

Mobilising Social Actors for Action in the Campaign Speech of President Paul Biya to the Population of the Far-North Region 29 September 2018

Joefrey Ngha Fuh Nji, PhD

The University of Maroua

Abstract :-This paper seeks to investigate how Paul Biya uses language to galvanise social actors in his campaign speech to the population of the Far-North Region, to mobilise them for action during the Presidential elections on the 7th of October 2018. In this speech he makes use of praise and promise listing, nomination strategies and anthroponym to ignite hope in the people so that they can give him the necessary support on the election day. He sounds more inclusive in his discourse as realised by the use of the pronouns 'You', 'We' and 'Us'. Meanwhile to a larger extent it is the personal pronoun 'I', and 'Me' that predominates. The discourses were mostly focused on development and revamping the area in the economic domain. The results have equally proven that Paul Biya in this campaign speech like in his end of year speeches and February 10th address to the youth is usually replete of praise and promise listing which leaves much to be desired.

Key words: Mobilisation, Social Actors, Campaign Speech, Population, Far-North Region.

I. INTRODUCTION

The focal point of this paper is Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), mainly opined and postulated by Ruth Wodak and research Associates (2001, 2006 & 2009) currently also prominently represented in, in ter alia, Lancaster-UK, Bern-Switzerland or Poznań-Poland. This approach was derived from linguistics, having its roots in, for example, linguistic pragmatics, sociolinguistics or linguistic discourse analysis (Reisigl, 2007:6, cited in Krzyzanowski 2010:72). They base their model on sociolinguistics in the Bernsteinian tradition, and on ideas of the Frankfurt school, especially those of Jürgen Habermas (Wodak, 2006:14), on Michael Foucault's theory and on Wittgenstein language games (Krzyzanowski, 2010:72). DHA, tries to integrate all background information (historical background but also the original historical sources) in the interpretation of all layers of a text since research shows the impact of the context on the function, structure and content of discourse (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2001). The focus of DHA is on discursive and linguistic elements, social practices and their in-depth examination, not on language per se (Wodak, 2006:14-16, Wodak et al. 1999, cited in Krzyzanowski 2010:71-72).

The study in which and for which this approach was developed attempted to trace in detail the constitution of an anti-Semitic stereotyped image as it emerged in public

discourse in the 1986 Austrian Presidential Campaign of Kurt Waldheim' (Wodak, 2006:15) but scholars working within DHA investigate various subjects. Wodak herself investigated sexism, racism, dealing with 'problematic' history, institutional communication, national and supranational discourse about Europe and, moreover, speech barriers (in schools or hospitals and courts). The main aim of her research is its practical application, such as guidelines for more effective doctor-patient communication and non-discriminatory language. Another application is to provide experts opinions during trials on racist language used by the media (Wodak, 2006:14-16, Krzyzanowski, 2010:74-75). 'The discourse-historical approach is designed to enable the analysis of indirect prejudiced utterances, as well as to identify and expose the codes and allusions contained in prejudiced discourse' (Wodak, 2006:15). Various studies on racism and prejudice contributed to the development of general and theoretical reflection on racist discourse (its content and form) about ethnic minorities or immigrants (Wodak, 2006:15).

As it has been stated in the description of DHA, this approach stresses the importance of context in the analysis of discourse. Van Dijk sees context 'as a broader abstract concept which grasps the dynamic relation between physical 'setting' and discursively-funded (social) actions undertaken therein by different individual and collective actors' (Van Dijk, 1977 cited in Krzyzanowski, 2010:78). Examining context demands recognizing its constructive nature since contexts are not just 'given'. They are, to a large extent, dependant on subjective factors and dynamic processes of discursive negotiations. It is important to understand the role of context as actual elements of communication, not only the physical and stable settings of communication. Therefore one has to recognize the role of actors in co-constructing contexts (Krzyzanowski, 2010:78). Van Dijk elucidates it as follows:

Contexts are thus not some kind of objective condition or direct cause, but rather (inter)subjective constructs designed and ongoingly updated in interaction by participants as members of groups and communities. If contexts were objective social conditions and constraints, all people in the same social situation would speak in the same way (2008 :10 cited in Krzyzanowski 2010:78).

DHA recognizes various levels of context: the immediate, language or text-internal co-text and co-discourse, the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses and the broad historical and socio-political context, which discursive practices are embedded in and related to. All of these must be related in the analysis of discourse. In the same vein, DHA aims at investigating not only the context of discourse production, but also the reception of it (Wodak, 2001:67, cited in Krzyzanowski, 2010:79).

II. IDEOLOGY

Interestingly departing for a moment from the ‘technical’ aspects of discourse, the notion of ideology should be briefly described. Thompson notices that the concept of ideology emerged in France in the eighteenth century and but is still in use. In his understanding, ‘ideology refers to social forms and processes within which, and by means of which, symbolic forms circulate in the social world’ (Thompson, 1990, cited in Wodak, 2002:10). Also, Reisigl and Wodak see ideology as an (often) one-sided world view which is shared by a social group and is (re)constructed in discourse. Therefore, ideology is linked to social and discursive actions (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009:88, cited in Krzyzanowski, 2010:73). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) recognizes ideology as a crucial aspect of ‘establishing and maintaining unequal power relations’ (Wodak, 2002:10).

Therefore if ideology is considered to be a tool for creating and sustaining power relations, the question is what power actually is? ‘Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures’ (Wodak, 2002:11). In addition, Van Dijk (2001) defines (social) power as *control* which means that a powerful person or group is able to control (to some extent) the minds and acts of other persons or groups. This power is attained through, so-called *power base*, inter alia, access to knowledge, money, fame, status, public discourse and ‘culture’. Nevertheless, it needs to be stressed that power is very rarely absolute, as groups may only to some extent control other groups or the control is possible in specific situations. Furthermore, dominated groups apart from accepting and legitimating power may also resist it (Van Dijk, 2001:355). The relationship between language and power is very close because language may express power and it can also challenge it or alter its distribution. Language constitutes a fine tool for exhibiting power and therefore, CDA aims at examining how linguistic structures are used to exert power, for example through grammatical forms or the choice of genres (Wodak, 2002:11; Krzyzanowski, 2010:73). ‘This attempt to uncover the discursive means of mental control and social influence implies a critical and oppositional stance against *the powerful* and *the elites*, and especially those who abuse their power’ (Van Dijk, 1995:18). Scientific studies in CDA also attempt to formulate a perspective of solidarity with the dominated group, for instance by creating strategies for

the development of counter-power and counter-ideologies (Van Dijk, 1995:18).

III. LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

The analysis in line with DHA operates at two levels, the thematic and in-depth analysis. The latter follows, inter alia, analytical categories described by Reisigl and Wodak (2001) *Strategies of Self and Other Presentation* this will be applied in the analysis of the campaign speech of President Paul Biya under study.

3.1 Thematic Analysis

The first step to be taken in the analysis of discourse is a thematic analysis, sometimes referred to as the entry-level analysis. The *raison d’être* for this preliminary analysis is to determine the contents of the analysed material and to attribute it to particular genres of discourses. The analytical category in this step of analysis is a *discourse topic*, which was reintroduced to CDA by Van Dijk (2009):

In theoretical terms such topics can be described as semantic macro-propositions, that is, as propositions that are derived from sequences of propositions in the text: for instance, by macro-rules such as selection, abstraction, and other operations which reduce complex information. The hierarchical set of topics or macro-propositions forms the thematic or topical structure of the text. Language users employ such macro-structures in order to understand globally and to summarise a text (Van Dijk, 1991:113, cited in Krzyzanowski, 2010:81).

In general terms, discourse topics maybe perceived as the summary and gist of a text, they also establish the most important information (Krzyzanowski, 2010:81).

In the analysis, discourse topics are defined in an inductive way. After several scrupulous readings, the macro-topic is found (an overall topic) and then, the topics (or also sub-topics) of parts of a text are decoded in top-down way. Afterwards, these discourse topics are ordered and list of key themes and sub-themes is prepared (Krzyzanowski, 2010:81).

3.2 In-depth Analysis

In the meantime, in-depth analysis in contrast to thematic analysis, examines ‘deeper’ located discourse structures. As Krzyzanowski (2010) stipulates, it ‘is primarily argumentation oriented and aims at revealing how different elements of discourse are endowed with pragmatic meaning and thus placed within different arguments according to the more-or-less strategic aims set up by the speaker(s)/author(s) of texts’ (Krzyzanowski, 2010:83). During the in-depth step of analysis, an analyst establishes the discursive strategies, linguistic means and the specific linguistic realisations (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001:44).

3.2.1 Strategies of Self and Other Presentation

There are several strategies which deserve special attention when analysing a specific discourse and related texts. When

doing this, we orientate ourselves to five salient questions. As postulated described by Reisigl and Wodak (2001, 2006 & 2009).

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
4. From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly ; are they intensified or mitigated?

According to these five questions, we elaborate five types of discursive strategies. By 'strategy', we generally mean a more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal. Reisigl and Wodak (2009:94) distinguish five different strategies, namely: nomination/referential strategy; predicational strategy; argumentation strategy; perspectivisation, framing or discourse representation strategy and intensification/mitigation strategy. The aforementioned strategies are traced by means of responding to the following generalised research questions:

- Nomination/referential strategies (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009:93) (how are persons named and referred to linguistically? (ibid:94)
- Predicational strategies (ibid:93) (what traits, characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to them?) (ibid:94)
- Argumentation strategies (ibid:93) (by means of what arguments and argumentation schemes do specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimate the exclusion, discrimination, suppression and exploitation of others? (ibid:94)
- Perspectivisation, framing or discourse representation strategies (ibid:93) (from what perspective or point of view are these naming, attributions and arguments expressed?(ibid:94)
- Intensification and mitigation strategies (ibid:93) (are the respective discrimination utterances articulated overtly, are they even intensified or are they mitigated?(ibid:94)

The first strategy above, that is the referential/nomination strategy, aims at constructing and representing social actors. For example 'the Government Delegate to the Maroua City Council', 'the Chairperson of the Far-North Regional Campaign Coordination'. The simplest elementary discriminatory form is a demeaning or derogatory name, such as the use of single anthroponymic terms, e.g. 'nigger' 'Boko Haram', 'secessionist'. The referential strategy is closely

interrelated with the second of the aforementioned strategies, namely predicational strategy. The predication is understood as the process of ascribing qualities through which people (but also objects, animals, social phenomena etc) are characterised by means of e.g. quality or time and space. Predication may be realised by forms of reference, attributes, collocations, comparisons, allusions and many others. Predictions maybe derogatory or appreciative, specific or evasive, explicit or implicit. This strategy may be realised by attaching stereotypical and negative traits to minority members in order to achieve negative other-presentation and contrasting them with a positive self-image.

3.3 Outline of the Campaign Speech

1. Expression of thanks to the Government Delegate, the Chairperson of the Far-North Regional Campaign Coordinator, and the population in general (paragraphs 1-4) 'permit me, first of all, to thank the Government Delegate to the Maroua City Council for his warm words of welcome...'
2. His choice of Maroua (paragraph 5) Biya is direct using the following phrase: 'My choice to come to Maroua on campaign is an expression of the high esteem I have for your region...'
3. Acknowledging the insecurity that has reigned (paragraphs 7-9) 'Over the past few years, you have been at the forefront. And you have stood your ground. Faced with a barbaric invader that destroyed...'
4. Promises (paragraphs 10-18) 'In the area of energy, the old hydroelectric dams will be upgraded. Others will be commissioned...'
5. Restoring peace in the North-West and South-West Regions (paragraph 23) 'However, we still need to restore peace in our North-West and South-West Regions, ravaged by acts of violence perpetrated by secessionists...'
6. Making use of the 'great opportunities' (paragraph 24) 'We will then continue to forge ahead by seizing all the 'great opportunities' open to us'
7. A call for action come October 7 (paragraph 26) 'Come 7 October, I know I can count on you to make the choice that will keep you on the side of 'the force of experience.'

3.4 Campaign Discourses in President Paul Biya's speech

3.4.1 Discourses on Rural Electrification

Excerpt 1. In the area of energy, the old hydroelectric dams will be upgraded. Others will be commissioned. Solar facilities, which are easier to build, will supplement them. Therefore, you will have the energy that is indispensable for rural electrification and for running your industries.

In this excerpt Biya is preparing the minds of the people of the Far-North to hope for better energy exploits that will enable them live lives that are commensurate to the potentials

that they possess in terms of the natural resources that they have in their area. For this to happen they must renew their confidence in him as he has the force that is required to push things to happen for their good. This is a campaign strategy to lure the people to vote for him.

3.4.2 Discourses on the Exploitation of Minerals to boost the Economy of the Area

Example 2. There is every indication that your subsoil abounds in minerals and oil. It will be necessary to give fresh impetus to prospecting and, subsequently, drilling.

Biya is straight to point postulating that the exploitation of minerals and oil will go a long way to foster the economy of the area that has been battered by Boko Haram insurgency for a long time if he is given another chance to wield power then the people of the Grand North would be very happy once more because he-Biya has gathered enough experience during the past years and knows exactly what to do to help the population overcome the economic hardship that has been imposed on them by the barbaric invader.

3.4.3 Discourses on Revamping the Agricultural Sector

Example 3. Some of your land is fertile and suitable for large-scale farming of industrial crops such as, depending on the area, rice and cotton whose acreages need to be extended. We will thus reduce food shortages and expand our textile industry to its rightful scale, with predictable employment spinoffs. I should also mention your vast expanses of land suitable for livestock, milk and meat production, as well as cereal cultivation. These various items bear great development potential.

Biya continues in his characteristic manner to lure the people by giving them the impression that he has a good knowledge of what the area is made up of in terms of cash crops and farming. So therefore he stands a better chance in giving to the population what they need to foster agric-production which will eventually lead to employment of the unemployed in the area especially the youth. Any farmer listening to this is elated to believe and give his/her support to the President come what may so that they can benefit from this Presidential largess provided he wins the election. This is only a campaign strategy used by Biya to cajole the people and make them feel that he really cares about their welfare. If not he would not wait for election time to come enlist them.

3.4.4 Discourses on Revamping the Tourism Sector

Example 4. Once peace is consolidated everywhere, tourism in your region will also need to be given a second chance. Our parks and reserves have not lost an iota of their attractiveness. All of this will require building infrastructure-roads, bridges, warehouses, coldstores, etc. which we sometimes lack.

Biya moves on to name specific areas of interest to the people, areas that are very sensitive to their needs and daily life. Tourism is one of the most income generating sectors in Maroua. By mentioning this in his speech galvanises the

population to hope and depend only on him for any solution because he has demonstrated that he knows what the people need and has good knowledge on the area.

IV. ANALYSIS

4.1 Ideological Analysis

Biya's speech is indeed a solicitation for support, composed of three segments: 'Thank you', 'What we intend to do for you', and 'What you have to do for me'.

'Thank you' segment is revealed in appreciation tokens, where the speaker expresses thanks to individuals and groups for their warm words of welcome, for implicitly preparing the enabling environment for this great occasion and for turning out en mass to receive him and his retinue or entourage.

In the opening lines of the speech, this is what he says: (1) 'Permit me, first of all to thank the Government Delegate to the Maroua City Council for his warm words of welcome...My thanks also go to the Chairperson of the Far-North Regional Campaign Coordination for the kind words he has just spoken about me and my wife...' this in appreciation to individuals. He now turns to the population in the 3rd and 4th paragraphs to say: (2) 'Thank you for turning out so massively to welcome me here in Maroua. You have braved the Sun, the heat and distance to meet me. I heartily thank you. Thank you for all your tokens of friendship and fraternal attachment which are a clear reflection of your region's beautiful traditions of hospitality and loyalty.'

Biya's form of address can be perceived as more inclusive, including all nationalities and ethnicities and most importantly militants of other political leanings, applying a more citizen-centred attitude. Also, this style of Biya can be explained on the lines of that citizenry is the cornerstone of the Republic of Cameroon, and that the whole system is based on a grass root diplomacy, rather than an exclusive elitist system.

The second segment of the speech which is based on what he and his government intend to do for the people of the Far-North Region is captured in the following statements:

(3) In the area of energy, the old hydroelectric dams will be upgraded...Solar facilities, which are easier to build, will supplement them...(4) Some of your land is fertile and suitable for large-scale farming of industrial crops such as, depending on the area, rice and cotton whose acreages need to be extended...(5) We will reduce food shortages and expand our textile industry to its rightful scale, with predictable employment spinoffs. (6) Once peace is consolidated everywhere, tourism in your region will also need to be given a second chance. Our parks and reserves have not lost an iota of their attractiveness. (7) All of this will require building infrastructure-roads, bridges, warehouses, coldstores, etc. which we sometimes lack.'

Biya in the above segment is making a list of promises which he intends to fulfill if he is given another chance by the population of the Far-North. This is a campaign strategy to

cajole and win over the hearts and interest of the populace. By outlining these promises to the people of this region he is presenting himself as one who has a perfect understanding of the people's needs and is therefore the only one who can provide the necessary solutions, he is the kind of 'Messiah' they have been waiting for.

Finally in the 3rd segment of the speech which has to do with what Biya expects from the population, this is what he opines: (8) the coming years will be crucial for Cameroon and particularly for **your** region. **We** will then continue to forge ahead by seizing all the 'great opportunities' open to **us**. To this end, **we** will need to remain united, demonstrate solidarity, juggle firmness and dialogue, and remain faithful to **our** democratic ideal. (9) Under such circumstances, I think nothing will be able to distract **our** great and beautiful Nation from its path to prosperity and social progress. (10) Come 7 October, I know I can count on **you** to make the choice that will keep **you** on the side of 'the force of experience'. The use of the pronouns 'your,' 'we', 'us,' 'our,' and 'you'. Is an indication that the unity of the people is indispensable in the face of national peril to ensure a landslide victory for the President especially from the Far-North region.

V. REPRESENTING SOCIAL ACTORS AND ACTIONS

5.1 Biya and his wife have been foregrounded

Example 1 'permit me...my wife and me.' Focus on the campaign is on him and his wife whatever he says and does in Maroua, the epicentre is him and no one else. His entourage has been mitigated as nothing is mentioned of them in the speech from beginning to end. The noun phrase ' permit me' appears twice and the noun 'me' referring to Biya appears four times show casing the fact that everything is centred around him, it is either him to win the elections in the Far-North or no one else. The first person singular pronoun 'I' appears (17) times, to project self and to showcase the fact that his will must prevail come what may.

Example 2 The Authorities in Place

Those who are going to help him in this process are: 'The Governor of the Far-North Region, the Government Delegate to the Maroua City Council, the Chairperson of the Far-North Regional Campaign Coordinator, Traditional and Religious Authorities.' Biya makes use of anthroponym to refer to these actors by referring to them using their titles thereby harnessing their importance and the power they wield in the region. This is equally a nomination strategy which he uses to construct these social actors who have a lot to do during the upcoming elections in the region on which Biya counts so much for a landslide victory.

Example 3. The third category of actors is the population

This is vividly captured in the following possessive phrases that appear four times in the speech.

(1) ' Dear Compatriots of the Far-North,...(2) My dear compatriots of the Far-North, thank you for turning out so

massively to welcome me in Maroua. (3) My dear compatriots of the Far-North, Now that the threat is receding, we will be facing an exalting task in no distant future.(4) My dear compatriots of the Far-North, the coming years will be crucial for Cameroon and particularly for your region.' The possessive phrases are an indication that Biya and the people of the Far-North have something special that they share in common. There is a close tie that is binding them together. The people occupy a special place in Biya's heart and so it will be unheard of to hear that the umbilical cord has been broken by whoever to derail the population from following and sustaining his interest in the region. 'My dear compatriots of the Far-North,' is Biya's form of address that can be perceived as more inclusive and more citizen-centred attitude. He equally makes use of the predicational strategy by qualifying the population as being brave, resistant and steadfast to overcome the odds of life as in '**You have braved** the sun, the heat and distance to meet me... Over the past few years, you have been at the forefront. And **you have stoo your ground**...Faced with a barbaric invader that destroyed, burnt and killed, **you resisted** as best you could.' This praise is to hail the people and encourage them to keep the flame burning and support him the more.

VI. CONCLUSION AND CLOSING REMARKS

This paper analysed the campaign speech of Paul Biya at the Far-North Region enshrined in the mobilisation of social actors for positive action which had as objective to galvanise the people and lure them to give him their unflinching support in the forth coming Presidential election-he achieved this through the use of promise listing and praise. The social actors were represented positively. The areas of interest in the speech focused on revamping and developing the following domains: rural electrification, exploitation of minerals to boost the economy of the area, revamping the agric-sector and tourism. That notwithstanding, political discourse in Cameroon and the representation of social actors is a mere game that carries major stakes, those of up holding power at all cost. The campaign speech is full of promises stated by the protagonist in view to be realised if he is voted into office. The strategy of promise listing and praise is characteristic of Paul Biya's political discourse be it at the end of each year, 10th of February or during campaigns.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Joefrey Ngha Nji, is Lecturer of English in the University of Maroua, Cameroon at the Higher Teacher Training College, in the Department of English Language and Literatures of English Expression. He is specialized in Applied Linguistics (Discourse Analysis). He is particularly interested in the functional use of language.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1]. Austin, John Langshaw. (1962). *How to Do Things With Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- [2]. Fairclough, Norman and Ruth Wodak. (1997). 'Critical Discourse Analysis'. in: Van Dijk, Teun (ed.) *Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, London: Sage.
- [3]. Krzyzanowski, Michal. (2010). *The Discursive Construction of European Identities*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- [4]. Krzyzanowski, Michal and Ruth Wodak. (2009). *The Politics of Exclusion-Debating Migration in Austria*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- [5]. Reisigl, Martin and Ruth Wodak. (2009). 'The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)', in: R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage.
- [6]. Van Dijk, Teun. 1997. *Text and Context. Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse*. London: Longman.
- [7]. Reisigl, Martin. (2007). 'Der Wiener Ansatz der Kritischen Diskursanalyse'. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 8,2 (<http://www.qualitative-research.net>).
- [8]. Reisigl, Martin and Ruth Wodak. (2001). *Discourse and Discrimination*. London: Sage.
- [9]. Van Dijk, Teun. (2001). 'Critical Discourse Analysis', in: Tannen, D., D. Schiffrin and H. Hamilton (eds.), *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- [10]. Van Dijk, Teun (2009). *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Sociocognitive Approach (SCA)*, in: R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd edition). London: Sage.
- [11]. Wodak Ruth. (2006). 'Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis', in: Verschueren, Jef, Jan-Ola Östman and Eline Versluys (eds.) *Handbook of Pragmatics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [12]. Wodak, R. (2001). 'The Discourse Historical Approach', in: Wodak, R. and M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage.
- [13]. Thompson, J.B. (1990). *Ideology and Modern Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [14]. Wodak, R. (2009). 'The Discourse Historical Approach (DHA)', in: R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. (2nd edition) London: Sage.
- [15]. Van Dijk, Teun. (2009). *Society and Discourse: How context controls text and talk*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.