



Dissenting Voices in Cameroon Political Discourse from 2019- 2022: A Rhetorical Analysis of some High Profile Politicians

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Abstract: The research paper entitled, “*Dissenting Voices in Cameroon Political Discourse from 2019-2022: A Rhetorical Analysis of some High Profile Politicians*”, analyses the discourses of three Cameroonian politicians. This stemmed from the observation that within the socio-political context of Cameroon, the speeches of prominent figures such as Paul Biya, Ni John Fru Ndi, and Maurice Kamto have reaped significant attention due to the strategic use of language behind their discourses and major contrasting perspectives. Understanding this socio-political context in which these dissenting voices emerge and their hidden intends is crucial for grasping the dynamics and complexities of political discourse in Cameroon. It is from this perspective that this paper examines the main socio-political themes and arguments presented in the selected discourses and explore the strategies employed by Paul Biya, Maurice Kamto, and Ni John Fru Ndi in articulating their dissenting views within the Cameroonian political context. The analysis hinge on contemporary rhetoric which informs the methodological tools applied in the work. The study analyse varying opinions in three speeches made by three different politicians between 2019 and 2022. The analyses demonstrated that all the three politicians used varying or dissenting views in theirs discourses through different Sub-sub rhetorical strategies of emotional, logical, and pathetic appeals. These rhetorical elements were independently analysed from their sub-sub themes to find the hidden techniques used in the discourses. The results showed that all politicians used these strategies. We found the aspirant, Maurice Kamto and Ni John Fru Ndi dominating in dissent. This is because, as aspirants, they were publicising their capabilities to Cameroonians. The incumbent, Pual Biya, used fewest dissenting voices. His discourse was more of higher instructions where the aspirants used as base for their dissent.

Keywords: Cameroon Political Discourse, Dissenting Voices, Paul Biya, Maurice Kamto, Rhetorical Analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, man has always disagreed. They argue to reach an agreement that suits each other. Politicians, just like all human beings, need language techniques and its communicative values to perform some actions

which can be a means to end, overcome and unite issues in the society. They are conscious of the importance of specific linguistic techniques and means in achieving their already tailored goals through language. This is the power of words that each politician has over his/her audience and

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opponent. It is only gotten through linguistic manipulation. So, politicians exploit the linguistic and rhetorical signals skilfully and use them for strategic functions with multiple meanings to be sent to different persons or groups of various political, social, religious, or educational tendency at certain times and places. Politicians utilize language to modify people's ideas and understanding, and send dissenting and upbeat messages about their agenda, and actions. All this is often used to disagree with the opponents' point of view, intentions and deeds (Budji, 2022).

The language used by politicians to express their varying opinions is considered to be an indispensable human endowment which is conceptualized for solving problems in the society. According to Harris (1976) language is the means through which political ideas are communicated to the society. This means that politicians know what they have to say depending on their goals in order to achieve calculated results. To subtly manipulate language, some politicians have been able to exert great influence on the preconceptions, beliefs, aspirations, and fear of the masses to the extent that people accept false assertions and flattery as truth postulates and even turn to support and stand for policies contrary to their interest (Thomas and Wareingn, 1999).

Dissenting voices are very common in Cameroon political discourse today. It is necessary for scholars to continue to investigate the role different politicians play in attaining their goals. Researchers have carried out research in this domain with the intention of transforming dissent either positively or negatively but with different outcomes. However, such results only reveal political discourse as diverse field of studies including communication and language, all of which are investigated from a rhetorical and pragmatic perspective. Studies in this sub domain lay more emphasis on the language of politics limiting themselves to inaugural, farewell, and campaign speeches, but not taking into consideration dissenting voices in politics, which is the hidden struggle for power with language being an indispensable tool. This is an encouraging factor in this study.

Statement of the Problem

The problem raised in this paper stemmed from the observation that within the socio-political context of Cameroon, the speeches of prominent figures such as Paul Biya, Ni John Fru Ndi, and Maurice Kamto have reaped significant attention due to the strategic use of language behind their discourses and major contrasting perspectives. Understanding this socio-political context in which these dissenting voices emerge and their intents is

crucial for grasping the dynamics and complexities of political discourse in Cameroon. However, despite the significance of these varying opinions in the discourses, there is a lack of comprehension as regard to the socio-political context that expose the hidden meaning behind the speeches of Paul Biya, Ni John Fru Ndi, and Maurice Kamto. This knowledge gap hinders our ability to grasp the underlying strategies, influences, and socio-political factors that shape their discourses and ideologies. Exposing this in this study is important, as it guides resonate good choices when we listen to politicians.

Research Questions

This paper intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main socio-political themes and arguments presented in the selected speeches of these Cameroon politicians?
2. What are the underlying motivations and ideologies behind the dissenting voices expressed in these speeches?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Discourse and Historical Perspective in Cameroon

Works on Political discourse as a domain in discourse analysis, limit to competitiveness, aggressiveness, ideological character and theatricality. Politics is a game of interest; its perpetrators compete for their personal gains. They do this by carefully using language tools to achieve their desires. Mbongo (1987) examined how politicians use language as a mighty weapon to get what they want from their people. In clear terms, he examines the techniques and stylistic devices used by politicians to influence and shape public opinions. Attention is focused on the skilful use of language to discard rumours and fights against corruption in public service, urge Cameroonians to be disciplined and have a sense of responsibility and to participate in nations building. Mbongo found out the techniques and stylistic devices such as effective contrastive style and the rhetorical questions which are used by Cameroon's Head of State to convince the public and discard rumours. Brown (1993) point out in his work that, it is not sufficient to know what one ought to say, but one must also know how to say it. He explains that if the minds of men were laid open, we will see but little difference between that of the wise and that of the foolish. The difference is that, the wise know how to pick and gather his thoughts for conversations whereas; the fool lets words fly out indifferently. Brown (ibid) further explains that many people lead frustrated lives because they haven't learnt how to use speech properly. He therefore believes that; when one speaks with authority, people will react to him as a person with authority if one speaks words of love; people will react to him with love. If words reflect a

seething anger, don't surprise if people avoid you, except when they want to fight you.

The Manipulation of Words in Political Speeches

Political speeches in this paper are characterized by functional and thematic features. They fulfil various functions due to various political activities and hold topics related to politics. Budji (2022), in a study entitled the language of conflict resolution: A case study of selected speeches of Barack Obama and Paul Biya, examined the salient linguistic techniques used in conflict resolution and exposed implicit words used in language and politics which encode language and make the meaning inherent in them clear. Vesela, J (2021) in a rhetorical discourse examines the Persuasive strategies in political speeches: A contrastive analysis of Barack Obama's and Donald Trump's electoral speeches. Sipra, M.A and Rashid, A (2013) presents the Critical Discourse Analysis of the first part of King Martin Luther's speech "When I Have a Dream" in socio-political context. Green; C (2007) in a study; Discursive Strategies in Political Speech: The Words of Dr. Bingu WA Mutharika, president of Malawi in 2004, examine the use of specific discursive strategies in United Nations General Assembly addresses given by Malawian president Bingu wa Mutharika over a period of four years. Aschale A (2013) in his text; *A Critical Discourse Analysis of President Barack Hussein Obama's Speeches regarding the Middle East and (North) Africa*, explains situations that demand politicians to grab to the "pro-one" of the mass and to their ideology, to him, political discourse dialectically articulated can be a vehicle towards achieving an ultimate end. Aldosari, B. N. (2020). In his work; *A Critical Discourse Analysis of Nelson Mandela's Defense Speech I am Prepared to Die*, presents a Critical Discourse Analysis of Nelson Mandela's defense speech "I am prepared to die", which was delivered in 1964 during his trial in what is often referred to as Rivonia Trial. Ayeomoni (2012) investigates the Nigerian military coup speeches of the three military political rulers; General Thomas AguiyiIronsi, General Yakubu Gowon, and General Murtala Muhammad. Dlugan (2009) investigates Martin Luther King's speech "I have a dream", who was the most popular leader of nonviolent movement that strived for racial equality in the United States of America. Duran (2008) conducted a contrastive study of the acceptance speeches, speeches which are written to provide expressions of gratitude, gratefulness, and honour for some form of award, delivered by President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry to the Republic and Democratic National Conventions before the 2004 Presidential Election in the United States of America. Al-Majali (2015) in his paper; Discourse Analysis of the Political Speeches of the Ousted Arab presidents during the Arab Spring Revolution using Halliday and Hasan's Framework of

Cohesion examines the salient linguistic features of the political speeches of the ousted Arab presidents during the Arab Spring Revolution. Azanji (2020) In Rhetoric of Hope in Inaugural and Farewell Speeches: A Case Study of Selected speeches of Barack Obama, Nelson Mandela and Ahmadou Ahidjo, examines language used in politics especially in farewell and inaugural speeches of these presidents.

METHODOLOGY

The data was downloaded from the official internet websites of these politicians and one transcribed because it was not found in the text form, but relevant to the study. Three speeches are selected for these studies each from the selected politicians'. The paper considers a sample of speeches from renowned or high profiled Cameroon politicians; Paul Biya, the chairman of the Cameroon People Democratic Movement (CPDM) political party (the incumbent), Ni John Fru Ndi, the chairman of Social Democratic Front (SDF) (an aspirant) , and Maurice Kamto, the chairman of Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM) (an aspirants). In the process, the researcher took into consideration to use only dissenting/ disagree or conflicting speeches paying particular attention to context, intent, and authenticity of the speaker. Paul Biya speeches were gotten from www.speeches.prc.cm., Ni John Fru Ndi's speeches were gotten from <http://youtu.be/dvyedcj28yk?si=0yowlm7JLRx7oXk> and www.mrcparty.org for Maurice Kamto selected speeches. It should be noted that all these speeches are used in different moments with different goals. The speeches are chosen to have a vast access to knowledge and information relating to the nature of having voice in political discourse. Through these speeches, we derived some elements and themes which are useful for our analysis. Maurice Kamto (MK for short) speech was delivered on December 31, 2022, End of Year Speech with emphasis on Anglophone crisis. Ni John Fru Ndi (NJ for short) speech was made in September 19, 2019, a speech he made during the Major national Dialogue on the Anglophone Crisis. Paul Biya (PB for short) speech was 10th September, 2019, Speech made to convene The Major National Dialogue, which was mean to solve the problems of Anglophone crisis and other things disturbing Cameroon.

The study takes into consideration speeches of three high profile Cameroon politician made in different occasions, time and places. They are selected between the years 2019 and 2022; within a period of 3years. This period has witnessed radical changes and power struggle in the history of Cameroon politics. The choice of these high-profile Cameroon politicians for this study was not done arbitrary. Paul Biya is the president of Cameroon and a politician since 1970s. He is the president of the

CPDM, the rolling party in Cameroon. His longevity in politics also account for his choice. A close study of his political speeches shows a change to having voice in politics with the creation of rival parties like CRM. This was not the case in the 90s and up late 2000s. This experience accounts for his choice in this write-up. Ni John Fru Ndi is the chairman of the SDF political party in Cameroon. He in the early 1990s brought Multiparty System that ended the one party system in Cameroon. He has participated in many presidential elections and lost in all. His party has been the main opposition party in Cameroon. Through his experiences and quest for power in Cameroon has made him to unavoidably engage in powerful disagreement with the government of the rolling party. This disagreement is demonstrated through his speeches. This accounts for his choice in this study. Maurice Kamto is the president of the CRM, a new, rival and more radical political party in Cameroon. He participated in the Cameroon national elections of 2018 and won in some parts of the country. This victory made him and his fervent supporters to illegally declare their party winner of the elections. The act was not welcomed by the government and the consequences were not favourable. Disappointed and feeling being cheated has since then employs him to dissenting messages with a green vision of having things better. He does this in different ways and expressed it through speeches. This justifies his choice in this study.

The analysis of the paper is done using Contemporary Rhetoric (by Richard Andrews 2014). This maintain some notions of old rhetoric associated with the Western practice of a structured system of teaching public speaking, writing skills that was largely developed in ancient Greece, used in Roman schools and early modern schools; and, with certain variations, is still in use today Golden *et al.*, (1976/1993); Enos, (1996); Bizzell and Herzberg, (2001) Azanji (2020) Budji (2022). In this section, we emphasize, demonstrates and discuss methods used in the analysis of the corpora. The qualitative descriptive work bases its analysis on contemporary rhetoric. It is analysed by investigating the various dissenting voices in political discourse portrayed in the speeches of the above politicians. This is done with strict considerations to context, aim, setting, time, and their communicative effects. The rhetorical appeal, like ethos, through Charisma, Credibility and control viewed through their sub themes, Logos and pathos will be used as a lens to exploit the various strategies and ideologies in the varying discourses of Cameroon politicians.

Analysis of Varying Opinions in Cameroon Political Discourse

A Contextual Overview

Maurice Kamto, an aspirant in Cameroon presidential quest, in his famous end of year speech on December 31, 2022 presented a dissenting speech on the state of affairs in Cameroon. This speech was considered essential to him due to the problems and challenges he and his party faced after the presidential and municipal election of 2017 and 2018 respectively. His trial and that of his subordinates with many allegations prompted him to make this dissenting speech that gives hope to Cameroonians. Hence, he aroused various topics to enhance his picture publicly, including the Cameroon's economy and the economic challenges with terrorist, internal and external security, healthcare, education, military forces, terrorism, etc. The speech was employed to show Kamto's positive image through emphasizing his outstanding achievements done in just five years since the presidential elections in 2017 and his well-planned future vision for the nation, in comparison with the failures, weaknesses, and inactivity of the ruling government. Thus, the speaker intended to make his recipients understand that he is, unlike others, a man of actions with good aspirations for Cameroon, who could face the internal and external risks and challenges. Ni John Fru Ndi, another aspirant made his own speech in September 2019 during the Major National Dialogue in Cameroon. He disagrees with the objectives and membership of the conference and refers to its outcome as failure in solving the Anglophone issues in Cameroon. Paul Biya, the incumbent, made his speech in September 2019 too. He presented so many divergent opinions on the thing happening in Cameroon. So, he called for the major national dialogue.

Manipulation Strategies in Kamto's Speech

To begin, we see the strategy of passion. Passion is a charismatic appeal of ethos. It shows how politicians display genuine enthusiasm, conviction, and emotional investment that enhance their credibility and persuasiveness. Being part of ethos, passion demonstrates how the politician truly believes in their message, creating a powerful connection with Cameroonians. The politician cares deeply because they understand what they are talking about very well. So, the politicians harness this passion-infused ethos by: Speaking with emotional conviction while maintaining logical coherence, Demonstrating personal investment in their subject matter, Using appropriate vocal variety, gestures, and facial expressions that reflect their enthusiasm, showing vulnerability through personal connection to the subject. This makes Cameroonians to see that the politicians care for their well-being.

MK Text 1:

Too many of our compatriots, civilians and soldiers, died in this fratricidal conflict. It is high time that all efforts be combined at the national and

international levels to bring about a definitive political solution. Our populations in the regions concerned aspire to peace and tranquillity to run their lives, and our country to establish national cohesion and vigorously pursue its march towards global development and shared progress.

In the above **Text 1**, Maurice Kamto demonstrates his persuasive appeal in passion; passion for achieving peace and progress in the context of a devastating conflict in the country. Kamto uses passion through emotional charged language to disagree with the current happenings in Cameroon e.g. "*fratricidal conflict*" and "*died*," evokes empathy and captures the attention of Cameroonians. The magnetic appeal in his charming words also makes him admirable by most Cameroonians. He further highlights charisma through his ability to inspire action and unity. Through this, he calls for combined efforts at both national and international levels. To Kamto, this is the only definitive political solution for Cameroonians. This call to action aims to galvanize support and mobilize individuals towards a common goal. Kamto in this text exhibits genuine enthusiasm for his fatherland. The charismatic's quality is evident in his vision for the future of Cameroon. "*...pursue its march towards global development and shared progress...*" This gives hope for the future. Thus, with all this enthusiasm and a sound message, Cameroonians are inspired to contribute towards the realization of his goals.

He also used confidence as a charismatic appeal of ethos in rhetoric that exudes self-assurance, certainty, and conviction when presenting arguments or ideas. It's a powerful component of ethos that enhances persuasiveness through several mechanisms: through confidence these politicians signals competence to Cameroonians. They are certain of their knowledge and positions; this is why Cameroonians are more inclined to trust their expertise and judgment. This self-assurance is communicated through; Decisive language with minimal hedging or qualification, Clear, assertive delivery without hesitation or verbal fillers, Composed body language, including strong posture and purposeful gestures, Willingness to make definitive claims or predictions, Calm handling of challenges or opposing viewpoints.

MK Text 2:

Even among its most ardent defenders, we see today that such a monarchical confiscation of power has gradually installed our country in an undemocratic governance, resistant to free, transparent and credible elections; in the temptation to organize a dynastic succession through a transmission of power by mutual agreement ignoring the choice of the sovereign people,

or even of the Constitution; a family, gregarious and opaque management of public affairs

Kamto in **text 2** above uses the confidence of Cameroonians to make his discourse heard by many. He does this in a mild irony by criticising the system of government in Cameroon. With certainty and without fear he criticizes a monarchical confiscation of power that has led to undemocratic governance in Cameroon. Leadership must be from a government of elected representative of the people, but Kamto has a variant view of this in elections Cameroon. He sees Cameroon electoral system and structures faulty. The use of words with certainty such as "*gradually installed*," "*resistant*," and "*temptation*" conveys a sense of urgency and concern in the state of affairs in Cameroon. By the phrase "*transmission of power by mutual agreement*", Kamto suggests that the ruling family (in the name of a party) is passing power down through generations without considering the will of the Cameroonian people or the constitutional processes in Cameroon. The use of the words, "*family, gregarious, and opaque management of public affairs*", emphasizes the dissatisfaction with the current governance system. It implies that decisions in Cameroon are made behind closed doors and without transparency, potentially leading to corruption or some sort of favouritism. Kamto's perception in this excerpt is that of certainty and self-assurance, of what Cameroonians are living.

He also used the strategy of authenticity as a charismatic appeal of ethos in rhetoric that refers to the perception that a speaker is genuine, honest, and true to them when communicating. This powerful dimension of ethos enhances persuasiveness in discourse through several key mechanisms. In rhetorical terms in general and in this research in particular, authenticity establishes trust by conveying that the politician's public persona aligns with their true values and beliefs. When audiences perceive authenticity, they're more likely to accept the speaker's arguments because they believe the person is speaking from genuine conviction rather than strategic calculation. Authentic ethos is communicated through: Consistency between verbal messages and nonverbal cues, Willingness to acknowledge limitations or vulnerabilities, Personal storytelling that reveals genuine experiences.

MK Text 3:

It will be infinitely less costly, for countries that claim to be friends of Cameroon and for the international community, to act energetically to achieve a consensual revision of the Electoral Code and the organisation of fair and transparent elections, than to manage a crisis linked to rigged elections, or to fund useless peacekeeping operations costing of billions of dollars, if by misfortune things went awry

In **text 3**, Kamto enjoys his charismatic quality of authenticity, by being true to his own values and beliefs, consistent in word and action, genuine and sincere, and showing transparency and integrity. When appealing to "*countries that claim to be friends of Cameroon and for the international community*", to take proactive steps toward ensuring fair elections. The statement is invoking the ethical tool of charisma in several ways. As an Authentic leader, Kamto acts in a way that is consistent with his professed values. In his eyes, if Cameroon's friends and the international community value democracy and human rights, then it should be a challenge for them to align their actions with these values by supporting a revision of the Electoral Code and the organization of fair elections in Cameroon. Kamto's appeal for fair and transparent elections is an indirect criticism of the poor regime in power. This is suggesting that without these qualities, elections could be vulnerable to rigging. He goes ahead to make difficult decisions that are in line with valued morals. He urges international actors to show moral courage by standing up for democratic principles, even if this may be challenging or require a significant efforts

Expertise as a component of credibility refers to the qualifications, knowledge, and skills that a speaker possesses, which contribute to their persuasive power. This is backed by audience perception that the speaker has a good mastery of what he is saying. This appeal is a crucial aspect of ethos, as it establishes the speaker's authority and trustworthiness. Politicians in this study who showcase their knowledge on a subject through education, experience, or research enhance their credibility with this theme of expertise. This makes the audience (Cameroonians) more likely to trust their arguments.

MK Text 4:

No part of our economic, political, social and cultural life is doing well. You know it, because you feel it in your everyday life.

In **text 4**, Maurice Kamto being an aspirant and wishing the best for Cameroonians instills in them that nothing is going right in Cameroon at all levels, be it socio-political and cultural. He uses his expertise and manipulates Cameroonians to easily belief him. To him, no one can live and not be aware that he or she is living; thinking about life proves your existence. Cameroonians live in misery. To make himself more credible, he tells Cameroonians that they are living a reality of hard times and they can't deny that they witness it in their everyday life. He uses this signal "*... You know it, because you feel it in your everyday life*" In his struggle for power, he carefully select words and justify that no sector of the economy is doing well be it economy, social or

political sectors. This gives him an urge before Cameroonians to the regime "*in place*". This is always so, when hope is given to the hopeless.

The integrity and transparency of the speaker is very important in discourse. It significantly influences his persuasive power. Honesty is important in this study because it gives Cameroonians (audience) hope that the speaker is sincere in what he is saying, establishing trustworthiness and ethical character. Honest speakers are open about their intentions, motivations, and any potential biases. This transparency fosters trust and makes the audience more receptive to their message. Honest speakers in this study admit when they don't have all the answers or when there are uncertainties. This humility enhances credibility, as it demonstrates a realistic understanding of the topic.

MK Text 5:

The year 2022 is finally the year of the fortieth anniversary of the accession to power of the President of the Republic in office. We can take no pride in such a political reality in a republic that prides itself on being democratic. The fortieth anniversary of a man at the head of a State in which there are so many Well educated persons, where the dynamism of youth is envied ... This longevity which is part of a logic of self-preservation of power, in the pride of proving – but to who? and why?...

Text 5 above presents Maurice Kamto's manipulative use of language that proves him honest. Just like a saint in his discourse, Kamto sincerely tells Cameroonians that the president in power has been there for too long and it is now an insult to the county. To Kamto, his understanding of what is called democracy, government by elected representative of the people, is seemingly not real in Cameroon. Proving himself trustworthy in presenting his message, he tells Cameroonians how the current president has make mockery of the country's democracy to be an element of pride. Through rhetorical questions, he questions, with the aim to expose, the weaknesses of the president in power... *but to who? and why?...* Manipulating language and disapproving what he calls reality in Cameroon, gives Cameroonians hope through him. The hope is gotten from his credible use of language for the sake of truth and not based on what he can gain as a person. Looking through this discourse we discover that though being an aspirant he meant well for the future of Cameroon.

Power as a component of control appeal refers to the ability of a politician to influence or direct the audience's thoughts, emotions, and actions, dominate, reward and even punish. Speakers who

hold positions of power (e.g., political leaders, executives) often have greater influence over their audience. Their power can compel listeners to pay attention and accept their messages. Individuals in influential positions may leverage their network or social standing to sway opinions and encourage action. Their power can create a sense of urgency or importance around their message.

MK Text 6:

To all Cameroonians, inside the country and in the diaspora, I extend my best wishes, as well as those of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement for the year 2023, a crucial year in our common march towards the long-awaited peaceful political change of power. No attack will shake us. No baseness will confuse us. No violence will derail us. I have told you and I repeat it again: You can trust me, I will never betray you.

In **text 6** above, Kamto employs the control tactics of power to rally support and proclaim his position as a leader in the pursuit of political change in Cameroon. His power is extended through a broad address to "all Cameroonians, inside the country and in the diaspora," he positions himself as a leader with a broad base of support and influence, reaching beyond national boundaries, a powerful rhetorical tool against his opponents. By making reference to CRM, Kamto intentionally wants to belittle himself, and honour the party which gives him credibility to stand and address Cameroonians. His dissenting Statements of "No attack will shake us," "No baseness will confuse us," and "No violence will derail us" convey a sense of untiring determination and resilience in the face of the ruling party and other oppositions, asserting the power and steadfastness of the movement. Kamto assuring his followers that he would never betray them assert his trustworthiness and loyalty, a characteristic of a powerful leader. As a politician with an agenda to be attained, Kamto in the excerpt rally support through his shared struggle, "our common march" and "the long-awaited peaceful political change of power" this creates a sense of a collective and shared struggle, appealing to Cameroonians' desire for change. Describing 2023 as a "crucial year" in the march towards change intensifies the importance of the present moment and the need for continues support and action from Cameroonians. In sum, Kamto's usage of language that carries dissent, resilience, and a shared struggle, though also asserting his personal commitment and trustworthiness, Kamto in this excerpt exercise control (power) over Cameroonians by positioning himself and the CRM as a powerful and reliable source in the pursuit of political change in Cameroon.

Acknowledgment of opposition as a component of logical appeal is the practice of recognizing and addressing counterarguments or

differing viewpoints within a discourse. This approach is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Demonstrates Fairness:** By acknowledging opposing views, a speaker shows that he has considered multiple perspectives. This fairness enhances his credibility and make them appear more balanced and reasonable.
2. **Strengthens the discourse:** Addressing counter discourse allows the politician to reinforce his own position. By logically refuting opposing claims, they can highlight the weaknesses in those arguments, which strengthen their own case.
3. **Builds Trust:** Recognizing opposition can build trust with the audience. It shows that the politician is not dismissive of other viewpoints and is willing to engage in a more nuanced discussion.

MK Text 7:

Even among its most ardent defenders, we see today that such a monarchical confiscation of power has gradually installed our country in an undemocratic governance, resistant to free, transparent and credible elections; in the temptation to organize a dynastic succession through a transmission of power by mutual agreement ignoring the choice of the sovereign people, or even of the Constitution; a family, gregarious and opaque management of public affairs.

In this dissenting **text 7**, Maurice Kamto uses the logical appeal of acknowledging the opposition. He criticise the centralization of power and undemocratic governance practices in Cameroon. The language used is highly political, recognizing the existence of opposing viewpoints between Kamto and Paul Biya, his opponent. Acknowledging ardent defenders of the ruling party, CPDM, Kamto in mild and less offensive words says "Even among its most ardent defenders" this acknowledges individuals and even groups who vehemently support Biya's regime and are now recognizing their opposing viewpoints. This acknowledgment sets the stage for a reasoned review for them to choose rationally where to belong. Kamto outlines specific concerns, such as resistance to free and credible elections, the temptation for dynastic succession ignoring the people's choice, and opaque management of public affairs. This language technique advises Cameroonians to be vigilant with the tactics of the ruling regime which to him is a failure. He strengthens this through reference to constitutional principles. The reference to ignoring "the choice of the sovereign people, or even of the Constitution", this raises awareness to stick to constitutional principles and the notion of popular sovereignty (determined by the ballot box). Acknowledging opposing viewpoints, Kamto demonstrates a willingness to engage in reasoned discourse and consider alternative perspectives,

though his main goal here is to make clear lapses of the opposing party. Through the logical appeal of acknowledging the opposition, Kamto challenges the centralization of power and undemocratic governance practices in Cameroon.

Compassion is an emotional appeal used to persuade an audience by evoking feelings of pity, sympathy, or empathy. When a politician uses compassion as a pathetic appeal, he aims to connect with the audience's emotions to inspire understanding, and mercy for striving people. It is seen through:

1. **Eliciting Sympathy:** The speaker presents a situation or subject in a way that makes the audience feel sorrow or concern (e.g., describing suffering to encourage charitable donations).
2. **Humanizing the Subject:** By sharing personal stories or vivid descriptions of hardship, the speaker makes the issue feel real and urgent.
3. **Moral Appeal:** Compassion often ties into a sense of justice or shared humanity, urging the audience to act out of kindness.
4. **Persuasive Effect:** People are more likely to support a cause, change their opinion, or take action if they feel emotionally moved.

MK Text 8:

With the year 2022, the civil war that has been destroying lives, the economy, national cohesion in the English-speaking regions of the North-West and South-West since the end of 2017 has registered an additional year. Every year that goes by without this conflict being resolved is one year too long.

The dissenting **text 8** above uses pathos specifically appealing to the emotion of compassion, exposing a deep awareness of the suffering of people. The speaker does this through the use of evocative and less offensive language that highlights the devastating consequences of the ongoing civil war in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon. The use of the phrase "*destroying lives*" evokes a sense of compassion for the human toll inflicted by the neglected conflict, while the inclusion of "*the economy*" and "*national cohesion*" underscores the far-reaching consequences that extend beyond individual suffering. The reference made to regions of "*North-West and South-West*" and the temporal marker "*since the end of 2017*" lends credibility and context to the speaker words. This grounding is a political reality. With words of this magnitude, Cameroonians of different works of life can envision the prolonged nature of the conflict and its effects on these affected regions. The use of the phrase "*one year too long*" conveys a sense of urgency and impatience, implying that the suffering endured by

the people in these regions is unacceptable and should not be prolonged any further. This language evokes a sense of empathy for those caught in the midst of the conflict, stirring Cameroonians emotions and desire for resolution that seem more than the government. Kamto's coherent presentation of the information, coupled with the political context and emotive language, creates a powerful narrative that resonates with his listener's (Cameroonians) sense of compassion. The excerpt highlights the human conflict, the economic and societal consequences, and the urgent need for resolution, while maintaining a clear and politically grounded narrative.

Manipulation Strategies in Ni John Fru Ndi's Speech

NJ Text 9:

Today we are invited to sit and participate in the national dialogue with a pre-prepare agenda in just one month on Anglophones in particular and Cameroonians in general. Mr PM, I want to take exception that I see this dialogue already a failure in the sense that people who are not involve are not concerned are brought here to shout so they could shout and clap. If you want the problems of this country to be resolved, Mr Biya should summon another conference for Anglophones and listen to them.

In **text 9** above, Ni John uses confidence to acknowledge his fellow citizens, and reminds Cameroonians that he stands before them today utterly confident in his convictions regarding the "*national dialogue*." To him, Cameroonians have been invited to participate, but it makes no sense because the conference seems to be merely a theatre. He feels that the membership in the conference is faulty. Contrary to the motive of the meeting, he tells the chairman of the conference that it is doomed to fail from onset. To him, the chairman of the conference has brought people to shout and clap, yes, but they are the wrong voices. People unaffected by and unconcerned with the true plights of Anglophones and Cameroonians as a whole. If President Biya truly wishes to resolve the problems tearing this nation asunder, he must do more than permit this farcical dialogue on his tightly controlled terms. He must summon an entirely separate conference designed specifically to hear the aggrieved Anglophone populace. Speaking like an Anglophone and for them, Ni demands a forum where Anglophone voices would reign supreme, where their grievances take centre stage, where the multitude of injustices have endured are finally given the dramatized airing they deserve. Not as background noise to be occasionally indulged, but as the solely focused agenda item. He with certainty informs the chairman of the conference that the path forward is clear. He should abandon these callow efforts at feigning negotiation. Prevail upon the President to demonstrate his commitment to

unity by hearing Anglophones out. Until then, you insult us all with this arrogant pretence of inclusion. The confidence of Anglophones has already found its limit.

NJ Text 10:

I know that I am a national tutor, but that came from Bamenda, I know I am from Anglophone area and I know I feel where the shoe pinches and as you say "no no no", (Background "exactly"). Since this thing started none of you have been to Bamenda, none of you have been to the SW, but yet you are only telling me "no no no" (applauds)

In the above **text 10**, Ni John Fu Ndi in discontent responds to francophone Cameroonians during the Major national dialogue of 2019. He says I hear your "no no no" loud and clear. But choose to speak frankly as one who truly understands where the shoe pinches on the issue of Anglophone Cameroonians. He calls himself a national tutor "i am a national tutor, yes, but I hail from Bamenda in the Anglophone region". He knows the struggles Anglophones have faced, the injustices they have endured. Yet none of the Francophone representatives; self-proclaimed experts have set foot in Bamenda or the Southwest. But they sit comfortably issuing their dismissive signals of "no no no" without ever witnessing the reality on the ground. He challenges their irresponsibility for claiming to grasp the depths of the plight of Anglophones when they have never walked the streets of the towns and villages of the NW and SW of Cameroon being torn apart. Ni John deny to be silenced by their empty rhetoric to discourage him. He feels the anguish of his people coursing through his veins. The cries for fairness and equality cannot be stamped out with "no no no." This emotional charge words gives Ni an upper hands because the audience, Cameroonians feel he can do better if given the chance. Ni challenges those in the conference to change and search for substantive solutions. Not more hollow words from those blind to Anglophone suffering.

NJ Text 11:

The solution of this crisis that has occasion the convening of this conference should begin by process of the restoration of the 1961 federal constitution (applause) in so doing the west Cameroon federated state will composed of two regions, namely the northern region presently referred too as the NW region and southern region presently refer to as the SW regions.

In **text 11** above, Ni John Fru Ndi just like Kamto disagree with the motives of 2019 Major national dialogue. He genuinely suggests that the solution to the crisis lies in restoring the 1961 federal

constitution and creating a West Cameroon federated state composed of two regions, "should begin by process of the restoration of the 1961 federal constitution" the northern region (NW) and the southern region (SW). This has been the general cry of Anglophone Cameroonians for many years. His honesty in this point tilt Cameroonians attention to look up him, particularly Anglophone in Cameroon, who now see that he has a good mastery of what they are living.

NJ Text 13:

All I am fighting is Mister Biya, not Kamto; If people came into politic to fight Fru Ndi, they fail before they ever started because you are going to politic with the program that you want to lead the country. So it is unfortunate and from my political life I have never, never wished somebody dead, but those who wish me dead unfortunately some of them died before me. Therefore, it is unfortunate; you do not wish your adversary dead. You try to sell the democratic option, and if i can sell my program people who buy my program vote for me; but the program you want to sell is not a program of dead, and the program you are selling is the program that should also take care of your adversary, of your opponents.

In this **excerpt 13**, NJ acknowledges his opposition while presenting his political stance and approach. In strong terms, he disagrees with a young politician coming to politics to fight him. He acknowledges this political fight and that of others, "All I am fighting is Mister Biya, not Kamto." This statement acknowledges the opposition between the speaker's focus on opposing the incumbent leader, Mr. Biya, and neglecting the stance of another political figure Kamto, whom the speaker is not targeting. Ni John is not happy with Kamto's approach, who solely aim to oppose him and not Mr Biya who is their Target; "If people came into politic to fight Fru Ndi, they fail before they ever started because you are going to politic with the program that you want to lead the country." This acknowledgment suggests that the speaker's approach is distinct from those who solely focus on opposing individual political figures, as the speaker believes in presenting a comprehensive program to lead the country. The speaker further acknowledges the opposition between their principled approach and that of their adversaries who harbour ill intentions, stating, "So it is unfortunate and from my political life I have never, never wished somebody dead, but those who wish me dead unfortunately some of them died before me." This acknowledgment highlights the speaker's dislike to wishing harm to his opponents. This contrasts the actions of his opponents who have harboured such sentiments. Finally, the speaker acknowledges the opposition between their inclusive political program and that of their adversaries, stating, "but the

program you want to sell is not a program of dead, and the program you are selling is the program that should also take care of your adversary, of your opponents."

Manipulation Strategies in Biya's Speech

Paul Biya uses the theme of expertise as a component of credibility for qualifications, knowledge, and skills that he possesses, which contribute to his persuasive power. This is backed by audience perception that he has a good mastery of what he is saying. This appeal is a crucial aspect of ethos, as it establishes the speaker's authority and trustworthiness. Politicians in this study who showcase their knowledge on a subject through education, experience, or research enhance their credibility with this theme of expertise. This makes the audience (Cameroonians) more likely to trust their arguments. Likewise, Professional Credentials. Citing relevant qualifications, facts, or professional experience, that are directly related to Cameroonians further solidifies the politician's expertise. The use of Evidence in presenting well-known data, statistics, or case studies reinforces a speaker's expertise. This evidence supports their claims and demonstrates their understanding of the subject matter. Effectively communicating complex ideas in an accessible manner can also signal expertise. When speakers articulate their knowledge clearly, it fosters trust and engages the audience.

PB Text 14:

For close to three years now, the North-West and South-West Regions of our country have been going through a crisis that not only jeopardizes the safety and well-being of the population living there, but also has far-reaching consequences for the national community as a whole.

In this **excerpt 14**, Paul Biya reminds Cameroonians of the state of affairs in the country, particularly in the NW and SW regions of Cameroon. Through this, Cameroonians are inspired to believe that Biya has a deep understanding of the situation in the two Anglophones regions; He further demonstrates his expertise by his ability to succinctly summarize a complex ongoing situation here. By mentioning previous experiences, PB implies that he has a deep understanding of the situation and is able to offer valuable insights based on his experience. He uses a clear and direct language, which indicates a desire to effectively communicate the gravity of the situation to Cameroonians. This is seen in the signal *...our country have been going through a crisis that not only jeopardizes the safety and well-being of the population living there...*

PB Text 15:

Decisions were taken subsequently to fast-track the decentralization process, with the creation of

a new ministry devoted thereto. The upcoming regional elections will complete the process by enabling our compatriots nationwide to fully participate in the management of their local affairs.

In this **text 15**, PB exhibits honesty in his discourse on the decision to create a new ministry devoted for decentralisation which would help solve many issues in Cameroon. He genuinely sees it as an honest attempt to distribute power and authority more evenly in the national territory. Biya builds trust in Cameroonians as he gives them hope to get involved in the management of the nation's affairs when this is done. This enhances credibility, as he is perceived as being foresighted and truthful about his government. From Biya's other speeches used in this study, we see that this discourse of his is a success; his words are meant for a giving occasion and aim to develop Cameroon. Though his aspirants criticise and down grade his government, Cameroonians see him as a figure to look up to. There are conflicts in different regions of Cameroons, and decentralisation is a solution.

Biya also uses Competence as a component of credible appeal which refers to the speaker's ability and skill to be calm under pressure and self-motivated in presenting his message. Competent politicians show their capacity to analyse issues and propose effective solutions. This ability reinforces their authority and encourages audience confidence. The way they convey information clearly and confidently reflects their competence.

PB Text 16:

It should be recalled that the crisis was triggered by corporate demands made by lawyers and teachers calling for the translation of the OHADA Uniform Acts into English and the preservation of the specificity of the Anglo-Saxon judicial and educational systems in the two regions.

In this **text 16**, Paul Biya inspires beliefs through the skill of competence. He provides a clear and concise overview of the triggers in the crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions using signals like *"It should be recalled that"*. Biya summarizes the key demands that sparked the crisis. This skill undoubtedly appeals to the senses. So, Cameroonians see him like one who can solve their problem. Knowing facts about what happened in the past could solve the issues at hand. Cameroonians need a solution to the crises and through this strategy, Biya shows he is capable of solving them.

PB Text 17:

That is why I have decided to convene, from the end of this month, a major national dialogue that will, in line with our Constitution, enable us to seek

ways and means of meeting the high aspirations of the people of the North-West and South-West Regions, but also of all the other components of our Nation.

In this dissenting **text 17**, Biya uses power to announce the convening of a major national dialogue aimed at addressing the aspirations of various regions and components of the nation. The language used is clear, political, and asserts his authority to initiate a process that seeks to devolve power and address the demands of different groups within the country. The phrase *"in line with our Constitution"* positions the national dialogue as a constitutional exercise, lending legitimacy to the process and Biya's actions within the established legal framework. He recognized the regional aspirations of the people of the North West and South West regions; *"meeting the high aspirations of the people of the North-West and South-West Regions"* this acknowledges the specific demands and aspirations of these regions, potentially signalling a willingness to address their concerns and devolve power to meet their needs. His inclusion of *"all the other components of our Nation"* suggests a broader scope for the national dialogue, extending beyond the North-West and South-West Regions to encompass the concerns and aspirations of other regions in within the country. The use of the phrase *"our Nation"* reinforces the idea of a unified nation while acknowledging the diversity of its components, potentially seeking to balance the demands for devolution of power with the preservation of national unity. He exercises power and position through the phrase *"I have decided"*. This is a clear assertion of authority and power to initiate the national dialogue, leaving no room for ambiguity regarding his position and intentions for the future of the country. By situating the national dialogue within the constitutional framework, Biya is seeking to reinforce the legitimacy of the process and his position to convene it. The clear and political nature of the language reinforces the speaker's authority and commitment to devolving power and addressing regional aspirations while maintaining national unity.

Biya also explores reason for claims as a component of logical appeal (logos). It is the justifications or explanations that support a discourse. This aspect is crucial for persuading an audience, as it helps to establish a rational foundation for the claims being made. Here's how reasons for claims function in this context: Reasons provide the underlying support for claims. They explain why a claim is valid, helping the audience understand the rationale behind it. A well-structured discourse typically follows a logical flow, where claims are supported by clear reasons. This structure makes it easier for the audience to follow the speaker's line of reasoning.

PB Text 18:

Most of them no longer have Cameroonian nationality, but they spend their time raising funds to carry out terrorist acts in Cameroon, masterminding acts of arson, kidnappings and murder, and issuing calls aimed at preventing children from attending school and fellow citizens from going about their business peacefully.

In **excerpt 19** above, the speaker uses the logical appeal of providing reasons for his claims to discredit and condemn the actions of certain individuals and groups. The speaker makes a claim about some individuals and groups who are bent on disturbing the peace of Cameroon, stating, *"Most of them no longer have Cameroonian nationality."* The speaker is referring to individuals and groups of persons who have allegedly lost or renounced their Cameroonian citizenship or national identity. The speaker then provides the first reason to support and justify his claim, asserting that these individuals *"spend their time raising funds to carry out terrorist acts in Cameroon."* This reason directly accuses these individuals and groups of actively engaging in fundraising activities aimed at financing terrorist operations within Cameroon. His second reason is that these individuals are *"masterminding acts of arson, kidnappings and murder."* This portrays them as the masterminds behind serious criminal acts such as arson, kidnappings, and murders, implying a high level of coordination and malicious intent. Which are punishable by the law. But the irony (to the speaker) is that people still yield to their demands by supporting this evil. The speaker offers a third reason, claiming that these individuals are *"issuing calls aimed at preventing children from attending school and fellow citizens from going about their business peacefully."* Meaning that they are actively encouraging, and inciting actions that disrupts the education of children, as well as the peaceful daily activities of ordinary citizens.

PB Text 19:

Despite all this, some people will continue to talk of marginalization of the people of these regions. It must be acknowledged that such is human nature and there will never be enough duty posts to satisfy all the regions, divisions, sub-divisions, towns, villages, families and citizens of our country. Any choice that is made will always cause joy whenever one is honoured, and disappointment when one is not.

In this dissenting **excerpt 19**, Biya employs the logical appeal of acknowledging his opposition to address the claims of marginalization faced by Anglophone regions. The speaker begins by acknowledging the existence of an opposing viewpoint by some Cameroonian elites, stating, *"...*

Despite all this, some people will continue to talk of marginalization of the people of these regions." This statement recognizes that despite the speaker's perspective, there are individuals or groups who will persist in voicing concerns about the marginalization of these regions. The speaker believes in the fair share of the national cake. Though, his opponents see the contrary. The speaker acknowledges his opposition, asserting, "It must be acknowledged that such is human nature." This statement suggests that the speaker recognizes the tendency for differing perspectives and dissenting voices as an inherent aspect of human behaviour and in discourse. He believes that man can't be satisfied. This self-confidence makes him more credible before his audience (Cameroonians). Furthermore, the speaker elaborates on the reason for acknowledging the opposition, stating, *"there will never be enough duty posts to satisfy all the regions, divisions, sub-divisions, towns, villages, families and citizens of our country."* This reason acknowledges the practical reality that it is impossible to fully satisfy the aspirations and expectations of every individual, community, and region within the country, as resources and opportunities are inherently limited. The speaker provides a broader perspective on the inevitable outcomes of any decision or allocation of resources made each time. The unavoidable reality is that any decision or allocation will inevitably result in both positive and negative reactions, with some feeling honoured and others feeling disappointed and it is a law of life. The speaker's use of the logical appeal of acknowledging his opposition provides a justification for understanding and accepting the inevitability of differing reactions and the impossibility of fully satisfying everyone's desires or expectations.

DISCUSSIONS

Research Question One: *What are the main socio-political themes and arguments presented in the selected speeches of these Cameroon politicians?*

After applying rhetorical strategies at different levels using the three speeches, the study found that the speakers showed strategic independence on specific rhetorical features to be employed manipulatively within the sub-sub themes of ethos, logos, and pathos. All politicians rhetorically used these themes in their dissenting voices. They also used the strategies of repetition and citing at the rhetorical level of their speeches.

1. **Research Question Two:** *What are the underlying motivations and ideologies behind the dissenting voices expressed in these speeches?*

All the Politicians Had Common Objectives:

To make their voices heard positively, develop Cameroon with varying ideologies, end the

crisis in the country. Disagreement in their discourses was seen as a tool to bring the audience attention to them. Therefore, it was a reflection of how the speakers presented others negatively.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the present study is different in some perspectives: first, the studies cited in the literature review concentrate on manipulation as far as political speeches are concerned, whereas the current study explores manipulation in given Cameroon political discourse. Second, this study is concerned with manipulation from rhetorical points of view. Third, the present study investigates manipulation in three political speeches delivered by three politicians. Fourth, the three speeches' ideological dimension has been taken into consideration, and has been turned into a kind of the point of departure for enhancing the power of manipulation in these three speeches to fulfil the speakers' political aims.

CONCLUSION

This paper presents findings of how some rhetorical features seen through socio political themes and arguments are used as manipulation strategies in three speeches by three high profile Cameroon politicians. These strategies aim to affect the recipients' thoughts and actions. Also, the findings show that the political speeches have a sum of nine strategies in common, such as honesty, expertise, passion, confidence, authenticity, power, acknowledgment of opposition, compassion, and reason for claims. This is the general ideological dimension under which manipulation is visible in these three speeches. The analyses provided 19 utterances relevant for the study. Not all the politicians used the above persuasive strategies to pass on their dissenting voices. Being an aspirant, Kamto used the highest number of strategies. Fru Ndi, an aspirant too was the next. The incumbent Paul Biya used the least and was seen often as the giver of higher instructions that set a base for aspirants to disagree.

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