The Rhetoric & Propaganda of Political Campaigns in Nigeria

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This paper examines the language of political campaigns in the Nigerian media. It explores the application of linguistic features in the political campaigns by politicians in their bid to persuade the voters to vote for them. On the basis of the analysis of these features, we assess the success or otherwise of the campaigns. Our study reveals that the campaigners rely on rhetoric, propaganda and other linguistic devices to make their messages more persuasive and appealing. The paper, however, argues that the campaigns are not always successful, in spite of the beautiful use of language, because the politicians are not sincere in their promises and because other factors such as rigging, financial inducement and intimidation are used to sway voters instead of the campaigns.

1. Introduction

The *Lexicon Webster Dictionary* (1981:143) defines a political campaign as “any course of aggressive action… intended to influence voters in an election”. Since the days leading to Nigeria’s political independence in 1960, political campaigns have been regular features in the country’s political agenda. Apart from the period of military rule, there have been political campaigns any time elections are about to hold in the country.

Within the past fifteen years, elections have been held four times in Nigeria, namely 1992/93, 1999, 2003 and 2007. All these elections were each preceded by aggressive campaigns whose sole aim was to persuade the voters to support a particular political party or candidate.

In the earlier elections of the 1950s and 1960s, when only few people had access to the mass media, political campaigns had to rely more on field campaigns (rallies) to sell their parties and their manifestoes to the electorates. The campaigners had to move from ward to ward, village to village and, in some cases, from house to house, to persuade people to vote for them. In the period covered by this study (1992-2003), however, the easy access to the media by both the politicians and the voters has shifted campaigns from the field to the media. Even when field rallies are held, they are, in most cases, transmitted live on television and radio such that a typical field rally can be rightly classified as a media campaign as well. This in part explains our choice of media campaigns over field rallies for this study.

Since political campaigns have now moved from the field to the media and the campaigner is no longer in a face-to-face contact with the potential voter, there is a growing need for the campaigner to be more creative in their choice of both tactics and language, if they must convince the potential voter. Our study reveals that political campaigns in the media rely on propaganda and rhetoric as tools for making their message to their targets persuasive. In this study, therefore, we intend to examine these linguistic techniques with a view to analyzing their content and intended effects on the target audience.

The data for this study came from a selection of political jingles collected between 1993 and 2003. The selection of campaign jingles is not limited to any political party or
any particular television or radio station; rather, we selected jingles from different media without regards to the political parties that own the jingles.

2. Language, Rhetoric & Propaganda

Language is used for informative, emotive, expressive, persuasive and directive purposes (Teilayo 2000). The above hallmarks the role of language in political campaigns for the elements enumerated by Teilayo above are the elements exploited as instruments of both rhetoric and propaganda in political campaigns. As Oputa (2002:6) has noted, “current rhetoric is rediscovering linguistics as a provider of more explicit tools and explanations than are otherwise available”. Propaganda, on the other hand, would be apparently non-existent if the linguistic techniques it exploits were unavailable. By implication, language provides the ‘raw material’ for both rhetoric and propaganda, and these are what political campaigns in the Nigerian media are all about. The purpose of political campaigns is to inform potential voters about the candidate, their political party and manifestoes or programmes; to appeal to their emotion through recourse to tribe or ethnic group, sectional interest, religious affiliation, etc, all aimed at persuading the voter to vote for the campaigner. To be able to do all these effectively, the campaigner must be able to use language in a way that goes beyond normal communication. Hence, the campaigner often resorts to propaganda and rhetoric devices in their attempt to persuade the potential voter. While propaganda has to do with persuasive techniques such as intimidation, blackmail, distortion of facts and telling the ‘truth’ with dubious intent, rhetoric deals with the figurative use of language aimed at exploiting the aesthetic qualities of language and making it more appealing and persuasive to the hearer.

3. The Use of Propaganda in Political Campaigns

Propaganda has been defined as “the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people’s beliefs, attitude or reaction by means of symbols” (Encyclopedia Britanica 1980, Vol.15). The symbols used in propaganda, says the encyclopedia, may be linguistic, paralinguistic or material in the form of stickers, flags, hairstyles, dressing, music, etc. To achieve the goals of propaganda, the propagandist:

… deliberately presents a selection of facts, argument and displays of symbols in ways he thinks he will have the most effects. To maximize effects, he may omit pertinent facts; he may try to divert the attention of the reactors (the people he is trying to sway) from everything but his own propaganda. (Encyclopedia Britanica 1980, Vol. 15).

From the foregoing, it can be seen that propaganda can deliberately distort facts and figures in an attempt to persuade the audience. Szanto (1978:48) adds that “the success of the propagandist in achieving his overall aim depends on his ability to exploit tradition and sentiment”.

Propaganda may manifest in any of the following five ways: false statement made in the genuine belief that they are true; deliberate lies; the suppression of truth; the suggestion of falsehood; and the slanting of news (Balfour 1979:427).

According to Ellul (1973:61), there are four types of propaganda, namely: political and sociological propaganda; agitation and integration propaganda; vertical and horizontal propaganda; and rational and irrational propaganda. Our interest in this paper, however, is limited to political propaganda, which according to Ellul is what obtains
when a group, which may be a political party, government or any of its agencies, adopts persuasive techniques to influence people in order to achieve their goals. Sociological propaganda, which is the flipside of the political propaganda coin, is aimed at making an individual accept or assimilate the dominant economic and political ideologies of the propagandist. Thus, political and sociological propaganda go hand-in-glove.

Political propaganda adopts different persuasive techniques whose aim is to persuade the electorate to vote in the interest of the party mounting the campaign. From our study of the various campaign jingles and statements selected for this write-up, we found that the campaigners adopt the following linguistic devices in their propaganda to persuade voters to vote for them: Cohesion, focusing, deictic, diction, catchy phrases and slang, among others. They equally appeal to tradition and existing solidarity with the voters as a way of persuading the voters that the candidate is one of them.

3.1 Cohesion
This is a device by which the campaigners seek to establish a link between the past and the present, or between a person and their achievements. This is usually achieved through referencing, in which case the past achievements of the politician are outlined as the basis for soliciting for another vote. We can see examples in the excerpts below:

1. Edo State don change for this past three years,
   Na the work wey Luck do:
   Water de flow o
   Children de go school
   Road e good o
   Workers dem happy
   Life e sweet o
   Lucky you do well.

   (Edo State has changed over these past three years
   It is thanks to Lucky
   Water is available
   Children go to school
   The roads are good
   Workers are happy
   Life is sweet
   Thank you, Lucky).

   In the excerpt, the achievements of the candidate, Lucky, are extolled as a way of inducing voters to vote for him again. This is linked in the same jingle by a request for another support thus:

2. The one he don do for the first term
   na small one.
   Make una vote Chief Lucky Nosa Igbinedion
   for governor again, so that he go fit
   continue to add for the beta
   beta wey he don do.
(The one he did during the first term is the small part, please vote Chief Lucky Nosa Igbinedion for governor again, so that he can continue with his good work(s).

The propaganda goes on to tantalize the voters, whetting their appetite, as it were, for ‘better things’ to come:

3. Lucky know say work dey down wey still remain to do and na for dis second term una go see all the special plan he get to make all Edo State people life beta. Vote for Chief Lucky Igbinedion again so that he go fit build on the foundation of good wey he don start.

(Lucky knows there’s still much work to be done and it is during this Second Term that you will see his special programmes to make the lives of Edo people better. Vote for Chief Lucky Igbinedion again so that he can build on the good foundation he has already laid.)

Worthy of note is the use of pidgin in this and most other pieces of campaign ‘messages’. Nigerian pidgin, being the second lingua franca in Nigeria, is adopted not only to reach the majority of the village dwellers who do not understand English but also to establish some kind of solidarity with the masses, creating the impression that the candidate is one of them.

The same strategy is adopted in the following excerpt:

4. Ogbeide give scholarship to all our children Give our mama dem small credit make dem take de trade. He put health center for Ogbor village….

(Ogbeide awarded scholarships to all our children, Provided small credit lines to our mothers to facilitate their trades. He built a health center at Ogbor village…).

This is linked up with an earnest request for votes in the following words:

5. When pikin report card good, na everybody de support am. Make we vote for am again o….
(When a child has a good report card
He enjoys everybody’s support
Let’s please vote for him again).

Cohesion is here achieved by linking the candidate’s report card with the need to vote for him again. One is thus a logical follow-up to the other.

In the following example, we see a different kind of cohesive link between past achievements and call for votes:

6. Remember say dis man don give scholarship for we children, dash generator to Udo water supply, give job to 2500 people. This man too good o. He put rubber factory for Olugbo, donate road and bridge.....

Don’t forget that this man has awarded scholarships to our children, donated a power generator to *Udo Water Supply Scheme*, offered jobs to 2500 people. This man is so good. He built a Rubber factory at Olugbo, donated Roads and bridges…)

In the above example, the audience is carried along by the use of active cohesive elements: *remember... give... dash... supply... give... put... donate...*. These cohesive elements serve to place special emphasis on the candidate’s achievements. The aim is to provide justifiable grounds for his asking for votes. After highlighting the candidate’s achievements a link is established between the foregoing and the call for votes with a rhetorical question:

7. Dis man never become Senator e don do all this. If he become Senator nko?

(this man is not yet a senator and he has done all this. What if he becomes a senator?)

The answer to the rhetorical question is left to the imagination of the audience. This method is deliberately adopted to achieve greater persuasive effect.

In another example, cohesion is achieved by linking the past with the present through the use of logical analysis:

8. In the beginning, he came and laid a solid foundation… Chief Lucky Nosakhare Igbinedin is back again to build on the foundation he has laid. This foundation is full of promises. A time of renewal of hope and determination by our people to
build a virile and stable state for themselves.

The logic here is that it is better if the person who laid the foundation is also the person who will build on it. The argument is buttressed with a tantalizing statement: “this foundation is full of promises”. And to demonstrate the preparedness of the man who laid the foundation to build on it, his past achievements are echoed as the basis for asking for another tenure:

9. Chief Lucky Igbinedion provided for the people the Passenger Welfare Scheme, and also established industries in the three senatorial districts of the state.

The ‘syllogism’ ends with what seems the only possible conclusion.

10. Edo people, give our Lucky Igbinedion a chance to build on these foundations. Vote Chief Lucky Nosakhare Igbinedion, the apostle Paul of our era, to help restore our legacies and pride. Go for the best.

For additional emphasis, the candidate is described as “our Lucky Igbinedion”, suggesting that the candidate is ‘one of us’.

A similar logical analysis is also employed in this excerpt from Obasanjo’s campaign stable:

11. There is peace in Nigeria, we owe it to our man. There is unity in Nigeria, we owe it to Baba. Obasanjo… now the common man is happier. Obasanjo… there is no better choice. Obasanjo is the way to a brighter future.

In addition to these achievements, the propagandist gives further reasons why Obasanjo deserves a second term:

12. When a man has focus, knows what it takes to run this country, he deserves another term. When Nigeria was termed a criminal nation abroad, Obasanjo’s magic redeemed Nigeria’s image. And blessed with a calm and calculated second in command, Alhaji Abubakar Atiku, Nigeria can boast of a formidable combination.

The logical follow-up to the above is therefore obvious:
13. Give them your mandate to consolidate these gains, and move Nigeria higher, higher to a brighter future.

3.2 Focusing
This is a device employed in political campaign propaganda to direct the attention of voters to the personality of the politician or to existing problem in the polity. This is usually done in two ways. In the first type, which is positive, the voter’s attention is drawn to the good qualities of the politician. In the second type, which is negative, the voter is told why they should not vote for a particular candidate. In doing this, the negative attributes of the opposition candidate are brought into focus. Below are excerpts that illustrate the first type:

In a terrain fraught with hazards and uncertainties, where female participation is downgraded and sometimes frowned upon, only a colossus can aspire to be reckoned with. 
Daisy Ehanire Danjuma… brings into Nigerian politics a tradition of commitment, loyalty and selfless service.

The device here is to introduce and emphasize the things that make the candidate unique. For instance she is full of courage and that is why she can come out, though female participation is downgraded and frowned upon. Her courage also comes out in her being able to come out into a hazardous venture like politics. Apart from her courage, she is a “colossus” and that is why she can do what other women cannot do. Her attributes are also brought into focus: “commitment, loyalty and selfless service”. We also see another example of focusing in this excerpt where the personality of the candidate is brought into focus:

15. Senator Roland Owie, the man wey we want for Edo State. 
God’s battle axe, God sent, light over Edo State 
The man of the people 
He no be pushover. If he talk am, e go do am.

(Senator Roland Owie, the man we want in Edo state. God’s battle-axe, God sent. Light over Edo state, the man of the people He is no pushover. If he says it, he will do it.)

A similar devise is equally adopted in the following example:

16. Obasanjo is our man, o yes. 
He don bring peace for Nigeria, o yes.
Life don de beta small by small, o yes.
Make the man finish the better work, o yes.

Before before, you call Nigeria name for Oyibo
country dem, even for Africa self…
Dem go look you, look you, [hiss].
But now, Nigeria don sidon kampe again.
Everybody de look our side. Obasanjo!

(Obasanjo is our man, o yes.
He has brought peace to Nigeria, o yes
Life is gradually getting better, o yes
Let the man finish his good works, o yes.

In time past, you mention Nigeria abroad
Or even in Africa…
They will stare at you, and hiss
But now, Nigeria has become viable again
Everybody now wants to be our friend.
Obasanjo!)

Here, the propagandist highlights the candidate’s achievements, affirming each
achievement with a resounding “O yes”, chorused in the background as if it was the rest
of Nigeria affirming the candidate’s achievement. Besides, the candidate is described as
“our man”, implying that he is down-to-earth and a part of the ‘masses’. His attributes
and achievements therefore qualify him for another mandate.

The second type of focusing is the one in which the focus is on the problems that
exist in the society, apparently caused by the opponent party. The presentation is usually
done in two ways. In the first, the problems are enumerated and attributed to the opponent
party, while the candidate being presented by the campaigning party is portrayed as the
one having the solution. In the second, the problems are presented in a way that accusing
fingers are pointed at the opposition candidate as being responsible for the problems. The
offer of solution is deliberately delayed but is consistently suggested by the tone of voice
and choice of words in the jingle. We examine the first type by looking at the following
excerpts:

17. I tire for this problem, I tire for this world
   I tire for this country, I tire for life o
   *O gini?*
   No light, no roads, no money, no food
   The little water I dey drink
   Na so so dirty de full am
   The little money I dey get, No so so transport de chop am
   *Haba!*
   Chop p o, na headache
   Hospital, no drugs
   I tire for life o.
(I am tired of these problems; I am tired of this world
I am tired of this country; I am tired of life
What is the problem?
No electricity, no roads, no money, no food
The little water I find to drink
Is full of dirt
The little money I make
I spend on transportation
Haba!
To feed is a problem
Hospitals have no drugs
I am tired of life)

The strategy, here is to paint a picture of gloom and desperation for the electorate, a picture that all hope is virtually lost and there is no solution in sight. Equally worthy of note is the propagandist’s attempt to evoke the people’s sense of solidarity through the use of language. The jingle is in Nigerian pidgin, the lingua franca of southern Nigeria where there is no dominant indigenous language. O gini, is Igbo, the language spoken in the Eastern part of the country, while haba is Hausa, the language of the North. The candidate being presented is Yoruba, from the West! Thus, everybody is apparently given a sense of belonging, or, to put it in Nigerian political parlance, everybody is ‘carried along’ in this short but catchy jingle.

After presenting a picture of hopelessness, the ‘Solution’ is immediately presented along with it:

18. My broda, wetin you de think o,
My sister, help don come:
MKO¹, Kingibe, SDP ACTION.
Abiola, Abiola, Abiola, progress
MKO is our man o.

(My brother, what is the worry?
My sister, help has come:
MKO, Kingibe, SDP, Action
Abiola, Abiola, Abiola, progress
MKO, is our man)

Significantly, the candidate’s slogan for the election was HOPE ’93. The jingle is therefore a message of hope as the candidate, MKO Abiola and his running mate, Babagana Kingibe are presented as being the only hope of finding solutions to the problems enumerated.

In the second type, though the candidate is eventually suggested as the solution, the focus is on the opponent and their failures. The following is a typical example:

¹ MKO are the initials of the presidential candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The initials stand for Moshood, Kashimawo, Olawale ABIOLA.
19. Dem say good road; hm, this one na road?
Dem say university go open; see wetin dem do.
Dem say our young people go get work,
Oya, wey the work?
Dem say queue no go dey for petrol station,
Ehen, see now…
We don try dem for different different position,
No action, story story…

(They talked about good roads, hum, are these roads?
They said universities would reopen, see what they have done
They said our youths would get jobs,
Ok, where are the jobs?
They said there would be no more queues at the petrol stations
Ehen, see for yourself
We have tried them in different positions
No action, the same old story…)

Though no names of either persons or party are mentioned in the excerpt above, it is presented in a way that the audience is left in no doubt about who is being referred to. Moreover, the presidential candidate of the Justice Party, Reverend Chris Okotie deliberately adopts the phrase “Dem say” (they said), which is normally used to introduce or refer to rumours. “Dem say” is therefore adopted to convey the impression of false promises, which, in the final analysis, is as good as mere rumour. For additional effect, each “dem say” statement attracts a response in the form of a rhetorical question, such as:

Hm, this one na road…?
Oya, wey the work…?

(Are these roads…?
Ok, where are the jobs…?)

The purpose of the rhetorical question is to convey the impression that there are no answers to the questions. Another emphasis on empty promises by the incumbent government is achieved through the statement below:

We don try dem for different different position,
No action, story story…

(We have tried them in different positions
No action, the same old story…)

This reminds one of the popular song by Femi Kuti with the refrain:  
So so talk and no action.

It also reminds one of the preamble before folk story tale by children, story story…
This indicates that as far as the campaigner is concerned, all the promises made by the ruling party are no better than ordinary stories and empty promises, something akin to folk tales narrated to children. Following this, the campaigner is presented as the one to right all the wrongs, thus:

20. We don try dem for different different position
    The one we never try na him be
    Reverend Chris Ogheneoverie Okotie
    The FRESH choice
    (We have tried them in different positions
    The one we have yet to try is
    Reverend Chris Ogheneoverie Okotie
    The FRESH choice)

We also see a similar pattern in the following excerpt:

21. Do you want continuity?
    No payment of pensions and salaries,
    Dry taps, waste of public finds, potholes
    instead of good roads, wasteful foreign trips.
    Darkness instead of light?

Here too, the reference is obviously to the candidate who is campaigning for another term of office, using continuity as the campaign slogan. The word ‘continuity’, therefore becomes the basis for revealing the identity of the opponent who is presented as being responsible for non-payment of salaries, dry taps, bad roads, among others. On the other hand, the party that would bring “light instead of darkness” as opposed to the ruling party’s “darkness instead of light” is revealed:

22. Let light shine over Edo State.
    Think before you vote. Don’t sell your vote.
    Vote ANPP all the way. It’s time for change.

A similar case of indirect castigation is shown below:

23. Na so something de be?
    Dem send person go Abuja, he begin do as he like, as if no be Esan people him de represent.

    (Is this how things are?
    Somebody is sent to Abuja and he begins to behave as he likes, as if it was not the Esans he was elected to represent

As usual the solution is found in the other candidate.
24. The vote this time na person wey go make
Esan people see the better wey dey Nigeria.

(The vote this time round is for someone who
can make the Esans benefit from Nigeria’s abundance)

3.3 Appeal to Tradition and Solidarity
Another propaganda strategy in political campaign is that in which the campaigner,
through the use of language, evokes the tradition and other values that the candidate
shares with the voters, as the basis for deserving their votes. In the excerpt below, the
candidate appeals to the electorate’s respect for elders and their belief and respect for
such traditions as prayers and breaking of kolanuts:

25. Elders of Edo State,
I bring these kolanuts, white chalk and salt
pray for me, barrister Patrick Obahiagbon,
son of Igodomigodo
Wetin pikin want na im e de tell him elders,
youth and family.
My throat never crack o. Word still dey my mouth.
Papa, mama, my people, una stand for my back;
stand by my side, gather round me, hold my
hand go up… Long live our elders.

(Elders of Edo State,
I bring these kolanuts, white chalk and salt
pray for me, barrister Patrick Obahiagbon,
son of Igodomigodo
Whatever a child wants, he tells his elders,
Youth and family.
My throat has not cracked yet.
There are still words in my mouth.
Father, mother, my people, stand behind me;
Stand by my side; gather round me
Raise my hands up
Long live our elders)

Here, the candidate appeals to the people’s tradition, culture and history. By referring to
himself as the son of Igodomigodo, he is going back to the remote history of the people
and asserting his status as a genuine son of the soil, since Igodomigodo was said to be the
ancient name of the Edo people. He also appeals to their sense of unity, urging them to
gather round him.

In another excerpt, Daisy Ehanire Danjuma appeals to the Edo people’s belief in the
family institutions when she refers to herself as coming from “the illustrations Ighodaro –
Ehanire dynasty of ancient Bini Kingdom. She is also described as “a wife, a mother, a
woman of culture”. All these are aimed at establishing her common root with her people,
despite the fact that she is married elsewhere.
Another way of evoking solidarity is by referring to the candidate only by his first name and through the use of the first person plural pronoun, as is the case in the following example:

26. Lucky know say work dey down wey still remain to do. Lucky, you na the governor we want…
Edo people, give our Lucky Igbinedion a chance
Our Lucky will perform the miracle of transformation, and restore our legacies and pride.

(Lucky knows there is still plenty of work to do
Lucky, you are the governor we want…
Edo people, give our Lucky Igbinedion a chance
Our Lucky will perform the miracle of transformation, and restore our legacies and pride)

Here, the candidate is referred to in the second person as if he was there present with the speaker. The intention is to bring him closer to the people. Similarly, the electorate is referred to in the first person plural, we, so that everybody will feel a part of the whole arrangement. These cohesive elements serve to integrate both the candidate and the electorate into, as it were, one indivisible entity; a reason the electorate must vote for him. Another way of invoking solidarity is through the use of slang associated with the primary target of the campaign. In the excerpt below, the candidate appeals to the youth in the following way:

27. The Bros na the presidential candidate for Justice Party, J.P.
My people, Justice Party hail una o.

The Brother is the presidential candidate of Justice Party, J.P.
My people, Justice Party salutes you.

Bros is a slang (derived from ‘brother’) used by the youth to refer to a fellow youth who is considered to be the most senior within the group, either in age or in status. Similarly, to “hail” somebody is the youth’s slang for greeting a member of one’s group. Thus, by “hailing” his “people”, the candidate, who was the youngest among the presidential candidates, was claiming solidarity with the youth, appealing to them to vote for one of their own.

4. Rhetoric
Another persuasive device used by political campaigners in the Nigeria media is rhetoric, which Oputa (2002:12) describes as “the art of speaking or writing well to cause or form a strong opinion”. Rhetoric can also be seen as the art of using words impressively. Rhetoric differs from propaganda in the sense that while rhetoric aims at persuading through the beauty of language, propaganda strives to persuade through the manipulation of language via distortion and sometimes outright falsehood. In the words of Corcoran (1979:35) rhetoric is simply “an act of persuasion” while Auer (1969:221) sees rhetoric as “the management of the spoken symbolic interaction that links speakers and listeners together. This implies that rhetoric is never unidirectional but rather a very important
persuasive device aimed at bringing both the speaker and listener together. Thus, it may be said that rhetoric cannot be effective until the speaker has elicited the appropriate response from the audience. Rhetoric has also been defined as “the art of using language skillfully for persuasion or for literary expression or for public speaking (Oputa 2002:12). Rhetoric, therefore, is not just about speaking. Its emphasis is on speaking skillfully. From our study of political campaign in the Nigeria media, the following rhetoric devices are used in the campaigners’ determination to persuade the electorate to vote for them: repetition, idiophones, metaphor, hyperbole, cliché and allusion.

4.1 Repetition

This is one of the most important devices used by politicians and they make use of this device in the belief that repetition enables the addressee to remember what has been said more easily than what is said only once. One good example is found in the televised address by the vice-presidential candidate of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) to party supporters in Edo State:

28. I want you to realize:
    continuity guarantees peace; guarantees
    stability, guarantees progress, and
    guarantees development.

The repetition of the word ‘guarantees’ makes the statement more rhythmic and therefore, easier to remember by the electorate. There is another case of repetition in one of the ANPP campaigns, as follows:

29. Think before you vote
    Don’t sell your vote
    Vote ANPP all the way

Here, the repetition of the word ‘vote’ is made for the purpose of emphasis and memorability. Another example of repetition is found in M.K.O. Abiola’s campaign jingle during the 1993 presidential campaigns:

    I tire for this problem
    I tire for this world
    I tire for this country
    I tire for life o.

    (I am tired of this problem
    I am tired of this world
    I am tired of this country
    I am tired of life.)

Here, the phrase I tire is deliberately repeated to highlight how dire the situation of the country is and why people must vote Abiola for a solution to the problems.
4.2 Idiophones
Idiophones are words which have no meanings in themselves but whose meanings can be deduced from the way they sound. The following are some examples:

30. But now, Nigeria don sidon chim again.
   (But now, Nigeria is strong again)

Chim is an Igbo idiophone whose meaning suggests firmness, strength, erectness and dependability. All these attributes can be applied to Nigeria, in the opinion of the writer of this political campaign jingle.

Another example is found in the Olu Falae campaign jingle during the 1993 presidential campaign primary of the Social Democratic Party (SDP):

31. S.D.P tell me where to vote o
   Sam.
   Anywhere you see Falae Foto o
   Sam Sam Sam
   (S.D.P. tell me how to vote
    sam
   Anywhere you see Falae’s picture
   sam sam sam)

The word Sam here refers to the smooth and easy way in which people are expected to cast their votes for him. Thus, sam suggests smoothness, speed, and absence of obstruction. On the other hand, sam is also a play upon the candidate’s name, Samuel, which is usually shortened to Sam.

Sam has an identical meaning in the following jingle by the Federal Government of Nigeria urging politicians to be upright and shun rigging and other forms of underhandedness:

32. No wuruwuru for third Republic
   No magomago. No jibiti at all
   Everything must waka sam sam sam.
   (No rigging in the third Republic
    No fraudulent practices. No cheating at all
    Everything must go smooth, smooth, smooth)

The words wuruwuru, magomago and jibiti are Yoruba idiophones whose meanings refer to cheating, fraud, lack of transparency, and deceit.

4.3 Metaphor
This is a rhetoric device in which one thing is substituted for another and it is one of the devices adopted by politicians, especially in describing the candidates. In one of the jingles, for instance, the governorship candidate of the ANPP in the 2003 elections in Edo State is described as:
33. “God’s battle axe” and “Light over Edo State”.

In another jingle, the PDP governorship candidate’s tenure as the incumbent governor (1999-2003) is described as music in the following excerpt:

34. This music is good. Let’s play it twice.

The same candidate is also described in another campaign slot on television as:

35. The skilled master builder… the apostle Paul of our era.

4.4 Hyperbole
This is a rhetoric device in which facts are deliberately exaggerated to achieve a specific effect. For instance, the senatorial candidate of the PDP in Edo South Senatorial Zone during the 2003 elections, Mrs. Daisy Danjuma, was described as “a colossus”, while the presidential candidate of the same party was described variously as “a magician” and “the way to a Brighter future”.

4.5 Cliché
A cliché is a saying which has become worn out because of over use. They are however used in political campaigns because people are familiar with them and they are easy to remember. Below are instances of clichés:

36. Facts are better than dreams
   Edo people, go for the best
   The Lucky Igbinedion you know
   is better than the Angel you have not seen.

The last statement above is obviously an echo of the cliché “the devil you know is better than the angel you don’t know”. Another cliché is used in reference to Obasanjo thus:

37. Let us give honour to whom honour is due.

In another jingle, Obasanjo and Atiku are described as “the winning team”, while Willie Ogbeide is described as “a man of the people”, and “the son of the soil”.

4.6 Allusion
Abrams (1981:8) describes an allusion as “a reference, explicit or indirect to a well known person, place or event. There is an allusion in the excerpt below:

38. This Senatorial seat na the right of Edo people. Make una no sell am. Make una no export am. So vote Paulosa Osakpamwan Ogbebor

   This Senatorial Seat is the right of Edo people.
   Do not sell it. Do not export it. So vote Paulosa Osakpamwan Ogbebor
This is a reference to the fact that the candidate’s opponent who was originally from Edo has married into another tribe (Jukun) and state (Taraba). Thus, to vote for her, according to this jingle would amount to selling or exporting the “right of Edo people”. This seems to be the underlying reason for mentioning Paulosa Ogbebor’s Edo name (Osakpamwan), to add extra emphasis to his “Edoness”.

5. Conclusion
If what it takes to win elections were propaganda and rhetorical devices, then some of the Nigerian politicians would outdo the others in the business of weaving words together for persuasive purposes. However, it has been observed that in the Nigerian situation, political campaigns are nothing more than formalities aimed at fulfilling ‘all righteousness.’ Most seats are won, not on the basis of the success or otherwise of the political campaigns but on the basis of rigging. In most cases the rigging is so widespread that it can rightly be said that the winner is the one who has been able to ‘out-rig’ the others. The just concluded 2007 elections are a case in point.

This goes to suggest that the power of rhetoric and propaganda as persuasive techniques in political campaigns has suffered a serious decline as the deciding factor in elections. Shipley (in Oputa 2000:34) puts this in perspective when he notes that “the decadence of rhetoric started with the decline of political freedom in the absence of which no great and sincere oratory is possible”. Boulton (1982:141) also notes that today’s rhetoric is very nearly a dirty word:

Rhetorical question is almost a synonym for exaggerated and insincere language… inflated or soggy pseudo-rhetoric is essentially insincere and an imitation of the rhetoric generated by real emotions.

Genuine rhetoric aims at genuine persuasion and its beauty lies in the skill it manifests and its sincerity to persuade the listener through the power of words. This, however, seems to have been jettisoned in Nigeria where politicians mostly campaign tongue-in-cheek and robbed of all sincerity. Rather than rely on their power of persuasion, Nigerian politicians now rely on other means of winning elections whether the electorates vote for them or not. This was very evident during the last (2007) elections where campaign rallies took the form of carnivals and jamborees without any serious attempt to persuade voters with electrifying speeches as used to be the case. Even the campaign jingles in the media were “bare and naked”, without any element of rhetoric. That explains why we did not feel any serious need to draw examples of political campaign speeches and jingles from the 2007 elections. Nevertheless, the linguistic features of rhetoric and propaganda will continue to be relevant, as they remain the only things that can truly add colour and excitement to political campaigns.
References

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