

The presentation of the fast track land reform in Zimbabwe, views from two dailies, The Herald and The Daily News.

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Abstract

This paper examined the discourse of land as shown in reporting by two Zimbabwean dailies, The Herald and The Daily News in May 2000. The research used critical discourse analysis to reveal how, linguistically, the two dailies in Zimbabwe positioned themselves through their reportage of the fast track land reform programme. It asked three essential questions: Who was shown, doing what? Whose voices were heard? and How was the audience influenced to evaluate? The Herald mainly featured influential political and social figures from within the country and the region as agentive participants whose actions were largely neutral and/or verbal. The Daily News on the other hand presented politicians, ZANU PF functionaries like war veterans and party supporters as agentive participants involved in material action acted on a variety of specified patients, among whom were farmers, teachers, opposition party supporters and villagers. The Herald was also seen as focusing more on speeches made by important people like politicians, whereas The Daily News tended to focus on material action (usually violent) shown to have been suffered by sectors of the country's population. The research showed how language can be used to paint different pictures of the same social phenomenon and therefore influence the readership to evaluate the land issue differently; while The Herald supported government policy, The Daily News took a negative stance towards it.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, land redistribution, agents, patients*