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Rhetoric in Selected Speeches of Obafemi Awolowo and Moshood Abiola

Alaba Akinwotu
Adekunle Ajasin University

Abstract

A number of extant studies have examined political rhetoric and propaganda. None of them, however, has explicitly examined the deployment of rhetoric by notable Nigerian political figures as representatives of different epochs in Nigeria's political history. This paper investigates the communicative intentions and persuasive techniques employed in selected political speeches of Obafemi Awolowo and Moshood Abiola, two past political figures in Nigeria political history. It examines the deployment of political rhetoric in communicating intentions in the selected speeches with the view to examine the persuasiveness of the speeches and the influence of the speakers' intentions on rhetorical choices. The study is driven by Aristotle's theory of rhetoric. Findings reveal that the selected speeches are not only highly persuasive but they also employed two types of rhetoric, combat and tact. While tact is achieved through the use of ethos, pathos, logos, and structural parallelism to boost the self-image of the speakers, combat rhetoric is achieved through metaphor and linguistic elements with negative semantic connotations, direct command, and intertextual references that register the speaker's aversion to an idea or event. Tact rhetoric is prominent mostly in pre-election speeches such as acceptance and campaign speeches while combat rhetoric is exclusive to post-election speeches which are more of protests/complaints. The paper concludes that Awolowo and Abiola's choice of rhetorical strategies

Alaba Akinwotu, PhD.
Department of English Studies
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria
Phone: +234 803 361 2528; E-mail: samuelakinwotu@gmail.com

is influenced by their communicative intentions, as the duo achieved the communicative import of persuasion in their speeches through effective deployment of rhetorical tools in their bid to inform, request, educate, commend, and condemn, as the case may be.

Keywords: Political speeches; rhetoric; tact; communicative intention.

1. Introduction

The period of election is always an interesting period due to the various activities involved. During electioneering process, political contestants compete for available offices and, as part of the process of engagement, they are required to deliver speeches at different fora before and after election. As a matter of fact, speech making is a vital aspect of electioneering process where politicians are expected to announce their political manifestos to the electorate and convince them to agree with them. This is the situation in Nigeria where it has been observed that the language of political discourse (including speeches, manifestos and other political texts) is primarily intended to gain political and interactional advantage over opponents (Obeng 1997) and it is often imbued with rhetorical and figurative use of language (Yusuf 2003). In all of these, the deployment of political rhetoric as instrument of persuasion has been very significant. De Wet (2010:103) observes that “politicians rise to power mainly because they can talk persuasively to voters and political elites”. Hence, Beard (2000:2) contends that the importance of studying the language of politics lies in the fact that it helps us to “understand how language is used by those who wish to gain power, those who wish to exercise power and those who wish to keep power”.

A number of extant studies have examined political rhetoric and propaganda. Ezejideaku and Ugwu (2007) investigate political rhetoric and propaganda and posit that political campaign speeches are means by which politicians acquaint prospective voters with their individual and party's programmes and they are usually delivered with the intent of persuading the voters to accept their views or positions.

Ayeomoni (2005) attempts a linguistic-stylistic investigation of the language of the Nigerian political leaders. The study reveals that the use of comma and full stop are stylistic devices identifiable with the administrative style of the military which relate to briskness and military fiat, frankness, fearlessness and boldness. Adetunji (2009) studies the inaugural addresses of Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo and America's President George Bush. The paper affirms that two speeches may belong to the same discourse genre and be contextually proximate, yet may have divergent illocutionary force and rhetorical elements. Taiwo (2010) examines the use of metaphors in selected Nigerian political discourses. The paper which examines how politicians realize their political goals and aspirations through the deployment of metaphors observes that metaphors play a central role in public discourse as they help to shape the structure of political categorisation and argumentation which is instantiated through conceptual mappings.

Most recent studies include Eromesele (2012) which looked at speech act types in the inaugural speech of President Goodluck Jonathan. The study observes that the former President relied more on sentences that performed commissive acts than other speech act types in his inaugural speech. Emeka-Nwobia (2015) focuses on how former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo utilised religious language in his speeches of 29th May 1999 and 2003. The study which examines the role of religion as a persuasive strategy in political communication concludes that Obasanjo deploys religious references to unite Nigerians of diverse beliefs and values. None of these studies has explicitly examined the deployment of rhetoric by notable Nigerian political figures as representatives of different epochs in Nigeria's political history. This is a gap that this study aims to fill by exploring the rhetorical strategies in selected speeches of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Moshood Abiola.

Awolowo and Abiola are two important political figures from South-west Nigeria whose political activities have continued to exert influence on the political history of Nigeria despite their experiences with regard to their inability to realise their ultimate ambition of ruling Nigeria. Although, the political

speeches of these two prominent figures have been widely studied, their deployment of rhetoric vide their communicative intentions with its attendant potentiality of revealing how much the country has been able to surmount some of the socio-political problems hindering its development is yet to be explored. The intention of this study is to fill this appreciable gap by illuminating their choices of rhetorical strategies and how such were influenced by communicative intentions.

2. The Political Context of the Data

The political entity called Nigeria was administered by successive British colonial administrations until October 1, 1960 when she became an independent nation with late Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe becoming the first indigenous Governor-General. Also, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa were elected President and prime Minister respectively, under the Republican constitution on October 1st 1963. Unfortunately, the government was not allowed to run full length, as it was terminated by a coup d'état on January 15th, 1966. Many government officials including Tafawa Balewa, Sir Ahmadu Bello (Premier of Northern Region), Chief Okotie-Eboh (Federal Finance Minister) lost their lives in this bloody coup that brought to power the first military regime led by Major General Thomas Aguiyi-Ironsi. Aguiyi-Ironsi's regime was subsequently overthrown in a counter coup on July 31, 1966 by his army Chief-of-Staff, Lt. Col (later Gen.) Yakubu Gowon who attempted to restore sanity and discipline in the rank and file of the army. He was the first to appoint military governors for each region.

One major incident of great importance during this period in the history of Nigerian politics, which is highly relevant to this study, is the Nigerian civil war. The war broke out on May 30, 1967, following the announcement of the secession of the then Eastern Region and the proclamation of a new Independent Republic of Biafra by the then military governor of the Eastern region, Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. The war lasted for three years resulting in the untimely death of many Nigerians. The government of

Yakubu Gowon which lasted for nine years was toppled by General Muritala Mohammed in a coup d'état on July 25, 1975. General Olusegun Obasanjo became the fourth Military Head of State of Nigeria on February 13, 1976 after a failed coup led by Lt. Col. Dimka in which General Muritala Mohammed was assassinated. Obasanjo handed over power to a democratically-elected government headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari on October 1, 1979. This marked the beginning of the Second Republic.

The political activities which were prelude to the Second Republic in 1979 involved five registered political parties which presented candidates for elective positions. These include:

1. Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo
2. National Party of Nigeria (NPN) led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari
3. Nigerian People's Party (NPP) led by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe
4. Great Nigerian People's Party (GNPP) led by Alhaji Ibrahim Waziri
5. People's Redemption Party (PRP) led by Alhaji Aminu Kano

The election result was declared in favour of Alhaji Shehu Shagari in spite of the controversies and criticisms levelled against it and he was subsequently sworn in as the first democratically-elected Executive President of Nigeria on October 1, 1979. Shagari's government was characterised by various problems such as leadership incompetence, religious fanaticism, corruption, and economic hardship. After the constitutional four-year span of his first term, he contested again and was re-elected for a second term amidst accusation of electoral malpractice. At the forefront of this accusation was Chief Obafemi Awolowo and members of UPN. Unfortunately, Shagari was not allowed to complete the second term as he was deposed in a bloodless coup led by Gen. Muhammadu Buhari on December 31, 1983, an event which marked the beginning of another sixteen years (1983-1999) of military succession in Nigeria.

The Gen. Buhari-led military junta was in power between December 1983 and August 27, 1985. The Supreme Military Council (SMC) headed by Buhari promised to instil discipline in Nigerians. Thus, in a bid to purge governance of corruption, his administration brazenly arrested, detained and persecuted political leaders suspected of criminal offences. Unfortunately, the regime did not come out openly with any plan to return Nigeria to civil rule. It was later overthrown in another coup led by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida who ruled till August 26, 1993 when he was forced to *step aside*. Unfortunately, Babangida's Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC)'s promise to return Nigeria to constitutional democracy turned out to be a ruse as the economy suffered and corruption climbed to unprecedented levels. The regime's protracted transition to civil rule programme culminated in the formation of two political parties:

1. Social Democratic Party (SDP) led by Chief M.K.O. Abiola
2. National Republican Convention (NRC) led by Alhaji Uthman Bashir Tofa

The SDP eventually obtained majority votes cast in the June 12 1993 Presidential election. However, to the utter dismay of Nigerians, the election was annulled and the entire transition programme terminated. The election, which was adjudged free and fair by local and international observers, would have ushered in a democratically-elected government under the leadership of Chief M. K. O. Abiola. Unfortunately, Gen. Babangida could not offer any convincing reason why he took Nigerians on a futile journey only to dash their hopes by a military fiat. Abiola protested the annulment of the election and later declared himself President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federation. He was subsequently arrested and detained. He died in mysterious circumstance in detention on July 7, 1998.

When it became obvious to him that he could no longer continue in office, Gen Babangida decided to *step aside* on August 26, 1993, having installed an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Earnest Shonekan. The ING itself was eased out of office three months later in a palace

coup led by Gen. Sani Abacha on November 17, 1993. Gen. Abacha's government was the height of military dictatorship and unconstitutionality. The regime which lasted for five years was noted for its official recklessness, extra judicial killings, corruption, and so forth. Gen. Abacha died mysteriously in office on June 8, 1998. After his death, the mantle of leadership fell on Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar who became the eighth military ruler of Nigeria. Gen. Abubakar supervised a transition programme that produced the democratically-elected government headed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo who took the mantle of leadership on May 29, 1999.

3. Rhetoric and Political Discourse

Studies in political discourse basically require an exploration of the art of rhetoric. Hence, we explicate Aristotle's (1959) theory of rhetoric. Aristotle (1959:15) claims that rhetoric is a practical discipline aiming at "exerting a persuasive action". It studies how persuasion can be achieved in speech making through the application of linguistic devices. Aristotle explains that persuasion can be achieved by the personal character of the speaker, by putting the audience into a certain frame of mind and by the proof provided by the words of the speech itself (Roberts, 2010:8). Accordingly, three forms of rhetorical appeal: ethos, pathos, and logos; have been identified with persuasive discourse. Ethos relates to the ability of the speaker to exhibit a personal character which is realised in the credibility of his/her speech. Pathos deals with the power of the speaker to arouse the emotion of his/her audience, while logos reside in the power of the speaker to persuade by means of truth and sound argument.

Aristotle further points out that there are three kinds of rhetorical speeches; deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. In the deliberative kind of speech, the speaker either advises the audience to do something or warns against doing something. The forensic speech either accuses somebody or defends self or someone; while the epideictic speech praises or blames somebody, as it tries to describe things or deeds of the respective person as honourable or shameful (Adegoju 2008:5). These three are relevant to political discourse.

The centrality of persuasive use of language in modern society can be better appreciated when viewed against the backdrop of human nature. As beings with intellect imbued with the power of discernment, humans can influence and be influenced by one another. This is why politicians deploy persuasive strategies in order to influence the beliefs, attitudes and forms of behaviour of the electorate. They aim at eliciting actions or responses from them through a deliberate act of producing utterances that appeal to their senses as well as their passions. Politicians communicate their intentions to the electorate by means of persuasion. They make use of various persuasive strategies to communicate their intentions to their listeners. In the process, they criticise, accuse, warn, inform, commend, and condemn as the situation demands.

4. Methodology

The data for this study comprise a total of twelve political speeches of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Chief Moshood Abiola sampled from anthologies, newspapers, and magazines. The selected speeches are those that reveal the presidential ambition of the speakers delivered during the periods of elections in 1978, 1983, and 1993. They include acceptance of nomination speeches, campaign speeches, and media or public addresses. The data were subjected to rhetorical analysis to unravel their persuasive and communicative import. The details of these are as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Selected Speeches of Awolowo and Abiola

S/ N	Speaker	Date	Title
i.	Chief Awolowo	2 nd August, 1978	The Imperfections of Man
ii.	” ”	7 th August, 1978	Nigeria Cannot Be Built on the Bricks of Hatred (Nigeria Unbound)

iii.	” ”	6 th October, 1978	The Challenges of the New Nigerian Era
iv.	” ”	12 th February, 1979	Light over Nigeria
v.	” ”	3 rd July, 1979	The Framework of National Policies
vi.	” ”	27 th January 1980	The Rape of Democracy in 1979
vii.	Chief Abiola	29 th March, 1993	Acceptance speech
viii.	” ”	20 th April, 1993	Agenda of Hope for Nigerians
ix.	” ”	9 th June, 1993	My Covenant with My Pec
x.	” ”	22 nd June, 1993	I'm Your Duly Elected President
xi.	” ”	23 rd June, 1993	A Deliberate Intention to Insult and Ridicule the Entire Nigerian People
xii.	” ”	11 th June, 1994	Our Time is Now!

5. Data Analysis

Persuasive techniques in selected speeches of Awolowo and Abiola can be categorised under tact and combat rhetoric. Tact rhetoric is achieved through the use of rhetorical appeals of ethos, pathos and logos, and structural parallelism. Combat rhetoric is basically achieved through affective elements of direct command and intertextual allusion.

5.1. Tact rhetoric

Tact in pragmatics relates to the strategies employed by participants to give value to social interaction. It refers to the exhibition or display of wisdom in one's use of language, especially when making request or asking a favour of somebody. A participant observing tact in interaction must avoid the use of offensive language or any word that may damage the integrity of his/her listeners (Adegbija 1995). In this study, tact constitutes language use in which threat to the face of the referent is deliberately mitigated. This discursive rhetorical strategy is achieved through ethos, pathos, logos and structural parallelism employed in the data.

5.1.1. Use of credence (ethos)

Ethos deals with speaker's ability to display personal character which makes his or her speech credible. It is important for politicians seeking elective positions to be of impeccable or credible character because the electorate are always interested in the character of anybody willing to represent them in any elective position. Apart from character, such a candidate must have an attractive record of achievements either in private or public service. Persuasion is better achieved when a speech is delivered in such a way that the character of the speaker is not in doubt and his/her record of achievements is clearly presented as in the extract below (Italics mine):

Extract 1:

I have served Nigeria in and out of season. *I served* as a leader of the Nigerian Youth Movement [...] *I served* as a nationalist [...] I served as Leader and Head of Government in the Old Western Region [...] *I served* as the Leader of Opposition in the Federal Parliament [...] In and out of office, I have always lived among you, not away from you; *I am familiar* with your sufferings and privations; and *I have always identified* myself with the deepest yearnings of the vast majority of our people. Besides, in these 42 years of my public career, *I have never deceived* you; and I have never let you down. *I will*

always regard my promise as a solemn pact, and my word as my bond. (Awolowo)

Extract 2:

I assure you that the creditors *will listen* to my government because *they know me*, because *they trust me* and *they have faith in my management capabilities*. (Abiola, ix)

Extract 3:

Fellow compatriots, I stand before you as a full-blooded Nigerian, who belongs to every home. *I am a member of every community*, through over 257 chieftaincy titles already conferred on me. I am a Patron/Grand Patron of over 650 organisations [...]. *I have been able to build bridges across regions, nations, and continents, across religions, across ethnic cleavages, across races. I have been able to put my business acumen into greater practice* for it has been realised by all those who want accelerated progress that the adoption of business management principles is a must in the conduct of public affairs. (Abiola, vii)

The communicative intention of Awolowo and Abiola in the extracts above is informing with the sole aim of persuading their listeners. They tactically employ the technique of testimonial argument to present themselves as credible candidates for the elective position of president in their speeches. They provide proof of their credibility by presenting their records of personal achievements. Awolowo enumerates the several public positions he had held previously (extract 1: italicised), and reminds his listeners that he feels and knows their challenges and he has always been advancing their cause. In the same vein, Abiola presents his score card in business and socio-cultural integration in extract 3. He presents a good image of himself thereby assuring them of his ability when he says, "I assure you that the creditors will listen to my government because they **know me**, because they **trust me** and they **have faith in my management**

capabilities” (extract 2). In his attempt to convince his listeners, he assures them of his capability, using his international image as a proof. The verb phrases “know me, trust me and have faith” are powerful rhetorical resources employed to convince them of international credibility. The persuasive and communicative import of the use of credence can be seen in the assurance it provides for the electorate.

5.1.2. Use of emotional appeals (Pathos)

Pathos is concerned with speakers’ clout by which he/she appeals to the emotions of the audience. The emotional disposition of the audience is very germane to the success of a speaker’s persuasive efforts. Pathos involves an attempt to sway the listeners by appealing to their emotions rather than their reason. Politicians may employ pathos to acknowledge the contribution of an individual or group or thank the electorate, and it may also be employed to criticise an opponent or his policies as may be found in extract 4 to 7 below (Italics mine).

Extract 4:

You have made moral and financial contributions in very substantial ways to the electioneering efforts of the UPN (Awolowo, vi)

Extract 5 :

We of the UPN are out to make a clean-sweep of the refuse of vileness, greed and corruption left behind by the past military regimes (Awolowo, Appendix: vi)

Extract 6:

We are tired of the military’s repetitive tendency to experiment with *our* economy. (Abiola, x)

Extract 7:

Our youth in particular, can see no hope on the horizon, and many can only dream of escaping from *our* shores to join the ‘Brain Drain’. Is that what *we* want? (Abiola, x)

There are three strategies employed by political public speakers in the deployment of ethos that are significant in the selected speeches. They are *commendation*, *condemnation* and *solidarity*. Commendation is a verbal incentive deployed to praise or appreciate someone. In this context, commendation has to do with appreciation aimed at making a person or a group being praised to feel elated. Awolowo employs this strategy in extract 4 to appeal to the emotions of his listeners by telling them that he appreciates their contributions to the success of the electioneering campaign during the 1979 elections. His statement serves as impetus for his referents. He encourages the listeners to continue to support his party as they had done in previous elections.

Condemnation is a strategy to show disapproval of, or discontentment with an issue or a practice. Awolowo and Abiola employ this strategy in extracts 5, 6 and 7 to show their disapproval of the corrupt practices of the military and their discontent with the socio-economic problems ravaging the entire country.

Solidarity is a strategy for identifying with listeners in a manner to show collective involvement. It may be employed to lauder and enhance the image of an individual or a party while criticising or condemning the opponent. This strategy is employed in extracts 5, 6 and 7 through a deliberate choice of linguistic items. The plural subjective pronominal *we* and its possessive adjectival counterpart *our*, are employed to show collective involvement, collective desire and collective action. An effective deployment of these strategies can boost the popularity of a politician. In a nutshell, Awolowo and Abiola achieve persuasion in the extracts above mainly by condemning the military regimes for various reasons.

5.1.3. Use of coherent argument (Logos)

Logos lies in the power of the speaker to provide truth by appealing to the sense of reason of the audience in persuasive argument. A coherent or convincing argument is very important to the success of any persuasive discourse. Such a discourse

must be intellectually appealing to the extent that the audience will appreciate the truth inherent in it. Awolowo and Abiola employ this persuasive appeal to discuss issues related to leadership crisis, electoral malpractice, economic crisis, and military dictatorship. These are evident in extracts 8 and 9.

Extract 8:

But the remaking of Nigeria is a task that calls for *probity, dedication, and courage* of a very high order, in addition to rigorous planning, Spartan *self-discipline* and *exceeding industry*. (Awolowo, v)

Extract 9:

The Federal Military Government issued a short statement terminating by fiat the result of the entire transition programme. The very manner in which the statement was made indicates a deliberate intention to insult and ridicule the entire Nigerian people. The statement was *undated, unsigned, unauthorised* and *made on a plain sheet of paper*. But for the fact that it was distributed to the press by the Chief Press Secretary to the Vice-President, it could very well have been issued by Association for Better Nigeria. (Abiola, xi)

A critical examination of these extracts shows that Awolowo and Abiola employ the rich resources of language to provide information about the problem of leadership and the annulment of June 12, 1993 election result respectively. For example, in extract 8, Awolowo provides detailed information with regard to the essential qualities (italicised) of the leader which the country needs. When this argument is properly placed in the context of the first republic and even the present dispensation, one cannot but agree with Awolowo's opinion that Nigeria problem is primarily that of leadership. Also in extract 9, Abiola criticises the Federal Military Government for the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election and the entire transition programme. The italicised linguistic items clearly describe the event presenting it as improper, deceitful and questionable.

5.1.4. Use of structural parallelism

Structural parallelism is a device that involves deliberate repetition of structures to express related issues in order to show similarities or differences in them. Words or group of words may be arranged in pairs to show their relatedness and achieve some specific effect. The speakers in the data used for this study employ this device to enhance the persuasiveness of their speeches (*Italics mine*). This is evident in extracts 10 and 11.

Extract 10:

Persuade, do not *coerce*. *Save*, do not *destroy*... *Pursue* national interest and *shun* self-seeking. (Awolowo, ii)

Extract 11:

I know that together, we can replace *cynicism* with *confidence*; we can replace *disillusionment* with *optimism*, we can replace *apathy* with *mass involvement* in the process of national development. (Abiola, viii)

A look at the extracts reveals the structural pattern of the sentences that made it up. They include:

Persuade, do not **coerce**.
Save, do not **destroy**...
Pursue **national interest** and *shun*
self-seeking,
replace **cynicism** with **confidence**
replace **disillusionment** with **optimism**
replace **apathy** with **mass involvement**

The linguistic items (in bold) are the information units of the utterances and they are deliberately arranged in pairs of positive and negative to achieve contrast. The positive values are which are foregrounded and emphasised, are further reinforced by the verbal elements (italicised).

5.2. Combat rhetoric

The term 'combat' belongs to military register and it has to do with resistance in form of battle, fighting and protest. In this study, combat rhetoric embraces all forms of expression or display of strong opposition to a position, an issue or an idea, including any form of public demonstration against such an idea or an opinion. Awolowo and Abiola use their post-election speeches to register their displeasure about some salient ideas, positions or issues. For example, Awolowo protested against electoral malpractice and military dictatorship, while Abiola's protests centre on the annulment of June 12 election and the role of the military in it. Both of them also complain about the poor economy and leadership problem in the country. In the data for this study, combat rhetoric manifests through the use of metaphor and linguistic elements with negative semantic connotation, direct command and intertextual reference. The extracts below explicate these claims. (*Italics mine*)

5.2.1. Use of metaphor and linguistic elements with negative semantic connotation

There are many perspectives on metaphor just as there are various theoretical directions to it from various disciplines. In literature for example, metaphor is defined as an expression which describes a person or an object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to the person or object. Metaphor is often typically conceptualised as a matter of words rather than thought or action. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:453-454), metaphor is also pervasive in our everyday life and our thoughts and actions are fundamentally metaphorical. This is the basis for their conceptual metaphor theory in which an expression is considered as a representation of a concept. In pragmatics, metaphor is defined and explained in terms of the *interactants* communicative intentions and it is accounted for at the level of utterance meaning (or speaker's meaning) as opposed to sentence meaning. Mey (2001:305) explains that metaphor "is a way of conceptualising and understanding one's surroundings; as such, make up a mental model of our world". Awolowo and Abiola deployed metaphor

(as illustrated in extracts 12 to 15) to conceptualise their thoughts on some issues of national relevance.

Extract 12:

This fact alone, that is of *firm and effective military presence* in our public life for more than 13 years, coupled with their manner of ascension to power, *could afflict* the new civilian administration with *fear, over-caution, or loss of initiative*. (Awolowo, iii)

Extract 13:

We of the UPN are out to make a clean-sweep of the *refuse of vileness, greed and corruption* left behind by the past military regimes (Awolowo, vi)

Extract 14:

Instead, we are being told that the judiciary behaves badly that I, M.K.O. Abiola should be penalised for its misconduct. It is *incredible*. In view of all these, I find the conclusion *unfortunate* but inescapable that the *FMG is guilty of bad faith, pure and simple*. (Abiola, xi)

Extract 15:

Yet the Federal Military Government on *the most unconvincing and disingenuous premise* [...] has decided to cancel the election and its result. I say categorically, that *the decision is unfair, unjust, and consequently unacceptable*. (Abiola, xi)

Whenever a politician wants to disagree with, criticise, accuse and condemn an opponent or an issue, he or she employs descriptive metaphor and linguistic elements with negative semantic connotation. For example, Awolowo assumes the voice of an analyst and critic by deploying metaphor and symbolism to accuse and condemn military dictatorship in extracts 12 and 13. In extract 12, Awolowo conceptualises the military as an affliction by deploying the medical and psychological metaphor of affliction (*fear, over-caution and loss of initiative*) to describe

the effects of protracted military dictatorship on Nigerians. Again, he symbolically conceptualises the military as rubbish, evil, voracious and dishonest in extract 13 (italicised). Abiola also assumes the institutional voice of a judge to criticise and condemn the military for their role in the annulment of the June 12 1993 election results. He employs linguistic elements with negative semantic connotation (*incredible, unfortunate; unconvincing and disingenuous; unfair, unjust and unacceptable*) to condemn the role of the military in the annulment of June 12 1993 election (extracts 14 and 15). He accuses and condemns the military for their insincerity, hypocrisy and deceit.

5.2.2. Direct command

Direct command is a device that is usually employed by politicians to influence their listeners to act in a particular way. It could be in form of a directive, an urge or a request that their listeners should do something or take a particular step. This is identified only in the campaign speeches of Awolowo. Extract 16 illustrates this persuasive strategy.

Extract 16:

I, therefore, **charge** you all; men and women, young and old, in the name of all that is best in the tradition of this dear land of ours, in the following terms: *Go forth* and present our programme to a waiting nation. **March forward** without looking back. **Argue hard** if necessary ... (Awolowo, ii)

In extract 16, Awolowo uses the strategy of direct command to request his listeners to take some steps or perform certain tasks. The extract is a subtle command issued to party supporters during a campaign rally to encourage them to work hard for electoral success in the 1979 elections. As subtle as the tone may seem, it is provocative and imperative considering choice of the active verbs (*go, march, argue*) that are post modified by appropriate adverbs (forth, forward, hard).

5.2.3. Intertextual reference

In discourse or communication, a participant may make reference to, or come across familiar texts which he/she perceives as belonging to another discourse but which is associated with the text under consideration. Intertextuality occurs when a feature which a participant perceives as belonging to another discourse is related to the discourse under consideration in a manner that the former affects the interpretation of the latter. Intertextuality refers to those features known to the reader because he/she has come across them in other texts before and which affects the interpretation of the text under consideration (Kristeva 1980; Porter 1986; Martínez 1996; and Slembrouck 2011). There are significant intertextual reference to specific socio-political issues and events in our data which serve to illuminate the present. Awolowo and Abiola make appropriate choice of linguistic elements that point to some socio-political and historical events in the country. References were made to the governance/government of the First Republic, the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) and the protracted military rule/intervention in politics. Extract 17 to 21 are few examples of such references (Italics mine).

Extract 17:

Any rehash of *the style of governance of the First Republic*, however, might induce in the people a desire for return to military rule. (Awolowo, iii)

Extract 18:

The *old political parties and some of their leaders* came to a tragic end on 15 January, 1966 – a date which also marked the temporary termination of political activities. (Awolowo, i)

Extract 19:

We have endured 24 years of *military rule* in our 34 years of independence. (Abiola, xii)

Extract 20:

The civilian administration will be a successor to a *military regime* which by October 1, 1979, would have been in the saddle for upwards of 13 years. (Awolowo, iii)

Extract 21:

Military rule has led to our nation *fighting a civil war* with itself (Abiola, xii)

Abiola and Awolowo were critical in their assessment of the issues raised in the extracts above. Awolowo did not spare the leadership of the First Republic which he accused of bad style which should be avoided in order to avoid a return to military rule. In extracts 17 and 18, Awolowo alluded to the leadership problem (such as indiscipline, ethnicity, corruption, etc.) as manifested in the style of governance of the first republic. These eventually led to the bloody military coup of 15 January, 1966, in which many of the leaders were killed. Closely related to the above is the issue of military rule/intervention in politics. Awolowo captures this in extracts 19 and 20 where he describes the experience of the people under protracted military rule with the verb “endured” (to suffer something difficult, unpleasant or painful) and the noun “saddle” (in total control). The Nigerian civil war of 1967–1970 is another item of intertextual reference especially in Abiola speeches. For example, in extract 21, he made reference to this political event by accusing and condemning the military for their role in the avoidable war.

6. Findings and Conclusion

This paper has examined the communicative intention and persuasive techniques in selected political speeches of Awolowo and Abiola. The paper accounted for the persuasiveness and connection between the speaker’s intentions and their choice of persuasive techniques in the selected speeches. The analysis revealed that the speeches of Awolowo and Abiola are highly persuasive as they display high significance of persuasive elements namely ethos, pathos, logos, direct command,

structural parallelism, and intertextual reference. Two types of rhetoric (combat and tact) were identified in the speeches. Tact, which is employed to boost the self-image of the speakers, is achieved through ethos, pathos, logos, and structural parallelism while combat rhetoric is deployed to resist and condemn all forms of negative tendencies (electoral malpractice, military dictatorship, corruption, etc.) which is achieved through direct command and intertextual reference. While tact rhetoric is significant mostly in pre-election speeches (such as acceptance and campaign speeches), combat rhetoric is found exclusively in post-election speeches which are mostly protests and complaints.

Examination of the communicative intentions of the speakers revealed that Awolowo and Abiola speeches reflect the socio-political ethos (contextual undercurrents) of the periods. The political epochs of the second and third republics are not so different. Issues in the speeches include electoral malpractice, leadership crisis, military dictatorship, and economic crisis. The speeches were characterised by accusations, criticisms and condemnation of protracted military dictatorship, electoral malpractice, and bad leadership in Nigeria. Awolowo and Abiola also used language to praise Nigerians and party members for their steadfastness. They equally used it to encourage them to be resilient in the collective bid to achieve political stability and constitutional democracy.

In conclusion, this study has further provided insight into the study of political communication in Nigeria political history. Awolowo and Abiola achieved the communicative import of persuasion in their speeches through effective deployment of rhetorical tools to inform, request, educate, commend and condemn, as the case may be. Evidence abound that their choice of rhetorical strategies was influenced by their communicative intentions.

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