

## A Comparative Analysis of (De)legitimation Strategies in Selected African Inaugural Speeches

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**Abstract :** Language, a versatile and sophisticated tool, is fundamentally sacrosanct to mankind especially within the realm of politics. In this dynamic world, political leaders adroitly use language to engage in a strategic show aimed at manipulating or mechanising the opinion of discerning people. This nuanced synergy is marked by different rhetorical strategies, meticulously synced with contextual factors ranging from cultural, ideological, and political to achieve multifaceted persuasive objectives. This study investigates the (de)legitimation strategies inherent in African presidential inaugural speeches, as African leaders not only state their policy agenda through inaugural speeches but also subtly indulge in a dance of legitimation and delegitimation, performing a twofold objective of strengthening the credibility of their administration and, at times, undermining the performance of the past administration. Drawing insights from two different legitimation models and a dataset of 4 African presidential inaugural speeches obtained from authentic websites, the study describes the roles of authorisation, rationalisation, moral evaluation, altruism, and mythopoesis in unmasking the structure of political discourse. The analysis takes a mixed-method approach to unpack the (de)legitimation strategy embedded in the carefully chosen speeches. The focus extends beyond a superficial exploration and delves into the linguistic elements that form the basis of presidential discourse. In conclusion, this examination goes beyond the nuanced landscape of language as a potent tool in politics, with each strategy contributing to the overall rhetorical impact and shaping the narrative. From this perspective, the study argues that presidential inaugural speeches are not only linguistic exercises but also viable weapons that influence perceptions and legitimise authority.

**Keywords :** CDA, legitimation, inaugural speeches, delegitimation

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