

**DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES IN KENYA'S 2008 POST-ELECTION  
CONSULTATION DISCOURSE**

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## ABSTRACT

This study addresses itself to the post-election consultation discourse of the two former Principals, the former President Mwai Kibaki and the Prime Minister Raila Odinga in the Kenyan Coalition Government between 2008 and 2012. The study is multi-disciplinary since it borrows from social theory, political science and linguistics. Preliminary investigation of the discursive relationship between the aforementioned principals reveals considerable intellectual interest in the complex linguistic strategies they use in their attempt to negotiate the issue of Portfolio Balance. This study focuses on how the discursive practices were employed to resolve the Portfolio stalemate and in the process define and construct the two principals in terms of their relationship, leadership, and ideological perspectives. The data for the study consisted of four texts purposively sampled from the instance of the Formation of the Grand Coalition Government. The texts were accessed through electronic data searches from the official websites of the former President and the former Prime Minister, and the same authenticated from the office of the Government Spokesman. The study was qualitative and data was analysed using the Critical Discourse Analysis theoretical framework with the major CDA theorists as Norman Fairclough and Reisigl and Wodak. The findings of the study revealed that both the principals used rational arguments justified through reference to the National Accord and the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. In addition, they used language which encoded political tolerance, optimism and reassurance for continued political support notwithstanding political competition. Consequently, the discursive strategies revealed that both the principals used mitigated language in their negotiation. In addition, there was no vilification of others to cause harm and this showed a complementary relationship. Further, the ideologies constructed the two principals each as negotiating for self and party respectively whereas there was non-representation of the Nation, that is, their discourse focused a lot on the issues of self and the party and not the Nation. The findings of the study would make a contribution to linguistics and political scientists in helping them understand the role of language as a possible means of solving coalition related conflicts and in turn demonstrate to them the powerful role language could play in party politics and coalition. Finally, the findings would inform policy studies such as those concerned with enactment of laws that provide the framework within which politicians and leaders use language, particularly, the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and various statutory provisions such as the Political Parties Act (2011).