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Persuasion and Politics in the President Muhammadu Buhari's Address on Endsars Protest

Abstract

This study investigates persuasive strategies used in President Buhari's addresses during the EndSARS protest. Persuasion is crucial in the heart of political discourse as discursive activities regulate and stabilise sociopolitical crises in the society. The addresses were made to appeal to the aggrieved citizens and condemn the destructive activities that accompanied the protest. Electronic media serve as the source of data. The data were collected from President Buhari's Twitter and The Punch newspaper's website. The data were analysed using three concepts of Aristotle's rhetoric: pathos, ethos, and logos. The following findings were made from the analysis: diverse linguistic elements are used in the composition of political address; political address contains persuasive strategies which are identified through Aristotle's rhetoric concepts – pathos, ethos and logos; persuasive strategies are used in political addresses to perform various purposes to curb national crises. Political discourse is imbued with persuasive strategies required in handling sociopolitical crises.

Keywords: persuasion, political address, rhetoric, EndSARS protest, socio-political crises

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1.1 Introduction

Great speeches throughout history have been revered for their emotional and psychological effects on people. Most of these speeches, delivered by great speakers, have incited revolutions, ignited wars, and initiated significant political and economic changes (Foucault, 2001). Language plays an essential role in communication and manifesting political wills, as seen in political campaigns and speeches. In campaigns, politicians try to canvass votes through promises and persuasion (Joseph, 2006). In speeches, politicians try to placate the masses after perceived wrongdoing or enforce compliance through words.

Rhetoric is language at play and is indispensable in political discourse. It focuses on three basic appeals - the speaker's character and image (*ethos*), the appeals to the audience's emotional state (*pathos*), and the strength of the logical arguments (*logos*) (Fahnestock, 2011). When applied correctly in a given text's social, cultural, and political context, the appeals still represent rhetorical devices that, in modern communication, take advantage of

verbal and other semiotic resources that convey persuasive aims (Perloff, 2020; Cockcroft, et al., 2013). The mode of political discourse is manipulative and persuasive as the language is ideologically embedded. This research aims to enlighten and disenchant electorate and citizens alike from the allure of political discourse and examine language's most prominent linguistic/stylistic features (Martin, 2013).

This study is concerned with persuasion in political discourse of President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria with focus on the speeches he made at two different points when the country was in turmoil. The first was made after a nationwide protest against police brutality; the second was made after a series of attacks in the southeastern part of the country. The two speeches are significant in President Buhari's tenure progression. President Muhammadu Buhari's speech (22nd October 2020) targeted the Lekki Massacre that halted the #EndSARS Protest in October 2020.

The study is guided by the following objectives: to investigate linguistic elements used for persuasive purposes in the presidential address on EndSARS protest; to identify and classify the persuasive features in the presidential address on EndSARS protest; to examine the role of persuasion in the presidential address on EndSARS protest.

1.2 Language and Politics

On the one hand, language, which consists of words utilised in a structured and customary manner and communicated through speech, writing, or gestures, is the primary means of human communication. On the other hand, politics is described as the interactions of social groups - some of which have more power than others - within a given society (Bergmann, 2018). Politics is narrowly defined as the operation of administration institutions; that is, governance and formulating or influencing governmental policies are central to politics. Democracy appears to be rooted in fairness, equality, and freedom, in contrast to authoritarian politics (Ricento 2000). Therefore, it is essential to have a command of creative and persuasive language to impose political wills and ideologies by convincing individuals that their political viewpoints are valid. The language of politics is "the language used by institutions of governance to conduct their business, communicate with other institutions and with the rest of society, or, more broadly, as all the discourses produced by groups within a society relating to issues of the management of power and social governance." (Partington and Taylor, 2017). Political speech is associated with the power struggle, as seen in campaign speeches, and maintenance of power, as seen in inaugural speeches and the speeches of all politicians in power (Sobola, 2020; Blaney, 2014; Charteris-Black, 2018).

The relationship between language and power is crucial. The politics of language refers to how language is used and manipulated in various political contexts to enjoy support, shape public opinion, and influence social and cultural dynamics (William, 2018). Language is a powerful tool that can be employed to promote specific ideologies, legitimise political agenda, marginalise or empower certain groups, and control narratives. Language is intricately tied to power dynamics (van Dijk, 2004). Those who control the dominant language often have a significant advantage in shaping public discourse and the narrative. Governments, political parties, and institutions may use language to maintain authority, suppress dissent, or legitimise their actions (Fairclough, 2015).

Language can also be a powerful tool for resistance and social change. Activists, social movements, and marginalised communities often reclaim and redefine language to challenge existing power structures, advocate for their rights, and create alternative narratives. Language can foster solidarity, challenge oppressive norms, and empower marginalised voices. The politics of language highlights how language is intertwined with power, discrimination, and social change (Obeng, 1997).

1.3 Persuasion

Persuasion is “the deliberate attempt to modify thought and action by manipulating the motives of men toward predetermined ends.” (Brembeck and Howell, 1976:24). The ability of language to influence people means that it may both support and challenge authority. However, while language communicates dominance, it also undermines it. Politicians can utilise language to their advantage in both negative and positive ways. However, Thompson et al. (2005) thought that the more words a statement has, the less impact it will have.

Persuasive communications do not always influence target audiences, but persuasion does involve a deliberate attempt to influence another person. Persuaders intend to change another individual's attitude or behaviour. This means that persuasion represents a conscious attempt to influence the other party and an accompanying awareness that the persuader has a mental state susceptible to change (Hart et al., 2017).

In political persuasion, the ebbs and flows of public opinion matter. In the broadest sense, a claimant must persuade the majority to adopt his point of view to operate as a motivating force against the opposition. However, many subscribe to the argument that it is not the political leaders who can manipulate opinion (Dunmire, 2012). Still, the media has the most sweeping effect on how political messages resonate with the citizenry. Political language differs from other languages because it serves a particular goal to influence the decision of the audience

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This paper hinges on the theory of Rhetoric.

2.1.1 The Theory of Rhetoric

The study of how language and other types of communication can persuade is referred to as rhetoric; it entails examining how language is used to convey meaning, shape social and cultural norms, and affect people's beliefs and behaviour. Rhetoric emanates from the study of how a speaker or writer could achieve his aim and the linguistic devices that could be employed for the purpose (Malmkjær, 2005). It could be described as the means through which the author controls his readers (Booth, 1961). The earliest Greek scholars thought the art of rhetoric as the ability “to structure speeches logically and deliver persuasively” (Burke, 2014: 17). The art gave a voice to the oppressed to logically claim their possession in the presence of juries. Style and emotional appeal were the strategic tactics employed by the rhetoricians then. Plato was of the opinion that rhetoric should not be based on emotional appeal but logic, ethics and truth. He believed that the three concepts strengthen an argument more than just emotional appeal. Isocrates, in the fourth century BC, presented a new view different from that of Plato on rhetoric. He was of the opinion that “real rhetoric involves not just logic and reason, but emotion and style as well” (Burke, 2014: 18). He concluded that reason and emotion are interconnected; likewise, content and style are inseparable. These are essential tenets of rhetoric. Since then, rhetoric has been thought as art of persuasion in politics, religion, law and other spheres of life.

Aristotle has a great influence on rhetoric through his texts. *Rhetoric* in which he developed his theory of prose style, and *Poetics* which contains poetic style. He built his text on the achievements of the earlier scholars on effective of language for persuasive purpose. One of his focal points in his text is that he is of the opinion that it is not sufficient for a speaker to know what to say but how to present it in a way that would influence the decision of the audience. He defines rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever” (Malmkjær, 2005: 450). It shows that the art of persuasion is applicable to different fields of study, especially where language is a tool of expression. He proposes three proofs of rhetoric which are pathos, ethos and logos. These

three concepts are crucial in textual analysis of various appeals in a speech. The appeals help to influence the audience decision. The three concepts are modes of appeal: pathos is emotional appeal; ethos is ethical appeal while logos is rational appeal.

2.1.1 Pathos

Pathos deals primarily with how language and performance are used in order to trigger emotions and control the mind of the audience. Pathos is perceived to be more effective than other persuasive appeals. Language is employed to influence the audience emotion to reason the speaker who intends to manipulate them to believe his view and support his argument. Emotional appeal is crucial in political discourse to achieve the political actor's intention. It is one of the strategies employed by political leaders to stabilise society and control action of the citizens (Burke, 2014).

2.1.2 Ethos

Ethos is concerned with the character of the speaker and an ethical appeal. The appeal is made based on his integrity, attitude, behaviour, moral standard, especially how the audience view him and believe in his capacity to influence them. Ethical appeal shows how a speaker earns respect of the audience based on how he relates to them, identifies with their suffering and challenges, let them realise that he is with them in the struggle. The appeal is made relying on the ethical value of the audience.

2.1.3 Logos

Logos is a logical appeal based on rationality of a text. It focuses on logic of a text to prove whether the text coherent presents the argument (Sobola, 2013) in a way that appeals to reason through arrangement of sentences, clauses and phrases. It is also concerned with how length, type and complexity of text used to construct an argument are able to prove its validity. It is a rational appeal that shows the integrity and honesty of an argument by pointing out how it appeals to the reasoning of the audience (Burke, 2014). It is based on superior argument and rationality.

2.1.4 Schemes and Tropes

Schemes involve grammatical choice, and their syntax can be analysed for patterns such as repetition or word order reversal. In contrast, tropes involve the choice of lexis and can be analysed through lexical semantics for features such as polysemy (multiple meanings) (Lazar, 2003). Both schemes and tropes influence 'meaning' and contribute to the persuasive effect, but schemes originate in syntactic patterning, whereas tropes originate in lexical semantics. An interaction between tropes and schemes often characterises middle and higher styles; this is effective as it combines the resources of lexical semantics and syntax.

On the linguistic level of sound (phonology), figurative elements, such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, or onomatopoeia, is situated. For example, they were repeating the initial consonant sound of a word (alliteration). Figurative expressions may also work on a meaning level of language (semantics), as with euphemisms, metaphors, metonymies, personifications, and many more. Many more types of figurative elements are also located on other linguistic levels, such as morphology (anaphora, anadiplosis, archaism, epiphora) and syntax (ellipsis, parallelism, chiasmus, asyndeton, polysyndeton) (Gluckberg, 2001).

3.1 Methodology

The data for this study are derived from two presidential addresses/speeches by President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria. The qualitative and descriptive research method is employed in processing and analysis of data in this study. Electronic media serve as the source of data, and the data were gathered from two different platforms; the Twitter address was collected from the president's Twitter profile, and the EndSARS speech was gathered from The Punch

news site. Both retrieved speeches have been transcribed and numbered vertically for easy reference during analysis. The Twitter Address has 12 sentences while the EndSARS speech has 44 sentences to be used as data for analysis. The contents of the speeches that reflect the strategies and appeals of the Aristotelian model (pathos, ethos and logos) were selected to be studied to show the persuasive techniques utilised in them. Textual data analysis method is applied on selected sentences of the speeches with specific attention to how rhetorical appeals are used in both addresses.

4.1 Data Analysis

The three concepts of Aristotle's theory of rhetoric – pathos, ethos and logos - are used to identify the persuasive strategies in the selected speeches. In this segment, the extracted data with rhetorical underpinnings are presented alongside the analysis below.

The Endsars Speech of 20th October 2020.

4.1.1 Pathos

Pathos is the persuasive attempt to appeal to the emotions of the audience. This is demonstrated in the text below.

Text 1

"19. But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence."

"21. In the circumstances...and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy.

22. For you to do otherwise will amount to undermining national security...Under no circumstances will this be tolerated."

"24. And I... enjoin security agencies to protect lives and properties of all law-abiding citizens without doing harm to those they are meant to protect."

26. This government respects... all the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, but it will not allow anybody or groups to disrupt the peace of our nation.

In line 19, the speaker quote connotes that only those not considered destructive/disorderly will enjoy the right to protection from law enforcement agents ***as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence."***

In line 21, the speaker implies that protesters are trying to destroy Nigerian democracy and are being used by subversive elements because they exercise the constitutional right to protest. He further goes on in line 22 by subtly threatening the protesters to cease all protests as it threatens national security, and the line ends with the euphemistic threat of violence ***under no circumstances will this be tolerated.***

In line 24, like in line 19, the speaker reiterates that only citizens considered worthy (trouble-free) will enjoy the right to protection from law enforcement agents while subtly implying that difficult people can and will get the brunt of the police's force.

In line 26, with a thinly veiled threat (using connotation), the speaker implies that the protesters aim to disrupt the peace of the nation rather than the constitutional right they are exploiting. All of the lines above have, in one way or the other, been aimed at influencing the masses, be it the protesters or other citizens going about their business.

Text 2

"7. The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked, and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated. So-called protesters have

invaded an International Airport and, in the process, disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors.

8. *All these executed in the name of the ENDSARS protests. I am indeed deeply pained those innocent lives have been lost. These tragedies are uncalled for and unnecessary. Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country."*

"9. *The spreading of deliberate falsehood and misinformation through the social media in particular, that this government is oblivious to the pains and plight of its citizens is a ploy to mislead the unwary within and outside Nigeria into unfair judgement and disruptive behaviour".*

20. *To our neighbours in particular, and members of the international community, many of whom have expressed concern about the ongoing development in Nigeria, we thank you and urge you all to seek to know all the facts available before taking a position or rushing to judgment and making hasty pronouncements."*

Metaphors are one of the major rhetorical devices, and the speaker avidly adopts them in the above lines in different forms. The first is the empathetic metaphor whose goal is to arouse the audience's empathy in ***I am indeed deeply pained those innocent lives have been lost.*** Then he goes on to outline the sad/negative occurrences since the beginning of the civil action, thus using a predicative metaphor to appeal to the patriotic nature of other Nigerians by thinly labelling the protesting Nigerians as disruptive and destructive ***So-called protesters have...disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors.***

He continues this diatribe by implying that this destructive behaviour was in the name of the protests before backtracking by suggesting that these violent activities had nothing to do with the protest ***Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country.***

He uses a third, an ideological metaphor, to offer a worldview, here the speaker states that the portrayal of the protests is filled with misinformation and falsehood. He delicately implores the world to disregard these falsehoods so that they (the world) do not make unfair judgments about the government. He continues in line 20 by expressing gratitude to world leaders who gave the Nigerian government the benefit of the doubt - ***To our neighbours ...members of the international community... we thank you...***

Text 3

"1. *I must warn those who have hijacked and misdirected the initial, genuine and well – intended protest of some of our youths in parts of the country, **against the excesses of some members** of the now disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).*

2.... *I acknowledged the genuine concerns and agitations of members of the public regarding **the excessive use of force** by some members of SARS."*

Paradiastole/whitewashing is one of the most frowned-upon devices used in persuasion. It can be regarded as a form of euphemism and is the rhetorical redescription of a situation customarily considered to be a vice in a positive or neutral light. In lines 1 and 2, the speaker whitewashes the misdemeanour of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) by classifying it as **excesses/excessive use of force** when SARS has notoriously and infamously been carrying out extrajudicial killings, kidnappings, and extortions. In the same vein, he implies that the protests are unlawful.

Ethos

A speaker's ethos is characterised by what attitude of the speaker can be revealed in speech or the speaker's choice of words. In addition, ethos entails the speaker's credibility as they become trustworthy when the speaker has swayed the audience.

Text 1

*"24. And **I call on all Nigerians** to go about their normal businesses and enjoin security agencies to protect lives and properties of **all law-abiding citizens** without doing harm to those they are meant to protect..."*

25. I would like to thank those state Governors, traditional and religious leaders who have appealed for calm and restraint. I also thank youth leaders who have restrained their followers from taking the law into their hands.

The speaker implores the protesters to stop protesting by virtue of his office: he uses inclusive language for this **I call on all Nigerians** and then uses exclusive language **law-abiding citizens** to describe everyone but the protesters insinuating that the security agencies should not do harm to those they are meant to protect in the name of law-abiding Nigerians. In line 25 with **state Governors, traditional and religious leaders who have appealed for calm and restraint**, the speaker segregates the governors and leaders that helped keep peace from those he believed fuelled discord in the society by seemingly using the protesters.

Text 2

1. "I must warn those who have hijacked..."

2. On Monday 12th October, I acknowledged the genuine concerns

4. As a democratic government, we listened to...we immediately scrapped SARS

5. On approving the termination of SARS, I already made it clear...

17. We will continue to improve good governance and our democratic process, including through sustained engagement.

18. We shall continue to ensure that liberty and freedom, as well as the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected.

In all the lines above, the president creates a sense of belonging, oneness, and collaboration through the ample use of first person pronouns – **I, we** first to convince the audience of his dedication to them and second to portray the speaker's authority as the president of the federation thereby contributing to his ethos.

Text 3

"5. On approving the termination of SARS, I already made it clear that it was in line with our commitment to the implementation of extensive Police reforms."

The speaker possesses the highest political power of a sovereign democratic state (by being the president) and flexes this power in his speech and actions. His speech is riddled with the first person pronoun, 'I,' and the activities described in his speech portray the extent of his authority. But despite his power, affected citizens seemed to not believe him. Instead, they continued the protests that should have ended after his proclamations. This seeming lack of regard for the president was borne out of a distrust for a government that has repeatedly disappointed the masses, especially in police brutality. And as such, he must reiterate his orders and make subtle threats to enforce obedience.

Text 4

9. The spreading of deliberate falsehood and misinformation through the social media in particular, that this government is oblivious to the pains and plight of its citizens is a ploy to mislead the unwary within and outside Nigeria into unfair judgement and disruptive behaviour.

19. *But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence.*

Parallelism is a figure of speech in which one element (for example, sound or word) or a broader structure (phrase, sentence) has the same grammatical structure with another element. In line 9, the speaker condemns the spread of falsehood by juxtaposing it with the consequences of such misconceptions on the nation and the people circulating them. While in line 19, the speaker juxtaposes the obligation of the government, the citizens, and the law enforcement agents, delivering subtle threats to the objects of the speech.

Text 5

7. *The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated. **So-called protesters** have invaded an International Airport and, in the process, disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors.*

8. *All these executed **in the name of the ENDSARS protests** ...*

21. *In the circumstances, I would like to appeal to protesters to note and take advantage of the various well-thought-out initiatives of this administration **designed to make their lives better and more meaningful and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy.***

Doing down (the opposite of whitewashing) involves the condescending use of words to describe an opposing entity. In both quotes above, the speaker downplays the struggles of the protesters by attaching violence to the cause and then condescendingly referring to them as **so-called protesters**. While in line 21, the speaker downplays the struggles of the protesters by condescendingly referring to them as jobless people that allow themselves to be used by subversive elements to cause chaos "**designed to make their lives better and more meaningful and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos.**" He then blames them for their predicament by implying that initiatives that can prove helpful to them are being ignored in favour of "**truncating our nascent democracy.**"

Text 6

6. *Sadly, the promptness with which we have acted **seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness** and twisted by some for their selfish unpatriotic interests.*

7. *The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked, and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated. **So-called protesters** have invaded an International Airport and, in the process, disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors.*

8. *All these executed in the name of the ENDSARS protests. I am indeed deeply pained those innocent lives have been lost. These tragedies are uncalled for and unnecessary. Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country.*

9. *But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence.*

In this line, *seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness*, there is a sly appeal to fear, patriotism, and the need to protect family. He slyly appeals to the listeners' by implying that the government is not weak- *seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness*. The appeal to patriotism is to some members of the opposing side; the speaker frames the speech astutely so that the opposite side loses support with the idea that the protest struggles have been lost.

4.1.3 Logos

Logic is another central part of rhetoric. Logos is the appeal to an argument based on reason and logic. In trying to convince a listener, the speaker uses facts, reason, and argument. Logos, the appeal to arguments based on reason, was the second of the artistic proofs. Logos means to convince an audience using logic or reason.

Text 1

7. *The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked, and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated. So-called protesters have invaded an International Airport and, in the process, disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors.*

8. *All these executed in the name of the ENDSARS protests. I am indeed deeply pained that innocent lives have been lost. These tragedies are uncalled for and unnecessary. Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country.*

While the statements above can be seen as an attempt to influence how the protest is perceived by the speaker as terrible happenings, still, logos has to do with the fact. All the occurrences listed in the text are factual occurrences that took place during the civil action, whether or not they were directly due to the protest or just a side effect of the civil action. Also, the closing remarks about the government's responsibility is also a completely logical factual statement.

Text 2

"10. *On the contrary, both our deeds and words have shown how committed this administration has been to the wellbeing and welfare of citizens, even with the steadily dwindling revenues, and the added responsibilities and restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic.*"

11. *Government has put in place measures and initiatives principally targeted at youths, women, and the most vulnerable groups in our society.*

21. *In the circumstances, I would like to appeal to protesters to note and take advantage of the various **well-thought-out initiatives of this administration** designed to make their lives better and more meaningful and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy.*

The Red Herring Fallacy is also known as misdirection or smokescreen attempts to change the subject by shifting the audience's focus from the real issue to one in which the speaker feels more confident. In line 10, the speaker deflects from addressing the protesters' issues but goes on to pitch the issue of police brutality with dwindling revenues and the covid 19 pandemic. This comparison was made to diminish the fight against police brutality.

Once again, in lines 11 and 21, the speaker slyly deflects from the issue of police brutality at hand and instead makes references to economic measures he and his administration have put in place for everyone but the protesters. He then implies that the protesters have no real reason to be protesting because everything they need has been put in place with the *well-*

thought-out initiatives of this administration. The speaker creates false equivalences between police brutality and economic advancement to diminish the issue of police brutality. And while all the above rings true, the fact that all of the things stated above by the president were put in place is also a fact.

Text 3

9. *The spreading of deliberate falsehood and misinformation through the social media in particular, that this government is oblivious to the pains and plight of its citizens is a ploy to mislead the unwary within and outside Nigeria into unfair judgement and disruptive behaviour.*

10. *On the contrary, both our deeds and words have shown how committed this administration has been to the wellbeing and welfare of citizens, even with the steadily dwindling revenues, and the added responsibilities and restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic.*

11. *No Nigerian Government in the past has methodically has seriously approached poverty-alleviation like we have done.*

The speaker contrasts the news (that he considers falsehoods) spread to the world and the supposed measures the administration has taken. In these lines, it is apparent that it is a political contrast where the speaker is more worried about how the administration is being perceived by the rest of the world rather than how he should be perceived by the people that matter the most and the people he even owes something to- the citizens.

A historical contrast is made in line 13, where the speaker contrasts his administration with past administrations, boasting about his administration firmly being against poverty.

Text 4

9. *The spreading of deliberate falsehood and misinformation through the social media in particular, that this government is oblivious to the pains and plight of its citizens is a ploy to mislead the unwary within and outside Nigeria into unfair judgement and disruptive behaviour.*

Passing over (occultation) is a ploy to pretend not to mention what is being said. In the above line, the speaker suggestively links the spread of perceived falsehoods to the protesters without directly mentioning it.

Text 5

5. *On approving the termination of SARS, I already made it clear that it was **in line with our commitment to the implementation of extensive Police reforms.***

16. *Let me at this point reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to preserving the unity of this country.*

17. *We will continue to improve good governance and our democratic process, including through sustained engagement.*

18. *We shall continue to ensure that liberty and freedom, as well as the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected.*

The speaker repeats the same point in different ways, using different strategies to convey his point. In line 5, he posits that SARS will be scrapped **in line with our commitment to the implementation of extensive Police reforms.** While he gave the go-ahead for SARS to be scrapped, it was not following the protesters' demands, as he subtly implied that SARS would be rebranded. Furthermore, in line 16, he alludes to the protesters wanting to divide the country. He suggestively reiterates that SARS will be rebranded and that the protesters have no real reason to protest.

In lines 17 – 18, he reiterates that the government is working hard towards making the country's democracy intact and dependable, but in line 18, he promises to ensure freedom and

liberty and seems to be doing the opposite by decisively shutting down the protests using different approaches and also by whitewashing the offending body – SARS, the fundamental rights he claims he wants to protect are not being protected due to the threat of SARS.

4.2 Discussion

This study engaged in the rhetorical analysis of persuasive strategies in President Muhammadu Buhari's presidential speeches. The selected speeches have several rhetorical appeals to explain persuasive strategies in the EndSARS speech and the Twitter Address. Twenty-three (23) texts (across both speeches) were analysed and classified under pathos, ethos, and logos, expatiating on persuasive strategies used to construct meaning on the situation at hand.

The pathos of the first speech was focused on the president bringing to the fore attacks on the nation's infrastructures and the government's corresponding warning against and methods of curbing these attacks. The ethos is dedicated to the president's decisive and critical manner of presenting the issues in the ethos while simultaneously flexing his authority and office. The logos then have the president making a factual account of the occurrences (in the speech) while making contrasts in some affected areas. Speech one majorly utilised pathos with the analysis of 6 texts, followed closely by ethos with 2 texts and logos with 1 text.

Speech two's pathos involves the president juxtaposing the negatives of the protests with the supposed measures the government has put in place to curb the excesses of civil action whilst trying to meet the demands of the protests. Ethos involves enjoining the Nigerians not involved in the protests to be assured that their interests will be protected while thinly threatening the protesters. Logos then consists of the president factually presenting data on some of the occurrences and the related activities. Speech two majorly utilised ethos by analysing 6 texts, followed closely by logos with 5 texts and pathos with 2 texts.

This inquiry has thus confirmed the assumption that political language can frame realities according to the speaker's whims. The study shows that using power as a strategy for domination is mainly achieved through flowery language, allowing the speaker to impose his opinion on others.

The analysis of figurative language shows that the president communicated via rhetorical means called figurative language to a different extent. The persuasive elements were easily recognised in the text, and symbolic meaning was understood as a compelling element of political thinking. He handled the process of using these persuasive devices to the maximum by intensifying his opinions on the issues, goading the audience into changing their attitudes towards the problems and, in the same vein, managed to de-legitimise some political entities and legitimise their goals. He utilises another way – facts to support his logical appeal and provoke unconscious emotional associations in the listeners.

Politicians use figurative expressions as persuasive strategies because, with the help of figurative language, they can interpret the current political situation. Figurative expressions like metaphors intensify their opinions and change the audience's attitude. Politicians can hide, uncover, or even highlight problems or speak about sensitive issues with this persuasive strategy. It is the task of the audience to understand the arguments of the politicians as well as the politicians' appeal to the audience in a way that the listeners can understand and identify the target referent and accept it.

Their persuasive strategies were analysed regarding logos, ethos and pathos, and their persuasive potential was discussed in every part of the analysis. President Muhammadu

Buhari refers to other sources with high intention, and he finds the sources for his arguments in judicial, political, historical, and literary documents, including some factual statistics.

4.3 Findings

The following are the findings of the study.

4.3.1 The linguistic elements in the presidential addresses

The research reveals the creative use of certain lexical and literary elements as potent weapons to persuade citizens to support the candidate's ideologies. The use of pronouns, inclusive and exclusive language, short sentences, salutations, emotive language, framing, analogy, generalisation, appeal, metaphor, parallelism, figurative language, connotation, repetition, allusions are all evidence of the choices made by the speaker. The speaker has subtly projected his image and political programmes through these lexical and symbolic elements.

4.3.2 The persuasive features of the presidential addresses

The persuasive features used in the speeches are broadly categorised into the three Aristotelian appeals – pathos, ethos, and logos with the appeal to pathos (audience's emotional state) being the most used, ethos (speaker's credibility) and logic (logical arguments) being the least used in the two speeches.

The speeches used the appeal to ethos to enforce the president's authority and appeal to logos to state facts and evidence to support their arguments. However, pathos is the most used in both speeches bearing credence to the speaker's need to appeal to listeners' sensibilities rather than upholding his authority through ethos or factual arguments through logos. Using the above linguistic patterns categorised into pathos, ethos and logos, the study shows that the use of language as a strategy for domination is mainly achieved through these devices, which allow the speaker to impose his opinion on others, chart a common front with the audience with the allusion to several emotional pieces and awaken that shared sensibility which will align the listeners with the projections of the speaker. Of the three strategies, it could be observed that pathos and logos strategies were the most employed by Buhari in his speeches.

4.3.3 The roles of persuasion in presidential addresses

Overall, the result of this study shows that persuasive strategies based on Aristotle's theory (400 B.C.) are applied in Buhari's political speeches. The three appeals of persuasive strategies (pathos, logos, and ethos) are equally essential to persuade the audience in political speeches. First, the use of the plural personal pronouns, *we*, *our* and *us* (inclusive/exclusive language), whenever it has nothing to do with the personal decision or life of the speaker, is endearing to the listener and allows them to identify with the citizens/listeners and a swift change to singular personal pronouns *I* and *me* depicts a strong will power allowing them to play down on their authority and, thus, give room for no imposition. Moreover, the effect of "our" and "us" is casually treating the unequal power relation between the speakers and the listeners. At the same time, the succinctness of the short sentences is used to foster authority. Moreover, ethos is used as an instrument of personality projection, self-promotion or what van Dijk calls a self-glorification strategy (van Dijk: 2004). The purpose is to win the support of the populace. The study shows the subtle glorification of self in speech one, where the speaker subtly alludes to being law-abiding. He also usually used the ethos strategy in his speeches by showing the reputation of his office.

The speaker also appeals to logic/reason (logos), and this strategy is mainly used through examples, factual data, statistics (a reference to economic initiatives) and informed opinion

(references to army chiefs, security heads, INEC), as evident in both speeches. With logos, the speaker uses allusions and analogies to past or current actualities, and his references via statistics and figures support his political programme ideas.

He used the pathos strategy frequently through the crafty framing of his words, sentences, and phrases. Persuasion is deployed as a strategy of negative representation by enacting lexical items with negative expressive values. The choice of words or expressions with negative connotations is an attempt by the speaker to present the "other" party in a negative light, deface them and make them unpopular. In this case, the candidate goes the extra mile to attack the personality of the individuals protesting (speech 2) and the ones seeking for self-actualisation (speech 1).

Power could be enacted by controlling other people's mental models or social representation using persuasion, coercion or information. With pathos, there is the intention to control and influence the audience's emotions, like the need to invoke fear-induced respect with the subtle use of threats in speech 1, calm tensions from the protests and appeal for understanding in speech two while simultaneously asserting authority with the help of analogy, allusions. In both speeches, salutations constitute a significant factor in the lifestyle of Nigerians. The speaker skilfully uses it in opening speech 2, and the lack of use in speech 1 reflects his authoritarian state in speech 1. Furthermore, they are rousing the audience's emotions and giving examples and factual data to persuade them to change their belief about laying siege to government agencies in the east (speech 1), discontinuing the protest, and engaging in dialogue with the government (speech 2). Salvaging international relations, renewing trust in the administration, and encouraging peace and unity are other roles played by pathos alongside other persuasive strategies in this study.

5.1 Conclusion

The study investigates President Muhammadu Buhari's presidential speeches using a rhetorical analysis. The focus is on persuasive strategies involving three classical rhetoric Aristotelian concepts logos, ethos, and pathos. The study has portrayed the use of rhetorical strategies for persuasive purposes in the political field, and how political actors take advantage of linguistic and figurative elements to appeal to the reasoning of the citizenry. These elements are used as persuasive tools to coax the audience to accept their sentiment and share their sympathy. Rhetorical concepts of pathos, ethos and logos are employed to reveal how President Buhari used his addresses to handle the burning crisis in the nation by condemning the violent act perpetrated by the protesters and seeking a peaceful resolution through dialogue. Political speeches and addresses used in handling national crises and social unrest have rhetorical strategies used for persuasive purposes inherent in them. This approach, however, creates effective communication between the president and the citizens because the silence of the president during a pandemonium in a country can exacerbate the situation. A timely and persuasive speech or address can curb violence in a country.

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Appendix

TWITTER ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE NATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE NATIONWIDE – June 1st, 2021.

I receive daily security reports on the attacks on critical national infrastructure, and it is very clear that those behind them want this administration to fail. Whoever wants the destruction of the system will soon have the shock of their lives.

We've given them enough time.

I received a briefing today from the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), on the series of attacks on their facilities nationwide. These attacks are totally unacceptable, and we will not allow those behind them to achieve their evil objectives. I have assured INEC that we will make available to them everything they need to operate efficiently, so that no one will say we don't want to go, or that we want a third term. There will be no excuse for failure. We will meet all of INEC's demands.

In the area of security, we have changed the Service Chiefs and the Inspector-General, and we are demanding that they rise fully to the challenges confronting us. There must be zero tolerance for all those bent on destroying our country by promoting crime and insurrection!

Many of those misbehaving today are too young to be aware of the destruction and loss of lives that occurred during the Nigerian Civil War. Those of us in the fields for 30 months, who went through the war, will treat them in the language they understand.

ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MUHAMMADU BUHARI, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON THE ENDSARS PROTESTS, 22ND OCTOBER 2020

Fellow Nigerians,

It has become necessary for me to address you having heard from many concerned Nigerians and having concluded a meeting with all the Security Chiefs.

1. I must warn those who have hijacked and misdirected the initial, genuine and well – intended protest of some of our youths in parts of the country, against the excesses of some members of the now disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS).
2. On Monday 12th October, I acknowledged the genuine concerns and agitations of members of the public regarding the excessive use of force by some members of SARS.
3. The choice to demonstrate peacefully is a fundamental right of citizens as enshrined in Section 40 of our Constitution and other enactments; but this right to protest also imposes on the demonstrators the responsibility to respect the rights of other citizens, and the necessity to operate within the law.
4. As a democratic government, we listened to, and carefully evaluated the five-point demands of the protesters. And, having accepted them, we immediately scrapped SARS, and put measures in place to address the other demands of our youth.
5. On approving the termination of SARS, I already made it clear that it was in line with our commitment to the implementation of extensive Police reforms.
6. Sadly, the promptness with which we have acted seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness and twisted by some for their selfish unpatriotic interests.
7. The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated. So-called protesters have invaded an International Airport and, in the process, disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors.

8. All these executed in the name of the ENDSARS protests. I am indeed deeply pained that innocent lives have been lost. These tragedies are uncalled for and unnecessary. Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country.

9. The spreading of deliberate falsehood and misinformation through the social media in particular, that this government is oblivious to the pains and plight of its citizens is a ploy to mislead the unwary within and outside Nigeria into unfair judgement and disruptive behaviour.

10. On the contrary, both our deeds and words have shown how committed this administration has been to the wellbeing and welfare of citizens, even with the steadily dwindling revenues, and the added responsibilities and restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

11. Government has put in place measures and initiatives principally targeted at youths, women and the most vulnerable groups in our society. These included our broad plan to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in the next 10 years; the creation of N75 billion National Youth Investment Fund to provide opportunities for the youths and the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Survival Fund, through which government is:

- a. paying three months salaries of the staff of 100,000 micro, small – and medium – enterprises,
- b. paying for the registration of 250,000 businesses at the Corporate Affairs Commission,
- c. giving a grant of N30,000 to 100,000 artisans; and
- d. guaranteeing market for the products of traders.

12. These are in addition to many other initiatives such as;

- a. Farmermoni,
- b. Tradermoni,
- c. Marketmoni,
- d. N-Power,
- e. N-Tech and
- f. N-Agro.

13. No Nigerian Government in the past has methodically and seriously approached poverty alleviation like we have done.

14. With regard to the welfare of police personnel, the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission has been directed to expedite action on the finalization of the new salary structure of members of the Nigeria Police Force. The emoluments of other paramilitary services are also being reviewed upwards.

15. In order to underscore the importance of education in preparing youths for the future, this administration has come up with a new salary structure and other incentives for our teachers.

16. Let me at this point reaffirm the Federal Government's commitment to preserving the unity of this country.

17. We will continue to improve good governance and our democratic process, including through sustained engagement.

18. We shall continue to ensure that liberty and freedom, as well as the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected.

19. But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence.

20. To our neighbours in particular, and members of the international community, many of whom have expressed concern about the ongoing development in Nigeria, we thank you and

urge you all to seek to know all the facts available before taking a position or rushing to judgment and making hasty pronouncements.

21. In the circumstances, I would like to appeal to protesters to note and take advantage of the various well-thought-out initiatives of this administration designed to make their lives better and more meaningful and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy.

22. For you to do otherwise will amount to undermining national security and the law-and-order situation. Under no circumstances will this be tolerated.

23. I therefore call on our youths to discontinue the street protests and constructively engage government in finding solutions. Your voice has been heard loud and clear and we are responding.

24. And I call on all Nigerians to go about their normal businesses and enjoin security agencies to protect lives and properties of all law-abiding citizens without doing harm to those they are meant to protect. Let me pay tribute to officers of the Nigeria Police Force who have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty.

25. I would like to thank those state Governors, traditional and religious leaders who have appealed for calm and restraint. I also thank youth leaders who have restrained their followers from taking the law into their hands.

26. This government respects and will continue to respect all the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, but it will not allow anybody or groups to disrupt the peace of our nation.

Thank you all. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

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