

SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF UNCOMPROMISING SPEECHES OF DEDAN KIMATHI IN THE TRIAL OF DEDAN KIMATHI

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Abstract

This study is basically a semantic analysis of Uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. No study has been carried out on uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi in The Trial of Dedan Kimathi thus the need for this study. Uncompromising speeches are speeches of someone who has not reached an agreement with anybody on anything. The study is significance because it establishes the worth of uncompromising speeches in the struggle for freedom. It is limited by lack of materials as the topic, to the best of the researcher's knowledge has not been investigated anywhere. Qualitative and discursive approach was adopted as method of investigation. The result of the analysis shows that uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi are prevalent in the play. Some of his responses to Henderson in the court, some of his conversations with Indian, some of his talks with Banker, some of his dialogues with Business Executive, some of his talks with Politician, some of his dialogues with Priest, some of his talks with Waitina; some of his talks with the British soldiers, some of his dialogues with Gatotia and some of his conversations with KAR Soldier are uncompromising speeches. The study impacts on the reading public the ability to grasp any written text or the author's point of view better.

Keywords: Analysis, uncompromising speech, semantics, struggle, political independence.

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Introduction

Speech is what someone says to a person or group of persons. Through one's speech listener(s) will be able to deduce what is on one's mind. There are people whose speeches indicate that they have not reached agreement with anybody on anything. Bolt (1978) states one of such speeches made by More when he refuses to come to consensus with King Henry III on his plan to divorce Queen Catherine and marry Ann: "Your Grace, I am not fit to meddle in this matter – to me it seems a matter for the Holy see". Bayne-Jardine (1970) asserts that Hitler Shouts: "stay and fight! I am not leaving the Volga," when his generals seek for permission to withdraw the German Forces from Stalingrand and regroup them before winter. Again, he asserts that Chamberlin say:

I am myself a man of peace to the depths of my soul. Armed conflict between nations is a nightmare to me ; but if I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force I should feel that it must be resisted when his efforts to avoid war with Germany fails. He further states that Hitler screams out: "I'll cook them a stew that they 'll choke on" when Britain and France anger him.

In The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, Kimathi says, "Kimathi Wa Wachiuri will never betray the people's liberation struggle. Never!" when Henderson asks him to lay down his arms and live in peace.

Objectives

The study aims to analyse the Semantic import of uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. The study strives to achieve the following objective:

- i. To identify and examine the uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi in the play

Method of Investigation

Qualitative and discursive approach was adopted as method of investigation .The approach is deemed appropriate because it permits explanation of the use of certain linguistic features in a given context.

Conceptual Clarification

In this section, important concepts are clarified to give orientation to the reader for better understanding. The concepts include speech: Speech is what someone says to a person or a group of persons. Crystal (2008), sees speech as “MEDIUM of transmission for LANGUAGE – the spoken medium.” Through the spoken medium human beings are able to communicate with one another. Ezenwa – Ohaeto (2006), asserts that “speeches are one of the ways through which communication is made possible in the contemporary society.” The commands: Shut the door; get out of here, and sit down, can be carried out if the speaker relates the orders to the listeners through speech.

Sulaiman (2013), sees speech as “one of the three fundamental communication modes.” Speech is one of the channels through which we communicate to others what we have on our minds.

Compromise: Reach a consensus in a way that the people involved offer what was needed so as to bring an end to dispute.

Uncompromising: Not reaching consensus.

Uncompromising speeches: These are speeches made by someone who has not reached agreement with anybody on anything. In *A Man for all Seasons*, More makes speech that indicates that he has not reached consensus with King Henry III to divorce Queen Catherine. “That you should put away Queen Catherine ... I think ... I cannot come with your Grace ...”

Political independence: This is the state of affair in which a country is not controlled by any other country. Nigeria, Ghana, England and Egypt are political independence countries.

Theme

The central theme in *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* is the theme of struggle for political independence. The people of Kenya are tortured and oppressed by the British colonial masters for many years; they fight the British now so as to gain political independence.

Analysis

The text was read and subjected to semantic analysis in order to explain the meanings of uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi in it. The identified uncompromising speeches were discussed or elucidated with excerpts or quotations from the text to support claims.

Uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi

“By what right dare you, a colonial judge, sit in judgment over me?”

The colonized believe that colonial judges do not have right to judge them; any attempt to do so by any colonial judge is often resisted. Kimathi resents an attempt by the imperialist judge to judge him.

“To a criminal judge in a criminal court, set up by criminal law ...”

Some people believe that the imperialists judges are criminals who employ law that suit them to Judge the colonized in illegal courts. Kimathi regards the colonial judge as a criminal who makes use of criminal law enacted by the British colonial masters to judge Kenyans in an unlawful court.

“I will not plead to a law in which we had no part in making.”

Certain people do not meddle in something which they have not played a role in its development. Kimathi thinks it is wrong to plead to a law in which they have not played part in its enactment.

“... One law ... protects the man ... of wealth, the foreign exploiter.”

Some Kenyans hold the view that the British colonial masters enact laws to protect themselves and their wealth. Kimathi is one of those who believes that the imperialists enact law that protects them and their wealth.

“There is no order and law without liberty.”

There is liberty where law and order exist. Kimathi holds the view that there is no country in the world where law and order exist without liberty.

“... I have only sought to protect the struggle from betrayal...”

A patriotic leader often tries the means at his disposal to protect struggle from being betrayed. kimathi tries as much as possible to protect the struggle from being betrayed by unpatriotic Kenyans.

“... Who are you to grant or deny life?”

Some people believe that it is only God that has the power to grant or deny life, not human beings. Kimathi shares similar view point with the people, that is why he asks Henderson:

“...who are you to grant or deny life?”.

“... How many nations have you wiped out, and later said: well, according to this treaty and that treaty, they had ceded their land and lives.”

Many People in Kenya are of the view that the colonial masters destroy many countries in the world and compel their leaders to surrender their lives and land to them. Kimathi is one of those who holds the view that the imperialists annihilate many countries in the world and force their leaders to sign treaties that relinquish their lives and lands to them.

“Shaw Henderson! ... killer of Africa ...”

Kimathi regards the imperialists as the executioners of Africa because they do not value the lives of Africans.

“... Traitors! ... These are your people”

Those who back the British colonial masters are regarded as defectors.

Kimathi considers the blacks that support the imperialists as betrayers because they help the imperialists to exploit their fellow blacks.

“... must you kill people, wipe out nations for medals?”

Certain soldiers execute people; destroy nations in order to gain medal reward.

Kimathi believes that some soldiers kill, and annihilate many countries so as to be rewarded with medals.

“... Do you take me for a fool?”

Imperialists often regard the colonized as fools; Kimathi thinks Henderson considers him a fool that is why he asks him (Henderson) to tell him(Kimathi) whether he regards him a fool.

“ ... I threw you off and you went sniffing and crying to your mother.”

Freedom fighters often wrestle with the imperialists. Kimathi wrestles with Henderson and throws him off.

“ ... We have fought your wars for you ... This time we shall bleed for our soil, for our freedom...”

Kenya people fight for British in many countries; they wish to fight the British colonial masters now in order to gain political independence.

“ ... I will keep on dreaming till my visions come true and our people are free ...”

One has to pursue one's goals until one achieves them. Kimathi promises to continue to struggle for freedom until kenyans are free from colonial domination.

“Kimathi Wa Wachiuri will never betray the people's liberation struggle. Never!”

A true leader does not betray his people in one way or the other no matter the case may be. Kimathi is a true leader that will never betray the independence struggle of his people.

“My life is our people struggling”

An ideal leader does give his life for his people’s cause. Kimathi gives his life for his people’s struggle.

“Kimathi will never sell Kenya to the British ...”

A patriotic leader will never sell his country to the imperialists no matter severe the problem may be. Kimathi vows not to sell his country to the British colonial masters.

“They told of hungry people, beggars on pavements ... wives selling themselves for a rupee ...”

Some man does not want a person whose country people still suffer to meddle in the affair of his country. Kimathi does not want Indian whose country people beg for alms and people’s wives indulge in prostitution to meddle in Kenya’s affair.

“ ... let me tell the fainthearted that this our struggle will continue until we seize back the right and ability to make ourselves new men and women in our own land.”

Strong-minded people often encourage weak-minded ones to continue to struggle until they achieve their set goals. Kimathi encourages the feeble minded not to relent until they live a new life in their land.

“We shall drive them out of our land – my brothers. ...”

People that are not needed in a place are often dislodged from the place. The British colonial masters are not needed in Kenya and the people are determined to dislodge them.

“ ... Buy back our land from those who stole it from us?”

Owners of land may not wish to buy back their land from those who take it from them by force. Kimathi and his people are not ready to buy back their land from the imperialists who take it from them by force.

“Would you ... call the war for national a regional movement? ...”

War fought to liberate the whole nation cannot be said to be war fought to free just a province. Kimathi tells the politician that the people of Kenya fight to liberate the whole country, not only the central province.

“How long will you continue being their messenger?”

Supporters of the colonial masters are often regarded as their messengers. Kimathi considers the Priest as the imperialists’ messenger because he is loyal to them.

“ ... when will you throw off your ill-fitting borrowed gown and create something you can truly call your own? ...”

Some people frown at those who borrow foreign culture and ignore their own. Kimathi is one of those who frown at this attitude; that is why he asks the Priest to tell him the time he will do away with foreign culture and embrace his own.

“I feared the self-acclaimed messengers of God might come to our fighters and say: surrender...”

The so-called messengers of God often advise freedom fighters to lay down their arms. Kimathi expresses his fear over the attitude of the so-called messengers of God who may come to the fighters and counsel them to give in.

“Can it be wrong ... in the eyes of your God for people to fight against exploitation?...”

Some people think it is not wrong to fight against exploitation. Kimathi holds similar view with those people, but wishes to know the view point of the Priest, that is the reason he asks him whether it is wrong to fight against exploitation in the eyes of his God.

“... Listen and listen well. I will fight to the bitter end ...”

Some people do not fear death, Kimathi is one of such people; he vows to fight the British colonial masters to the end no matter what the consequence will be.

“Spare your threats for some other cowards. You are wasting your breath.”

A brave leader does not fear death threat.

Kimathi is not afraid of death threat made against him by Henderson, that is why he tells him (Henderson) to threaten cowards not him (Kimathi).

“What medal are you working for, traitors! ...”

Some soldiers treat freedom fighters rudely in order to gain medal reward. Kimathi asks Waitina to tell him what medal he works to obtain.

“... traitors to your people ... Sellers of your own people ...”

Some black security operatives do betray their kinsmen to the imperialists. Kimathi regards Gatotia and soldiers as traitors because they betray their kindred to the British colonial masters.

“Four hundred years the oppressor has exploited and tortured our people”

The imperialists exploited and tortured people in many countries for many years. They exploited and tortured the people of Kenya for four hundred years.

“Our people will never surrender”

Determined fighters do not surrender. Kimathi's people are determined fighters that will never surrender to the British colonial masters.

“We must continue to make more guns ...”

If fighters do not like to run short of guns, they have to manufacture more of them. Kimathi advises his people to manufacture more rifles so that they should not run short of them.

“There are ...; those who went to negotiate with the enemy despite the ban on talks at this stage of our struggle.”

In any struggle, there are people who act contrary to the wish of the people despite warning not to do so. Some of Kimathi’s people want to come to terms with the foes in spite of warning that they should not do so.

“Lawyers, Liars ..”

Some people regard lawyers as liars; Kimathi is one of such people, he considers lawyers liars.

“... Murderers of truth ...”

People who do not tell the truth are murderers of truth. Kimathi considers the imperialists as murderers of truth because they do not tell the people of Kenya the truth.

“We are fighting against British colonialism and imperialist robber of our land, our factories our wealth....”

It is natural for people to fight against foreign domination, robbery of land, factories and wealth. Kenya people fight against the British colonial masters mainly because they rob Kenyans of their land, factories and wealth.

“ ... you fight against us?

A true mercenary!”

A black soldier who fights against the black man is regarded as a mercenary. Kimathi considers KAR soldier as a mercenary because he fights his fellow blacks.

“You help them murder,
You help them massacre,
You help them plunder ...”

Kimathi draws the attention of KAR soldier to the assistance he often gives to the imperialists to murder, massacre the blacks and steal their land.

“In the court of imperialism!

There has never and will never be
Justice for the people ...”

Many people believe that justice will not be done to the colonized in the court of imperialists. Kimathi holds similar view with these people by stating that justice has never and will not be done to him or his people in the court of the imperialists.

“... For every traitor there are thousand patriots.”

Whenever there is a betrayer, there are many loyalists. Kimathi draws the attention of the judge to the fact that whenever there is a defector there are thousand loyalists.

“But our people will never surrender

Internal and external foes
will be demolished”

Determined fighters do not surrender until they defeat the enemy. Kimathi makes the judge to be aware that his people will never give in until they deal a blow to the internal and external enemies.

“So, go!

Organize in the mountains ...”

A good war tactician often tells his people the tactics to employ in fighting the enemy. Kimathi being a good war tactician tells his people the tactics to use in fighting the enemy.

“... Denounce those who weaken our struggle by creating ethnic divisions ...”

Those who weaken the spirit of struggle by creating divisions among people are usually criticized. Kimathi urges his people to criticize those who weaken the struggle by creating divisions among people.

“That I will never do.”

A true fighter does not reveal the secret of his fellow fighter even if he is caught. Kimathi refuses to tell Waitina where Mathenge, Matenjagwo and others can be found.

The Role of Semantics in Communication.

A character can communicate idea to another character if the idea he wishes to communicate is meaningful. If the idea is not invested with meaning, his interlocutor will not be able to grasp what he intends to relate to him.

Lyons(1977) observes that “it is obvious or has appeared so to many semanticists, that there is an intrinsic connection between meaning and communication, such that it is impossible to account

for the former except in terms of later.” Lyons’ observation shows that meaning cannot be conveyed without being communicated. Dong (2000) explains that meaning is the core of the whole communication system; once the meaning is missing there is likelihood that there is going to be breakdown in communication. This point of view indicates that meaning is the core of the whole communication system; if it is lacking, there is the likelihood that communication will fail.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that uncompromising speeches of Dedan Kimathi are prevalent in the play. The uncompromising speeches are subjected to semantic analysis in order to explain their meanings. Some of Kimathi’s responses to Henderson in court; some of his talks with politician; some of his dialogues with Priest; some of his conversations with the Business Executives, some of his dialogues with Banker; some of his talks with Waitina; some of his talks with Gatotia, some of his conversations with Indian, some of his dialogues with British soldiers and some of his talks with KAR soldier are uncompromising speeches. Uncompromising speeches are often made by someone that has not reached an agreement with anybody on anything. Kimathi has not reached an agreement with the colonial masters on matters pertain to granting Kenya political independence, that is why his speeches are full of uncompromising expressions. Freedom fighters often employ uncompromising speeches to express their unyielding stands on issues. Kimathi’s talks with Henderson and the imperialist loyalists in the play clearly indicate his unyielding stand against imperialist domination of Kenya.

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