

PATRIOTISM AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN AFRICA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE PERSPECTIVE ON BANDA'S, KENYATTA'S AND MAHAMA'S SPEECHES.

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Abstract

Concession speeches are somehow rare in the political arena of African leaders. In other words, most of the politicians do not deliver speeches of acceptance of their defeat. This paper is an exhortation to reconsider the African politics by accepting defeat through discourses in order to save unity and perpetuate peace. Thus, relying on Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough, the study intends to explain that patriotic language embedded in the concession speeches of Rupiah Banda (2011), Uburu Kenyatta (2013), and John Mahama (2016) is an arsenal to keep peace in African States. This investigation reveals that concession speeches are means for implanting a sustainable peace through language of patriotism, tolerance, unity and solidarity.

Keywords: *Concession, patriotism, peace, solidarity, tolerance*

Résumé

Les discours de concession sont d'une manière ou d'une autre rares dans l'arène politique des leaders Africains. En d'autres termes, la plupart des politiciens ne tiennent pas des discours d'acceptation de leur défaite. Cet article est une exhortation à réexaminer la politique Africaine en admettant la défaite à travers des discours en vue de sauvegarder l'unité et de pérenniser la paix. Ainsi, s'appuyant sur l'analyse critique du discours de Norman Fairclough, l'étude a pour but de montrer que le langage patriotique qui réside dans les discours de concession de Rupiah Banda (2011), de Uburu Kenyatta (2013), et de John Mahama (2016), est un arsenal pour maintenir la paix dans les états Africains. L'investigation révèle que les discours de concession sont des moyens pour une paix durable à travers le langage du patriotisme, de la tolérance, de l'unité et de la solidarité.

Mots-clés: *concession, paix, patriotisme, solidarité, tolérance*

Introduction

Sustainable peace in Africa is somehow threatened due to many factors like the approximate implementation of democracy and lack of patriotism. Real peace appears as a treasure that African people look for as if it were distributed by other beings apart from Africans.

The notion of patriotism is very often overlooked by politicians in political spheres. Concession is very hard to accomplish since interests are at stake. The interests of nations are rarely considered as the first thing that should prevail over any other thing. Beyond political parties, the life of a given country continues and it should not be stopped or shunted by own interests preservation. Sustainable peace is the prerequisite for development and welfare of communities. From this postulate, patriotism is the essence that is likely to engender genuine peace in Africa.

Political tensions have contributed to maintain African continent in series of crises generally before, during, and after electoral processes. The situation has paved the way to rigidity within political parties so that the acceptance of the victory of another party is the most knotty action to perform in order to keep harmony and tranquility. Results are most of the time qualified as fraudulent; they are disputed and rarely accepted or sometimes, accepted under reserve. Being defeated, politicians do not generally deliver concession speeches to calm the political atmosphere. Concession speeches refer to speeches delivered by losing candidates after elections (Putri and Yanti, 2021). In other words, they are official speeches to confess the victories of others. It seems to be difficult to accept unless one really practises patriotism that is expounded as the fact of manifesting deep love for his/her homeland. Patriotism implies sacrifice, renunciation and resilience.

The three concession speeches which make up the corpus of this paper are delivered by Banda in 2011, Uhuru Kenyatta in 2013, and John Mahama in 2016, respectively from Zambia, Kenya and Ghana. In the speeches, those ex presidents have developed patriotic acts by congratulating presidents-elect, giving them pieces of advice to be good presidents for citizens and inviting their partisans to accept the verdict while working hand in hand with the new leaders. The socio-economic interest of the investigation is to entice people to develop a patriotic spirit so as to generate political atmospheres of a sustainable peace. A climate of peace naturally leads to a strong and steady economic situation.

The study aims at showing that patriotism embedded in the concession speeches of the three presidents is a booster rocket to set and keep peace in Africa. To reach that objective, the following

questions arouse: what are the linguistic tools that convey the idea of a sustainable peace? Are patriotic acts likely to consolidate peace in Africa?

Being split in three parts, the research is framed by Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis which is applied through description of formal properties, interpretation, and explanation. The first part provides an overview on Critical Discourse Analysis. The second one deals with patriotism, maturity, and tolerance in discourse. The third one, but not the least, is focused on language of cohesion.

1. Overview on Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), being a form of analysis suggested by N. Fairclough, is embedded in Discourse Analysis. It is a subcategory of Discourse which can be defined as the use of language that is grammatically oriented for the purpose of communication (Cook, 2001). Discourse in its broad meaning refers to "language as a form of social practice" (Fairclough, 1995 :54) and in its narrow meaning, it is seen as "the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view" (Fairclough, 1995 :56)

Discourse Analysis is an eclectic linguistic methodology; that is, it combines different disciplines and views. It is from this perspective that J. Muncie (2006:74) asserts:

It derives, in the main, from linguistics, semiotics, social psychology, cultural studies and post-structural social theory. It is primarily a qualitative method of reading texts, conversations and documents which explores the connections between language, communication, knowledge, power and social practices. In short, it focuses upon the meaning and structure (whether overt or hidden) of acts of communication in context.

The intersection of all those related disciplines makes Discourse Analysis stand and rich in terms of data analysis. The integrated disciplines help deal with the analysis and the interpretation of language. Considering the contours, it is worthwhile asserting that Discourse Analysis deals with the structure of social interaction that is highlighted within conversation (Brown and Yule, 1983).

CDA is a theory of discourse that sees about the enactment of dominance, social power abuse, and inequality through text and talk, in the political and social contexts (Dijk, 1995). It is considered as a theory that analyses language use. CDA focuses on discursive practices, the socially established ways of producing utterances. The discursive practices are articulated around socio-cultural and historical contexts.

The purpose of Critical Discourse Analysis is to analyze discourse that is language use. The model of Critical Discourse Analysis used to guide this work grasps language use as a social practice. Considering the social aspect, it establishes the links between textual structures and their function in interaction within the society. In the same line of thought, N. Fairclough claims “In seeing language as discourse and asocial practice, one is committing oneself not just to analyzing texts, nor just to analyzing processes of production and interpretation, but to analyzing the relationship between texts, processes, and their social conditions [...]” (Fairclough, 1989 :26). In this way, the analysis of Banda’s, Kenyatta’s, and Mahama’s speeches takes into account the relation between the discursive practices and the social conditions.

Political discourses always bear ideologies and they are most of the time conceived to impact on people be they implicitly or explicitly delivered. This aspect shows the significance of CDA dealing with the way language practices are endowed with power relations and ideological processes which are in most cases ignored by addressees. Thus, “the aim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language in use” (Hoepfner, 2006 :5). Keeping the same argumentative line, CDA aims at illuminating the way opacity exists in discursive practices.

In a word, CDA tends to unveil all the hidden aspects related to language; especially in this case, it helps decipher some linguistic tools that are linked to the expression of maturity, tolerance, solidarity, and unity. Thus, the speeches of Banda, Uhuru Kenyatta, and John Mahama are undoubtedly related to power, history and ideology. The hidden aspects conveyed by the linguistic markers are elucidated in the light of Critical Discourse Analysis. The formal properties like pronouns, determiners, adverbs, the negation mark (not) are described

grammatically as suggested in the first articulation of the three-tier of implementation of CDA. Then, these words are discussed in relation with texts; it is the level of interpretation. Thirdly, social contexts are taken into account to fit the last step, explanation. The last stage deals with the relation between texts and the social contexts of the political discourses.

2. Patriotism: Maturity and Tolerance in Discourse

Language of maturity and tolerance appears as the prerequisite for a strong democracy that leads to peace. The two terms somehow refer to responsibility. But, maturity involves tolerance in the sense that to be tolerant, implies a high level of maturity. In other words, it boosts the realization of forgiveness and acceptance.

2.1. Subjectivity in Patriotic Language

Subjectivity is expounded as a process of appropriation of language functions in real situation of communication. In the same perspective, “the individual act of appropriating a language inserts the speaker into his speech act [...] this situation is evidenced by specific items whose function is to place the speaker in a constant and necessary relationship with his enunciation.” (Benveniste, 1971 :82) Subjectivity is also considered as the speaker’s capacity of positioning himself/herself as the subject. This idea is strengthened by this assertion “it is in and through the language that human being becomes a subject” (Benveniste, 1971 :259). Most often, the marker that conveys the presence of a speaker is the first singular person pronoun “I” since it directly refers to the discourse tenant.

Political language of presidents Banda, Kenyatta, and Mahama are fully marked by subjective markers that highlight the idea of peace, friendship and partisanship. ‘I’ is often used to develop ‘ego’ and authority; what is remarkable is that, it is rather used in contexts by the presidents to show meekness and resilience as in the following extracts: (1) **“I** called President-elect Nana Akufo Addo Dankwa of the New Patriotic Party to congratulate him on his well-fought and well deserved victory in Wednesday election. **I** would like to wish our president Nana Akufo Addo, the best of luck in his administration” (Mahama, 2016)

(2) **“I** take early the opportunity to congratulate **my** brother Raila on his election. **I** have been on phone with the president-elect to express **my** support and that of **my** coalition. **I** congratulate the president-elect Raila Odinga and wish him well on his new responsibility as president of our republic” (Kenyatta, 2013).

(3) Speaking for **myself** and **my** party, we will accept the results (Banda, 2011).

By the means of the first singular personal pronoun ‘I’, the three presidents are in line with the principle of democracy that is to acknowledge the victory of winners by accepting their defeats. This is to show how far they are filled with fraternity and tolerance. Moreover, the expressions “I called president-elect” and “I have been on phone with the president-elect” highlight the fact that apart from their political divergences, they are able to accept the verdict of the ballot boxes since the term ‘president-elect’ is to confirm the election of these presidents. Saying “I take early the opportunity to congratulate my brother Raila”, the outgoing president, Kenya, shows that friendship is beyond a mere election. It reveals that he has defeated his pride and put fraternity forward as in “my brother Raila”.

The congratulations and best wishes addressed to their respective opponents are a sign of respect and consideration. These expressions are to entice people to line up according to the situation since the antagonists do not tear each other apart even after the elections. Extracts “**I** would like to wish our president”, “the president of our republic”, and “we will accept the results” are not trivial in the sense that the possessive pronoun ‘our’ and personal pronoun ‘we’ involves ‘I’, the speaker, and ‘you’, people of the respective countries. By the way, the outgoing candidates are joining their voices to the ones of the citizens to admit that they are now under the authority of new presidents. The blend of ‘I’ and ‘you’ which is the shift from ‘I’ to ‘we’ within sentences is somehow a call for the whole nations. This call stipulates that debates over elections come to a close and time has come to work. These patriotic languages deriving from maturity and tolerance are worthwhile in order to guarantee peace. The first singular person pronoun ‘I’ and its variants ‘my, myself’ are the fit linguistic items that display the views of the politicians so as to get their partisans to adhere to what is really good for their country. They consequently appear as the icons of peace safeguarding that everyone should follow.

The following sentences reveal the political maturity of the politicians through patriotism.

(4) “The people of Ghana have said emphatically that they are taking away the power they gave to **me** four years ago, and **I** have no power to say no” (Mahama, 2016)

(5) “**I** think we lost because, our time was simply up” (Mahama, 2016)

(6) “**I** urge all jubilee supporters to work with the new President in moving our great country forward” (Kenyatta, 2013)

(7) **I** urge you all now to rally behind your new president. (Banda, 2011)

Extracts (4) and (5) from John Mahama prove that he does not resist to the verdict of Ghanaian people who gave him power four years ago. In (3), saying “I have no power to say no”, he confesses that the voices of people have prevailed. This maturity and patriotic language unveils the fact that the leader is reduced to acceptance and that nothing else can be done beyond that reality. As a resilient man, in sentence (5), he uses the two pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ to refer to him and his party leading them to admit that their ruling period was over and that the state is continuity. In this extract, “I think” has the same semantic charge as “I believe” and they amount to specify that the ex president leaves his failure on behalf of destiny since what is the most important is the preservation of peace.

Except (6) is a call by Uhuru kenyatta toward people favorable to him in order to work with the new government. By the use of ‘I’ the ex Kenyan president is seen as a bridge that links the supporters to the new president. He shows and teaches that the nation and its interests are more important than any other thing. Consequently, nation must be above individual interests. The love of his country compels him to unite people and persuade them to work whatever the government for developing their country. Thus, this illustrates that what people of the same country have in common is nothing else than the country. Therefore, no matter the personal interests and the political parties, patriotism must prevail.

In (7), despite his failure, the Zambian president, Banda, positions himself as a galvanizer who invites everyone, taking into account his partisans, to be active in the construction of their country.

This action of the leader is a lesson taught to everybody: it is useful to engage in a gracious fight for the interest of all rather than an egocentric interest; that fight is to undertake actions that are far from harming the functioning of the State. He has shifted his ego into the greatness of the spirit so as to create a peaceful atmosphere favorable to development. The leader is the one who is able to disarm his activists by a mere watchword. If the chief has publicly agreed, who else can insist on protests? From this extract, one can also learn that power is fleeting and that individuals should not trouble the tranquility of States because of their interests. Peace should be consolidated by individual and collective actions.

2.2 An Inch toward Peace Consolidation

The consolidation of peace is perceived through negative sentences that characterize politicians' manifestation of love for their respective States. The marker 'not' emphatically highlights the refusal of performing actions that could harm people or nations. The sentences below elucidate the point.

(8) "Elections should **not** divide us" (Kenyatta, 2013)

(9) "I love the country that has given me the opportunity to serve in various capacities for nearly two decades and I would **not** do anything to undermine our democracy or threaten the peace we enjoy" (Mahama, 2016)

(10) "Now is **not** the time for violence and retribution" (Banda, 2011).

These extracts convey the will of the politicians to maintain the stability of their countries. The modals 'should', 'would', and the verb 'is' followed by the marker of negation 'not', are used to reject practices that are likely to harm or slowdown the realization of strong democracy and peace.

In (8), Kenyatta implicitly compares elections and the nation as heritage. That is, elections are too insignificant contrarily to the nation since they can merely be considered as contexts that appear and disappear, but country always remains. Besides, the leader invites his supporters and citizens to be united for the interest of the nation. This rejection of division is to act upon his listeners so as to suppress revenge and vindictive actions. In the same line of thought, being an ex president presupposes that he has many devotees who really need to

accept and respect the verdict of the majority. Thus, the call for unity does not only show his humbleness, but also his heroic contribution to sustainable peace.

In excerpt (9), Mahama is drastically opposed to all that goes against democracy. By the negative statement “I would **not** do anything to undermine our democracy”, he manifests his attachment to a moral value that is the preservation of democracy and peace. Democracy, meaning freedom of choice, compels him to align.

As for Banda, in example (10), he is in favor of the perspectives that, after elections, there is no need to fall into violence and vandalism. Elections mean the choice of people in congruence with their expectations and that choice must be respected. Most often violence arouses when the parties do not confess the victory of the new presidents. The use of ‘not’ aims at discarding any feeling of rebellion that might result in an uncontrolled war. This leads Banda to appear as a leader that advocates peace values. The speeches of these politicians are filled with democratic languages that calm the political atmospheres of their countries.

2.3. No-construction in Concession

‘No’ is a determinant that means ‘none’ or ‘nothing’ and it is used by the leaders to illustrate awareness, responsibility and frankness as in these utterances:

(11) “I have **no** ill feeling in my heart; there is **no** malice in my words. I wish him well in his years as president (Banda, 2011).

(12) “**No** amount of deceptive campaign promises could keep us in power. **No** amount of monopolization of the media space could save us. **No** amount of money could stop our defeat” (Mahama, 2016)

In illustration (11), the Zambian president reassures people that he has really conceded the victory of his political rival, Michael Sata. The constructions “no ill feeling” and “no malice” convey a semantic charge that refers to a great mindset. This aspect shows that in spite of being the defeated candidate, he is able to triumph over sorrow for the sake of participating in the wellbeing of his nation. The greatness of the spirit leads to the degree of frankness that sets aside hatred and conspiracy. This way of addressing people develops emotions in receivers in order to fall in behind the speaker, Banda. Asserting that

his heart is neither a room of hypocrisy nor a factory of ill manifests some esteem towards his personality; that behavior is a good one that aims to strengthen peace.

In extract (12), the determinant “no” turned into an insistence form as “no amount” is repeated three times. This is to reveal that the voice of people in a democratic system must always prevail and it is useless to resort to malicious actions to develop admiration from others unless one wants to fall in self-deception. By the way, Mahama confesses that illegal means to reach their ends are not what leaders need to gain the sympathy of their countrymen. These bad practices could lead to unprecedented crises. The repetition of “no amount” is an implicit call for change by the Ghanaian leader. In the same perspective, what needs to be done is simply to accept the verdict of the people and be a canal of peace so that to keep peace and security in African countries.

The fact of loving their countries has compelled the politicians to practice resilience, sacrifice, tolerance, responsibility, and maturity so as to stop any danger that could threaten their countries. Patriotism, through language of maturity and tolerance, is the essence of a sustainable peace. Peace is not a mere concept; it is rather a behavior that should be manifested by everywhere and in all circumstances.

3. Togetherness in Political Language

Solidarity and unity are major characteristics of patriotism that fosters peace. It is therefore absurd to aspire to peace without taking into account solidarity and harmony in daily life. Africans should really start developing unity to stand whatever the troubles as the maxim stipulates “together, we stand”. The manifestation of their unity is possible through fairness in politics. A concession speech is not only given to acknowledge the victory of the other, but it is also conceived to reinforce cohesion.

3.1. From Concession to Social Cohesion.

Cohesion is the expected gist by people who incarnate peace values. It refers to the idea of oneness that must prevail in political atmospheres. Whatever the divergences in terms of opinion, the civilized politics must guide any political activity. Cohesion and

concession are closely bound; in this context, Chesebro and Hamsher (1974 :40) put “concession speech is the vehicle used to secure a new social relationship; it is intended to purify and redeem both sides.” The cues of unity are expressed by the first plural personal ‘we’ and its variants ‘our and us’ as in what follows:

(13) I urge Kenyans of all walks of life to remember that **our** unity is **our** strength (Kenyatta, 2013).

(14) Zambia must not go backwards, **we** must all face the future and go forward as one nation (Banda, 2011).

(15) This is **our** country. And its fortunes lie solely on **us**. Let **us** all stand up and be counted (Mahama, 2016).

The personal pronoun ‘we’ and its variants ‘our’ and ‘us’ are used by the political orators to foster cohesion in their countries. In other terms, they are used to engender emotional states that connect hearers to the reality of unity. Thus, the emotion provoked by peaceful languages through the pronouns is to increase the feeling of peace that each citizen should manifest.

Example (13) illustrates that strength derived from unity. The intention behind Banda’s use of the possessive pronoun ‘our’ is to establish proximity between the Kenyans and him since ‘our’ implies that they share something; and that something is their country. The president calls his citizens for adhering to his vision so as to constitute a single force useful for development. He also invites people to get rid of all practices that could undermine social life. Stating “our unity” and “our strength” is to trigger awareness in people for reaching the level of total commitment for peace.

(14) and (15) are illustrations in which the Zambian and Ghanaian presidents express great challenges to overcome by the principle of oneness. By using ‘we’, ‘our’ and ‘us’, they call everyone for responsibility toward their respective countries. Homelands are unique; politicians and populations have them in common. These sensitive languages are real incitements that draw the attention of recipients to have a particular look in the direction of their countries. In other words, these exhortations intend to render each person ambassador of a sustainable peace by his/her way of speaking and behaving no matter the place. Development can never come from outside, it is initially

internal by its essence that is tranquility. The pronoun ‘we’ and its derivatives ‘our and us’ imply the notion of oneness and collegial actions that lead to success.

In extract (15), Mahama exerts a psychological pressure that compels each citizen to make the best choice; that is, to adhere to his viewpoint about unity for gathering energies. These energies are in line with peace preservation for the good functioning of their country. For the leader, time is no more for revenges or crises, but the hour of building a solid nation has come and it is a must for everybody to be architects of the realization. The fact that the country fortunes and development depend on the citizens leads the population to know that their destiny is in their own hands. In other terms, citizens are the ones who contribute to the destruction, humiliation, expansion, development of their country. This is to trigger awareness in people so as to be responsible.

The enticement of the outgoing president is a robust message that boosts the population to break any resistance related to different political affiliations. In fact, his intention of unifying people lies in the fact that Ghana is not limited to a famous political name like John Mahama or Nana Akufo. The success of a country lies on resilient individuals around new leaders, be they leaders of their political parties or not. The most important in patriotism is that, there is no loser; everybody is the winner for the sake of the country. From this lesson, one can bear in mind is that solidarity should be at the center of any patriotic actions since together, we stand.

3.2. Coordinating Views: from Divergences to Convergences

Solidarity entails the convergence of views so as to be efficient in the accomplishment of goals. Patriotic leaders, even after being defeated, should not watch political affairs from a certain distance without saying any word about them. It is of a great importance for them to deliver concession speeches that show their magnitude spirit. It is from this perspective that Banda puts forward solidarity to unite Zambian people for the sake of making their country prosper. That is perceptible in the subsequent extract:

16) Now is the time to unite and build tomorrow Zambia **together**. Only by working **together** can we achieve a more prosperous Zambia (Banda, 2011).

The adverb 'together' conveys the idea of harmony that Zambians should spouse if they really want noticeable changes. Using that adverb infers that divergences exist, but what is worthwhile to consider is the interest of the nation. Moreover, the repetition of 'together' indicates that those people are sentenced to live as one. The ex president motivates his hearers to opt for solidarity and harmony to achieve their aspiration. The word 'together' is assimilated to a thunder that demolishes the oversized ego resulting in individualism, the quest for own interests. Banda therefore appears as a unifying person in love with peace who desires peace and development. He has transcended his title and honor of president to show humility and responsibility as a son the country.

The context presents the good example of the Zambian president that his peers should follow to stabilize the African Politics. What should also be kept in mind is that human beings are destined for passing away, but a nation, the heritage of all, remains. In this example, the linguistic item 'together' works subtly on receivers so as to coordinate views. It gives the impression that the leader is not far from the people. That feeling of proximity is a motivation that is likely to give them an envy to create an asylum of peace. The call of the president compels the citizens to align as the unity that he wants is to build a strong Zambia. Consequently, whoever would not go in this way is simply considered as an enemy of the country.

Conclusion

Elections in Africa are fearsome events that have become the daily life of people. They generally bring about pre-election or post-election crises that result in desolation. The choices of presidents that should be an easy task for populations are often turned into difficult situations to manage since those choices are most of the time contested by leaders. African political leaders fear defeat since most of them are candidates to win at all costs. Being candidate is not synonym of victory as in a democratic system, the voices of the citizens prevail; and the verdict of the urns must scrupulously be respected. Two possibilities guide a political life: defeat and victory. It is now time to be aware and abolish malicious practices that do not honor African politics.

A leader should think about the possibility of winning or losing. Defeat in itself is not a fatality and this is what the three leaders, Banda, Mahama, and Kenyatta showed by highlighting patriotism. The patriotic act is seen by delivering concession speeches that are rare in Africa. These discourses full of love, unity, resilience, and humility have advocated peace through official recognition of the victories by political rivals. Exhorting the members of their respective parties as well as the entire population to unite and be around the new presidents so as to work for development are commendable acts. Love for their homelands pushed them to align with the establishment of a permanent peace through the language of patriotism, maturity, tolerance, and cohesion.

Concession speeches are not discourses of moral or physical weakness, but rather speeches of honor, humility and greatness useful for calming African electoral atmospheres in order to perpetuate peace in nations. The three leaders are examples that their peers should follow to drastically reduce electoral paranoia that tends to perpetuate in Africa. The study also shows that political actors can be channels of peace or war, because their speeches or watchwords can cool or worsen ardor. Anyway, the remark that portends a better political future for Africans is that, some African countries are already part of the quest for a sustainable peace by implementing concession discourses as custom. If countries such as Ghana, Kenya, and Zambia succeed in this situation, why should other countries not do the same to keep peace? It is worthwhile for the States of African continent to join this patriotic momentum to maintain social stability.

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