



EXPRESSING ETHICAL JUDGMENTS: A STRATEGY FOR DESTABILIZING THE POLITICAL OPPONENT

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Abstract:

This paper is about the analysis of moral discourse, an under-investigated field in linguistics. Taking political speeches as analytical data, the study focuses on the expressing of ethical judgments used as a means of destabilization of the political opponent. The adopted method is empirical-inductive and qualitative. Thus, the empirical verification of the validity of the research hypotheses has been possible through the exploration and interpretation of the data collected. The results of the data analysis reveal that causal attribution is a discursive practice through which the political leader expresses his subjectivity in terms of negative evaluation of the actions and political choices of the person he or she is challenging politically. The linguistic processes used in moral judgments expressing are lexical and grammatical.

Keywords: ethical judgments, political discourse, linguistics, processes, expressing

Résumé :

La présente étude porte sur l'analyse du discours moral qui constitue un parent pauvre des recherches linguistiques. L'étude analyse les jugements éthiques utilisés dans les discours politiques pour déstabiliser l'adversaire politique. La méthodologie adoptée est empirico-inductive et de type qualitatif. Ainsi, la vérification empirique de la validité des hypothèses de recherche a été marquée par l'exploration et l'interprétation des données collectées. Les résultats de l'analyse révèlent que l'attribution causale est la pratique discursive à travers laquelle le leader politique exprime sa subjectivité en termes d'évaluation négative des actions et choix politiques de son adversaire. Les procédés linguistiques d'expression des jugements moraux sont quant à eux lexicaux et grammaticaux.

Mots clés : jugements éthiques, discours politique, linguistique, procédés, expression

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Introduction

This study falls within the field of linguistic analysis of moral discourse. Moral discourse refers to the statements which, taken in context, make the interlocutor perceive that the speaker agrees or disagrees with a given action or behaviour. Moral discourse is under-investigated in language sciences (see S. Hounston & G. Thompson, 2000; J. R. Martin & P. R. White, 2006; J. Spencer-Bennett, 2018). Accordingly, O. Boukari posits that by referring to the subjective character of moral evaluation that is the source of diversity and versatility, many have paradoxically concluded that the linguist (who studies facts of language) is incapable of analysing objectively axiological phenomena /« en se referent au caractère subjectif de l'évaluation morale, source de diversité et de versatilité, beaucoup ont conclu paradoxalement à l'incapacité du linguiste (dont l'objet d'étude demeure les faits de langue) à rendre compte objectivement des questions axiologiques » (O. Boukari, 2020 quoted by O. Boukari & D. Teterou, 2021, p.69). "Consequently, there is still a lack of theorizing on moral communication in the language sciences" (M. Drescher, 2020, p.5-56).

This paper deals with moral discourse and it analyses the expression of ethical judgments as a strategy to destabilize the political adversary. Indeed, access to political power is competitive, one of the strategies used by political competitors is the stigmatization of the adversary throughout the discourse. Thus, the political actor publicly criticizes his or her adversary harshly by blaming him or her for an unfavourable situation that affects citizens. He or she makes therefore judgments in terms of good and bad. These judgments being subjective, political discourse, unlike scientific discourse, therefore does not escape subjectivity. Political discourse is highly personalized and peppered with traces, clues, points of view, opinions, feelings and ethical judgments of the speaker.

The study seeks to highlight, on the one hand, the discursive practices that fall under the stigmatization of the political competitor and on the other, the linguistic procedures for expressing ethical judgments. By making the hypothesis that the stigmatization of the political adversary comes to be through causal attributions and that the linguistic processes for expressing ethical judgments are lexical and grammatical, the methodological approach adopted for the study is empirical-inductive and of a qualitative type. This approach makes it possible to verify the research hypotheses through the analysis and interpretation of the data collected or gathered.

The first part of the study is devoted to theoretical and methodological frameworks. It clarifies the notions of political discourse, expressing of discourse, ethical judgments, responsibility and causal attribution before the presentation of the corpus and the data analysis. While the second part is devoted to the presentation of the study results. The third part is devoted to discussion. The conclusion and the bibliographical references complete this paper.

1. Theoretical and methodological framework

1.1 Theoretical framework

This section is devoted to the definition of the concepts that are essential to understanding the field of study as well as the analysis of the collected data. These concepts are: political discourse, ethical judgments, responsibility and causal attribution.

1.1.1 Political discourse

A discourse is said to be political depending on its context of production. That is to say, it is the conditions of enunciation that make it possible to categorize a discourse as being a political one. Political discourse draws its specificity from the personality of the speaker (who has a political responsibility), the mode of organization (argumentative speech, rhetoric, etc.), the aim of the speaker (influence, persuade). P. Charaudeau (2005, p.30) posits that « ce n'est (...) pas le discours qui est politique mais la situation de communication qui le rend politique (...) » "it is (...) not the discourse that is political but the context of communication that makes it political (...)". The speaker is present in this type of discourse through which **he** tries to capture the attention of the audience and to make them adhere to **his** political project. A political discourse does not describe the world. Being in search of the adhesion of the audience, it is rather the art of persuasion which is a matter of priority.

The political leader makes use of his linguistic skills in order to have access the power. Political discourse is designed above all to influence the audience by using various discursive practices. Among these discursive practices are argumentation, moral judgments etc. Argumentation and moral judgments make it possible to have a positive self-image on the one hand and to denigrate and arouse repugnance for one's political opponents on the other. It is not designed to describe but to persuade. Its analysis involves taking into account both linguistic and contextual elements. Indeed, the context determines the speech of the politician. The political actor builds the ethos which « consiste à faire bonne impression, par la façon dont on construit son discours, à donner une image de soi capable de convaincre l'auditoire en gagnant sa confiance »/ "consists in making a good impression, by the way one constructs one's speech, in giving a self-image capable of convincing the audience by gaining its trust" (D. Maingueneau, 2002, p. 1). In order to outclass his or her political adversaries, the speaker seeks throughout his speech to build a positive self-image to captivate the attention of his audience. He or she presents himself or herself as a political leader who flees the evil and stands for the good. **He** seeks to please, to arouse passions, to give the impression that **he** is the one who stands for the well-being of the audience. The political leader wants to persuade by the effect of the speech because the purpose of the political speech is to make the audience adhere to the ideological positioning of the agenda. As R. Ghiglione (1989, p.9), argues, political discourse is a « discours d'influence produit dans un monde social » "speech of influence produced in a social world", its aim is to « agir sur l'autre pour le faire agir, le faire penser, le faire croire »/ "act on the other in order to make him or her act, make him think, make him believe". It is then obvious from the foregoing statement that the speaker's points of

view, his judgments, opinions, etc. are very present in political discourse. It is therefore a highly personalized discourse which, unlike scientific discourses, does not escape expressing the speaker's subjectivity.

1.1.3 Ethical or moral judgment

Ethical or moral judgments are judgments the speaker uses to approve or disapprove of someone's action. In this paper morality and ethics are used as synonyms and are used interchangeably (see J. Spencer-Bennett, 2018; M. Drescher, 2020; O Boukari & D. Teterou, 2021). Morality or ethics is a verbal activity through which the speaker expresses **his** agreement or disagreement about a given action or behaviour. Moral judgments are therefore subjective (J. Spencer-Bennett, 2018; S. Hunston, 2010; A. J. Ayer, 1936). Moreover, ethical judgment emerges through the statement and the context of the speech. Moral or ethical judgment emerges only in the contextual use of language. A moral judgment can only be decoded by the interlocutor by taking into account both the statement and the context of the enunciation, or through the linguistic and extralinguistic. Ethical judgment is hidden in the context of enunciation. Analysing moral judgments is to make a contextual interpretation of what is non-explicit in a given statement in terms of positive or negative judgment. It is therefore to go in search of what the speaker does beyond what he says. Moral judgments are found in the background, they are generally not the subject of the discourse, they are not explicit, but rather enveloped and perceived through the context of enunciation.

To sum up, ethical judgments are discursive, that is, they emerge through discourse and cannot truly be deduced outside of a given communication situation. The perception of moral judgments in political discourse is possible through the mobilization of a complex set of elements, in particular (i) the representations or prior information that we have about the personality of the political leader who is speaking (the speaker comes from the regime in place? from the opposition? an unsuccessful candidate in the elections?...); (ii) the moment of enunciation and (iii) verbal resources. But on what basis do political leaders make ethical judgments in their professional speech?

1.1.4 Responsibility and causal attribution

Ethical or moral judgments are essentially based on the idea of "responsibility" of the human being. Indeed, the human being has the possibility of acting well or acting badly when it comes to decision-making. The human being endowed with the faculty of discernment is morally responsible through the acts he poses because he has the possibility of act or not to act. There is moral responsibility when an act is judged in terms of good or evil with regard to the resulting consequence. The notions of "responsibility" and morality are therefore intimately linked. Ethical judgments are easily stimulated when a person is held responsible for harm caused to others as a result of a given choice. This possibility of a choice which the human being has presupposes causal attributions. There is causal attribution when, in the adversary's discourse, the speaker holds a person responsible for a given consequence following a good or bad action. In political discourse, causal attribution comes to be by the fact that the political leader expresses **his**

disagreement with **his** political adversary's acts. Through causal attribution, the speaker shows that the person **he** is challenging is the cause of the pain that citizens are experiencing.

In which socio-political context are the analysed discourses made?

1.1.5 Socio-political context of Republic of Togo from 2005 to 2020

On February 5, 2005, Eyadema Gnassingbé died after 38 years in power (1967-2005). While the opposition parties have mobilized to get power, it is rather Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé who succeeded his father as president of the republic. During this period (2005-2020), four presidential elections were held in Togo. They were all won by Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé with 60.2% of the vote against 38.2% of the vote for Emmanuel Bob Akitani in 2005; 60.9% of votes against 33.9% of votes for Jean-Pierre Fabre in 2010; 58.77% of votes against 35.19% of votes for Jean-Pierre Fabre in 2015 and 70.78% of votes against 19.46% of votes for Agbéyomé Kodjo in 2020.

The parliament is formed only of MPs or members of parliament. This parliament has always been dominated by the ruling party (RPT/UNIR) with 50 parliamentarians over 81 in the 2007 legislative elections; 62 deputies over 91 in the legislative elections of 2013 and 59 lawmakers over 91 in the legislative elections of 2018. This numerical majority allows the Constitution and the electoral code to be constantly revised or amended within the framework of the legislative and presidential elections guaranteeing Faure Gnassingbé to be elected in the presidential elections in one round and without the reinstatement of term limits until the constitutional revision of 2019. It is the law n°2019-003 of May 15, 2019 amendments of the Constitution which reintroduce the limitation to two (02) terms the limit of the number of presidential mandates, the vote of the diaspora and the uninominal majority ballot in two rounds for the election of the Head of State. The constitutional revision of May 15, 2019 was preceded by socio-political demonstrations initiated by Tikpi Atchadam of the PNP from August 19, 2017. These demonstrators asked for the return to the Constitution of October 14, 1992 which already limited the number of terms to two and advocated the organization of presidential elections in two rounds before the initial revision it underwent in 2002. However, the constitutional revision of 2019, thanks to the reorganization of its article 158, allows the incumbent president Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé to still seek a fourth and a fifth mandate, because he had the mandate to be eligible in the presidential election of 2020 and that of 2025. As the ruling party-dominated parliament deemed that this amendment does not apply to the incumbent president.

1.2 Methodological approach

The data is made up of 76 written speeches, 05 audio speeches of approximately 2h 34min and 07 audio-visual speeches of approximately 3h 08min. They are political speeches (New Year greetings, press conferences, speeches at political party congresses, interviews and many other political events) held in Togo from 2005 to 2020. These data were collected at political party headquarters, on YouTube, print media, online media, political party websites and Facebook pages. These collected speeches are either written or oral

(audio, audio-visual). We first proceeded to the manual transcription of the oral speeches. When transcribing speeches, the exclamatory intonation is marked with an exclamation mark "!" while the inquiries are marked with a question mark "?". A truncated speech is indicated by [...]. The brief pause is marked with a comma "," while the longer one is marked with a full stop ". ". Then, the data is analysed with regard to the research question to check the validity of the research hypotheses. Concretely, the analysis consisted of the exploration and the interpretation of the linguistic techniques which, put in connection with the context of enunciation contribute to the expressing of the ethical judgments.

2. Analysis

In this section, the results of data analysis that focuses on causal attributions in political discourse and the expression of ethical judgments are presented. Each competitor holds the political adversary morally responsible for the suffering the citizens' experience.

2.1 Causal attributions in political discourse

A causal attribution in discourse is the fact that the speaker argues that someone's action is the cause of something. In this specific case, we speak of causal attribution when the political leader imputes the responsibility for an unsatisfactory situation experienced by the citizens to his political adversary. It is an accusation against those who are politically fought on the basis of the idea of "responsibility". Concretely, through his/her statement, the political leader presents himself/ herself as a spectator who observes the Togolese citizens in pain and for this decides to break with indifference. Thus, he or she takes the floor to reveal to the citizens the source of the difficulties they experience in their life. The statement and its context are taken into account; the audience perceives that the problem experienced is the consequence of the actions of a given individual. These are accusations based on good and evil. They are made to show that the political adversary is acting badly. The causal attribution is therefore moral. It is not based on factual phenomena and cannot be scientifically demonstrated. That is why it happens that political leaders mutually reject responsibility for a given dramatic situation. Causal attributions constitute a strategy of conquest of power for the politician. Indeed, by being indignant at the penalty that his adversary causes to the electorate, it appears a certain desire to abolish the said penalty if the electorate grants him the votes to gain power. He wants the electorate to recognize that he wants to free them from the pain that this political actor causes on them.

The illustrations in (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7) illustrate the causal attributions in political discourses in Togo.

(1)

« **L'entêtement de l'armée et du parti au pouvoir, le RPT, à maintenir les mêmes méthodes de gouvernement faites de terrorisme d'État, de violence, d'arbitraire, de mensonge, de fraudes électorales et de répressions, ont conduit à la situation**

dramatique que, de leur fait, le pays connaît aujourd’hui avec plus de 800 personnes tuées, plus de 4.500 blessés, plus de 200 prisonniers et plus de 40.000 réfugiés au Bénin et au Ghana depuis l’élection frauduleuse du 24 avril 2005. » (Gilchrist Olympio, face à la Communauté togolaise de France, 22/10/2005)

“The stubbornness of the army and the ruling party, the RPT, in maintaining the same methods of government made up of state terrorism, violence, arbitrariness, lies, electoral fraud and repressions, have led to the dramatic situation that, because of them, the country is experiencing today with more than 800 people killed, more than 4,500 injured, more than 200 prisoners and more than 40,000 refugees in Benin and Ghana since the fraudulent election of April 24, 2005.” (Gilchrist Olympio, Speech with the Togolese Community in France, 22/10/2005)

(2)

« 2017 a été également marquée par cette initiative qui a opportunément attisé un feu qui couvait à cause de la **désinvolture, l’insouciance et l’insolence du régime RPT/UNIR**. (Brigitte Adjamagbo-Johnson, Message de vœux à l’occasion du nouvel an 2018)

“2017 was also marked by this initiative which conveniently stoked a fire that was smoldering because of the casualness, carelessness and insolence of the RPT/UNIR regime”. (Brigitte Adjamagbo-Johnson, 2018 new year greetings)

(3)

« Depuis 19 août 2017, une crise éclate au Togo, **un pays dirigé d’une main de fer depuis plus d’un demi-siècle par une seule et même famille** qui entend instaurer pour l’avenir à partir de 2020 une monarchie absolue [...] **C’est un régime réfractaire à l’alternance qui s’oppose par tous les moyens à la démocratisation du pays**. » (Tikpi Atchadam, 8 janvier 2019)

“Since August 19, 2017, a crisis has erupted in Togo, a country ruled with an iron fist for more than half a century by one and the same family which intends to establish for the future from 2020 an absolute monarchy [...] It is a refractory regime to alternation which opposes by all means the democratization of the country”. (Tikpi Atchadam, January 8, 2019)

The illustrations in (1), (2), and (3) come from speeches by the Togolese opposition. The first relates to the socio-political demonstration that followed the presidential election of April 24, 2005. The last two allude to the political crisis that Togo experienced from the simultaneous demonstrations in several cities of Togo on August 19, 2017. The three excerpts are therefore set out in situations of political crises that have afflicted harmful consequences for the Togolese people: people killed, injured, refugees, political prisoners, etc. Opposition leaders blame the political instability and the regrettable consequences that flow from it on the regime in place. The latter is responsible for it by his bad methods of government in (1); his offensive attitude and contempt for the opposition in (2) and his reluctance against the advent of political alternation in (3).

In (1), Gilchrist Olympio talks about the presidential election of April 24, 2005. This election was organized due to the death of the late President Gnassingbé Eyadema who, elected in 2003, should complete his mandate in 2008. Gilchrist Olympio is the president of the Union des Forces de Changement (UFC) party which took part to this election through the candidacy of Emmanuel Bob Akitani. According to the final results announced by the Constitutional Court on May 2, 2005, Gilchrist Olympio's party (UFC) lost this election with 38.2% of the vote against 60.2% for Faure Gnassingbé of the RPT party is the ruling party since 1967. These results were contested by the opposition through demonstrations that led to the following consequences evoked by Gilchrist Olympio: more than 800 people killed, more than 4500 injured, more than 200 prisoners and more than 40000 refugees in Benin and Ghana. The Togolese, therefore, experienced a deplorable situation following the 2005 presidential election. Gilchrist Olympio, whose party disputes the results of the election, expresses his anger towards the RPT regime which he believes is the culprit. For him, the contestation of the results of the presidential election and the resulting consequences are justified by the poor management of the country by the ruling regime. It is because of terrorism, violence, arbitrariness, lies, electoral fraud and repressions used by the RPT party in the management of the country that Togo experiences the death of people participating to demonstrations, injuries, refugees and political prisoners. The methods of government of the RPT, therefore, inflict penalties on the Togolese people.

In (2), it is Brigitte Adjamagbo-Johnson, an opponent of the ruling party, who speaks to the Togolese people on behalf of her message of the 2018 new year greetings. Her act of enunciation takes after a crisis that shook Togo through opposition demonstrations demanding the return to the 1992 Constitution which enshrines the limitation to two of the number of presidential mandates; a two-round ballot for the election of the President of the Republic, etc. These opposition demonstrations, which constitute "the initiative which opportunely fanned a smoldering fire", have led to harmful consequences ranging from the destruction of property to the death of human beings at the level of the army and civilians. Knowing that the demands of the opposition have not been satisfied, Brigitte Adjamagbo-Johnson holds the ruling party responsible for this failure. The regime is held responsible because, for her, it adopts blameworthy behaviour marked by its casualness, its recklessness and its insolence with regard to the demands of the opposition. The speaker makes use of axiological lexical items which incriminate the ruling party about the consequences (death of men, injuries, destruction of property, etc.) that followed the demonstrations.

The excerpt in (3) also comes from the discourse of the Togolese opposition. Indeed, Tikpi Atchadam who is the speaker is from Parti National Panafricain (PNP) which called its activists to carry out simultaneous demonstrations in several cities of Togo on August 19, 2017 for the advent of political upheaval in Togo. The demonstrations of August 19, 2017 were followed by other demonstrations which ultimately resulted in deaths without achieving the departure of Faure Gnassingbé from the presidential chair. According to Tikpi Atchadam, this crisis is only the consequence of the mode of

management of the country with “un bras de fer”/“iron fist” by “une seule et même famille”/ which intends to establish an absolute monarchy.

The illustrations in (1), (2) and (3) clearly show that the Togolese opposition expresses its anger towards the ruling party, which it holds responsible for the political crises with harmful consequences for the Togolese people. For her, it is because the ruling party is acting badly that Togo is experiencing these political crises with deplorable consequences marked by deaths, material destruction, economic damage, etc. The head of the state also makes causal attributions to his political adversaries as mentioned in (4) and (5).

(4)

Journaliste : « La revendication de votre départ immédiat est une revendication maximaliste. N'est-ce pas plutôt une posture de négociation ? »

Faure Gnassingbé : « C'est possible, même si je suis certain que certains ont cru que mon renversement par la force était faisable. **C'est là le problème de notre opposition: poser des exigences irréalistes, être par la suite incapable d'expliquer à sa base pourquoi elles ne sont pas suivies d'effet et en être réduit à blâmer le gouvernement.** » (Faure Gnassingbé, 10 décembre 2017, Interview donnée à Jeune Afrique)

Journalist: “The demand for your immediate departure is a maximalist demand. Isn't it rather a negotiation posture?”

Faure Gnassingbé: “It is possible, although I am sure that some believed that my overthrow by force was feasible. This is the problem with our opposition: making unrealistic demands, then being unable to explain to their partisans why they did not succeed. Then, they fall into blaming the government.” (Faure Gnassingbé, December 10, 2017, Interview given to Jeune Afrique)

(5)

« Je suis triste pour mon pays. Au-delà de l'affichage d'intentions démocratiques, ce que cherchent mes adversaires c'est la captation du pouvoir avant le terme de mon actuel mandat. Tout cela est vain, **mais le risque de ruiner la réputation du Togo auprès de la communauté internationale et des investisseurs est, lui, bien réel.** C'est pourquoi je suis déterminé à faire respecter l'état de droit et à protéger nos acquis économiques et sociaux dans l'intérêt de tous les Togolais. » (4_Faure Gnassingbé, 10 décembre 2017, Interview donnée à Jeune Afrique)

“I am sad for my country. Beyond the display of democratic intentions, what my opponents seek is the capture of power before the end of my current mandate. All this is impossible, but the risk of ruining Togo's reputation with the international community and investors is very real. This is why I am determined to uphold the rule of law and to protect our economic and social gains in the interest of all Togolese.” (Faure Gnassingbé, December 10, 2017, Interview given to Jeune Afrique)

The two illustrations in (4) and (5) are taken from the interview that Faure Gnassingbé gave to Jeune Afrique on December 10, 2017. The president was speaking at a time when Togo was going through a period of turbulence since the demonstrations events of August 19, 2017. The interview focuses on this political crisis in Togo under the aegis of the Parti National Panafricain (PNP). For Faure Gnassingbé, the political crisis that Togo has gone through with regrettable consequences is only the fault of his political opponents. His political adversaries incite their militants to go out to demonstrate in the street with the intention of overthrowing the head of state by force. It is therefore an opposition that makes “unrealistic demands” in its quest for power. These unrealistic demands, which are the basis of the “demonstrations”, “insurrections” of the opposition are likely to “ruin Togo's reputation with the international community and investors”.

In this section, causal attributions in the political discourses in Togo are analysed. These causal attributions consist for the speaker to break with indifference and to exteriorize his concern, his emphatic anger by denouncing the bad acts of his political adversary affecting negatively Togolese citizens. The author of a causal attribution thus presents himself as a spectator, a witness of the evil, of the suffering that citizens are experiencing and attributes the responsibility for this situation to the person he is fighting politically. He shows the people the culprit of their suffering, the danger, the misfortune they are experiencing. Causal attributions, therefore, consist in identifying one's political adversary as being the cause of some evil. As a result, these causal attributions are closely linked to the idea of good and evil, and therefore to morality. They are made without factual bases and it happens that sometimes political leaders attribute responsibility to each other for certain deplorable facts. Thus, causal attributions are ethical judgments that fall within the subjectivity of the speaker. In the lines that follow, our analysis will focus on the linguistic devices marking the subjectivity of the speaker within his discourse.

2.2 Expressing moral judgments destabilizing the political adversary

The attribution of moral responsibility refers to the fact that the speaker indicates that the action of his political adversary is the cause of the pain experienced by citizens. The speaker thus judges the acts of his political adversary whom he or she holds responsible for a situation that is harmful to the people. It is an ethical judgment with a pejorative connotation of the actions of the one who is politically opposed. Indeed, the identification of the political adversary as the source of the suffering of the people cannot be demonstrated scientifically with factual evidence. It is an accusation that only depends on the subjectivity of the speaker. The latter being in a political competition uses this means to destabilize his opponent who is also mobilizing the electorate. The expression of this subjectivity of the speaker is done through lexical and grammatical devices that should be studied in the following lines.

2.2.1 Lexical devices blaming the political adversary

Engaged in political competition, political leaders judge each other's behaviour in terms of the harm caused to the electorate. The leaders of the Togolese opposition let their

negative judgments of the attitude of the ruling party. These judgments are perceived through lexical devices that mark the presence of the “speaker” in his or her utterance. Indeed, faced with their struggle for the “liberation of the country”, the ruling party opposes them with an attitude of contempt and disdain. This attitude, according to them “creates conditions of uncontrolled violence” and prevents “an honorable exit from a recurring and thirty-year socio-political crisis”. This is why they express their anger, the conception of the evil they have of their political adversary through lexical devices deployed in their speeches such as in (6) and (7) below.

(6)

« 2017 a été également marquée par cette initiative qui a opportunément attisé un feu qui couvait à cause de la **désinvolture, l’insouciance et l’insolence** du régime RPT/UNIR. » (1_Brigitte Adjmagbo-Johnson, Message de vœux à l’occasion du nouvel an 2018)

“2017 was also marked by this initiative which conveniently stoked a fire that was smoldering because of **the casualness, carelessness and insolence** of the RPT/UNIR regime.” (Brigitte Adjmagbo-Johnson, 2018 new year greetings)

(7)

« 19 août 2017, 8 janvier 2019. Déjà plus d’une année de lutte pour la libération de notre pays en vue de l’avènement d’un Togo par tous et pour tous et le régime refuse d’entendre raison. Il refuse et cela est manifeste de revenir de son état de **sourd, muet, aveugle** dans lequel il s’est volontairement plongé. » (Tikpi Atchadam, 8 janvier 2019).

“August 19, 2017, January 8, 2019. Already more than a year of struggle for the liberation of our country with a view to the advent of a Togo by all and for all and the regime refuses to listen to reason. It refuses and it is obvious to come back from its state of **deaf, dumb, blind** which it voluntarily adopted.” (Tikpi Atchadam, January 8, 2019)

In (6) and (7), Brigitte Adjmagbo-Johnson and Tikpi Atchadam allude to the behaviour of the RPT/UNIR regime according to the socio-political crisis that Togo experienced in 2017. They let the negative judgments they have of this behaviour through the use of the lexical items *désinvolture* “casualness”, *insouciance* “recklessness” and *insolence* “insolence” in (6) and *sourd* “deaf”, *muet* “dumb”, and *aveugle* “blind”, in (7). However, while it is easy to recognize that casualness, recklessness and insolence are words that negatively judge the behavioural conduct of a given individual, the same is not evident for the words *sourd* “deaf”, *muet* “dumb”, and *aveugle* “blind”. Negative judgment expressed by these words can only be perceived by the interlocutor only by taking into account the context and the co-text. Brigitte Adjmagbo-Johnson, condemns the fact that RPT / UNIR adopts an attitude of casualness, recklessness and insolence in a crisis situation where the populations express their dissatisfaction in the street. She expresses her anger, her disapproval of the behaviour of the ruling party through these

words and thus marks her presence or her subjectivity through her speech. In (7), the words *sourd* "deaf", *muet* "dumb" and *aveugle* "blind" in their primary sense designate a disability-related respectively to hearing, language and sight. They each designate an involuntary handicap that affects a given individual and that can easily be observed in the person. But in the enunciation situation of illustration (7), these words rather characterize a voluntary behavioural act that cannot be observed. This gives them the property of morally loaded items because Tikpi Atchadam uses them to verbalize the way in which he personally conceives the behavioural conduct of his political opponent. He denounces through these words, a total silence of the RPT / UNIR when the opposition and the populations are demonstrating in the street. It is therefore a contemptuous and insulting silence that the leaders of opposition judge as unworthy of esteem, respect and attention, neither by sight, nor by speech, nor by hearing.

If in (6) and (7) it is behavioural conduct that is condemned. In (8) there are lexical items through which Gilchrist Olympio blames the methods of government.

(8)

« **L'entêtement** de l'armée et du parti au pouvoir, le RPT, à maintenir les mêmes méthodes de gouvernement faites **de terrorisme d'État, de violence, d'arbitraire, de mensonge, de fraudes électorales et de répressions, ont conduit à la situation dramatique** que, de leur fait, le pays connaît aujourd'hui avec plus de 800 personnes tuées, plus de 4.500 blessés, plus de 200 prisonniers et plus de 40.000 réfugiés au Bénin et au Ghana depuis l'élection frauduleuse du 24 avril 2005. » (5-Gilchrist Olympio, face à la Communauté togolaise de France, 22/10/2005)

"The stubbornness of the army and the ruling party, the RPT, in maintaining the same methods of government made up of terrorism, violence, arbitrariness, lies, electoral fraud and repressions, have led to the dramatic situation that, because of them, the country is experiencing today with more than 800 people killed, more than 4500 injured, more than 200 prisoners and more than 40000 refugees in Benin and Ghana since the fraudulent election of April 24, 2005." (Gilchrist Olympio, Speech with the Togolese Community in France, 22/10/2005)

Gilchrist Olympio marks his presence through his speech by characterizing the methods of government of his political adversary. The word *entêtement* "stubbornness" reveals that the utterer conceives that the RPT persists in negativity. This negativity is made up of terrorism, violence, arbitrariness, lies, electoral fraud and repression. Through these words and expressions, Gilchrist Olympio makes a negative personal assessment of the methods of government of the ruling party.

After this analysis of morally loaded lexical items, the analysis now addresses the grammatical techniques of blaming the political adversary.

2.2.2 Grammatical techniques blaming the political adversary

In this section, we analyse the grammatical techniques that are used to express the utterer's moral judgments within his discourse. In the political speeches collected, the

competitors for the presidential seat express their subjectivity through types of utterances such as the illustrations in (9) and (10) show.

(9)

Nous sommes régulièrement l'objet de manœuvres de déstabilisation ourdies par de prétendus amis qui se proclament défenseurs de la même cause que l'Alliance Nationale pour le Changement. De prétendus amis qui se sont révélés tout dernièrement une véritable entrave à notre marche résolue vers l'alternance et le changement auxquels aspirent les Togolaises et les Togolais. **Comment comprendre qu'un parti qui a signé un accord de gouvernement avec le RPT/UNIR depuis dix ans se réclame de l'opposition ?** Quel sens donner aux mots d'ordre démobilisateurs en 2018, au moment où la lutte exigeait une montée en puissance de la pression populaire par les manifestations publiques pacifiques, face aux insuffisances de la feuille de route de la CEDEAO ? » (11-Jean-Pierre Fabre, 10 octobre 2020, Discours d'ouverture à l'occasion du Conseil national de l'ANC)

« We are regularly the object of destabilization acts hatched by so-called friends who claim to be defenders of the same cause as the Alliance National pour le Changement (ANC). So-called friends who have recently proved to be a real obstacle to our resolute struggle for the alternation and change to which the Togolese aspire. **How to understand that a party that has signed a government agreement with the RPT / UNIR for ten years claims to be from the opposition?** What meaning should be given to demobilizing slogans in 2018, when the struggle demanded an increase in popular pressure through peaceful public demonstrations, in the face of the shortcomings of the ECOWAS roadmap?" (Jean-Pierre Fabre, October 10, 2020, Opening speech at the National Council of the ANC)

(10)

[...] que d'élections tripatouillées. Au Togo, ceux qui gagnent les élections ne gouvernent pas. Je pense à Gilchrist Olimpino, je pense à Akitani Bob, je pense à Jean-Pierre Fabre. Par contre, ceux qui perdent les élections gouvernent. Je pense à Eyadema Gnassingbé, je pense à Gnassingbé Faure. **Mais quel paradoxe électoral !** (Tikpi Atchadam, 02 juillet 2017 au stade d'Agoè)

« [...] what rigged elections. In Togo, those who win the elections do not govern. I'm thinking of Gilchrist Olimpino, I'm thinking of Akitani Bob, I'm thinking of Jean-Pierre Fabre. On the other hand, those who lose the elections govern. I think of Eyadema Gnassingbé, I think of Gnassingbé Faure. **But what an electoral paradox!**" (Tikpi Atchadam, July 2, 2017 at the Agoè stadium)

In (9) and (10), speakers resort to grammar in order to express their ethical judgments. This is precisely the interrogative sentence in (9) and the exclamatory sentence in (10). Indeed, in (9), it is a type of sentence, in this case the interrogative

sentence which translates the responsibility of the UFC in the failure of the "resolute struggle for alternation and change to which the Togolese aspire". Jean-Pierre Fabre denounces through this question, the duplicity of the UFC party which he believes is subservient to the ruling party. Through this interrogative sentence, the interlocutor perceives that Jean-Pierre Fabre is suspicious of the UFC, which he considers to be an obstacle to the advent of political change in Togo. In (12), the exclamatory sentence "But what an electoral paradox!" translates the negative judgment that Tikpi Atchadam has of the management of elections in Togo. This sentence closes an abnormal practice that he evokes where those who win the elections do not govern and it is those who lose the elections who govern.

3. Conclusion

Linguistic devices make it possible to express either the certainty of the speaker or the evaluation that he makes of something. Certainty relates to whether the speaker indicates that he is convinced or not of what he is saying. Evaluation on the other hand refers to the negative or positive judgments that the speaker makes through his discourse. The aim of this paper was to analyse linguistic phenomena expressing ethical judgments so as to destabilize political adversaries. The method adopted, an empirical-inductive and qualitative one, is used to make an empirical analysis of the data collected. The results of the analysis reveal that the ethical judgments of destabilization of the political adversary are perceived through lexical and grammatical devices. The lexical processes of expressing negative ethical judgments are marked by the use of pejorative lexical items condemning the actions, the methods of government or the strategies of the conquest of the power of the political adversary. As for the grammatical processes, the political leaders make use of the types of sentences in particular the interrogative and exclamatory ones to express their negative judgments of those whom they are challenging politically. This discourse analysis reveals ideology and social relations to power as the study involves the study of institutions, social groups and social movements so as to understand how people in various settings and situations use language to represent the world to themselves, to others and of others.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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