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(De)Legitimization Strategies in the “Austere Prose” of Palmiro Togliatti*

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Abstract:

This article illustrates the specific linguistic ways which introduce the pragmatics and semantics of de-legitimization and symbolic power in political discourse. We will show that the words produced in political discourse, represent an enabling tool to create the effects of meaning related to the process of (de)legitimization as a slip/change of meaning. Taking into account the few previous studies on de-legitimization strategies, our intention is to analyse this discursive practice in the political discourse of Palmiro Togliatti, considering as the focus of our analysis three speeches delivered in the period 1947-1952. We will show that Togliatti employed many different discursive strategies that can be included within the (de)legitimization spectrum.

Keywords: Authoritative Discourse, Dehumanization, (De)legitimization, Political Discourse, Vocatives

1. Introduction

In this paper, we will try to illustrate some legitimization and delegitimization strategies employed in the public discourse of Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the Italian Communist party – the largest Communist Party in

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non-Communist Europe at the time – focussing on the period 1947-1952. The choice of this time range is not based on random sampling. By 1948 the Cold War had divided Europe into two camps and many nations were forced to choose between East and West. We are especially interested in analyzing (de)legitimization at work in this complicated and anxious historical context.

Furthermore, the pragmatics of (de)legitimization strategies in political discourse has been a widely studied and debated topic in recent years, but most studies have concentrated on the linguistic behaviour of contemporary actors on the political scene. We believe that studies devoted to analyzing these practices in a historical perspective are timely and can provide useful insights for the study of language as an instrument of control and symbolic power in (evolving) discourse and society (cf. Bourdieu 2001).

The figure of Togliatti is particularly challenging from the viewpoint of discourse analysis (and for most researchers not particularly appealing, cf. Cortelazzo 2011). In 1947-1948, Togliatti's line of moderate (parliamentary) Communism was sharply criticized by his international allies because of his conservatism and nationalism. In the Italian political elections of April 1948, the joint Communist-Socialist list was defeated due to a combination of fear (we should remember that Czechoslovakia had fallen to the Communists only two months before), Catholic Church, and the influence of the propaganda from the United States. Hence, Togliatti was a defeated social actor struggling to legitimize his actions and the political agenda of the Italian Communist Party. By legitimizing himself as an important social actor, he was necessarily forced to delegitimize his political opponents.

In pragmatics, and more broadly in social studies, the notions of legitimization and delegitimization have been considered two sides of the same coin (cf. e.g. Martín Rojo 1995; Martín Rojo and Van Dijk 1997; Cap 2008 and 2013). Legitimization is standardly related to a positive evaluation of the self, whereas delegitimization is related to the negative evaluation of the "other"/"enemy" (cf. Hellín-García 2013). Concerning delegitimization, as is well illustrated in Chilton:

it can manifest itself in acts of negative other-representation, acts of blaming, scape-goating, marginalizing, excluding, attacking the moral character of some individual or group, attacking the communicative cooperation of the other, attacking the rationality and sanity of the other. The extreme is to deny the humanness of the other. At the other end of the spectrum legitimization, usually oriented to the self, includes positive self-presentation, manifesting itself in acts of self-praise, self-apology, self-explanation, self-justification as a source of authority, reason, vision and sanity.

(Chilton 2004: 47)

We will see in this paper that the "austere prose" (Cortelazzo 2011) of Palmiro Togliatti was also not immune to the recourse of persuasive tools interpreted by the current literature as delegitimization practices.

In recent years, (de)legitimization practices have been analysed both from a functionalist perspective and a mentalist perspective. Broadly speaking, the functionalist enterprise (cf. e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Van Dijk 2005; Van Leeuwen 2007, a.o.) addresses strategies of (de)legitimization and their linguistic means of realization in discourse, in order to decode relationships between language and ideology, language and power, language and gender, and so on. For instance, Van Leeuwen lists four main categories of (de)legitimization tools: authorization (citing established figures or traditions), moral evaluation (linking their agenda to a system of values), rationalization (mentioning the goals/faults of institutionalized social practices) and mythopoesis (employing narratives that reward legitimate/punish delegitimate actions) (Van Leeuwen 2007: 92; cf. also Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Hellín-García 2013).

The mentalist viewpoint on the other hand tries to account for implicit inferences in discourse. In this context, a clear issue related to (de)legitimization is that of manipulation. In recent studies (cf. Blass 2005; Allott 2008; Saussure 2008; Maillat 2013, a.o.), Relevance Theory, in particular, has been employed as a robust tool to interpret and explain how (readily) the addressee can be manipulated (Sperber and Wilson 1995). As is well illustrated in Maillat:

In a relevance-theoretic framework, interpretation is efficiency-driven. From an evolutionary perspective such a system is expected to look for processing shortcuts. Manipulation takes advantage of this natural – inevitable – attraction towards cognitive shortcuts and exploits it. And in many cases it gets away with it because, as Sperber and Wilson (1995: 90) underline: [...] people are nearly-incorrigible “cognitive optimists”. They take for granted that their spontaneous cognitive processes are highly reliable, and that the output of these processes does not need re-checking. In a recent development of these ideas, Sperber *et al.* (2010) claim that the cognitive system evolved a separate mechanism, “epistemic vigilance”, in order to offset the cognitive drawbacks of this drive towards efficiency. The role of the epistemic vigilance filter is to ensure that the cognitive mechanisms governing interpretation are not misled or trapped too often. In that sense epistemic vigilance is predicted to be intimately related to manipulative uses of language, as they are expected to function in opposite directions.

(Maillat 2013: 197)

As Sperber (1994 and 2000) convincingly shows, a socio-political actor can in principle argue for an untruthful assumption with clever logic and convince/manipulate the addressee.¹ We will see that Togliatti’s argumenta-

¹ Sperber (2000) has shown how deception and manipulation can be seen as a “natural” part of communication. Sperber claims that human beings are provided with a “logico rhetorical module” that allows the addressee of a manipulative message to analyze the message for its internal/external consistency. This logico-rhetorical module would have evolved as an adaptation to the deceptive possibilities inherent in communication, somewhat along

tion implies the recovery of assumptions and *shortcuts*, which had a felicitous (and massive) manipulative effect. The psychological effects on the processing effort of the addressee in Sperber and Wilson's (1995) view can possibly play a role in justifying the attainment of manipulation. To resist manipulation is not an easy task from the viewpoint of processing. As shown in Rocci:

In order to maintain a common ground 'for the sake of understanding' the sceptical addressee needs to keep in middle term memory a representation of the ways in which this common ground differs from his/her real beliefs. Note that this extra mnemonic effort is similar in nature to the one which is necessary to the liar in order to lie consistently.

(Rocci 2005: 103)

The rest of the paper is articulated as follows. Section 2 illustrates the (few) previous analyses devoted to the study of the political speech of Togliatti. Section 3 shows and analyses the types of delegitimization strategies employed by Togliatti in his speeches. In particular, we have chosen to concentrate our analysis on three significant speeches delivered by Togliatti between 1947 and 1952. Chronologically, the first one is the speech delivered at the *Assemblea Costituente* (Constituent Assembly) on March 27th announcing the vote of the PCI in favour of the insertion of the Lateran Pacts in the new Republican Constitution, the second one is the speech of January 1950 in Modena during the funerals of the victims of the massacre of January 9th at the *Fonderie Riunite*, the third one is the speech delivered at the Chamber of Deputies on December 8th 1952 against the electoral law presented by Minister of Internal Affairs Mario Scelba. The Conclusion follows.

2. Previous Analyses of Togliatti's Discourse

The language and rhetoric of Palmiro Togliatti have attracted the interest of very few scholars (cf. e.g. Paccagnella 1975; Paradisi 1982; Antonelli 2002; Fedel 2003). Rather curiously, the same has happened with other leaders who have contributed to the Post-War Constitution of Republican Italy, such as Alcide De Gasperi or Pietro Nenni, if we exclude a few (mainly lexicographic) studies (cf. D'Anna 2010; Cortelazzo 2011; and references cited there).

The authors who have studied the political speeches of Togliatti noted as their main features the use of an austere and solemn prose, and a rigorous (textually concatenated) rhetoric. Antonelli (2002) argued that the speeches of Togliatti maintain substantial adherence to the rules of the "literary model", despite using a simple, fluid syntax, based on parataxis with only very few subordinate (mainly causal and final) clauses. Paccagnella (1975) stressed

the lines of *Machiavellian intelligence* (Byrne and Whiten 1988; cf. Blass 2005). This adaptive system, as "epistemic vigilance" leads to a "persuasion-counter persuasion arms race" (Blass 2005: 178; cf. also Chilton 2005).

that the architecture of the rhetoric of Togliatti was firmly structured, in strict consistency with a “logical schema”, clearly emerging from the internal distribution of his speeches (cf. also Fedel 2003; Baldi 2007 and 2012).

Cortelazzo (2011) notes that Togliatti’s political discourse is characterized by rhetorical tools such as invective, rhetorical questions, climax, and constant repetition of key terms (structuring a shared Communist lexicon) and anaphora, but he considers such devices as “gimmicks” oriented to highlight the rigorous argumentative structure. In particular, among the typical patterns of argumentation employed by the leader of the Italian Communist Party, Paradisi (1982) detected a structure based on the so-called ‘unità contraddittoria’ (contradictory unity), that is a way of developing the discourse by organizing it based on a scheme of the type “*X but Y*”. A clear example of this structure can be found in the speech given at Modena at the funeral of the victims of the massacre of January 9th 1950. Consider the passage below in (1) (from now on the most important fragments are highlighted in bold).

- (1) **È stato detto: basta!** [...] **Ripetiamo questo basta**, tutti assieme, dando ad esso la solennità e la forza che promanano da questa stessa nostra riunione. **Ma dire basta, non è sufficiente**, perché gli assassini e gli eccidi si succedono come le note di una tragedia.
 ‘Some have said stop! [...] We repeat this ‘stop’ all together, giving it the solemnity and strength emanating from our meeting. But saying just ‘stop’ is not enough, because the murders and massacres follow like the notes of a tragedy’.

The speech in (1) is structured on a binary scheme where a *correction* triggered by the connective *ma* (‘but’) introduces the focal point of the argumentation. Delegitimization techniques also seem to be effectively encoded in Togliatti’s political speeches through the “*X but Y*” pattern, as shown in (2):

- (2) **Ci hanno accusato** di essere i nemici della proprietà. **Ma** coloro che ci hanno accusati **erano loro stessi una banda di ladri** che ha messo a sacco **P’Italia intera**.
 ‘We were accused of being the enemies of property. But those who have accused us were themselves a gang of thieves who looted the whole of Italy’.

In the example in (2), taken from *Rapporto ai quadri comunisti di Napoli*, a speech given on April 11th 1944, in which Togliatti illustrated the so-called “Svolta di Salerno” (Salerno turning point),² Togliatti – in order to delegitimize (already falling) Fascism – downplays the typical Communist rhetoric based on the abolition of private property (and, more broadly, on class warfare),

² The “Svolta di Salerno” (a quite controversial political shift) was basically a compromise between antifascist parties, the monarchy and prime minister Pietro Badoglio to work together to defeat fascism and set up a government of national unity.

stressing some kind of patriotic nationalism, which is a very unusual behaviour for a Communist leader. In the next Section, we will further explore the (de) legitimization strategies employed in Togliatti's political speeches, showing that his polished rhetoric was not exempt from subtle and open attacks on his enemies.

3. The Main Tools of (De)Legitimization in the Speeches of Togliatti

In this Section, we will analyse some of the most important (de)legitimization tools employed by Palmiro Togliatti in his speeches. We have chosen to focus our analysis on three significant speeches delivered by Togliatti between 1947 and 1952, a period dense with agitation and instability in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.³ The first one is the speech given at the *Assemblea Costituente* (Constituent Assembly) on March 27th, announcing the vote of the PCI in favour of the insertion of the Lateran Pacts in the new Republican Constitution (a quite controversial choice for a Communist Party), the second one is the speech of January 1950 in Modena during the funerals of the victims of the massacre of January 9th at the *Fonderie Riunite*, in which six workers were killed by the militaries (belonging to *Arma dei Carabinieri*, a division of the Italian army), the third one is the speech given at the Chamber of Deputies on December 8th 1952 against the electoral law presented by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mario Scelba, and in defence of the principles of the Italian Constitution.

3.1 Authoritative Voices, (Shared) Emotions and Dehumanization

Palmiro Togliatti employed many different strategies that can be included within the (de)legitimization spectrum. One of the main characteristic features in the speeches of the Communist leader is the use of authoritative voices/ references to legitimize his agenda (and conversely to delegitimize the agenda of his political enemies). Consider the excerpts in (3).

³ The source from which the speeches are taken is *Opere di Palmiro Togliatti* (6 vols.), edited by Ernesto Ragionieri, Franco Andreucci, Paolo Spriano and Luciano Gruppi (Editori Riuniti, Roma).

- (3) a. ricordo che **Gramsci** mi diceva che il giorno in cui si fosse formato in Italia un governo socialista, in cui fosse sorto un **regime socialista**, uno dei principali compiti di questo governo, di **questo regime**, sarebbe stato di liquidare completamente la questione romana garantendo **piena libertà alla Chiesa cattolica**. (27/3/1947)
 ‘I remember that Gramsci told me that the day he set up a socialist government in Italy, the day in which a socialist regime would come about, one of the main tasks of such a government would be to liquidate completely the Roman question ensuring full freedom of the Catholic Church’.
- b. Il **Guizot**, che esprime questa **ricerca di equità** nel modo più chiaro, lo asserisce: “Se la maggioranza è spostata per artificio, vi è menzogna; se la minoranza è preliminarmente fuori combattimento, vi è oppressione. Nell’un caso e nell’altro, **il governo rappresentativo è corrotto**”. (8/12/1952)
 ‘Guizot, who expresses this quest for fairness in the clearest way, says: “If the parliamentary majority has shifted by artifice, there’s a lie; if the minority is preliminarily out of action, there is oppression. In either case, representative government is corrupt’.
- c. **Sonnino** si richiamava apertamente, nel proporre e difendere la proporzionale, al **fatto storico della Comune**. Si trattava di dare una impronta definitiva di democraticità, di rappresentatività e di giustizia all’ordinamento costituzionale dello Stato, nel momento in cui il **movimento sociale non può più essere soppresso con la forza**. (8/12/1952)
 ‘In proposing and defending the proportional system Sonnino openly invoked the historical fact of the Paris Commune. This was to give a final impression of democracy, representativeness and justice to the constitutional order of the State, at a time when the social movement cannot be suppressed by force anymore’.
- d. porto l’espressione della solidarietà e del cordoglio profondo del Partito comunista italiano, del **partito di Antonio Gramsci** [...]. (9/1/1950)
 ‘I bring the expression of solidarity and profound condolences of the Italian Communist Party, the party of Antonio Gramsci’.

As shown in recent work by Van Leeuwen (2007) and Reyes (2011) (contemporary and past), “voices of expertise” are employed in political discourse to show the addressee that recognized authorities in a specific field (in the precise case of Togliatti, mainly *social politics* are “backing the politician’s proposal with their knowledgeable statements” (Reyes 2011: 801). Basically, Togliatti strengthens his position referring to the “authorization” that a speaker “from outside” brings to the immediate context of his speech.

It is interesting to note the fact that Togliatti used not only voices close to his system of values (cf. the founding father of Italian Communism, Antonio Gramsci in 3a, 3d), but also voices from outside the Communist enterprise (cf. 3b, 3c). The “voices” of François Guizot, a French conservative liberal politi-

cian of the Nineteen Century, and that of Sidney Sonnino, a former liberal Italian Prime Minister, are a case in point. The communicative intention is quite clear: if (past) authoritative (leading) figures of the opposite political side agree with our plans, our enemies are necessarily delegitimized because they are not able to interpret and represent their political roots.

Another typical delegitimization tool employed by Togliatti, despite his “cold prose” is the use of a set of (shared) emotions with the addressee. This aspect of Togliatti’s discourse emerges especially outside the Parliamentary Court, in his speeches to an “ordinary people” audience. Consider the following passages, taken from the speech given in Modena during the funerals of the victims of the massacre of January 9th 1950.

- (4) a. Voi chiedevate una cosa sola, il lavoro, che è la sostanza della vita di tutti gli uomini degni di questo nome. Una società che non sa dare lavoro a tutti coloro che la compongono è **una società maledetta. Maledetti sono gli uomini** che, fieri di avere nelle mani il potere, si assidono al vertice di questa società maledetta, e con **la violenza delle armi, con l’assassinio e l’eccidio** respingono la richiesta più umile che l’uomo possa avanzare: la richiesta di lavorare. (9/1/1950)

‘You asked only one thing, work, which is the substance of life of all men worthy of this name. A society that cannot provide jobs for all its members it is a damned society. Damned are those men who, proud to have power in their hands, stand at the top of this damned society, and with the violence of guns, with murder and massacre, reject the humblest request a man could advance: the request for a job’.

Questo drappo e questi colori sono il simbolo della **nostra** unità, dell’unità della patria e di tutti i cittadini italiani nella difesa dei valori essenziali della **nostra** esistenza. Tutta la **nostra** vita, tutta la vita e tutta la lotta del nostro partito, ci fanno fede che io non vorrei pronunciare, in questo momento, altre parole che non fossero un appello severo ad unirsi tutti, davanti a queste bare, per deprecare ciò che è accaduto, **per respingere questa macchia dalla realtà della vita del nostro paese.** (9/1/1950)

‘This flag and these colours (of *the Italian flag*) are the symbol of our unity, the unity of the homeland and of all Italian citizens in defence of the essential values of our own existence. Our whole life, the whole life and the whole struggle of our party, show that we are authentic in what I do not want to say, at this moment, other words beyond a severe appeal to stay unite, in front of these coffins, to deplore what has happened, to reject this stain from the reality of the life of our country’.

Politicians linguistically achieve dynamics of shared emotions with their audience through “constructive strategies”, namely, utterances realizing a “we” group *versus* a “they” group by the means of specific acts of reference (Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999: 92; cf. also Van Dijk 2005; Reisigl 2008; Capone 2010). For instance, in Togliatti’s speech the appeal through shared emotions

(encoded also *via* invectives as in 4a), allows him to build up (and possibly, overdraw) the opinions of his audience regarding a full set of matters. In particular Togliatti is asking for *actions*: he is asking his audience to fight against the Italian *status quo*. Here, the “right to work” is conveyed as one of the cornerstones of the Communist agenda, against the (perverted) behaviour of those who hold power that are in fact killing those asking for a work. Togliatti is stressing here – *via* a path of shared emotions – that his opponents are delegitimized by their own actions and that his agenda is emotionally (namely, without interpretative efforts) the right one to follow.

Furthermore, mention of the words ‘società maledetta’ (damned society) evokes a series of nuances in the audience’s mind, emotionally linked with (dreadful) previous experiences (consider again, in this regard, that Italy had just come out from twenty years of Fascist regime). Through emotionally bulky experiences, meanings are dialogically shaped and built (Bachtin 1980; cf. also Reyes 2011). The passage in (4a), for instance, triggers an emotional path (fear, sadness, and, potentially, revenge) in the audience, ideal to (de)legitimize political moves based on the aftermath of such shared feelings. Indeed, as argued in Reyes (2011: 806): “Emotions are key in the legitimization process, because they condition and prepare the audience to receive proposals and courses of actions. Emotions skew the audience towards accepting and supporting the proposal of the social actor, who has triggered the emotions in the first place”.

As already pointed out, the negative representation of public actors and the attribution of negative qualities to their actions (cf. *Maledetti sono gli uomini che, fieri di avere nelle mani il potere [...] con la violenza delle armi, con l’assassinio e l’eccidio respingono la richiesta...* ‘Damned are those men who, proud to have power in their hands [...] with the violence of guns, with murder and massacre, reject the humblest request’) allow creation of a two-folded event, in which the speaker and addressee are in the “us-group” (see e.g. the constant use of the first person plural pronoun in 4b) and the social actors depicted negatively constitute the “them-group”. In this precise case the government, who according to the words of Togliatti, has directly killed innocent peoples whose only fault was to ask for a job is clearly delegitimized, being in the “them-group”.

Another common tool of delegitimization employed by the Italian Communist leader was depersonalization/dehumanization as a discursive practice. Consider the examples below:

- (5) a. quando tra i presenti a un’assemblea si muove uno **spettro**, è inevitabile che **quello spettro** attiri l’attenzione e ad esso ci si rivolga. **Onorevole Tesauero**, lei qui è lo **spettro del regime fascista** [...]. (8/12/1952)
 ‘when among those who are present in the Assembly, there is a ghost it is inevitable that this ghost draws attention, so that we talk directly to it. Mr. Tesauero, here you are the ghost of the fascist regime’.

- b. Lascero da parte le volgarità, gli articoli come quelli che scriveva l'altro giorno un **illustre camaleonte**, il signor Mario Missiroli, domandandosi che cosa c'è sotto all'atteggiamento dei comunisti [...] proprio lui che, per esaltare i Patti del Laterano, scrisse un intiero volume che, si dice, ebbe il personale plauso di Mussolini! È evidente che lezioni di etica da **un camaleonte non le prendiamo**. (27/3/1947)

'I will leave aside vulgarity, such as the articles that were written the other day by an illustrious chameleon, Mr. Mario Missiroli, wondering what's underneath the attitude of the Communists [...] the same man who wrote a full volume to exalt the Lateran Pacts, a volume that, it is said, had the personal approval of Mussolini! It is clear that we do not take lessons in ethics from a chameleon'.

One of the first authors to recognize depersonalization/dehumanization as a discursive delegitimizing technique was Bar-Tal (1989) (cf. also Tileagă 2007). Dehumanization constitutes possibly the extreme case of prejudice and stereotyping. Those who are not humans (clearly outside any possible "us-group") are automatically excluded from the realm of acceptable norms and values. In (5a, 5b) Togliatti refers to his enemies as ghosts or animals bearing malicious/wicked qualities. Note, interestingly, that both the social actors to which Togliatti refers are clearly linked to the (already) delegitimized Fascist regime.

3.2 (*Mythical*) Past and (*Hypothetical*) Future

A further (de)legitimization technique used in Togliatti's speeches is the use of a "timeline" of events by which the scope of his discourse goes beyond its immediate and physical context and enters the course of actions (cf. Jackendoff 1983; Dennett 1991). Often past events and key figures of the past (cf. the Section above) are recalled to delegitimize the conduct of the social actors who are perceived as enemies. For instance, consider the fragment in (6) in which the (French) bourgeoisie is historically depicted as evil, but this judgment transcends history because its conduct represents a "macchia indelebile" (an indelible stain),⁴ thus involving both the context of the discourse and the future actions to undertake. Note also in the passage in (6) the use of the peculiar "*X but Y*" argumentative schema of Togliatti introduced in Section 2, with the fragment "Si spegne l'eco delle fucilate, ma resta odor di polvere nell'aria!" ('the echo of gunfire ends, but there is still a smell of dust in the air!')

⁴ Note that in the *lexicon* of Palmiro Togliatti *stains* play a special role in delegitimizing the opponent and leaving them aside from the system of values shared with the audience (cf. e.g. the excerpt in 4b).

- (6) La **rivoluzione operaia** del giugno 1848 è **soffocata nel sangue**. Sull'atto di nascita del **regime borghese**, installatosi in Francia dopo il secondo crollo napoleonico, sta la **macchia di sangue** delle fucilate con le quali venne fatta **strage degli eroici combattenti della Comune**. È una **macchia** indelebile. Si spegne l'eco delle fucilate, ma resta odor di polvere nell'aria! Il movimento operaio si afferma, **va avanti**. (8/12/1952)

'The workers' revolution of June 1848 is drowned in blood. On the birth of the bourgeois regime, set up in France after the second fall of Napoleon, there is the burden of the bloodstain of gunfire with which the heroic fighters of the Commune were slaughtered. It is an indelible stain the echo of gunfire ends, but there is still a smell of dust in the air! The workers' movement goes on'.

The opposite pole of the timeline (the future) is also an "arena" for the conquest of social power by political actors. It has been recognized that in political discourse, the legitimization strategy projects the (hypothetical) future according to the possible actions taken in the present (cf. Fairclough 2003; Reyes 2008 and 2011). It has been said that future events constitute "an ideologically significant site in which dominant political actors and institutions can exert power and control" (Dunmire 2007: 19). This pattern is particularly evident in Togliatti where literally "future means action" (this attitude is especially evident in the speech of Modena), possibly due to the fact that the *simulacrum* of a better future/world was a standard part of Communist rhetoric (cf. Ilie 1998). Consider that the lexicon employed by the communist leader, as documented in (7a, 7b) below, is also full of terms such as 'nuovo' (new), 'rinnovamento' (regeneration), 'rinascita' (resurgence) and so on that clearly aim at legitimizing, conveying a positive set of shared values and emotions influencing the actions to be undertaken.

- (7) a. Come partito di avanguardia della classe operaia e del popolo italiano, coscienti della nostra forza che ci ha consentito di concludere vittoriosamente cento battaglie, **ci impegneremo ad una nuova, più vasta lotta**, in difesa della esistenza, della sicurezza, degli elementari diritti civili dei lavoratori. **Ci impegniamo a svolgere un'azione tale**, di propaganda, di agitazione, di organizzazione, che raccolga ed unisca in questa lotta **nuovi** milioni e milioni di lavoratori, tutte le forze sane del popolo italiano. Ci impegniamo a preparare e suscitare un movimento tale, un sussulto proveniente dal più profondo stato di cose che grida vendetta al cospetto di Dio. (9/1/1950)

'As a vanguard party of the working class and of the Italian people, aware of our strength that allowed us to successfully conclude a hundred battles, we are committed to a new, broader struggle in defence of life, safety, the basic civil rights of the workers. We will engage in such an action, propaganda, agitation, organization, gathering new millions and millions of workers in this fight, all the clearest forces of the Italian people. We are committed to prepare and launch a movement which rises up from the deepest state of affairs, that cries out to heaven for vengeance'.

- b. La nostra lotta è lotta per la **rinascita** del nostro Paese, per il suo **rinnovamento** politico, economico e sociale. In questa lotta noi vogliamo l'unità dei lavoratori, prima di tutto, e, attorno a essa, vogliamo si realizzi l'unità politica e morale di tutta la nazione. **Disperdiamo le ombre** le quali impediscono la realizzazione di questa unità! (27/3/47)
 'Our struggle is a struggle for the rebirth of our country, for its political economic and social renewal. Through this struggle, we want the unity of the workers, and around it, we will realize the political and moral unity of the whole nation. Let's remove the shadows which prevent the realization of this unity!'

In the excerpts considered above, another overt legitimization device also appears quite clearly, namely manifest *altruistic behaviour*, which according to Lakoff (1996; cf. also Baldi and Savoia 2009) is crucial to social actors in order to legitimize their decisions and activities. Indeed, when a social actor altruistically works toward the "inclusion" of other/marginal social groups (e.g. the unprotected, the poor, the weak, etc.) s/he has more chances to be accepted and endorsed by her/his addressee. Furthermore, enemies are delegitimized threatening a hypothetical awful future if their intentions happen to be translated into actions. Consider, as a clear example, the passage below in which Togliatti addresses the conduct of Mario Scelba, predicting an anti-progress "back to the past" effect.

- (8) **A questo ci vorrebbe riportare l'onorevole Scelba:** al Parlamento eletto per curie. (8/12/1952)
 'Mr Scelba would like to bring us bak to this: to a Parliament elected by curias (e.g. classes).'

3.3 Questions, Answers, (Re)Projections and Delegitimization

A further notable way of conveying a delegitimization effect in Togliatti is through a refined system of question and answer. The question reports the problem. The answer indicates the actor(s) responsible for the problem, who is, thus, delegitimized through this peculiar rhetorical device. Consider the example below:

- (9) **Chi vi ha condannati a morte? Chi vi ha ucciso? Un prefetto, un questore irresponsabili e scellerati?** Un cinico ministro degli interni. Un **presidente del consiglio** cui spetta solo il tristissimo vanto di aver deliberatamente voluto spezzare quella unità della nazione che si era temprata nella lotta gloriosa **contro l'invasore straniero**; di aver scritto sulle sue bandiere quelle **parole di odio** contro i lavoratori e di scissione della vita nazionale che **ieri** furono del **fascismo** e oggi sono le **sue**. (9/1/1950)

‘Who has sentenced you to death? Who killed you? Irresponsible and wicked prefects, or police superintendents? A cynical interior minister. A Prime Minister whose only merit was deliberately wishing to break the unity of a nation that had risen in the glorious struggle against the foreign invader; the merit of having written words of hate against the workers on his flags and words destroying national life that yesterday belonged to Fascism and today are his own’.

In (9) Togliatti notably refers directly to the victims indexically, using second person pronouns (*vi*, you), and a sequence of questions introduces the alleged ‘material’ culprits (‘un prefetto’, ‘un questore’). The real “moral” culprits (‘un ministro...’, ‘un presidente del consiglio’) are introduced in the answer (cf. Bar-Tal 1990). The moral culprits are depicted as the instigators of the massacre of Modena, and, according to Togliatti, are only capable of words of hate toward the working class. This is clearly a subtle strategy of delegitimization.

Note that, in (9) the agenda of the prime minister (Alcide De Gasperi) of the newborn Italian Republic is again compared to Fascism, a political movement, which was already delegitimized by history. Further note that, quite strangely for a communist leader, Togliatti, in his prose, often resorts to patriotic nationalism (cf. “lotta gloriosa contro l’invasore straniero”, ‘glorious struggle against the foreign invader’), as a positive emotion to share with his audience (cf. also excerpts in (4b) and 7b) (cf. Silverstein 2003). Finally note that the same question and answer strategy of (de)legitimization is also employed in the discourses held in the Parliamentary court, as documented by the excerpt in (10), in which Togliatti tries to delegitimize the Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democrats) party, claiming that it is not the only defender of the freedom of religious conscience of the Catholic workers, and that left wing parties can also have (are legitimized to play) that role.

- (10) **Perché ci siamo trovati** a un certo momento e ci troviamo ora **in una specie di vicolo cieco**? Perché il nostro dibattito è arrivato a questo punto di evidente drammaticità? [...] I colleghi di parte democristiana alle volte parlano presentandosi come unici difensori della libertà della coscienza religiosa delle masse cattoliche. **Non credo che alcuno dei partiti di sinistra voglia lasciare loro la esclusività di questa funzione.** (27/3/47)

‘Why were we at some point and are we now in a sort of dead end? Why has our debate come to this point of obvious drama? Our Christian Democrat colleagues sometimes speak posing themselves as the only defenders of the freedom of religious conscience of the Catholic masses. I do not think any of parties of the left want to leave them the sole responsibility for this function’.

In the passage in (9), we may also see that Togliatti pays attention to the words (actually, *parole di odio*, ‘words of hate’) of his adversaries. Actually, attention to the lexicon and discourse of his enemies seems to be a recurring theme in Togliatti’s political speeches. Consider the passages in (11):

- (11) a. Ho sentito testé l'onorevole **De Gasperi affermare** che per lo meno una di queste formule [...] avrebbe potuto essere accettata [...] Mi permetta, onorevole De Gasperi, ma **ciò che ella ha detto è una svalutazione diretta dell'Assemblea.** (27/3/47)
 'I have just heard Mr De Gasperi say that at least one of these formulas [...] could have been accepted [...]. Allow me, Mr De Gasperi, what you said is a direct write-down of the Assembly'.
- b. Onorevole De Gasperi, **qui è mancato qualcosa, è mancato, più che l'intermediario, il rappresentante autorizzato di questa voce, che è la voce della nazione.** (27/3/47)
 'Mr De Gasperi, here something is missing, more than the intermediary, we have missed the authorized representative of this voice, which is the voice of the nation'.
- c. L'onorevole **De Gasperi ha parlato**, e io mi aspettavo parlasse come **capo del governo** [...] Ripeto: avremmo voluto che l'onorevole De Gasperi non parlasse qui, come **ha parlato**, quale esponente del Partito democristiano o, ancora di meno, come **esponente della coscienza cattolica**, la quale non si estrinseca né si può estrinsecare in un solo partito. (27/3/47)
 'De Gasperi spoke, and I expected him to speak as the head of the government [...] I repeat: we wanted De Gasperi not to speak here, as he spoke, as leader of the Christian Democrat Party or, even less, as a spokesman of the Catholic conscience, which is not extrinsic nor can be externalized by a single party'.

Here, the voice and discourse of De Gasperi are constantly delegitimized. Togliatti says that De Gasperi underestimates the role of the Parliamentary court, that he is not able to speak with the voice of the nation and finally that he speaks (at most) as a Party leader and not as a Prime Minister. De Gasperi is ideally projected to a role/status inferior to the one that he is assumed to play and fulfil, by means of the critical analysis of his own (fallacies in) discourse (cf. Joseph 2006; Fraser 2010). Hence, we propose to labelling this manifest delegitimizing technique as *(re)projection* (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Baldi 2007; cf. also Lambrecht 1996), namely, an argumentation practice by which the opponent acquires a low-key profile in view of her/his own (inappropriate) words/acts/thoughts. Consider that this technique really seems to be a key point in Togliatti's speeches as also shown by the excerpt in (12), where the thoughts of the opponent (here Alfonso Tesauro) are delegitimized again due to a (re) projection close to Fascism, and we have already seen that such "historicist" delegitimization represents another permanent feature of Togliatti's speeches.

- (12) ma **chi ha sottomesso al fascismo il pensiero**, la scienza, ha commesso il **peccato più grave**. Lei ha peccato contro lo spirito, onorevole Tesauro, e **questo peccato non è remissibile**. Lei lo sa! (8/12/1952)
 'but those who have subjected their thoughts and their science to Fascism have committed the greatest sin. You have sinned against the spirit, Mr. Tesauro, and this sin is not subject to repentance. You know it!'

3.4 Vocatives, Imperatives, and Their (De)Legitimizing Role

Another notable trait of Togliatti's speeches is the great use of vocatives, as illustrated in (12) below, where the vocatives are highlighted in bold.

- (12) a. Bene hai fatto, **o città di Modena**... (9/1/1950)
 'You did well, city of Modena'
 b. E voi, **o compagni e fratelli caduti**... (9/1/1950)
 'And you, comrades and brothers fallen'
 c. Ma lasciamo gli scherzi, **o onorevole Nitti** (27/3/47)
 'But let's leave aside jokes, Mr. Nitti'

The pragmatic contribution of vocatives can be illustrated as a tool indicating that the meaning expressed by the clause is of special relevance to the referent of the vocative (the addressee) (Portner 2004; see also Zwicky 1974; Zupnik 1994; Danler 2005). Vocatives introduce a different discourse level, embedding topic-focus-illocution layers; this corresponds to the special status of vocatives, which essentially name the addressee characterizing her/him as present in the discourse and externalizing her/his participation. Vocatives reveal the membership to the domain of knowledge, beliefs which are presupposed by discourse procedures. In the use of Togliatti they either indicate the loyal and good people (12a, 12b), the sole legitimate people, or address the enemies, with direct delegitimizing attacks (12c). This is clearly a discursive strategy deliberately employed by Togliatti in order to activate a specific mental representation and a specific shared scenario in the addressee (cf. also Baldi and Franco 2014 on parallel considerations based on the speeches of Benito Mussolini); a typical (de)legitimization strategy.

Also, imperatives can be assumed as means for the political actor to achieve joint reference with the addressee (cf. Bierwisch 1980; Hamblin 1987; Wierzbicka 1991; Portner 2014, a.o.). They are an instrument of "directive force": "*it is easy and typical for imperative sentences to be used to try to get someone (the addressee, normally) to take some non-linguistic action*" (Portner, forthcoming). Indeed, they are heavily employed by social actors in search of legitimization because their effect goes beyond the immediate context of discourse and, in a way, (re)project a performance (cf. Section 3.3 on the concept of *reprojection*). As expected, imperatives are used quite often in Togliatti's speeches (addressing both the audience and his opponents), as shown by examples in (13).

- (13) a. E voi, compagni [...] **riposate!** (9/1/1950)
 'And you, comrades, rest!'
 b. Ma voi, madri, sorelle, spose, **non piangete!** (9/1/1950)
 'But you mothers, sisters, brides, don't cry!'

- c. **Ricordate** le discussioni che avemmo alla Costituente (8/12/1952)
'Remember the discussions we had at the Constituent Assembly'
- d. **Cercate di governare** meglio di quanto non abbiate governato finora
(8/12/52)
'Try to govern better than you have done so far'

4. Conclusion

This paper analyzed different ways by which legitimization takes place in discourse. Language is undoubtedly the most important means of the political actor for establishing and maintaining his/her legitimization. "The fundamental legitimating explanations are, so to speak, built into the vocabulary" (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 112). The words produced in political discourse, represent an enabling tool to create the effects of meaning related to the process of (de)legitimization as a slip/change of meaning.

The impossibility of separating politics from words is motivated by the fact that language is the true essence of policy; words, then, are political "even without their knowledge" (Debray 1994: 141). Politics, meanwhile, tries in language to find the way to obtain consent, legitimacy, the evocation of those symbolic models within which the word is a myth and "everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse" (Barthes 1991 [1957]: 109).

Political language has always been the object of investigation of morality and policy, which started from the assumption that political communication is a powerful factor in society. A leader wins or loses power by using or by not effectively using political language, and the masses are rendered impotent or gain strength, are deceived or informed, through the discursive strategies.

Reyes (2001: 782) defines legitimization as "the process by which speakers accredit or licence a type of social behaviour. In this respect, legitimization is a justification of behaviour (mental or physical). The process of legitimization is enacted by argumentation, that is, by providing arguments that explain our social actions, ideas, thoughts, declarations, etc". This suggests that a decontextualized study of legitimization and (de)legitimization strategy is not possible.

Legitimization provides the justification of the most important elements of the value system by reference to the institutional tradition. Tradition is conveyed through narratives whose outcomes are legitimization actions and punishment for non-legitimate actions. The positive image of "us" can be increased by emphasizing its positive aspects and, at the same time, the negative image can be reduced by omitting its negative aspects. We have examined the different aspects through which political communication takes place and, in particular, the linguistic-pragmatic procedures aiming at introducing a particular vision of the political opponent.

As is well known, at the level of everyday communication it is not always necessary to produce rational justifications to be believed (if one has the confidence of the interlocutor) as, indeed, it is not often satisfactory to produce objective data. Different implications at different levels are involved, including the social one. Referring to Greimas (1976), in the perspective of a discursive grammar and the system of presentation of speech, Desideri (1984: 21) notes that in political discourse, the modality “making someone know something” has the tendency to turn into the “making someone believe something” modality. Thus, the political instrument of “ritualized identification” and, more generally, the discourse’s persuasive strategies are achieved through the “making someone know something” modality which turns into the “making someone believe something” and, finally, into the “making someone want something” modality.

Desideri (1984: 19) highlights some of the typical features of political speech: a relationship with the social conditions of production and reception, the crucial role of the ritual features of enunciation, and of recognition by receivers. Actually, political communication is primarily structured in terms of enunciatory procedures that build through the structures of discourse trust and elements of consensus between the addresser and the receiver (cf. Baldi 2007).

One aspect which we discussed concerns the communicative modalities of Togliatti’s political speeches. The interaction between the sender of the political message and the addressees is based on a process, which cyclically identifies and distinguishes the two subjects of communication. Within the process of signification, the role of the addressees seems susceptible to manipulation and to a progressive change through the communicative components that in the “political speech” play the central role.

Turning now to the texts we have considered, we can observe that Togliatti’s legitimization typically takes the form of a verbal process in which the authority utterance clause introduces some form of obligation modality. The role model authority plays an important role in legitimization both through emotions and the appeal to rationality. This paper shows the strategies adopted by Togliatti in order to obtain persuasion; in his political speeches, Togliatti is careful to express a lexical and semantic-pragmatic relationship between words and their referents.

The argumentative system of the Italian Communist leader is always well structured and coherent and gives rise to very accurate prose. The textual progression seems addressed to accompany the addressee in the correct decoding of the message with respect to the intentions of the sender. In this perspective, a logical and well-organized presentation of the arguments supporting it by means of famous phrases and shared arguments is proposed. Finally, the use of anaphoric reference helps the addressee to correctly infer the intentions of the speaker and not to lose the thread.

Linguistic intentionality is what animates a speech act: it is the reason why the speech act is proffered as well as the intended consequence of the speech act. If all goes well, and the speaker’s communicative purpose is understood

properly, the addressee will fulfil that purpose. Intention originally meant aiming at. So, it is reasonable that the utterance should aim at something (its purpose) and be fulfilled if the purpose is taken up (Capone 2010: 2965).

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