

Scintillating Catch Phrases in Selected Presidential End of Year Speeches in Cameroon

Joefrey Ngha Fuh Nji
The University of Dschang

ABSTRACT

This study explores scintillating catch phrases in selected presidential end of year speeches in Cameroon. The study investigates how scintillating catchphrases have been used by the president during his end of year speeches. The paper argues that he wants to capture the attention of the audience and convince them to believe in his discourse, so the citizens can continue to support him and his political ideology and to maintain self in power. The analysis will bother on some selected speeches which the paper finds necessary to meet the objective of the research. The data is collected from Cameroon Tribune the state bilingual daily newspaper which publishes the end of year speeches in both French and English. Only the English versions have been used in the work. The theoretical framework that has informed this research is Critical Discourse Analysis drawing largely on Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) 2009, and Teun van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA), which opines 'that properties of language which can vary as a function of social power should be taken into account when analyzing language' (Van Dijk, 2009). For the DHA, language is not independently powerful-it gains power through the use 'powerful' individuals make of. (Wodak, 2009). The results reveal that president Paul Biya uses and switches from one catch phrase to the other in order to spur his audience and capture their attention. These catchphrases are used to good effect in order to lay bare his arguments for the development of the country and to better the living conditions of Cameroonians.

Keywords: scintillating, catch phrases, presidential, end of year, speeches.

INTRODUCTION

Cameroon has neither a long nor a rich tradition of research in political discourse analysis. It was not until 1987 when Mbongo studied Presidential speeches with the aim of revealing the nature and functions of the English of politics in Cameroon by disclosing the stylistic devices the president used to make language a powerful tool. He was closely followed by Stephen Ambe in 2005 who wrote the first PhD Thesis wholly devoted to the analysis of leadership (political and religious) discourse in Cameroon. The next in this series was Lem Lilian Atanga who in 2007 completed a thesis on the interplay between gender, discourse and power in Cameroon Parliament discourse. Mforteh (2005; 2006) examines leadership discourse in Cameroon from 1990 to 2000 with aim of showing how the will of leaders to persuade their listeners and followers of their ability to salvage Cameroon from its perilous socio-economic and political situation, was reflected in their texts. Leading actors in the crisis were of course not only politicians but religious leaders also played a key role in advising and attempting to guide or influence political stances of their flocks. Thus, Mforteh uses the term 'leadership discourse' to refer to both political and religious discourse that he analyses with focus on lexical choices,

discourse organization and functions. Atanga (2009) investigates gender and power relations in the Cameroonian parliament using a critical discourse analytical approach, which focuses on social issues and seeks to expose unequal relations within institutions. Her data is made up of material gathered from discussions and question-answers sessions in parliament. The study is both qualitative and quantitative and examines the amount of male and female talk and the gendered distribution of topics, as well as how female and male parliamentarians are addressed (i.e. titulation). The analysis per se is carried out using Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach of CDA. Dassé (2007) probes the signals of hope in Cameroon political discourse using George Lakoff's Simple Framing Model as framework of analysis. The aim is to examine the lexicon, deitic expressions and the tenses politicians from the ruling party (CPDM) and those from the main opposition party (SDF) used to conjure up hope in their listeners and followers. Dassé's (2007) work is therefore oriented towards content analysis as he identifies, counts and compares the use of lexes for castigating and upbeat motives by either camp. The analysis of the data reveals that globally, politicians from either side tend to use more positive than negative lexes. He further realizes that politicians from the ruling party tend to use more positive lexes than those from the opposition party, and that the reverse is true regarding the use of negative lexes. Finally, he notices that both ruling party and the opposition party texts contain more verbs in the present and future tenses than in the past tense. Moreover Dassé (2008) carries out a pragmatic appraisal of persuasion in Cameroon political discourse. Departing from the now in vogue tendency to look at signals of persuasion in discourse through the study of rhetorical patterns and identification and labelling of lexical items, he uses Grice's Maxims of Communication, coupled with Sperber and Wilson's Relevance theory as measuring rods of the data. The hypothesis is that in their exertion to conquer or to retain power, Aspirant and Incumbent politicians in Cameroon opt for 'strategic communication' that he defines as an intentional non-co-operative use of language, which makes it difficult for their followers to decide on which of the two is trustworthy. This hypothesis is tested on selected opposition and ruling party-political texts produced in Cameroon from 2000 to 2008. Kamdem (2008) studies selected presidential speeches delivered during the 1990s, a period of social, economic and political trouble in Cameroon. His aim is to 'examine the discourse strategies used by an incumbent Head of State and political leader to elicit actions from his recipients in particularly troubled socio-political and economic environment'.

This paper consists of a study of selected presidential end of year speeches, and the rationale lies in the curiosity world of catchphrases used in the speeches. It consists of an attempt to understand what is beyond these catchphrases and to share their comprehension with the public. The public indeed merely throw their eyes on these phrases but they are not very often inquisitive about the meanings they stand for. It is here then that, as it will be explained later, that one finds out the place of semantics, the study of the meanings of words and phrases (Hornby, AS 2000). It would be interesting for us to understand the motivation and philosophy that urged the president to conceive such catchphrases and use them in his end of year speeches, and the deep meanings they are meant to communicate to the Cameroonian people.

OBJECTIVE

This study attempts to understand the underlying intentions of Paul Biya's use of catchphrases in his end of year speeches as he addresses the nation. It intends to disclose what is beyond these catchphrases and decode the various messages they embody in order to share them with the public. It examines the contexts and circumstances which led Paul Biya to display his

internal feelings and ideas that denote a range of motives based on social paradigms that express individual struggle for life, general opinions and collective experiences. Presumably, these catchphrases explore all spheres of social life by praising virtues and denouncing evil. They constitute a high perception of life and show that each situation and event have not only their burdens and worries that require relevant responses but also, they provide thoughts and strategies conducive to specific solutions. Their objective consists then in arousing collective consciousness that may lead people to be aware of their environment that seems to be cruel and evil but also inspiring, evocative and resourceful.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

This study is undertaken within the framework of critical discourse analysis drawing largely on the discourse-historical approach (DHA) of Wodak and research associates to identify macro discourses, topics and subtopics. It equally draws further on van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach which stipulates that those properties of language that can vary as a function of social power should be taken into account when analyzing discourse. As opined by (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, p. 258), discourse analyses are a rapidly developing area of language study. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997) and (Wodak and Meyer, 2009) note that CDA cannot be classified as a single method but rather as an approach, which consists of different perspectives and different methods for the study of the relationship between the use of language and social contexts.

For (Van, Dijk, 2007a) and (Wodak, 2008a) there are at least seven dimensions in the study of discourse using this methodology.

1. An interest in the properties of '*naturally occurring*' language use by real language users (instead of abstract language system)
2. A focus on *larger units than isolated words and sentences*-texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts or communicative events.
3. The extension of linguistics *beyond sentence grammar* towards a study of action and reaction.
4. The extension to *non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects* of interaction and communication: gestures, images, film, internet.
5. A focus on dynamic (socio) cognitive or interactional moves and strategies.
6. A study of the functions of (social, cultural, situative and cognitive) *contexts of language use*.
7. An analysis of a vast number of phenomena of text grammar and language use: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interactions, turn taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, mental models and many other aspects of text and discourse.

When one takes a close look at all of these tenets of CDA, one sees that it is the best tool for the analysis the discourses scintillating catch phrases and the number game in selected end of year presidential speeches in Cameroon. (Richardson, 2007, p. 1) submits that, as a theory and method, analyses the way individuals and institutions use language. Analysts here, according to (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249) should focus on 'relations between discourse, power and dominance and inequality and discourse (re)produces and maintains these relations of dominance and inequality' due to their concern with the analysis of the 'often opaque relations' between

discourse practices and wider social and cultural structures. A researcher submits that CDA practitioners should take an 'explicit socio-political stance (Ibid, 2007, p. 252).

When doing an analysis of speeches like those of the President of Cameroon on scintillating catch phrases, it is very important to look at the historical perspective and evolution of these speeches, reason why DHA is invaluable for this study. The mental models of President Paul Biya who delivers these speeches at the end of the year, which aims at making an evaluation of what has been achieved so far and prospect for the future on how to improve on the living conditions of Cameroonians is brought out using the SCA approach to CDA.

DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The data for this study is got from Cameroon Tribune as already stated in the abstract. The data is selected from end of year speeches of President Paul Biya from 1982 to 2022. End of year speeches are pertinent in that they are evaluative and prospective to enhance a proper understanding of presidential prescriptions and what he intends for his country and citizens every year. Only the speeches that carry scintillating catch phrases were earmarked and used, the reason for which not all the speeches are shortlisted in the analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The study utilized qualitative methods as a basic technique to explore and analyze some of the end of year speeches of Paul Biya. The strength of the qualitative technique allows a broad view to be taken and made the research approach more flexible. The analyses focus on scintillating catchphrases, in the selected speeches of Paul Biya as indicated in the corpus, the analysis shall be in excerpt and the structures analyzed shall be in bold.

The analysis shall comprise scintillating catch phrases. In the course of the analysis the importance of each of the subtopics shall be highlighted.

PRESENTATION OF SCINTILLATING CATCH PHRASES

As we look forward to listing catchphrases as got from the selected presidential end of year speeches, it would be good to define the concept 'catchphrase'. On the Wikipedia website, a catchphrase is a short phrase or expression which has gained usage beyond its initial scope. For Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003), it is a word or expression that is used repeatedly and conveniently to represent or characterize a person, group, idea, or point of view. In other words, it is a kind of phrase that attracts one's attention. That is, the sender of the message is the holder of the sense of this message, and then it is up to the receiver to guess the content of what is said or written. According to Harris (2006: 863-879), asserts that a catchphrase is a joke and way to form solidarity with others. 'People are doing it to feel good about themselves, to make others laugh, to make themselves laugh' he said. The catchphrase is a fast-track to this recognition; a pure metonym for a whole series of social expectations, Darlington (2014:125). A catchphrase is then a particular word or expression or a particular style of speaking and phrasing a cultural idea. The meaning of catchphrase that has been adopted in this study is that of Webster (2003).

Topicalization of Catchphrases

As said earlier, these catchphrases aim at attracting readers and listeners, community members on certain social perspectives. They involve many functions. They constitute communication and building hope in the minds of the readers and listeners. They equally contain various

themes and their arrangement and processing have been operated according to these themes they bear on.

The Glorification of the Predecessor:

Paul Biya in his first end of year speech as the president of Cameroon presents himself as one fit for the position and as the rightful successor of president Ahmadou Ahidjo by praising Ahidjo in the following excerpt

Excerpt 1:

As it is then tradition, I wish to convey to each of you and to the entire nation, for the first time as Head of State, and on the eve of this New Year, my best wishes of good health, happiness and prosperity. May peace warm your hearts, and may there be a oneness of mind amongst you. /Indeed, how can we not feel proud of the dignity and maturity displayed by the Cameroonian people who, on that occasion, showed the rest of the world that they were committed to the institutions they had freely chosen, thus inspiring the credibility and reliability of those institutions and reasserting their confidence in the task of progress and human advancement in justice, equity and harmony-a task which was patiently accomplished under the aegis of an exceptional, distinguished and venerated leader, President Ahmadou Ahidjo. /...it behoves us to pay repeated tribute and show unending gratitude to this personality of not only national but transnational dimension, to this charismatic leader, the grandiose action he waged with tenacity and perseverance for a quarter of a century for the development of the Cameroonian nation. / it seems to me that the best manner to honor this oath is obviously not only to safeguard the precious achievements accumulated under the enlightened dynamism of my prestigious predecessor, but above all, to impart, in my turn, renewed vitality, in order to maintain, and if necessary, quicken the pace of our progress. (Paras 1-10, Paul Biya, 1982)

In the above excerpt, Paul Biya makes use of adverbial and adjectival phrases to project and showcase the good works, accomplished by his predecessor not only by hailing him but also by positively presenting Cameroonians who stood by him to support him in his poise to build Cameroon. This is demonstrated in these catchphrases...the dignity and maturity displayed by the Cameroonian people, 'was patiently accomplished under the aegis of an exceptional, distinguished and venerated leader, President Ahmadou Ahidjo, he moves on to praise Ahidjo by giving him a national and international personality worthy of the name as in...this personality of not only national but transnational dimension, he doesn't stop there he continuous in this utterance of reference ...to this charismatic leader, the grandiose action he waged with tenacity... Ahidjo is not only a charismatic leader, he is equally an 'enlightened and dynamic, and prestigious... he concludes by calling on Cameroonians to wage him just as they did to Ahidjo by saying... to impart in my own turn, renewed vitality, in order to ...quicken the pace of our progress. The use of these catchphrases is to create a positive image about self in the minds of the listeners and most especially to win the heart and mind of his predecessor and to tell him that he didn't make a mistake to make him his successor. Adjectives such as ...exceptional, distinguished, and venerated, says it all about Ahidjo.

Self-Reliant Catchphrases

Excerpt 2:

Fellow Cameroonians, get me right. This brief overview should not make us wallow in self-satisfaction. I am in a better position to know that a lot still remains to be done. But it is precisely

because I believe that we can make even more progress that I exhort you not to relent in your efforts. We have the physical and human capital to do so. It is for all of us to have that will. (Para. 12, Paul Biya 2001)

Paul Biya in this excerpt asserts and takes responsibility that he is ready to do what the people expect of him as in... I am in a better position...I believe that... I exhort you... We have the physical and human capital to do so. These affirmative catchphrases portray him as one that is ready to carry his country and people forward.

Excerpt 3:

(...) Earlier on, I mentioned the importance I attach to the improvement of the living conditions of our people and social progress in general. / It goes without saying that we will pursue ongoing efforts in the public health and education sectors. As concerns the latter, emphasis will be laid on professionalization to increase prospects for employment. / The ministries responsible for water, electricity and housing will I insist, take strong measures to facilitate access to these amenities. I will personally monitor developments in these areas. Cameroonians, Dear Compatriots, I am fully aware that the lofty goals I have set will not be easy to attain. Obviously, this task will require substantial and long-term efforts. / That is why, to see through, I formed a government tailored to the challenges inherent in our 'greater achievements'. I want to believe that those who have been appointed to accomplish this mission will be totally committed devoting their skills and determination to work. (Paras, 23, 24,26, and 27 Paul Biya 2004)

In excerpts 2 & 3 he portrays himself as one who is ready to carry on the with the progress of the country without fear or favor the use of pronominal catchphrases says it all as in I am in a better position, I believe that, I exhort you, We have the physical and human capital to do so, it is for us all to have that will. He continuous in excerpt 3 to reiterate that he has not forgotten what he had earlier promised he will do as in, ...I mentioned the importance I attach to the improvement of the living conditions of our people and social progress in general. I will insist...I will personally monitor development in these areas...he is fully aware that the task ahead of him will not be an easy one as in...I am fully aware that the lofty goals I have set will not be easy to attain. To solve this problem, he has formed a government that will ensure that things work out well despite the challenges that may accrue like in I formed a government tailored to the challenges inherent in our 'greater achievements', in line with this, he expects that those who have been given the privilege to serve as ministers will be up to the task as in I want to believe that those who have been appointed to accomplish this mission will be totally committed. Commitment is the key to breakthrough all the hurdles that might want to stand on their way come what may. The constant use of pronominal catchphrases is indicative of the fact that Paul Biya is ready to improve on the welfare of his compatriots.

Catchphrases Calling for Solidarity

Webster's Dictionary (2016:345) defines solidarity as 'Unity which produces or based on unity of interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies.' It refers to the ties in society that bind people together as one. The term is generally employed in sociology and the other social sciences as well as in philosophy or in social teaching to mean that you alone cannot succeed in life and that progress and development involve many people who, are united and understand each other. These catchphrases constitute expression of social life that people share wherever

they live. Most of Paul Biya's end of year speeches is characterized by this virtue. As we shall examine in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 4:

To sum up, I have the conviction that, if we use our resources to the fullest, if we face the crisis with determination; we will go through this new ordeal without much damage. I have no doubt that after the crisis we will start moving forward again, with even more enthusiasm and energy. / It is the duty of those in power to minimize that element of unpredictability as much as possible in order to successfully conduct policies in keeping with the commitments made before their peoples. / I can assure you that, as far as I am concerned, the riots, the difficulties due to the crisis, the incidents caused by armed groups will not make me stray off my course. / Circumstances may make the task more arduous for us but, rest assured, no obstacle will stop us. / As always, I will need your confidence and support to overcome them. But I have no doubt that, together, we will succeed. (Paras 19, 24, 25 and 26, Paul Biya 2008).

Following the crisis that broke out in 2008 around the end of February, Paul Biya had to call on Cameroonians to join him so they could bar the way to further crisis and most especially to quell the crisis at the time. He makes use of conditional and pronominal catchphrases to reassure his people that he is capable and that they should get along with him so that things could be lighter for him and his government this can be noticed in these phrases, like: I have the conviction that...if we use our resources to the fullest, if we face the crisis with determination; we will go through this new ordeal without much damage. He is convinced that the crisis will not last and that after the crisis, his determination to develop Cameroon will continue as in: I have no doubt that after the crisis, we will start moving forward again...I can assure you that, as far as I am concerned, the riots...will not make me stay off my course. He moves on to canvass for support from his people in a bid to let them know he is with them and that he is a man of the people as in: I will need your confidence and support to overcome them...together we will succeed.

Catchphrases Aiming at Praising Followers

Excerpt 5:

At the same time, and while awaiting the ruling of the International Court of Justice to which we have referred the matter, we are doing everything to ensure that our dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula with Nigeria does not jeopardize the diverse relations existing between our two peoples. / Let me say again, that I am fully aware of the sacrifices that you are all making to fight the crisis. I laud your patriotism. Thanks to your civic responsibility, thanks to your confidence in the action of this government.../ We must persevere and work even harder in order to reap the fruits of our collective effort. (Paras. 8&45, Paul Biya 1996). In this excerpt, he praises his followers in these expressions: I laud your patriotism...Thanks to your civic responsibility...thanks to your confidence in the action of the government...We must persevere and work even harder. Anyone listening to the president say this to them will be moved to do more and support whatever initiative the president has for them. These praise words are a political strategy to canvass for support and subsequent votes.

Excerpt 6:

Furthermore, we will have to consolidate our system of democracy, complement it and improve on it, such that all Cameroonians may play their role and acquire the democratic culture that

will spare us adventurers. The sense of responsibility you have shown on many occasions makes me believe that you will be up to the task. / We will also have to ensure the satisfactory development of our economy. There are those things that depend on us. In this connection, I have no fears. I know that you are enterprising, inventive and hardworking. (Paras 10-21, Paul Biya 1999).

This excerpt aligns with the previous one in the same vein of praiseworthiness as seen in these expressions: The sense of responsibility you have shown on many occasions...you will be up to the task...I have no fears...I know that you are enterprising, inventive and hardworking. These catchphrases can only but spur the citizens for more civility and more enterprising in whatever they do to portray a positive image about their country and themselves.

Excerpt 7:

As already mentioned, a year ago, it remains that our march to progress requires that our country continues to enjoy peace and stability. Fortunately, and to a large extent, thanks to your sense of responsibility we are enjoying enviable stability. (Para 27, Paul Biya 2003).

Paul Biya in this excerpt is praising and at the same time acknowledging the responsible behavior of Cameroonians towards maintaining peace and stability which is sine qua non to development, when he says in this adverbial and interjectional phrase... Fortunately, and to a large extent,...thanks to your sense of responsibility...We are enjoying enviable stability.

This is eloquent testimony that Cameroonians are peace lovers and peace makers.

Excerpt 8:

You will agree with me-I believe-that a single word suffices to describe our country during the year that is drawing to an end: RESILIENCE. I am referring, as you know to our people's capacity to resist and cope with da-today challenges, which is acknowledged by all development partners. / Throughout the year, our Nation put up a fierce resistance to Boko Haram terrorists. At this juncture, I would like to pay a glowing tribute to our defense and security forces, as well as our people. The courage and professionalism of our forces and the commitment and courage of our people have helped to preserve our territorial integrity. (Paras. 2&11, Paul Biya 2015)

In this excerpt catchphrases such as RESILIENCE, fierce resistance, glowing tribute, professionalism, commitment and courage, abound. These adjectival catchphrases are to praise and flatter Cameroonian soldiers who are fighting insecurity perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect in the extreme north of the country. These are words of encouragement are meant to ignite the fire of love for fatherland in the soldiers despite the fact that in the course of defending the fatherland some of them lose their lives. By praising them Paul Biya as the commander in chief of the arms forces, is hailing their fighting spirit and implicitly telling them that he is with them, and that he is taking note of what they are doing to defend the territorial integrity of the of the country and that their reward shall be immeasurable.

Catchphrases Appealing to Change in Social Behavior

Excerpt 9:

In addition to these ills that are beyond our control there is tax evasion, customs fraud and embezzlement of public funds attributable to a class of our fellow countrymen who are adepts

of a rather strange notion of democracy. Whatever the case, the abnormal practices have contributed in no small way to the drastic decline in state revenue thereby putting it in a position where it is unable to regularly pay the wages of its employees, and to fund development activities, as well as to ensure the social protection of Cameroonians. / But all our efforts will be in vain if the lack of civic responsibility, tax evasion and customs fraud, smuggling, organized banditry embezzlement of public funds, and forgery persist, and if certain attitudes do not change. I want to tell all such economic delinquents, to those who defraud other Cameroonians, that they should not expect any leniency on my part...I take that commitment. (Paras. 4 & 16, Paul Biya 1989)

Excerpt 10:

I wish to address an issue which, as you know, is one of the strong points of government action. I am referring to the restoration of public and individual morality. It is not an easy task as the scourge became deeply-rooted in habits because of the crisis. Government is striving to implement good governance and anti-corruption strategies. (Para. 30, Paul Biya 2000)

Meantime in this excerpt the catchphrases are the restoration of public and individual morality and the implementation of good governance and anti-corruption strategies to sanitize the public service as in these noun phrases: the restoration of public and individual morality...Government is striving to implement good governance and anti-corruption strategies.

Excerpt 11:

To this end, we shall fight forces of inertia, eliminate bottlenecks and better control mistakes. (Para. 7, Paul Biya 2001) Here the fight against immoral forces like: inertia, continue in order to restore public morality.

Excerpt 12:

My fellow compatriots, as you can see, our main enemy in this matter is not the lack of means, human resources or even financial capacity. It is inertia. That is what we must fight if we have to move forwards. (Para. 27, Paul Biya 2003)

The catchphrase here are: ...inertia, something that must be eradicated if Cameroon has to move forwards in progress.

Excerpt 13:

I can see only two possible drawbacks to our momentum. The first relates to the inefficiency of some of the government services dealing with these issues. It is not their competency that is called into question but their lack of determination to succeed. (Para. 16, Paul Biya 2005).

From excerpt 9 to excerpt 13, Paul Biya is hammering on the change in behavior in order to advert corruption, administrative bottlenecks,

Injunction Catchphrases

Injunction catchphrases are phrases that either directive, commanding or prohibitive. This will be examined in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 14:

We must also ensure that disparities in development do not crop up between our regions. This will certainly accelerate rural/urban migration which is at the origin of the impoverishment of some of our provinces and crowding of our cities. (Para. 14, Paul Biya 2000). In this catchphrase, Paul Biya is commanding as in: We must also ensure..., the collective pronoun We is referring to him and his cabinet as well as those who are in charge of implementing his orders... the modal auxiliary Must is indicative of the fact that there is no excuse to be given whatsoever in as much as curbing disparities in development in the regions is concerned. The noun phrase disparities in development is harnessing the fact there must be no inequality in whatever development projects are to be carried out in the regions.

Excerpt 15:

But there is something more serious. I am referring to corruption which I have often denounced but which is still rife. There is a clear mismatch between our effort to alleviate poverty and the scandalous enrichment of a few individuals. Public funds are embezzled; it should be recalled, at the expense of the nation. I want to say very solemnly today: this must stop.....The National Agency for Financial Investigation was set up for that purpose. I expect it to perform its duty without complacency. (Para. 13, Paul Biya 2005).

In this excerpt, Paul Biya is assertive in this in junctional catchphrase, I want to say very solemnly today: this must stop... the use of the personal pronoun I is reminiscent of his poise and personal engagement to fight the endemic cankerworm called corruption. The adverbial phrase very solemnly is used for emphatic purposes and to demonstrate his determination to end corruption in Cameroon through peaceful means. The demonstrative phrase this must stop..., is indicative of the fact that he doesn't want to hear anything mentioned about corruption, not to talk of carrying it out by corrupt individuals. If this happens again something terrible will befall defaulters of this his solemn order.

Excerpt 16:

The foremost among them is the quest for personal benefit at the expense of the general interest which ought to be the golden rule of public service. The Supreme State Audit should be inflexible in this respect. (Para. 11, Paul Biya 2011).

Here Paul Biya counts on the inflexibility of the Supreme State Audit bench in implementing his order in the fight against greedy individuals who delight in enriching themselves with funds meant for public interest. The verb phrase should be inflexible in this respect, is telling. This equally entails that there should be no complacency in performing their duties.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The paper has discussed different themes contained in the catchphrases. Raising and reflecting the social realities and conditions of Cameroonians portrayed in catchphrases in selected end of year speeches of Paul Biya the President of Cameroon. The catchphrases were analyzed following the different themes they embody. They were catchphrases on glorifying predecessor, praising followers, invoking solidarity, appealing to change in social behavior, self-reliant catchphrases and injunction catchphrases. The analyzes hinged on the linguistic importance of such catchphrases and the role catchphrases play in political speeches. From the analyzes one got to see that catchphrases play a crucial role in political speech by encapsulating

complex ideas into memorable, concise phrases that resonate with the public. They serve several important functions. First, catchphrases enhance communication by simplifying policy positions, making them accessible to a broader audience. For instance, in Cameroon, one gets to see phrases like “Cameroon of Great Ambitions” “Cameroon of Greater Achievements” “Cameroon of Great Opportunities”, “The People’s Choice”, “Power to the People” just like in America recently we have had catchphrases like “Yes We Can” or “Make America Great Again”, not only convey a message but also evoke emotional responses, fostering a sense of unity and purpose. Second, the analyzes have proven that catchphrases aid in branding a political figure or movement. They become synonymous with the politician’s identity, helping voters remember them and their platforms. This branding can create a lasting imprint in the public consciousness, influencing voter perceptions and decisions. Additionally, catchphrases can be powerful tools for mobilization. They can inspire action, galvanizing supporters around a common goal or cause. Like the fight against corruption in Cameroon which has been one of the major concerns of Paul Biya’s end of year speeches. Overall, the strategic use of catchphrases in political discourse is vital for effective communication, branding, and mobilization, making them an essential element of modern political strategy. This research adds to the broader understanding of how catchphrases shape our perception of political discourse, offering insights into the rich tapestry of Cameroonian linguistic culture.

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