PAN-AFRICAN ACTIVISTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA: MENTAL WORLDS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF DIGITAL DISCURSIVE FACES

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Abstract

Experiences and observations shape individuals within their worlds—be it their environment, mindset, or actions. Everything leaves an imprint, even at the most subtle levels, much like events themselves. Building on the idea of events as markers of statement production (Lokonon, 2022), this study extends the inquiry to include technology and ideology as active forces shaping the mental worlds of those benefiting from the transformation of information production and content management through the internet. Power, once confined to its traditional domains of privilege and domination, is now redistributed. The proletariat, once an ideologically defined concept, appears more representative of a reality that materializes the imagined. Similarly, Africa, with its historically marginalized Pan-Africanist ideology, transitions from an abstract ideal to a tangible realization. From imagination to the self-realization expressed through discourse, what marks are left on discursive faces? This research innovatively continues the conceptualization of ''discursive faces beyond the traditional frame'', exploring the imprints of construction within a framework influenced by social worlds shaped by environment, ideology, and technology. The evolving African political e-rhetoric is analyzed to reveal how these discursive faces are constructed through the interplay of narrative structures, storytelling, and sociotechnical traits unique to each activist claiming Pan-Africanism as their ethos. This study is both theoretical and practical, following the logic of discursive face approaches and mental models with semi-automatic data processing (Google software and Chat GPT 4).

Keywords: Pan-African activists, digital discourse, mental models, narrative construction, discursive e-faces.

1. Introduction

Everything portrays it as a virgin continent, despite its earlier maturity compared to other continents. Every narrative relegates it to the bottom of the hierarchy (Amin, 1972; Anta Diop, 1979; Du Bois, 1903; Nkrumah, 1963, 1964), with even the sciences contributing to this marginalization. Between proponents and opponents, the facts and their significance demand attention, calling for new perspectives. New perspectives and new generations are now propelled onto the global geostrategic stage by both traditional and new media (Lokonon, 2019). These platforms seamlessly integrate into the masses while simultaneously constructing their own communities, often referred to as ''digital families or communities'' (Donath, 1999). This new generation forms the subject of exploration in this study, particularly through their ideological affiliations and the dissemination of discursive media productions that revive ideals from the past, transforming them from an imagined legacy into a myth cherished by dreamers stripped of their cultural heritage. The generation nurtured by a nourishing source of protest, awakening, and the desire to build for change; does this not influence their mental worlds? Can their decisions and actions truly escape these observations and experiences?

Indeed, the mental world of man depends on his human personality, which, in an Allportian approach, is merely the sum of his education, knowledge, traditions, and cultures acquired through observation and/or experience. However, despite the loss of his cultural origins due to various contingencies - colonial schooling, colonial directives for managerial thinking and action, multifaceted

interference shaping a specific type of Black African by colonizers - it becomes increasingly difficult to keep the subconscious separate from the conscious. Thus, Kant's notion of unsociable sociability ultimately fertilizes the physical body, leading to the resurgence of human essence. As a result, the enslaved individual comes to recognize themselves as such and resolves to liberate themselves, no longer willing to be merely 'treated' (Sala-Molins, 2002, p.12), even though science, philosophy, and religion have all historically positioned themselves in complicity. This reality reflects a behavior shaped through socialization into a hegemonic doctrine. Such socialization, according to social construction theorists, may occur through conversion, transformation, negotiation, or reinforcement. Simplistically, it begins by defining the essentialist within the individual. Hence, for us, this connection between mental worlds and what is spoken becomes evident; as in a pragmatist logic, ''to say is to do'', bridging speech and action. This highlights our alignment with Garnham (1980, 2021) on the concept of a ''mental model of discourse''. As Garnham notes, '' (…) it has become clear since the 1960s that the primary purpose of text and discourse comprehension is not to produce a representation of the semantic structure of sentences in a text or utterances in a dialogue, but to extract information about situations in a world that the semantic structure encodes'' (Garnham, 2021, p.2).

If, as demonstrated, discourse reflects experiences and observations, and discursive construction serves as a mirror of mental worlds - allowing one to discern, through words and their arrangements, the discursive personality of the speaking subject, then the subject's behavior towards the fact reveals both the territory and narcissism (Gbaguidi & Lokonon, 2023; Lokonon, 2022). This inevitably distances us from the traditional framework of ''faces'' in linguistic politeness. What, then, are the markers of the construction of these discursive faces? So what is the purpose from the proclamation of such an identity by these activists? Just residues of mental worlds (Altman, 2015; Cardon, 2010) or self-construction in the space? Transposed into the technological world, what techno-discursive construction emerges to express faces in the digital space (Lokonon, 2022, 2024)? Of these e-digital faces, is the identity of these activists' plural or unique? Indeed, between ''reproduction influenced by people and sometimes by situations in discourse'' (Garnham, 2021, p. 4) and often based ''on beliefs and convictions'' (Othamn & Salih, 2022, p. 157), ideology ''encounters its functionality, reflecting the traditional link between the self-identification of new speakers, movements, and discourse'' (Featherman, 2015, p. 9)?

Operating here within an ideological-socializing context—marked by the intense clash between ideologies (Pan-Africanism versus hegemonist and neo-colonialist counter-values)—the analysis of the discursive productions of these Pan-African activists focuses on media production. It examines the interplay between narration, representing the speaker's perspective, and storytelling, reflecting the communicative framework, to identify structural patterns that reveal the markers of narrative construction. These markers expose the discursive personality through the faces (i) and highlight the role of technology in establishing a digital self within the space (ii). However, a brief methodological incursion is necessary to clarify the objectives and hypotheses, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of discussions and debates to better align with the theoretical approach.

2. Materials and methods

The aim of this research is to analyze the semio-pragmatic constructs that deploy the faces of Pan-Africanist activists in the digital discursive space. In this way, the organizational dynamics of the narrative emerge to express the discursive faces of the digital self and to analyze how this self-appropriates space to distinguish itself digitally. Therefore, we posit that, from the dictates of technological apparatus to the organizational play of narrative, the territories and narcissisms of activists are readable in their Pan-Africanist e-identity. Thus, the organizational dynamics of the narrative construct the discursive faces of the digital self; and this digital-self distinguishes itself through its plural identity expression within an increasingly ideologized space.

It is thus easy to identify the points of inquiry: first, regarding the new paradigm that removes "faces" in linguistic politeness from their traditional framework, allowing for theoretical circumspection and the delineation of certain concepts and corpora essential to understanding this study.

2.1. Discussions and Debates on the Paradigm of "Discursive Faces" in its Entirety and in the Digital Context

Three aspects emerge for reflection: the use of a competency within a psychosocial and expressive framework to articulate the discursive self; linguistic units as constructs deployed for the purposes of expressing a discourse-carrying self; and the dictates of two noumena: humans and technology, both serving this self, revealing itself consciously or subconsciously in discourse to continually express itself. The question arises: why does "I" express itself, and is "I" entitled to express itself? That is the heart of the matter! This evokes two notions: rights and legitimacy. Consequently, how should we classify what emanates from the mouth of someone who has not been granted this right to belong to the circle of hearing-listening-speaking? Speech, or mere use of words? This explains our adherence to Bourdieu's assertion (2022: 20): "Every act of speech raises the question of its own legitimacy, and one way to feel somewhat justified in monopolizing speech is to feel that one is responding to questions." Thus, with "its own legitimacy," it becomes pertinent to revisit the key questions of a message: what? who? when? where? and why? The **what** implies self-awareness as the bearer of discourse, as someone who can speak, and, in the **what**, speak meaningfully. But the **where** also contextualizes the site generating the interaction; the object used to interact is summoned to specify each activist with their ideological foundation, further revealing the basis of enunciative or argumentative construction. This involves usage, practices, and the user.

Usage as a Sociological, Psychological, and Expressive Element of Competence to Articulate the Discursive Self

Following Bourdieu's perspective (2022), one notes that the right to speak is not self-bestowed but is granted through practices, traditions, and beliefs—an ensemble legitimizing speech. How does this legitimation naturally occur? This already introduces another dimension of **usage**: legitimation. Thus, we move beyond mere "use of words" to "known usage," that is, awareness of an object, its utility, and the ability to use it effectively within interaction. Consequently, the actor is no longer passive but active, also imposing their dictate upon the object.

This study, however, focuses on these actors in their being, considering the various contextual situations observable: the social constructs activists use to express themselves, propose strengthening, preserving, modifying, or transforming them to assert their presence. This reflects a hegemonic philosophy - reductive yet trace-leaving - confronted with another social philosophy: the ideology of African identity, Pan-Africanism, both past and present, coexisting with another situation: technologies-communication tools whose functions echo the slogan of yesterday, ''Workers of the world, unite'', united through the shared use of an object. This justifies the study's immersion in Pan-Africanism (Du Bois, 2006; Nkrumah, 1963, 1964 [2001]) to assert, "you misjudge us," "we can govern ourselves," "we belong to the oldest civilization" (Amin, 1972; Anta Diop, 1979), through an enunciative construct deeply embedded in the mental worlds of each discourse bearer. Indeed, the outward form—viewed here as the arrangement of words into utterances - is linked to inner thought, which forms only through accumulated knowledge and residues for the production of meaning. Hence, this study calls upon Garnham (2021) to uncover and describe this link, highlights Fiant's (2011) insights into constructions supporting narrative emotion, and draws on Featherman (2015) to justify the virtuality of the collective self, shaped by technology, another key factor nurturing the mental worlds of these discourse producers.

Thus, one understands why perception becomes the crux of data collection in this study, justifying the exploration of a new field focused on emotion through narrative (second discussion and debate). However, it is worth noting that this study does not aim to delve further into debates about whether "meaning is usage" or "usage is good practice," summarizing analytical philosophers, sociologists of usage, or psycholinguists. For us, what is perceptible, while it may not directly align with the actional dimension of the sign - with its references and symbols for action - can only be understood in terms of utility. Hence, the actor becomes significant in achieving the communicative purpose; the enunciative construct, developed within norms, serves the participants, who also shape themselves through their discourse.

This study, therefore, adopts the new paradigm of ''discursive faces'' developed by Lokonon (2022) to examine whether, in discourse, faces can indeed be discerned—whether as the territory, also referred to as the "negative face," which relates to the physical person and their possessions, including culture, professional status, social position, and both tangible and intangible heritage, observable in narcissism, or the "positive face." These notions, developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), highlight that each

participant enters the interactive framework with their faces intact, without any prior construction. However, in the interactive space, these faces can be harmed or attacked through discourse, a situation that ideally should not occur. This brings us to Goffman's (1974) thesis of mutual protection or Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2003) emphasis on valorization. But in reality, we must ask: *If these faces are intrinsic to every individual, inseparable from them, and subject to risk in the interactive space through discourse, which also immerses itself in a mental world, can we continue to view a participant navigating the discursive space without their faces being perceptible in their enunciative or argumentative constructions through discourse?* This is the central question, and it justifies the adoption of this innovative paradigm in this study, in line with Lokonon (2022), while also opening new fields of investigation in terms of research tools.

Linguistic Units as Constructs for the Stakes of Self-Expression in Discourse

Here, the concept of usage continues in terms of practices and utility for a purpose. As highlighted in Lokonon (2022), emphasis was placed on the use of linguistic units, as the author developed it in terms of occurrences and co-occurrences. The question is, why this orientation already in this precursor work of the new paradigm? For the author, focused on the interactional logic between signs, the mental world of discourse reveals a relationship between words, words in their uses, and the user of these words to act (producing written or oral texts).

Thus, the word, expanded to the sign, allows for an understanding of the evolution of everything, including the human being. Accordingly, the author notes in her work that signs reveal behavior (linguistic, relational, and psychological) in connection with any fact. Why, then, the focus on occurrences and co-occurrences? From the simple identification of a word to its use in linguistics, there is indeed a link; however, this link is interrogative and explains the author's position, which shows that if there is a ''fortuitous circumstance'' for the concept, the mental world of discourse demonstrates that nothing is fortuitous; everything stems from something: the constructs of the mental worlds of the user. Therefore, the ''appearance'' of a word in a production reveals more than its use or practice; it primarily reflects the relationships and coherences organized by the psyche of the speaker and their acting body.

There has been considerable progress in understanding how local relations between clauses or utterances are computed. These relations fall into two broad categories. First, anaphoric relations determine identities of either sense or reference between expressions of various kinds, primarily NPs and VPs. Second, coherence relations, which may be signaled by clausal connectives (such as "because," "but," "although") or sometimes suggested by world knowledge, determine relations among the eventualities denoted by clauses (Garnham, 2021, p.2).

From small words to propositions, sentences, and beyond, if the purpose of interaction mobilizes the speaker, the choice of specific words reveals the speaker in terms of their body, body with

emotion and body working in connection with the body of the other to whom they speak, for relational action. However, despite precautions in usage, what escapes the speaker are the traces that allow the other to assign them a role as a convener. This discursive body, constituted by "faces," is in turn shaped by words to make itself readable in discourse. These faces, however timidly or strongly legible, are not invisible, as they possess representations known to all: physical representation, possessions for territory, and dignity for narcissism. This expands the traditional scope of "faces" in linguistic politeness, situating them in discursive construction.

But if it is now acknowledged by the pioneers of the mental world of discourse that the choice of a word is not random, can the arrangement be? Here, we move away from statistics and numbers. Indeed, numbers no longer isolate or disembody words; instead, the chosen manner of arranging them with others and creating intertwining links defines, beyond describing the world, the enunciative and communicative action, the speaking subject in discourse.

This questioning allowed a shift into the world of narrative, whether literary or media-oriented, as necessitated by the context of our study. *The Narrative?* In this study, analysis no longer focuses on occurrence or presence (co-occurrence) through statistical significance in terms of presence (correlation) within a statistical background (numbers) of the word but rather on the final output in terms of discourse construction. Classical tools for narrative analysis are borrowed while remaining open to the object - the medium - establishing the participation framework.

What is the research aim, then? The study addresses this question more precisely. Nevertheless, one is justified in asking: Does the fact in question operate for the speaker in the choice of narrative construction, or do their mental worlds dictate the optional law? In the context of our corpus, if the subject imposes their will, the data will reveal it, but if it is the mental worlds of the speaker, the data will unveil this as well.

The dictates of two noumena: the human and technology in service of the self, exposing itself either consciously or subconsciously in discourse, always striving to express itself.

The connection in this study extends beyond subjects of memory or facts; it also encompasses another element of mental worlds: the media. This inclusion allows for a discussion of media and digital identity. For us, this identity is online and pulls humans out of their intimacy. Thus, we align with the perspective of these authors: *the online self*, which is nothing other than "the presentation of self-online between relationship and recognition" (Denouël, 2011, pp. 77-79), and intimacy transposed into public space (Donald, 1999), forming an *in-ex-timacy* (Tisseron, 2001), and yet, "in search of recognition of subjective singularity" (Granjon & Denouël, 2010).

However, regarding the construction of discursive faces, dynamic processes shape them; the apparatus, with its dictates, fosters an erased or disengaged expression. Yet, in this context, there is no pursuit of approval. Human personality makes these faces readable, whether willingly or by force. At this point, we delve into the

outcomes of object use: technology. This study, however, focuses on the elements that allow us to interpret usage and its practices. What are the components involved in the construction of discourse? Are they technical features (Jouët, 2000) that define the speaker, and how do they contribute to this definition? What do they create in terms of relational dynamics?

Hence, the study incorporates a dispositive approach (Lafon, 2019; Papadoudi, 2014), as it moves from mere usage to emphasize the utility of the actor-user, who, in facing the dictates of technology, shapes their own dictates in mastering the object. This process not only positions them within the interactive axis but also connects them to others and enables the activation of meaning in multiple forms within the space. Does this mediating object not transform the actor-user into a mediator as well, in their pursuit of mediating objectives?

These activists, while using technology for mediating purposes, reveal various expressions of their discursive faces within these spaces. The study delves into these aspects in its development.

Everything here indicates the need to establish a brief framework to avoid going in all directions with the words in this study

2.2 Clarification of Key Concepts

"Ideology", "discourse", "narratives", "activists", and "Pan-Africanist" will feature prominently in this study, and it is important to clarify how these terms are used here. From the outset, where there is ideology, there is discourse, and no truly constructive discourse can exist without an ideological foundation. Everything is a struggle, even the implementation of a project is a struggle, especially those that aim to capture minds for the renewed nobility of Africa within Africa and across the world. Thus, this study will maintain that, in any scenario, even if structures create a distance between ideology and discourse, the central meaning unites them. This is because "discourse is perhaps the most significant of such social behaviors as it is the only activity capable of explicitly demonstrating and communicating beliefs. An understanding of ideology that lacks a theory of discourse is, therefore, fundamentally incomplete" (Othman & Salih, 2022, p. 157). Furthermore, the dynamics of narrative evolve to articulate the self in the context of digital identity. *Narrative* is used here to express the particularity of the forms in which Pan-African activists convey their message, regardless of the current events. It is crucial to emphasize that this transcends the mere intention of presenting a topic and instead focuses on the interaction between words, as well as between the words and the speaker, whether consciously or unconsciously. Therefore, these constructs reveal how each activist deploys their faces within the discursive space. *Discursive faces* are an accomplishment of faces in discourse; it is neither a matter of valuation nor protection, but a matter of construction. Thus,

> (...) the face is not just ''the positive social value that a person effectively claims through the line of action that others assume they have adopted during a particular contact' (Goffman, 1974: 9); but especially that of which they 'become aware and construct throughout the action

during a contact as a human being' (Lokonon, 2022, p. 118).

By "*discursive faces beyond traditional frameworks*", we refer to identities constructed through discourse, which may be introverted or extroverted. This concept innovates by moving beyond conventional ideas of protecting and valorizing faces, focusing instead on how words and utterances reveal a speaker's territoriality and narcissism before any protective measures are taken. With technology, apart from occurrences, openings or closures to the facts in question, what specificity emerges in terms of constructs under a geopolitical philosophy: Pan-Africanism? Within the term *Pan-Africanism*, this study navigates between geopolitical/strategic philosophy and ideology. Nevertheless, it is important to recall that at a certain point, given the underdevelopment in which Africa is entrenched, this term, along with the entire philosophy surrounding it, seems outdated. Abandoned, it is uttered to recall a great principle: the misunderstanding of the Black man (Du Bois, 2006) by a policy of conditioning and the fostering of spirit (Nkrumah, 1963), a dogmatization that strips him of culture and knowledge, even though he is the instigator and the master of it (Anta Diop, 1979; Du Bois, 2006; Gbaguidi & Lokonon, 2023). So, if by the semantic structure of the word with the suffix: *ism*, an ideology is already emerging, we must read there, in reality, an entire philosophy on the origin of the human race: the black one-as already the root. It is therefore a mark which leaves imprints on man and in man and which must also be read in his behavior. This also must construct the identity. Hence, it can be noted, in this study that *identity* emerges through the act of discourse in a mechanical, constructivist, observable or experimental psychic way (Altman, 2023; Gbaguidi & Lokonon, 2023; Lokonon, 2022). This implies structuring and meaning-making, hence the relevance of "*narrative*" in this study. It refers to the representation and organization of a series of events, ideas, or experiences in a coherent structure, also as a way to understand how humans make sense of the world, communicate experiences, construct identities; and for us, how the speakers construct themselves in utterances.

Does this not already suggest the type of corpus? In reality, the contextualization of a study and its positioning as a research question naturally select the elements to be explored for data collection. However, it is important to define the corpus to facilitate the understanding of this study.

2.3. Corpus Presentation
This study aligns with the objective of preserving memory, as Africa today suffers from a lack of works narrating events as they truly happened, free of distortion. It explores three main aspects: a brief historical overview leading to the choice of themes, a concise explanation of the methods for selecting the corpus, and a schematic presentation of the selected actors.

Regarding *the historical overview*, it is noted that contemporary events and the discourses they generate are significant, as is the political trend quickly labeled by the Western press as ''neo-Pan-Africanism''. Does this not evoke the painful reminder of the collective failure of Africans who fought for rights and the socio-economic development tied to this ideology?

Africans who have revived Pan-Africanism in the 21st century emphasize pride in being Black, belonging to a so-called underdeveloped continent, being treated as such, and deciding to embrace *this* identity. ''This'' refers to how they perceive themselves, distinct from the imposed narratives. It is the recognition of a multifaceted identity: knowledge, culture, and natural wealth. Some demand a ''way'' (their own development path, conceived and implemented without external interference), while others claim a ''voice'' (a speaking subject reclaiming authority at all levels). Even in the media, policies in place, particularly in Francophone Africa, reinforce dependence. RFI, TV5, and France 24 remain the dominant sources of information. It wasn't until June 1, 2012, that Africans in this region gained access to a channel proclaiming itself as Africa's voice: Afrique Media TV. This shift altered narratives and introduced new actors. Public spaces are now occupied by ordinary citizens, echoing the ideals of figures like Nkrumah. Themes vary but all aim to awaken consciousness. In nations resistant to this channel's programs, attention intensifies. The reach has since expanded, and both within and outside Africa, there is now a broad spectrum of consciousness raisers occupying traditional media and social networks. They are quickly labeled ''activists'', self-identify as ''Pan-Africanists'' and assert their right to comment on all issues distinguishing yesterday's Africa from today's.

It becomes clear why, after their focus on the Central African Republic, their attention shifted definitively to the Sahel, specifically to the three countries challenging French domination and exploitation: Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger (listed here in order of precedence, highlighting their commitment to breaking away). This explains the selection of themes related to these nations of rupture and justifies the comparative analysis among them.

Indeed, it must be noted that demonstrating a commitment to break away from the old system required forceful action - coups d'état. This endogenous military intervention triggered an exogenous institutional backlash. Consequently, the new leaders faced opposition from regional and international institutions, including ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), WAEMU (West African Economic and Monetary Union), France, the European Union, and the United Nations. The result: several measures were imposed on these countries, such as exclusion from cooperative institutions, financial and economic embargoes, and, on the security front, terrorism and territorial occupation aimed at undermining the state's foundations. It is important to note that, despite Western interventions, these states have remained partially deprived of their territories for over a decade. The insecurity caused by terrorism has been deemed unmanageable, despite military efforts (Châtaigner, 2019; UN Security Council press summary of July 25, 2023; TV5 news broadcast of February 11, 2020), along with its associated consequences. This justifies the attention given to the liberation of Kidal by the Malian army, a city of strategic economic, geographic, and geostrategic importance

that had been held by terrorists for a decade (BBC report of November 13, 2023; France 24 news broadcast of November 7, 2024), serving as an open gateway toward the capital. In Western publications, the narrative cast doubt on the recapture of this symbolic city, representing the reclamation of Mali's territorial integrity, for several days.

Should it be recalled that Mali, the first country to experience a coup during this so-called democratic era, is still under embargoes? Embargoes were also imposed on Niger following the coup against President Bazoum on July 26, 2023, accompanied by the immediate decision to reinstate the ousted president by force (BBC News, August 14, 2023; TV5 News broadcast, August 27, 2023). This last coup attracted widespread attention, with Pan-Africanists, French authorities, and institutional leaders all weighing in. For Pan-Africanists, the act was commendable; for others, it needed to be condemned - perhaps reflecting the fall of a key stronghold for those committed to breaking away from a system of exploitation and subjugation.

The threat of war loomed over the region, and the memory of Libya's collapse added fuel to the discourse, with displays of face-threatening acts such as verbal violence, insults, and false arguments. It was a polarized confrontation, and the entire African continent was affected. The African Union distanced itself, as did some heads of state from other regions, leading to a visible split. Notably, some leaders disassociated themselves from the warlike stances adopted in Francophone West Africa. Amid this climate, ECOWAS, which had mobilized an intervention force for Niger, convened to lift the sanctions imposed on these dissenting countries - four in total, including Guinea (BBC News, August 15, 2023; TV5 News, February 24, 2024; Africanews, August 13, 2024). How could this not capture attention?

It should be noted that the coup occurred on July 26, 2023. ECOWAS held its first meeting on July 30, 2023, during which immediate sanctions were announced, along with an ultimatum. A second meeting took place on August 10, 2023, reaffirming the intention to restore the ousted president by force. However, it was only on February 24, 2024, during a summit of the institution, that the sanctions were lifted without any negotiations. Thus, the choice of these two themes - the recapture of Kidal by the Malian army and the unilateral lifting of sanctions against Niger- becomes evident. Both symbolize the new sovereignist approach in Francophone Africa.

Regarding the *selection of the corpus*, two methods were employed: event-based selection combined with web zapping. This allowed for the collection of activists' outputs on the two topics of interest. Among the media productions retained, additional criteria were applied: consistency in terms of volume (at least 13 minutes for a short video) and narrative structure (balancing between storytelling and discourse, characteristic of the new Pan-African narrative), along with production techniques that highlight the use of technology. This enabled the selection of materials conducive to data analysis. Ultimately, the following Pan-Africanist activists were selected: Banda Kani, Nathalie Yamb, Professor Franklin

Nyamsi, and Kemi Seba. Regarding the choice of social networks, the process was automated through Google's search engine. As a result, platforms like TikTok and WhatsApp were excluded. The reason for this exclusion lies in the fragmented nature of the content available on forums concerning the two topics, where only brief segments of productions were accessible. This led to the preference for YouTube and the digital platforms created by certain activists, as well as the websites of media outlets broadcasting programs on these themes. It is now time to provide a brief overview of each activist.

Regarding *the schematic presentation of the activists*, the following points should be noted:

- Banda Kani, a politician with a political party living in Cameroon, host of programs on Africa's leading voice channel: Afrique-Média TV, and other channels like DBS and For You Tv;
- Kemi Seba, a civil society figure with an NGO, called "Pan-Africanist Emergencies", whose vision is the liberation of Africa, and particularly the exodus of France from its former colonies for true sovereignty. Despite his numerous travels and having abandoned France as his residence and homeland for some time, the activist has settled in Africa;
- Professor Franklin Nyamsi, a philosophy professor living in France, embracing the ideals of African sovereigntists. His new convictions led to his resignation from the teaching position;
- Nathalie Yamb, commonly known as the Lady of Sochi, a Cameroonian residing in Switzerland; her convictions for Africa's sovereignty have also resulted in her being banned from stepping foot on French soil.

The focus is on describing how these activists employ strategies to construct their various ''selves'' as speaking subjects, enabling them to stand out individually while simultaneously presenting themselves as belonging to a unified collective spirit; the same developed to persuade the masses and captivate their audiences.

3. Results and discussion

Dominance at the market of ideas (Altman, 2023, p. 1243), habits and experiences govern of course the enunciative level, the interaction of participants within a communication space. As developed by Brown & Levinson (1987), each participant enters the space with their own territory and dignity, which are threatened by speech acts (Goffman, 1974) and also built by the same acts of speaking (Lokonon, 2022). How all of these mental models help to engineer the utterances?

3.1. Narrative dynamics for discursive faces

Every option reveals a commitment, a recognition of the self, and a management of self-impression by oneself and of the self by the other (Goffman, 1974: Chapter 4). In this quest for meaning, ideological discourse carries the interpersonal marks of the discourse producer. At this level, many elements come into play in terms of structuring; there is the linguistic unit, the utterance, the

enunciative phrase, and the media narrative. As developed in section 2.1, at this stage, it is important to observe the influence of the contextual situations described, which nurture the mental worlds of these activists and seek both Africa's path and voice.

3.1.1. Speakers' Investments in the Word

Sharing Hobbesian and Allportian positions, Lokonon (2022, p. 118) asserted that a person's reference point in all things, whether in relation to themselves or to external things, remains grounded in their present situations and not in prior causes, with all vital energies melting it. This perspective thus reflects a developmental view of humankind. Thus, simple citizens who once lived in harmony with their environment at a certain point in history saw their surroundings transformed by an event that, seemingly, disrupted their tranquillity. Since then, they claim to be 'in a struggle' against 'a war that is being waged, and has always been waged, against Africa,' and they particularly regard themselves as 'soldiers on the front line.' Africa, therefore, is both their being and their possession, inseparable from their essence in its fullness. By this way, it is easy to hear:

> « Et moi, je vous ai mis au défi ici depuis 10 ans Vous verrez ces gens tombés. Ça fait 10 ans que je le dis ici ; vous êtes en train de voir ça a commencé. Vous êtes en train de voir (…), « (…) je dois appeler un chat un chat. Si vous voulez m'amener à respecter un petit (…), un yɛyɛ qui s'amuse avec un continent comme l'Afrique, mon cher Bachir ! c'est-à-dire, je ne sais pas comment vous allez faire pour m'arrêter. Je ne vais donner aucun respect à ceux qui ne le méritent pas »[1]

Translation

> And I have been challenging you here for 10 years. You will see these people fall. I have been saying it here for 10 years; you are starting to see it happening. You are starting to see (…), "(…) I must call a spade a spade. If you want me to respect (…), a fool who toys with a continent like Africa, my dear Bachir! I mean, I don't know how you're going to stop me. I will give no respect to those who do not deserve it.

Not being in a context of analysing violent discourse, certain statements have been omitted without, however, hindering the focus on investment in words, which is of interest at this level. Indeed, from those excerpts of Banda Kani (BK), it is noted that there is a preference for argumentative construction to emphasize facts and the values of facts, such as '*I have been saying it here for 10 years*' and '*you will see these people fall*'. This participates at the exposition of territory and confirms the elements that nurture the mental worlds of this speaking subject and reveals a return to the archaeology of knowledge. Indeed, this Pan-African television channel, Afrique Media TV, always opened its space to this individual, establishing a consistent presence on screen. The speaker recalls contexts where certain images should not be seen or

circulated[2], yet social media has already popularized the right to produce information. Therefore, it is difficult to practice withholding; thus, images have toppled those denounced by this man, who was initially disbelieved by the public, plunging them into a low position. Verbs like 'see' or 'fall' and adverbial locution like '*in the process of*' not only render the information manifest but also lend credibility to the speaker's words. Facts are thus invoked to efface the self; strong words are used, even borrowing from other languages: '*pathetic*', '*yɛyɛ*' to elevate Africa, one of the battles for which the speaker declares himself a 'soldier on the front line'. Thus, the speaker forbids the journalist - the "policeman" of the set - from forcing him out of the argumentative stance where 'everything is reason' (Gbaguidi & Lokonon, 2023); this is for the sake of the value of facts: '*for 10 years now, and as days go by, you will treat them as they truly are*'. From this, we note a discursive face that highlights, in the first instance, 'territory', meaning the person in his physical representation along with all his possessions (Lokonon, 2022), presenting the image of a knowledgeable, strategic individual who reads geopolitical situations with skill. This also appeals to his narcissism - his dignity. Hence, 'if you want me to respect...' and '*I don't know how you are going to make me (…)*', '*I will not give any respect to those who do not deserve it (…)*'. It is not merely an image that he deploys but rather his participation in the socio-public space. The question is: what type of discursive face?

In this case, we prioritize the self and the other in terms of address to identify each other within the space. Here is the mechanical breakdown: 'I' appears 5 times compared to 'you' 8 times, 'pathetic' 2 times, 'these people' 1 time, 'the' 1 time, 'they' 1 time, 'yɛyɛ' 1 time, and 'those' 1 time; this results in a count of 5 for the 'discursive self' versus 15 for the co-self (the other) participating in the discursive space in terms of those being spoken to and those being spoken about. From this data, as demonstrated by Gbaguidi & Lokonon (2023: 373), the construction is introverted relative to participation. This is also noted in the case of Nathalie Yamb (NY) with the excerpts below:

> « J'avais prévu de parler d'autres choses aujourd'hui mais la situation est-elle que j'ai chamboulé mon programme. », « Il y a quelques semaines de cela, je disais à des amis que, le peuple malien a 6 mois très difficile devant lui. Ma prédiction s'appuyait sur le fait qu'à compter du 1ᵉʳ janvier 2022, la France assurerait en plus des présidences permanentes de l'UEMOA et de la CEDEAO, celle tournante de l'union européenne jusqu'au 30 juin 2022 et qu'elle aurait donc une capacité découpée de nuisance. » (Nathalie Yamb (NY)« Les sommets de l'UEMOA et de la CEDEAO qui se sont tenus

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[1] Intervention of Banda Kani on the set of Afrique Média, specifically in the program ''Débat Africain'', whose theme is: the Malian people standing up to say no to ECOWAS and France.

[2] Who can still doubt the images showing, instead of security work, soldiers ''doing excavations themselves'', ''harvesting gold'' or even ''putting well-worked gold into containers''? "You will see them fall", "you are seeing", are statements appealing to the archeology of knowledge

dimanche à Accra m'ont donné raison. En effet la bande de perroquet … »[3]

Translation

> ''I had planned to discuss other matters today, but the situation has disrupted my schedule''. ''A few weeks ago, I told friends that the Malian people have a very difficult six months ahead of them. My prediction was based on the fact that starting January 1, 2022, France would hold not only the permanent presidencies of UEMOA and ECOWAS but also the rotating presidency of the European Union until June 30, 2022, thus having a divided capacity for harm''. (Nathalie Yamb (NY) ''The UEMOA and ECOWAS summits held on Sunday in Accra proved me right. Indeed, the band of parrots…''

Indeed, there are 4 occurrences for the discursive-self compared to 12 occurrences for those being spoken about (only 3) and against whom one speaks (9 occurrences). In contrast, in Kemi Seba's case, the construction is extroverted-expressive construction of the discursive self, meaning that the discursive other-those being spoken about-has only 3 occurrences compared to 10 occurrences for the self in the space.

> *« Le changement géopolitique qui s'opère en Afrique, même nos adversaires, je crois qu'il y a un rapport de l'Ifri, (...) et, ils disaient que les gens comme Kemi Seba, comme d'autres, Franklin Nyamsi Nathalie Yamb sont euh des figures qui ont contrib qui contribuent massivement à éduquer les populations et les orienter vers un discours », « L'alliance de Etats du Sahel, c'est le fruit d'un travail que nous et d'autres, on a effectué »*[4]

Translation

> The geopolitical change taking place in Africa, even our adversaries—I believe there's a report from Ifri (...)—and they were saying that people like Kemi Seba, like others, Franklin Nyamsi, Nathalie Yamb, are figures who have massively contributed and continue to contribute to educating populations and guiding them towards a certain discourse. The Sahel States Alliance is the result of work that we and others have carried out.

Let us note in the analysis of this excerpt that, to remain true to the spirit of the text, we have not sought to separate Kemi Seba, who calls upon other activists in the text, since the intended meaning manifest for all remains: the occupation of the setting by Pan-African activists, leading and already recording, according to them, victories in the ongoing struggle. This is further reinforced by

another excerpt from Franklin Nyamsi[5], even if here the construction relies on the situation, meaning the closing or opening of the discursive self to the situation being discussed. In this case, it is noted: we/our: 5 occurrences; 'Africa.cain.e.s: 4 occurrences; Niger-Mali-Burkina-Niamey: 2 occurrences for each, so 4 for Niger in reality; the 3 heads of state: 2 occurrences; the 3 countries: 2 occurrences; necessity: 2 occurrences; un-ir/ion: 2 occurrences; African people: 2 occurrences; understanding: 1 occurrence; place: 1 occurrence; volunteer: 2 occurrences; extraordinary opportunity: 1 occurrence; prosper : 1 occurrence; fully benefit: 2 occurrences; confederation: 1 occurrence; federation: 1 occurrence. In reality, the discursive self has effaced itself for the deployment in the socio-discursive space of the situation, the fact in question; the extroversion of the discursive face is in the openness to the situation not because there is no assimilation, but rather because it is the ''current situation'' driven by vital energies, that is, those that activate ''interacting traits, values, attitudes, motivations, …'' (Cattell, cited by Lokonon, 2022).

Furthermore, it is important to highlight here that, the enunciative construction also allows us to read a territory that is well exposed and sometimes too highlighted with the following statements: "There is place for any willing person", "any willing person who wants fully benefit", "can come and act and prosper in this space"; this activist merges his entire being and his assets with the authorities of this space. Who informed him that it is looking for "person"? Who told him that there is "place"? Where does this decision-making authority come from to say "can come and act and prosper?"

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[3] *Nathalie Yamb, regarding the sanction imposed on Mali following the coup d'état through which Assimi Goïta, instead of handing over power to a third party as before, takes control of power himself*

[4] *Intervention by Kemi Seba during an interview with the journalist from the e-media NEinfo.*

[5] *"« Ce samedi 6 juillet 2024, l'Afrique sera rassemblée à Niamey. Les trois chefs d'Etats du Mali du Burkina-Faso et du Niger se retrouvent à Niamey au Niger », « Les trois chefs d'Etats du Mali, du Burkina-Faso et du Niger sont en train de nous ré-enseigner au peuple africain, aux élites africaines du présent et du futur, la nécessité de l'union, la nécessité de l'entente pour protéger nos peuples », « Nous sommes obligés de nous unir et de ne pas nous échapper pour des postes », « Il y a de la place pour toute personne volontaire, toute personne volontaire qui veut pleinement profiter; qui veut pleinement profiter de cette opportunité extraordinaire que la fondation de la confédération et de la fédération représente pour les Africains, peut venir agir et prospérer dans cet espace. ».*
Translation: This Saturday, July 6, 2024, Africa will be gathered in Niamey. The three heads of state from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger are meeting in Niamey, Niger." "The three heads of state from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger are re-educating the African people, as well as the current and future African elites, on the necessity of unity, the necessity of understanding to protect our people." "We must unite and not flee for positions." "There is room for every willing person; anyone who wants to fully benefit from this extraordinary opportunity that the establishment of the confederation and federation represents for Africans can come to act and prosper in this space.

This is also the other strength of this work which, continuing the exploration of the notion of "the construction of discursive faces", questions the place of the choice by a speaker of any enunciative construction in relation to another, of one sentence in relation to another (Altman, 2023; Mandou Ayiwouo, 2020), of one word in relation to another (Gbaguidi & Lokonon, 2023 and we will add, in relation to this work positioned in the dispositive approach, of a narrative compared to another).

3.1.2. From the Word to Investment in Narrative Construction

We transpose here, immersing this part into the grammar of models and mental interpretations, the issues of incidental play and praxeological constraints to retain that every option to utter responds to 'the speaker's own laws' (Mandou Ayiwouo, 2020: 603-606) for issues of relevance and communicative victory in the case of these activists. In terms of the structural schema of the narrative, we draw from the world of narratology and media narrative to search for data. Thus, for narration, three (3) classical elements are retained: initiation, confrontation, and resolution; and for media production: the dramatic units of time, setting, and action. Here is what emerges from the figure below.

Figure n° 1: The Schematic Structure of Narrative Construction
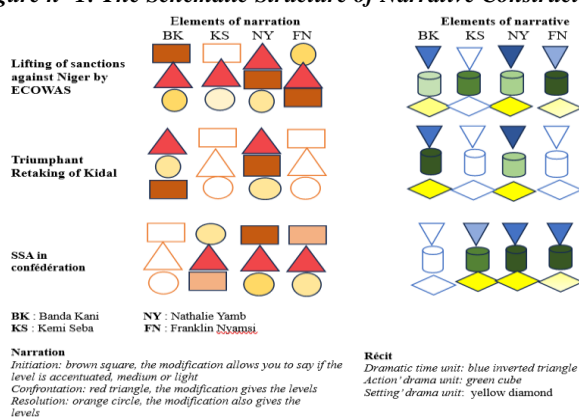
From this figure which concerns speeches on three (3) events, namely, the lifting of sanctions against Niger, the capture of Kidal from terrorists by the Malian army, the Alliance of Sahel States which, transformed into Confederation.

- Regarding observable elements for media narratives, the following observations have been noted:
- For Nathalie Yamb (NY), there is a pronounced construction regarding dramatic units of setting (◇), a strong emphasis on dramatic units of time (▽) and a less pronounced presence concerning dramatic units of action (▯).
- In the case of Banda Kani (BK there is also a strong emphasis on dramatic units of time (▽) along with pronounced dramatic units of place and action (◇ ▯).
- concerning Franklin Nyamsi (FN), there is a significant emphasis on dramatic units of action (▮), no emphasis on units of setting (◇), and a mixed construction regarding units of time (▽ ▽).
- As for Kemi Seba (KS), the productions found are not very consistent since one concerns a report on his statement during a visit to Niger and the other a snippet regarding AES during an interview with a journalist from an e-tv. However, it is observed that there is a very pronounced construction in terms of units of action (▮).

- In relation to the narrative, it can be observed that there is inconsistency in the structuring among the four (4) activists, with a schematic structural option that varies according to the theme and likely the perceived stakes by each individual. However, for Nathalie Yamb (NY), across the three themes, she began 2 with confrontation (▲), followed by initiation (▮) before ultimately concluding with resolution (◯) witch serves as a starting point for Kemi Seba (KS) and Franklin Nyamsi (FN), who finish with initiation, which holds its place for Banda Kani (BK), as indicated by the classic structure of the narrative. Even so, once initiation is established, the speaker allows themselves to reformulate the figurative scheme according to their inspiration or motivation [1]. What do these particularities reveal about the delivery of the discourse?

From evidence, in terms of coherence between the expressions of the speaker and the perceptions of the listener after hearing, it should be noted that there is a constant construction of conflict (heroes vs. traitors), (good vs. evil), (valid leaders vs. sellout leaders), etc. Are we talking here about an appositive declension (Mandou Ayiwouo, 2020) of the argumentation that reinforces the focus for the listener? Additionally, face-threatening acts enhance the expository acts of language, allowing for reference and inviting the listener to a co-construction. For instance, when BD says, "I read the statements of Tinubu, I sent them to people, I told my comrades in the party [inaudible] I said, 'read this, read this'", or when FN states, "They served us again a bouillabaisse: a bad déguê: what in my mother tongue, bassa, we call bimanpεlε: a bad broth," and when NY remarks, "So should we rejoice? No [she takes a serious expression, shaking her head from right to left], we need to put all this into perspective, and I will explain to you why we should instead be worried". Manipulation through narratological construction cannot help but lead the receiver to modify their reactions: less indifference and actions closer to the intended meaning become manifest. Because,

''much of our thinking about the world is people-centred rather than situation-centred, and that this aspect of our thinking naturally carries over to the descriptions of the real or imaginary worlds we produce or describe in fiction, newscasts, everyday conversations and a variety of other forms of text and discourse'' (Garnham, 2021, p. 4).

From these data, we can say that the hypothesis: "the organizational games of the story construct the discursive faces of the digital self" is verified. Moreover, the data clearly shows that it is not the subject who dictates the rules of creation but rather the mental worlds of the activists. This varies according to the coherence (Garnham, 2021) that each one establishes with the event. This is to say that words encode our self in its environment for its exposure in the socio-discursive space. However, the fear is that from this individual manipulation a collective one will set in where everything must go in one direction, look in the oriented direction. What is comforting is that social networks show that the locutionary organization of the speaker allows the faces of discourse to be read in deployment in the interactive space through a multipolarity of man is expressed.

3.1. Sociotechnical relations for which expressiveness of discursive faces?

Having assumed the functions of information, explanation, persuasion and communication, these mass discursive productions address about: the marks of ideological affiliation and the technical-socio interactional traits of the speakers.

3.1.1. Already the marks of ideological belonging

The notion of the actional dimension of the word also emerges, in our view, from the expression of speech acts and politeness, as it reveals the human being-the person of the discourse-who can no longer hide their innermost self from the other. Thus, if these activists do not contest their brew from the Pan-Africanist source, the elaboration of co-occurrences better situates the issue.

Graphe n° 1: Ideological Co-occurrences/Saliencies of Activists on the Lifting of ECOWAS Sanctions
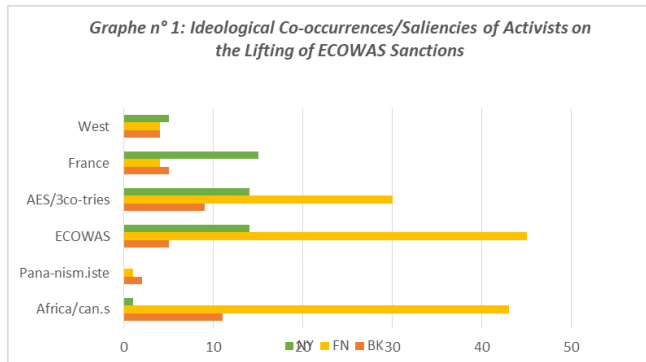
It should already be noted that the elements studied in terms of volumes of realization of subject space are unbalanced, that is to say, the discursive production of FN (Franklin Nyamsi) is 40'52 minutes compared to 29'23 minutes for BK (Banda Kani), 17.14 minutes for NY (Nathalie Yamb) and 0.28 minutes for KS (Kemi Seba). This justifies the abandonment of the lexicological description of the latter. So, as the graph shows, only two (2) of the three (3) activists used the term "Pan-Africanism" in their speech. These are BK (2 occurrences) and FN (1 occurrence); It is true that it is still early to draw conclusions because perhaps the emphasis is placed on the symbol: "Africa.cans". There, BK maintains the course with 11 occurrences while FN prances with 44 occurrences against 1 for NY which takes the lead compared to those against whom we speak for once with France (15 occurrences), the West (5 occurrences). This advance is quickly thrown into the background with FN, 45 occurrences for ECOWAS, 30 for AES against 9 for BK and 5 for NY.

In fact, co-occurrence allows us, in a given contextual situation, to understand the priorities of each speaker and to uncover unconscious elements following a Freudian logic. Shouldn't what comes out of the mouth remain what the body thinks and sometimes says? This is a question we must ask ourselves. For it is essential to prioritize situations to prevent the space from becoming merely a tool.

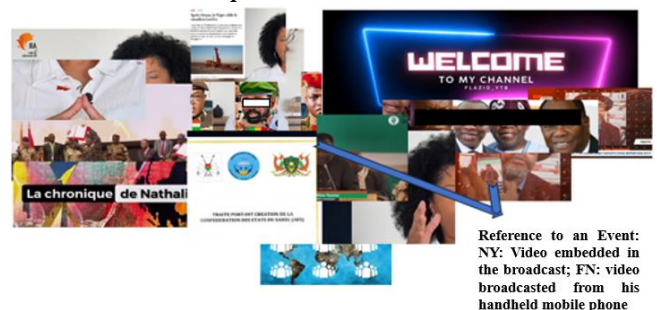### 3.1.1. The Socio-technical Interactional Traits of the Speakers

The contribution of media and technologies to any social interaction is mediation (Papadoudi, 2014), as well as mediation and mediatization (Lafon, 2019). However, it is important to specify that with ICTs, the internet user develops technical traits that distinguish them from others. As a result, this study allows us to observe a plural identification. The following figure provides guidance on this matter.

Figure n° 2: From Visuals to Characteristic Technical Traits of Participants on Traditional Media

As can be noted in this figure, there is a professional realization of these diverse political magazines in terms of journalistic genre: interview on one side and debate on the other. The capabilities of production techniques: inlay, over-realization, voice-over on image... do not in any way belong to these speakers, namely BK and KS. The technical features characterize the media by ricochet the production team of each media. Which is not the case in the following figure.

Figure n° 3: From Visuals to Characteristic Technical Traits of Participants on Traditional Media

Reference to an Event: NY: Video embedded in the broadcast; FN: video broadcasted from his handheld mobile phone

Through this figure, the following elements are noted: the media-properties of the speakers, the programs-on their initiation and through their animation. While it might be overstating to claim that all professional skills originate from the speaker NY, it should be noted that production techniques, such as embedded surrealization, on-air broadcast for the dissemination of witness elements, were more pronounced and sophisticated in NY's case than in FN's, who sometimes allows his own presence on screen to be diminished by third parties, as shown in the images on the right. Nevertheless, these technical traits can be seen as characteristic. This brings up the question of the construction of social interaction in the quest to qualify posts. As shown in the following figure, it is easy to assert that the information assumes a dual modality for these activists, regardless of their profiles, namely mass information and interactive information.

Figure n° 4: The Body, a Marketing Tool for Activists

The body here not only reinforces the message but also highlights the negative face (the territory) of Pan-Africanist activists (Lokonon, 2024), while revealing their being through their voice (rhythm, intonation, vitality, etc.). Based on the data obtained at this level, we can also assert that the hypothesis "this digital self is specified for the plural identity expression of ideologized activists" is also validated. A stronger validation is further confirmed by reception, as shown in the figure below.

Figure n• 5: Brief summary of the interactivities following the activists' productions
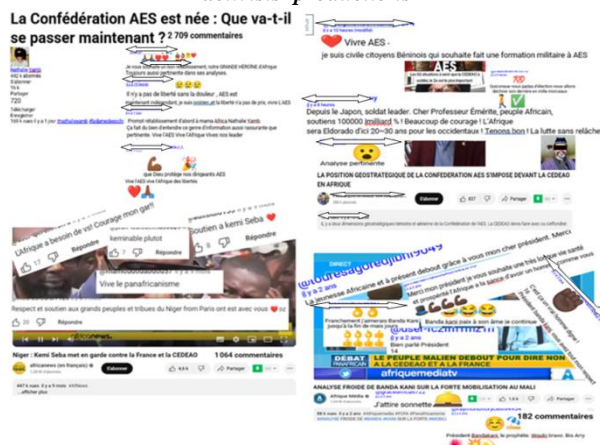
The words, signs, and native digital elements (icons, emojis) described by Paveau (2017) firmly attest to this, as illustrated in the figure. From this, one can deduce a coherent axis between participants, specifically the intertwining encounter between the "expression given" by the speaking subject and the "expression given up" by the receiver, as developed by Goffman (1974).

3. Conclusion

It is true that we decided to avoid other questions imposed by the body with its various components which the activists studied made abundant use of. This will be the subject of another study. However, what is interesting here is the bimodality of information which manages to pass from one modality to another, that is to say from mass information to interacting information and vice versa due to the use of the body to construct one's face in space and interactivities to ensure a narcissistic plural identity with a view to the circularity of information (Lokonon, 2024).

As it's noted, interactivity has been rich in productions; here, multiple-dimensional productions have been favored: text + native digital elements: icons, techno-graph, techno-discourse. Indeed, this interactivity helps to address the shortcomings regarding the electronic presentation of oneself as Pan-Africanist leaders. However, some shadows remain; and there is a concern that the interactivity stemming from the discursive productions for activists, along with the internalization of the Pan-Africanist source of nourishment, could transform into thorns in the garden of Pan-Africanist leaders. In the context of feedback reception regarding the construction of "discursive faces," it is essential to note the delicacy of this paradigm in a digital context. Discursive faces, while genuinely perceived by the audience, essentially define the human speaking subject for them and can be detrimental in cases of shifts in convictions or even abandonment of a belief due to new information received. Another study will certainly address this aspect in more detail.

After the work in the media, the new framework should not lose sight of the fact that this is a struggle for hegemony, for power, even if this struggle for Africa aims to bridge the gap and overturn a situation of dominance. Thus, we understand why discursive faces, through territories and narcissisms, have allowed the four activists to construct a digital ideological identity and how the dictates of technology have reinforced the identity of Pan-Africanist leaders, thereby awakening a philosophy of organization and management of the black race, the only race of humanity, and not, as has been integrated until now, of the black man.

Thus, if the following hypotheses are validated: "the organizational games of the narrative construct the discursive faces of the digital self" and "this digital self is specified for the plural identity expression of ideologized activists", then the general hypothesis, namely "from the dictates of the technological dispositif to the organizational games of the narrative, the territories and narcissisms of activists in their Pan-Africanist e-identity can be read," is true.

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Figure 1: From the author's own analysis and understanding
Figure 2: From the author's own analysis and understanding
Figure 3: From the author's own analysis and understanding
Figure 4: From the author's own analysis and understanding
Figure 5: From the author's own analysis and understanding

Graphe 1/ From the author's personal analysis and calculation

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