

Vol. 5, N°19, pp. 84– 101, Septembre 2026
Copy©right 2024 / licensed under CC BY 4.0
Author(s) retain the copyright of this article
ISSN : 1987-1465
DOI : <https://www.doi.org/10.62197/TJIW6382>
Indexation : Copernicus, CrossRef, Mir@bel, Sudoc,
ASCI, Zenodo
Email : RevueKurukanFuga2021@gmail.com
Site : <https://revue-kurukanfuga.net>

*La Revue Africaine des
Lettres, des Sciences
Humaines et Sociales*
KURUKAN FUGA

POLITICAL INCORRECTNESS AND DISCURSIVE PARADOXES IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ERDOĞAN'S STATEMENTS ON HAMAS.

Marius Eder BROU
Université Alassane Ouattara
ederbrou@yahoo.fr

Abstract: This paper explores the role of political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes in President Erdoğan's statements on Hamas, showing how language functions as a strategic tool in political communication. The study addresses the problematic of how discursive strategies simultaneously challenge dominant Western narratives and legitimize alternative geopolitical positions. Its main objective is to analyze the interaction between political incorrectness and paradoxical discourse as resources of persuasion and ideological legitimation. The research is grounded in the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, Wodak, Van Dijk) and employs a qualitative methodology based on textual analysis of Erdoğan's statements. The findings reveal that political incorrectness operates as a distancing strategy from hegemonic representations, an attention-getting mechanism, and a means of ideological reconfiguration. Discursive paradoxes function as persuasive devices, manipulative frames, and instruments for reconciling competing ideological positions. Together, these strategies demonstrate how political discourse constructs visibility, redefines categories of meaning, and negotiates legitimacy in international relations.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Discursive Paradox, Erdoğan, Hamas, Political Incorrectness

Résumé : Cet article analyse le rôle de la non-conformité au politiquement correct et des paradoxes discursifs dans les déclarations du président Erdoğan sur le Hamas, en montrant comment le langage devient un instrument stratégique de communication politique. La problématique posée est celle de la manière dont ces stratégies discursives contestent les récits dominants occidentaux tout en légitimant des positions géopolitiques alternatives. L'objectif principal est d'étudier l'interaction entre la non-conformité au politiquement correct et le paradoxe discursif, envisagés comme des ressources de persuasion et de légitimation idéologique. L'étude s'appuie sur le cadre théorique de l'analyse critique du discours (Fairclough, Wodak, Van Dijk) et adopte une méthodologie qualitative fondée sur l'examen textuel des déclarations d'Erdoğan. Les résultats montrent que la non-conformité au politiquement correct fonctionne à la fois comme stratégie de distanciation vis-à-vis des représentations hégémoniques, comme mécanisme de visibilité médiatique et comme outil de reconfiguration idéologique. Les paradoxes discursifs apparaissent, quant à eux, comme des dispositifs de persuasion, des cadres de manipulation et des instruments de conciliation entre positions idéologiques concurrentes. L'ensemble révèle comment le discours politique construit la visibilité, redéfinit les catégories de sens et négocie la légitimité dans les relations internationales.

Mots-clés : Analyse critique du discours, Discours paradoxal, Erdoğan, Hamas, politiquement incorrect

Introduction

Politics is one of the key areas of language use that goes beyond exchanging information. Political language creates identities, shapes public opinion and even builds power relations. Thus, N. Fairclough (1995) reminds us that discourse is socially constituted and socially constitutive at the same time. It means that not only political discourse reflects social realities, it produces them. We can also notice with V. Dijk (1997) that ideology, power and cognition overlap in political discourse. In this context, linguistic choices are strategic weapons political leaders use to express their world views. In this sense, political communication sometimes has a fun surprise: an increased willingness to abandon the restrained diction of diplomacy in favor of more incendiary or aggressive speech. Hence, the concept of political incorrectness.

Political incorrectness is such an intentional communication strategy that consists in breaking away from traditional norms of politeness. However, political incorrectness is not simply a breach of acceptable language. It is understood as an act of bolstering political visibility or conveying ideology. In addition to political incorrectness, discursive paradoxes are increasingly at the center of contemporary political discourses.

Discursive paradox is such a contrasting proposition, a speaker uses in instances of communication. Paradox therefore, is a sort of ambiguity or contradiction embedded in discourse. In Erdogan's statements about Hamas those two discursive strategies intermingle. In his speech, Erdogan regularly juxtaposes politically incorrect formulations within paradoxical constructions; both of which co-construct his personality. So much has been said about political ideology, populism and persuasive discourse but the exploration of political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes in political discourse remains insufficient. And so far both these mechanisms have rarely been analyzed together to see how they co-construct resources of legitimacy in social relations. This gap is particularly pronounced in Erdogan's statements on Hamas. The aim of this analysis is to observe the workings of those strategies and their interaction as ideological and argumentative resources in Erdogan's statements on Hamas. The current study aims to address the following research questions: How do political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes operate in Erdogan's speech on Hamas? What discursive roles do they play? How can they be interpreted?

A key argument put forward is that political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes are not mere discursive aberrations. They are strategic discursive constructions used to negotiate, redefine ideological spaces and capture public opinion. The study relies on critical discourse analysis framework namely Fairclough (1995) and Wodak (2009) approaches. It identifies linguistic realizations of these strategies and interprets their discursive functions in political communications. The analysis is articulated as follows: in part one, political incorrectness is presented as a discursive strategy in interaction. In the second part, discursive paradoxes are analyzed as discursive strategies of ideological legitimation. The third part, political incorrectness and discursive Paradoxes are framed as calculated ideological Tools.

1. Political Incorrectness as a Discursive Strategy

Political incorrectness is a deliberate unconventional language used in political discourse. It is not a mere violation of linguistic or diplomatic conventions but a deliberate discursive strategy used to challenge established norms. This section examines how political incorrectness functions as a strategic resource for ideological positioning and political contestation.

1.1. Political Incorrectness as a Strategy of Distancing

In political discourse, political incorrectness should not be interpreted as just breaking diplomatic or linguistic norms. It is a strategic discursive practice political actors deliberately employ to distinguish themselves from dominant ideological ideas. Thus, it helps challenge established norms. Political incorrectness is a discursive distancing strategy that questions the legitimacy of institutions and individuals who have power in order to redefine reality. Following Foucault (1972, p. 49), “discourses are practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.” Considering this assertion, it can be said that issues such as, terrorism, resistance, or legitimacy are not objective facts that exist outside their discursive representation. They are defined through relations of power that make them socially and historically constructed. Erdoğan’s discourse on Hamas, seeks to disrupt accepted Western views and lend populist geopolitical meaning through the transgression of diplomatic communication norms. In the following excerpt, Erdogan rejects imposed views without resorting to diplomatic language. Considered as valid and universally normal: (1) “I have never called Hamas a terrorist organization and I do not view Hamas as a terrorist organization” (Erdoğan, 2024) From this utterance, one can share with N. Fairclough (1995, p. 55) that “any discursive event is simultaneously a text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice.” Of course, Erdoğan’s discourse adopts a blunt and uncompromising tone that challenges the norms of diplomatic language. This dynamics lies in the categorical utterance he uses and which

calls into question, the western hegemonic signifier of “terrorism” he wants to distance from. This distancing operates in the double discursive operations contained in the repetition of the negative construction “I have never called” and “I do not view.” It is a categorical refusal of the western pre-existing cliché attributed to the Hamas. In fact, O. Ducrot (1984, p. 217) informs that negation is inherently polyphonic because it presupposes the existence of another voice whose proposition is rejected. Through this statement, President Erdogan implicitly acknowledges the existence of the dominant Western discourse that considers Hamas as a terrorist group while simultaneously invalidating it. This utterance therefore establishes a dialogical confrontation between two competing voices: the Western voice that classifies Hamas as a terrorist group and Erdogan’s counter-voice that rejects this classification.

In this utterance, political incorrectness emerges as a discursive distancing of hegemonic representations of something. This distancing is reinforced and evidenced with the repeated use of the first-person pronoun “I” that symbolizes his enunciative responsibility and which turns his statement into a performative act of dissociation. Erdogan, through the use of “I” positions himself against the label of terrorism attributed to the Hamas. This discursive approach is described by P. Bourdieu (1991, p. 170) as “a power of constructing reality” by challenging the “monopoly of legitimate naming.” (P. Bourdieu, 1991, p. 109). This distancing discursive strategy becomes even more explicit in the rhetorical question: (2) “Because Hamas is a resistance group that strives to protect its lands? Therefore, how can I call such a resistance group a terrorist organization?” (Erdogan, 2024).

This rhetorical question implies that some western governments, international organizations or media institutions designate the Hamas as a terrorist organization. Its semantic coherence permits to uncover its political incorrect status. This incorrect status lies in the harsh denunciation of arbitrariness and hegemony. M. Billig (1996, p. 18) observes that “thinking is inherently argumentative.” Therefore, this interrogative form simply delimits the concept of “resistance” and “terrorism”. The statement of Erdogan functions as an enthymeme through the adverbial connector “therefore” to contest the concept of terrorism attributed to the Hamas by western countries. In Aristotelian terms, it suggests a premise that remains unstated: groups fighting to defend their territory are not terrorists. In this respect, the substitution of “terrorist organization” with “resistance group” frames Erdogan’s instantiation. This lexical substitution is a nomination strategy. According to M. Reisigl and R. Wodak (2009, p. 94), nomination strategies are discursive procedures through which social actors are named and assigned specific attributes. Thus, Erdogan distances himself from this attribute of criminality given to

the Hamas and attributes it the expression “resistance group”. It is an inference consciousness strategy that functions as an awareness to evoke the notions of patriotism and legitimate self-defense of the Hamas throughout its actions. President Erdogan’s lexical shift produces what V. Leeuwen (2008, p. 33) calls “re-contextualization.” It is the transfer of social actors from one framework of interpretation to another. Therefore President Erdogan’s lexical choices convey ideological acts through which collective perceptions are reshaped and social realities are redefined as can be seen in the following excerpt: (3) “ Hamas is a resistance group that strives to protect its lands” (Erdoğan, 2024) This is a predicative utterance that reinforces the discursive repositioning of Erdogan vis-à-vis western considerations. The verb “strives” shows intentionality and perseverance. The infinitive expression “to protect” assigns a defensive action.

Moreover, the noun phrase “its lands” invokes territorial legitimacy and historical belonging. As Edelman (1988, p. 103) observes, “Political language is political reality.” Contrarily to western opinions, Erdogan constructs Hamas not as an aggressor but as a victim engaged in legitimate self-preservation. This positive predication contradicts the Western paradigm. From this standpoint, distancing also operates through historical reframing where the discourse shifts attention from acts of violence to the historical conditions that supposedly generates them.

Erdoğan has a different view on what is commonly admitted. Political incorrectness becomes by virtue an ideological struggle to de-Westernize the production of geopolitical knowledge. It is what Mignolo (2011, p. 46) calls an “epistemic disobedience” that consists in the rejection of universal categories imposed by dominant powers. Political incorrectness refers to Erdoğan attempt to construct himself as an autonomous actor capable of producing his own truths. This discursive strategy corresponds to Wodak’s (2001, p. 65) notion of identity construction through differentiation between “us” and “them.” It emerges as a contestation of dominant representations in order to construct alternative systems of meaning. As Edelman (1988, p. 103) observes, “Political language is political reality.” Political incorrectness is a particular discursive language use that differs from hegemonic truths in order to establish a shocking alternative intelligibility. Beyond its function of ideological distancing, political incorrectness constitutes an important resource for the production of visibility and public salience in political communication.

1.2. Political Incorrectness: an Attention-Getting Mechanism

In political communication, political incorrectness also works as a strategic way that produces visibility and contributes to public salience. In fact, in today's societies are hyper-mediatized ones in which political actors seek to find their place in information networks. As such, political discourses are affected by media logics. In this regard, Fairclough (1995, p.54) notes that the power for social agency lies in visibility and circulation of discourse. Therefore, political discourses are more and more provocative, norm-transgressive in this regard. In this endeavor, political incorrectness serves as a form of transgressive communicational strategy through which political actors manage to stay relevant and reaffirm their being. Political incorrectness is therefore, a kind of discursive controversy from which new powers emerge. This is particularly noticeable with Erdogan's statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In his statements, he employs some provocative words that hit back at dominant Western opinions:

(4) But I am one of the leaders who knows Hamas well. I have never called Hamas a terrorist organization and I do not view Hamas as a terrorist organization. Because Hamas is a resistance group that strives to protect its lands. Therefore, how can I call such a resistance group a terrorist organization?" (ERDOĞAN, 2024).

This statement of president Erdoğan represents a discursive rupture with world public opinion on the Hamas. It challenges the Euro-American view of the Hamas as a terrorist group. In this semantic polarization processes, Erdoğan defines Hamas a "resistance group" instead a "terrorist organization." The goal of Erdoğan in this lexical inversion is to create controversy and generate media buzz in order to catch public attention. Moreover, his self-positioning in using personal deixis "I" in "I am one of the leaders who know Hamas well", shows his personal assertion. Chilton (2004, p. 67), explains that deixis and self-reference are key devices through which political actors build authority and assure discursive dominance. This particularized claim positions Erdoğan as a leading voice on the conflict and enhances his global profile in the world. Erdogan is in a logic of visibility when he contextualizes the October 7 attacks:

(5) We need to know the reasons that prepared the conditions for Oct. 7. We need to understand them well. And when we examine the background of how many Palestinians were martyred, how many Palestinians were killed, the situation reaches very, very different levels. (Erdogan, 2024).

This statement acknowledges that President Erdogan does not unconditionally and immediately condemn the attack but simply calls for shifting attention on the re-contextualization of the attack in order to find its social conditions. In so doing, president Erdoğan turns back to general consideration and puts out a counter-discourse which diverges from West point of view. This discursive strategy is likely to get media attention and give different interpretations as is his

objectives. In addition, the evocation of Palestinian suffering through loaded language like “martyrs” provides a moral weight to his discourse creating thus controversy and emotion. All this is to catch public and media attention. Thus, controversy and emotional turns create sensational reports. They turn into ways in which political incorrectness creates public salience: (6) “Israel has continued its brutal offensive on Gaza since a cross-border attack by Hamas last October.....“Not only children but also the U.N. system is dying in Gaza” (Erdogan, 2024)

This statement has a confrontational character with the adjective “brutal” and the metaphor “the U.N. system is dying in Gaza” that convey consideration and judgment. For P. Charaudeau (2005, p. 96), political communication is done according to a “logic of dramatization” in which conflict adds an element of media attractiveness. Thus, the evaluative adjective “brutal” conveys a moral condemnation of Israel’s actions in Gaza. Accordingly, P. Chilton (2004, p. 112) posits that evaluative choices of lexical items orient discourse. This confrontational adjective portrays president Erdogan as an opponent of Israel. The objective of Erdogan is to look for visibility through media reports. This public salience strategy is also offered in the metaphor of death “the U.N. system is dying in Gaza.” G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (1980, p. 156) emphasize that metaphors are not just decorative techniques, but conceptual devices that constitute social reality and organize political views.

The dramatization of the UN institution by means of this metaphor of death is mockery that assigns the UN system, a moral failure. This direct attack of President Erdogan is also a visibility strategy. It positions him as an anti-establishment figure in global governance. V. Dijk (1997, p. 91) notes that the discourse of politics can be most visible when they are activated through links between discursive and institutional norms contesting power relations. From then on, political incorrectness marks the construction of ethos. It constructs itself as a discursive way of standing out, and being seen. Within this context, Angenot (2008, p. 39) observes that public discourse is organized by polemical oppositions which allow actors to be distinguished from hegemonic ideologies. A great deal of this visibility Erdogan is looking for, comes from this logic of open opposition to dominant Western opinions.

1.3. Revival of Political Incorrectness as a Strategy for Ideological Reconfiguration

Political incorrectness breaks conventional diplomatic lines. It disavows institutionalized. It proceeds from the contestation of pre-existing ideas or opinions in order to generate different ideational structures. In this trend, traditional meanings fall away and alternative interpretive is

reconfigured. In this perspective, political incorrectness is involved in re-shaping social meanings through the re-articulation of key categories of representation (Fairclough, 1995, p. 97) as is the case of Erdogan re-categorization of Hamas:(7) “ Hamas is a resistance group that strives to protect its lands” (Erdogan). Erdogan breaks with the prevailing ideas that typifies Hamas as a terrorist organization with the lexical substitution “Hamas is a resistance group.” This corroborates V. Dijk (1997, p. 45), view according to which “ideological discourse is dependent on processes such as semantic polarization and evaluative inversion to generate opposing representations of social actors”. This semantic shift legitimates the Hamas. In addition, if such is a case, therefore, Hamas actions are representative of an anti-colonial struggle and self-determination. In so doing, Erdogan tries to reconstruct the moral status of Hamas while trying to undermine existing conceptions about it. Political incorrectness in this sense seeks to redefine ideological, social, economic or geopolitical realities. This ideological reconfiguration constructs Palestinian victimhood: (8) “how many Palestinians were martyred, how many Palestinians were killed... we need to know the reasons that prepared the conditions for oct. 7” (Erdogan, 2024)

Through this question, Erdogan wants a new interpretation of the conflict. He thinks that the conflict should be configured as oppression and victimization. The semantic of “martyr” reveals the notion of injustice and collective suffering. Thus, he reorients the interpretive focus away towards questions of humanitarian injustice in order not to represent the conflict through the prism of terrorism. Such a discursive orientation challenges the diplomatic perception of the conflict and offers an ideological critique of international diplomacy. Political incorrectness is utilized as a tool that seeks to resist hegemonic representations and create alternative meanings through language.

2. Discursive Paradoxes and Ideological Legitimation

Discursive paradoxes are strategic language devices political actors use to legitimize ideological positions. These apparent contradictions help strengthen persuasion and shape public perception. This section explores how Erdogan employs discursive paradoxes to support and legitimize his political ideology.

2.1. Discursive Paradoxes as Neutral and Persuasive Devices in Political Discourse

In general, discursive paradoxes are perceived as logical inconsistencies or rhetorical flows. A close look at them permits to notice that they do not necessarily imply incoherence namely in political discourse. Chilton (2004, p. 23) points out that political discourse is intrinsically

strategic because it involves the representation of self and others within competing search of interests and values. Discursive paradoxes or contradictions serve this purpose. Following Billig (1996, p. 18), political reasoning finds its route through tensions, oppositions and competing views. In this perspective, persuasion depends more on an ability to manage ideological contradictions than upon formal consistency. This phenomenon is especially evident in Erdogan's statements about Hamas in: (9) "We are, of course, against terrorists" (Erdogan, 2024) and (10) "But I am one of the leaders who knows Hamas well" (Erdogan, 2024).

In (9), Erdogan strikes an affirmation tone to the universal condemnation of terrorism through the adverbial phrase "of course..." With this modal marker, Erdogan establishes a connection with the internationally accepted norms and adopts a moral consensus. But, directly after this declaration he then utters a contrasting proposition by way of the conjunction "but" to signify rupture in (10). This phrase constructs experiential authority and positions Erdogan as an eye-witness who has a privileged viewpoint on the Hamas. This to mean that facts must reign rather than prejudice. Discursive paradoxes become therefore persuasive tools.

Aristotle (2007, p. 38) notes that persuasion is available through ethos, logos and pathos. Thus, in Erdogan's statements, logos is manifested in the causal links that connect territorial defense and political legitimacy. Pathos and ethos are evoked through reference to Palestinian suffering and historical dispossession. In this multi-layered articulation, lies Erdogan's paradoxical articulation. For P. Ricoeur (1976, p. 79), "It is through opposition between interpretations that meaning comes to the fore". Erdogan's discourse shows this hermeneutical principle by creating ambiguity through the opposition between "terrorism" and "resistance". This permits to strengthen persuasiveness. Charteris-Black (2011, p. 13) asserts that political persuasion succeeds by reconciling conflicting moral frameworks. Discursive Paradox is therefore a powerful tool, as its persuasive potential comes from the compatibility of contrasting moral structures. Persuasiveness is therefore determined by how to carefully deal with an ideological contradiction.

The confrontation of two opposing stances also creates polyphony as suggested by O. Ducrot, (1984, p. 217). The counter voice is that the first had a claim to anti-terrorist principles but the second provides a specialized knowledge system to both qualify and indeed relativize such principles. In this instance, Erdogan establishes discursive tension between a universal

scorn for Hamas as an indisputable terrorist group, and recognition of the context surrounding its emergence. Excerpt (1) embodies this tension in a more overtly categorical way. Episode-free and in open contradiction with the Truman paradox related to excerpt (6). This excerpt employs the same negative forms “never called” and “do not view.” Through this, Erdogan maintains compliance to the anti-terrorist norm by dressing it in a referential disguise. Paraphrasing M. Bakhtin (1981, p. 324), discourse is made polyphonic by the voice of an apparatus that condemns terrorism but provides a competing counter-voice to forgo applying this term to Hamas. This paradoxical structure is indicative of what Fairclough (1995, p. 76) has identified as the ‘strategic articulation of competing discourses’. Erdoğan is serving both sides.

He can tell his Western interlocutors that he rejects terrorism and keeps his pro-Palestinian supports happy by refusing to call Hamas a terrorist organization. Discursive paradox defines itself as a strategy of neutrality that can have persuasive implications as in chunk (2).with the interrogative form, along with the conjunction “therefore” Erdogan establishes a causal chain that turns the conclusion into an apparently logical necessity. C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969, p. 187) claim that rhetorical questions attempt audience allegiance by rendering propositions as self-evident statements. Additionally, the semantic field of the phrase “enemy combatant” relates to anti-colonial and liberation conflicts, while the label “terrorist organization” immediately conveys illegal and indiscriminate violence. Discursive paradox, thus becomes a site of ethical coherence through lexical opposition in order to persuade.

2.2. Discursive Paradoxes as Instruments of Manipulation and framing

Discursive paradoxes also operate as manipulation and framing discursive practices. Frames are defined as “mental structures that shape the way we see the world” (Lakoff, 2004, p. xv). In this trend, discursive paradoxes as a framing strategy is deployed in language use to sculpt attention. They do so because emphasizing things and relegating other predications to the shadows, is a discursive strategy in which discursive paradoxes reveal the magic potentialities that thrive in their use in (11): “We need to know the reasons that prepared the conditions for Oct. 7. We need to understand them well” (Erdoğan, 2024).

In this utterance, Erdoğan’s communication is manipulative. Manipulation itself is a hidden procedure with some linguistic trickery. It consists in “building emotional appeals for the [manipulator]’s purposes to either change how someone perceives something and hence who the person now believes themselves to be” (Ali & Rashid, 2022). This is what we can see with

Erdoğan. Concerning October 7 event, He redirects attention toward preceding circumstances as in the repetition of the modal structure “we need.” This discursive construction produces a sense of obligation and necessity. More importantly, the phrase “prepared the conditions” attempts to trigger a causal frame. This request of the contextualization of the causes of the violence is a manipulative strategy of catching people’s attention. This, because the causes are information-specified for the audience. Similarly, in excerpt (5), Erdogan, uses similar lexical choice to denounce.

The word “martyred,” unlike “killed”, comes from a religious and moral register designed to anoint victims as martyrs, and all suffering as sacrificial suffering. In this endeavor, the lexical choices invoke a moral duty and judgement in the audience. It is thus, a manipulative tactics meant look for sympathy and also to create hate. Israel is characterized with aggression and moral illegitimacy and the Hamas as victim of aggression. This manipulative stance manifests itself in the tone of the repetition of “How many” and “We need to”. The tone paires with emotion-inducing language. For Berezovska-Chmil & Shchur (2023), it is a sort of ‘referential manipulation’. Referential manipulation is twisting reality to change perception. This distortion of reality is the challenging of mainstream opinions about Hamas. Erdogan thinks that Hamas should be considered as a “resistant group”, not a terrorist one whose acts should be considered “legitimate” from the perspective of history.

In addition, there is also a framing that arises from institutional delegitimization in (6) with the gradual repetition of three negative adjectives. It is a predication strategy that assigns negative qualities to the UN institution so as to impact on the audience mentality. . This amplification through the accumulation of pejorative adjectives is what Debord (1967, p. 12) refers to as the “society of the spectacle,” in which political events are treated as a form of emotional theatrics. The discursive paradoxes thus become tools of symbolic manipulation that inform the collective gaze and alter public opinion. Truth is then, in a “cirque of relations with systems of power which produce and sustain it. (Foucault, 1980, p. 93).

2.3. Discursive Paradoxes: The Solution to Competing Ideological Positions

An important fact about discursive paradox is that it caters to opposing ideological positions. Indeed, from a political standpoint, this serves not only to speak in favor of international legitimacy but also to please domestic audiences and to defend strategic interests. Such discursive hybridization comes down to this statement from Erdoğan: (12) “Türkiye strongly

supports a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict.” (Erdoğan, 2024). The adverb “strongly” reiterates commitment to international legality and dovetails Türkiye with United Nations resolutions. But this institutional accommodation has existed alongside his rejection of dominant Western opinions about Hamas. This paradox underlines what Laclau (2005, p. 70) describes as the contingent character of political identities. On one hand Erdogan uses the language legal norms and on the other hand he does not shun from using also that of ideological resistance. This contradiction also forms in his comments about NATO too: (13) “We put the position of all NATO members on the table and make our decisions accordingly” (Erdoğan, 2024). This statement highlights the need for multilateral cooperation but yet, it is immediately followed by another paradox when he adds: (14) “These decisions are not made in haste” (Erdoğan, 2024).

This second statement brings in both sovereign autonomy and strategic independence. The paradox-solution reconciles collective discipline with the national freedom. Erdogan, thus comes across as both a devoted ally and an independent leader. His language is made of discursive paradoxes. He speaks to multiple audiences without committing himself fully to one ideological perspective. This degree of flexibility is reflections of the type of hegemony described by Gramsci (1971, p. 12) as intellectual and moral leadership able to aggregate different interests into a single frame. Bakhtin (1981, p. 272) argues that all utterances are “at the intersection of two consciousnesses.” Erdogan’s statements move in this direction. They change from diplomatic into confrontation, institutional legitimacy into ideological resistance, universal norms into sovereign autonomy.

These contradictions are neither erased nor simply reconciled, but instead materialized in a supple and relevant discursive field. Discursive paradox is a kind of contradiction management. As such, they become tools of ideological legitimation. They are intricate devices of ideological mediation; a way to reconcile competing identities and fighting political threat. By simultaneously articulating resistance with diplomacy, confrontation with cooperation, international legality and sovereign autonomy, Erdogan creates a discursive space where both normative legitimacy and tactical wiggling can be maximized. Paradox therefore becomes, and should not be regarded as a failing of political discourse but rather one of its main sources of ideological authority.

3. Political Incorrectness and Discursive Paradoxes: an Intentional Ideological Strategy

Political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes function as complementary ideological strategies. Political actors use them to resist, challenge established norms and relations, legitimize new political meanings. This section examines how Erdogan strategically combines these discursive mechanisms to construct a language of resistance and ideological contestation.

3.1. Political Incorrectness and Discursive Paradoxes: the Language of Resistance and Contestation

Discourse is a way of speaking about social realities. In Political discourse, people seek to impose their representations of reality. Political discourse, thus becomes an arena where political actors discursively position themselves and establish power relations, challenge them or reproduce them. (N. Fairclough, 1995, p. 55). In this perspective, political incorrectness and discursive paradox should be understood as strategic moves that political actors use to confront established views and create meaning management. These discursive mechanisms serve as a counter-hegemonic language that seeks to resist and challenge common conceptions. This resistance is corroborated by the following assertion: (15) “I have never called Hamas a terrorist organization and I do not view Hamas as a terrorist organization..... Because Hamas is a resistance group that strives to protect its lands. Therefore, how can I call such a resistance group a terrorist organization”? (Erdogan, 2024).

Resistance or challenge appears in Erdogan’s refusal to adopt western definitions of Hamas as a “terrorist group.” It is a challenge of the traditional branding imposed on Hamas by the west. This attitude is representative of what Foucault (1980, p. 131) calls the “regime of truth” by which power and truth cannot be separated. The explicit dissociation that communicates resistance is demonstrated by the two repetitive negative constructions, “have never called” and “do not view.” The use of first-person pronoun, “I,” materializes personal responsibility that renders the utterance an act of resistance. Moreover, rejection also occurs in Erdogan’s refusal to use the label “terrorist organization” to designate the Hamas. Instead, he uses a new lexicon. P. Bourdieu (1991) calls this discursive process, ‘the monopoly of legitimate classification’. In fact, Bourdieu notes that naming is a form of symbolic domination because it implies the authority to define social reality. Therefore, symbolic power is “a power of constituting the given through utterances” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170). Thus, through this refusal, Erdogan establishes an alternative semantic order. In addition, the adverbial connector “therefore” followed by the adjective “such” also conveys resistance. The adjective “such” reinforces the positive characterization of Hamas. The distinction between “resistance group” and “terrorist

organization” is an act of discursive reframing. Political incorrectness stands as a process of re-signification. This discursive re-orientation is further reinforced through historical contextualization: (16) “From 1947 until today, Palestine has come to this day by losing its lands over and over again” (Erdogan, 2024).

With the expression “from 1947 until today,” Erdogan denounces international agreements that established Israel in the area and which has been transformed into a cumulative dispossession of Palestinians’ lands as noted with the structure “over and over again.” This reframing of history opposes Western-oriented representations with one in which colonial domination replaces the paradigm of terrorism. In doing so, President Erdogan redirects attention. He therefore resists securitization narratives by privileging causality over condemnation. Political incorrectness appears as an idiom of defiance. From the perspective of Gramsci (1971, p. 12) discursive resistance represents a struggle against hegemony. This counter-hegemonic discourse also prevails in:

3.2. Political Incorrectness and Discursive Paradoxes as a Tool for Public Opinion and Legitimization

Political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes are not exclusively associated with resistance. They serve as persuasive tools in molding public opinion and in solidifying political legitimacy. To quote Edelman (1988, p. 103), “political language is political reality”. This means that political actors construct realities in their discourses in order to secure audience adherence or support. Thus, one can observe a revealing paradox in this statement that is congruent with the preceding affirmation: (17) “We are, of course, against terrorists. But I am one of the leaders who knows Hamas well” (Erdogan, 2024).

Erdogan pits two propositions against each other with the adversative conjunction “but”. He clarifies his stance on terrorism and explains why he does not consider Hamas a terrorist organization. This means that there exists a counter-claim, which according to Fairclough (1995, p.88), was made to hold onto agreement while alternative meanings were offered. Moreover, the adverbial phrase “of course” serves to naturalize opposition to terror. A self-evident stance whereas the expression “I am one of the leaders who knows Hamas well,” introduces experiential authority in order to convey that popular opinion about Hamas is false. Erdogan positions himself as an understander of the Hamas. He conveys that he knows more

about it than anyone. As such, his opinion is to be trusted and his interpretation of the conflict is not up for questioning. His words are power words, and therefore lend power to his statement. Bourdieu (1991, p. 66) explains that the authority of discourse is closely tied to that of the person who enunciates it. As such, the validity of Erdogan's argument relies as much on his own participation in it by presenting himself as a competent actor. Erdogan's tactic is to get audience's empathy and mobilize the moral emotion of the audience. Thus, he uses G. Debord's (1967, p. 12) concept of 'spectacularization of political reality'. It consists in insisting on facts in order not only to catch public opinion but also secure support from one's perception. This orientation taken by Erdogan also appears in the semantics of the strategic word used in (18): "Nearly 41,500 people, mostly women and children, have since been killed" (Erdogan, 2024).

He makes a statistical reference in order to denounce what can be considered as an aggression. In addition, the precision or specification "“mostly women and children” intensifies emotional impact showing suffering of vulnerable people thereby eliciting moral condemnation. Erdogan therefore, strengthens his image as a morally responsible geopolitical actor. His words legitimate his actions. Political incorrectness therefore becomes a strategic resource through which Erdogan consolidates authority and shapes public opinion.

3.3. Political Incorrectness and Discursive Paradoxes: Markers of Ideological Position and Power Negotiation

Political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes are discursive concepts that operate as much through setting actors in a power-ideology network. Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 112) contend that political identities are constructed through discourses which articulate them in specific ways along the axes of equivalence and antagonism. In Erdogan's discourse, political incorrectness and paradoxes function as markers of ideological positioning and instruments of geopolitical negotiation. This positioning is negotiated in extract (13). The expression "privileged five" implies a paradox. In effect, the adjective "privileged" introduces an implicit criticism of inequality and concentration of power. Such a view is sustained by R. Cox (1981, p. 128) who argues that international institutions often reflect existing relations of domination. Here, Erdoğan represents himself as a rebel, a spokesperson of all the world's nations who calls for deep reform and equity of the UN. **This political incorrectness manifests in extract (13)** when he asserts "we put the position of all NATO members on the table and make our decisions accordingly". The inclusive pronoun "we" and the phrase "all NATO members" foreground multilateralism and cooperation. Yet this is immediately followed by the negative construction

“These decisions are not made in haste” which emphasizes prudence and sovereign autonomy. The discourse therefore reconciles alliance solidarity with national independence. Such oscillation corresponds to Bakhtin’s (1981, p. 272) notion of dialogism. Erdogan’s discourse moves through a strategic management of contradictions. Political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes stand as calculated instruments of ideological positioning and power negotiation. They are used by Erdogan **to critique Western hegemony** and claim international legality. They are altogether done through the simultaneous articulation of resistance and diplomacy in such a way that Erdoğan transforms contradiction into a source of strategic authority that positions him as a sovereign decision-maker. In this sense, political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes emerge as sophisticated instruments through which power, legitimacy and influence are negotiated.

CONCLUSION

The research has analyzed the discursive construction of political incorrectness and contradictions within Erdogan’s remarks on Hamas and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The analysis shows that political incorrectness is a communicative tool serving a variety of functions. It is a deliberate ideological strategy whereby political agents contest hegemonic systems of representation, negotiate political identities and legitimacy. Thus, it functions as a strategy of discursive instantiation that contest pre-existing opinions or authority. Additionally, it appears as a counter-hegemonic discourse in which prevailing truths are constructed.

Similarly, discursive paradoxes stand as persuasive resources that political actors deploy to connect opposite positions. Discursive paradoxes also function both as framing devices and as forms of manipulation. Political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes are both communicative tools of resistance and contestation deployed by speakers to undermine dominance and articulate alternative readings. These discursive mechanisms serve as ideological-positioning and power-negotiation markers. Thus, Erdogan switches back and forth between the languages of diplomacy and confrontation, institutional legitimacy and institutional criticism, multilateral cooperation and sovereign autonomy. These apparent contradictions do not expose inconsistency but flexibility in approach. Political incorrectness and discursive paradoxes are strategic discursive practices that are woven into ideological and geopolitical power relations. Future research could expand on this analysis by comparing Erdogan’s discourse with other political leaders or investigating the workings of political incorrectness in digital media ecology and transnational political and communicative contexts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALI, Rasha, RASHID, Bahroz, 2022, *A discourse analysis study of manipulation and persuasion as means of doublespeak in British political debate*. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374701065>.
- AMOSSY, Ruth, 2010, *La Présentation de soi: Ethos et identité verbale*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- AMOSSY, Ruth, 2014, *Apologie de la Polémique*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- ANGENOT, Marc, 2008, *Dialogues de sourds: Traité de rhétorique antilogique*. Paris: Mille et Une Nuits.
- ARISTOTLE, 2007, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Translated by George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford University Press.
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail Mikhailovich, 1981, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- BILLIG, Michael, 1996, *Arguing and Thinking: A Rhetorical Approach to Social Psychology* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- BOURDIEU, Pierre, 1991, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- BUELWABA, Mohammed A., 2021, *Legitimation and manipulation in political speeches: A corpus-based study*. *Procedia Computer Science*, 189, 11–18.
- CHARAUDEAU, Patrick, 2005, *Le Discours Politique: Les Masques du Pouvoir*. Paris: Vuibert.
- CHARTERIS-BLACK, Jonathan, 2011, *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- CHILTON, Paul, 2004, *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- COX, Robert, 1981, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 10(2), 126–155.
- DAILY SABAH with Agencies, 2024, September 25, "Erdoğan affirms Hamas as resistance group defending its lands." Istanbul. Retrieved from <https://www.dailysabah.com>.
- DEBORD, Guy, 1967, *The Society of the Spectacle*. Paris: Buchet-Chastel.
- DUCROT, Oswald, 1984, *Le Dire et le Dit*. Paris: Minuit.
- EDELMAN, Murray, 1988, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- FAIRCLOUGH, Norman, 1995, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.
- FOUCAULT, Michel, 1972, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock.
- GRAMSCI, Antonio, 1971, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.
- HABERMAS, Jürgen, 1989, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Translated by Thomas Burger. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, Catherine, 1980, *L'Énonciation: De la Subjectivité dans le Langage*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- LACLAU, Ernesto, 2005, *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso.
- MAINGUENEAU, Dominique, 2014, *Discours et Analyse du Discours*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- MIGNOLO, Walter D., 2011, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- MYATT, John, 2023, *Language and Manipulation: How the Right Words Exert Influence*. *Word Connection Japaliation*. Retrieved from <https://www.word-connection.com/post/language-and-manipulation-how-the-right-words-exert-influence>.
- PERELMAN, Chaïm, OLBRECHTS-TYTECA, Lucie, 1969, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- PLANTIN, Christian, 2011, *Les Bonnes Raisons des Émotions*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- REISIGL, Martin, WODAK, Ruth, 2009, “The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA).” In Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 87–121). London: Sage.
- RICOEUR, Paul, 1976, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.
- VAN DIJK, Teun A., 2006, “Politics, Ideology and Discourse.” In Keith Brown (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 2nd ed., Vol. 9, pp. 728–740. Oxford: Elsevier.
- VAN LEEUWEN, Theo, 2008, *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.