

## **Chuka Campaign Songs: A Close Examination of the Style and Characterization**

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the style and characterization in the campaign songs of the Chuka community in Kenya. The campaign songs under interrogation are those conducted between 1992-2013. The Chuka community is one of the seven subgroups of the Meru ethnic community in Kenya. During every electioneering period, these songs take a center stage with the politicians and their supporters striving to outdo each other in the game of trying to muscle political power. The style employed to pass the message through the campaign songs to a certain degree influences how it is perceived and possibly how it is appreciated by the potential electorate. This study submits that no serious insight can be gained into a campaign song discourse if a close examination of the style employed to pass the message is ignored. Likewise the issue of characterization in a discourse of this nature may not be ignored. This is because the campaign songs in question are about people clamouring for votes and those who subscribe to their candidature. It is about the participants playing either passive or active role in this power contest. To wade through this, the study is guided by selected tenets from the Critical Discourse Analysis theory thereafter referred to as C.D.A. This theory has always had close links with Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) reaching back to its foundation in the works of Fowler et al (1979) on Critical Linguistic (C.L).*

**Keywords:** *campaigns songs, style, characterization, politician, voters.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The focus of this study is premised on the third objective of the research conducted in the three divisions of Magumoni, Chuka and Igambang<sup>o</sup>ombe in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The study proposes to critically examine the style used by the „vying politicians“ and their supporters (those who sing) to pass a certain message or messages for that matter with the sole aim of tilting the thinking of the potential electorate in their favour. The analyst subscribes to the fact that a close survey of the discourse of this nature and magnitude is not complete without highlighting the subjects of participation (either directly or indirectly) in the campaign song discourse under this scholarly scrutiny. Chilton (2004) lays claim that a political discourse is all about „persons“ and the manner in which they present their ideas to the electorate with a view of either retaining power or getting it cunningly from those who already have it.

As already stated, the data used in this study was drawn from the Kichuka campaign songs sung during the general elections conducted in the period between 1992-2013 in Kenya. In these songs, the message was passed in a way that assumed that the electorate in Chuka Community needed to make a critical decision of making the right political choice.

Scholars have researched on a number of issues about the Chuka community. Highlights of a few of them throws some light to readers who may at this critical stage want to know who exactly are the Chuka people. According to Guthrie (1967) the Chuka people are part of the seven sub groups that form the larger Meru community in Kenya. The other subgroups are the Mwimbi, Tharaka, Imenti, Tigania, Igoji, and the Igembe people. The Chuka people speak the Kichuka dialect. Munene (2011) lays claim that the Kichuka dialect has more in similar with Kitharaka when compared with the other dialects of the Ameru sub-groups. Possibly, this could be true because Mwaniki (2004) says that the oral traditions has it that the Chuka and the Tharaka people are sons and daughters of a one man called Muchuka. Were and Wilson (1972) describes the Chukanese as one of the Bantu speaking people inhabiting the slopes of Mount Kenya which they refer to as „Kere Nyaga“ (go and tell Nyaga). Mwaniki (1986) lays claim that the genesis of the campaign songs in the Kenyan soil can be correctly traced back to 1957 when the colonialists allowed the locals to elect their representatives to the

Legislative Council (Legco). The Africans who were interested in these political posts had to campaign to win more supporters. The Chuka people were not left behind on this.

Generally speaking, the Chuka people love songs and dances. A political event like general political elections would always attract the local artists who would come up with songs. These songs were presented in a manner that would:

- Build up the candidate supported.
- „Paint black“ the vying politician whose candidature was detested.
- Appeal to the electorate to be active participants in the ongoing political process by use of their votes.

Campaign songs create scenarios where there is deliberate attempt to achieve certain political goals (Luke, 2005). This study utilizes CDA which is an interdisciplinary approach in the study of a discourse. In the section that follows, this article delves into the style employed in passing the message of appealing for votes from the potential voters.

## 2. STYLE IN KICHUKA CAMPAIGN SONGS

Style is an art learnt and over passage of time it can be perfected. Traditional artists would rather take it as a gift for selected few by the gods. This would make them feel and act special. The composer of the Kichuka campaign songs attempt to present their preferred candidate as the best and those others as non starters who were just out to waste time. In this subsection, this article is going to focus on 8 of the many styles and strategies these politicians and their supporters employed in quest of votes.

### 2.1. Promises

The aspiring political candidates and their supporters did a thorough research of the needs of the electorate. These needs were a fertile ground for orchestrated deceit. The campaign songs are full of promises based on fulfilling these needs. This has been a ploy employed by the Chuka politicians and their supporters for a longtime. According to Njogu (2001) elections in Kenya are informed by socioeconomic issues such as unavailability of schools, good drinking water, health facilities, electricity, investment programs, security, employment etc. The language as used in these campaign songs was full of promises; achievable and non achievable ones. In the campaign song below, the electorate in Chuka Igambang“ombe constituency were being promised to witness vast development if they elected a Mr. Muthomi as their area M.P.

Original Text	Translation
<p><b>Tumuthureni</b> Antu ma Chuka Igambang“mbe, kura ni kwa Muthomi, Tutikwenda mangi. Kura cietu ni ciake. Tigana na garagaria , Kura cietu ni ciake, <u>Tuthure maendeleo,</u> Nitumuthureni, <u>Nikenda tuthii na mbere.</u></p>	<p><b>Let’s elect Him</b> People from Chuka Igambang“ombe, Let’s give our votes to Muthomi . Leave others alone, Let’s give him our votes. Ignore other useless contestants, Let’s give him our votes, <u>A vote in his favour is synonymous with development,</u> <u>Let’s elect him so that he can spear- head development in the area.</u></p>

### 2.2. Propaganda

Propaganda are ideas or statements that may be true or false but are exaggerated and that are used in order to enjoy a political mileage. Conason (2003) argues that the role of propaganda is to persuade the masses and is one most modern strategies used in a political contest all over the world. Weigel (2010) noted that some politicians owe their rise to propaganda because it is a political tool that appeals mostly to the emotions rather than to pure understanding. The Kichuka campaign songs interrogated in this study were riddled with this type of propaganda. Use of propaganda in the Kichuka campaign songs had a bearing on the political process in the region. The vying politicians and their supporters employed this strategy and the potential electorate fell prey to the same. Indeed, a politician who fails to use propaganda (if there is any) may not enjoy popularity that is enjoyed by one using it. This article is not oblivious of the fact that use of propaganda is not peculiar to Chuka community in Kenyan politics. In 2003, propaganda through music in Kenya was brought into focus

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by two young musicians; Joseph Ogidi and Jahd Adonijah who called themselves Gidi Gidi Maji Maji and had a surprise runaway hit with “unbwogable”, a danceable and politically flammable song that became an anthem for opposition politics.

In the Kichuka campaign song below, a decision to elect a Mr. Kindiki as the senator of Tharaka Nithi County in 2013 General Elections was presented by the singers as one arrived at by “all” inhabitants of the county –the Chuka, Tharaka, Mwimbi and Muthambi people. Whereas it could be true that by then the contestant was popular in the locality, it’s not possible for „all“ to have decided to give him their votes. The pertinent question to ask here is: where and when did these people meet and pass this decision? Actually, this should be appreciated as a ploy that was used to intimidate those who were against his candidature to have a change of mind in his favour e.g.

Original text	Translation
<p><b>Sinita</b>            Negwire makiurania , Sinita wetu ni uriku? Ni Kindiki            , ni Kidiki Uria ukuga tiwe niwe            Ni sinita wa ngubu,            Na ni wakili munene , Agendage nkinya Hague,            Kumatetera Akenya,            Ni Kindiki , ni Kidiki            Uria ukuga tiwe niwe  <u>Chuka iraugire niwe, Tharaka iraugire niwe, Mwimbi,</u>  <u>Muthambi niwe, Ni Kindiki , ni Kidiki,</u>            Uria ukuga tiwe niwe.</p>	<p><b>Senator</b>            They are wondering, Who is our senator?            It’s Kindiki, it’s Kindiki,            Let everyone know.            He is a powerful senator , And a tough lawyer,            He goes even at the Hague, To represent Kenyans,            It’s Kindiki, it’s Kindiki            Let everyone know  <u>Chuka people, Tharaka people,</u>  <u>Mwimbi and Muthambi people,</u>  <u>All a r e s a y i n g i t ’ s K i n d i k i ,</u> Let everyone            know</p>

### 2.3. Repetition

The composers of the Kichuka campaign songs employed repetition as a way of trying to pass the message to the Chuka electorate. Repetition as was used in these campaign songs is evident at the level of sounds (alliteration), words, phrases and at times whole lines of the songs discourse in question. In the sense it is used in these campaign songs, it is aimed at playing the following roles:

- Creating coherence in the song. The unity of the coherence units in the campaign song work together and express a certain message which is perceived as unified and making sense.
- Creating rhythm in the song.
- Stressing a certain point or message for that matter.
- For easy remembrance on the part of the hearers.
- Giving the singers a sense of satisfaction that all has been said loud and clear.

#### Examples:

##### *Repetition at the level sounds.*

Original	Translation
<u>lii</u> ntimenya:	<u>lii</u> I don’t know:
<u>lii</u> ntimenya	<u>lii</u> I don’t know
<u>lii</u> nteto ikwarua:	<u>lii</u> what is being said: By others I don’t know What is being said:
Ni mau mangi ntimenya	By Muthomi I know
Iria ikwarua:	
Ni Muthomi ni mbici	

##### *Repetition at the level of words*

Original	Translation
Kanyiri kainagua ni mwene:	A people loves a kinsman:
<u>Nitumuthureni</u>	<u>Let ’s elec t hi m</u>
Uyu ni mwana wetu: <u>Nitumuthureni</u>	This is our child:
Au nibo turi: <u>Nitumuthureni</u>	<u>Let ’s elec t hi m</u> That’s our decision:
Kanyiri kainagua ni mwene	<u>Let ’s elec t hi m</u> A people loves a kinsman

**Repetition at the level of phrases**

Original text	Translation
Ithii mbere na kaunti yetu: <u>Ithii mbere</u>	Development in our county: <u>Development</u>
Ithii mbere na kaunti yetu: <u>Ithii mbere</u>	Development in our county: <u>Development</u>
Na Kindiki araugire: <u>Ithii mbere</u>	Even Kindiki has asserted: <u>Development</u>

**2.4. Threats**

Use of threats was another strategy that was employed by the vying politicians and their supporters to discourage:-

- Certain politicians from continuing to clamour for votes or
- Some voters from casting their votes to their opponents.

Dunmire (2007) says that threats in a political discourse are used with an aim of coercing certain behavior from the electorate or a certain politician. Usage of these threats in Kichuka Campaign songs was aimed at triggering a response from the opponent or opponents for that matter. At times figurative language is used in these songs with the aim of eliciting a certain response (Capone 2010).

**Example1.**

Original text	Translation
Na Kareke: <u>Niarumithue mbumbui</u> Ya matina: Agendandage nayo	Make Kareke: <u>To be bitten by the spider</u> On the buttocks: All the time

**Example2.**

Original text	Translation
Muntu ukaruma: I Kapteni ii Niaugire mbu; Uuuu iiiii	He who is against: Kapteni Should be screamed at: Uuuu iii

In example 1 above Kareke (a vying politician) was threatened with a bite of a spider on his buttocks (matina). A spider’s bite is painful and more especially on sensitive parts like buttocks. “A bite” in this context was failure to support him. In Example 2, voters who were against the candidature of Kapteni were to be screamed at (kugirwa mbu). In Chuka traditions, screaming at somebody as a way of protest and subsequent disapproval is believed to attract a curse. Out of fear of being cursed, those who were against his candidature were expected to shift support in favour of Kapteni whose candidature was being endorsed by the singers.

**2.5. Use of Rhetoric Questions**

Some of the Kichuka campaign songs used during this electioneering period were riddled with rhetoric questions. These questions were:

- Posed for an intended political effect.
- Used in a way of making a certain assertion.
- Not designed for an answer.
- Calling for an evaluation of a certain political standpoint that needed change. Have a look at these three examples:

Original text	Translation	Semantic value
<b>Example 1</b> Ntuku ta ino i: Wamionire naku?	Ever seen a day like this one? Ever seen an Mp Like this one?	A long waited day for casting votes to the favoured candidate.
<b>Example 2</b> Mumbunge toyu ii: Wamwonire ku?	And who is this laughing confidently?	He is an able MP. He will really serve them well.
<b>Example 3</b> Nake uria nuu: Ukuthetheka?		He’s confident that he is going to win the election.

## 2.6. Unfavourable Comparison

The political contestant who was supported by a certain group of potential voters (in this context the singers) was presented as the best compared with his or her opponents. The „good“ of a person whose candidature was being endorsed was given prominence (highlightened) in the song. On the other hand the one whose candidature was not supported was presented as the opposite (in the negative way) of the favoured one. The good done by the opponent was even attributed to the favoured candidate. In the campaign song below, Mayor Mbaabu was being compared with the other whose name was not mentioned:

Original text	Translation
Muntu <u>utigakira</u> Arume kuu mbunge Ni <u>meya uyu Mbaabu</u>	The one who will not fear Other men in the parliament Is mayor Mbaabu
<u>Niwici guceria</u> Muntu utigakira Arume kuu mbunge Ni meya uyu Mbaabu	<u>He is development conscious</u> The one who will not fear Other men in the parliament Is mayor mbaabu
<u>Uyu ti wa mwitio</u> Muntu utigakira Arume kuu mbunge Ni meya uyu Mbaabu	<u>He's no t p r o u d</u> The one who will not fear Other men in the parliament Is mayor Mbaabu

‘The other contestant’ who was not mentioned in this campaign song was unfavourably compared with mayor Mbaabu. Through this kind of comparison, a message was put across to the potential voters that no doubt Mayor Mbaabu ought to be the one to be elected.

### Mbaabu was:

- +Courageous
- +Development conscious
- +Humble

### The other was:

- Courageous (coward)
- Development conscious
- Humble (proud)

## 2.7. Invoking Supernatural Powers

There was strong evidence that some of the Kichuka campaign songs were modeled on the ordinary Christian songs in the Chuka community. According to the Christian belief, God is Omnipotent and All Loving and when called upon by a believer, He would answer in affirmative. To them, He influences course of political events so long as what is asked for tallies with his plans or is not guided by selfishness. A common Christian song referred to as „Niwega Ngai“ (Thanks to God) was improvised to suit the political needs of the time (2013 General Elections). The campaigners for a Mr. Muthomi Njuki were appealing to their Maker to help him win the sought for political seat in Chuka Igambang“ombe constituency. Have a glimpse:

Original text	Translation
Ni wega Ngai: Mutongoria Nake Njuki: Ni mubunge Roho waku: Mutongorie Tutikabuuta; Kana tunonta	Thanks to Almighty: He who guides May your spirit: Guide Njuki through To win the seat: We will not hunger Or thirst

## 2.8. Public Critique of the Opponent

Basically, this is an artistic announcement and questioning of the opponent’s character all in attempt to demonstrate to the potential voters that the opponent dismally fails to meet the moral standards befitting the political office he/ she is seeking. Njogu (2001) lays claim that this is quite common in Kenyan environment in every electioneering period. He singles out 1975 single party by election in the Lamu East constituency where services of the local artist (poets) were sought and even paid so that the ‘Malenga’ could sing praises for the candidates they supported while simultaneously ‘mud slinging’ their opponents. Often the ridiculed candidates would counter attack using the same style in attempt to water down the venom leveled against them. In Kichuka campaign song below (sung 2013) the character of the opponent was made public for voters’ scrutiny and assessment.

Original text	Translation
Utikambire : Nimuthuure Ninkumenya: <u>Ni mwei wa migunda</u>	Don't tell me: To give him my vote For I know: <u>He steals peoples plots</u>
Utikambire: Nimuthuure Ninkumenya: <u>Ni Malaya</u>	Don't tell me: To give him my vote
Utikambire: Nimuthuure Ninkumenya: <u>Ni wa tenguri</u>	For I know: <u>He is a prostitute</u>
Utikambire: Nimuthuure Ninkumenya: <u>Atikethagia antu</u>	Don't tell me: To give him my vote
Utikambire: Nimuthuure <u>Arungamite:</u> <u>Na kiama gia KANU</u>	For I know: <u>He is cantankerous</u>
	Don't tell me: To give him my vote For I know: <u>He does not greet people</u>
	Don't tell me: To give him my vote <u>For the party sponsoring him: Is KANU</u>

### 3. CHARACTERIZATION IN KICHUKA CAMPAIGN SONGS

According to Madumulla (2009), characterization is the way characters in a discourse are presented. The characters are the axis through which the various conflicts and themes are weaved and developed in a text. These sentiments are shared by Hawthorn (1987) who asserts that a critical survey of any discourse is not complete if the characters or participants are not identified and evaluated on the basis of their success or failure in developing themes and the messages therein. From the data of the Kichuka Campaign songs collected in 2013, the analyst was able to identify four types of characters namely:

- The vying characters.
- The singing characters.
- Potential voters.
- Distantly referred or concealed characters.

#### 3.1. The Vying Characters

From the data of the Kichuka campaign songs collected, the analyst was able to identify politician characters who were vying for the various political seats in the period between 1992-2013. These were 'real characters or people'; not like the ones you will find in fiction works like *Siku Njema* (1996), *Natala* (1997), or even *Betrayal in the City* (1976) for that matter. At times the Chuka political artists fictionalized these characters but with a lot of caution –not-to-rob him/her the 'reality touch' which was necessary for the appeal of the votes in the given political contest. The potential voters had to (i) know the vying politician (ii) Identify with him or her. If the political artists were to be overtaken by creativity, they would then rob him/her of that reality touch. However historical characters are sometimes fictionalized in fiction works thus literary critics getting interested in trying to unravel the relationship between History and Literature. What has History to offer Literature and vice versa? Come to think of Dedan Kimathi in the history of Kenyan struggle for independence and Kimathi in the play *Mzalendo Kimathi* (1978) or *Kimathi* in the novella *Kaburi Bila Msalaba!* (1969). In Chuka campaign songs, a number of issues could be highlighted about the vying character:

- The message and the style uncoiled around them.
- They were the ones seeking votes.
- They used truths, half truths, blatant lies and exaggerations to please the potential voters.
- Have played a key role in shaping the „political path“ of the Chuka people.

**Examples of these vying characters**

Name of the vying character	Position vied	Year/years
Njoka Mutani	Parliamentary	1992/1997
Kapteni Mbuba Petkey Miriti	Parliamentary	1997/2002
Kareke Mbiuki Nthuraku Gichuyia	Parliamentary/gubernatorial	2002,2007,2013
Kaburu	Parliamentary	2007
Muthomi Njuki Mbaabu Karagita	Parliamentary	2007
Beatrice Nkatha Ragwa	Parliamentary/gubernatorial	2007,2013
Kindiki	Parliamentary	2013
	Parliamentary County council Women rep	2013
	Gubernatorial Senatorial	2007
		2013
		2013
		2013

**3.2. The Singing Characters**

In the context of these Kichuka campaign songs, these were the characters who actively participated in the singing with a view of winning more supporters for the vying politician whose candidature they were endorsing. More often than not, these characters fell into two clear divides:

- The soloist („*Kitharia*’ in Kichuka) - these characters led the singing. They guided or gave directions. To a large extent they determined the vigour in which the song would be conducted. At times they alternated their roles of active production and repetition but in all this, they fronted themselves as the ones who were in control.
- The respondents („*Etikiriria*’ in Kichuka) - In most of the cases, they developed the phrase initiated by the soloist. They picked on the refrain, danced, jumped, screamed and made artistic gyrations to attract crowds. Through their songs and dances, they invited the potential voters to gauge and evaluate the aspirants’ life history, public and private deeds. In most of the cases, this is not an honest exercise in that the black side of the preferred candidate is shielded whereas that of the opponent is laid bare with an unmistakable exaggeration. They would even recommend openly to the potential voters who appeared to be afflicted by the spirit indecision on who of the aspiring candidates they should vote for. Together with the soloist, these characters were a times paid in cash or in kind. This gave them the motivation to go on and on; enduring all manner of challenges that attempted to militate against their sole goal of garnering support for the favoured political hopeful. At times the opposing groups ran out of control and the singing actually graduated to ugly confrontations. Their support to a given politician was not guaranteed if there were no handouts. Indeed most of them were mercenaristic in deed and character. This was not strange bearing in mind that most of them were not guided by any political principle but by idleness, greed and search for self gratification. A majority of them were guided by one of the Chuka traditional maxim that

‘*For the mole to come out of it’s abode, water must be used*’ (Gwitiriria mbuko runchi). Simply put, the political hopeful should continuously shower them with gifts and favours for a sustained support up to the end.

In specific Kichuka campaign songs these characters were identified by subject pronominals and possessive pronouns.

**Example:**

Subject pronominal	<b>Kichuka</b>	<b>Swahili</b>	<b>English</b>
Possessive pronouns	<i>twiu</i>	<i>sisi</i>	<i>us</i>
	<i>namo</i>	<i>wao</i>	<i>them</i>
<b>Example of a song:</b>	<i>cietu</i>	<i>zetu</i>	<i>ours</i>
	<i>waku</i>	<i>wako</i>	<i>yours</i>
<b>Original text</b>		<b>Translation</b>	
Kitharia: Urariragira: Etikiriria: Kura <i>cietu</i> iii Kitharia: Tugukunenkera Etikiriria: Kura cionthe iii		Soloist: You wanted Respondents: <u>Our</u> votes Soloist: <u>We</u> will give you Respondents: All our votes	

### 3.3. Potential Voters

This group of characters comprised of those who were eligible to vote and those who were not. The data collected showed that not all those who were eighteen years and above had registered for this crucial exercise. However, they would not risk to be identified as so lest they don't enjoy favours from the vying politicians and their supporters. This group of potential voters was very crucial because at that point in time; they were the ones who wielded the political power only to lose it instantly the moment a certain vying politician was declared the winner. The politicians treaded carefully in the way they dealt with them lest they don't get their support. The vying politicians in fact, "chick treated" them just the same way they did the singing characters. To maintain, influence and

subsequently tilt their support to certain candidates, gifts or to be more specific „bribes“ had to exchange hands. At times, it was difficult to draw a hardline between these potential voters and the singing characters. Once the invitation for support of a certain candidate was well received, the vying politicians, the lead group in singing and the potential voters bonded into one group hence sang their song together in support of the politician whose candidature was being supported.

In the Kichuka campaign songs, these potential voters were referred to by the areas they hailed from as is evidenced in the following songs:

Original text	Translation
Antu ma <u>Ch u ka I ga mb a n g 'o mb e</u> , Kura ni kwa Muthomi, Tutikwenda mangi, Kura cietu ni ciake . Iaiuii, Kura ni cia petkey x2 Wathii <u>Chuka</u> ; Kura ni ciake. Wathii <u>Muthambi</u> ; Kura ni ciake Wathii <u>Mwimbi</u> ; Kura ni ciake Wathii <u>Tharaka</u> Kura ni ciake	People from <u>Ch u ka I ga mb a n g 'o mb e</u> Cast your votes to Muthomi. Those others, no Let's give him our votes Iaiuii, All votes to Petkey x2 In <u>Chuka</u> ; All votes to Petkey In <u>Muthambi</u> ; All votes to Petkey In <u>Mwimbi</u> ; All votes to Petkey In <u>Tharaka</u> ; All votes to Petkey

### 3.4. Distantly Referred or Concealed Characters

The names of the characters supported by the singing ones were openly mentioned whilst those whose candidature was detested were distantly referred to or concealed. This was meant to avoid direct confrontations which could have found their way in Kenya courts on account of defamation.

#### Example 1

Original text	Translation
Ii <u>wa kathimbu</u> Tutikumwenda ii	We do not want <u>The one wielding a club (rungu)</u>

#### Example 2

Original text	Translation
Kinyu ii: Iii kinyu x2 Muntu uria: <u>Ukinyite Petkey amukinyuke</u>	Do not: Ah! Do not The person: <u>Trying to block Petkey should stop</u>

#### Example 3

Original text	Translation
Urinthairiria: <u>Nthuure muntu</u> <u>Muntu tukumenya</u> ; <u>Ni mwei wa migunda iii</u>	I shall not: <u>Elect a person</u> <u>A person known: For stealing plots</u>



In the three examples above (derived from 3 different Kichuka campaign songs), reference is not made of them by use of their names:

- One wielding a club
- One trying to block Petkey (in this song the favoured candidate)
- One who steals people's plots.

Albeit these person's names were concealed, the locals knew who they were. So, failure to mention their names did not in any way translate to the potential voters not knowing who they were. They were able to identify them and the assumption of the singing characters was that by unfavourably comparing them with the political hopefuls they supported, they would be denied the so coveted vote.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This article has successfully looked at the styles that were employed by the composers of the Kichuka campaign songs in the period 1992-2013. This period is unique in Kenyan politics in that people enjoyed more democratic space when compared to the earlier periods. The analyst is not oblivious of the fact that these were not the only styles employed but can authoritatively attest to the fact that the following eight of those styles stood out conspicuously: use of promises and propaganda, repetition and threats, posing of rhetoric questions, invoking of the supernatural, unfavourable comparison of the political hopefuls and public critique of their person and character. The article has demonstrated that a close look of the characterization in a political discourse of this nature could also be appreciated as style. Analysis of the data used in writing this article has identified four types of characters: the vying character, the singing character, the voter and the distantly referred or concealed character. It is the submission of this article that these characters are different from those found in say *Natala (1997)* or *Babu Alipofufuka (2001)* (fiction works) in that they are real characters „ who walked on solid earth“ and have contributed in the shaping of the political landscape of the Chuka community in Kenya. In the future, I encourage comparative studies to be done on political discourse from different communities in East Africa region.

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