**Review Article**

# Pictorial Metaphors in The Portrayal of Corruption as Dirt in The Kenyan *Daily Nation* Newspaper Cartoons

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**Abstract:** Cartoons use language as an artistic medium in which various options are explored for effective communication. Cartoon is used to satirize and lampoon socio-political abuses like corruption. In Kenya, corruption poses one of the greatest challenges facing the Kenyan government and reports on corruption scandals in the media are the order of the day. Political cartoon therefore has enabled the cartoonist to deal with political issues mockingly in an indirect way through cross - domain mappings, to ridicule dictators and corrupt figures without fear of victimization. The present paper analysed pictorial metaphors in the portrayal of corruption as dirt in the print media cartoons. The objectives were to examine the source-objects depicting corruption as dirt in the political cartoons in The Daily Nation Newspaper and to determine their modality. The research was guided by the tenets of the pictorial metaphor model founded by Charles Forceville (2006) within the conceptual metaphor theory. The paper was limited to political cartoons depicting corruption as brought out in the Kenyan Daily Nation Newspaper in the years 2018 and 2019, a period characterized by mega corruption scandals in Kenya. This was also the period of the 'handshake' that declared zero tolerance on corruption. The paper adopted analytical research design. The study population comprised 16 political cartoons in The Daily Nation Newspaper in 2018 and 2019. Random purposive sampling technique was used to select the required cartoons and the sample size was dictated by saturation sampling. From the 16 cartoons a total of 6 political cartoons were sampled using saturation sampling method as some of the themes depicting corruption as dirt were repetitive. The findings were that the source-objects that depict corruption as dirt in The Daily Nation Newspaper are CORRUPTION IS A CAN OF WORMS, CORRUPTION IS SOOT, CORRUPTION IS MUD, CORRUPTION IS BLACKSMOKE, CORRUPTION IS STENCH and CORRUPTION IS UNSIGHTLY GARBAGE conceptual metaphors. All these different types of dirt have been used to castigate corruption which is a discomfort to the common citizen; pollute the environment, a source of embarrassment and even a danger to lives.

**Keywords:** Portrayal of Corruption, Pictorial Metaphors, Daily Nation, Newspaper, Newspaper Cartoons

## INTRODUCTION

Cartoons are forms of visual communication which just like other forms of visuals provide a clear mental picture, quick understanding, enhance memory and provide a shared experience in the print media. "The cartoon serves as a capsule version of the editorial opinion meant for the reading public to swallow and probably get some societal ills cured. Cartoons are not only meant to entertain the readers, but also seek to ginger their sense of reasoning into clamouring for positive change in the political structure'' (Onakpa, 2014: 35).

Adom (2016) distinguishes five types of cartoons. These are editorial or political cartoons, comic strips, animated or movie cartoons, gag cartoons and illustrative cartoons. Editorial or political cartoons appear in the editorial section of the newspaper and may support the main editorial of the day or may deal with other news items of the day. A political cartoon does not always show real people; it may use a personification of a country or organization as a person, an animal or a monster. Comic strips appear as regular features with known or established characters in newspapers. They are portrayed in series to illustrate or tell a story. Each strip includes a series of panels with the words of characters encased in a balloon. Animated or movie cartoons are short, computer drawn cartoons made to appear as if it is hand drawn. They are made in series to create the illusion of movement and action. They are used for cinematography and are produced on audio-video screens. Gag cartoons on the other hand are single-paneled cartoon used to create fun about people in general. Lastly, are the illustrative cartoons, which portray specific ideas in a direct and simple manner; they help in explaining stories, teaching aids or advertisements. At the same time, they explain further the text that accompanies them. The focus of the present paper was political cartoons, as the study is an analysis of the portrayal of corruption – as a social ill – in cartoons.

According to Burack (2000), political cartoons are vivid primary sources that offer intriguing and entertaining insights into the public mood, the underlying cultural assumptions of an age, and attitudes toward key events or trends of the times. It is also noted that they are complex visual or symbolic discourses which employ rhetorical devices that require rhetorical analysis in order to make sense of the messages and their impact on the

public (Benoit *et al,* 2001). Lawate (2011) explains that political cartoons or cartoons in newspapers, which is the focus of the present paper, have a special place in our dailies and apart from the obvious roles that they play, cartoons are a reflection of society and provides a view point to the people reading it.

Lawate (2012) reiterates that the job of a cartoonist is to tackle the represented phenomenon through the conventional satire. It is also explained that political cartoon is a visual medium that engages the audience, helps them understand and interpret the political, social and economic scene in the country. Onakpa (2014) says that the political cartoon is often satirical in nature and castigates the social misdeeds, sayings, views or events that have to do with highly placed personalities and that the cartoon is a vital tool employed by the press for its watchdog role in the society. The cartoonist acts as the conscience or voice of the people in that he speaks for and represents their opinion.

Wambui (2016) points out that in Kenya corruption manifests itself in both petty and grand corruption cases. She explains that petty corruption is where people have to pay money to obtain public services while grand corruption is a high level scandal that is often reported in Kenyan newspaper headlines involving substantial amounts of public funds. Wambui (2016) lists some of the scandals that have hit headlines since 2008 such as; The Maize Scam, Triton Oil Scandal, Free Primary Education Funds Misappropriation, The Eurobond Scam, Tokyo Embassy Scandal, Chicken Gate, National Youth Service Scandal, Ministry of Health Scandal, National Cereals and Produce Board Scandal among others and most recently the Arror and Kimwarer Dams Scandal where billions of public funds have been lost. She concludes that Kenya's image globally continues to deteriorate due to corruption hence losing the investor confidence and making development and industrialization a pipe dream. Reported corruption levels and bureaucratic interferences have negatively affected the performance of government institutions in Kenya. Therefore given the wide coverage that corruption gets in the Kenyan Daily Newspapers and the negative impact it has on the general populace, a lot of reactions have been elicited in a bid to lay bare what corruption is.

According to Tagne (2015) the language of corruption in many countries is gradually developing lexicon and linguistic features, therefore; the language users have developed myriads of 'hygienic and camouflage ways' to refer to the practice of this social ill. Patrick(2013) gives examples of various lexemes and expressions coined by language users in different countries in reference to bribe: '*cash for soup*' in Turkey; '*token of gratitude*' in China; '*money for tea*, in Afghanistan; '*beans for kids*' in Kinsasha; '*gombo/kola*' in Cameroon; '*glass of wine*' in Paris; '*chai yawazee/ tea*

*for elders*' Swahili expression in Kenya; '*something small/ kitu kidogo*' in Kenya; '*gratitude/haalapenz*' in Hungarian/ Mandarin; '*oiling money/ kanepenz*' in Hungary (http://www.pri.org/stories/2013-07-12/language-corruption-cash-soup-nokia-box). This research project was aimed at showing how corruption has led to linguistic creativity in various parts of Sub – Saharan Africa, and it explains that such a language also varies from one public domain to another, although there are some lexemes which cut across all the domains. The present paper however, examines how corruption is portrayed in cartoons by establishing the source-objects of the pictorial metaphors.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Cartoons use language as an artistic medium in which various options are explored for effective communication. The language of cartoon is not as direct as the language of news reporting in that it is characterized by satirical and metaphorical pictures; and codified and connotative wordings which makes it socially appropriate and relevant to inform, educate and entertain the general public. Cartoons are used to satirize and lampoon socio-political abuses like corruption. In Kenya, corruption poses one of the greatest challenges facing the Kenyan government and reports on corruption scandals in the media are the order of the day. Political cartoon therefore enable the cartoonist to deal with political issues mockingly in an indirect way through cross - domain mappings, to ridicule dictators and corrupt figures without fear of victimization. The language of cartoons makes use of both text and image which are carefully integrated to communicate the intended meaning. Given the unique nature of the language of cartoons, it has become a vital tool employed by the press to castigate social misdeeds and given the watchdog role in the society. Cartoons may be overlooked by many, but just like other modes, they can effectively tell a story and in this paper it is corruption stories. The paper focuses on how corruption is portrayed as dirt in cartoons in *The Daily Nation* Newspaper and gives an insight into the language of cartoons as communicative tool in society with the hope of promoting Semiotics as a key mode of communication.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the paper was to examine the source-objects depicting corruption as dirt in the political cartoons in *The Daily Nation Newspaper* and to determine their modality.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Forceville (2006) says that all discourse is persuasive in the sense of aiming for some sort of cognitive, emotional or aesthetic effect, or all three together, in its envisaged audience. Verbal messages and texts in communication are often complemented, or even superseded, by information in other signifying systems.

For instance, printed material like advertisements, manuals, instruction books, maps, graphics, cartoons et cetera usually combine, and establish interactions between verbal and pictorial information.

The pictorial metaphor model is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). One of the tenets of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is that metaphor is not a figure of speech, but a mode of thought that can occur in other modes than language alone (Lakoff, 1993). More specifically, Lakoff and Johnson claim that human beings conceptualize abstract ideas in terms of concrete experiences. Concrete experiences are those that pertain directly to the body, that is, sense perception, motor activity, physical pain and pleasure, heat and cold and so on. This aspect of the theory is referred to as '*embodiment*' (Lakoff, 1993:102). Forceville (1996) submits that analyses are extended from merely verbal discourse to pictorial and multimodal discourse. The study further points out that it is important to focus such analyses on discourses in a specific genre and political cartoon is one of the multimodal genres often addressed within CMT.

Black (1979), states that a metaphor imposes an identity relation between two 'things' that are conventionally considered as belonging to different categories in which the result is usually an untrue statement, for instance, "*MAN IS A WOLF*" conceptual metaphor. Each metaphor has two parts. According to Black (1979), the first 'literal' part was called the *tenor, topic or primary subject* and its second, 'figurative' part the *vehicle* or *secondary subject*. Forceville (2016) explains that these two are now called target domain and source domain respectively. In '*THE WORLD IS A STAGE*' and '*FOOTBALL IS WAR*' conceptual metaphors, '*world*' and '*football*' are the metaphors' targets, '*stage*' and '*war*' their sources. Both targets and source evoke a network of features and connotations. They are part of a 'semantic domain'', as long as this labelling does not obscure the fact that attitudinal and emotive dimensions are part and parcel of both target and source domains, moreover; pragmatic considerations such as genre attribution also play a role in interpretation.

Often, the underlying identity relation between target and source ('A IS B') is not already linguistically given in this form, but must be inferred from the metaphors' surface manifestation. For instance, in the linguistic expression 'If your heart surrenders, you'll need me to hold', cue LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD conceptual metaphor without having the convenient "A IS B" surface structure.

Black (1979) explains that once target and source have been construed, the metaphor is ready to be interpreted. Interpretation of a metaphor boils down to mapping or 'projecting' at least one feature (connotation, value, attitude or emotion) associated with the source on to the target. Forceville, (2016) elaborates that often a set of features that are structurally related in a source domain is mapped as a whole or as far as seems relevant onto the target domain. In this way, a well chosen source domain can impose structure on an unknown target domain.

## METHODOLOGY

Random purposive sampling was used to sample 16 political cartoons depicting corruption as dirt in *The Daily Nation Newspaper*. A sample size of 6 cartoons was dictated by saturation sampling as themes in some of the 16 cartoons were repetitive. The data was analyzed qualitatively into themes, under different portrayals of corruption as dirt. The pictorial metaphors were coded to indicate the different types of pictorial metaphors according to the groups of varied source-objects that were identified. Based on the tenets of pictorial metaphor model the data was identified and presence of metaphors noted, coded, grouped into themes and interpreted to establish how source domains were mapped to depict corruption as dirt in *The Daily Nation Newspaper* cartoons. A total of six source-objects themes were identified, which included: CORRUPTION IS A CAN OF WORMS, CORRUPTION IS SOOT, CORRUPTION IS MUD, CORRUPTION IS BLACKSMOKE, CORRUPTION IS STENCH and CORRUPTION IS UNSIGHTLY GARBAGE conceptual metaphors.

## DISCUSSION

CORRUPTION IS DIRT conceptual metaphor draws an analogy between corruption and dirt by mapping of the negative attributes of the source domain, for instance bad smell, on to the target domain. This study compares biological decomposition and other forms of decomposition to moral decadence (corruption) in which the conceptual metaphor is symbolized by a number of source-domains as indicated in the following pictorial metaphors.
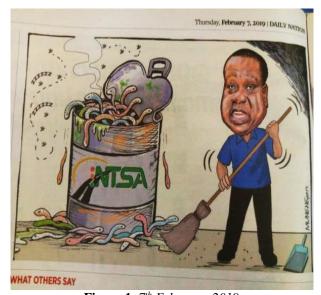


**Figure 1**. *7th February, 2019*

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The cartoon in figure 1 is based on the former Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government Dr. Fred Matiang'i's attempt to streamline services at the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA). The NTSA is an agency mandated with road safety in Kenya by offering services like motor vehicle inspection, driving license renewals, issuing *boda boda* (motorcycle) rider registration certificates and so on. The sector had been marred by allegations of corruption among its officers who frustrate clients and demand for bribes in order to access services, likened to a can of worms. In the pictorial metaphor is a caricature of Matiang'i sweeping after opening the 'can of worms.' He is holding a broom and next to him is a dust pan which he is using to collect the worms back into a huge can labelled '*NTSA*'. The can is overflowing with maggots, a symbol of the rot at NTSA. Evidence of the rot at NTSA is explained by the stench coming from the can and flies milling around it. The pictorial metaphor likens streamlining of services and eradication of corruption at NTSA to sweeping a dirty room. Corruption is compared to filth infested by maggots giving rise to the MAGGOTS FOR ROT metonymy. The source object of corruption in the cartoon is a can of worms hence, CORRUPTION IS A CAN OF WORMS conceptual metaphor. The conceptual metaphor is closely related to '*Opening a can of worms*' which is a common expression that means getting in to a complex, embarrassing situation that may further complicate issues. It thus shows how complex corruption is. This is a multimodal pictorial metaphor of the verbo-pictorial variety, whereby the text and the images interact to give meaning and creatively narrate the story.



**Figure 2**: *14th July, 2018*

The cartoon in figure 2 is based on a report on sugar scandal. The sugar sector was riddled with corruption scandals and mismanagement of the institutions connected to the sugar sector. Mega corruption had been reported to occur between Kenya Sugar Board officials, managers of mills, managers of out-grower institutions and senior ministry officials. The cane growers are usually at the bottom of the power chain. In this instance, the scandal involved importation of duty free sugar into the country which prompted the probe. In the pictorial metaphor, there is a tray containing *SUGAR REPORT* (text). The report includes an assortment of waste materials, symbolic of the corrupt deals unearthed. The garbage consists of all types of filthy materials such as cans, boxes, machetes and skeletons which the cartoonist uses to communicate the ugly nature of the scandals. At the same time, the large quantity is a representation of the massive nature of corruption in the sector. Over the garbage are flies milling around and this further depicts corruption as filth which is symbolic of moral decadence. The report has been carried out by Sugar Commission, labelled as (SUGAR COMM.), represented by the men in suits and in the speech bubble they say ' …WE HAVE LEFT NO STONE UNCOVERED'. The report however, is a disappointment to *WANJIKU* who is watching in disbelief at the findings. The source object of corruption is garbage which stands for dirt, giving rise to the GARBAGE FOR DIRT metonymy and the CORRUPTION IS GARBAGE conceptual metaphor. This is closely connected to Figure 1, in that with time garbage rots and extremely rotten garbage produces maggots which could also symbolize the different magnitudes of corruption. CORRUPTION IS DIRT conceptual metaphor hence maps features of dirt on to corruption.



**Figure 3**: *5th May, 2019*

In Figure 3, which is also a multimodal pictorial metaphor, there are two black containers, one a pot and the other a kettle. The pot represents politicians and this can be inferred from the caricatures of the political personalities (Honorable Orengo, Honorable Raila and Honorable Kalonzo) in it while the kettle represents the clergy evidenced by the dressing. The texts read '*Stop receiving politicians' dirty money*' and '*Stop using church as a political platform*', other than relying on the background information of the cartoon the texts confirm

that the cartoon is on corruption. The two groups are trading accusations with each seeing the other as the corrupt party. The cartoonist is of the opinion that both parties are corrupt and none deserves to call the other *'black'*; the reason they are both in black containers. It is a case of the pot calling the kettle black and vice versa. The pictorial metaphor was based on the general opinion that the church was being hypocritical when it outwardly condemned politicians labelled as corrupt but accepted money from them. The church was meant to help fight against corruption and called on Kenyans to shun and shame the corrupt. Black is a colour associated with dirt and even so if a pot or a kettle is black then the assumption is that it is sooty and can soil clean hands. Corruption is associated with dirt, in this case the black pot and the kettle covered with soot. The source object for corruption in the pictorial metaphor is sooty pot giving rise to CORRUPTION IS SOOT conceptual metaphor. The cartoonist has carefully integrated text and image to convey the message.



**Figure 4**: *11th July, 2018*

The cartoon in Figure 4 was based on corruption scandals among governors. The media reported many graft scandals involving state agencies and officials since President Uhuru Kenyatta was re-elected in 2017 and he promised a renewed crackdown on graft. With devolution in Kenya, the Legislature and the Executive were devolved to the fourty seven political and administrative counties headed by governors. Devolution of government resulted in the devolution of corruption as the local governments became prone to corruption challenges. Reports from Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission (EACC) and Kenya National Audit Office indicated the prevalence of corruption in counties, ranging from bribery, nepotism, and embezzlement and mismanagement of public resources. In the pictorial metaphor is a presentation of governors flying on a poorly maintained and defective plane. The plane written *GOVERNORS* is worn out, from the numerous patches and the black smoke emitted from the exhaust pipes. The plane symbolizes the county governments which are

piloted by governors and its poor condition symbolizes the near collapse of the counties due to mismanagement. The mismanagement is as a result of corrupt deals further symbolized by the black smoke labelled IMPUNITY emitted from the plane. The text, which is a remark by the pilot '*WE SHOULD NOT FACE PROSECUTION*' is an indication of the ignorant nature of the governors who do not realize the immense danger they are subjecting themselves and the counties to. The plane could crash any time given its defectiveness (the black smoke). Hence CORRUPTION IS BLACK SMOKE conceptual metaphor. The conceptual metaphor, just like CORRUPTION IS SOOT conceptual metaphor is referred to as colour metaphor. Abbas and Banafshe (2011) argue that certain connotative values are generally associated with colours and carry certain resonances in a given culture. And that colour metaphors deal with abstract associations for instance white is associated with *eternity, virtue, innocence, purity, heaven* and *light*, while black is associated with *death, mourning, murder, sin* and *devils* which explains the choice of black by the cartoonist to symbolize corruption which is considered as evil by the society.



**Figure 5**: *7th May, 2019*

The cartoon in Figure 5 is a pictorial portrayal of corruption in Kiambu County. Kiambu County under the governorship of Ferdinand Waititu was among the counties that were riddled with corruption scandals. This necessitated an audit by EACC which unearthed corruption in the systems. In the cartoon is a tattered report written '*Kiambu Audit Report*' trickling wet with dirty water. Around the report too are flies milling; an indication of the presence of dirt – corruption. The person carrying the report is Waititu himself, symbolized by the caricature, but he is holding it at an arms-length because of the stench emanating from it. The stench from the report is so unbearable that Waititu has to avoid it by facing away. The person carrying Waititu is presumably an official from EACC taking him for prosecution and he is equally very uncomfortable with the stench, clearly from Waititu's words '*EASY…Act like it is Not stinky*!'

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which translates to BEING CORRUPT IS IGNORING THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION conceptual metaphor. The cartoonist therefore likens the report on massive corruption in Kiambu County to unbearable, dirty stinky pieces of paper, hence CORRUPTION IS STENCH conceptual metaphor. The pictorial metaphor also gives rise to the STENCH STANDS FOR DIRT metonymy. This information is also communicated through cross domain mappings of the features of the source domain on to the target domain.



**Figure 6**: *23ʳᵈ February, 2019*

Figure 6 captures CORRUPTION IS UNSIGHTLY RUBBISH conceptual metaphor. The cartoon contains rubbish in a room which makes the occupants uneasy and so there is an attempt to hide the mess under a carpet. In the cartoon is a vacant seat for the IG (Inspector General) who later turned out to be Hillary Mutyambai appointed into office on 8ᵗʰ April, 2019 to replace Joseph Boinnet. The IG, (THE SEAT FOR THE OCCUPANT metonymy) brought out through a text, is charged with the overall administrative management of the police force which is one of the sectors that had also featured prominently in corrupt scandals. The seat is placed on a heap of says '*GOOD LUCK TO* rubbish covered with a green carpet marked *POLICE*. Under the carpet one can see images of skeletons spilling over and leaflets written *Rogue cops, Brutality, Dishonesty* and *Indiscipline*. These are atrocities committed by the police force and have gone unresolved. The atrocities, symbolised by rubbish are instead swept under the carpet so that the new office holder does not notice how messy the office he is inheriting is. In the cartoon again, there are two people representing the common citizen walking away from the scene engaged in a dialogue. One says '*WELL, I'D RATE HIM FAIRLY…..*' meaning he understands the complexity of the office and could be the previous occupants performed worse. The other *HIS SUCCESSOR*', again confirming that it is a hopeless situation and they do not expect much from the current

change but all they can do is wish the new IG luck in the fight against corruption.

## CONCLUSION

CORRUPTION IS DIRT conceptual metaphor is brought out by a number of source-objects that in various ways have depicted corruption as a dirty, repulsive activity which is not only harmful to human but to the environment as well. The source-objects included **a can of worms, soot, mud, black smoke, stench** and **garbage** which all give rise to CORRUPTION IS A CAN OF WORMS, CORRUPTION IS GARBAGE, CORRUPTION IS MUD, CORRUPTION IS SOOT, CORRUPTION IS STENCH and CORRUPTION IS UNSIGHTLY LITTER conceptual metaphors. These different types of dirt have been used to castigate corruption as it is a source of discomfort to the citizens; pollutes the environment; a source of embarrassment and is also a danger to lives. The paper also concluded that all the pictorial metaphors were multimodal in that the cartoonist integrates text and image to effectively relay the coded message.

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