

Delineating the Language Features of War Speeches

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Abstract

The writer sets out to study excerpted samples of the war speeches made across the world between the World War eras and the present with a view to finding out the linguistic choices favoured by war leaders over time to drum up support for wars. It is argued here that there may be something unique in the linguistic choices made in war speeches which convince people to support the prosecution of wars despite the wanton destruction that follows them. Framed on a descriptive research design, with stylistics as the theoretical framework, the study examines the excerpts chosen by deliberate sampling so as to identify and analyze the features they share. The analysis reveals that the speeches share many linguistic features in common, all of which may be responsible for the control of the minds and actions of the people.

Keywords: War; Language; International community; Propaganda; Rhetorical functions.



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1. Introduction

If there are casualties of war then remember that when they woke up this morning they did not plan to die this day. Allow them dignity in death. Bury them properly and mark their graves. It is my intention to bring every single one out alive but there may be people among us who will not see the end of this campaign. We will put them in their sleeping bags and send them back. There will be no time for sorrow (Collins, 2003).

This was excerpted from the speech delivered by Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Collins of the Royal Irish Regiment of the British Army to his troops in Kuwait the night before Iraq was bombarded in order to capture the uncertainties of war times even from the point of view of war actors, the military. Civilians are not excluded from the fear, insecurity, threats, precariousness, and danger that wars portend. Throughout history, the world has been ravaged by wars of different magnitudes. Great talents have been cut down. Families, towns, settlements have been wiped out. Many economies have crashed, many ancient and great civilizations and cities of the world have been brought to ruins, and physical structures and other amenities put in place to compliment life are razed down deliberately during wars. Lives spared by soldiers' bullets or missiles are taken by hunger, starvation and diseases, as medical attention and relief materials if available do not reach everyone who needs them.

The Second World War alone took an estimated 56.4 million lives (Guinness Book of Records). Another estimate of 5.4 million deaths, excluding deaths by starvation, diseases, and other indirect influences of war has been recorded in thirteen countries between 1955 – 2002 (Reinberg and Healthday Reporter, 2008). Assessing the level of destruction in the ongoing war in Syria, the world Bank observes that an estimated four hundred to four hundred and seventy deaths have been recorded and that about half of her 2010 population has been displaced. Also, between 2011 and 2016, her GDP has been estimated at \$226 billion. The Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) which cost the Federal Government a whopping sum of \$840 million (equivalent of 300 million Nigerian pounds) wasted an estimated three million lives (Aneke, 2007). The Middle East has engaged in many theatres of war and violence (Arab- Israeli War (1948-1949, Israeli's Senai Campaign (1956), Yemen Civil War (1961-1969), Arab-Israeli War (1973) and others since the Second World War, with the number of deaths estimated at hundreds of thousands, very many wounded persons, massive destruction of infrastructure, and millions of displaced persons (A Chronicle of the Middle East Conflict, 2005). Wars and violence of different magnitudes going on globally are responsible for the massive refugee crises ravaging the more peaceful parts of the world, as people keep fleeing to safety. Many people and nations also face massive poverty and outbreak of diseases as an aftermath of war. In addition to these, wars go with maiming, assaults, brutality, psychological trauma that may last for lifetime.

War, therefore, is all about deliberate destruction of lives and property, and everything that makes life worth living. It brings with it trails of destruction, waste, carnage, torture starvation, and wilful murder. Yet, it is a calamity human beings will have to contend with for a long time because they are aggressive by nature and always tend towards self-destruction. Many nations have invested and are still investing fortunes to manufacture and possess different categories of weapons of mass destruction even when the majority of the populace live in abject poverty.

In spite of the huge destructions that trail wars, people are persuaded or manipulated into accepting war as the only viable means of solving political crisis and resolving territorial issues. Herman Goering confessed privately to Gustave M. Gilbert, a prison psychologist and U.S Army Captain, in his jail cell during the Nuremberg trials on April 18, 1946 as follows:

Why, of course, the people don't want war. Why would some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best that he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece? Naturally, the common people don't want war; neither in Russia nor in England nor in America, nor for that matter in Germany. That is understood. But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people

along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a parliament or a communist dictatorship ... Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same way in any country (n.p.)

To achieve this aim, wartime speeches are heavily ornamented to project the wickedness of the enemy; their evil intentions toward the people; the need to safeguard the integrity of the state/nation and her people, and to protect their territory by embarking on the war. This research investigates selected war speeches from the First World War to the present so as to highlight the features they share, and by which the minds of people are manipulated into accepting war as a way of solving crises. As far as this researcher knows, war speeches have not been studied for the purposes of discovering their features. Considering what the world has lost to wars, this study will guide people towards discerning manipulative intents inherent in war speeches so that they can take informed decisions when an option of war is placed before them. The following research questions will be answered in the course of this work.

- a. What are the features of language commonly found in war speeches?
- b. What effects do they have on the human mind?

War speeches, ranging from the ones delivered during the First World War to the war in Syria and Iraq, as well as other armed conflicts and insurgencies going on in different parts of the world were downloaded from the internet and studied. Recurrent features in the speeches were excerpted for analysis.

1.1. What is War?

War is a large-scale conflict between two or more groups, states, or nations carried out by the military or mercenaries over a period of time. It is the absence of peace. Clausewitz defines war as “an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will” (75). Long also sees it as “...a spectrum of discord, a continuum where unrestrained armed conflict and world peace are at opposing ends” (1). According to him:

If a nation’s will is in harmony with other entities then the natural tendency will lean towards world peace. As discord develops between a nation’s will and other nation-states or non-state actors the natural tendency will increasingly lean toward more aggressive national engagement and armed conflict. (1)

Wars started in the preliterate society. Many writers have given conflicting insights into what the first war was. [Ahmedadab \(2008\)](#) notes that the first recorded evidence of war was the one between Lagash and Umma estimated to have taken place in 2525 BC, while [Mark \(2009\)](#) dates the first pictorial evidence of soldiers in war to the Kingdom of Kish around 3500BCE. He also notes that Jericho provided archeologist with evidence that a fortified city stood on the site before 7000BCE n.p.). The wars took the forms of small and large scale raids and massacres fought with spears, clubs and stones, and in some parts of the world by soldiers on horsebacks and carriages. Since the Second World War, many sophisticated weapons of war, including biological, chemical and nuclear weapons have been invented and used, while some nations have continued to aspire to equal others in the possession of sophisticated weapons. This implies that human beings are aggressive, and their aggressiveness has made wars and advancement in modern warfare inevitable. Man, therefore, may have to contend with wars for a very long time.

1.2. Types of Warfare

Warfare is categorized into the following:

- i. Chemical warfare – It is the use of poison gas which can kill in hundreds by suffocating its victims to death. Chemical warfare is prohibited. However, tear gas is permitted to be used in violence prone areas.
- ii. Civil war – It is the outbreak of war between two or more groups within the same country.
- iii. Conventional warfare – This is the reduction of an opponent’s armament through an open battle.
- iv. Guerilla warfare – This is an unconventional warfare in which a less equipped army attacks the enemy surreptitiously to make up for discrepancies in armament. It is a military tactic that can be effectively used to deal heavy blows to the enemy.
- v. Asymmetrical warfare – This type of war takes place between two opponents of notable discrepancies in military might and size.
- vi. Nuclear warfare – This is the use of nuclear weapon to assault the enemy. Nuclear warfare is the most dreaded warfare because of the magnitude of destruction it brings. It is capable of decimating the world population. Only a few nations are in possession of nuclear weapons.

1.3. War Speeches

Speeches are an essential ingredient of war. War speeches are an embodiment of conscious efforts aimed at manipulating the minds of the people using the powers of oratory. They are used to talk the people into accepting war by condemning the rival group, transmitting propaganda, giving them updates on the conduct of the war, and assuring them of imminent victory. War speeches are consciously crafted to respond to the emotions of the people and suit the mood of the time.

In the words of Wenzlowski “political, and especially speeches that deal with war have to be stirring, appealing and convincing...” (2013, p. 25). Consequently, war leaders seek and utilize oratorical powers to convince the people to embrace war despite the enormity of its consequences. War time speeches encapsulate the problems, necessities, and achievements of the time, and serve as a powerful instrument of persuasion, explanation, and manipulation. The wartime leader uses emotive language to paint a sinister image of the enemy so as to provoke grave resentment towards the threat they represent; justify the reasons for war, and use persuasive strategies to gain the support and allegiance of the people. Wenzlowski states that:

speeches that deal with war mainly aim at creating a feeling of unity, enthusiasm and at enhancing patriotism by referring and appealing to a nation's history, ideology, convictions and values that are in danger and have to be defended. At the same time the politician has to point out his own position, resolution, his personal authority and responsibility. All in all, it is his task to "promote" the righteousness and necessity of a possible war (3)

This view is also shared by Butt *et al.* (2004). "It is said that the central players in the prosecution of war understand that in order to win the war, they must win „hearts and minds“. The category – „hearts and minds“ – applies to those undertaking the campaign as well as those being liberated (p. 286-287). To this end, political leaders employ many rhetorical devices to make their speeches compelling, appealing and persuasive. Rhetorical devices are the devices used to make the sender's message have the expected impact on the receiver. What then is rhetoric?

1.4. Rhetoric

"... all communication, to a greater or lesser extent, is an exercise in control, an attempt to assert one's own position and to persuade the other to accept it" ((Widdowson, 2007) p. 67). This art of persuasion is a very old discourse art. It was esteemed very highly in the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations as the art of gaining control of the civic life of the people and political situation of the time especially as speakers were adjudged knowledgeable in all topics (The Roman Republic's Adoption of Rhetoric, n.d, n.p.). Rhetoric is esteemed in many nations of the world especially in relation to the control of civic life. People are easily swayed by powerful language especially when the speaker is adjudged competent, influential, and knowledgeable. Lucas observes that:

we are persuaded to support a cause or campaign for one or more of these reasons: because they perceive the speaker as having high credibility, because they are won over by the speaker's evidence, because they are convinced by the speaker's reasoning, and because their emotions are touched by the speaker's ideas or language. ((Lucas, 2004) p. 428)

Persuasion is "an ongoing process in which verbal and nonverbal messages shape, reinforce and change people's responses" (Miller cited in Pearson *et al.* (2003) p. 541). Also, Prentice Hall Grammar avers that a persuasive speech "is a spoken statement that presents a position and tries to convince an audience to accept that position or to take an action" (2004, p.123). Persuasive speech involves using all possible oratorical skills to convince the audience that the speaker's line of argument is worthwhile and should be given a trial. A good persuasive speech is capable of swaying the listeners. Consequently, civic life is controlled by those who possess persuasive abilities to control the people. Persuasion, reinforces beliefs, opinion or attitude of an audience. It changes people's belief systems, opinions or attitudes and move them to act out the scripts written by the speakers. (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2015).

There are times in the political life of a people when the leader deploys all the persuasive strategies at his or her disposal to lure the people into taking some decisions which could be life threatening. One of such points is wartime. War leaders use elegant persuasive language to convince their people to embark on war. The enemy nation is portrayed as sinister, oppressive and ruthless people, and the people are made to understand them as such. Throughout history, war speeches have exhibited some rhetorical strategies which have proved effective in convincing peoples to embrace war as the only means to solve political problems. It is the target of this study explore them and their persuasive impacts on the people.

1.5. Stylistics

Stylistics is the branch of linguistics that studies literary texts, news reports, speeches, interviews, and other communicative events/ situations in order to discover how the writer or producer has deployed linguistic resources to actualize his or her goal. It accounts for the distinct choices authors make, and which give their works particular flavour. Ike states that "stylistic is first and foremost a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses of language, that is, the varieties of language in use" (10). Simpson defines it as "a method of textual analysis in which primacy of place is assigned to language" (2).

Broadly, stylistics is divided into linguistic and literary stylistics. Linguistic stylistics explores creativity and innovativeness in language use in non-literary texts such as speeches, interviews, radio broadcasts, debates, sermons, while literary stylistics studies linguistic choices made in literary texts in order to fully appraise a work of arts. The stylistician pays in-depth attention to the sound patterns, syntactic organization, and semantic relations, among other things. To this effect, stylistic analysis is usually carried out on the levels of phonetics/phonology, graphology, morphology, syntax/grammar, lexicology, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis. Modern stylistics has witnessed the evolution and survival of cognitive, feminist, critical, discourse, and pragmatic stylistics.

The theory of stylistics upon which this study hinges is foregrounding. It is a deviation from the language norms to achieve an aesthetic/stylistic effect. According to Yankson, "any deviation from the norm – the code- is the foreground, because it brings the message to the forecourt of the reader's attention" (1987, p. 3). The opposite of foreground is the background. It is, therefore, a deviation from the background that results in foreground. The two main types of foregrounding are deviation and parallelism. Deviation takes the form of deliberate violation of the rules of normal usage in order to attract attention to what is said, while parallelism concerns pattern repetition or replication to create special effects.

2. Data Analysis and Results

2.1. Strategic Use of Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns are an indispensable persuasive tool in war discourse due to their ability to emphasize and manipulate meaning. Nakagwe observes that:

Even though pronouns do not convey meaning to the extent as content words, which give meaning to a sentence, they may change the meaning or understanding of the sentence or even the perception of the speaker depending on how they are used. Pronouns also indicate the relationship between speaker and listener or between the speaker and a certain situation. Pronouns can place distance between speaker and listeners or a situation or express solidarity and unity. (4)

Below are examples of the use of the personal pronouns „I“, „we“, „our“, „they“ and „you“ in war speeches:

„I“

I should like to say this to the world. I alone was in a position to make such proposals, for I know very well that in doing so I brought myself into opposition to millions of Germans (Hitler, 1939).

When others were building castles, I lived in a modest house, and in a tent. I never forgot my youth in Sirte, I did not spend our national treasury foolishly, and like Salah-al-Deen, our great Muslim leader, who rescued Jerusalem for Islam, I took little for myself... (Gaddafi, 2011).

I expect My First Guard Regiment on Foot and My Guards to add a new page of fame to their glorious history. The celebration today finds us confident in God in the Highest and remembering the glorious days of Leuthen, Chlum, and St. Privat. Our ancient fame is an appeal to the German people and their sword. And the entire German nation to the last man has grasped the sword (Wilhelm, July 31 1914)

The use of „we“ and „our“

For three years we have fought against overwhelming odds. Our conduct of the war has been contrasted sharply with that of the Nigerian hordes. We were always aware of our limitations, and therefore have never discontinued our efforts for peace and a negotiated settlement (Odumegwu, 1970).

We wish that this were not so. But we must deal with the world as it is, if it is ever to be as we wish. (Johnson, 1965).

The use of „he“, „they“, „it“, „its“

Beaulieu fled with the remains of his army. Already Normandy may be considered as belonging to the Republic. At this moment Beaulieu is passing through the Venetian States, many of whose cities have closed their door upon him (Bornaparte, 1796).

This war, like most wars, is filled with terrible irony. For what do the people of North Viet-nam want? They want what their neighbours also desire: food for their hunger; health for their bodies; a chance to learn; progress for their country; and an end to the bondage of material misery. And they will find all these things far more readily in peaceful association with others than in the endless course of battle (Johnson, 1965).

The position of Prussia in Germany will not be determined by its liberalism but by its power ... Prussia must concentrate its strength and hold it for the favorable moment, which has already come and gone several times. Since the treaties of Vienna, our frontiers have been ill-designed for a healthy body politic (von Bismarck, 1892).

The use of „you“

Soldiers, you are naked and ill-fed! Government owes you much and can give you nothing. The patience and courage you have shown in the midst of these rocks are admirable; but they have gain you no renown; no glory results to you for your endurance...” (Bornaparte, 1796).

And so tonight – to you, the great silent majority of my fellow Americans – I ask for your support. (Nixon, 1969).

2.2. Justification

War leaders as much as possible contrive reasons for embarking on wars. They want to be seen as having good reasons to embark on war. Consider these excerpts:

What are the main facts? There were six countries which entered the war at the beginning. Britain was last, and not the first. Before she entered the war, Britain made every effort to avoid it; begged, supplicated, and entreated that there should be no conflict. (George, 1917).

This is not a world we should accept. This is what's at stake. And that is why, after careful deliberation, I determined that it is in the national security interests of the United States to respond to the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons through a targeted military strike. The purpose of this strike would be to deter Assad from using chemical weapons, to degrade his regime's ability to use them, and to make clear to the world that we will not tolerate their use (Obama, 2013).

Some may ask: Why act now? Why not wait? The answer is clear: The world could wait no longer. Sanctions though having some effects, showed no signs of accomplishing their objective. Sanctions were tried for well over 5 months, and we and our allies concluded that sanctions alone would not force Saddam from Kuwait. (Bush, 1991).

We are now in a state of war in every sense of the word," the president told supporters. "This war targets Syria using a handful of Syrians and many foreigners. Thus, this is a war to defend the nation (Al-Assad, 2013).

2.3. Repetition

This is another important rhetorical tool used in war speeches. It is aimed at highlighting the indispensability of the topic they express to the conduct of the war. Examples:

You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: victory: victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realized; no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal... (Churchill, 1940b).

For France is not alone! She is not alone! She is not alone! She has a vast Empire behind her. She can align with the British Empire that holds the sea and continues the fight. (De-Gaulle, 1940).

Repetition can also be in the forms of anaphora, alliteration, parallelism.

a. Anaphora

This involves the repetition of the same word(s) at the beginning of successive clauses or phrases in order to secure emphasis, to heighten the style, distinctness, or charm (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2015) Anaphora is a powerful rhetorical device to encourage the audience and appeal to her emotions of the audience. Examples:

We shall go on to the end, We shall fight in France

We shall fight on the seas and the oceans

We shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be

We shall fight on the beaches

We shall fight on the landing grounds

We shall fight in the fields and in the streets We shall fight in the hills

We shall never surrender... (Churchill, 1940a) Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands

Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island. (Roosevelt, 1941a).

b. Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of a consonant mainly at the beginning of two or more words in a sentence or succeeding lines (especially in poems) to emphasize meaning.

The second wave targeted other ships and shipyard facilities. (Roosevelt, 1941b).

We are sure that these liberties will be in hands which will not abuse them. (Churchill, 1939).

Our difficulties and dangers will not be removed by closing our eyes to them (Churchill, 1946).

c. Parallelism

Wartime leaders employ linguistic foregrounding in the form of pattern repetition to bring their message to the fore.

Behind all this glare, behind all this storm, I see that small group of villainous men who plan, organize, and launch this cataract of horrors upon mankind (Churchill, 1941).

The past, with its crimes, its follies, and its tragedies, flashes away (Churchill, 1941).

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger (Roosevelt, 1941b).

2.4. Rhetorical Questions

These are questions asked to make a point or achieve a particular effect on the addressee, rather than to get an answer. Examples:

For 18 white men, Europe is aroused. What have they said about our millions? 18 white men assisting the crime of genocide! What does Europe say about our murdered innocents? How many black dead make one missing white? Mathematicians, please answer me. Is it infinity? (Odumegwu, 1969a).

Why must we take this painful road? Why must this nation hazard its ease, and its interest and its power for the sake of a people so far away? (Johnson, 1965).

2.5. Appeal to a Supreme Being

War speeches usually display the dependence of the war leader and his army on God for victory. Examples:

The freemen of the world are matching together to victory! I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will expect nothing less than full victory! Good luck! And let us all beseech the blessings of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking (Eisenhower, 1944).

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain inevitable triumph. So help us God (Roosevelt, 1941a).

2.6. The Use of Evidence

Evidence helps to clarify and reinforce your ideas. Strong evidence is useful in war speeches because many are skeptical about going to war. Evidence consists of supporting material such as testimonies, statistics, and facts.

i. Testimonies

Testimonies of those we consider knowledgeable and of sound mind is capable of swaying the audience into accepting the positions of such people.

Examples:

Listen to one of our great officers out there, Marine Lieutenant General Walter Boomer. He said: “There are things worth fighting for. A world in which brutality and lawlessness are allowed to go unchecked isn’t the kind of world we’re going to want to live in” (Bush, 1991).

Listen to Master Sergeant J.P. Kendall of the 82nd Airborne: “We’re here for more than just the price of a gallon of gas. What we are doing is going to chart the future of the world for the next hundred years. It’s better to deal with this guy now than 5 years from now” (Bush, 1991).

ii. Facts and Figures

The clarity and authenticity of ideas are heightened by supporting them with figures. We have been accustomed to numbers as they seem to reflect our knowledge. Examples:

More than a million people of German blood had, in the years 1919-1920, to leave their homeland. (Hitler, 1939).

Over the past two years, what began as a series of peaceful protests against the repressive regime of Bashar al-Assad has turned into a brutal civil war. Over 100,000 people have been killed. Millions have fled the country. ..The situation profoundly changed, though, on August 21st, when Assad’s government gassed to death over a thousand people, including hundreds of children. The images from this massacre are sickening: Men, women, children lying in rows, killed by poison gas (Obama, 2013).

2.7. Touching on Emotion

Emotional appeals make persuasive speeches compelling. The speaker consciously chooses emotion-arousing language to create emotional pictures in the listeners’ mind’s eye. Examples:

I thank you for your absolute commitment to the cause for which our youth are making daily, the supreme sacrifice, and a cause for which we all have been dispossessed, blockaded, bombarded, starved and massacred. I salute you. I salute the memory of the many patriots who have laid down their lives in defense of our fatherland. I salute the memory of all Biafrans – men, women and children – who died victims of the Nigerian crime of genocide.... (Odumegwu, 1969b).

In the West, some have called me “mad”, “crazy”, but they know the truth yet continue to lie, they know that our land is independent and free, not in the colonial grip, that my vision, my path, is, and has been clear and for my people and that I will fight to my last breath to keep us free, may Allah almighty help us to remain faithful and free. (Gaddafi, 2011).

2.8. Use of Contrasts

Contrasts mean comparing two or more ideas, concepts, phenomena in order to show the difference between them is an effective way to convince the audience. Contrasts highlights the good attributes of the chosen idea over its counterpart by making the difference between them glaring. Examples:

This is no class war, but a war in which the whole British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations is engaged, without distinction of race, creed, or party. (Churchill, 1941).

I see the ten thousand villages of Russia where the means of existence is wrung so hardly from the soil, but where there are still primordial human joys, where maidens laugh and children play (Churchill, 1941).

Contrasts sometimes take the form of parallel sentences as seen in these examples. This is used to heighten the effect of the message on the people.

We go to liberate, not to conquer. (Collins, 2003).

This crises is not an internal crisis. It is an external war carried out by internal elements (Al-Assad, 2013).

2.8.1. Hyperbole

It deploys exaggeration to blow a situation out of proportion and makes it seem enticing. Consider these excerpts:

I have ordered my Air Force to restrict itself to attacks on military objectives. If, however, the enemy thinks he can from that draw carte blanche on his side to fight by the other methods, he will receive an answer that will deprive him of hearing and sight (Hitler, 1939).

The existence of Israel has continued too long. We welcome the Israeli aggression. We welcome the battle we have long awaited. The peak hour has come. The battle has come in which we shall destroy Israel (Aref, 1967).

3. Discussion

Personal pronouns are capable of evoking different shades of meaning which represents different ideologies. Consequently they are deployed by persuasive speakers to achieve their aims of swaying the audience to their sides. Using „I“, war leaders display their involvement, commitment, responsibility, power, and authority to the people and the state. „I“ presents them as the mouthpiece of their people, whose responsibility it is to take the right decisions on their behalf. „I“, therefore signals solidarity and shared responsibility. „We“ (including „us“ and „our“) presents the image of inclusiveness and is used in the in-group and outgroup polarization inherent in war speeches. The in-group

is presented as angelic, unique, and peaceful, while the out-group is ruthless, valueless, wicked, and oppressive. War leaders use „we“ to achieve positive self-presentation of the in-group, and negative other presentation of the out-group represented by ‘they’, ‘them’, ‘their’, ‘he’, ‘she’, ‘it’, ‘its’. ‘You’ has the power to make strong appeals. Writers distinguish between referential „you“, impersonal „you“, and the vague „you“ (Kitgawa and Lehre, 1990; Nakaggwe, 2012). The referential „you“ identifies a specific person; the impersonal „you“ is indefinite in nature and refers to everyone, while the vague „you“ refers to an unidentified specific individual. Of these, the impersonal „you“ is of special interest in war speeches because it addresses the general public on issues that affect everyone (Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2015).

Repetition, whether as anaphora, parallelism, assonance or alliteration, is aimed at reiteration for the purpose of sinking the idea in the subconscious mind of the audience so that their thoughts and actions are influenced. War leaders use it to achieve the desired effect of making war speeches memorable. Rhetorical questions are deployed to create awareness and jolt the audience to mental alertness. This automatically raises the consciousness of the people to the situation at hand and convinces them that the speaker’s stance is worthwhile. Appeals to a supreme being is an integral part of war speeches. Different peoples pray to their gods and goddess in their own different ways to preserve their lives in wars and give them victory. This portrays the dependence of the human race in the supremacy and controlling powers of such being over the universe. The deployment of emotive language to create emotional pictures in the listeners’ minds’ eye has the capability of provoking or sparking off the expected emotional reactions in the audience.

War leaders also use evidence in the forms of statistics, facts and figures and examples to authenticate their claims while leaving the audience to tell themselves silently, “this is true”. Use of evidence convinces beyond mere words. Contrasting two ideas in such a way that the one the speaker is interested in is balanced against the one he wants to downplay is a very effective way to convince the audience. War leaders use it to control the minds of their audience towards their interest in the war. Using hyperbole, war leaders claim much authority and power over the enemy, even if it may not be the truth. It, therefore, is a viable instrument for the manipulation of the minds and actions of the audience, and making them believe in the might of their leader and his/her army to protect them.

4. Conclusion

Human beings naturally desire peace, but at the same time are aggressive. This aggressiveness leads to the desire to perpetuate violence, and produce weapons of wars, including those capable of decimating life and perpetuating physical, environmental, economic damages. When wars becomes inevitable, leaders resort to speeches (and propaganda) to convince the people to embrace it against all odds. They engage the resources of language to persuade the people or manipulate their minds and actions in support of the war. To succeed in this agendum of mind control, war leaders adorn their language with many rhetorical ornaments. It is some of the rhetorical strategies that have been associated with war speeches over time in different parts of the world that are explored in this paper.

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