



The Use of Positive Self-Presentation in Diplomatic Discourse a Pragmatic Appraisal of the Speeches of Some Cameroonian Diplomats

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Abstract:

This paper examines the use of positive self-presentation in diplomacy and diplomatic discourse with particular attention to speeches made by Cameroon diplomats from 2000 to 2020. When diplomats present themselves in a positive, optimistic way, they do so to improve their mood and improve their international relationships. Diplomacy is a tactical method or form of self-presentation and also of impression management. In this case, states and their diplomats shape the images to impact foreign policies and bridge personal identity with national identity which include strategies like image enhancement and sometimes blame avoidance. Goffman (1967) thinks that self-presentation and impression management of speakers and writers, who especially try to make a positive image and impression while avoiding a bad image about them is common in discourse practices. Using Austin's (1962) speech act theory, the study got speeches from seven (6) Cameroon diplomats and chose to work on 15 of their speeches. The findings actually revealed that Cameroon diplomats do engage in positive self-presentation. They present themselves better by so doing, brand Cameroon's image. The motivation to preserve a positive image of the country and themselves are part of a constant display of their dispositions though they sometimes depend on some situational features to elicit them.

Keywords: Positive Self-Presentation, Diplomatic Discourse, Impression Management, Speech Act Theory, Cameroon Diplomacy.

Review Article

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers on diplomacy have acknowledged that diplomacy and its practices, together with human interaction span across the universe, though the word 'diplomacy' only started to be used immediately after the last decade of the 18th century. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines diplomacy as "the activity of managing relations between different countries". Going by *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, a diplomat is someone whose job is to represent his or her country in a foreign country, for instance, in an embassy. To be diplomatic is therefore described as the connection in managing relations between countries.

Berridge and James (2013) defined diplomacy as the conduct of relations between

sovereign states through the medium of officials who are based at home or abroad. They further highlight that the backbone of diplomacy was the dispatch of diplomatic missions to foreign states, and that this practice is still very fresh today. Diplomacy is thus, an attempt to promote international negotiations and it is the main way through which nations communicate, enabling them to have complex and regular relations. According to Bern (2008), diplomacy is the means by which states throughout the world conduct their affairs in ways to ensure peaceful relations. In the words of former British Premier, Winston Churchill, "diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that they ask for directives". It is often said that diplomacy is all about negotiation even in times of war between countries. In the words of Sir Henry Wolton, written in the album of

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Christopher Fleckmore, diplomacy is the art of sending honest people (diplomats) to lie abroad for the good of their countries. In his statement, he stated “a diplomat is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country”. www.quotesgarden.com/diplomacy.

Diplomacy, according to *Encarta* (2009), is the management of communication and relationships between nations by members and employees of each government. We discover here that communication is very essential in diplomacy because no diplomacy can be effectively done without communication. This seems true as Trans (1987: 08), cited by Jonsson & Hall (2002; 01), argued out that “Communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body”. Diplomacy has existed since the beginning of civilization and it was practised in Europe with the formation of city-states in ancient Greece. At the time, diplomacy had not grown to the level of countries sending diplomats to reside abroad, they were rather sent to carry out negotiations and mediations and return as soon as they were done with the assignment. Bern (ibid), states that diplomacy has existed since the creation of states, empires, dated to 13th Century BC and diplomatic representation started during the Renaissance in the 15th century with the first representatives of Switzerland sent to neighbouring countries in 1800. Berridge and James (ibid) state that diplomacy is quite synonymous to foreign policy especially in the U. S which involves the tact in dealing with people especially the outside world. In fact, they were generally non-resident diplomats. Diplomacy was closely linked to royalty since in the beginning; diplomats were only members and relatives of the ruling family. Diplomacy has often been associated with the practice of espionage. Espionage is a process of intelligence gathering through spies and sometimes, a country hides under the umbrella of diplomacy to gather intelligence on military, culture, economic and political life of another country. Diplomacy is broadly practiced in two phases: we have bilateral diplomacy, and multilateral diplomacy.

Bilateral involves two states and multilateral deals with several states. We have different kinds of diplomacy practiced in different parts of the world.

Diplomat

Many people have heard and used this word ‘diplomat’, but unfortunately, very few persons have understood who really a diplomat is. To better understand this study, it is imperative that we define who a diplomat is. Some have entirely associated it to someone who is dubious or cunning. What does it mean to be a diplomat? Neumann (2005:01) opines “I argue that being a diplomat involves juggling three scripts of self against one another”. He further concludes that “being a diplomat is never-ending and self-effacing technique of self, in the sense that the end product of diplomatic work is to let processes that are already in motion either go on or to have them stopped”. In trying to determine the role of a diplomat, Figus (2018:04) avers that “the main function of a diplomatic agent in a country is to attempt, in every possible way, to advance the interests of his country in the area where he is sent”. A diplomat therefore tries to create a good image about his country by increasing or developing international confidence. He is also in control of cooperation and common interests between states.

African diplomacy is shaped by major events that Africans went through in the past, notably the 1884 Berlin Conference on African. In fact, African diplomacy is influenced by its political, social and economic development, centuries after. Mayall (1987:129) writes, “the legacy of the 1888 Berlin conference remains with us today”. To him, this has made the African continent to harbour many social ills like many refugees are found wandering homeless in Africa than anywhere else in the world, Africa is said to be one of the poorest continents where millions cannot afford to feed themselves. Coming from these setbacks, African diplomacy is still at its infancy stage with constant coups in most states and growing militarisation is the order of the day. Mayall (ibid) maintains that, “Africa contains many of the poorest countries in the world, and there is the process of growing militarisation of African

societies, a trend which is admittedly not confined to Africa but which is certainly well represented". The history that has shaped African diplomacy is one of foreign intervention which arguably has impacted the continent negatively. This means that, the growth of African diplomacy is slow with much influence coming from other super powers as Mayall (1987:129) elaborates "... the rising tide of local and external interventions of one kind or another in African politics and the ruthless, but also spectacular exercise in South African 'machtpolitik', and one need to have an almost nineteenth-century belief in the inevitability of progress to maintain a positive view of the future". Around the 1950s and 1960s when most African states became independent, books that were written on African politics and diplomacy were filled with hope as they had thought that Africa could be that continent that will correct the errors of failed diplomacy in other continents. Through collective solidarity, Africans would start to play her own role on the international scene as Mayall (1987:130) puts:

Internally, through the creative regeneration of individual African nations, and collectively through the solidarity of African people, the continent would begin to play its own part on the world's stage as a subject, an actor in its own right in the world's political system

African diplomacy is closely linked to African nationalism where diplomats and nationalists had as goal, to bring about unity, economic and social development though Mayall notes with dismay that some of the objectives are not yet attained as he narrates "to present a detailed examination of what went wrong in African is an impossible task".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Under this section, we review works that are related to self-presentation and those of diplomatic discourse. Several works have been done in the area of self-presentation and diplomatic discourse.

According to Goffman (1959), people engage in self-presentation because life is highly structured and formalized. This means that life is

structured in a way, we act as if we master nothing and act according to the context and the environment in which we find ourselves. In fact, in every circumstance of our lives, we try hard to impress others and this leads to self-presentational management. This is what Goffman (ibid) calls "face work". He further states that people self-present because they wish to define the nature of social situation and that they are motivated to do so. People also self-present because they need some social benefits in life. Tedesche and Norman (1985) think that this kind of self-presentation represents a social form of influence in which one person; probably the self-presenter tries to gain power over another (audience) by managing his personality in such a way that impresses them.

Baumeister *et al.*, identify two main reasons why people self-present. First, they do so because they want to impress the audience. That is, matching one's self-presentation to the audience's expectations and preferences. Secondly, we have self-construction as motivating factor whereby, speakers match their self-presentation to one's own ideal self. In some cases, self-presentation is undertaken to conform to an already established self. That is, some people do engage in self-presentation because they want to conform to what the public knows already about them, this kind of self-presentation is christened by Swann (1990) as "self-verification". Another important reason why people do self-present is to create an identity about themselves in the minds of others (Baumeister, 1982; Rosenbery, 1979; and Schlenker, 1980). People try to make others think that they possess some extra characters different from those of the society. Rosenbery particularly points out that this kind of self-presentation is common with adolescents, as they frequently strive to make people feel that they are talented, sophisticated, and competent. To create this, impression management is needed because one cannot effectively self-presents if one cannot manage impression.

People who create impression about themselves are supposed to be motivated and in most cases, the motivation is extrinsic. Consequently, people very often self-present out of homes, to external audience rather than

family members. Hogan and Briggs (1986), suggest that to effectively self-present and control impression, social acuity is needed. Social acuity is the ability to know what exactly we need to do in order to successfully create a desire impression and does self-present.

We do have unlimited impression management and self-presentational strategies that we use in various circumstances to create ideas about ourselves. Jones (1990) distinguishes five common self-presentational strategies.

Many fascinating studies have been done in the area of the self and self-presentation. We shall examine few of these works in an attempt to show the foundation they lay in this area.

Peleckis *et al.*, (2013) carried out a study with the aim of analysing the phenomenon of self-presentation in business world as a behavioural mode through which business strives under public business surroundings to reach an agreement and avoid repudiating or what Peleckis *et al.*, (ibid) called orienting to universally adapted norms and other people expectations. In their study, the key strategies of self-presentation are described, and modes used in business meetings and negotiation situations explained. The motivation of self-presentation is developed under public contexts due to its features of persons taking interests in people and how they consider and evaluate other persons. Peleckis *et al.*, mentioned that:

Therefore, a person realizing himself as a social object, tries to perceive and see himself as such who can be seen by others, and, representing himself correspondingly in business meetings and negotiation, tries to show himself to be accepted and evaluated, and/or in such a way that when regulating other people impressions on himself, when getting particular results in business, he or she could confirm his (her) own identity.

Consequently, their study enlarges the understanding of self-presentation with the impact both on the person's identity and his state of carving out his business in a social interaction. Self-presentation there refers to the behavioural mode through which it is

strived under the auspices of public social surroundings, trying to achieve an agreement and avoid repudiating orienting universally adapted behavioural norms and other people (Peleckis *et al.*, 2013:2). Self-presentation strategy according to Peleckis *et al.*, (ibid), is an active verbal and/or non-verbal means of behaviour in public sphere with the aim to create a desirable image for the people around the image builder, and to strengthen and hold on to his or her own social status and other goals specially if the person wants to keep his or her structures, skills and abilities. Human behaviour and actions change depending on the social context and those surrounding him. Peleckis *et al.*, gluing up from various thinkers write that;

Realizing his own existence as a social object develops in a public evaluating situation – under evaluating public conditions, when estimating personal properties and behaviour (Baumeister *et al.*, 1989). All daily business situations are related with self-presentation goals – from the meeting with a new boss during the selection interview, till the negotiation between competitors, presentation and selling of an idea, product, service, or during the meeting inside the company or in great conference, where we could be only a listener all three days, but we are making particular impressions anyway. Together with self-monitoring the public self-awareness takes place: the individual is seized by a diffusive feeling that he is in the centre of other people (Buss 1986).

To them, self-presentation is caused by two key factors of social situation: exclusiveness, that is, when someone appears in a visible position, for instance, when someone speaks to an audience or to large group of business partners, and novelty, for instance, a person, while joining a new project group, is obliged to an intensive observation and investigation from the group members, when goes for negotiation with a new client (Peleckis *et al.*, 2013:2).

Mehdizadeh (2010) looks at online social networking sites which have revealed an entirely novice method of self-presentation. Social networking sites provide a new type of analysis which is geared toward examining personality and identity. His study looks at how narcissism and self-esteem are manifested on the social networking web site facebook.com. Mehdizadeh (2010) considers self-esteem as a person's overall self-evaluation of his or her worth, implicit and explicit self-esteem are subtypes of self-esteem. Implicit self-esteem according to him, is an automatic, unconscious self-evaluation; explicit self-esteem is a more conscious, reflective self-evaluation. To Mehdizadeh (ibid), self-esteem and narcissistic personality self-reports has changed over the past years. The internet officially got public attention in the early 1990s and since then, revamped and redesigned the way information is aired to the global audience. With the knowledge of World Wide Web, (WWW), people are able to share, relay information to a large majority of persons through individual blogging, videos, photos and many others through communicative sites called web applications. By using this specific web sites, users can post self-relevant information, connect with other members of the community, interact with one another and gain important news briefs from all over the world in just a simple click, as Mehdizadeh (2010:357) puts, "Most notably, these Web sites offer a gateway for online identity constructions". The influence of the internet on identity production has been analysed and examined over the decades, and most of such investigations have been directed towards anonymous online environments with chat rooms and bulletin boards inclusive. In contemporary times, most works on this have shifted their attention significantly to focus on self-presentation in a lesser anonymous online societies referred to as social networking web sites.

Germana D'Acquisto (2017) in his work on language of United Nations Resolutions concerning the question of Palestine, takes into account the genesis of the

Palestinian conflict and the diplomatic negotiations that have been done in English though the international community knows so well that the two worrying fractions (Israel and Palestine) are not English-speaking nations. His corpus included two sub corpora which are, sixty-six Security Council Resolutions amounting to 2965 words, and forty General Assembly Resolutions making a total of 2529 words from 1948 to 2006, with links to the key events of the conflict that started from the plan of partition of the territory called Palestine which was established in the General Assembly of Resolution 181 in 1947. Germana D'Acquisto's aim is to examine the role of the English verbal system and archaic expressions in connection with modality in the institutional language of the United Nations and to also show different pragmatic reasons of such normative text types, taking into consideration, the communicative interaction between the legal authority, the UN, the addressees, the members states and the international partners and observers. The reason why he considered both sub corpora is due to the fact that they have different roles within the confines of the organisation. Consequently, the General Assembly is the key deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN with some 193 members states, providing unique forum for multilateral interaction on the full scale of global issues that are covered by the Charter whereas, the Security Council has as basic role to maintain international peace and security. The Security Council according to Germana D'Acquisto (2017), the United Nations has It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obliged to comply with Council decisions. It is also the first to take the leading role in determining the existence of threats to peace or any form of aggression in the world. Another role as outlined by Germana D'Acquisto is that it calls upon the parties in any dispute to settle their differences in a peaceful method and also recommends ways of adjustment or terms of the settlement.

Nassar (2011) proposes a reflection on how diplomatic discourse establishes a plot to national identity and contributes to the construction of a narrative of a country, having the Brazilian government of Lula as his case study. His narrative needs a powerful public diplomacy and has much to add on PR inside and outside organisations. Nassar work, face with an increasingly interdependent and connected world, his narrative of the country needs a strong public diplomacy and the support of an independent, ingenious and pragmatic international inclusion which establishes itself. In a particular context, Nassar believes that the government of Lula da Silva from 2003 to 2010 had repositioned Brazil on the global stage and has made foreign policy at the central of her services especially given her national projects. According to Nassar, the strategy adopted by the government of Lula da Silva was to promote self-esteem, strengthened by the belief of the emerging Brazil, the Latin American solidarity, and close tie with African countries in order to change certain narratives and ensuring that she overcome some contradictions that had been witnessed in the past. From his analysis of 24 discourses of Brazilian diplomacy, he settles on an interdisciplinary theoretical path to show the inter connectedness between narrative of the country, diplomatic discourse and national identity. While doing so, he discovered that the structure of the Brazilian national myth was indispensable to national identity.

Mehtiyev (2010), analyses the use of English in diplomatic discourse. He holds that though there is the existence of several languages in the world today, English is the most popular and is the first choice because the majority and the diplomatic elite prefer to use it over the other languages. Mehtiyev (2010:01), writes “In addition to the 375 million native speakers, it has been suggested that 1.1 billion people know English as a second or foreign language, outnumbering the native speakers by 3 to 1. 51 % of Europeans speak English as their native or as a foreign language”. With its great openness to other

linguistic variations, the language as a world language has become the language of power and prestige and consequently is an international gate way to social and economic growth. Mehtiyev (2010 *ibid*), strongly positions that “the current dominance of English as a world language is undisputed”. It has a leading role to play in both official working, in all international organisations. Before the World War two, French was said to be the leading language in the international scene, but, after the war, English became the world’s language and use in all the cycles of life. Mehtiyev (2010) reiterates that “English has replaced French as the lingua franca of diplomacy since World War II.... the rise of English in diplomacy began in 1919, in the aftermath of World War I, when the Treaty of Versailles was written in English as well as in French, the dominant language used in diplomacy at that time”. The international use and spread of the English language is also made possible by the role it plays especially in English-speaking nations like the United States and the Commonwealth of Nations immediately after the World War II, specifically, in the establishment and organization of the United Nations and the rapid development of the Internet.

According to Mehtiyev (2010), English is one of the six official languages of the UN and, along with French, one of its two working languages (the others are Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish). He puts that “English is the current lingua franca of international business, science, technology, and aviation”. Several reasons account for the use of English especially out of the English-speaking nations. Mehtiyev (2010) notes that in the second half of the 20th century, the rapid spread and use of the English language because of the military, economic, and cultural dominance of the United States. Ever since the US became the world’s super power, the English language has been growing in a geometric rate. Mehtiyev (2010:03) unreservedly nurtures that belief that, the English language is also regarded by many, as an unofficial global lingua franca due to the economic, cultural, and geopolitical

might of most of the developed Western countries in world financial and business institutions. He puts “the de facto status of English as the lingua franca in these countries has carried over globally as a result. English is also overwhelmingly dominant in scientific and technological communications, and all of the world's major scientific journals are published in English. English is also the lingua franca of international Air Traffic Control communications”.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper anchors on the Speech Act theory propounded by Austin (1962), later on developed by Searle (1969)). This theory states that the study of meaning is at the heart of pragmatics. That is, not only the study of word and sentence meaning, but also the meaning of utterances in specific contexts of use. Austin (1962) states that sentences should be categorized into two constituent parts; the constative and the performative. The former can be either true or false while the latter's truth is unquestionable. A speech act, according to Van Dijk (1980:176), is also called an illocutionary act; it is therefore a social act accomplished by the utterance of a meaningful expression in a given context. Searle (1978:16) defines speech in the following words:

Speaking a language is performing speech acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises and so on, and more abstractly, acts such as referring and predicating and secondly that these acts are in general made possible by and are performed in accordance with rules for the use of linguistic elements.

Historically, the speech act theory came into existence thanks to Austin in 1962, in his paper, “How to Do Things with Words”. It was later on developed and modified by his student Searle. This theory sheds light on the “use” aspect of language and shifts philosophical arguments more to ordinary language. Yoshitake (2004) further opines that Austin thought philosophers have neglected the utterance as action-aspect that is why he came up with this aspect of performative utterances. This theory

holds that language does not only describe things, but it is equally used to do things. Put differently, words and statements do not describe a situation or state facts, but also perform action. In his explanation of infelicities, Austin (1962) came up with two kinds of infelicities which are the Misfires and the Abuses. Traditionally, the latter is concerned with the speaker's feeling, intention and continuous action (Yoshitake 2004). Again, Horner (n.d) states that “according to speech act theory, in writing as well as in speaking, individuals are performing intentional acts”. To this, we note that the writer or the speaker's text should be analysed based on his text, and most importantly on what the writer's or speaker's purpose or intention is. In as much as the speaker is aware of his audience, the audience should be versed with the speaker, his text and intention. These four elements together constitute primarily, the important elements in speech act theory. Horner (ibid) states that,

In writing acts of communication, a writer must be especially aware of his readers; furthermore, he must make his readers aware of himself as a writer. It is important that a reader know not only who the writer of a written text is, but also what the writer's purpose or intention is

This quotation sheds light on the key issues to note when using the speech act theory in examining a text. We should pay particularly attention to, the writer/speaker, reader/listener, the text, and the writer's or speaker's intention.

METHODOLOGY

We describe the method of data collection and selection. Murcott (1997) in an unpublished paper titled “The PhD: Some informal Notes”, holds that while dealing with the methodology chapter, there are questions to be asked. The following are one of such questions.

- 1) How did you go about your study?
- 2) What overall strategy did you adopt and why?
- 3) What design and techniques did you use, and
- 4) Why those and not others?

These questions above are very necessary because they help guide us through this work. It gives an understanding of the work and more importantly, the section provides answers to those questions. This work considers some selected speeches from Cameroonian ministers of External Relations. These speeches collected and selected were gotten in different ways. While some were gotten directly from the Ministry of External Relation in Cameroon, and, WWW.diplocam.cm is the official website of Cameroon Ministry of External Relations in which we got a reasonable number of speeches from.

At the end of our corpus compilation process, we had 15 speeches gathered from Cameroon corpora of diplomatic speeches. The selection was done based on the significance of their socio-economic, political

and diplomatic contexts of their production. One of the key issues taken into consideration while collecting the corpus were issues of genre, setting, context, place and interplay of self-projection in them. A very salient questions were asked in order to render this work authentic with the subject matters clearly defined, giving their possible intents of the corpus and their ideological strategies. In answering these questions, it is incumbent to state here that, only speeches of the Presidents, Ambassadors and Ministers External Relations were judged appropriate to be used here. The president of Cameroon was considered a diplomat because he is the first personalities of these countries, and most times, is considered as the first diplomat.

Presentation of the Corpus

Here, we present the corpus that we gathered from the field.

Table 1: The Cameroon Corpus of Diplomatic Speeches

No	Source	Author	Year	Occasion
01	Text A	Eugin Defang	-2020	-Message to Cameroonians in China
02	Text A	Eyebe Ayissi	-2011	-UNGA Plenary
03	Text A	Francois-Xavier	-2004	-UNGA Plenary
04	Text A	Mbella Mbella	-2017 -2018 -2019 -2019 -2020	-72 nd Anni. of UNO -UNGA Plenary -Sommet Russie-Afrique -UNGA Plenary -New Year message
05	Text A	Paul Biya	-2000 -2016	-UNGA -UNGA
06	Text A	Pierre Moukoko	-2012 -2013 -2013 -2015 -2016	-UNGA Plenary -Cameroon-Great Britain joint Comm. -Uk-Cameroon Business Meeting -70 th session of the UNGA -UNGA plenary
07	15 Excerpts	06 diplomats	2000-2020	15 Speeches

From the table above, there are a total of 15 speeches, 15 excerpts to be analysed between 2000 and 2020.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Goffman (1967) thinks that self-presentation and impression management of speakers and writers, who especially try to

make a positive image and impression while avoiding a bad image about them is common in discourse practices. To Cameroon diplomats, this practice is done to pull admiration, to condition the minds of listeners or readers to accept a particular perception or opinion. Nsaibirni (2018:85) posits that “more generally, we find that, in principle, all

information that is detrimental to the in-group will tend to remain implicit, and information that is unfavourable to the out-group will be made explicit". In Cameroon diplomatic sphere, self-presentation is thus, a behaviour which tries to convey information about the diplomats and Cameroon, which is the country they represent. This consequently, delineates a class of motivations in the diplomats' behaviours. These motivations to preserve a positive image of the country and themselves are part of a constant display of their dispositions though they sometimes depend on some situational features to elicit them.

Excerpt 1. At cet egard, les dynamiques politiques internes a notre pays ont mis a rude epreuve la capacite d'action des services centraux du Ministere, des missions diplomatiques et consulaires, ainsi que de leurs personnels respectifs.

This excerpt denotes the use of positive self-presentation as the speaker holds that Cameroon's internal political dynamics have severely tested the capacity for action in the Ministry's central services, diplomatic and consular missions, as well as their respective staff. He holds that the 2019 balance sheet is satisfactory and that this is the handiwork of every Cameroonian serving either in the Ministry of External Relations, diplomatic or consular missions. "Ce résultat est le fruit de l'implication effective des uns et des autres, à divers niveaux. He points out that the intense diplomatic activity that marked the year 2019 permits them to learn a major lesson; it is the inseparable nature of their domestic challenges with the deployment of their diplomatic activity in an increasingly complex world and its perpetual change.

Excerpt 2. The country is a haven of peace and stability in a conflict-plagued sub region.

Speaking at the UK-Cameroon Business forum (source: MINREX), Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo positions Cameroon as a haven of peace despite the fact that it is in a region plagued with conflict and insecurity. He holds that, at the economic level,

Cameroon possesses various assets, of which political stability and social peace are not the least. Consequently, the country is seen here as a haven of peace and stability in a conflict-plagued Sub Region. He also adds that Cameroon has human potential with a youthful, dynamic and highly educated population which thus tells of a country which is a breeding ground of technocrats. Cameroon is looked upon as a country which has a generously endowed mineral resources and one of the biggest forest reserves in Africa, and also has the second highest hydroelectric potential in Africa. Judging from preceding statements, the speaker further claims that, since his accession to power, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA, instituted the New Deal Policy based on two main principles: rigour and moralization. Consequently, it is in this regard that he engages the country in towards ambitious projects aimed at modernizing State institutions and other sectors of national life.

Excerpt 3. Now, we have stabilised our economy, we have a growth in education about two percent, growth rate of 4.5percent.

Positively, the speaker paints a good image of Cameroon by stating that they have stabilised their economy and also growth rate in education. This is an aspect of positive self-presentation employed by the speaker to put Cameroon positively in the minds of his audience. He holds that it took them 20 years through structural adjustment programs with the IMF and the World Bank to come to a positive conclusion after the external debts' crisis. Consequently, the speaker claims that they have stabilised their economy, they have a growth in education about 2 percent, growth rate of 4.5percent, and hope that the following year, and they will make it with a substantial rate of 5.7 percent.

Excerpt 4. Ever since this occurrence, the Cameroonians in China, have shown great resilience and deep sense of understanding of the stakes involved in this campaign; by scrupulously respecting the various

preventive measures that have been outlined by the government of China.

The speaker in this excerpt exposes the good side of Cameroonians living in China. To him, since the outbreak of the Covid-19, Cameroonians living in the People's Republic of China have shown considerable signs of resilience and a sense of understanding of its ramifications. He posits that they carefully respect the barrier measures outlined by the Chinese government and the World Health Organisation. He holds that their good attitudes have resulted to the low prevalence rate of the virus amongst them. "This low prevalence level is fast emerging as one of their distinctive hallmarks in the ongoing fight against the virus".

The embassy highly commends this attitude and achievement, which equally projects them as disciplined and law-abiding persons. He further states that away from individual efforts, a good number of Cameroonians have been going the extra mile, by regularly braving and surmounting the strict preventive measures in force, and reaching out to their fellow compatriots. So, he expresses appreciation to their social mobilisation and support to their community members which he thinks have been exceedingly striking and has been duly noted at the appropriate quarters. The embassy extremely acknowledges this communal spirit, and hereby lugubriously praises the various Cameroon community leaders for their different initiatives especially their morale boosters towards their members.

Excerpt 5. In the field of education, for example, despite strong growth in the numbers of student enrolments, we have substantially reduced disparity between boys and girls and achieved a significantly higher secondary-school graduation rate. Our efforts are focused, inter alia, on ensuring that young Cameroonians in all regions of the country are able to enjoy their right to education.

In excerpt five, we note with interest, the use of positive self-presentation as a

technique to build on the self. Speaking at the 8th plenary meeting of the United Nations general assembly in 2019 (source: MINREX), Mr Mbella Mbella Lejeune indicates that Cameroon has made great strides in the field of education. He holds and wants to label Cameroon positively that despite strong growth in the number of students, Cameroon has substantially reduced the disparity between boys and girls and has achieved significant secondary school graduating rate. This is an attempt to say that Cameroon encourages the education of the girl child more than any other country in Africa. Cameroon is seen here as country that has invested much on the education of its youth as he holds that "Our efforts are focused, inter alia, on ensuring that young Cameroonians in all regions of the country are able to enjoy their right to education".

Excerpt 6. Excellence, c'est en cela que je saisir l'occasion pour me féliciter de l'implantation progressive des grandes entreprises russes au Cameroun tels que Gazprom, et invite les autres opérateurs publiques et privés économique de la Russie à y accroître les investissements, le Cameroun disposant d'atout important économique et surtout d'énormes ressources naturelles, non encore exploitées mais également un coup d'investissement attractif qui garantie la sécurité des investissements étrangères. En sommes, M. le président, le Cameroun manifeste toute sa volonté de la consolidation des relations de coopération avec la Russie qui est un partenaire important

In this excerpt, we observe the employment of the positive self-presentation as a means to brand Cameroon to the international community and Russian companies in particular. While welcoming the progressive establishment of large Russian companies in Cameroon such as Gazprom, the speaker is opportune to present what

Cameroon has got to offer. Cameroon according to him, has important economic assets and huge natural resources which is still to be exploited, and an attractive investment opportunity that guarantees the security of foreign investments. The speaker therefore maintains that Cameroon shows readiness to consolidate cooperation ties with Russia as an important trading partner.

Excerpt 7. I would like to renew here and now Cameroon's proposal for the establishment of an international ethical body, committee or observatory responsible for promoting fundamental and universal human values among and within nations

The speaker in excerpt 7 uses the positive self-presentation to communicate with his audience. He brands Cameroon image by stating that she has renewed her proposal for the establishment of an international ethical body, committee or observatory body responsible for the promotion of fundamental and universal human values. With this statement, the speaker tries to sell Cameroon's image positively to the world as a country that respects and promotes fundamental and universal human rights. She does not only promote, she is a strong advocate and chief actor in the process as it is mentioned that she has made proposals for the establishment of international ethical body, committee or observatory board responsible for promoting human rights.

Excerpt 8. Cameroon is pleased to have hosted, in Yaoundé from 11 to 13 June, the first Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all parts and components that can be used for their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly.

Speaking at the 11th plenary meeting of the United Nations general assembly in 2018 (source: MINREX), Mbella Mbella Lejeune gives Cameroon credit for hosting in Yaounde from the 11 to 13 June, the first Central African convention for the control of small

arms and light weapons. By stating that this convention was holding for the first time, suggests that it was Cameroon initiative and or for Cameroon to have been chosen to host the maiden convention is a sign of Cameroon friendliness and hospitality. Precedingly, the speaker holds that under the erudite leadership of his country, which holds the biennial presidency of that first conference, the Central African States have enthusiastically unswerving to combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all States parties to the Kinshasa Convention by mobilising satisfactory operational– both institutional and logistical resources. Accordingly, members of the CEMAC subregion intend to fortify, among themselves and with other partners, including the United Nations, Cooperation, coordination, networking and the interoperability of resources for the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention to combat unlawful circulation of small arms and light weapons.

Excerpt 9. My country is profoundly devoted to peace. It will spare no effort to promote the Peaceful settlement of disputes. On that connection, it will continue to promote peace throughout the world, and specifically in Africa, in Central Africa and in the Gulf of Guinea.

Excerpt nine above reveals great testament to the use of positive self-presentation as a technique to construct and manage self. The speaker attempts to paint Cameroon good image when he states that she is profoundly devoted to peace. By using “profoundly devoted to peace”, the speaker wants the audience to understand that Cameroon is not only a safe haven in her subregion, she equally advocates for peaceful resolution to conflict in different parts of the world. “On that connection, it will continue to promote peace throughout the world, and specifically in Africa, in Central Africa and in the Gulf of Guinea”. Cameroon judging from the speaker statement is a peaceful country and also makes absolute attempt to promote peace throughout the world.

Excerpt 10. In political terms, and with regards to elections, our independent electoral constitution–Elections Cameroon–ELECAM– set up in 2006 and made responsible for the entire electoral process, from the electoral register to the organization of the ballot, the oversight of elections and referendum has become fully operational and has a number of local offices.

The speaker in this excerpt attempt to brand Cameroon image positively as he holds that, in politics, and with regards to elections, their independent electoral constitution, Elections Cameroon (ELECAM) has been put up in charge with entire electoral process. Before now, elections in Cameroon were managed by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Supreme Court. But the putting in place of ELECAM, Cameroon prides itself to have set up an independent body that will henceforth conduct elections in the country. The speaker presents Cameroon has a country where Elections are free, fair and transparent given that ELECAM has been put in place to facilitate the process. It is in charge from electoral registration to the organisation of the elections proper, the oversight of elections and referendum which became fully operational with decentralised services in all regions of the country.

Excerpt 11. In this regard, Cameroon welcomes the General Assembly’s decisions to proclaim 24 April the annual International Day of Multiculturalism and Diplomacy for Peace and to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations under the theme: the future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multiculturalism”.

In this excerpt, we see a speaker in a conscious effort to give Cameroon a good image at the international scene. Judging from his statement, it is clear that he wants the audience to understand that Cameroon welcomes multiculturalism and international peace and diplomacy across the globe. By welcoming the General Assembly’s decisions

to proclaim 24 April as the annual International Day of Multiculturalism and diplomacy for peace, Cameroon is seen here as a lover of peace and diplomacy. She advocates for peaceful settlement to conflicts in the world, a world where there is the respect for difference and acceptance of being different. She reaffirms her commitment to multiculturalism which is a sign that she respects diversity. Multiculturalism brings unity within a community and a compassionate attitude amongst people of the world.

Excerpt 12. In Cameroon the rule of law is tied to both individual and collective development, as shown in our adoption and implementation of development programmes and policies that are both ambitious and realizable, alongside promoting democracy values in our sociopolitical life

Speaking at the United Nations general assembly in 2012 (source: MINREX), Professor Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo presents Cameroon as a country where there is respect for the rule of law which is connected to individual and collective development. If Cameroon is a rule of law and encourages the rule of law, it therefore no gainsaying that it promotes freedom of speech, movement and human rights as she adopts and implements these to foster development programmes and policies which are beneficiary to its citizens. By stating that it promotes democratic values in their socio-political life, implies that Cameroon promotes equal treatment of all, she makes sure people come first in every decision, builds performance pressure on the government, has a stable administration, prevents corruption and allows people to be more politically educated.

Excerpt 13. In Cameroon, since 2010, we have implemented a strategy for growth and employment whose primary purpose is indeed the reduction of poverty. The measures taken in that regard aim in particular at creating jobs and improving the living conditions of the population. The

recovery of our economy and our public finances, which has fostered the return of growth, bodes well for success of our efforts

In this excerpt, we note with interest, the aspect of positive self-presentation used by the speaker to promote Cameroon's image. He holds that Cameroon has implemented a strategy for growth and employment with the primary goal to that of reducing poverty. This suggests that Cameroon is creating jobs and incomes are crucial for her development. Though many developing countries are struggling with high unemployment, Cameroon can be seen here as making positive strides towards growth and employment as a means of alleviating poverty. Cameroon is seen here as being able to create jobs to help curb the rate of unemployment and improve the living conditions of its citizens. The speaker also posits that Cameroon's economy is recovering and its public finances as well which has facilitated the 'growth, bodes well for success of their efforts'.

Excerpt 14. Despite the frequent difficulties in reconciling economic constraints with the demands of social development, Cameroon has endeavoured in recent years to place those demands in their rightful context.

Speaking at the United Nation general Assembly (source: MINREX), President Paul Biya uses positive self-presentation to build on Cameroon's image. He posits that Cameroon though face with several difficulties in reconciling economic constraints with the demands of social development, it still has made an effort in modern times to place those demands in their right context. This speaks of a country where its leaders are conscious of the need of the citizens and major constraints and know what to do to overcome such difficulties. Cameroon has endeavoured to place those demands in their rightful context suggests that, she understands just what is needed to be done and is working towards it. Thus, Cameroon is striving towards a relax economy and which will enable some social development to follow.

Excerpt 15. Among those efforts, I would first mention the preservation of peace, security and stability, the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law and the promotion and protection of human rights.

Still at the United Nations general assembly (source: MINREX), President Paul Biya promotes Cameroon's positive image at an international stage. He says that Cameroon has made considerable efforts to preserve peace, security, stability and consolidates democracy, promotes the rule of law and protects human rights. Consequently, we understand that Cameroon is a safe haven because there is the absent of insecurity and instability. Peace and security are an important aspect of human existence; a peaceful and secure nation is critical and touches all aspects of economic and social development in a nation and is indispensable to the realisation of human rights. So, Cameroon is proud to be a country where there is a direct effect of peace and security felt by its population with equitable economic development, giving the nation a positive impression. President Paul Biya seems to have understood that the world today has become increasingly more multifarious, and with new security challenges face by most countries, it is important to advocate for a peaceful and secured society. Consequently, there is no country that can develop economically without peaceful coexistence within its population and with neighbours. The fastest emerging countries are amongst those with the best security facilities, and witnessing peace and tranquillity. President Paul Biya seems to have understood this perfectly well, reason why he wants to index Cameroon as that nation working steadfastly toward development thanks to the peace and security it enjoys.

CONCLUSION

This study had examined the use of positive self-presentation in diplomacy and diplomatic discourse with particular attention to speeches made by Cameroon diplomats from 2000 to 2020. When diplomats present themselves in a positive, optimistic way, they do so to improve their mood and improve their

international relationships. We have revealed that diplomacy is a tactical method or form of self-presentation and also of impression management. In this case, states and their diplomats shape the images to impact foreign policies and bridge personal identity with national identity which include strategies like image enhancement and sometimes blame avoidance. Goffman (1967) thinks that self-presentation and impression management of speakers and writers, who especially try to make a positive image and impression while avoiding a bad image about them is common in discourse practices. Using Austin's (1962) speech act theory, the study got speeches from seven (6) Cameroon diplomats and chose to work on 15 of their speeches. The findings actually revealed that Cameroon diplomats do engage in positive self-presentation. They presented themselves better by so doing, brand Cameroon's image. The motivation to preserve a positive image of the country and themselves are part of a constant display of their dispositions though they sometimes depend on some situational features to elicit them.

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