

APPRAISAL AND EVALUATION IN ZIMBABWEAN PARLIAMENTARY DISCOURSE AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

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Abstract

“Unofananidza Jesu naKombayi here? (Lit. Are you comparing Jesus with Kombayi?) (Condolences on the death of Senator Patrick Kombayi, 28th July 2009, Appendix B4, line 350)

This Shona interjection during the debate on the motion on condolences on the death of Senator Patrick Kombayi (MDC- T) in the Zimbabwean parliament presents the speaker stance taking, appraising and strategically manoeuvring advancing certain argumentative positions. Considering the impact of the outcome of these debates on governance, discourseanalytic researches have to be carried out in order to explore the sorts of appraisal and argumentation principles that are realised. This study makes a multifaceted theoretical approach to a comprehensive exploration of debates and speeches in the Zimbabwean parliament and their representation in newspaper articles. The appraisal theory, the extended pragma- dialectic theory of argumentation and controversy analysis have been integrated to uncover important linguistic insights on parliamentary discourse and news reporting. The analysis is based on a corpus of debates and speeches in the Zimbabwean parliament within the period 2009 and 2010.

Another corpus consists of newspaper reports on these debates and speeches in this period. A thematic approach informed by theoretical principles is utilised in the selection of reports, debates and speeches.

Firstly, I examined parliamentary discourse. Focus have been on the critical discussion model, argumentative strategies- forms of strategic manoeuvring, how the dialectic- rhetoric relation can be understood, how appraisal resources are realised in the argumentation process and on examining how appraisal resources employed reflect the type of a debate or speech.

Secondly, I explored newspaper articles from four Zimbabwean newspapers reporting on the same themes on debates and speeches. Focus has been to make comparative analysis of news reporting examining how appraisal resources are utilised in the representation of parliamentary discourse in different newspapers (independent versus government or state owned newspapers and English versus Shona newspapers) and to examine the nature of argumentation and strategic manoeuvring principles that are utilised in news reporting and how controversial (divergent) debates or issues are represented. This multifaceted analysis offered varied dimensions in the exploration of parliamentary discourse and news reporting and expansions of the appraisal and argumentation theories.