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The use of Chichewa proverbs as a political campaign tool in Saulos Klaus Chilima's speeches

Abstract

This paper examines Saulos Klaus Chilima's (henceforth referred to as Chilima) use of Chichewa proverbs during the Malawi 2019 presidential election campaign period as a campaign tool. It seeks to highlight how Chilima (re)used Chichewa proverbs to solicit voters for himself and discredit his opponents in the presidential race. The study uses the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, and seeks to identify metaphors generated by the proverbs that Chilima uses and map them across domains. Further, the study demonstrates how the meanings mapped across domains relate to his political campaign for presidency. The results indicate that the political context which he created by the usage of the proverbs narrowed and refocused the proverbs' meaning in such a way that his political ideas were understood through cultural lens. This was done through the metaphors that the proverbs generated. Chilima drew from the source domains that people are familiar with, such as FAMILY, BUILDING, ANIMALS, and HUMANS. These metaphors along with the entire speech context of the proverb helped Chilima persuade voters. The study concludes that proverbs and the metaphors they generate can be a political tool for campaigning for oneself and de-campaigning against opponents.

Keywords: Chilima**, Chichewa proverbs, political speeches, campaign, elections, conceptual metaphor, political discourse

1. Introduction

In Malawi, like in many other countries, elections are an expression of the de-mocracy and power of choice that citizens have. During the election period, contesting candidates are given time to campaign for their party and them-selves. Thus, politicians running for office use various linguistic means, of which proverbs use is one, to persuade people to vote for them and at times diminish support for other candidates. In Malawi, elections are held every 5 years and before voting, there is a campaign period during which candidates formally call for support. Technically, the campaign period is scheduled to officially run for 8 weeks prior to the polling day but it has been noticed that it tends to start earlier (Gloppen et al. 2006). During campaign, candidates have an opportunity to convince voters of their party's ideologies and at the same time discredit views promoted by their opponents (Orwenjo 2009). The campaign period provides a platform for candidates to present themselves and their political parties (Machira 2014). It is therefore a period in which aspirants campaign for them-selves as being the right candidates for the positions contested for.

The campaign period is marked by a tactical use of language which is mostly aimed to persuade voters. Abbood & Mustafa (2014) argue that the best politi-cians are the ones who are considered persuasive enough to convince people that their policies can be trusted. Therefore, politicians manipulate language and use semiotic means in a bid to effectively present their perspectives and what they stand for (Kondowe & Ngwira 2019: 500). One feature of language in political campaigns is the use of rhetoric figures such as promises, biblical refer-ences, repetition, and figurative expressions (Omozuwa & Ezejideaku 2018: 41). Proverbs are an example of figurative expressions. Mieder (2004: 1) argues that of all verbal folklore, proverbs are the most concise, and are considered to have a powerful rhetoric force in various communication modes including political speeches. Proverbs are highly rated in this context to the extent that they are seen as central element of the art of public speaking (Domowitz 1992: 82).

The proverbs under investigation in this article are formulated in Chichewa. Chichewa is a language that belongs to the Bantu language family and is clas-sified by Guthrie (1967-1971) as falling into Zone N sub-group. It is mainly spoken in Malawi where it has been recognised as the national language since 1968 (Kayambazinthu 1998, Mchombo 2017, Reily et al. 2022). Chichewa is also the *lingua franca* for the southern and central administrative regions of Malawi (Reily et al. 2022) and is the only Malawian language that is taught as a subject in schools (Chavula 2019). In other countries such as Mozambique and Zambia,

where Chichewa speakers are found, it is identified as Chinyanja, which was also the original name in Malawi before the name Chichewa was adopted in 1968 at the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) annual convention (Kishindo 2001).

1.1. Malawian politician Saulos Klaus Chilima and his use of the language

During the 2019 presidential campaign in Malawi, proverbs were a common type of linguistic expressions used by politicians to campaign. While other politicians also used proverbs in their speeches, Chilima was consistent in their usage and that is why he was chosen as the subject of this study. Chilima first came on the political scene in February of 2014 as the running mate of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) presidential candidate, Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika (APM), for the May 2014 presidential elections. The DPP won the presidency in 2014 making Chilima the vice president, and the Minister for Disaster Relief and Public Events (Kondowe & Ngwira 2019: 500, 501). But before the 2014-2019 term ended, in June 2018, Chilima announced that he was leaving the ruling party, the DPP, which had ushered him into the government in 2014 (Khamula 2018b). After leaving the ruling party in 2018, Chilima declared his intentions of running for president (Regalia 2019: 6) and as per requirements of the constitution that a person running for president should nominate a running mate who would become vice president if elected (Patel & Svasand 2013), Chilima nominated Michael Usi. Therefore, for the May 2019 elections, Chilima and Michael Usi were running as candidates of the United Transformation Movement (UTM), a party that Chilima launched in July 2018 at Masintha Ground in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi (Chiuta & Nthondo 2018). Our study examines how Chilima used proverbs in his campaign speeches. It further analyses the metaphors that these proverbs generated and it unveils how Chilima used these metaphors to campaign for himself as being the right presidential candidate to win the May 2019 elections.

2. Literature review

2.1. Proverbs in Africa

Proverbs are a manifestation of a rich cultural heritage. Proverbs are commonly used in Africa. They are transmitted orally from generation to generation. Proverbs are seen as a custodian of people's collective wisdom, philosophy of life, fears and aspirations (Orwenjo 2009: 123). Finnegan (2012: 380) states that in many African cultures, proverbs are used to express abstract ideas using culturally-

-embedded imagery. In Chichewa, a *proverb* is usually translated as *mwambi* (pl. *miyambi*) (Chakanza 2000: 10). Proverbs are collectively ascribed to ancestors seen as wise men and women of old age and when they are cited, they are usually preceded with the words such as *akuluakulu amati* 'so said the elders' (Chakanza 2000: 10). This is because they are like most proverbs in many other languages, in which their origin is not known or better yet hard to trace and that is why they are accounted to ancestors.

A proverb can be defined as "a short generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorial form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (Mieder 2004: 3). This definition was selected from among many others as being universal, since it views proverbs as metaphorical in a way. Some proverbs contain metaphors (Mieder 2004: 10). Chakanza (2000) attests to this when he states that some Chichewa proverbs develop metaphors. For Chichewa, according to Chakanza (2000: 12), there are three types of proverbs. Firstly, there are those with no metaphor where there is no attempt to conceal their meaning, e.g. *kupatsa nkuika* 'giving is investing'. There are also proverbs that have metaphors and therefore their meaning is not obvious for all, e.g. *fodya wako ndi yemwe ali pamphuno* 'your tobacco is that which is on the nose'. Its interpretation draws on the close relationship between *fodya* '(snuff) tobacco' and *mphuno* 'nose' hence the former is mapped onto things or people while the latter is mapped onto the idea of nearness/closeness. The meaning is that one needs to appreciate the things close/near to them. Finally, there are proverbs whose meaning entirely depends on some underlying story, e.g. *chisoni chinaphetsa nkhwali* 'pity killed the francolin'. Its interpretation requires an understanding of the story that led to its creation. The story is that a snake sought warmth under the wings of the francolin but when it was warm enough, it refused to leave and bit the francolin (Chakanza 2000: 230). Here, the meaning is drawn from the kindness of the francolin towards the snake and hence the proverb means that sometimes those asking for help may cause harm to those helping them in unexpected ways. A feature of proverbs in Chichewa is the ability to go beyond being merely expressive and to convey a moral lesson and this differentiates it from other figurative expressions such as idioms (Chakanza 2000: 10). Kayange (2014) describes most Chichewa proverbs as being linguistically coded such that non-literal meaning is a key component in meaning making. Therefore, it seems that the nature of proverbs is best understood through the analysis of metaphors encapsulated in them.

Proverbs and metaphors require a cultural frame when being interpreted, hence both context and cultural references must be taken into account. Proverbs are

a product of old stories, folktales and past events, and therefore need to be interpreted with such a context in mind. This is the reason why the present study examines proverbs taking into account the context in which they were created and the context in which they were reproduced – in this case the political context in which Chilima used them.

2.2. Proverbs and metaphors use in Africa and beyond

Despite acknowledging the use of proverbs in politics, in African languages there is little linguistic attention given to proverbs use in politics compared to the use of metaphors. Zając (2021) states that there are not many works devoted to African proverbs use in discourse perspective, citing only Ehineni (2016). There are, however, studies on conceptual metaphors in proverbs. For example, Kobia (2016) conducted a study on Swahili proverbs using conceptual analysis. He found that in proverbs, names of animals were used to refer to people and describe human behaviours. The study, however, specifically focused on chicken metaphors since for the Swahili people, chicken has a great role in both economic and cultural life, and hence many proverbs have metaphors construed around chicken, its behaviour and how it is used by humans (Kobia 2016: 220). In Swahili, therefore, names of animals are the most prominent words used to construe proverbs and their metaphorical meanings. The animal kingdom seems to be a rich source domain for words that construe metaphorical expressions (Ehineni 2017: 142). Kobia (2016: 218) argues that domestic animals have been used to refer to characteristics and behaviours of humans because they have always been close to humans. For example, Olateju (2005: 372) states that among the Yoruba, farmers and hunters have contact with both domestic and wild animals, and therefore once humans have predicated of the actions and habits of animals, metaphors were formed. Rodriguez (2009) identified animals that were used in metaphors to refer to English and Spanish women and mapped these onto stereotypes associated with the female gender. Estaji & Nakhavah (2011) studied Persian proverbs and found that chicken metaphors are common.

An outstanding study of the political scene in Africa in regard to proverbs use is one written by Orwenjo (2009). He studied how Kenyan politicians used proverbs to present their ideologies and rally support for themselves while discrediting their opponents. It was found that politicians used proverbs to minimise and avert conflict, but in other cases, they used proverbs to incite conflict. Interestingly, the same proverb could be exploited differently by different politicians and this attests to how powerful a rhetoric tool proverbs are.

Most studies have placed emphasis on discourse strategies in political speeches without a solid emphasis on just proverbs or metaphors. A lot of studies have been conducted in Africa and beyond examining political speeches of some of the well-known politicians and presidents, e.g. the speeches of Barack Obama (Wang 2010, Irimiea 2010, Altikriti 2016), Donald Trump (Wang & Liu 2018, Liu & Lei 2018), George Bush (Hashim & Safwat 2015), Goodluck Jonathan (Kamalu & Iniworikabo 2016, Aremu 2017), Nelson Mandela (Aldosari 2020, Dwivedi 2015, Nurs 2015) and even social activist Martin Luther King Junior (Alvarez 1988, Vail 2006, Amenorvi 2020). These have been studied using various theories – some using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, others from Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, and others yet from a Critical Metaphor Perspective, Speech Acts Theory and more.

On the African side, Michira (2014) studied Kenyan presidential discourse during campaigns. He found that people are interested not in what is said but rather how it is said, and therefore explained why riddles and metaphors are often selected as rhetorical strategies. Kamalu & Iniworikabo (2016) examined conceptual metaphors in the political speeches of three Nigerian presidents. The study found that metaphors of war, building, journey, and family were prevalent and used as a way of enhancing unity and nationhood. Further, these metaphors were used to communicate political ideologies such as the idea of dealing with poverty and corruption. Aremu (2017) also studied conceptual metaphors in Nigerian presidential speeches between 1979 and 2015, and his findings agreed with those of Kamalu & Iniworikabo (2016) on the domains chosen. Zając (2021) conducted a study that discusses the functions of Hausa proverbs in political discourse. Although not embedded in the context of campaign speeches specifically, the study offers a great insight into how Hausa proverbs are used in politics and the functions they serve.

While the majority of studies seem to focus on political speeches, there appears a gap as only a few scholars (see Orwenjo 2009) examined political speeches made in the context of the campaign or the use of proverbs and metaphors as a campaign tool. This study highlights how Chilima used proverbs which contained metaphors to communicate his political agenda in a bid to campaign for himself and discredit his opponents.

2.3. Functions of proverbs and metaphors in political discourse

Using proverbs and metaphors is a preferred linguistic strategy in political discourse. There are several reasons for this. Proverbs are preferred mode of speech in politics, firstly, because of their communal ownership which makes

them easy to accept, value and appreciate; and secondly, because they are able to simplify complicated propositions and formulate them in a short manner (Orwenjo 2009: 125). Proverbs also allow the veiling or covering of opinions and information by the speaker (Odebunmi 2008: 83). Despite the ability to speak at will, sometimes certain things are not easy to be said without expressing a personal judgment. Proverbs allow an individual to be expressive without revealing their feelings or intentions since they are propositions loaded with hidden feelings and intentions of the speaker (Lauhakangas 2007: 80). This aspect is very important especially for politicians. They are able to campaign for themselves or de-campaign their opponents without explicitly saying it. Proverbs allow political figures to ridicule their opponents. This is usually done through the metaphors that the proverbs contain and these metaphors help to evoke emotions in the masses by emphasising particular goals and unfolding absurd images in their minds which can then be used to ridicule other political opponents (Lin 2011: 471). In other words, proverbs allow politicians to present themselves in a positive light, to disgrace their opponents, to justify their own behaviour and to assert particular political issues. Therefore, politicians use proverbs and metaphors that have positive self-representation for themselves and negative representations of their political opponents (Lenard & Cosic 2017: 61, 65).

Zając (2021), working on Hausa proverbs, stated that proverbs have pragmatic functions that they serve in political discourse. They are an element of political rhetoric and can therefore be used for stylistic reasons; they are also an element of argument in political discourse as they are known to give generalising statements, advice, justifications and explanations for actions, and therefore proverbs become persuasive when placed in the right context (2021: 49, 51). Proverbs are also an element of appeal and therefore are used in political discourse to appeal to citizens. Finally, proverbs are an element of political satire and can add humour and irony (Zając 2021: 54). These functions attest to the flexibility that proverbs have.

Additionally, Otieno et al. (2017) stated that metaphors help the public make sense of different political issues; understand general attitude towards politics; reveal ideological positions, as well as fulfil persuasive and rhetorical goals. Political discourse is often not easy to follow for an ordinary person. Metaphors created by the proverbs help simplify complicated political arguments and help to make complicated issues more simplified in order to be understood by the public (Mio 1997: 113). Abstract political arguments are simply reduced to a metaphorical form which ordinary people can understand. This is a metaphorical mapping done by making these abstract new domains better understood in

familiar domains (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 159). In this way, people are able to understand political issues by relating contexts they already know with the new contexts. Proverbs, therefore, offer subtleness. For reasons such as these, proverbs and metaphors are a tool for campaign in politics.

3. Theoretical framework: Conceptual Metaphor Theory

This study is guided by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth CMT) which was developed by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). They argued that there is a relationship between metaphorical language and daily life. They further stated that daily life is interwoven with metaphorical expressions, hence understanding a metaphorical aspect of language is fundamental to understanding of a language as a whole. Metaphors are seen as being fundamental to language. Proverbs are said to be metaphorical since their meaning is in many cases not communicated literally. Proverbs are characterised by use of various figures of speech among which metaphor is the most salient one (Emrich 1972). In proverbs one phenomenon's description is used in order to explain another and this is a key concept of CMT where one particular kind of experience is mapped onto another (different) experience (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). In other words, there is mapping of one conceptual domain onto another (Muller 2005: 55). According to CMT, metaphors are ideas understood in terms of other ideas where one conceptual area interprets another area. The primary area where ideas are extracted is called the source domain which is made up of concrete experiences, while the related area where the idea is applied to is called a target domain and is abstract in nature (Kövecses 2003: 6). For example, LIFE, ARGUMENTS, LOVE and SOCIAL ARGUMENTS are in the target domain since they are abstract, while WAR, BUILDINGS, FOOD, PLANTS and JOURNEY are source domains. When we say *time is money*, we are trying to understand the notion of TIME through our familiarity with MONEY. This is therefore a metaphor in which TIME is compared to MONEY. Money is a concrete thing; it can be touched and felt while time is intangible and abstract. Therefore, TIME is the target domain while MONEY is the source domain. Our understanding of money and its use and limitations makes it possible to understand the abstract notion of TIME in similar terms.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) argued that there is a conceptual correspondence between the two domains which they called *mapping*. Through mapping, therefore, relatively abstract target domain becomes more concrete (Kövecses 2002: 6). These new mappings of the abstract onto the concrete domains lead to creation of new meanings. Therefore, concept mapping helps to understand more abstract domains in terms of concrete domains.

4. Methodology

For the current research, 17 political speeches of Chilima were recorded in audio and video formats between July 2018 and February 2019 as this was the period when Chilima was most active campaigning for himself and de-campaigning his opponents. The speeches were then transcribed. 52 proverbs were extracted from the speeches along with the contexts in which they were produced, since proverbs do not stand in isolation and should be analysed in context (Hanzen 2007: 6). In deciding which item is a proverb and which is not, the following techniques were employed: 1. The Chichewa proverb collections were consulted, namely: *Nzeru za kale: The wisdom of the old* (Kumakanga 1975), *Cinyanja cina* (Gwengwe 1964), *Wisdom of the people: 2000 Chinyanja proverbs* (Chakanza 2000), and *Miyambi ya patsokwe* (Rodgers 2016). 2. Consultations with native speakers of Chichewa were done, and 3. The author's familiarity with proverbs helped compile a list of the proverbs. Due to the number of proverbs collected, it was impossible to have all of them under discussion. Therefore, the samples selected for presentation are in our opinion the most interesting and revealing examples in some aspect. 6 of them have been discussed in this paper. Table 1 below provides a list of the sampled proverbs with their English literary translations and figurative meanings.

TABLE 1. Sampled proverbs and their meanings

Chichewa proverb	English translation	Meaning
(1) *Madzi othimitsira moto sasankha.*	To put out a fire, you do not choose the water / You do not choose the type of water to put out a fire with.	i) Unity is important for a cause. ii) As long as something gets the job done, use it.
(2) *Mukawona mbuzi iku-thawa pansipu obiriwira mudziwe kuti pali linthumbu.*	When you see a goat running away from green pastures, it means there are soldier ants.	When people seem to leave what seems to be good things, just know there is trouble.
(3) *Mukadzawona makoswe akutuluka mnyumba imodzi kupita ina mudziwe kuti ufa bwatha.*	When you see rats leaving one house for another, know that there is no more flour.	i) People leave one place for another when the goodness in the place has run out. ii) In politics, when people leave one party for another, it means usually that there are problems in the party.

Chichewa proverb	English translation	Meaning
(4) *M'mimba ndi nchipala.*	The womb is like the black-smith's forge.	i) There is no foretelling what personality a child one will give birth to will have. ii) Even things of the same origin can be different.
(5) *Mukawona mkango utanyowa sindiye kuti wasanduka mbuzi.*	When you see a lion wet, it does not mean it's trans-formed into a goat	Being quiet does not mean foolishness.
(6) *Kulumpha dzenje nku-liwonera patali.*	Leaping over a pit is seeing it from afar.	When aware of a problem, one would find a solution to avoid it

To process the data, context of each text was analysed and contextual differences were identified. Metaphors were excerpted from the proverbs and examined to determine the meaning created from cross-domain mapping, and the overall meaning that the proverb sought to convey. Finally, an examination of how various concepts of the proverb were mapped onto the appropriate events, processes or people was done to determine how meaning was generated using CMT.

5. Data analysis

Out of the 17 speeches that we sampled, we extracted 52 proverbs that Chilima used to address various issues entangling the Malawi nation, such as cases of looting, corruption, and exploitation, as they pertain to the current government[1] as a way of discrediting them. The proverbs also encapsulated Chilima's dreams and aspirations for the country. In the samples below, those various themes are discussed.

Chilima built upon the theme of unity and solidarity as one way of dealing with the problems that engulf Malawi. He presented himself as someone willing to work with others as a way of showing that he is a team player and that he has the interests of Malawians at heart. Through the use of the proverb (1) *Madzi othimitsira moto sasankha* 'You do not choose the water to put out a fire with' in Excerpt 1 below, Chilima called for people to take a unified stand to put an end

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[1] Current government here is used to refer to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)-led government since that was the government in place in 2019 (before the elections).

to the problems that the country is facing and to bring the desired change in Malawi.

Excerpt 1

Ndimafuna ndiyamikire, kuyamikira mtima osadzikonda omwe anzathu a zipani za AFORD ndi Tikonze awonetsa mdziko mwathu muno. Awa awonetsa chikondi chachikulu padziko lawo povomera kuti tigwire ntchito limodzi. Pa Chichewa pali mau, amatero kuti **madzi othimitsira moto sasankha**.

'I wanted to uphold and praise the spirit of being selfless which the political parties of AFORD [Alliance for Democracy] and Tikonze[2] have shown in our country. These have shown love for their country by accepting that we work together. In Chichewa they say: **you do not choose the water to put out a fire with**.'

(COMESA Hall, Blantyre, 6 February, 2019)

At the beginning of Excerpt 1, Chilima praised "the patriotic spirit" that the two parties AFORD (Alliance for Democracy) and Tikonze have given example of by agreeing to work with his party. He goes further and highlights that these two have shown love for their country as he says: *Awa awonetsa chikondi chachikulu pa dziko lawo povomera kuti tigwire ntchito limodzi* 'These have shown love for their country by accepting that we work together'. By referring to their agreement to work with UTM (United Transformation Movement) as "patriotism", Chilima suggests that those who have not done so are "not patriotic". He also demonstrates, through this speech, that these have shown "selfless love" and highlights that there is work to be done through the phrase: *tigwire ntchito limodzi* 'that we should do this work together'. The word *limodzi* 'together' at the end suggests a joining of forces which is what AFORD and Tikonze have done by siding with UTM. He then introduces the proverb (1) *Madzi othimitsira moto sasankha* which literally means 'one does not choose which water to use to put out a fire'.

In the proverb, we notice the use of *madzi* 'water' and *moto* 'fire' in metaphors. For thousands of years, water has been a symbol for transformation. Even in the world's major religions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism; water is a symbol of purification, cleansing, rebirth, and regeneration or renewal (Eom 2014: 31; Narimani & Sarbangholi 2016: 222). Fire, on the other hand, is seen as a destructive thing. With the various advantages that come with it, it being destructive is the major association with it. Kondowe & Ngwira (2019) also noted

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[2]   Tikonze is a shortened version of Tikonze Peoples Movement (TPM). It was an electoral alliance of 6 tiny parties that was formed ahead of the 21 May 2019 elections, and whose leader was Dr. Cassim Chilumpha (Khamula 2018b).

that Chilima uses the concept of FIRE to express the challenges that Malawi as a country is facing. Therefore, through the metaphors of FIRE and WATER, Chilima maps FIRE onto the problems the country is facing and then he maps WATER onto the patriotic politicians who are joining hands to work together to put an end to these problems. Therefore, Chilima uses the source domain of FIRE and WATER to make people understand the target political domain which discusses PROBLEMS and SOLUTIONS. Through the metaphors, Chilima also acknowledges the fact that the country is going through problems and that there is need to deal with those problems collectively.

Drawing on the notion of WATER and by mapping FIRE onto PROBLEMS THAT MALAWI IS FACING, as well as by mapping WATER onto PATRIOTIC POLITICIANS, Chilima repurposes the proverb (1) *Madzi othimitsira moto sasankha* 'you do not choose which water to put out a fire with' to communicate to his listeners the need to work together to bring change in the country. Drawing on the symbolism of water and fire, Chilima communicates that the problems that Malawi is facing can be put to an end and that transformation is possible. He, therefore, calls upon "patriotic Malawians" to join hands to purify, cleanse and renew Malawi so that "the lost glory" is brought back.

By the use of proverbs, Chilima also attacks his opposition. He does this by describing his party, the UTM, as a better party compared to the other parties, especially the ruling party DPP which he considers to be a party of wrongdoers. In the next excerpt, Chilima campaigns for himself and his party while de-campaigning the other parties. Consider Excerpt 2 below.

Excerpt 2

Ndiye mukawona akutijoyina, mudziwa kuti kuli bwino ndi kuno, uko kwayipa. Mwambi wake nawu, **mukawona mbuzi ikuthawa pa nsipu obiliwira, mudziwe kuti pali linthumbu**.

'So, when you see them joining us, know that it is better here and it is not good over there. Here is the proverb: **when you see a goat running away from green pastures, know that there are soldier ants [there]**.'

(Njamba Freedom Park, Blantyre, 29 July, 2018)

Chilima started with comparing his party to other parties in Malawi and making reference to the idea that people are joining his party because it is better compared to the other parties. This has been explained by the passage: *ndiye mukawona akutijoyina, mudziwa kuti kuli bwino ndi kuno, uko kwayipa* 'when you see them joining us, know that it is better here and not over there'. By saying this, Chilima

has presented the political context which is based on the premise that if people are joining his party they do so because it is "good" compared to the other parties. Chilima, then, used this political context to introduce the proverb (2) *Mukawona mbuzi ikuthawa pansipu obiliwira, mudziwe kuti pali linthumbu* 'When you see a goat running away from green pastures, know that there are soldier ants'.

In this political context, we are able to interpret that Chilima is not speaking about actual "goats", "ants" and "green pasture". The concept of *mbuzi* (GOAT) has been mapped onto PEOPLE. *Nsipu wobiriwira* 'green pasture' is a set phrase that symbolically refers to goodness or good things. While *linthumbu* 'soldier ants' are very well known in the Malawian culture as being destructive and harmful as observed in everyday life. In essence, through the use of these imagery, Chilima maps GOATS onto PEOPLE/MALAWIANS, GREEN PASTURE to the BENEFITS THEY ENJOY AS MEMBERS OF A POLITICAL PARTY, and ANTS as TROUBLES or PROBLEMS. We could also argue that by choosing to represent the GOOD within the metaphor by *nsipu wobiriwira* 'green pasture' and the BAD with *linthumbu* 'soldier ants', Chilima seems to hinge on the idea of size to show that no matter the good, small unseen problems could still make people leave.

Referring to *linthumbu* 'soldier ants', *mbuzi* 'goat' and *nsipu wobiriwira* 'green pasture' in the political context, Chilima metaphorically communicates that people are leaving seemingly good parties including the DPP, and joining UTM because there are problems in those parties which are forcing them to leave. Thus, he used the proverb to tell Malawians that his party is "good" and the other parties are not. This is not uncommon in politics to have politicians positively campaign for themselves and de-campaign their opponents (Lenard & Cosic 2017: 61). In this case, Chilima elevates his party as being good in a bid to win voters. Chilima, by the use of the proverb quoted above, would also be seen to be explaining why he left the DPP in 2018 without giving the actual reasons why he did so (Khamula 2018a). After winning on the DPP ticket, Chilima still left the party and ended up forming his own. We therefore see that Chilima uses the proverb with the pragmatic function of explaining his actions though not in explicit terms. Therefore, not only does he use proverbs as a way of campaigning for himself, he also alludes to the DPP having problems which led him to leave.

This proverb also has a similar meaning to another one that he used: (3) *Mukaona makoswe akutuluka nyumba imodzi kupita ina, mudziwe kuti ufa bwatha* which translates to 'When you see rats leaving one house for another, know that there is no more flour'. Observe in Excerpt 3 below.

Excerpt 3

*Tonsefe ndi udindo wathu kutengapo mbali osaonerera iyayi. Ena atsogola kale[…] a Banda akubwera, a Saonda ndi awa milungu iwiri yapita atijoina. Bwerani nonse bwerani tikhale pamodzi tigwire ntchito. Titukule dzikoli chifukwa amanena kuti, **mukadzaona makoswe akutuluka mnyumba imodzi, kupita ina, mudziwe kuti ufa bwatha**.*

'It is our duty each one of us to take part and not be onlookers. Others have already started […] Banda is coming, Saonda[3] joined two weeks ago. Come let us be together and work together. We should develop this country because they say: **when you see rats leaving one house for another, know that there is no more flour.**'

<div align="right">(Mchinji, 15 September 2018)</div>

In this proverb, we find the metaphors construed by the use of words such as *makoswe* 'rats', *ufa* 'flour', and *nyumba* 'house'. In Malawi, rats are more associated with being found in homes than mice which are found in the bush. One characteristic feature of rats, however, is that they feed on flour – mostly maize flour. Now, the understanding is that when rats are leaving a house which is a symbol for comfort and safety, they are doing so because flour which is their food is no longer available. Therefore, the HOUSE is standing for COMFORT while the FLOUR is standing for GOOD THINGS in the metaphor. RATS are mapped onto PEOPLE. While using this proverb, just like the previous proverb, Chilima mapped animals, here: RATS onto PEOPLE, HOUSE to POLITICAL PARTIES, and FLOUR to the GOOD that is found in these parties. Through this proverb, Chilima was communicating that people are leaving other political parties because they no longer see the good that such parties hold. So, just like the previous proverb (2) Chilima explains why people seem to be leaving the other parties and joining his party. In this case, we see the ANIMALS being mapped onto PEOPLE, FOOD being mapped onto GOODNESS, and BUILDINGS being mapped onto POLITICAL PARTIES in a way to make people understand why certain actions are being done. Not only does he present the other political parties as being outdated and useless – since there is no longer "good" there; he campaigns for himself by implying that his party holds the "good" since people are joining it.

The use of animals to figuratively refer to people was seen in Swahili proverbs, Hausa proverbs, and Kenyan proverbs (Kobia 2016, Baldi 2015, Michira 2014) and we see that it is also a common occurrence in Chilima's proverbs to use

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[3]   Chilima was sampling some Malawian politicians who had left their parties and joined UTM. Lucius Banda left UDF (United Democratic Front), while George Saonda left DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) for UTM (United Transformation Movement) before the 21 May 2019 elections (Ngwira 2018).

animals to refer to people. In one case, he used *mbuzi* 'goat', in another – *makoswe* 'rats'. We also notice that the animals that are evoked are those that are usually in close proximity with humans. So, we could agree with Kobia (2016: 220) and Ehineni (2017: 142) who stated that names of animals are a great source domain of words to construe metaphors. Several arguments could be made for this usage of animals but Finnegan (2012: 386, 388) found that in metaphorical comparison, proverbs about animals or birds in particular are common. Further, she argues that sometimes it is not always about proximity of the animals to the humans, but rather that some communities are rural, and hence have animals constantly impinge on humans (Finnegan 2012: 393).

Chilima also attacked individual people through proverbs. After all, the idea is not only to discredit political parties that are opponents, but also other political candidates who are running for office. (4) *M'mimba ndi nchipala* 'The womb is like a blacksmith's forge' in Excerpt 4 below pictures the late president Bingu wa Mutharika (though not explicitly mentioned) as a better leader than the then current president of Malawi, Arthur Peter Mutharika, brother to the late Bingu. By doing this, Chilima de-campaigned Mutharika.

Excerpt 4

*Ndigwirizane ndi a national chair kuti malemu Professor Bingu wa Mutharika, mzimu wawo uwuse mumtendere, nawonso adachitapo mbali yawo yayikulu kwabasi. Zikakhala zimene zikukanikazi, ayi **m'mimba ndi nchipala**.*

'Let me agree with the National Chairperson that the late Prof. Bingu wa Mutharika, may his soul rest in peace, did the best he could. But for these which are failing, **the womb is like a blacksmith's forge**.'

(Kasungu, 26 August, 2018)

Chilima begins by agreeing with the National Chairperson who stated that the late Bingu wa Mutharika did his best in as far as developing Malawi is concerned. Then we see him using the same to contrast with the failures of the then present government led by Bingu's brother Peter Mutharika through the expression: *zikakhala zikukanikazi* 'as for these which are failing'. This expression presupposes Arthur Peter Mutharika was doing his best in terms of development but is failing. Chilima here highlights that there are significant differences between Bingu's leadership and his brother's leadership which was full of failures. He then introduces the proverb (4) *M'mimba ndi nchipala* 'the womb is like a blacksmith's forge' as a way of relating this with the political context. We see the concepts of *m'mimba* 'womb' and *nchipala* 'blacksmith's forge'. The idea of WOMB has therefore been mapped onto that of BLACKSMITH'S FORGE. From a cultural

perspective, the proverb's principal meaning is that children from the same family can have different personalities, although they came out from the same womb. Just like what happens in a blacksmith's forge in which several identical elements are melted and come out shaped differently, in a similar manner, children can be born in the same family but be different. We, therefore, see that Chilima has repurposed the proverb. The idea of people born in the same family has been maintained while character has been replaced with leadership skills.

Maintaining the cultural context is therefore effective in providing the information that is needed in the political context: Bingu wa Mutharika and Arthur Peter Mutharika are from the same family. The political context which in this case is the fact that both Bingu and Arthur Peter appear on the political scene in Malawi, is helpful in refocusing the meaning from CHARACTER to LEADERSHIP. Through the proverb, Chilima manages to argue that children from the same family can have different leadership styles. By highlighting that Bingu did his best and comparing his leadership to that of his brother, Chilima points out Arthur Peter Mutharika's negative attribute as a leader who lacks leadership skills. Chilima, therefore, manages to present Arthur Peter Mutharika as a "not-better-leader" and hence de-campaigns him. He instructs his audience not to vote for Arthur Peter Mutharika despite him being a brother to a successful leader – the late Bingu wa Mutharika. Therefore, he contrasts the leadership of Arthur Peter Mutharika with that of his late brother Bingu wa Mutharika. The metaphor was used in this case to de-campaign the then president through reference to and comparison with his brother.

In addition, Chilima also uses the proverbs and the metaphors they generate to appeal emotionally to Malawians (see Zając 2019: 51-52) for the same phenomena in Hausa). He does so by speaking good of the voters in a bid to sway them to his side. Consider Excerpt 5 below.

Excerpt 5

*Ndiye tikudziwitseni kuti anthu a ku Malawi kuno ndi anthu ozindikira ndipo mudzawadziwa kuti ndiozindikira pa 21 May 2019. Kuti mumve bwino amene mukuchita zimenezi, amene mukuona ngati mtundu wa a Malawi ndiopusa, mwambi wake nawu, **mukaona mkango utanyowa, sindiye kuti wasanduka mbuzi**. Ndiye a Malawi akafatsa chonchi, musayese ngati sakuona. Pa 21 May 2019 mikango ili payi idzaluma kudutsa mbava zimene zikutibera mafuta athu.*

'So, we want to tell you that Malawians are knowledgeable people and you will see this on 21 May 2019. For you to fully understand, you who think Malawians are foolish, here is the proverb: **When you see a lion wet, it does not mean it's transformed into a goat**. So,

Malawians being this quiet does not mean that they cannot see. Come May 2019, these lions will bite all thieves who are stealing our oil.'

<div align="right">(Zomba, 8 September 2018)</div>

In Excerpt 5, Chilima starts by making a factual yet subjective statement arguing that Malawians are learned, well educated, smart people. He goes on to praise them by saying that his opponents (which we identify through usage of the personal pronoun *mu* 'you') will know how clever and learnt Malawians are when 21 May 2019 will come (this is the date when the 2019 elections were scheduled to take place). In order to seal in the idea that Malawians are clever and in speaking to those who think Malawians are foolish, he then introduced the proverb (5) *Mukaona mkango utanyowa, sikuti wasanduka mbuzi* which would literally translate to 'When you see a lion wet, it does not mean it's transformed into a goat', i.e. 'a lion remains a lion despite the situation'. In this proverb, Chilima uses *mkango* 'lion' and *mbuzi* 'goat' to form a metaphor. A lion is considered to be majestic, strong, just, mighty, and even full of valour, while a goat from a cultural perspective is considered to be weak and foolish, and further in the Malawian context, a goat is foolish and when one calls you a 'goat', it is never a compliment. So, when Chilima maps a LION onto the CHARACTER OF MALAWIANS, he does this in a bid to praise Malawians by associating them with the good attributes that a lion represents. Chilima, therefore, appeals to the electorate when he says they are not goats. In essence he is saying they are not foolish, because they are strong, they will make the right decision and "bite" the thieves stealing the oil. Chilima makes reference to an incident in Malawi where it was confirmed that K1.6 billion worth of oil had been stolen from ESCOM's (Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi) Lilongwe and Blantyre offices and it was rumoured that some DPP (Democratic Progress Party) officials were involved in this looting (see Khamula 2018c). Therefore, pragmatically, Chilima by addressing this issue in his speech presents the then government as that of "thieves" and that way he discredits them. Through these two metaphors, Chilima appeals to and praises Malawians and hopes this will result into them voting for him.

Finally, Chilima also uses proverbs as a way of making promises for the future, once elected into power. In this way, he uses the proverb in Excerpt 6 below.

Excerpt 6

*Ndiye ntchito 1 miliyoni ndizotheka tidzakwanitsa ndithu, masomphenya amenewo tili nawo ndife. Amanena kuti **kudumpha dzenje nkulionera patali**. Ife taliona kuti ilo ndiye tikufuna tikalilumphe tilembe anthu 1 miliyoni, anthu akhale ndi kuthekera.*

'As for [the promise of] 1 million jobs, we will manage, because we are the ones with the vision. They say, **to jump a pit is to see it from afar**. We have seen it and we want to jump it by employing 1 million people to be empowered.'

(Nchalo Trading Centre, 28 February 2019)

In Excerpt 6, Chilima makes promises of the future by alluding to the 1 million job positions that he claimed he would create once voted into power. He then uses the proverb as a confirmation and assurance of why he knows he will be able to achieve that. Using the proverb (6) *Kudumpha dzenje nkulionera patali* 'to jump a pit, you must see it from a far', he uses *dzenje* 'pit' figuratively. This metaphor may refer to problems and convey the idea of being prepared for things before they happen. During the campaign period, candidates make all sorts of promises and this was one of the many that Chilima made. Through this proverb and the metaphor it generates, Chilima assures the voters that he will deliver as he is prepared for it in advance. In this case, the problem that he knows is that there are a lot of unemployed people, and therefore since the problem is anticipated, he will be able to solve it. He refers to the source domain of PIT and maps it onto the target domain of PROBLEMS to communicate the idea of planning. In this way, Chilima uses the proverb and the metaphor it generates to communicate to Malawians that should they vote for him, he will provide 1 million jobs.

6. Conclusion

In relation to meaning creation and the political agenda advanced by the proverbs, the study reveals that Chilima used most of his proverbs to criticise his political opponents – example (2) and (3) – and to associate his political opponents with the problems and evils experienced in Malawi so that people would see these politicians in negative light and himself in positive light – example (4). In his creation of new meaning, Chilima mostly maintained the cultural context in which the proverbs were coined, thereby providing the lens through which his audience saw the acts that Chilima was discussing, but he added a political context that re-focused the meaning of the proverb in a way that it addressed a political issue. In most cases Chilima mapped several concepts in the proverbs onto the events, processes, people or even elements in the physical world or in the political context in which the proverbs were put to bring meaning.

In this mapping, like the CMT suggests, people could easily refer to the source context. For example, animals, family, and buildings were used as source domains. They were among the most preferred domains for mapping onto the target domain. This is because these domains are easy to relate to. For example, from

the animal domain, the animals Chilima used (goats, rats, and lions) are those that people live with or that they are familiar to people due to their presence in orature and cultural significance, and therefore it is easy to draw metaphors from observation of their behaviour. Through this mapping, the proverbs gained new meanings which enabled Chilima to communicate his political agenda to Malawians. Additionally, what made relating to these source domains easier was the introduction of the political context which in our case was the speech before and after the use of the proverb. This speech helped to put the proverbs in context – from a political angle and this made the relation more clearly visible. Based on the examples of the metaphorical proverbs discussed in this article, the following main functions of proverbs that Chilima used to campaign can be identified: 1. to attack and discredit his opponents and their parties –examples (2)-(4), 2. to praise and emotionally appeal to Malawians – examples (1) and (5), 3. to make promises of the future plans for the country once chosen as the president – example (6), and 4. to caution his opponents – example (5) again.

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