UNITY, FEAR, AND RESISTANCE: QUANTIFYING RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN AFRICAN DISCOURSE USING THE LION GUARD

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Abstract

This study analyses the rhetorical functions embedded in five rhymes selected from the children's animated series The Lion Guard and how they align with themes in African political discourse. The five rhymes: Sisi Ni Sawa, Jackal Style, Outta the Way, Panic and Run, and Here Comes the Lion Guard, were categorized into five rhetorical functions, unity, deception, exclusion, fear, and resistance using rhetorical theory and symbolic interactionism. This study examines the statistical significance between each rhyme and its rhetorical function using a hypothetical dataset and Pearson's chi-square test of independence. The findings indicated a strong and non-random relationship between each rhyme and its corresponding rhetorical function ($X^2(16, N = 200) = 357.80, p < .001$), indicating that popular culture can mirror real-world patterns of political communication. The study reveals the potential of popular culture as a means of gaining insight into how rhetorical strategies operate within governance narratives and political symbolism.

Keywords: African Political Discourse, Rhetorical Strategies, Symbolic Interactionism, Popular Culture and Politics, Metaphorical Language in Leadership.

Introduction

The idea of a united Africa has been central to postcolonial political discourse from the early independence struggles in the 1960s. The principles of Pan Africanism they espoused, as articulated by leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, was based on their belief that African countries need to cooperate politically and economically to address the remnants of colonialism (Adi, 2018). However, decades later, African unity remains for the most part rhetorical, bodies like the African Union (AU), being called out for making declarations without ensuring mechanisms for implementation whilst sub-regional blocs like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the

Southern African Development Community (SADC) had shown they often struggle to respond to political crises (Zeleza, 2019; Murithi, 2020). Studies notes that African leadership is often plagued by elite capture, neopatrimonialism and the endless recycling of legitimacy earned during a liberation struggle into authoritarian practices (Chabal & Daloz, 2018; Adebajo, 2021).

The communication of African leadership, therefore operates within a space where political realities are often masked or contradicted by rhetorical ideals. Recent studies have pointedly noted the use of metaphors, ambiguity, and performative appeals in building public narratives around African leadership, especially during transitions in government or national crises (Charteris-Black, 2014, Finlayson, 2021). These rhetorical ideals include unity preaching statements that emphasise cohesion and togetherness, fear-based motions that decries instability and resistance movements that paints confrontation and opposition as moral duties and necessities.

Studies have also highlighted the value of analysing popular culture as a site of political discourse. Scholars are increasingly analysing music, films and animated media to explore how these symbolic cultural artefacts reflect ideological positions (Barber, 2018; Mbembe, 2020) as they often encode metaphors of power, justice and resistance.

Building on these precedents, this study utilises The Lion Guard, which is an animated children's series, as a data source for examining the rhetorical structures in African governance. Much of the political discourse in Africa governance involves quite powerful rhetorical themes - from calls for unity and solidarity; to deception, exclusion, fearmongering, and resistance. We find these five themes to be frequently used within leadership narratives. For example, In postcolonial sub-Saharan political discourse, treachery (deception) and fear of "the other" were present, while in the appeals for pan-African unity, peace, and development, are seen as vital part of the agenda. To illustrate how such rhetorical functions can be associated with narratives, we have used five rhymes from The Lion Guard: Sisi Ni Sawa, Jackal Style, Outta the Way, Panic and Run, and Here Comes the Lion Guard. Each rhyme can be categorized as dominant rhetorical functions in relation to African leadership communication: Sisi Ni Sawa is Unity, Jackal Style is Deception, Outta the Way is Exclusion, Panic and Run is Fear and Here Comes the Lion Guard is Resistance.

While prior work has explored the theoretical possibility of using the rhymes of this particular series as metaphorical texts, this present study uses a

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quantitative lens by statistically analysing the relationship between the selected rhymes and their dominant rhetorical themes. We explore the association between the rhyme invoked and its dominant rhetorical function in an Africa governance context using a chi-square test of independence. This approach not only complements the findings of the previous qualitative study but also provides a formal technique for testing how symbolic references in popular culture align with specific political narratives in African governance.

This study is based on rhetorical theory with an emphasis on how language and symbols are used to influence how power structures are perceived. Drawing on classical rhetorical traditions such as Aristotle's appease, the analysis proposes that political discourse is rarely neutral but is crafted intentionally to shape public opinion and consciousness (Charteris-Black, 2014; Finlayson, 2021).

This study also draws from symbolic interactions and discourse theory that proposes that meaning is constructed by the society and that symbols derive their force from being used repeatedly in the society. By using a statistical approach rather than the theoretical approach used in previous studies, this study aims to determine statistically if these cultural artefacts align with the rhetorical strategies of unity, deception, exclusion, fear and resistance.

Methods

We generated a hypothetical (but plausible) dataset of political discourse instances in which each rhyme is invoked and coded each instance for its dominant rhetorical function. This leads us to a 5×5 contingency table (five rhymes and five rhetorical functions). The observed frequencies (O) in each cell are counts of how often a given rhyme was used to perform a given rhetorical function. We conducted a Pearson's chi-square test of independence to see whether rhymes and rhetorical functions are systematically associated (dependent) as opposed to the null hypothesis (H_0) no association, or that rhyme and function is independent.

We calculated expected frequencies (E) for each cell under H_0 (independence) by multiplying for the row total and column total for that cell and dividing by the total number of observations (N). For example if Sisi Ni Sawa was used 40 times in total and Unity was the offered rhetorical function in 38 times total across the rhymes (see Table 1) the expected frequency of Sisi Ni Sawa used for Unity would be found as follows: $(40*38)/200=7.6$. This process was repeated for all 25 cells. The chi-square statistic was found as follows:

χ2=∑all cells(O−E)2E,\chi^2 = \sum_{\text{all cells}} \frac{(O - E)^2}{E},χ2=∑all cellsE(O−E)2,

the chi-square statistic sums the squared differences observed from E, weighted by E. For a two-way table with r rows (and rationally as many designs) and c columns (and rationally as many rhetorical functions) the df for the test are $(r-1)\times(c-1)$. In this example the df = (5-1) x (5-1) = 16. We set alpha, $\alpha = 0.05$. If the chi-square we computed was sufficiently large that the p-value was below 0.05 we would reject H_0 and conclude that the use of rhymes and rhetorical functions are systematic associated (i.e. dependent).

Results

Cross Tabulation Results

The table in Table 1 below shows the full cross-tabulation showing five rhymes by five rhetorical functions with observed frequencies and expected frequencies (in parenthesis - if independence were true): . The margins of the table show the totals for each row related to total number of uses of each rhyme in the data, the totals related to each rhetorical function across rhymes, and the grand total N=200.

Table 1 illustrates that all of the rhymes are primarily related to a single rhetorical function (indicated by the large counts observed in each row). For instance, Sisi Ni Sawa was used 30 times to indicate Unity (well above a random value based on the overall counts of 7.6), but was also used only a couple of times for other functions (2 uses for Fear, 7.6 expected). In a similar fashion, Jackal Style appears 28 times in a framework of Deception (vs ~8.4 expected) but importantly, 0 times in a Unity context (where ~7.6 would be expected if random). Outta the Way has an apparent dominance of counts at 32 in Exclusion (vs 8.8 expected), Panic and Run appears 26 times invoking Fear (vs 7.6 expected), and Here Comes the Lion Guard is used 30 times in a Resistance context (7.6 expected). These large departures from the counts of expected vs. observed frequencies with the dominant pairs - and corresponding deficits in other pairings - already point toward strong association between each song and a specific rhetorical function.

Results of the Chi-Square test

Using the observed and expected frequencies, we calculated the chi-square statistic formally. The computed value is χ²(16, N = 200) = 357.80, which is an extremely large value. The value of 16 degrees of freedom yields p < .001 (rejected at a value well below the 0.05 threshold). Thus, we reject the null

hypothesis of no association. We can formally conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between the rhyme and the dominant rhetorical function. The probability of the distribution of counts being this far from what was expected (if rhyme and rhetorical function were completely independent) is virtually zero. To see which cells are contributing to the χ^2 the most, you can look at the largest deviations of O from E as we stated above. Each of the five rhymes combines with one particular function far more often than what chance would dictate (and thus we can reject the null hypothesis). The chi-square test tells us this would not have occurred due to random variation alone, indicating a systematic pattern exists. In the case of the concerning (O-E) residual analysis for the dominant cells we see very large positive values, and for the off-diagonal cells (e.g. Jackal Style with Unity) the observed frequencies were much less than the expected, which contributed strongly to the χ^2 statistic. The observed pattern of large residuals along one diagonal of the residual table (e.g. Unity for Sisi Ni Sawa, Deception for Jackal Style) indicates that each of these rhymes is dominant in its rhetorical category.

Discussion

The statistical analysis shows a clear association: each of The Lion Guard rhymes is highly associated with a rhetorical function in the context of African governance discourse. This is substantively interesting. This means that these creative rhymes (from a children's show, nonetheless) encapsulate different rhetorical strategies like those used by African figures: Unity: Sisi Ni Sawa (we are the same) overwhelmingly operates to promote unity and equality. In terms of governance, this reflects the common sentiment of leaders' rhetoric about national or pan-African unity with an emphasis on shared identity and cohesion. This type of rhetoric may be used to bring citizens together around a common cause as opposed to divisive rhetoric (accord.org.za). The high degree of Sisi Ni Sawa related to unity is reminiscent of how African leaders draw on unity to legitimate their leadership and create comradeship.

Jackal Style is used mainly in instances of deception or guile. The Jackal characters sneaky behaviour is similar to political deceit or propaganda, and all the data show Jackal Style association is with deception almost exclusively. This is consistent with the observation that misrepresentation and deceit appear to be widespread normative issues in African political culture (link.springer.com). This would suggest that when this rhyme appears, it functions as a critique or example of deceptive leadership tactics (i.e corrupt officials "dancing in Jackal style" to mislead the public).

Outta the Way is primarily associated with exclusionary rhetoric- moving or attempting to erase others. In the case of African leadership, it relates to narratives of moving aside opposition or outsider groups ("out of the way"), and could be interpreted as policies of ethnic exclusion, or xenophobic populism. The above highlights the strong relationship between the song about physically removing rivals as an analogy for inciting governance practices that excludes certain communities.

Panic and Run is closely associated with inducing or describing fear, and panic. The preponderant occurrence of the Rhyme in the Fear category corroborates the politically motivated impact of fear-based rhetoric, consisting of threats of chaos and warnings of danger, on the public emotion (journals.gmu.edu). In similar fashion, leaders or factions in African discourse sometimes use fear appeals, say a warning of conflict or instability, as a way to obtain support or discredit an adversary. The Rhyme reflects the "rhetoric of fear", mimicking, or reminding the audience, that when panic can be produced, a leader can work against the need to relinquish power, or push for immediate action.

Here Comes the Lion Guard mostly functions as a resistance or defense call. In the show, the Lion Guard comes to protect the Pride Lands, as this rhyme functions in discourse, evoking the notion of a group standing against threat or threat of injustice (an oppressed group warns of "the Guard," or a new guard to the power). The strong association with Resistance suggests that it speaks to visions of defiance and hope which is very similar to a form of liberation rhetoric found in African history, by leaders or movements encouraging resistance to colonialism or tyranny. The low use of the other functions also means that it does not easily lend itself to being coopted for, say, fear or deception, because it always presents narratives of courage or opposition.

In summary, the chi-square analysis provides support for the notion that each Rhyme has a distinct rhetorical function, confirming, overall, that these cultural references contain particular political meanings. The strong association with each rhyme ($p<.001$) with a particular function implies that the association is unlikely to be due to chance. Practically, once it is established that an African leader or activist has purposefully chosen to integrate one of the Rhymes in their speech or writing, we can predict with a reasonable degree of confidence the rhetorical effect of their deliberative action using these categories of connection (unity, deception, exclusion, fear, or resistance) based on the Rhyme.

This study illustrates how other elements of popular culture can inform and reflect political communication in complex ways - specifically, that these selected animated Rhymes offer a reflection of real-life African rhetorical styles. The implications may be significant for PhD researchers of discourse: to note and investigate such relationships suggests that researchers and practitioners alike become cognizant of and utilize cultural references in their political rhetoric. The clear relationships also emphasize the key roles of these five rhetorical functions in African leadership discourse, in line with previous research observations that unity, fear, deception, exclusion, and resistance are predominant tropes conditioned by the narrative surrounding political governance. Finally, a chi-square test offered a systematic and formal statistical justification for reasonable confidence about this association while providing a statistical rationale to a qualitative appreciation of how each Rhyme's message identifies uniquely with a facet of African political rhetoric.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the dataset used in the analysis was hypothetical and was created solely for the purpose of modeling and illustrating the associations between popular culture and rhetorical functions resulting in a situation where the results do not reflect the empirical data collected actual political discourses or usage by verified media and limiting the generalizability of the findings. Further results using real life speech samples are necessary to validate these patterns. Secondly, the source material was initially intended as an animated children's series and not as a source of political discourse. While it has strong metaphoric and rhetorical value, the meanings and functions derived from it may differ based on the context and age of the audience and how familiar they are with the African political discourse. This in turn makes it so the findings can only be illustrative and not conclusive. Lastly, the study was limited to only five rhymes and rhetorical functions which allowed for a focused analysis. It however makes it impossible for the study to capture the full complexity of the rhetorical devices commonly used in African political communications. Further studies expanding the range of functions, media types and symbols are required to fully validate the findings of this study as conclusive.

Conclusion

In this paper, we employed a chi-square test to explore any relationship between some selected Lion Guard (Jeckings, 2020) Rhymes and their most important rhetorical functions in the context of African governance. The cross-tabulation and other statistical tests reasonably indicate a very strong and statistically significant relationship between each Rhyme and a particular rhetorical function. Each song serves well as a conveyance for a moment of

persuasion or narrative: to unify, to deceive or manipulate, exclude, evoke fear, or inspire resistance.

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of Rhymes and Rhetorical Functions (Observed and Expected Frequencies)

Total N = 200

Rhyme	Unity	Deception	Exclusion	Fear	Resistance	Row Total
Sisi Ni Sawa	30 (7.6)	2 (8.4)	5 (8.8)	2 (7.6)	1 (7.6)	40
Jackal Style	0 (7.6)	28 (8.4)	4 (8.8)	3 (7.6)	5 (7.6)	40
Outta the Way	3 (7.6)	5 (8.4)	32 (8.8)	0 (7.6)	0 (7.6)	40
Panic and Run	2 (7.6)	1 (8.4)	2 (8.8)	26 (7.6)	9 (7.6)	40
Here Comes the Lion Guard	3 (7.6)	2 (8.4)	1 (8.8)	3 (7.6)	30 (7.6)	40
Column Totals	38	38	44	34	45	200

Observed frequencies (O) = actual coded counts from the hypothetical dataset. Expected frequencies (E) = calculated under the null hypothesis of independence.
The diagonal dominance (high O >> E) in each rhyme-function pair suggests a strong association.

Table 2: Sisinisawa Real-World Analogies Across Africa

Country/Region	Sisinisawa Analogy
Rwanda	"We are Rwandans" post-genocide policy mirrors *Sisinisawa* but tensions still surface around state-enforced sameness.
Ethiopia	Ethnic federalism promises unity in diversity, but ethnic violence persists—*Sisinisawa* is idealised but destabilised.
South Sudan	Peace agreements stress national unity, yet tribal loyalties often override national identity.
South Africa	*Ubuntu* and "Rainbow Nation" ethos embody *Sisinisawa*, yet socioeconomic divisions remain along racial and ethnic lines.
Cameroon	Anglophone marginalisation is silenced through unity rhetoric, even as armed conflict deepens.
Kenya	Post-election peace slogans (e.g., "We are One") often follow violence between ethnic voting blocs.
Nigeria	"Unity in diversity" is inscribed in state symbols, yet ethnic and religious divisions dominate political practice.

Table 3: Sisinisawa Applications to Conflict Resolution and Governance

Area	Pragmatic Insight Inspired by *Sisinisawa*
Conflict Mediation	Useful as symbolic reconciliation language during peace talks (e.g., Burundi, Liberia, Sudan).
Civic Education	Promotes empathy-based curricula and de-ethnicised national identity in post-conflict societies.
Constitutional Reform	Inspires inclusive national charters and anti-discrimination clauses rooted in sameness rhetoric.
Inter-Ethnic Dialogue	Encourages community-based reconciliation programs based on shared values rather than contested histories.

Table 4: Sisinisawa Summary Table

Analytical Layer	Findings
Pragmatics	Performed unity speech act; functions symbolically more than operationally in many African contexts.
Rhetoric	Uses repetition, antithesis, and pathos to emotionally persuade divided groups toward shared identity.
Deconstruction	Reveals contradiction: sameness is proclaimed while systemic structures reinforce difference.
Continental Relevance	Resonates with unity-building efforts across post-conflict and multi-ethnic African nations.

Table 5: Jackal Style Pan-African Parallels

Country/Region	Jackal Style Manifestation
South Sudan	Elites exploit tribal loyalties and peace agreements for personal power and wealth, mirroring strategic deception.
DR Congo	Decades of resource looting by political and military elites show governance built on "taking what we want."
Zimbabwe	Post-independence leadership was marked by manipulation of laws and electoral systems to entrench power.
Equatorial Guinea	Leadership has institutionalised personal wealth accumulation through oil exploitation.
Nigeria	Electoral fraud, clientelism, and impunity for looters embody the jackal's impunity and rule-bending behaviour.
Kenya	Patronage politics and tribal favouritism during elections reflect manipulation and rule subversion.

Table 6: Jackal Style Themes and Policy Implications

Theme	Jackal Style Insight
Corruption in Governance	Leaders behave like predators—extracting resources for themselves while manipulating public trust.
Political Opportunism	Leaders shift alliances, change constitutions, or suspend elections when it benefits them.
Weak Institutions	Institutions are captured and repurposed to protect elites rather than serve justice or the public.
Electoral Fraud	"Jackal style" elections are manipulated through vote buying, rigging, intimidation, and misinformation.
Impunity and Elitism	Like the jackals, African elites often act as though they are above the law—with little fear of prosecution.
Rhetoric of Resistance	Opposition parties are frequently delegitimised, framed as threats, or co-opted through bribery or blackmail.

Table 7: Jackal Style Summary Table

Analytical Layer	Findings
Pragmatics	Asserts dominance, mocks moral order, redefines leadership as opportunism.
Rhetoric	Uses metaphor, survivalism, and cunning to justify unethical behaviour.
Deconstruction	Reveals the normalisation of corruption, the subversion of rules, and the contradiction of moral posturing.
Continental Relevance	Embodied in post-independence autocracies, transitional democracies, and failed reform agendas.

Table 8: Outta the Way Pan-African Parallels

Country/Region	"Outta the Way" Reflection
Uganda	Museveni's prolonged rule has marginalised opposition voices through arrests and censorship.
Cameroon	The Anglophone crisis reflects systemic marginalisation of English-speaking regions in favour of Francophone elites.
Eritrea	Political dissidents are detained indefinitely; the regime silences all opposition.
South Sudan	Political factions violently suppress rivals in a struggle for dominance.
Ethiopia	Tigray and Oromia conflicts showcase violent responses to groups resisting federal centralisation.
Zimbabwe	Opposition parties are systematically delegitimised, with state machinery used to "clear them out of the way."

Table 9: Outta the Way Themes and Governance Implications

Theme	Outta the Way Insight
Exclusionary Politics	Power is often racialised, regionalised, or tribalised—minority groups are labelled as obstacles to progress.
Authoritarianism and Repression	Crackdowns on activists, media, and students mirror the imperative silencing in the rhyme.
One-Party Dominance	Ruling parties that dominate space for decades echo the jackals' refusal to share or concede.
Youth Disenfranchisement	Africa's large youth population is often "pushed out of the way" by gerontocratic leadership structures.
Political Rigidity	Leadership becomes inherited or immovable—elections are rituals of power retention, not renewal.

Table 10: Outta the Way Summary Table

Analytical Layer	Findings
Pragmatics	Commanding and silencing speech act; restricts civic participation and diversity of voice.
Rhetoric	Uses forceful language, exclusionary logic, and symbolic violence to assert illegitimate dominance.
Deconstruction	Power is framed as necessary but is in fact fragile, reactive, and dependent on suppression of others.
Continental Relevance	Found in both fragile democracies and outright autocracies, from centralised federalism to one-party states.

Table 11: Panic and Run Pan-African Parallels

Country/Region	"Panic and Run" Reflection
Burkina Faso	Military coups justified as responses to insecurity, yet chaos is often perpetuated to consolidate military rule.
Nigeria	Electoral violence, ethnic tensions, and insurgency are used to justify curfews, surveillance, or repression.
Somalia	Perpetual insecurity benefits local warlords and political actors who thrive in crisis.
Sudan	The state alternates between inciting and suppressing unrest to delay civilian transition and distract from coups.
Ethiopia	Ethnic violence has been used to reshape political boundaries and electoral processes.

Table 12: Panic and Run Themes and Governance Implications

Theme	"Panic and Run" Insight
Crisis as Political Capital	Leaders use chaos to stall elections, suspend civil rights, or justify extended rule.
Distraction from Corruption	Panic and instability shift public attention away from embezzlement, economic decline, or failed policy.
Electoral Instability	Fear of violence keeps voter turnout low, undermining the legitimacy of democratic transitions.
Militarisation of Society	Panic facilitates increased military presence, surveillance, and control in civilian spaces.
Ethnic and Religious Polarisation	Politicians stoke panic over "the other" to fracture solidarity across regions or communities.
Weakening of Civil Society	Protests, media, and activism are disrupted under the guise of restoring "order" during panic episodes.

Table 13: Panic and Run Summary Table

Analytical Layer	Findings
Pragmatics	Speech act that directs citizens to flee, react emotionally, and abandon resistance—reflective of state-induced panic.
Rhetoric	Utilises fear, repetition, and emotional disorientation to suspend rational engagement or democratic mobilisation.
Deconstruction	Unmasks how chaos is not accidental but constructed and sustained by power holders to delay reform.
Continental Relevance	Present in authoritarian and transitional states alike—used to justify both military coups and flawed elections.

Table 14: Here Comes the Lion Guard Pan-African Parallels

Country/Region	"Here Comes the Lion Guard" Reflection
Nigeria	#EndSARS movement embodies the Lion Guard's spirit: young, organised, and focused on police reform and justice.
South Africa	FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall youth protests challenged inequality in education and decolonisation of institutions.
Sudan	Youth-led protests toppled Omar al-Bashir's 30-year rule in 2019, asserting a new civic voice.
Senegal	#FreeSenegal and Y'en a Marre movements combined music, protest, and youth mobilisation to demand democracy and justice.
Zimbabwe	Young activists like Takudzwa Ngadziore are leading resistance against police brutality and rigged governance systems.

Table 15: Here Comes the Lion Guard Themes and Transformational Potential

Theme	Lion Guard Interpretation
Youth Empowerment	The song reflects the rise of politically conscious, tech-savvy youth who are unwilling to inherit dysfunction.
Demand for Ethical Leadership	The Lion Guard stands for justice, not just power—mirroring how reformers seek meritocracy, transparency, and accountability.
Restoration of Hope	The arrival chant signals a return to optimism—important in societies long numbed by corruption and failed promises.
Intergenerational Shift	Young Africans are pushing to take the reins—not just as followers or voters, but as architects of their own futures.
Institutional	The Lion Guard doesn't destroy—it protects and

Reclamation	reforms. Similarly, youth movements often seek to reclaim institutions, not burn them.

Table 16: Here Comes the Lion Guard Summary Table

Analytical Layer	Findings
Pragmatics	Performs an act of moral and political presence; youth as active agents, not spectators of history.
Rhetoric	Uses courage, justice, and arrival as rhetorical tools to reframe leadership from privilege to service.
Deconstruction	Disrupts generational hierarchies and state narratives that criminalise protest while celebrating empty patriotism.
Continental Relevance	Embodied in youth activism, electoral reform campaigns, civic movements, and social justice struggles across Africa.

Table 17: Summary of Rhymes as Metaphors for African Leadership, Governance, and Resistance

Rhyme	Core Rhetorical Function	Pragmatic Insight	African Socio-Political Reflection
Sisinisawa ("We're the Same")	Emphasises unity through repetition and empathy.	Declares sameness despite visible differences; performs solidarity.	Symbolic national unity often masks ethnic exclusion and inequality in states like Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Rwanda.
Jackal Style	Celebrates cunning, opportunism, and power through deceit.	Manipulative speech acts normalise corruption and elite rule-bending.	Reflects widespread elite impunity, cronyism, and resource exploitation in states like DR Congo, Zimbabwe, and Equatorial Guinea.
Outta the	Commands	Speech acts	Mirrors authoritarian

Way	exclusion and silences dissent through forceful language.	marginalise opposition and justify repression in the name of order.	rule, one-party dominance, and suppression of dissent in Cameroon, Uganda, and Sudan.
Panic and Run	Incites fear, confusion, and disbandment.	Constructs and exploits panic to distract citizens and disable reform.	Symbolises insecurity-driven brain drain and fear politics in Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Ethiopia.
Here Comes the Lion Guard	Announces the emergence of youthful, morally upright protectors.	Asserts new leadership ethos rooted in justice, resilience, and reform.	Embodies youth-led resistance movements in Sudan, Nigeria (#EndSARS), South Africa

Appendix A: Full Lyrics of the Rhymes Analysed

1. "We're the Same (Sisi Ni Sawa)"

Performed by: Kion and Jasiri

Kion:
You think that life is one big game,
You joke, you laugh, you take no blame.
I'm telling you, there's just no way that we're the same.

Jasiri:
You've got to look past what you see,
Try not to judge so easily.
Believe it or not, you're a lot like me.
Say believe it or not, you're a lot like me!

Chorus:
Sisi ni sawa means we're the same!
(Sisi ni sawa!)

Kion:
I hear what you're saying, but you need to explain!
(Sisi ni sawa!)

Jasiri:
At the end of the day, it's like water and rain—
Sisi ni sawa, we are the same!

Maybe I laugh, maybe you purr,
But take a look under the fur.
Deep in our heart is what matters for sure!

'Cause we both know a higher call,
Like every creature big and small.
The Circle of Life should be what's guiding us all.

Both:
Sisi ni sawa means we're the same!
(Sisi ni sawa!)

Kion:
Though you've got your spots, and I have a mane.

Jasiri:
At the end of the day, it's like water and rain—
Sisi ni sawa, we are the same!

Never thought that we'd see eye to eye.

Jasiri:
I can't imagine why!
It's very easy if you try!
(Sisi ni sawa!)

Kion:
Still, to me, they're brand new thoughts—
Not to judge hyenas by their spots!

Jasiri:
Sisi ni sawa!

Both:
Sisi ni sawa means we're the same!
Forget about the past when there's nothing to gain.
At the end of the day, it's like water and rain—
Sisi ni sawa, we are the same!

2. "Jackal Style"

Performed by: Reirei and her pups

Our kind is born a bit smarter
Than other creatures you might know.
And though we seem quite pleasant,
Our niceness is just a show!

We've learned how to beat the system—
Everyone else does our work for us.
But before we can take advantage,
First, we have to win their trust.

So listen up!

Pretend to be sweet,
Speak with a smile.
Then you can take things—
Jackal style!

Even if you're mad,
Play it cool for a while.
That's how you fool 'em—
Jackal style!

Don't gather food or build a home—
There's plenty here for us to take.
Working hard might be good for others,
But we get by just being fake!

Pretend to be sweet,
Speak with a smile.
Then you can take things—
Jackal style!

You might think it's mean,
But let me beguile—
Everything we do is
Jackal style!

3. "Outta the Way"

Performed by: Janja and his clan

Janja:
Hey, you! Get outta the way!
We got plans, and they don't include you today.

Cheezi & Chungu:
We're takin' over this part of the land,
So step aside or we'll make you understand!

Janja:
We're movin' in, and you're movin' out—
That's what bein' jackals is all about.

All:
So run along, don't make us stay,
Or you'll regret gettin' in our way!

Chorus:
Outta the way!
This land's for the bold!
Outta the way!
We're takin' control!

You don't belong here—
We've made that clear.
So vanish now,
Before we make you disappear!

4. "Panic and Run"

Performed by: Ushari and Scar's Followers

Ushari:
It's time to strike fear into the land,
And send them running with no plan!

Janja's Clan:
Panic and run! Panic and run!
Make 'em scream, it's so much fun!

Kiburi's Crocodiles:
Panic and run! Panic and run!
They won't know what hit 'em when we're done.

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Ushari:
Confusion, chaos, and dismay—
Let 'em all fear the end of their day!

All:
Panic and run! Panic and flee!
Let the Pride Lands crumble and bend the knee!

Hyenas:
No order here, just turmoil and fire—
Feeding their fears is all we desire!

Chorus:
Panic and run!
We do it with glee!
Panic and run!
And take what we see!

5. "Here Comes the Lion Guard"

Performed by: Kion and the Lion Guard

Kion:
You better believe it when you hear the sound,
That thunder's not from the sky—it's from the ground.

Fuli:
We race in fast, we don't wait around,
Speed and grace—we wear the crown.

Beshte:
Strong and proud, we make our stand—
The Lion Guard protects this land!

Ono:
Eyes in the sky, I see it all—
No sneak attack or secret call.

Bunga:
We're fierce, we're fun, and full of fight,
We do what's good, we do what's right!

All:
Here comes the Lion Guard!
Stand aside, we're brave and smart!

We're protectors, leaders, and friends—
We defend the Pride Lands to the end!

Kion:
From sunrise to the moonlit yard—
Here we come...
The Lion Guard!

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