

# Analysis of Hate Rhetoric on Selected Social Media Platforms in Nigeria

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**Abstract-** *This paper is an analysis of social media hate utterances with a view to unearth how social media users persuade the audience on various sensitive societal issues. To achieve this, the study specifically analyses the rhetorical persuasive strategies employed in selected social media platforms in Nigeria. Sixty-three hate utterances/songs, drawn from six selected social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, and online newspapers and magazines) in Nigeria were used as data for the investigation. The Aristotelian rhetoric theory of appeal was employed as the framework for this study. The study reveals that pathos rhetorical theory of appeal and Hyperbole rhetorical expression were used to injure and/or malign the target, more than other rhetorical appeals and figurative rhetorical expression. The study concludes that the high frequency of pathos rhetorical appeal and the high frequency of hyperbole hate figurative rhetorical expressions are deliberate just to inflict agonizing pain on the target. The study also concludes that the period in which data was collected may have accounted for this.*

**Indexed Terms-** *Social Media, Rhetoric, Hate Speech, Hate Rhetoric, Hate Rhetorical Strategies.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Advancement in technology has enabled people to have access to a wealth of virtual information and various opportunities not previously available, through the tools of computers and cell phones. The devices have become the actual mediators between people by ways of entertainment or knowledge enhancement (Dhingra & Mudgal, 2019). Social media are web-based communication tools that enable people to interact with each other by both sharing and consuming information. It enables common interest-based groups collaborate and discuss in the open space

(Nations, 2021). It fosters creativity and collaboration with a wide range of commentators on a number of issues such as education, economy, politics, race, health, relationships etc. (Amedie, 2015). However, Egbe and Ekpe (2009) view the media as “a double-edged sword which can either promote or exacerbate conflict” (p.122). To authenticate this, Parajuli (2021) holds that social media is used for the distribution of false information/misinformation, intentionally created and spread disinformation, cyberbullying like harmful online behaviour, cybercrimes like identity theft, cyber stalking, cyber defamation trolling, insult, hating, shaming, stigmatization, discrimination and so on. Mostly, these crimes are committed in anonymity. This anonymity of the social media provides a ‘safe’ platform for some individuals/groups for sending warfare messages of hate to target individuals/groups. This advancement in technology corroborates the Hallidonian tripartite function of language -ideational, textual and interpersonal-, as people use language on social media to freely express their content, communicate information, establish discourse and, and maintain social relationships with one another (Halliday, 2013). Hence, using Aristotle’s theory of appeal, this study investigates the rhetorical strategies used to express hate in selected social media platforms in Nigeria. The investigation aims at revealing the rhetorical appeals and figurative expressions used to persuade the targeted audience as found in the study.

## II. RHETORIC

Malmkjaer (2002) posits that rhetoric originates from the theory of how best a speaker or writer can, by application of linguistic devices, achieve persuasion. De Wet (2010) holds that rhetoric and persuasion go together. For him, if rhetoric is the art of persuading others; therefore, persuasion is inseparable from rhetoric. Freese (1939) does not only believe that rhetoric generally is the deliberate use of language to impress the hearers and influence them for or against

a certain course of action but also maintains that rhetoric is as old as language itself and the beginning of social and political life. Aristotle (1926) describes rhetoric as a discipline with a set of techniques of persuasion that can be applied to any subject. With this, he came up with three major classical rhetoric dimensions: Ethos, which deals with the speaker's capability to display a personal character that makes his speech credible and trustworthy, Pathos, the speaker's power of stirring and arousing the emotions of the audience, and, Logos, the power to provide truth by means of persuasive and rational argument (Mauk & Metz 2016). In corroboration with Aristotle's position, Plato, as cited in Ottoh-Agede (2022), in his dialogue, Gorgias, posits that, "rhetoric is an act of persuasion". Persuasive speech too, could depose or empower tyrants, determine public policy, and administer laws. Rhetoric are speeches/arguments/stories that would convince and move the target audience (Toye, 2013). Rhetoric also can be seen in figurative expressions or figures of speech as they also are components of persuasion or cogency that characterises good communication. Some speakers deploy the act of rhetorical figurative language in expressing themselves. These figurative expressions come in different forms like; metaphor, metonymy, amplification, allusion, hyperbole and so on (Ottoh-Agede, 2022). These major rhetorical dimensions, coupled with rhetorical figurative expressions would be used for analysis in this study.

### III. HATE RHETORIC

In other to decipher hate rhetoric, hate speech has to be identified first as hate speech, since the rhetorical appeals and strategies used to express hate can only be recognized in hate speeches. Thus, hate rhetoric cannot be realized without the realization of hate speech. Cohen-Alo, (2012) holds that hate speech is a bias-motivated, hostile, malicious speech aimed at a person or a group of people because of some perceived innate characteristics. For Ezeibe (2015), hate speeches are utterances, typed documents, advertorials, musicals, or any form of literature that is used to attack an individual, a group - religious, social, political, business – gender, or race. Nzeako (2017) on the other hand admits that hate speech has a wide definition and those definitions vary from country to country, depending on the historical experiences of the

country in question. He describes hate speech as a speech or any action that is laced with hatred, and advocating for it to be proscribed. On the contrary, Ibileye (2018) looked at the suggestions for proscribing and putting a barn on hate utterances. For him "our speech is our freedom and our humanity, any attempt to take speech from humans, takes their humanity from them. Therefore, free speech should be preserved and promoted as a way of strengthening our democracy and the fabric of our society" (p. 12). Apparently, the above definitions fail to capture how hate speech can be identified by its characteristics. To capture this, St Clare (2018) came up with; referent and reminder, subordinating and silencing, and content-sensitive.

### IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several scholars (Shaw, 2012; Ezeibe, 2015; Okafor& Alabi 2017; Fasakin et al 2017; Ernst et al, 2017; Ayeni, 2018; Agwuocha 2020) examined discourses of hate from diverse areas of the society. Shaw, (2012) examined hate speech in cyber and acknowledged that hate speech presents serious human rights issues because a workable global, online solution to hate speech would be difficult to achieve. He concludes that policing hate speech is a complex issue with important consequences that implicate serious human right issues because of the disagreements over the importance of freedom of expression, coupled with the fact that government regulation is unlikely to produce a solution to the problem. Examining hate speech in the 2015 general election campaign in Nigeria, Ezeibe (2015) argued that hate speech has been elevated to the status of political campaign strategy and recommended that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other civil societal organizations should identify and prosecute individuals and organizations that breach laws governing electoral campaigns and public speech in Nigeria. Okafor and Alabi's (2017) study revealed that campaign speeches prior to the 2015 general elections in Nigeria were obvious weapons of intimidation, blackmail, incitement, and coercion, and recommended that enlightenment programmes on the tenets of democracy and good governance for all citizens be organized so as to protect Nigeria's nascent democracy. Fasakin et al (2017), using the social responsibility theory, examined the part the media

played in the use of hate speech on television by politicians during political campaigns. The study found out that the media have been used to stoke hatred and stimulate violence among ethnic and political groups during the electioneering periods. The study concludes that newspaper organizations should focus not just on what politicians say, but what they intend to do. Focusing on hate speech on YouTube, Ernst et al (2017) surveyed hate beneath-the-counter speech. They found that the dominant comments in their study dealt with devaluating prejudices and stereotypes towards Muslims and/or Islam which were identified in the comments made or the discuss the comments are found in. Ayeni (2018) explored social media hate utterances from a socio-pragmatic point of view. The study revealed that online hate expressions can be identified, categorized, and accounted for within a socio-pragmatic framework. The study also observed that ethnic-motivated hate expressions were the most frequent. It concludes that the frequency of the use of nouns and noun phrases to convey hate may be attributed to the fact that nouns as names are generally used to label and identify concrete entities. Agwuocha's (2020) inquired into COVID-19 hate-induced utterances from a SAT perspective, with peace-building aspirations. The study concludes that given the growing concern for online hate speech as a new dimension, the implications on peace-building amongst nations are capable of causing offline harms which are inimical to the peace-building process of any nation. The above reviews studies have shed some light on the possibilities of using the speech act theory for analyses in different ways. They will also give the researcher an insight into how investigations are carried out using hate speech.

Some other scholars (Arofah, 2018; Koval, Sychev & Zhadunov, 2019; Aboh, Onuoha & Kalu, 2020; Hobbs, Lajevardi, Li & Lucas, 2021) investigated hate rhetoric from diverse perspectives. Arofah (2018) analysed online media-news religious hate rhetoric, using Ahok's religious blasphemy as a case study. He found out that the analysed hate utterances neglected the ethos and logos aspects of rhetoric and relied mostly on pathos to persuade its audience to hate the target. Hobbs, Lajevardi, Li, and Lucas (2021) investigated the surging of crime rate in the United States owing to religious rhetoric in the media and other sources, in 2017. Using online discussion

sources (4chan, gab, Reddit), media coverage (newspapers, Google Trends), and hate crime databases (Activities of Daily Living, Council of American-Islamic Relations, Federal Bureau of Investigation), the researchers observed that between the early and mid-2017, there was a decline in media and online discourses of Muslims, hence, a huge drop in anti-Muslim hate. But from mid to late 2017, an increase in violent hate crimes and bias incidents against Jews and Grangers were recorded, owing to a week-to-week online posts of disdainful utterances on the target. The researchers, through the use of a questionnaire, also discovered that platform-level and individual analysts of online social media users are of the opinion that the increase in anti-Jewish speech was partly orchestrated by reactionary extremists who previously promoted anti-Muslim speech. The reviewed studies have provided the researcher with more insights on the deconstruction of hate rhetoric and how analysis on rhetorical devices is carried out.

## V. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Aristotle (1926) describes rhetoric as a discipline with a set of techniques of persuasion that can be applied to any subject. For him, rhetoric "is the function of no other of the arts, each of which is able to instruct and persuade in its own special subject.... But rhetoric so to speak appears to be able to discover the means of persuasion in reference to any given subject" (p.15) For Makay (1977, p.10) "rhetoric is a hollow bombast, artificial eloquent style and form of speaking without content; a dishonest or deceit form of communication". To further authenticate Makay's (1977) position, Akpan (1987) holds that to a layman, rhetoric may mean inflated and insincere use of language but for Ottoh-Agede (2022), rhetoric is an artistic way of writing or making a speech. For her, it is a way of presenting an argument in a persuasive manner that may or may not obscure the truth. The language may appear dulcified in speech or in writing, with figurative expressions. Rhetoric is the earliest art of persuasion or language used to motivate and/or influence an audience (Epstein, 1978). In furtherance, Crystal (2008) maintains that in modern communication, the study of rhetoric is the understanding of the underlying argument and persuasion. The persuasive nature of rhetoric engages three stages of effective communication as proposed

by Aristotle (1926). They are; Ethos, appeal to sense of character, credibility and authority; Pathos, appeal to emotions, and Logos, appeal to reason and sense of logic. Rhetoric analysis can also be seen in figurative expressions as they also are components of persuasion or cogency, characterising good communication. Some examples are; metaphor, Allusion, hyperbole, metonymy, amplification and so on (Ottoh-Agede, 2022). This study adopts Aristotle’s (1926) theory of persuasion, with the aim of identifying the various rhetorical appeals and figurative expressions used in the study to persuade the target.

VI. METHODOLOGY

Fifty-four (54) utterances and nine (9) songs laced with hate, making a total of sixty-three (63) utterances, were drawn from six social media platforms as the data for this study. This is broken down thus; Facebook, ten (10) utterances, online newspapers and magazines, eight (8) utterances, TikTok, eight (8) utterances and

two (2) songs, Twitter, twelve (12) utterances, WhatsApp, eight (8) utterances and three (3) songs, and YouTube, eight (8) utterances and four (4) songs. Data collected were coded as Text 1 – 63, in some instances, some texts were sub-numbered as Text 2a, Text 2b, and Text 2c, to follow the thread of a particular text. Twenty texts were sampled for analysis and each text sampled was analysed in terms of the rhetorical genres and rhetorical figurative expressions. The selected speeches were drawn from different discourses ranging from online political, religious, racial and other discourses. Below is the presentation of rhetorical utterances which are captured as Rhetorical Texts (RT), the Rhetorical Genre (the type of rhetoric), the Justification of the Rhetorical Genre, the Rhetorical Figurative Expression and the Rhetorical Strategy observed from the data.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1: Data Presentation and Analysis

S/No.	Utterance	Rhetorical Genre	Justification of Rhetorical Genre	Rhetorical Figurative Expression
RT 1	Can the people ask, “Who is this inyamiri?” It is the Igbos, after great suffering they said “give me water” Because of this statement of “give me water” We started calling them “Inyamiri” (Text 1b)	Ethos	Ethical appeal or persuasion with mutual influence between speaker and the target	Allusion; an indirect reference to the Nigerian civil war
RT 2	“...When we speak, the Zoo trembles, that is what happens when cattle rearing terrorist and paedophile is your ruler.” (Text 2a)	Pathos	Boasting, political appeal of supremacy	Metaphor; direct comparison, calling Nigeria, “the zoo”
RT 3	We are anti-Christians, and those that deviated from Islam, they are forming basis with prayers but infidels (Text 9b)	Pathos	Religious appeal	Metaphor
RT 4	“No amount of defamation could strip our darling PMB of his integrity for	Pathos	Boasting, political appeal of supremacy	

	which he's renowned for. In 2019, it's Buhari or we set the zoo ablaze!!!" (Text 11a)			Hyperbole, an exaggeration to set the country ablaze.
RT 5	"If you find anybody in your village asking after Radio Biafra kill the baboon Awusa Foolani or Yoruba bastard. Let them keeping searching as we keep tweeting for #Biafra. Lunatics!" (Text 12a)	Ethos	Ethical appeal and persuasion	Pun; as used in the spelling of Hausa as <i>Awusa</i> and Fulani as <i>Foolani</i>
RT 6	We warn that nothing will be able to save those raising their voices against us and Allah. Nothing will be left behind, from the East, west and Middle Belt except those who accept the creation of Allah and the leadership place of Fulani in fulfilling this destiny (Text 13b)	Pathos	Ethical appeal, establishing credibility and mastery of topic	Hyperbole; for claiming to clear the East, West and Middle-Belt regions of Nigeria
RT 7	People shouldn't look at us and say, "Oh, you are insulting us." No, I'm telling you the fact. The fact that you are a Nigerian means that you are an animal. Only an animal can accept the name given it. Is that true or false? (Text 15c)	Ethos	Establishing credibility and mastery over the topic of discourse	Irony; in the sense that the speaker is claiming not to insult and at the same time saying Nigerians are animals
RT 8	"The Igbos are collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained, crude in all their ways. Money and acquisition of wealth is their soul objective and purpose in life." (Text 17)	Logos	Inductive argument and drawing a conclusion	Hyperbole because all Igbos cannot collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained, crude in all their ways.
RT 9	We have a group of thieves and armed robbers called leaders; Buhari, Lai Mohammed, Rotimi Amaechi Rochas Okorochoa etc. They are the bandits	Pathos	Political appeal to feelings	Hyperbole because the statement is exaggerated. All the leders cannot be Thieves and armed robbers

	we have in Nigeria now (Text 27).			
RT 10	We challenge the Federal Government to tell us any court in the country where any herdsman is being tried today for all the killings, kidnappings, raping of women and destruction of farmland they have carried out against innocent citizens. (Text 21)	Ethos	Establishing credibility and mastery of the topic	Hyperbole. In this text, Nigeria is referred to as the zoo. A few individuals cannot crumble Nigeria, so it is an exaggeration
RT 11	Never should we allow a drug baron certified by the court of law to be the president of the federal republic of Nigeria. Pablo can never be the President of the Federal republic of Nigeria. (Text 39).	Pathos	Political appeal	Metaphor; here, a presidential candidate is called a drug baron
RT 12	I'm not proud of him as a governor, a governor who wears blue on yellow, yellow on green, at times with purple; who does not have a dress sense; who does not know what the time is globally today. (Text 41)	Pathos	Political appeal	Hyperbole; the presentation of the riotous colour combination of the governor is exaggerated
RT 13	Onitsha is the dirtiest place on planet earth, the dirty capital of the world. Onitsha, no be we talk am o. What we're saying is that you have the right, we'll also give you the right to say your own. (Text 42)	Ethos	Establishing credibility and mastery over the topic of discourse	Hyperbole an exaggeration by saying that Onitsha is the dirtiest place on planet earth.
RT 14	The president, Gen. Mohammed Buhari, we are not begging you for money. But you know as well as we do, we are Muslims, we have the history of knowledge. In this regime of yours, do not allow one hypocritical <i>inyamiri</i> to	Pathos	Religious appeal to emotion	Allusion; an indirect reference to the Nigerian civil war

	utter the writings on the Nigerian currency. (Text 44)			
RT 15	To hate is human; to bomb is divine. We hate western inventions including twitter: however, we feel the necessity to use it to reach out to our fans (Text 45)	Pathos	Religious appeal/sentiment	Allusion to the Antithetical saying of; to err is human, to forgive is divine.
RT 16	“As you have seen, we have been causing havoc and bad infidel federal government still clueless as ever. Long live Boko Haram” (Text 47)	Pathos	Religious appeal/sentiment	Hyperbole; for saying the federal government is completely clueless
RT 17	You created the Boko Haram and the Fulani terrorists in the north by yourself and when things got out of your power, you now want the southerners to go to the north and pay with their dear lives all in the name of serving their country (Text 30)	Ethos	Establishing credibility and mastery of the topic	Hyperbole; for saying “Your prophet and your god are both sick terrorists”
RT 18	Just for clarity, I am not a peaceful liberator, I am not a peaceful agitator. When you are liberating your people from a terrorist government, a terrorist oppressor, you use force both in self-defence & in attacking the terrorists. (Text 55)	Pathos	Ethnic appeal to feelings and emotion	Metaphor; for using the words terrorist government, and terrorist oppressor
RT 19	Wherever they are, we will kill them ourselves at the same time, the same day, 12 noon, wherever we find them all over the world. I am not like anything they have seen before”. (Text 59)	Pathos	Religious/political appeal	Hyperbole; by claiming to carry out an action the same all over the world.
RT 20	“The root cause of Fulani herdsmen killings is Gen. Buhari”. (Text 61)	Ethos	Establishing mastery and credibility of the subject matter	Hyperbole; unfounded claim

Summary of Hate Rhetoric found in the Study

The summary of findings in respect of the hate rhetoric by rhetorical genres and rhetorical figurative expression as observed in the study are presented in the tables below.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Hate Rhetorical Genre

Rhetorical Genres	Frequency	Percentage %
Pathos	12	60%
Ethos	7	35%
Logos	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Figure 1: Frequency Distribution of Hate Rhetorical Genre

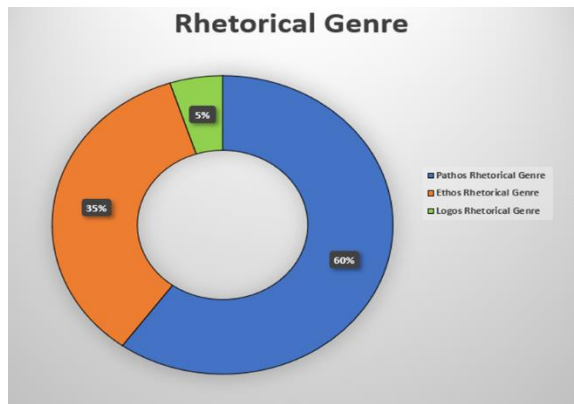
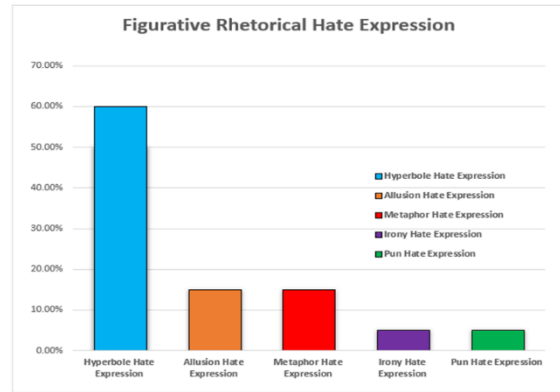


Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Hate Figurative Rhetorical Expressions

Figurative Rhetorical Expressions	Frequency	Percentage %
Hyperbole	12	60%
Allusion	3	15%
Metaphor	3	15%
Irony	1	5%
Pun	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Figure 2: Frequency Distribution of Hate Figurative Rhetorical Expressions



Discussion of Finding

Rhetorical analysis and data presentation was captured as Rhetorical Texts (RT), Rhetorical Genre, Justification of the Rhetorical Genre and Rhetorical Figurative of Expression as observed in the data. Using the rhetorical texts, discussion here will centre on two of the above-mentioned rhetorical areas.

Pathos Rhetorical Genre

Pathos, a rhetorical appeal accounted for the highest occurrence in this study with 60% (n = 12).

Text 9a

We are anti-Christians, and those that deviated from Islam, they are forming basis with prayers but infidel. Text 55

Just for clarity, I am not a peaceful liberator, I am not a peaceful agitator. When you are liberating your people from a terrorist government, a terrorist oppressor, you use force both in self-defence & in attacking the terrorists.

Text 9a is a religious appeal and a show of oneness to fellow believers of Islam. It is also a call and an appeal to the consciousness of Muslim brothers not to deviate from Islam and Islamic injunctions like others who have and are now regarded as infidels. Again, it is also an appeal and reawakening the Muslim brothers' awareness to the fact that they are anti-Christians so that they would not think of having anything to do with them as they are infidels as well. Text 55 is an ethnic appeal. The speaker in this appeal seeks to clarify his stance and that of their group. The speaker is also appealing for the support of all the members of the group as he is reawakening their consciousness to the



fact that what he is doing is for their liberation by saying, when you are liberating your people from a terrorist government, a terrorist oppressor, you use force both in self-defence & in attacking the terrorists. This utterance suggests an ethnic emotional appeal because the speaker said, when you are liberating your people and letting the people concerned believe that the speaker has their interest at heart and that exacting is what the speaker is acting out.

#### Ethos Rhetorical Genre

Ethos, the second most used rhetorical genre in this study accounted for 35% (n =7) frequency of occurrence. Below is the discussion of some of its texts.

##### Text 1b

Can the people ask, “Who is this inyamiri?” It is the Igbos, after great suffering said “give me water” Because of this statement of “give me water” We started calling them “Inyamiri

##### Text 30

You created the Boko Haram and the Fulani terrorists in the north by yourself and when things got out of your power, you now want the southerners to go to the north and pay with their dear lives all in the name of serving their country

Ethos. just like the pathos rhetorical genre, has political, ethnic and religious hate expressions but the difference is that speakers/writers here established credibility and mastery of the appeal they are making. Text 1b for instance is a Hausa hate song which targeted the Igbos. The singer, with all sense of credibility and mastery of what is being said, traced the history of how the hate name Inyamiri came to be to the Nigerian civil war. The singer started by making a demand to be asked, who is this inyamiri? The single reason for this demand is that the speaker wants to exhibit her credibility and mastery of the topic of discourse. This is evident in the following lines of the song in which she made an allusion to the Nigerian civil war, where the name Inyamiri originated from. Text 30 is an utterance with a finality tone. This again shows a level of confidence in the speaker. The speaker said you created the Boko Haram and the Fulani terrorists in the north by yourself ... This utterance suggests that the speaker is very sure of what is said as the speaker did not exhibit any sign of uncertainty. Again, there is to some extent, some level

of ethnic divide and sentiment, which the speaker is using to invoke mutual influence. From the utterance, one can deduce that the speaker is a southerner and is trying to make other southerners join in the same reasoning as that in the utterance.

#### Logos Rhetorical Genre

Logos rhetorical is the lowest rhetorical genre observed in this study as it accounted for 5% (n = 1) frequency of occurrence. Logos is discussed below.

##### Text 17

The Igbos are collectively unlettered, uncouth, uncultured, unrestrained, crude in all their ways. Money and acquisition of wealth is their soul objective and purpose in life

The above text may have some ethnic undertone, but basically, going by the second sentence, the utterance was made based on historical and literal analogies of the appeal to logos. This utterance will be well understood by Nigerian based on shared mutual background knowledge. It is on record that the Igbos view wealth as a means of gaining social prestige and acquiring social befitting rank. This stems from Igbo cosmological view of human existence encapsulated in their proverb Nwata kwochaa aka, osoro ogarayan rie nri (if a child washes his hands clear, he dines with the rich) (Chinweuba & Ezeugwu, 2017). Traditional Igbo people flaunt their expanse lands, large farms and abundant harvests, large compounds marked by numerous houses and peopled by wives, offspring and dependents which are fruits of their entrepreneurial efforts. This accords them recognition and titles from the society such as Ozo, Oba, Ichie, Ochiliozuo, Osirioha, Ogbuefi, to mention but a few (Ogugua, 2003).

#### Rhetorical Figurative Expressions

Five rhetorical figurative expressions, hyperbole, allusion, metaphor, irony, and pun, were observed in the study. They are presented below according to their frequencies of occurrence.

##### Hyperbole

Hyperbole, an overstatement or a deliberate exaggeration for a rhetorical effect accounted for 60% (n=12) frequency of occurrence and the highest

occurring of the five. Below are some instances of exaggerated expression found in the study.

Text 11a

No amount of defamation could strip our darling PMB of his integrity for which he's renowned for. In 2019, it's Buhari or we set the zoo ablaze!!!

Text 42

Onitsha is the dirtiest place on planet earth, the dirty capital of the world. Onitsha, no be we talk am o. What we're saying is that you have the right, we'll also give you the right to say your own.

A critical look at the above expression will show that they were exaggerated by the speakers. Take the second sentence in Text 11a -in 2019, tis Buhari or we set the zoo ablaze- for instance. Nigeria has been referred to as the zoo since Mazi Nnamdi Kanu called it so. Apparently, the zoo in this context is Nigeria and the speaker is promising to set the whole country ablaze at the same time. This is an exaggerated statement as this is not attainable. Text 42 also is termed an exaggerated expression because the speaker does not have any justification for the claim that Onitsha is the dirtiest place on planet earth, the dirty capital of the world. If the speaker had backed up this claim by saying he had travelled everywhere in the world, which is near impossible, before reaching this conclusion, maybe it would not have been an exaggerated expression.

Allusion

Allusion is the second most used rhetorical figurative expression in this study which accounted for 15% (n = 3) frequency of occurrence. Below is an example of allusion found in this study.

Text 1b

Can the people ask, "Who is this inyamiri?" It is the Igbos, after great suffering said "give me water" Because of this statement of "give me water" We started calling them "Inyamiri

The use of Inyamiri in text 1b above is an allusion to the Nigerian civil war where the name originated from. It was explained in the full text that the name was coined from the Igbo sentence, nyem miri -give me water-which was the first thing an Igbo person in bush running for their dear life will tell anyone they meet.

Metaphor

Metaphor is the third most used figurative rhetorical hate expression in this study as it accounted for 10% (n = 2). Below is an example.

Text 2

When we speak, the Zoo trembles, that is what happens when cattle rearing terrorist and paedophile is your ruler.

The zoo which was used to refer to Nigeria in the above text is metaphoric as it connotes the image of a zoo that houses animals.

Irony

Irony, the fourth and least used figurative rhetorical hate expression accounted for 5% (n = 1) frequency of occurrence. Below is the discussion of the only text found here.

Text 13

People shouldn't look at us and say, "Oh, you are insulting us." No, I'm telling you the fact. The fact that you are a Nigerian means that you are an animal. Only an animal can accept the name given it. Is that true or false?

The above text which is the only ironical utterance was found in this study is termed ironical in the sense that the speaker said he is not insulting the target but he is saying to the target, you are an animal

Pun

Pun is the fourth and least used figurative rhetorical hate expression accounted for 5% (n = 1) frequency of occurrence. Below is the discussion of the only text found in the study.

Text 12a

If you find anybody in your village asking after Radio Biafra kill the baboon Awusa Foolani or Yoruba bastard. Let them keep searching as we keep tweeting for #Biafra. Lunatics!"

In the above text, the writer deliberately spelt Hausa as Awusa and Fulani as Foolani. This is pun in literary terms because it is a deliberate act by the speaker to demean the target.

## CONCLUSION

The paper analysis hate rhetoric on selected social media platforms in Nigeria, using the first Aristotelian

component -rhetorical appeals to logos, ethos and pathos, alongside rhetorical figurative devices. The study discovered that pathos hate rhetorical appeal is the most used hate rhetorical appeal while hyperbole hate figurative rhetorical expression is the most used hate figurative expression. The study concludes that the high frequency of pathos rhetorical strategy and the high frequency of hyperbole hate figurative rhetorical expressions are deliberate just to inflict agonizing pain on the target. The study also concludes that the period in which data was collected may have accounted for this.

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