

*Sanctions, Fate and (de)legitimization: the speeches of Benito Mussolini during the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935-1936)*

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SUMMARY

In this paper we will employ some of the tools made available from contemporary researches in pragmatics to analyze the strategies of legitimization/delegitimization in three Mussolini's speeches made during the Italo-Ethiopian War (1935–36). We will show that these speeches are particularly interesting from a pragmatic viewpoint because they are conceived to delegitimize two different kinds of enemies/entities: the League of Nations (in a broad sense, a superordinate actor) and the Ethiopian leaders and people (perceived as subordinate agents). The paper also introduces a tentative interpretation of the role of the syntax-pragmatic interface as a possible tool, or better as a level, by which speakers achieve power, and try to act as a determinant of what the addressee thinks. In particular we will illustrate a characteristic use of aboutness (shift) topics and vocatives in Mussolini's discourses.