STRATEGIC MANOEUVRING IN 2019 CAMPAIGN SPEECHES IN THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE IN SOUTH AFRICA: EXTENDED PRAGMA-DIALECTICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: This article investigates how political candidates in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa employed means of strategic manoeuvring during the provincial election campaigns of 2019. It assumes the framework of the extended pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, by first reconstructing the argumentation structure, identifying the means of strategic manoeuvring, and finally, critically analysing the prototypical speech acts in the political campaign discourse. The data were collected from the isiXhosa newspaper *I'solezwe LesiXhosa* during the campaign from February to April 2019. The findings demonstrate commissives and assertives as the prototypical speech acts in the political argumentative discourse in the Eastern Cape Province. In addition, dissociation is manifested in multiple contexts to persuade the audience of the standpoint that the opposition parties are more visionary than the incumbent party, African National Congress.

Introduction

The article has three objectives, the first relates to the reconstruction of the argumentation structure of political candidates' argumentations in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa, the second focuses on identifying

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the means of strategic manoeuvring as suggested by Zarefsky (2008), and the third is to analyse the prototypical speech acts in the political campaign discourse.

The study assumes the framework of the extended pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation in order to identify how campaigners employed strategic manoeuvring to gain support from voters of the Eastern Cape during the 2019 campaign period.

IsiXhosa is the most spoken language in the Eastern Cape and also the second most spoken language in South Africa following isiZulu (South Africa.com 2023). Sijadu (2020: 198) argues that in rural areas, indigenous languages like isiXhosa are the primary tools used to communicate information. Additionally, our study demonstrates how isiXhosa is utilised to defend government political agendas in an effective and reasonable manner in order to win and maintain support.

According to Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2015: 297), argumentation is a social, intellectual, verbal activity serving to justify or refute an opinion. The definition aligns with the aim of politicians when they are engaged in defending or justifying their political agendas while at the same time refuting their opponent's political agenda. The present article intends to examine the rhetorical devices used by politicians as strategic devices in order to persuade voters to vote for their political parties. Morasso (2012) argues that newspapers are a good source of data as they construct news and make a selection of relevant facts that play a vital role in an argumentative discussion. She further claims that discussants in argumentation are ideally committed to give reasons to support their claims and be open to critical evaluation. The use of argumentation as a mode of discourse appears in diverse kinds of discourse, among which newspaper articles play a key role (Smith 2003; Walton 2007).

It is important to understand that argumentation is not just a verbal "product" but also a "language usage activity" that is subject to certain conditions (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2015). Moreover, it is important to note that argumentation is an externalised language usage for specific purposes such as justification and refutation of an opinion. When discussants are involved in argumentation, they are trying to resolve a conflict regarding the acceptability of a standpoint by convincing each other of the acceptability or unacceptability of that standpoint. Argumentation can also be verbalised as a "monologue" when politicians are presenting and justifying their manifestos. The theory of speech acts is the best theory that can provide a framework to studying language use functions.

With regard to speech acts identified by scholars around the world (Searle 1979; Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson and Jacobs 1993; Yule 1996), argumentation is a functional language usage entity that is primarily connected with bringing about a particular sort of effect in the listener. The speech acts of argumentation have a common illocutionary force, which is aimed at justification or refutation of an opinion. In the Tanzanian political context (Nyanda 2016; Mwombeki 2019), commissives are prototypical speech acts. Also, the current findings portray that commissives and assertives are prototypical speech acts in the political argumentative discourse in the Eastern Cape Province.

The data were collected from the isiXhosa newspaper *I'solezwe LesiXhosa* during the 2019 campaign period from February to April 2019. *I'solezwe lesiXhosa* is South Africa's first daily isiXhosa newspaper run from Independent Media's East London office in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. This innovative vernacular newspaper delivers content that speaks to an audience of predominantly Eastern Cape readers and it is filled with community news, politics, sports and opinions as daily themed pages. The interviews used in the present article were conducted by the *I'solezwe LesiXhosa* newspaper to different political parties for the period of two to three months (see Appendix). The interviewer used the same questions to all political parties, giving them the opportunity to prepare responses in advance before being interviewed. The interviews with Economic Freedom Fighters (hereafter EFF) and the Democratic Party (hereafter DA) were selected for the purpose of the study. Given the findings from the data, both opposition parties strategically manoeuvred in defending their standpoints, in the sense that they evaluated their manifestos positively and evaluated the African National Congress (ANC) negatively, and both appealed to liberal and conservative presumptions, as construed by Zarefsky (2008).

1. Background

During the Eastern Cape 2019 Provincial Elections, the ANC was the leading party with 68,74% votes, followed by the DA with 15.73% as the first opposition party leading, then followed by the EFF with 7,84% as the second opposition party. More importantly, in the South African National Government, the representation of these parties was the same, where the ANC was the leading party with 62.15% followed by the DA with 22.23% and the EFF coming as third with 6.35%.

Zarefsky (2008) defined political argumentation as an attempt by politicians to gain and use power, to make collective decisions for the public good by mobilising individuals in pursuit of common goals and by giving effective voice to shared hopes and fears. He further maintained that political discourse is pre-eminently the discourse of the public sphere where access is unrestricted and technical expertise is not a recommendation. Hence, the data were easily accessible from the weekly newspaper the isiXhosa speakers of the Eastern Cape read. Politics can also be defined as anything and any place where human social interactions and relationships have implications for how social goods ought to be distributed (Paul 1999: 2). Social goods may entail the distribution of money, power and status that seem to be of value in society. In the South African context, the opposition political candidates mention the inadequacies of Eskom to provide electricity effectively as a strategy to highlight that the ANC government has failed to provide basic services. Chilton (2004: 3) expressed similar views, stating that those in power struggle to maintain equality for all, and on the other side, power can be taken as a corporation or institution of a society meant to resolve opposing interests concerning money, liberty, and the like.

In the Tanzanian context, the 2015 general election campaigns portrayed how the liberation and ruling party, *Chama cha Mapinduzi* wanted to maintain political power by winning the majority votes (Mwombeki 2019). The CCM strategically claim to have maintained peace in Tanzania without specifying what exactly peace entails. In South Africa, the ruling party, the ANC has managed to keep the majority rule since 1994 through various strategic means; among them is the effective reasoning that the ANC is a reliable party for the previously disadvantaged black majority that has sacrificed so much to fight for the freedom of the black people. Hence, it has managed to keep the position of power in government, many black South Africans vote for the ANC because of loyalty to the sacrifices of the ANC, this puts the opposition parties in a difficult position of defending their political manifestos by pointing to the failures of the ruling party the ANC. It is argued by many citizens of South Africa that, although the ANC is a liberation party, they have failed to provide basic services in the Eastern Cape like roads, houses, water and many in the rural areas suffer the consequences (Van Tilburg 2020).

This article is organised as follows, it first explores the linguistic status of isiXhosa in South Africa, then follows a theoretical background of argumentation theory as postulated by different scholars (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984, 1992, 2004; Van Eemeren et al. 1993; Van Eemeren,

Grootendorst & Henkemans 1996; Van Eemeren, Houtlosser & Henkemans 2007; Van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002a), by critically discussing core notions of the extended pragma-dialectic theory of argumentation, which includes the notion of strategic manoeuvring in political discourse (Zarefsky 2008, 2009, 2014; Van Eemeren et al. 2014). This is followed by the analysis of data, the findings, and the conclusion.

2. Linguistic status of isiXhosa in South African Politics

South Africa has eleven official languages. The Statistics South Africa (2019) suggests that at the national level 25.3% of individuals speak isiZulu at home, while only about 8% of South Africans speak English as a home language. And yet, English has largely been the unquestioned lingua franca of official national politics (Rudwick, Sijadu and Turner 2021). There is a distinct difference between political communications at the national level as opposed to the provincial level where communication in vernaculars is much more prominent. Many among the rural and elderly population have not had sufficient access and exposure to English to comprehend a political address in this language (Rudwick et al. 2021). Hence, politicians in rural areas like the Eastern Cape employ indigenous languages to present their political objectives in the deliberative argumentative discourse. IsiXhosa is the most spoken language in the Eastern Cape, the second most spoken language in South Africa after isiZulu (South Africa.com 2023). Therefore, the use of isiXhosa in the Eastern Cape political context is relevant for political objectives and suggests a good persuasive strategy to win the minds of the potential electorate. During the Coronavirus pandemic (2020-2022), it was observed that even national government politicians addressed the nation in vernacular languages in order to convince the citizens of South Africa to comply with coronavirus regulations. This indicates that indigenous languages cannot be overruled as crucial components of effectively conveying messages. Rudwick et al. (2021) state that access to language plays a significant role in improving responses of affected individuals.

3. Key perspectives in pragma-dialectical theory and research

The extended pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation, which is concerned with the pragmatics of argumentative discourse, is explored since it involves the speech acts. Two key speech acts notably in the campaign discourse of the Eastern Cape are commissives and assertives. The properties

of argumentative discourse include analysing the quality of argumentative moves made by the campaigners. Argumentative discourse is methodical, in the sense that the argumentation follows an ideal model on how arguers should conduct their arguments in resolving differences of opinion (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004; Van Eemeren, Garssen, Krabbe, Henkemans, Verheij et al. 2014; Van Eemeren 2015).

3.1 *The extended pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation*

The argumentation theory, which envisions the ideal model of a critical discussion, is postulated providing general guidelines to how discussants engaged in a critical discussion should construct their arguments. However, the authors of this article acknowledge that the argumentative reality does not always follow the ideal model of argumentation as stated by Van Eemeren and colleagues. The critical function of the model serves as a standard in the evaluation of argumentative discourse or texts. It also sets a series of norms that determine where an argumentative exchange of ideas diverges from the procedure that is most conducive to the resolution of a difference of opinion (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 59). The model specifies which speech acts, at which stages of the discussion, contribute to the resolution of the difference of opinion (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992: 36).

Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 63) identify only five speech acts that are linked to a critical discussion, namely *assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives*. Assertives are speech acts by which the speaker or writer "asserts" a proposition, this usually happens when a person commits oneself more strongly or less strongly to the particular proposition. Politicians employ the speech act of assertives when they advance their standpoints regarding their political manifestos. Directives are speech acts by which the speaker or writer tries to get the listener or reader to do something or to refrain from doing something, such as speech acts of requesting and prohibiting. This speech act is effective when politicians point out reasons why voters should not vote for a certain political party. Commissive speech acts occur when the speaker or writer undertakes to do something or to refrain from doing something, for example when somebody makes a promise "I promise I will support you." Politicians often make promises to the voters that if they get their vote, they will fulfil their obligations. Mwombeki (2019) highlights that commissives are predominant speech acts in the political domain. Additionally, in the Tanzanian context, Nyanda (2016) expresses how Members of Parliament commit themselves to meet the institutional interests of the parties they belong to.

The DA speaker metaphorically makes commitments that if the people of the Eastern Cape vote for them they will not experience dark days (of difficulty) with no electricity (literally) such as they are presently experiencing under the ANC government. Expressive speech acts happen when the speaker or writer expresses his feelings by congratulating or thanking someone, regretting something, "Thank you for coming," "I'm happy to see you." Expressive speech acts do not play a direct role in a critical discussion, since they merely express emotions; however, that does not mean that they do not have a positive or negative contribution in a critical discussion. Declaratives or declarations are speech acts by which a speaker declares a particular situation, such as when the wedding officiator declares; "Now I call you husband and wife."

According to Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004: 95) analytic reconstruction of argumentative discourse has a pragmatic and dialectical character, hence the term "pragma-dialectical." A pragmatic character views the discourse or text as a coherent whole consisting of speech acts, and its dialectical character lies in the premise that these speech acts are part of a methodical attempt to resolve a difference of opinion by means of a reasonable discussion (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004: 95). The dialectical procedure of reasonableness discussion is tabled clearly in the ideal model of critical discussion advanced by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004).

The theory of argumentation asserts that discussants who engage in a discussion, have a tendency of focusing on the rhetorical objectives of effectiveness more, paying less attention to the dialectic objectives of reasonableness (Van Eemeren et al. 1996; Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002b). The rhetorical effectiveness deals with strategic manoeuvring. Arguers employ different strategies in convincing and persuading the intended audience of their standpoint, whereas reasonableness focuses on the dialectical aspects of the argumentation as stated in the ideal model of argumentation (Van Eemeren et al. 2014).

While the model of critical discussion is a theoretical standard for analysing argumentative discourse, contextual factors cannot be ignored. Contextual factors upon which an argument is embedded include institutional goals of both the DA and EFF. Mohammed (2008: 377) stated that contextual factors play a crucial role in critical discussion because they give institutional insights (the institutional point of view from which the argument is based). When politicians are engaged in political discussions, their aim is to defend

their institutional goals effectively, so that they can gain voters. Each politician represents their parties, and institutional goals of their parties must be defended effectively. In this case the institutional goals are the political manifestos of each party.

The challenge experienced by discussants in balancing effectiveness (*rhetoric pursuits to convince voters of the acceptability of their standpoint*) with reasonableness (*the dialectic procedure of critical discussion*), led argumentation scholars such as Van Eemeren, Grootendorst and Snoeck Henkemans (1996) to introduce the notion of strategic manoeuvring. Strategic manoeuvring is a rhetorical tool that enables discussants to balance their rhetorical pursuits of effectiveness with dialectical dimensions of reasonableness in the argumentative discourse in different argumentative contexts (Van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2002b; Van Eemeren 2010a). Nyanda (2016: 35) alludes that balancing the two pursuits is indeed challenging because discussants take advantage of the opportunities available in the dialectical environment to make moves that will increase the acceptability of their standpoint by other participants in the discussion. This is evident in the case of DA, where they take the advantage of electricity shortage in South Africa, to make moves that have a negative implication on the ANC in that it has brought darkness to the country both in a figurative and a literal sense. The argument is implicit in nature because the socio-economic context of the people of the Eastern Cape is worse in the ANC post-apartheid era. The DA speaker employs this presentational device of metaphoric language to their own advantage by creating hope to the people of the Eastern Cape that when they vote for the DA, light will come in every area of their lives not only the physical light which refers to electrical shortages but also economically by creating jobs and providing other life essentials. Zarefsky (2008), whose work is more focused on political argumentation, alluded that it is important that parties involved in the resolution process advance dialectically allowed moves that serve their rhetorical interests with the greatest effectiveness.

3.2 Characteristics and means of political discourse

Political argumentation is significantly culture bound because it reflects the views and opinions of a specific political culture (Zarefsky 2008). This fact constraints argumentation by making it difficult to convince a vast audience who have diverse beliefs and views, and come from different backgrounds and cultures. In South Africa, as stated, eleven official languages are spoken. In the Eastern Cape, the representation of these languages differs significantly.

IsiXhosa is the majority language, followed by English and then Afrikaans. The DA is regarded as a mainly white man organisation in South Africa, and as a political organisation, they have a huge challenge to convince black voters especially isiXhosa speakers in the Eastern Cape that they are better than the ANC. This calls for huge amounts of strategic manoeuvring to be implemented by politicians able to readdress the large and broad political socio-economic gap that has created inequalities among the people of the Eastern Cape (both blacks and whites).

Zarefsky (2008: 318–322) identified several characteristics of strategic manoeuvring in political discourse that influence the effectiveness of argumentation. These characteristics include: the lack of time limits, the lack of clear terminus, the heterogeneous audience, and the open access. In addition to these characteristics, Zarefsky identified the following types of strategic manoeuvring in political discourse: changing the subject, modifying the relevant audience, appealing to liberal and conservative presumptions, reframing the argument, using condensation symbols, employing the locus of the irreparable, and using figures and the tropes argumentatively.

Political discourse is characterised by arguments with a "lack of clear terminus," hence it is sometimes not evident that the argument has been concluded. A good example is that of President Cyril Ramaphosa who was attacked during the 2019 voting campaign for his involvement and decision making in the 2011 Marikana massacre that resulted in the deaths of thousands of mineworkers in South Africa. Even court decisions intended to settle disputes may turn out instead to reignite them because when politicians defend their institutional stand points, they tend to discredit Ramaphosa's leadership based on the Marikana issue. This characteristic of political strategic manoeuvring causes constraints because it may be difficult to determine whether the situation is resolved or not.

Zarefsky (2008: 118) further pointed out that due to the heterogeneous nature of political argumentation audiences, it is risky for a politician to relate his or her political standpoint to the audience's prior affiliations. This is because the audience come from different political affiliations and background. Politicians can address these dissensus by assuming that the audience shares general understandings and beliefs that characterise a political culture. In the Eastern Cape Province, DA and EFF campaigners addressed the issue of poverty and corruption as a general concern of the people of the Eastern Cape.

Also, Zarefsky (2008: 119) identified two theories of attribution and motivation that form part of the community's social knowledge. According to the theory of attribution, politicians will attribute success to their own efforts and failures

to efforts beyond their control. This view of the social norm promotes the use of the post hoc fallacy, e.g. since the ANC government in South Africa has been in power the rate of poverty has increased in our nation.

During an election process, politicians begin a process of campaigning whereby they declare their political manifestos publicly and engage in public speeches of defending and justifying these manifestos. According to Youth Manifesto (2015) "an election manifesto is essentially a list of policies that a political party says it will enact if it is voted into offi¬ce at a general election." They further elucidate that,

> Before an election, each party will produce an offi¬cial manifesto which will form the basis of its campaign. Manifestos serve a very important function, because they are the main way of telling voters why they should give their vote to a particular political party. This means they are usually written in a persuasive style which attempts to make readers believe that the policies they contain will be in their best interests (Youth Manifesto 2015).

The following map shows the location of the Eastern Cape Province within the Republic of South Africa.

The provincial results of the main political parties in the Eastern Cape Province during the 2019 election campain are presented in table 1.

2019 EASTERN CAPE PARTY RESULTS

PARTY	NUMBER OF VOTES	% SUPPORT	SEATS
ANC	1 357 137	68.74 %	44
DA	310 538	15.73 %	10
EFF	154 821	7.84 %	5

Table 1: Provincial results of the main political parties in the Eastern Cape Province (source: Electoral Commission of South Africa 2020).

3.3 *The contextualization of strategic manoeuvring in communicative activity types*

When taking strategic manoeuvring into consideration it is expedient to be cognizant of the "macro"-context in which the discourse takes place (Van Eemeren and Garssen 2015). This brings in the kind of communicative domain in this case *"political domain"* to contextualise the discourse in a specific *"communicative activity type."* The contextualisation of the argumentative discourse creates preconditions for the strategic manoeuvring and prototypical speech acts that should be expected in the analysis and evaluation. As propounded by Van Eemeren and Garssen (2015), strategic manoeuvring can only be studied in the context of real-life communicative activities that are aimed to achieve institutional goals. In the case of the political parties in the current study the politicians represent institutional goals in order to win votes. Therefore, the communicative activity is to convince voters through the advancement of defending arguments that they are better than the ANC.

The representatives of political parties have to be mindful of the macro-context as they represent their political agendas. The Eastern Cape Province has challenges that are unique to its own environment and these challenges influence how politicians utilise strategic manoeuvring in defending their political agenda. Challenges faced by the people in the Eastern Cape include corruption, which is caused by a mismanagement of funds see Van Tilburg

2020, a lack of service delivery resulting into poorly constructed roads and poverty among many. In the endeavour to address these concerns, politicians devised strong defending arguments to defend their institutional point, which may at times be fallacious and derail strategic manoeuvring. The people of the Eastern Cape who are loyal supporters of the liberation party, the ANC finds it difficult to vote for other parties, making it more difficult for opposition parties to win the elections. Therefore, the macro-context of the Eastern Cape hinders opposition parties to achieve their institutional goals.

4. Analysis of argumentative discourse in Is'olezwe interview reports

The theory of argumentation propounds that the argumentation discourse can be reconstructed into various argumentation structures such as a simple or a complex argumentation (Van Eemeren et al. 2002). In most political arguments, the structure of arguments is more complex, a reason being that the political context deals with lots of criticisms. When analysing the arguments, the reconstruction is done carefully, by following the procedure stated in the model of critical discussion. It is also necessary to identify argument schemes employed since they play an important role in the evaluation of argumentative discourses. Argument schemes ascertain the relation between what is stated in the argument and what is stated in the standpoint (Van Eemeren and Garssen 2015). These authors distinguish three main categories of argument schemes: the symptomatic schemes, the similarity schemes, also known as causal argument scheme, and the similarity schemes. These schemes include a variety of subcategories whose role is to point the various dialectical routes taken to defend a standpoint. Certain expressions can be a key in identifying which argument scheme is used.
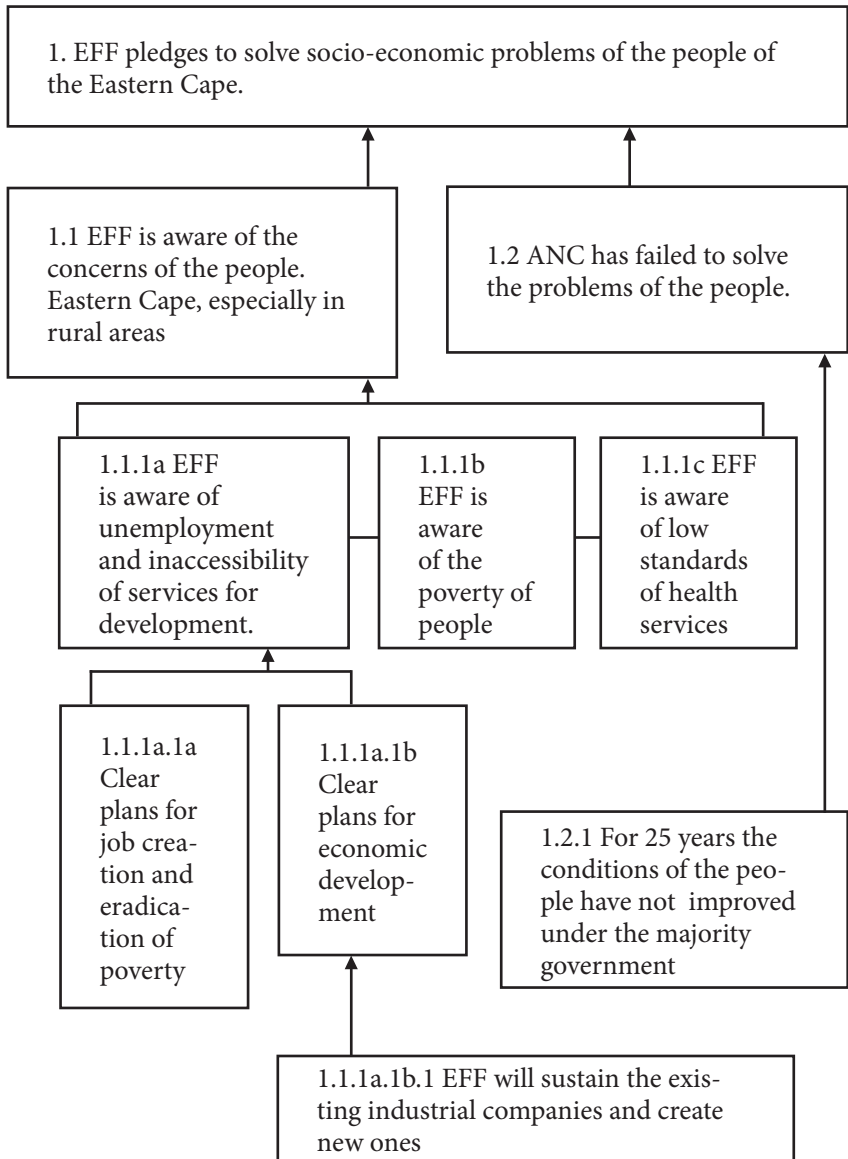
The argumentation structure of the EFF as indicated in Figure 1 below shows a complex argumentation structure, composed of multiple argumentations that are composed of an alternative defence of the same standpoint. It also has coordinative argumentation, which consists of a combination of arguments that must be taken together to constitute a conclusive defence. Lastly, the argumentation consists of subordinative argumentation, which is made up of defence of a standpoint by giving layers of arguments that support each other.

The texts for investigating argumentative discourse were selected from the *Is'olezwe LesiXhosa* newspaper on Thursday 21 March 2019 for the DA and Thursday 28 March 2019 for the EFF, in which two interviews are analysed (see Appendix). The first is from the Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF)

and the second from the Democratic Alliance (DA). The interviewer is the newspaper journalist Sithandiwe Velaphi, hereafter abbreviated as SV. The questions asked are the same for both political party representatives. The EFF is represented by Yazini Tyetyana, hereafter YT, and the DA is represented by Nqaba Bhanga, hereafter NB.

The standpoint of EFF representative argumentation is (1) "EFF pledges to solve socio-economic problems of the people of the Eastern Cape." This argumentation structure is complex, in the sense that it compromises several structures, which include, *coordinative argumentation structure* (1.1.1a, 1.1.1b, 1.1.1c and 1.1.1a.1a, 1.1.1a.1b), *multiple argumentation structure* (1.1, 1.2) and *subordinative argumentation structure* (1.2 and 1.2.1).

Figure 1: Reconstructed argumentation structure on the awareness of people's concerns in the Eastern Cape by the EFF representative

1. EFF pledges to solve socio-economic problems of the people of the Eastern Cape.

1.1 EFF is aware of the concerns of the people. Eastern Cape, especially in rural areas

1.2 ANC has failed to solve the problems of the people.

1.1.1a EFF is aware of unemployment and inaccessibility of services for development.

1.1.1b EFF is aware of the poverty of people

1.1.1c EFF is aware of low standards of health services

1.1.1a.1a Clear plans for job creation and eradication of poverty

1.1.1a.1b Clear plans for economic development

1.2.1 For 25 years the conditions of the people have not improved under the majority government

1.1.1a.1b.1 EFF will sustain the existing industrial companies and create new ones

Given the objectives of our article, one of which includes identifying the elements of strategic manoeuvring in the campaign discourse, the EFF representative, in argument (1.1) employs the strategy of *appealing to liberal and conservative presumptions*. Yazini Tyetyana (YT) tries to include the rural people who are staunch supporters of the ANC, the liberation political party that brought democracy to the people of South Africa. The EFF is strongly supported by the youths of the Republic of South Africa. Employing this strategy, YT is sending a message that EFF is not only interested in liberal movements but also interested in the conservatives. This argument appeals also to a *heterogenous audience*, because the EFF addresses both the liberal and conservative presumptions simultaneously.

The EFF strategically capitalises on the already existing concerns of the people of the Eastern Cape as the coordinative argumentation structure (1.1.1a, 1.1.1b, 1.1.1c and 1.1.1a.1a, 1.1.1a.1b) shows. Given the fact that the characteristic of political discourse is a *lack of clear terminus*, the EFF representative addresses the same concerns that have been previously addressed by the ANC. The representative implies that the EFF has a better strategy to deal with the concerns of the people of the Eastern Cape.

The EFF representative utilises the strategy of the *locus of irreparable* in his argument to support the standpoint that the EFF is aware of the concerns of the people of the Eastern Cape. In the deliberative argumentative discourse, politicians employ the *locus of irreparable*, when they make claims that if they do not act now the moment will be lost (Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca 1969). Yazini Tyetyana (YT) tries to influence the audience to assume the view that the past 25 years they voted for the ANC was an ineffective governing practice of the ANC and if they do not vote for the EFF this will just proceed.

Furthermore in the same approach of White (2011) and Sinkova (2013), the EFF representative evaluates positively his political party and negatively evaluates the ruling party the ANC in his argument (1.2.1). He strategically portrays the ANC as a party that has not fulfilled their responsibilities towards the people of the Republic of South Africa, and the citizens of the Eastern Cape in particular. He does so strategically in persuading potential voters to adopt the view that the EFF will improve the people's conditions of living once the party wins the election.

As portrayed in Figure 1, Yazini Tyetyana asserts that the EFF is aware of the concerns of the people of the Eastern Cape, especially in rural areas (argument 1.1). In argument 1.2, he asserts that the ANC has failed to solve

the problems of the people of the Eastern Cape. Both arguments presented to support the standpoint in Figure 1 are in a form of assertions. If assertions were accidental in Yazini Tyetyana's arguments, they could not have been identified in the reconstructed argumentation structure on the awareness of people's concerns in the Eastern Cape by the EFF representative. But, given the nature of the way assertions are used, it stimulates the minds of analysts that assertions are meant to present views of the EFF representative as the views of all the people of the Eastern Cape.

The same trend is established in argument 1.1.1a.1b.1 where the representative asserts that the EFF will sustain the existing industrial companies and create new ones. Apart from assertives, commissives are portrayed in the standpoint (1) in Figure 1 which highlights a pledge of the EFF to solve socio-economic problems of the people of the Eastern Cape. Explicitly, arguments 1.1.1c, 1.1.1b and 1.1.1c state socio-economic challenges the EFF is aware of, suggests a commitment of the EFF to solve existing problems in case elected into power. With respect to Figure 1, assertives and commissives are predominantly used in the deliberative argumentative discourse. Essentially, since deliberation in argumentation invites potential voters to make decisions in the resolution process, assertives and commissives are likely to occur (Mwombeki 2019).

The prototypical argument scheme in this discourse is a causal argument scheme, where party X (EFF) promises to solve the socio-economic dilemma of the Eastern Cape caused by the ANC if the people vote for the EFF. An example of the causal argument scheme made by the EFF:

1. Party X has a good plan (P) for the socio-economic condition of Eastern Cape.

1.1 Party Y the ANC has failed for 25 years to solve the socio-economic situation of the Eastern Cape.

Therefore, a good plan (P) will lead to a solution of the socio-economic factors of the Eastern Cape.

The argumentation structure of the DA interview is also a complex argumentation structure, including multiple argumentation structure, coordinative argumentation structure, and subordinative argumentation structure, which can be represented as follows:

Figure 2: Reconstructed Argumentative Discourse on the restoration of human dignity of the people of the Eastern Cape

1. DA pledges to restore human dignity of the people of Eastern Cape

1.1 DA has plans to restore human dignity of people of the Eastern Cape

1.2 ANC has failed to maintain the human dignity for people of the Eastern Cape

1.2.1 Under the ANC government, the nation experiences constant power cuts

1.2.2 ANC government brought darkness in the nation

&

(1.2.2') ANC government is corrupt, lacks service delivery, lacks accountability and lacks policy implementation

1.1.1a DA will **channel every** Grade 12 child into three systems

1.1.1b The unschooled people will be given money to seek jobs

1.1.1c Social grants will be doubled

1.1.1.1a Grade 12 children will have access to education system

1.1.1.1b Grade 12 children will have access to police system

1.1.1.1c Grade 12 children will have access to health system

The DA's standpoint maintains that the DA is determined *"to restore the human dignity of the people of Eastern Cape."* Strategically, in argument 1.2, the DA representative employs unexpressed premises based on social knowledge in order to imply that the ANC government has failed the people of the Eastern Cape. Zarefsky (2009) referred to such strategies as theory of attribution, where the arguer assumes that the audience shares the same general knowledge and beliefs concerning the ANC which has failed to deliver the services of basic human rights to the people of the Eastern Cape. Since the dawn on democracy in 1994 the ANC has been the ruling party in the Eastern Cape Province and the whole of South Africa; they have the power to implement what they have promised the people of the Eastern Cape, however they have failed to implement their policies. The unexpressed premise implying that the DA is not to be blamed for the failure to maintain human dignity, but it is the ANC that needs to give account to the people.

The DA employs the strategy of *modifying the relevant audience* in the coordinative argumentative structure (1.1.1.1a, 1.1.1.1b, 1.1.1.1c) by addressing the most relevant issue of poverty in the Eastern Cape. Since the DA is known as a previously white and middle-class black organisation, the representative tries to address the stigma that they are not concerned about the poor people, by targeting the majority of the people of the Eastern Cape who are poor. Zarefsky (2008: 116) suggested that political argumentation has no set time limits especially in essentially contested topics. In the South African context, an issue of mismanagement of public funds by the state owned entity ESKOM has resulted in load shedding for years since 2018 and still going on in 2023 (Macupe and Khumalo 2023).

It is still under strong scrutiny by various political parties and opposition parties such as the DA uses the ESKOM dilemma to attack the ANC as an incompetent party. The leader of the DA Mr Steenhuisen stated to an online newspaper Sunday Times as the reasons why he could not attend the meeting organised by the president, that *"I couldn't attend because of load-shedding, I don't have Wi-Fi during load-shedding and my other stuff had run down,"* (Makinana 2023). His argument is not based on the reality of his situation since politicians have other means to generate energy that most citizens do not have. He strategically employed this argument in order to discredit the president by focusing the attention of the nation to the current ESKOM energy crisis.

In arguments 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, the DA campaigner employs a strategy of metaphorical expression *"iANC ize nobumnyama kwilizwe lakuthi"*. The ANC has brought darkness in our country," which implies that the ANC

government is corrupt, lacks accountability, lacks delivery of services, and has no policy implementation. The metaphor of darkness has both literal and figurative expressions, which are that the ANC has failed to maintain electricity services in the country and, figuratively, that due to poor governance of the ANC the people of South Africa have lost hope. The DA campaigner employs this strategy by warning the people of the Eastern Cape Province that if they do not take the ANC out of government they will remain in a state of poverty.

Another strategy is pinpointing the enemy (Shabo 2008) whereby, in this context, the DA identifies the ANC as the only source that has led the people of the Eastern Cape to hard socio-economic conditions. Pragmatically, there might be other reasons for the limited socio-economic facilities in the Eastern Cape, but campaigners take advantage of a single factor in order to disqualify other politicians or other political parties as incompetent.

Regarding the speech acts, the DA representative makes pledges and commitments to increase the job opportunities, sustain the existing industrial companies and create new industrial companies as strategies to combat extreme poverty in the Eastern Cape. Such commitments, as similarly demonstrated by the EFF representative, are a typical indication of how commissives speech acts dominate the political campaign speeches. The commissives speech acts are thus part of strategic manoeuvring.

Regarding the prototypical speech acts in Figure 2, on behalf of the DA, the representative commits his party to improve the living conditions of the people of the Eastern Cape in almost every other argument he presents to support the standpoint (1) of the reconstructed argumentation structure on the restoration of human dignity of the people of the Eastern Cape, for instance in arguments 1.1.1a, 1.1.1b and 1.1.1c. The three arguments (1.1.1a, 1.1.1b and 1.11c) are asserted as if the DA representative is sure of what DA contestants would do in case they were selected to lead the Republic of South Africa, particularly the Eastern Cape Province. As in the case of arguments staged in Figure 1, assertives and commissives are strategically used to attract the minds of potential voters.

With regard to the argumentation scheme, although Garssen (2017) argues that the problem solving argumentation scheme is a prototype of plenary debates in the European Parliament as shown in the following 1., 1.1, and ('1.1') structural model,

1. The proposed legislation X should be adopted

1.1 Because: Adoption of the proposed legislation X solves problem Y

('1.1') And: If the proposed legislation X solves problems such as Y, the proposed legislation X should be adopted

(Garssen 2017: 35). It can also be established that in the deliberative argumentative discourse, the prototypical argumentative pattern is a problem-solving argumentation scheme as indicated in 1., 1.1, and ('1.1') structure:

1.   Democratic alliance policies should be adopted

1.1   Because: Adoption of the DA policies solves problems caused by poor governance of ANC

('1.1') And: If the DA policies solve problems caused by poor governance of ANC, such as poor roads, unemployment, poor education system, and poor security system in South African, especially in the Eastern Cape Province, then they should be adopted.

Voting for DA candidates into power should be implemented because there are problems of poverty, poor infrastructure, etc. And the DA will solve all such problems.

According to Garssen (2017), the problem-solving scheme states that something should be removed because it will remove a predicament that needs to be removed. In the context of the Eastern Cape Province, the predicament can be construed as socio-economic problems resulting from poor governance of the liberation party, the ANC.

Discussion

The analysis demonstrates that assertives and commissives speech acts are effective strategies employed by both DA and EFF politicians to convince the voters that they have the expertise to govern the people of Eastern Cape. The DA speaker advances his standpoint by asserting that the DA "believes that employment restores dignity"; therefore, they will restore the dignity the people have lost through the mismanagement of the ANC. The DA employs an argument for authority by commissioning the people of the Eastern Cape to go out and vote for the DA so that they can take the ANC out of power for change to come. The institutional

goals of the DA are to win the elections in the Eastern Cape Province, hence he advances the commissives argument that promises the people of the Eastern Cape that if they vote for the DA change will come.

Given both analyses, appealing to liberal and conservative presumptions, dissociation, positive self-evaluation, and negative opponent evaluation and committing oneself to solve people's problems are the main forms of strategic manoeuvring that the EFF and DA political representatives employed in the interviews in order to gain support for their political parties. More importantly, speech acts under the category of commissives and assertives appear as the dominant speech acts in the EFF and DA interview communicative activity type. The EFF and DA representatives repeatedly pledge to improve the living conditions of the people of the Eastern Cape. The contextual frame of the Eastern Cape, which is characterised by a lack of infrastructure and poverty, gives these politicians a good ground to effectively advance these strategies in order to defend their political agenda effectively.

Both the EFF and the DA blame the incumbent political party, the ANC, for the failure to improve the living standards of the people of the Eastern Cape. The party representatives employ various persuasive techniques in order to show that for over twenty-five years, the ANC government has disappointed specifically the people of the Eastern Cape. In the context of the Republic of South Africa, EFF and DA campaigners pledge to do better than the ANC, the ruling party that has been in power since South Africa got her independence. However, the two opposition parties (DA and EFF) seemingly struggle to fully convince the strong ANC supporters to reconsider their support for the ANC (Gerber 2019).

It could be argued that their arguments enforce their positions to maintain the leading opposition positions in the Eastern Cape but not the leading political party because the ANC won the provincial elections in 2019. The DA and the EFF remain the two strong opposition parties, with the DA being the second leading party in the Eastern Cape Province.

Conclusion

The arguments of the opposition parties are strong in terms of argumentative standards set in the model of critical discussion, however they fail to fully convince the people that the ruling party, the ANC, is incompetent. The contextual factors of the Eastern Cape such as poverty and the lack of

infrastructure are taken into consideration by both parties such as a lack of jobs, roads and housing. Both parties state clearly in their political manifestos that they have a better plan that will improve the standard of living for the people of the Eastern Cape. The causality argument scheme, the coordinative and multiple argumentative structure and various prototypical speech acts employed by the discussants to persuade voters were not convincing enough to win the majority position.

Socio-political factors of the Eastern Cape are instrumental in determining the outcome of the results. These socio-political issues include voters especially from the rural areas and elderly people who show strong patriotism to the liberation party of South Africa by voting for it irrespective of their dissatisfaction with it. The Eastern Cape being "the home of the legends" since most ANC political veterans such as Nelson Mandela come from there, these factors have disempowered the opposition parties from winning the elections no matter how strong their arguments (Mba 2021). .

Likewise, the contextual factors of the discourse have a huge contribution to the argumentative discourse based on the Eastern Cape that influence the results of the elections. Mba (2021) claims that racial identity is a major factor in South African politics and people still vote according to race. This claim could be one of the reasons why the "milk and honey" promises of the DA party, which is a white majority party, failed to convince the voters.

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APPENDIX

Interview 1: *I'solezwe Newspaper Article (page 4, 28 March 2019)*

EFF representative Yazini Tyetyana (YT) and newspaper journalist Sithandiwe Velaphi (SV)

SV: Yeyiphi eyona nto exhalabise abantu baseMpuma Koloni, abakhala ngayo bonke?

(What is the main concern of the people of the Eastern Cape?)

YT: Abantu beli phondo bakhala kakhulu *ngentswelangqesho, indlala, ukungaphucuki kweenkonzo zempilo, nokungafumani iinkonzo zophuhliso*, ingakumbi phaya ezilalini.

(People of this province are concerned about unemployment, hunger, low standards of health services, lack of services for development, especially in rural areas.)

SV: Sithini isicwangciso seEFF kubantu abangaphangeliyo, ulutsha noomama?

(What is the plan of the EFF to the people who are unemployed, the youth and mothers (females)?)

YT: Kuzo zonke iziphakamiso esizenza kwimanifesto yethu sichaza ncakasana ukuba baza kuxhamla njani abantu abatsha noomama kuba ngabona bantu sijolise ukuphucula iimeko zabo.

(In all our manifestos, we explain exactly how the youth and mothers *are going to benefit because they are the main people we are targeting to have their living conditions improved.)*

SV: Uthini umyalezo eninawo kubavoti njengokuba kusiyiwa kunyulo ngomhla wesibhozo kuCanzibe?

(What is your message to the voters as the voting date of 8 May is approaching?)

YT: Mnye umyalezo esifuna ukuwugqithisa kubantu bakuthi. Umbutho wethu iEFF lelona qela linezicwangciso ezibhadlileyo zophuhliso nokudala amathuba emisebenzi, nekungezona zinto zingxamisekileyo ingakumbi kwiphondo lethu. Iminyaka ingamashumi amabini anesihlanu savotela urhulumente wentando yesininzi, kodwa iimeko zabantu ingakumbi ezilalini azikaphucuki, yiyo lo nto iEFF isithi makubuyiswe imizimveliso eyavalwayo kukhwetywe nemitsha ukuze ziveliswe apha ubuninzi bezinto esizisebenzisayo nesizityayo, kuvele amathuba emisebenzi silwe nendlala.

(One message we want to say to our people. EFF is the only political party that has clear plans for development and creation of jobs, as they are urgent matters especially in our province. For twenty-five years, we voted for a majority government, but the conditions of people especially in the rural areas has not improved, that is why the EFF says the industrial companies that closed must return and also seek new ones so that the production of goods we use and eat are done within, that will lead to job creation and the eradication of poverty.)

Interview 2: *Iso;ezwe Newspaper Article (page 4, 11 April 2019)*

DA representative Nqaba Bhanga (NB) and newspaper journalist Sithandiwe Velaphi (SV)

SV: Yeyiphi eyona nto exhalabise abantu baseMpuma Koloni, abakhala ngayo bonke?

(What is the main concern of the people of the Eastern Cape?)

NB: Abantu baseMpuma Koloni abaphaya ku-1.2 million abaphangeli. Kwakhona, abantu baseMpuma Koloni abaphaya ku700 000 sele bewuncamile umsebenzi kuba awukho. Abantu baseMpuma Koloni bakhalela intswelongqesho kwaneendlela ezimbi. Abantu beli phondo bakwakhala ngolwaphulomthetho besithi amapolisa awancedisi. Thina siyiDA sinesicwangciso sale ngxaki. Wonke umntwana ophumelele uGrade 12 siza kumthatha simfake emapoliseni, simfake kwisebe lezemfundo nakwelezempilo. Abantu abangafundanga abafuna umsebenzi, siza kubanika imali yokuhamba bayokukhangela umsebenzi. Imali yendodla, siza kuyiphindaphinda ukuze sinike isidima abantwana nabantu bakuthi.

(People of the Eastern Cape who are about 1.2 million are not working. Also, people of the Eastern Cape who are 700,000 have already given up on getting jobs because there is none. People of the Eastern Cape are concerned about unemployment and bad roads. The people of this province are also concerned about crime saying that the police are not helping. As the DA we have a plan for this problem. Every child who has passed grade 12 is going into the police system, the education and health systems. People who are not schooled who need jobs are going to get money to go and look for work. Social grants are going to be doubled so that we restore dignity to our children and people.)

SV: Sithini isicwangciso seDA kubantu abangaphangeliyo, ulutsha noomama?

(What is the plan of the DA to the people who are unemployed, the youths and mothers?

NB: Sikholelwa ukuba xa umzi nomzi unomntu ophangelayo, amakhaya ethu angabuyela kwizidima. Lo mbutho wethu uza kubuyisela isidima soluntu ngokuthi unike umzi nomzi umsebenzi. Kwikhaya apho kungekho mntu usebenzayo, akukho xolo. Ngoko ke xa emzini kukho umntu ophangelayo, kubakho isidima futhi neengxaki ziyakwazeka ukusombululeka.

(We believe that when a household has a person that is working, dignity can be restored in our homes. This organisation of ours will bring back human dignity by providing each home with a job. In a home where there is no person working, there is no peace. Therefore, when a home has a person who is working, dignity is restored and problems are resolved.)

SV: Uthini umyalezo eninawo kubavoti njengokuba kusiyiwa kunyulo ngomhla wesibhozo kuCanzibe.

(What is your message to the voters as the voting date of 8 May approaches?)

NB: Ndithi kubantu baseMpuma Koloni masihambe siyokubhukuqa iANC, khon' ukuze sibe nombane ngamaxesha onke. Phantsi kweDA asokuze zicime izibane, siza kudedisa ubumnyama kuvele ukukhanya, kuba iANC ize nobumnyama kwilizwe lakuthi. Ngomhla wesibhozo kuCanzibe siza kuvelisa ukukhanya kweDA.

(I say to the people of the Eastern Cape let us go and take the ANC out of office, so that we can have electricity all the time. Under the DA the lights will never go off, we will remove darkness and bring light, because the ANC brought darkness in our nation. On the 8th of May we are going to bring the light of the DA.)