

## Two as Magic Number: Aspects of the Persuasive Style of Commercial Road Transport Advertising Discourse in South-Western Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Language behaviours of small groups have been taken for granted in linguistic research in Nigeria. These small groups do interesting things with language as, if not more creatively than, advertising practitioners, media workers, politicians, musicians, literary writers etc, that are generally acknowledged as innovators in language. This paper aims at addressing this neglect. One often ignored small group whose language behaviour piques interest in this paper is the commercial road transport advertisers. The paper indicates that the language of this group, in addition to its discourteous substances, is dense with rhetorical, persuasive elements that are effectual in selling their services which, as we find, are framed as products, and in making life go on and enjoyable in their small world.*

**Key Words:** Oratory, magic number, 'megaphonic', amplification

### Introduction

A walk into any public motor park in South-western Nigeria reveals a common sight: a man, usually under a small tent or inside an abandoned vehicle, holding close onto his mouth, an old telephone receiver, which has been reworked by local technicians, to function as a microphone. On top of the collapsible tent or cast off vehicle is a megaphone, channeling the voice in different directions. The individual behind the talking instrument uses language in a distinct way that should interest language scholars. Prior to this development, there has been in existence a traditional method of touting which does not involve much use of language. While the 'traditional' tout scampers up and down, hunting for passengers, the 'megaphonic' tout sits at one place, where he registers, in oratory, his campaigns to both the enthusiastic and unwilling audiences. The two of them now work together as a team in producing the oratory under study.

The phenomenon described above and which informs the subject of this paper would surely be outlandish to the audiences in the western countries where public transportation may not call for any serious advertising. As opposed to the situation, for instance, in Shanghai, where The Magnetic Leviathan Train makes public transport convenient, London, where 'Double-decker buses' and 'Light Rail System' complement each other to ease public transportation, Munich, where Trams are superabundant, Mexico where The Modern Metro, which is capable of carrying 240,000 passengers per day, has been inaugurated as far back as 1969 (See White's "Public Transportation" in *Encarta*, 2006), or in Dubai where "roads are designed to accommodate surging traffic and enhance business...and where a commuter can book for taxi on the internet and wait to be picked up..." (See Adeyemo, 2008), Nigeria has poor public transport system with rickety passenger cars and too few luxury buses affordable to the very few affluent people. In this country, the governments exercise "supreme control and supervision over licensing of drivers, the importation, registration and licensing of all types of vehicles, and orderly flow of traffic but the bulk of passenger transportation is performed by private companies and individuals" (See Onakomaiya, 1983:359) and there is no known practical public transport policy regarding the ownership and use of commercial motor vehicles, the rights of travelers and pricing. Given this circumstance, public transport becomes a free market, a situation which inevitably compels market competition (one aspect of which is the road transport advertising described above) among contending service providers. Later in this paper, we shall remark on the other and more ludicrous aspects of this competition.

## Aim of the Study

This paper sets out to reveal some rhetorical facts of the advertising language of the commercial road transport advertisers in South-western Nigeria. It aims to show that the language variety is not just 'dirty' as the public sees it neither is it just for inviting potential travelers but that it serves other rhetorical purposes such as enthusing, emoting and deceiving. These and some other functions, we shall consider later in this paper constitute the total import of the oratory.

## Data Collection/Analysis Method

Giving the noisy nature of the research environments, which prevented tape-recording of linguistic data, participatory observation method was used in gathering the data analyzed in this study. The researcher visited a major park in each of the four major cities in South-western Nigeria and, unsuspected by the subjects, recorded their rhetorical pieces in writing. The motor parks included Ojoo in Ibadan (Oyo State), Ajegunle in Oshogbo (Osun State), Odosida in Ondo (Ondo State) and Berger In Lagos (Lagos State). Data obtained in these sources were considered as adequately representing those obtainable in other places not visited, for all the states in South-western Nigeria share the same socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Also, because of their regular inter-state shuttles, they get along quite regularly. So, they are a linguistic group with almost, if not virtually, the same speech style.

The data were closely read and correlated (since we did not aim at a comparative study) to one another for common features. They were then grouped according to the rhetorical strategies they illustrate. Catford's (1974:27) theory of Translation Equivalence which is premised on the view that every language is "*ultimately sui generis*", meaning that its categories are defined in terms of relations holding within the language itself, was invoked in rendering the data in the target language. Using this approach of translation, we were able to present the nearly equivalents of the data thereby furnishing readers with the true data that we are working with.

## Theoretical Orientation

The language under study is a form of rhetoric as it is aimed at winning people over. The theory of persuasive rhetoric therefore readily suggests itself in analyzing it. Also, since this study concerns with what Gumperz (1982:9) describes as "the language usage of a particular human group", we need an interpretive schema that permits the application of our knowledge of the people's social world in conducting our investigation. In this respect, Deil Hymes' contextual theory proves useful. The discourse under study is a situational-rooted genre of persuasion. This point attests further to the suitability of the two theories in analyzing it. In what follows shortly therefore, we review them in a greater detail, starting with the theory of rhetoric, in a bid to showing their fittingness to our purpose in the present study.

*Rhetoric:* From the classical, medieval and renaissance periods to the modern time, Rhetoric has been about the "theory and practice of eloquence, whether spoken or written" (*Encarta*, 2006). It concerns with all matters relating to beauty, forcefulness or accuracy of style. That is, "the use of language in such a manner as to impress the hearers and influence them for or against a certain course of action" (Freese, 1959: viii). These rhetorical qualities are generally associated with Homer, Plato, Cicero, Aristotle, Seneca, Georgias and the Sophists in the classical period; Capella, Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville, etc during the medieval period and Leonard Cox, Pierre de Courrelles and Andre de Tonquelin during the renaissance time (see Bradford, 1997:1-4 and *Encarta*, 2006). These philosophers are associated with certain rhetorical models that described principles to be followed in composing discourses of various types. One of these models is Aristotle's Persuasive Discourse Model, which specifies three ways that speakers can persuade their audiences. The three ways include: ethical, pathetic and logical (See Parson and Sanford, 1994:87-188). Using ethical way, the speaker relies on his own image or uses the image of a trustworthy person in presenting his views. This serves in giving concrete endorsement to such views. Pathetic persuasion focuses on the emotions of the audiences, constructing a position for them by indicating that something is either good or bad. One good example of this is the government's regulatory warning on cigarette products in Nigeria- "Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health". Logical persuasion relies on verifiable arguments.

It makes claim, confirms that the claims are true by giving evidence and urging you to accept the claims. The fundamental principles of Aristotle's persuasive model and other models not touched upon here, according to *Encarta* (2006) include invention, arrangements, style, memory and delivery.

The scope of rhetoric has moved beyond its traditional three major kinds-deliberative, forensic and epideictic. Contemporary rhetoric, in the words of Esuh (2003:191) is "an offshoot of Modern Scientific Philosophical analysis and comprises all the artistic and scientific analysis and application of rhetoric to everyday behavioural pattern of human existence". This implies that the study of oratory now includes such treaties as history, philosophy, literature, advertising, political discourse, music and several others. In view of this, we consider the specimen of language under study as a genre of modern rhetoric.

*Dell Hymes' Elements of Context:* As indicated earlier, the discourse under study is peculiar to a small group. There is therefore the need to provide relevant situation information about the group, particularly the social and psychological context in which they operate. This will help us in conducting explicit interpretation, particularly to serve the non-Nigerian audiences. Hymes (1964) identifies six elements of the discourse. These include participants, topic, setting, channel, code and message form. Following Hymes' classification, the discourse of transport advertising is briefly contextualized below.

*a. Participants and setting:* The regular inhabitants of the public motor parks in Nigeria are not just commercial transport workers but also petty traders, beggars, artisans, vagabonds, newspaper vendors, job seekers and 'local sex workers'. These people, though not the immediate target of the campaigns, represent a part of the background for the rhetorical style adopted. Activities in this domain lead to that special variety of language pejoratively referred to as "the language of the garage boys" in Nigeria. This term has complete negative connotations: it is simply a dirty language by public assessment. Truly speaking, everything on all sides of the participants in this discourse environment promotes the use of language in deviance of social etiquette: there is, in steady display, despite government constant regulations against such practice, hard drinks and herbal drugs with alcoholic ingredient; there are also several inner circles, where people smoke hemp and hard cigarettes liberally. In spite of all these, the public judgment of the language use of this group is rather too brusque and not too correct. It is borne out of the general notion in the country that driving is a job reserved for people that have failed in other better areas such as schooling, trading and even, farming.

Paradoxically, this so-called dirty environment is favourable to the development of oratorical skills, which may be difficult to come by in any other area: Evidence abounds that many of the popular music and theater artists in the country today, grew up in, or at one time or the other, had some 'engagements' with this environment. No doubt, commercial transport workers in Nigeria epitomize hard work. Early risers - they wake the cock. In the early and late 70's before the rise in the activities of highway robbers, commercial transporters used to pick passengers on their beds. The practice then was that passengers would go to their desired motor park a day preceding their journey and enlist with the vehicle plying their destination by supplying their detailed address. They were very confident of being picked before dawn the following day. More importantly, it has become a common knowledge in the country that no one can trounce the 'garage boys', as the inhabitants of these places are sometimes called, in the battle of words. Most of them, no doubts, are orators.

*b. Channel and Code:* The medium being employed is the medium of speech. However, it can not be regarded strictly as a public speech for the speaker and the audiences are not engaged in formal face-to-face encounter. Also, the audiences are mere listeners; they rarely contribute to the development of the oratory. The discourse is rendered in Yoruba, which is the language spoken in the research environment. Occasionally, participants mix Yoruba with English, which is the country's official language.

*C. Topic and Message Form:* The major activity of the commercial transport advertisers in Nigeria is the achievement of manipulation. That is, the totality of their rhetorical practices is primarily for the purpose of convincing travelers. The travelers need to be persuaded for some reasons- one is to cope with the market competition for their services: there are numerous other motor parks they can go to for these services. Another reason is that *pirate transporters* (commercial transporters that pick their passengers along roads and private car owners who accost passengers either for economic gains or for on-the-journey companionship) struggle hard with them. In this respect, the commercial transport advertisers are different from the traditional touts, who jostle passengers into commercial vehicles, using physical action, or *On-the-motion* conductors whose strategy is the drawling tone of voice which they manipulate in announcing their destinations to the intending passengers. The first group are often

found in unorganized bus stops where they scramble for passengers, pushing them around, elbowing and shielding contending mates and shoving their 'catches' into the waiting-going things which they call *Aje-Igboro* (the money maker of the town) vehicles.

Both the subtle manipulation and *push around* activities described above paint an ugly, but realistic picture of the public transport system in Nigeria. It is obvious that the government of this nation has failed in providing convenient transport system for the citizenry. The collapse of the rail system in the early 80's, the inability of many people to bear the cost of air and water transportation in Nigeria coupled with the hazards of the two means of transportation in the country have led to an increase in the demand for road transportation. Since then, the business has witnessed a boom. More than before, commercial vehicle owners can now be proud of their profession: they no longer wear dirty clothes while on duty. More importantly, they now have a formidable union-the National Union of Road Transport Workers, which in addition to its trade union activities plays *in/significant* role in politics and sports. Some sorts of refinement have been brought into their practices, one of which is the 'megaphonic' advertising under study.

## Analysis and Discussion

A close reading of the data gathered reveals such common strategies as impersonation, deceit, costly humour, sing song, affectations, bulldozing and face-threatening acts, used by the megaphonic advertisers studied. These strategies are common to them since commercial transporters in this part of the country get constantly in touch with one another through inter-state shuttles. This brings about some sort of cross-fertilization of marketing ideas. The strategies are analyzed below drawing upon analytical methods used in the works of such earlier scholars (who have researched on rhetorical discourses and the language behavior of small groups) as Lloyd's (2007) "Rear gunners and troubled privates: Wordplay in a dick joke competition", Hobbs's (2007) "Miracles of love: The use of metaphor in egg donor advertisements", and Awonuga's (1988) "Political Rhetoric: Awolowo's Use of Language".

### The Use of Deceit

Language is strategically used in this domain to deceive. When this happens, people are deluded into taking decisions contrary to their will. One aspect of the deceptive use of language is the use of number-2 as in: *Lagos, Lagos, two more chance; two Ibadan, two chance... Ibadan*. The meaning of this is that two more passengers are needed for the vehicle in turn to take off. An eager passenger will logically interpret this to imply that with him on board of the vehicle, only one traveler is left. This strategy is capable of urging on in-coming passengers, making them double up so that the chance will not elude them. One interesting thing about this strategy is that people understand it to be a lie but because of the characteristic manner in which it is told, they are still swayed by it. Oftentimes, passengers that are such swayed express their disappointment when they realize that there are just few or no passengers on board by mugging the concerned campaigner with abusive words. Interestingly, these commercial advertisers do not play this game of deceit with "1"; while other numbers are indefinite, "1" is real and definite.

Another deceptive strategy, which also reinforces the one discussed above, is impersonation. This involves getting 'vague' passengers seated in the vehicle that is on turn to give the 'authentic' passengers the impression that it will take off in no time. In most cases, the vague passengers are jobless individuals whose haven place is the public motor park; they are paid for this job. Sometimes however, they are a part of the advertising theme who works with the megaphone man to reinforce his campaigns. These 'hired' passengers technically make room for the real passengers by taking permission to purchase call credit, to go and eat at near-by canteen, to urinate; by claiming to have lost an important item and by telling all sorts of unimportant lies. Though this strategy is designed by action, it can be treated as a phenomenon of language because it functions similarly to language. The strategy appeals to the need of the people to get to their desired destinations in time. It is also capable of influencing their decision about where to board a vehicle to their desired destinations.

In addition, they tell lies when passengers complain about the bad conditions of their vehicles, say, for instance, broken screen or bad seat. Their usual defensive statement is that 'the faults just develop' or that they are not aware of such faulty conditions.



## Affectation Strategies

Commercial transport workers in Nigeria are certainly aware of the public assessment of their way of life. They know that the society to which they belong does not accept them on moral ground and that there is the general tendency to brand their language as 'dirty' language. A part of the strategies used by this group in shafting the emotion of the members of this public is disabusing their minds through various forms of pretentiousness. Our data revealed that commercial transport advertisers sometimes harness the religiosity of the people in selling their services by pretending to them to be religious. A walk to any of these parks, particularly in the morning, presents a different picture of this so-called dirty environment: it is simply a worshipping ground depending on the religious leaning of the anchor man. There is unusual seriousness with the anchor turning a clergyman reeling off verses of the Bible or reciting the Quran and praying wholeheartedly for members of that macro family – drivers, passengers, car owners, advertising team and others as those mentioned earlier. Nigerians, no doubt, are religious human beings. Of course, they associate very readily with matters that have religious tone. Commercial advertising rhetoricians in this region demonstrate their understanding of the religion life of their people and harness it by putting up religious postures and this helps them in obtaining success from their campaigns.

In addition, they display a high degree of moral affectation by using honorific terms in addressing their 'clients'. Such English kinship terms that are honorific in the Nigerian context as 'brother', 'sister', uncle, daddy, mummy, and Yoruba honorific pronoun 'e' (a short form of 'eyin'-plural you) are used in inducing favourable responses in the passengers. In a culture like that of Yoruba, where human respect is highly valued, this campaign strategy by the advertisers is considered strategic as it is capable of making realizable their communication purposes. This use of flattering language exemplifies the proverbial "soft words that draw kolanut out of the pocket". This strategy attests to the view of Socrates that rhetoric is "...a mere knack of gratifying and pleasing the hearer...a species of the genus flattery" (see Freese, 1959: xix). This sort of flattery illustrates Aristotle's pathetic strategy for it serves in appealing to the emotion of the potential travelers, making them develop interest in their services.

## Amplification Strategy

Though the language genre under study can not be classified directly as an epideictic rhetoric, whose business is to praise or blame, amplification strategy characteristic of, or more suitable to that kind of rhetoric is used by commercial advertising rhetoricians in Nigeria. This strategy involves the strengthening or lessening of ideas through reference to reputable or nameless persons and important or unimportant occasions as the case may be. In all of the public motor parks visited while gathering data for the study, the oratorical actors enlarge their branch of trade union, the kind of vehicles they display for tours and even the drivers paraded and narrowing others indirectly. One common example is the campaign presented below

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| a. E wole, e wole:                    | Enter, enter  |
| Okò Nua ni okò tí wà ní ibyí:         | Our vehicles here are of Noah                               |
| b. Awa kii gbè'ru eleru ní ibi yíi:   | Here, we don't tamper with our passengers' luggage          |
| Laipè yíi, odidi maalu kan ní Fulani: | Not quite long here   |
| Kan gbagbe sinu moto wà tí a          | One man of Fulani tribe forgot a life cow                   |
| si dà pàdà fun ní odindí àtí laaye:   | In one of our buses and it was returned lively and in whole |
| c. Awa o kii n gbè overload ní ibi:   | Here, we don't carry overload                               |
| Ori Kan; esè mejì ní tiwà:            | It is one head, two legs for us                             |

In the texts a, b and c reproduced above, the advertisers have created fears in the minds of the passengers and have also allayed those fears. Through the style of amplification described earlier, the image of other people (commercial transport providers) and places (motor parks) has been painted bad.

This serves to dissuade passengers from going elsewhere for the service. In text 'a', the campaigner creates in the minds of the passengers the fear of accident which is very rampant on the Nigerian roads, sets these minds at rest through allusion to the biblical Noah, who is universally acclaimed to be the first driver and whose Ark epitomizes safety. Similarly in text 'b', the advertiser appeals to the security needs of the passengers. The orator demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the moral character of some providers of the service advertised, undoubtedly admitting the truth that they do tamper with travelers' belongings but proves his own establishment different.

The fact being expressed here is amplified through the rhetorical practice of hyperbole. *Encarta (2006)* describes the trope as a "form of inordinate exaggeration according to which a person or thing is depicted as being better or worse, or larger or smaller, than is actually the case". In the context of the text, the trope is used by the orator to register his personal sentiment about the matter at stake. Certainly, it is not possible to use the kind of vehicles on display to transport cows not to talk of forgetting one cow inside one of them. Considered at the surface level, the text may be regarded as just a part of the humours in the oratory, but there is more sense than this to the choice of the word 'cow' by the advertisers. This sense is quite logical: Cow in Yoruba semiotic world epitomizes affluence because it is assumed to be the most economically endowed animal. Going by the fact that no single part of it goes to the waste bin when killed for food, the cow is generally regarded as a symbol of bountiful endowment. No wonder why a leading *Fuji* music artiste in Nigeria recently likened himself to a cow among other *Fuji* musicians in the country. As he claimed, even the urine of cow is a basic ingredient of a local drug used in the treatment of convulsion in children. In the context of his brand of music, he considered himself quite indispensable and more gifted than others who sing that brand of music. The level of signification at which this artiste and the producer of the text 'b' under discussion operate indicates that each of them possesses a great knowledge of reasoning. In the context of this advertisement, the strategy is both ethical and logical. It is ethical because it paints a good image of the workers in that domain; it is logical because it can make one reason that one's luggage is safe in the hands of these people who are so honest to let go, even more valuable property that the cow in this campaign symbolizes.

The expression "One head, two legs" in text 'c' above is a synecdoche of one person. The trope serves in the campaign to assure prospective passengers that their convenience is guaranteed. This expression appeals to reason for it presupposes 'one head, more than two legs, which ordinarily is quite impossible. Considered at the secondary level of signification, it relates to, or describes one aspect of the poverty life of the common man in Nigeria. The situation in this country is not only that most people cannot afford a personal car but also that many find it hard to pay for the services of commercial transporters. Consequent upon this, many people engage in 'pairing passenging', involving two or three passengers sitting on each other's lap, occupying a passenger's space. This is called "napping" (adulterated form of the English word-lapping) by commercial road transporters in Nigeria. When this happens, other passengers get inconvenienced but in certain cases, will not dissent in order to demonstrate being considerate of the condition which compels their fellow human beings into taking such a decision. The practice is so rampant especially among school children and apprentice artisans that one common slogan used in commercial road transport advertising in the country is "no napping o", meaning that lapping is not allowed.

Another aspect of the amplifying strategy in the oratory is illustrated by the following slangs registered in the audience, via metaphorical locution.

- a. Maa lo Skoda: Keep on moving Skoda.
- b. Esin loko : This very vehicle is a horse.

Text 'a' above describes the vehicle paraded as 'Skoda'. Skoda is a brand of car which came into the Nigerian automobile market in the early part of 1990's. It was highly cherished for elegance and speed. Since then, the word 'Scoda' has become a metaphor of elegance and high speed. Outside this domain, the word is used to urge people on and praise them as unstoppable. Similarly, the word 'horse' in 'b' is a metaphor of speed and power. The ability of the horse to survive for days without food and water is harnessed in this campaign to describe the performance power of the vehicle in question. Though some of these vehicles portrayed as 'Horse' and 'Skoda' often break down after travelling a few kilometers, the strategy often works well for the campaigners in producing desired persuasive effects.

## Humour

To generate pleasure in the discourse environment, transport advertisers sometimes construct jokes, play on words and involve in sing-song and tongue-twisting practices. Tones and rhythms are managed in some way to produce pleasurable effects. One example of tongue-twisting style is shown in the extract below:

Agawaga tigi sege tangan nigiyenge o : awa ti se tan niyen o  
 Egeningin togo бага mongan wigi pege : Eni ti o ba mon wi pe  
 Ogoungun n longo kigi ogo gbege egesege nigin lenge o: Oun n lo ki o gbe ese n le o

In producing the tongue-twisting text above, the producer inserts the voiced velar sound / g / and the velar nasal sound / ŋ /, after every vowel sound in a word. This kind of language game is common among school children who use the code in conducting extensive discourses amongst themselves. While some adults will simply consider this as impeding communication process and pay no attention to it, some are enthused by it and smile for joy. The English translation equivalence of the text above is provided below

We are set to go now now  
 Whoever knows that  
 He is going had better walk up quickly.

Similarly, the rhetoricians sometimes cast expensive or annoying jokes with their passengers. Such jokes relate especially to the body image of women. One example in our data is reproduced below:

One more chance. One more chance: One more chance. One more chance.  
 E jowo a o gbe eleru o: Please not the one with load o

The producer of the text above plays upon the word 'load' making it doubly meaningful. At the level of denotation, it means the actual load. In the context in which it is used however, this actual sense of the word has been used, as an extension of the general derogative and stereotype image of women in Nigeria, to imply an obese woman. This kind of humour excites the emotion and commercial road transport advertisers in Nigeria take delight in it, even though it is uncouth and the affected person, especially if she understands this derogative sense, can take offence.

Similarly, they adorn their language with vulgar expressions. These expressions are used in charging the atmosphere of their discourse environment. In the text below, the advertiser uses language offensively through the rhetorical operation of pun:

Ado. Ado .Ado : Ado. Ado! Ado.  
 Ado.Obinrin meji. Ado. Obinrin meji : Ado. Two women.  
 Ado.Obinrin meji: Ado. Two women

The word 'Ado' is a short form of 'Ado-Ekiti', the name of a capital city in South-western Nigeria. Each part of the compound naming word is a root and a stem and can stand for the original full form. This implies that the terminus of the vehicle on trip is this capital city. The producer of this oratory however chooses the second stem deliberately for achieving a particular communication intension. 'Ado' is a clip of two Yoruba words –'Awa' (we) and 'do' (to engage in sexual action with ...female sex). It is obvious from the context of this text that it is the latter sense of the word that the producer intends. In the first instance, the advertiser's preference for women travelers is un-called for in a country where women constantly fall victims of rape, kidnapping and ritual killing. Of course, if interpreted that way, it is capable of pushing them off. Two reasons can be adduced for the choice of woman travelers in the text. The first is to register his intention clearly. The second reason is that the reversed version 'Ado Okunrin meji' is outright impossible aside the fact that it will not produce the comic effect the advertiser wants it to produce because this will suggest lesbianism - an unpopular, if known at all, practice in Nigeria. The kind of sex talk described here is unethical giving the moral background of this country but many Nigerians believe that expressions like this are drug-induced. So, in most cases, they do not take offence as long as it is in this domain that such comes to life. It now appears that these people enjoy special immunity to use language in an 'unconventional' manner.

One other aspect of the humour in the discourse is realized through lexical repetition on reduplication. One prime example in our data is “E wole koro koro. E wole witi witi”. The words “koro” and “witi” in Yoruba language are onomatopoeic words suggesting fast speed. Their repetition in this encounter serves in urging on prospective travelers. The repetition also gives the discourse some musical quality and makes the text produce some gripping effects of an incantation. The rhetorical strategy serves in playing upon the emotion of potential travelers who are always eager to set out on their journey in time.

### Demonstration of the Knowledge of Places

Another means of persuasion employed by transport service rhetoricians in Nigeria is the display of their knowledge of places along different routes. They do this by reeling off the name of these places and important terminuses in order of their nearness to each other. This is an aspect of the fear-allaying strategy in the oratory. It is necessitated by the fact that public transport system in this part of the world is fraught with such unsafe practices by commercial motor drivers as wantonly terminating a journey and exchanging passengers. The campaign strategy serves in assuring the passengers that they will be delivered at their right destinations. Strangers, who are plying the road for the first time or who do not know places, also do not need to seek direction from passers-by.

### Bulldozing Strategy

Conscious of the fact that the passengers are at their mercies, commercial transport advertisers in Nigeria sometimes adopt bold-face or face-threatening strategy. This rhetorical practice often compels people to act against their will. Examples found from our investigation are analyzed below:

1. The choice of Rough Imperatives:
  - E wole ti e ban lo.
  - Awa o fe ki eniyan ma duro lenu motor wa...
  - Enter if you are going with us
  - Here, we don't allow passengers
  - To hang on our motor vehicle...
2. The use of Advisory Imperatives:
  - O je ma go oko iluu re:
  - You had better not miss this chance.
  - Eleyi ma ti n lo niyen en:
  - This one is already set to take off
  - Abi o Fe foru wolu? :
  - Or you want to get home late?
3. The choice of Strong Assertive Locutions:
  - Ma fi akoko e sofo.Ko si soole mo
  - Do not continue to waste your time
  - The era of 'soole' (road side lifting of passengers)
  - has gone

When language is used in the manners above, prospective travelers who had probably thought of going elsewhere may have to re-think and step back. The language patterns are often deliberately used by the advertisers to conceal their curiosity to secure passengers. Certainly, it is when this curiosity is overt that most Nigerian travelers make nonsense of their advertisement by deciding to dishonour it. This last point describes one aspect of the unholy relationship between commuters and their drivers in Nigeria in spite of their symbiotic engagement.



## Conclusion

This study has made clear, through dwelling on the nature and value of commercial transport advertising oratory in Nigeria, the fact that rhetoric is neither an exclusive property of classical or western culture nor is it limited to political, forensic, philosophical, literary etc treatises. It indicates rather that since the road transport service advertisers whose language style constitutes the data for this study draw heavily on the devices of rhetoric: demonstrate, through their use of language that they possess the power of reasoning and have knowledge of the people's emotions and passions, use language with ornamentation, they are fit to be regarded as a recognizable part of modern rhetoricians. Their language therefore deserves attentions in linguistic research.

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