A review

Of the article: Analysis of Kenya's newspaper headlines: The handshake and shifting political alliances
by authors: Mugambi C. Ngumo, Lillian K. Omoke

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Assessment of selected essential parameters of the article:

1.	Does the title of the article correspond to its content?	**corresponds** / does not correspond
2.	Compliance of article format with formal requirements (abstract, keywords, length, references).	**complies** / does not comply
3.	Keyword selection	**corresponds** / does not correspond
4.	Does the abstract correspond to the article content?	**corresponds** / does not correspond
5.	Relevance	**high** / sufficient / insufficient
6.	Originality	high / **sufficient** / insufficient
7.	Logic and correlation of sections	high / **sufficient** / insufficient
8.	Findings and conclusions	**sufficient** / insufficient
9.	Quality of expression (language, style)	high / **sufficient** / insufficient
10.	Quantity of language examples or evidentiary support	high / sufficient / **insufficient**
11.	Theoretical relevance (if applicable)	high / **sufficient** / insufficient
12.	Correspondence of the References to the content	**corresponds** / does not correspond

Comments and recommendations of the reviewer:

First, it is worth noting that this is a very promising paper, and I would be glad to review a revised version prior to publication. The author has addressed a significant, un(der)researched topic, particularly as it concerns the interaction of so many sociologically-grounded factors (political party, gender, ethnicity, etc.) in Kenya. However, there are a very areas where some substantial revision would greatly improve this paper. In short, situated language usage needs to be provided to support the analysis, and much of the sociopolitical history can be trimmed. This is a sociologically informed study, *but* a **linguistic** study nonetheless.

       The very first line of the introduction is vague and a non-starter, i.e. it neither hooks the readers' attention nor says anything interesting or profound about the paper. The rest of the

introduction is very good, though it should be divided into two separate paragraphs once the discussion of Kenya begins halfway through the paragraph at the top of page two.

It is really interesting to frame the discussion within a pre- and post-handshake context, but this should be clarified slightly, as it is not entirely clear to the reader whether this refers to a real temporal distinction OR if this simply refers to the political climate, i.e. one of cordiality and collaboration vs. one of individualism and tense relations.

The third and fourth paragraphs of section 2.1 are simply too long. This is generally due to the inclusion of far too much political background that isn't really necessary. Although it is important for the reader to understand that context, s/he does not need to be an expert on it in order to understand the conclusions you're going to make. Focus more energy and effort on the methodology, data, and analysis, but call attention to the political context.

It seems odd for the author to state that "Wodak further correctly observes [...]," given that Wodak is a world-renowned expert on CDA whose work doesn't need affirmation. We see the same situation just one paragraph later: "Van Dijk accurately holds that headlines [...]" Similarly, there is a (hyper)reliance here upon Wodak, Fairclough, and van Dijk, but there has been far more work done in CDA beyond these three, despite their somewhat statuesque role in CDA studies.

The section on ideology is great: clear, concise, and diversified w/r/t literature review.

Figure 1 is unnecessary. This could be more concisely explained in a single sentence or two. However, it is also worth acknowledging the obvious criticism: Such an iterative process leaves the researcher open to the accusation that s/he has strategically chosen items for the corpus during the second round to prove what s/he has started to identify in the first round. To this end, when the author says that s/he "purposively sampled from the two major dailies," it is possible that s/he may run the risk of confirmation bias.

Section 5.1.2.1 is really brilliantly presented, but I wonder if it would be better to provide more prosaic bzw. situated/contextualized examples of e.g. the war-based metaphors. Instead of simply trusting the author, the reader can draw his or her own conclusions after seeing the data.

Section 5.1.2.2 is really flat. Van Leeuwen is a great scholar to consider w/r/t the ways in which social actors are represented, but his research should have been introduced in the literature review, and we should see greater emphasis on features beyond simply exclusion. For instance, van Leeuwen only presents exclusion in opposition to inclusion, but only the former is actually addressed here. That says nothing of all the other roles he defines. Although you do make a passing mention to passivization, there are similarly no examples given.

Much of section 5.1.2.3 could reasonably be included in the conclusion. There are some references to historical precedent/events and the jambo la kabila pale Kenya, *but* none of this really fits into its own section. Similarly, the absence of women should be addressed, if at all, in Section 5.1.2.2 with the discussion of exclusion.

Recommendation:
for unconditional publication / for publication with discussion notes /
for publication after revision / for unconditional refusal of publication.

Signature of the reviewer

Date
13 March 2021

Editor's Note:
The authors amended the manuscript taking into account the reviewer's recommendations.