

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**



# **LANGUAGES**

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# **PERSUASIVE PROSE**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ESSAY.....	3
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	6
DECLARATION.....	7

This is a speech by Mmusi Maimane. It is intended to criticize the President's speech during the SONA on "Thursday" and partly to mock his [President's] poor leadership in general. The speech is directed to the members of the parliament and the South African citizens. The entire speech is sarcastic and generates both positive and negative effects to the audience. Within the essay, I will demonstrate the lexical choices used by the speaker through contrast to interchangeably discourage the South African citizens as well as encourage them to act against the President of South Africa's leadership. This will be done through an analysis of the content of the speech addressed by Mmusi Maimane intended to both the parliament members and the South Africans. Through this analysis I am also willing to indicate his intention and expectations from the South African citizens. There are various text features that the speaker employs to persuade his agenda. He uses the formal and caustic tone within the text that is written to be spoken. Therefore, he is intending to appeal to the audience's emotions to act against the President's leadership which is also the main theme. Inasmuch as that remains the latter, the speaker demonstrates other ways to persuade his intentions, that is.

The speaker uses the repetition of the phrase "Planet Zuma" within the speech to emphasize the sense of isolation between the audience and their leader. By contrast, he is, in fact, doing two things at the same time; that is, he is exposing a feeling of rejection from their leader, which makes the audience invisible and feel uncared for, in return, he [the speaker] seeks their attention as someone who recognizes and cares about them. The use of phrases such as "far, far away" suggests the huge gap between the audience and the President, which then creates an impression of negligence from their leader and further supports the speaker's intention to seek their attention. This means that he cautions the audience to open their eyes towards the leadership of the President. He wants them to take action against him, hence he [the President] never acknowledges their existence within his world. This point is further supported by the phrase "we learned more about Planet Zuma than the country we live in" which further brings an imagery of isolation between the President and the South African citizens.

The fact that in "Planet Zuma" there is a lack of "job crisis" and there is high "quality education", brings a contrast between the President's painted image and the South African citizen's lives. The speaker is demonstrating, to the audience, the false image the President wants them to believe. This suggests that he [the speaker] adds fuel towards their emotional appeal in favour to reject the President's leadership by demonstrating lack of honesty and transparency from their President. This is supported by failure to "mention basic education


once” which affirms the speaker’s desire to prove the unreliability and carelessness of the President towards their children’s future and that of the country. Such phrase arouses concern in the audience about their position and their role within the country. It makes them feel undermined and not seen as significant citizens within their own country. The speaker reinforces the same feeling to his audience by enumerating “8.3 million South Africans who are jobless” which was ignored by the President during his speech on “Thursday.” He challenges the audience to evaluate their reality compared to the emphatic, yet delusionary image painted by the President in his “planet” where “every problem” is easily solvable.


On the other hand, the speaker indicates the sense of concern towards the audience he is addressing. He is demonstrating that, unlike the President, he is considerate of their devastating conditions and he is aptly open towards working and solving their everyday calamities. He is appealing to their conscious to make the right decision. Therefore this favours the speaker’s attempt to win their attention and act with haste against the President for the sake of the future of the country and that of their children.

The speaker uses ellipsis within his speech to indicate that there is omission. Since the speech is written to be spoken, the function of ellipsis allows his audience to ponder about the decisions made by their President. He invites them to use their common sense and evaluate the conditions which the President uses when addressing them, and to determine if his [President] actions are considerate in providing the solutions experienced by the citizens. He provides a platform to let the audience makeup their mind, and draw-out a conclusion that will satisfy them about the President’s leadership. The fact that their leader fails to “mention basic education”; solves problems by merely organising “a commission of inquiry”; and present “empty words”; provides both the quality and erroneous evidence of his leadership choices. Therefore the speaker allows his audience to draw out conclusion in hope that they will make a right decision in motion to halt the President’s leadership.

By calling out “Madam Speaker”, he equally calls out South Africans to give him further attention as he pleads to their hearts. This puts the speaker in good books with the audience, because, unlike the President, he is acknowledging their presence. The act alone wins the hearts of the South Africans in general to warm up to his pleads. In so doing, he is luring them to lose confidence towards the President, by pointing out that he had “lived” to their “expectations.” The word “expectations” makes the audience realize their disappointment with the President’s speech and further adds the feeling of uncared for and that of being undermined by him. The speaker reinforces his plead to gain their support when he points out the President’s flaw of using “empty words” and carefully mocks him that

he is “out of touch” for the audience’s interests. He intends to awaken the citizens’ consciousness and challenges them to re-evaluate the kind of leadership they have received so far. The phrases “empty words” and “out of touch” undermines the President’s previous speech, and to ~~the~~ certain extent, his leadership position. However the speaker uses the words to push his agenda. He indicates that the President has undermined South African citizens. Therefore this further discourages the confidence of the audience towards the President’s leadership.

On the other hand he [the speaker] is challenging each and every South African citizen,  individually, to look within his/her consciousness and do what is right for the future of his/her children and country. In summation, he is pleading to their hearts by saying the following to his audience: The President does not recognize you in his perfect world; does not acknowledge your concerns and the devastating conditions you live in every day. He undermines and takes for granted the vote you gave him by delivering “empty words” to you, because he is “out of touch” and does not want to acknowledge his responsibility that he had failed you. All this happens because you merely do not exist in his “planet Zuma”. Do you really want to be ~~lead~~ by such President?

In conclusion, I have demonstrated the contrast from the speaker to discourage the audience to lose confidence against the President’s leadership, but encourage them to rebel against him in favour to gain their support. This is deduced from analysis of the content of his [the speaker] speech in which he carefully uses his text such as “Planet Zuma” to paint an image of two different worlds and to demonstrate isolation between the President and his people. I further highlighted the speaker’s main intention throughout the essay, which is to persuade the audience by appealing to their hearts to influence them to rebel against the President’s leadership. Phrases such as “empty words” and “out of touch” are quoted to emphasize the speaker’s contrast to discourage his audience to lose confidence and to encourage them to rebel against the President’s leadership. Inasmuch as such phrases were undermining the President’s speech and to the certain extent, his position, the speaker managed to appeal to the emotions of his audience and received their attention. 

39

40

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



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**ADDENDUM C: PLAGIARISM DECLARATION**



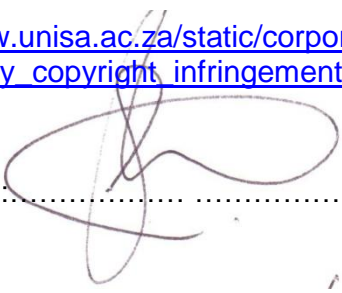
**STUDENT NO.:** ... 62470523.....

**ASSIGNMENT TOPIC:** ...Persuasive Prose.....

**ASSIGNMENT NO.:** .....898771.....

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