

УДК 81-114.2

THE COMMUNICATIVE TACTIC OF ACCUSATION IN CAMEROONIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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The aim of the research is to determine the use of the tactic of accusation in Cameroonian political discourse. The tactic of accusation is most often implemented using tropes such as epithets, metaphors, and antitheses. Almost every accusation uses words from the semantic field «unacceptable» to denote the irrationality and unproductiveness of the current government and the beliefs of its opponents. The article is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the tactic of accusation in political discourse in the linguistic sphere. The systematization and structuring of provisions covering the evolution of the term «political discourse» and related concepts is carried out in modern directions and in European and African schools of political linguistics. Features of the development of the term «political discourse» are associated with the history and socio-political characteristics of states, as well as a wide range of sociopolitical factors. The paper identifies and clarifies the importance of an accusative tactic in political discourse, its genre and identity, and a valuable public way for delivering a political message. It is proved that in order to understand the explicit and implicit targeting of political texts and systematize linguistic manipulative mechanisms, a comprehensive analysis of speech tactic is required, which, in turn, consists of specific speech techniques. Based on the interpretation of discourse as a linguocultural, intercultural and axiological phenomenon, the author's understanding of political discourse is formulated.

Key words: political discourse, tactic of accusation, opponent, power, personal interest, electoral hold up.

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of a politician is to conquer and retain power. Political discourse reflects this goal. This is what determines the specific features of the communicative influence within the political discourse. This influence is the main linguistic function of political discourse, which is realized through communicative strategies. Today this concept does not have a generally accepted interpretation in linguistics.

O. S. Issers considers the communicative strategy as «a complex of speech actions aimed at achieving communicative goals», which includes «planning the process of speech communication depending on the specific conditions of communication, and the personality of the communicants, as well as the implementation of this plan» [13, p. 54]. The strategy is also interpreted as «a cognitive communication plan, through which the optimal solution of the speaker's communication tasks is controlled, considering the lack of information about the opponent's actions» [13, p. 100]. Political discourse can be simply defined as the discourse of politicians, i.e. their texts or talks and their professional activities. The topics usually come from public events that require collective decision-making, policies regulations, or legislation [16, p. 4]. In this definition of political discourse, Van Dijk includes the elaboration of communicative strategies, tactics and techniques used in political discourse. This includes strategies such as strategies of confusion, agitation, propaganda, and intimidation. These strategies on the other hand involves tactics such as

the tactic of discreditation, false promises, lies and accusations. We have seen that political discourse analysis first of all should be able to define its proper object of study: what exactly is a «political discourse»? The easiest and not misguided answer is that political discourse is identified by its actors or authors, viz., politicians. Indeed, the vast bulk of studies of political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels. Some of the studies of politicians take a discourse analytical approach (Carbó T., Dillon G. L., Harris S., Holly W., Maynard S. K.) to give a better understanding of a political discourse [8, 9, 11, 12, 14].

PRESENTATION OF KEY MATERIAL

The emergence of the term «political discourse» is due to the significance of the research aimed at reflecting the specifics of the cognitive approach to the study of text corpora, and is directly related to the development of the term «discourse» (French *discours*, English *discourse*, from Latin *diskursus* «movement, circulation; conversation»), which was introduced into the scientific terminological apparatus by American scientist Z. Harris in 1952 and is used in the phrase «discourse analysis» [11].

Political discourse refers to frames of meaning and their ordering and disordering propensities. It attributes special importance to symbolic capital as a form of meaning in contrast to economic capital, the two constituting quite different forms of power. Symbolic capital is a result if events individually narrated, compiled, interpreted, and made into collective master narratives by agents who, by a process of retrievals and projections, orality and writing, narratives and texts, are able to read events as social texts. This, the narrative construction of reality, relies heavily on events as signifiers, particularly as metaphors and metonymies. The main emphasis is on the power of interpretation using myths about the past as evidence. Experience becomes an imaginary real which is taken as a higher and convincing form of truth. Events, considered in terms of difficulties, predicaments, and circumstances, define millennial and transcending goals, resolving such difficulties and predicaments by means of a logic of overcoming. If political discourse takes the form of a mytho-logic it, when formed into discourse communities, constitutes a form of collective power of its own. It distinguishes insiders from outsiders, establishes boundaries, terrains, and affiliations at the level of the state or some lesser jurisdiction. It is in the context of discourse communities that, in these terms, thought engenders political action while political action engenders thought. So, considered, political discourse is based on how events are interpreted. It contrasts with other forms of analysis in terms of the rationality it employs. Conceptually it owes much to semiotics, linguistics, and philosophical concepts as well as literary, sociological, and political science analysis – hence the intellectual pedigree provided. Some uses and applications of political discourse theory are indicated in terms of relevant events and circumstances as well as suggested trends and tendencies for the future [4].

The studies of N.D. Arutyunova emphasize the social nature of discourse and its features and characteristics. According to the scientist, discourse can be defined as «a coherent text in conjunction with extralinguistic – pragmatic, sociocultural, psychological and other factors; text taken in the event aspect» [1, p. 136–137]. By defining discourse as

«communication, which is submerged in life», the linguist identifies the main characteristic that distinguishes the concepts of discourse and text. So, the author believes that the term discourse, unlike the term text, does not apply to the ancients and other texts whose links with living life are not directly restored [1, p. 136–137].

Jean-Jacque Rosseau (French philosopher who published an essay about the social contract between governments and people in 1762 and the political discourse in France) wrote about the basic principle of his «social contract» which is that laws are binding only when they are supported by the will of the people. This concept positions the will of the people above the authority of government, which was in a stark contradiction to governance in France at that time [15]. In Rosseau's time, the French monarch was thought to be divinely bestowed, and, of course, they could hand down laws without regard for the will of the people. Rather, they often backed laws that served an elite few. Because of this, Rosseau's radical treatise became a founding text for The French Revolution and the political reformation to come.

A political text published in 1792, which is one of the first feminist political texts, by Wollstonecraft simply argues that women are deserving of the same fundamental rights as men. This text reflects the importance of political discourse in the 1790s. She specifically argues that women have a right to be educated, and makes the case by reasoning that as the moral compasses for society, and the people responsible for raising future generations, it was logical for women to be properly educated. The context of her writing about freedom and rights is significant, because this text was published during the French Revolution. Because of the sentiment of «liberté, égalité, fraternité» that was in the air during the time of the revolution, this message of women's equality was generally well-received in its time. Unfortunately, it was not acted on politically, but the text became a foundational work for later suffragette and feminist movements to come.

As discourse from social media is discussed on the news, social media has been successfully used to organize political protests and build political communities. It is frequently used by whistle-blowers – WikiLeaks, for example – which attracts the attention of media outlets. R. Aslam further notes that social media has crossover appeal [7]. News that is overlooked by traditional media outlets is instantly delivered to the masses. Social networks often disseminate trending topics before they can be addressed on the news. Other examples include the Egyptian revolution and Occupy Wall Street, both of which began in 2011 [10]. In these instances, protesters used networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, in conjunction with their mobile phones to organize their communities [3].

Freedom House (<https://freedomhouse.org>) is an independent watchdog organization that was established in 1941 to promote democracy around the world. One of its most recent projects involved an examination of the effect that social media has on politics. The resulting report «Freedom on the Net 2017: Manipulating Social Media to Undermine Democracy» concludes that while Internet usage in the United States is relatively open, online political discourse is characterized by «a proliferation of fabricated news articles, divisive partisan vitriol, and aggressive harassment of many journalists» [10].

According to L.A. Nefedova, «a proven means of drawing attention to a message is rhetorical questions that exist in the political sphere, regardless of linguocultural specifics» [5, p.111]. In this context, the return of rhetoric to the nucleus of political debate leads to a

more contentious question: are we witnessing, together with processes of dealignment and polarisation, a complete transformation of rhetorical culture as a consequence of the recent upheavals in worldwide politics? While this is a question that can only be answered in the long-term, a clearer understanding of the unfolding scenario must take into account the media by which most politics managed to capture the political imaginary. Speeches full of rhetoric reflect the influence of political discourse on the listeners.

After the 2017 US presidential election, claims were made that Russia interfered with the election by posting propaganda and fake news online to manipulate the perspectives of unsuspecting voters. As investigations were launched into the alleged interference, evidence that social media had been used to manipulate political outcomes in other countries started to surface. Freedom House's report suggests that misinformation introduced on social media has influenced elections in no less than 18 countries by impairing citizens' ability to make informed, fact-based decisions.

The dissemination of propaganda is by no means confined to foreign meddling. Freedom House (2017) notes that of the 3.4 billion people worldwide who have access to the Internet, 42% live «in countries where the government employs armies of 'opinion shapers' to spread government views and counter critics on social media» [10]. Political opponents seeking to win elections or sway public opinion likewise often seek opportunities to manipulate social media content. After surveying 65 countries as part of its research, Freedom House found that social media manipulation tactics include paid pro-government commentators, pro-government media and propaganda, fake news about elections, and hijacked social media accounts. While information from paid pro-government commentators stems from credible reports, the commentators often do not disclose that they are posting information on behalf of the government. Fake news, on the other hand, merely mimics credible reports and is false. Pro-government media and propaganda may be orchestrated by the government or affiliated individuals/organizations. A government may bribe online commentators, take over their social media accounts, and distribute political editorials through their profiles.

Speech itself is initially «politically complete», since it is a sign of solidarity with other members of society who use the same language. It is not a coincidence that language as an intermediate link between thought and action has always been the most important factor in establishing political pressure, and economic and political discrimination [2, p. 32].

R. Wodak argues that political language is somewhere between two poles: a special language and the jargon of a certain group. Therefore, the political language should be understandable and focused on a certain group [17, p. 42].

Many linguists believe that any text affects the consciousness of the addressee from a semiotic point of view. As rightly noted by P.B. Parshin, for a political text, speech influence is the main goal of communication, towards the achievement of which the choice of linguistic means is guided [6, p. 403].

Most politicians use the tactic of accusation, included in the agonial strategy of political discourse during their speeches. It is also one of the tactics mostly used in Cameroonian political discourse during presidential elections. The main intention of this tactic is to discredit the political opponent. Using this tactic, politicians pursue the task to weaken the opponent with accusations, which sometimes include false allegations.

In Cameroon most politicians often use the tactic of accusation in order to place the blame on their opponent, and to attribute to an opponent the perpetration of an unforgivable and unpardonable act. At the same time, politicians in their speeches try to influence the listeners in such a way that he or she adopts a similar negative attitude toward a particular political opponent.

In this article, we will focus on the use of this tactic of accusation by a particular Cameroonian political leader Professor Maurice Kamto, leader of the party of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, a political party of the opposition in Cameroon. We will examine some of his political speeches and identify the various ways in which he uses the tactic of accusation against his political opponents.

On May 19th 2020 in Yaounde (the capital of the Republic of Cameroon), Maurice Kamto who had lost the presidential elections of 2018 against President Paul Biya, makes a discourse addressed to the nation. In this extract of his discourse, we will observe how the tactic of accusation is being used in order to discredit President Paul Biya as well as his government.

My dear compatriots,

It is in sadness and desolation that our country is marking its National Day, this 20th May 2020, riddled as it is with violent convulsions.

The current government continues to impose on the brave populations of the North-West and South-West this violent, barbaric and useless civil war, which they single-handedly started following the protest movements of November 2016, and whose tragic consequences are deplorable in many respects.

Evidence of the damage is overwhelming: the multiplication of massacres of innocent civilian populations, one of the most recent and emblematic of which was perpetrated in Ngarbuh on 14th February by the army, the collection of civilian and military victims of this war; the tragedy of thousands of our fellow refugees in Nigeria and the plight of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people;

The burning of homes, the destruction of infrastructure and the socio-economic disaster generated by this war.

And all this happens under the indifferent watch of an arrogant and contemptuous power. I would like to take this opportunity to once again honor the memory of all the victims of this atrocious war, and to reiterate my sincere condolences to their families, as well as my best wishes for speedy recovery to the injured. It is high time that lasting solutions were brought to this unsustainable situation.

In this extract of his political discourse, we can observe three accusations directed towards President Paul Biya, government, and the army. Firstly, Maurice Kamto accuses the government «***to impose on the brave populations of the North-West and South-West this violent, barbaric and useless civil war***» of killing the population in these two regions of Cameroon. Secondly, the army «***of massacres of innocent civilian populations***» and, thirdly, he accuses indirectly President Paul Biya of «***an arrogant and contemptuous power***».

In the second part of this incredible discourse of 19th May 2020 Maurice Kamto focalizes on the appearance of various public infrastructures in the country and he says «***Nothing, otherwise a few grotesque monuments, uninspired, hastily made and often with***

unbearable ugliness». With these words, Maurice Kamto indirectly accuses the present government and the head of the state of not willing to develop the public infrastructures of the country and he therefore denigrates the various monuments that reflect the sufferings of the people.

This example of a discourse shows the attitude of Maurice Kamto to the actual political situation in Cameroon. He begins his speech with the address «My dear compatriots» – a combination of words that expresses his affection and devotion to his compatriots and therefore exposing the lack of interest of his opponents to the people. Then he continues with a series of interrogative sentences «We must ask ourselves: what is happening to Cameroon?», «What makes us Cameroonians that we succumb so fast to the propaganda, and we accept everything, including the unacceptable?». This is to let the people (listeners) know that he is aware of the various problems and difficulties which they face in their daily routines. He tells people to open their eyes and understand that they are being fooled by those who rule them.

He openly accuses the authorities, the government and the head of the state. He does this using numerous epithets with a negative connotation – a *few grotesque monuments, uninspired, hastily made and do often with unbearable ugliness*.

Another example of a political discourse where Maurice Kamto uses the tactic of accusation can be observed in his speech of the 9th December 2019 when he addressed himself to the nation. He said:

«Everything is done to restore the situation of the single party where a political party at will and following his mood shares some seats with some allies and consolidates his position as dominant».

This example illustrates the attitude of Maurice Kamto towards the candidate Paul Biya (President of the Republic of Cameroon), his political party and the government. Maurice Kamto openly criticizes Paul Biya, his political party, and his way of governing the country. He accuses the president Paul Biya indirectly of dictatorship and fake democracy.

On the 1st January 2018, Maurice Kamto in his allocution to the nation, during post electoral crisis, this time gives the name of the person who is targeted by his accusations. He says:

«The cause of all this drama has a single name, BIYA Paul. Never has a man sacrificed the fate of his people for his own ego».

«This election provided compelling evidence that one individual, Mr BIYA Paul, mobilized all public resources – financial, administrative, material, institutional and security - to perpetuate his re-election. It is no more no less than corruption, a damage on the public fortune and the abuse of power that led to an ELECTORAL HOLD UP».

The tactic of accusation in political discourse includes the use of words with negative connotations, which are quite logical for this tactic, as they help to express discontent more clearly. This time, in the speech of Maurice Kamto, we can observe that he accuses Paul Biya directly of sacrificing the lives of his people for his own interest and ego, and of an electoral holdup.

In one of his speeches in 2020, Maurice Kamto accuses the ruling party of incompetence and irresponsibility in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the desire of Paul Biya to remain in power forever with the help of the state terror. He said:

«Enough is enough! The Cameroonian people have suffered enough from the gluttony of a few people whose incompetence, irresponsibility and cynicism still spread dramatically to the world as part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and who believe they can keep power forever only through State terror».

In this extract of a speech base of a political discourse, we can easily observe the presence of the tactic of accusation based on the various semantic and pragmatic means presented in the text. The orator reveals his own view of the political situation in the society and he uses semantics of words such as «gluttony of a few people» or «irresponsibility and cynicism». These words, which are directed to the people in power, and authorities who can't take the necessary measures to fight a serious threat to the society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the communicative tactic of accusation is an explicit way of discrediting a political opponent. As an instrument of political discourse, the tactic of accusation is used quite widely, since it does not necessarily lead to confrontation with the politician, and in most cases, it can serve as the beginning of a constructive dialogue, but it can also serve as the beginning of a political crisis. The presence of the various factors, which play an important role in the influence of political discourse in the society, are observed. The semantic and pragmatic nature of the political discourse in a society has always been a result of the interpretation of the addressee. This interpretation is directly linked to the sociopolitical situation in the country. And this was the case in the republic of Cameroon, since various speeches from the opposition led to riots. Due to political speeches the addressee reacted as the orator expected. In the case of Maurice Kamto, this tactic of accusation, which he used, led to his arrest by the state authorities and to his imprisonment in 2019, since his accusations were mostly targeted towards the government authorities. He was released 9 months later due to international pressure on the Cameroonian government from France, the United States of America, and Great Britain.

The investigated examples perfectly demonstrate how accusation became high-frequency phenomena, which have a huge impact on the consciousness in the political struggle. Because the subject of a political discourse of politicians which reflects some interests and has some purposes and tasks, interprets reality in the text. The main aim of political discourse is struggle for power. The tools of speech accusation of a political discourse of politicians are present at all levels of language – phonographic, lexical and grammatical. The widest layer of speech means of accusation is presented at the lexical level. The found stylistic devices interacted with each other, which allows achieving a much more effective impact on the reader. Accusations within a political discourse of politicians is a multidimensional phenomenon. Achievement of one of the main tasks of a political discourse of politics, i.e. management of public opinion can allow such features as focus and dedication on the mass addressee, and invisibility as well. The tactic of accusation in political discourse does not open its viewpoints about influence, and its efficiency depends on that. Studying of the mechanism of the tactic of accusation by linguistic means helps to avoid psycho-technical effect of speech manipulation, or speech demagoguery, speech aggression or even speech violence.

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КОММУНИКАТИВНАЯ ТАКТИКА ОБВИНЕНИЯ В КАМЕРУНСКОМ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ

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Цель исследования – определить использование тактики обвинения в камерунском политическом дискурсе. Тактика обвинения чаще всего реализуется при помощи таких тропов как эпитеты, метафоры и антитезы. Практически в каждом обвинении используются слова из семантического поля «unacceptable» (неприемлемый) для того, чтобы обозначить нерациональность и непродуктивность работы действующего правительства и убеждений своих оппонентов. Статья посвящена комплексному анализу тактики обвинения в политическом дискурсе в лингвистической сфере. Систематизация и структурирование положений, охватывающих эволюцию термина «политический дискурс» и связанных с ним понятий, проводится в современных направлениях и в европейских и африканских школах политической лингвистики. Особенности развития термина «политический дискурс» связаны с историей и социально-политическими характеристиками государств, а также с широким спектром социально-политических факторов. В тексте выявляется и разъясняется важность тактики обвинения в политическом дискурсе, ее жанр и идентичность, а также ценная публичная возможность донести политическое послание. Доказано, что для понимания явной и неявной адресности политических текстов и систематизации языковых манипулятивных механизмов необходим комплексный анализ речевой тактики, которая, в свою очередь, состоит из конкретных речевых приемов. На основе трактовки дискурса как лингвокультурного, межкультурного и аксиологического феномена автор формулирует авторское понимание политического дискурса.

Ключевые слова: политический дискурс, тактика обвинения, оппонент, власть, личный интерес, нарушение на выборах.