

Rule Flouting as Argumentation Strategy: A Case of the South African and Zimbabwean Parliaments

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Abstract

Parliamentary discourse is rule-governed with controlled diction, specific as well as documented protocol and standing orders in place, one would expect that parliament is a place where all is serene and actors are as “honourable” as they are titled. Recent events in most African parliaments have proven that the serenity expected from parliament is anything near reality. Language use is at times foul and conduct dishonourable. The rules of the house are flouted and when such happens it is usually deemed “un-parliamentary.” Though “un-parliamentary” such language and behaviour can be seen as a form of argumentation. Argumentation, which is the primary activity that parliamentarians are involved in whenever there is a sitting has been defined as a verbal, social, and reasoned activity aimed at convincing critics of the acceptability of an argument by putting forward a number of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint This chapter looks at the argumentation within un-parliamentary behaviour which flouts parliamentary discursal conventions.

Keywords: Rule Flouting, Argumentation Strategy, Parliamentary discourse, South African Parliaments, Zimbabwean Parliaments