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A critical discourse analysis of rhetorical strategies used by South Africa's President, Cyril Ramaphosa: the case of the state of the nation addresses 2018 - 2019

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ABSTRACT

This study provides an academic enquiry into presidential rhetoric and how it is employed in presidential speeches to reinforce and maintain power relations. It seeks to analyse how the President Cyril Ramaphosa constructs the reality he seeks to present to the people using rhetorical strategies during the State of the Nation Address (SONA). The study addresses a much-neglected aspect in the field of language, presidential speeches and the State of the Nation Address, particularly in South Africa – this involves how politicians draw from existing discourses to create text in order to shape social realities for the public. This is done through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as a method of analysis, in order to ascertain how language is deployed in order to shape social realities, to reinforce ideologies and maintain power. This study also illuminates how democracy is negotiated and projected through use of rhetorical language.

KEY WORDS: Critical Discourse Analysis, Rhetoric, Presidential Speeches, Language, Power, Ideology