



## Rapport Management in President Buhari and Governor Sanwo-Olu’s Speeches on #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria

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DOI: [http://doi.org/ 10.36892/ijlls.v3i4.688](http://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v3i4.688)

**Received:**

07/11/2021

**Accepted:**

30/11/2021

**Keywords:**

President  
Muhammadu Buhari,  
Governor Babajide  
Sanwo-Olu,  
#EndSARS, Public  
speaking, Rapport  
Management.

**Abstract**

Speech making in politics is an essential tool used to manage relationships between politicians and the electorate. The success of a speech depends on the content and the discourse and linguistic strategies employed to achieve speakers’ communicative goals. Political speeches have been widely studied, but extant studies have given tangential attention to the management of rapport in speeches of political office holders delivered in crisis situation in Nigeria. Two speeches delivered by President Muhammadu Buhari (PMB) and Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu (GBS) on the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, downloaded from [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng) and [www.premiumtimesng.com](http://www.premiumtimesng.com) respectively, were purposively selected and analysed using Rapport Management theory. This is with the view to accounting for the linguistic elements and discourse strategies and their functions in maintaining harmonious relationship in selected texts. Linguistic elements such as the inclusive “we”, the institutional “I”, collective/possessive “us” “our” “your” and descriptive adjectives and strategies such as claiming common ground, expressing solidarity, showing empathy were employed to manage rapport and achieve communicative goals by PMB and GBS. While GBS tactically avoids utterances that are rapport threatening, some utterances of PMB have the tendency to impair rapport. He however mitigates them through hedging, personalisation, institutionalisation and testimonial argument.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Speech making is an essential aspect of politics which involves the organisation and management of society. Politics and language are inextricably bound because political communication involves the use of language and language is the means by which power and control are exercised in politics. Language is the medium by which politicians establish and maintain social relationships; a means by which they express their feelings, and sell their ideas, policies and programmes to the larger society. As in communication, speech making involves a speaker in seeking either to inform a hearer of something or to enjoin him/her to act in a particular way. Writing about communication, Bogdanor (1987: p.443) opines that communication involves “the flow of messages and information that gives structure and meaning to the political processes.” As an art, speech making has to do with persuasive use of language. Even though public speaking is not only about persuasion, it is obviously an important aspect of it; hence directly related to rhetoric.

In the ancient Greek society, premium is placed on speech making as an essential aspect of public political participation and as a means by which the extent of the political influence of

a candidate is measured. Speeches are vital to governance, as they provide the platform for political public officers to keep the populace informed of policies, developments and programmes. A speech making event provides opportunities for politicians to present their views, beliefs, opinions, policies and programmes to the electorates. An occasion for a political public speaker to deliver a speech often provides the opportunities for him/her to establish rapport and maintain social relationships with his/her listeners.

As a process, it involves the writer in preparing a ready-made script for oral presentations. Bormann (1961: p.263) has observed that the busier a person becomes or the higher the social status someone attains, the more acceptable it is to deliver ghost-written speeches. As a result of their tight schedule, Presidents, public figures as well as company's executives often make use of professional speech writers in preparing their speeches. In most cases, because of the pressure of time, most Presidents and Chief Executive Officers assemble a team of speech writers to brainstorm and string related ideas into composite speech. The written speech has become quite popular mainly because it has a way of ensuring that what is intended is what the words convey. Sometimes however, speech writers may fail in discharging their duties effectively and this may negatively impact on the integrity of their employer and cast shadow on their competence and professionalism. It follows, therefore, that the quality of a speech depends on the content, as well as the in-built strategies, and these may positively or negatively impact on the public image/perception or integrity of the speaker. It is on this backdrop that this study examines selected speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari and Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. This is with the view to accounting for the linguistic and discourse strategies employed to achieve/manage rapport in selected speeches and their role in achieving speakers' communicative goals.

The #EndSARS was a movement of social redress in Nigeria which began as a Twitter campaign in 2017. It was a movement organised by Nigerian youths to protests against police brutality; specifically, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) which was set up in the mid-1990s to combat incidences of armed robbery across the nation. In October 2020, following the report of many cases of corruption, harassment and human rights abuses, Nigerian youths gathered at different locations in major cities across the country to stage mass demonstrations accompanied by widespread campaign especially on the social media calling for the disbandment of SARS and a reform in the entire Police Force. Not long, their demands began to draw the attention of sympathisers, especially Nigerians in diaspora, who also staged solidarity protests in many city centres around the world.

Some of the allegations brought up against SARS officers are that they go after young Nigerians, especially males and they mount illegal road blocks to conduct checks and searches. They were also accused of unlawful arrests and detention, extra judicial killings, rape, extortion, kidnapping, murder, theft, torture and humiliation. After a few days of peaceful protests, the Nigerian Police authorities responded by dissolving the unit replacing it with a new unit called the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT). Nigerians saw this as a mere change of name without any attendant reform to achieve the much desired improvement in the services of the Police Force and its violent methods of maintaining law and order. So the protesters continued unabated. The following are the five primary demands which the protesters sent to government.

1. Immediate release of all detained protesters;

2. Justice for victims of police brutality and their families;
3. Establishment of an independent oversight group to investigate reports of police misconduct;
4. Psychological evaluation and retraining of all SARS officers before reassignment;
5. Increase in police salaries to dissuade corruption and reward their protection of the nation's citizens.

Government responded by confirming the disbandment of SARS, promised to reform the entire Police Force and look into other demands made by them. The youths, however, refused to discontinue the protest. As time went by, the protests assumed the symbol of broader resentment against the government as the Nigerian youths accused the political class of marginalising them. They also accused the government of failure to improve on the economy, paying poor attention to job creation and their inability to find solution to the crippling challenges in the educational sector. Thus, they expanded their demands to include reinvigoration of the educational and health systems and positive drive toward job creation.

On its part, the government made frantic efforts to persuade the youth to discontinue the protests. However, when persuasion would not work, government decided to resort to the use of force and this led to violence as hoodlums hijacked the hitherto peaceful protest and began to unleash mayhem. What followed was a national calamity, destruction of monumental proportion and loss of many lives. The speeches analysed in this study were broadcast to the nation by President Muhammadu Buhari and the address by the Lagos State governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, to the people of Lagos State on the heels of the mayhem.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There have been a lot of studies on presidential speeches which is an aspect of political discourse. For example, Taiwo (2010) examines the deployment of metaphor in Nigerian political discourse using Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) theory of Conceptual Metaphor and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The paper identifies and describes the use of metaphor with reference to the role it plays in shaping public discourses and how the discourses reflect the reality in Nigerian political space. The paper revealed that politics is conceptualised as a battle, a journey and a game. Eromesele (2012) focuses on speech act types in the inaugural speech of President Goodluck Jonathan. The study reveals that commissive acts are more significant than other speech act types in the inaugural speech of President Jonathan. Also, Emeka-Nwobia, (2015) examines the interface between religion and politics by focusing on the use of religious language in President Olusegun Obasanjo's speeches on democracy day of 29th May 1999 and 2003. The study which examines the persuasive strategy and the role of religion in politics reveals that Obasanjo makes use of religious references to achieve unity among Nigerians of diverse cultures, beliefs and values. Sharififar and Rahimi (2015) study Obama's and Rouhani's political speeches at the UN in September 2013 using Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics. The paper observes that Obama and Rouhani integrate ideology and power in their speeches. While Obama makes use of simple and colloquial language, Rouhani engages more of complex words and his language is formal. Obama and Rouhani makes use of personal pronouns such as 'we' to express intimacy with their audiences and they make frequent use of the modal verbs 'will' and 'can', to achieve persuasion. Ayo Osisanwo (2017) is a study of President Buhari's inaugural speech from the perspective of

pragmatics. The paper accounts for the speaker's intentions in the speech using aspects of Jacob Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory. His findings reveal a total of nineteen pragmatic acts used to achieve four goals namely; revealing intention, admitting and appreciating, direction/directives and giving in the contexts of shared situation knowledge, relevance, reference, inference. Omotunde and Ojo (2017) investigate linguistic politeness in selected Independence Day Anniversary Speeches of Nigerian Heads of Government between 1960 and 2011. The paper reveals that the speakers employ Tact maxim (to achieve face saving act and to express unity, solidarity and intimacy with their listeners), Pollyanna maxim (to conceal the reality of bad situations to make the people happy), Modesty maxim (to show humility) and Approbation maxim (to appreciate the people). Alavidze (2018) focuses on the use of politeness by politicians to maintain their public image. The paper which examines selected speeches of President Donald Trump observes that politicians find ways to cope with situations in which their public image is under threat by employing politeness strategies. The study reveals that Trump employs politeness strategies to show familiarity and strong interest towards the people to make them like him. He also used the language/dialect they are familiar with to project a good image of himself by identifying with them as members of a social group. Dridi (2020) accounts for politeness phenomenon in the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) annual political speeches between 2006 and 2012. The paper which sets out to identify and explain the politeness strategies employed by politicians in addressing their audiences, shows that politicians would rather choose Face Threatening Acts (on record with redressive action) over Face Threatening Acts (on record without redressive action) and Face Threatening Acts (off record). Also, they make use of positive politeness and expressive speech acts to achieve commonality/familiarity and sympathy.

Arising from the review above is that, to the best of the knowledge of the author, extant studies have not exhaustively examined rapport management in the speeches of Presidents and political office holders delivered in crisis situation. This is a gap in scholarship that this study hopes to fill. This study, therefore, examines the linguistic and discourse strategies employed to achieve/manage rapport in selected speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari and Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The #EndSARS protest was a significant event with far-reaching implications for the socio-political climate of Nigeria and as such, worthy of scholarly inquiry. In the bid to manage the crisis, the President and some state governors delivered national and state broadcasts respectively on the crisis. Two speeches delivered by President Muhammadu Buhari and Governor Babajide Sanwo-olu were purposively selected for this study. The speech by the President was selected for its national outlook while Governor Babajide Sanwo-olu speech was selected essentially, because Lagos was the epicenter of the protests and the violence. Again, the selected speeches were delivered on the heels of the Lekki Toll Gate shootings: an event which marks the height of the protests/violence that characterised the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. The speeches were downloaded from [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng) and [www.premiumtimesng.com](http://www.premiumtimesng.com) respectively and subjected to analysis using the theory of Rapport Management. This is with the view to accounting for the linguistic elements and discourse strategies, their functions in rapport management, and in achieving speakers' communicative goals.

#### 4. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

This paper benefits from the theory Rapport Management (RM) by Spencer-Oatey (2005, 2008) which is a development on Brown and Levinson (1978; 1987) politeness theory. Politeness is linked to the broader concept of etiquettes or good manners or appropriate behaviour (including humility) especially during interactive or communicative encounters. It involves a speaker to be refined or cultured in his/her language use in a manner that will not constitute a verbal assault or threat to the face of the listener thereby causing an offence. The theory of politeness is based on the notion of face which Goffman (1967, p.5) defines as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. Brown and Levinson (1978) theory was influenced by Goffman’s *notion of face*. According to Brown and Levinson, face has to do with ‘the public image that every member of the society wants to claim for himself’. This implies that face is a possession of individuals; the public self-image every individual strives to protect.

As observed by Brown and Levinson, there are some acts that tend to threaten face in interactions and these can negatively impact on the maintenance of relationships. Thus, in an attempt to maintain the face of addressees, speakers usually avoid Face Threatening Acts (FTA). Sometimes, however, one may not be able to avoid the FTA. The only available option is for one to minimise or mitigate the threat. Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) model of politeness theory has been criticised that it is individual-based rather than relationship or society-based, that it is western-based and it does not handle other issues such as politic and impolite behaviour (see Eelen, 2001; Mills, 2003; Arundale, 2006; Culpeper, 2006; Locher, 2008). These necessitate further improvements on the theory one of which is the Rapport Management.

Rapport Management (RM) is a politeness framework that is premised on the notion that “language is used to construct, maintain and/or threaten social relationships,” (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p.12). It is an aspect of language use that centers on the management of social relations (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, p.12). As a theory, it relates to the management or mismanagement of the relationship of (dis)harmony and smoothness between people. It is a framework to explain how language is used to promote, maintain, or threaten harmonious social relations. Thus, RM refers to the management (or mismanagement) of relations or (dis)harmony among people (Spencer-Oatey, 2005). In its conceptualisation, RM includes both individual perspective and societal perspective of face management, sociality rights and interactional goals, etc. As Spencer-Oatey (2000, 2008) has argued, the motivation for RM is not the desire to maintain face alone but the desire to maintain sociality rights which are fundamental personal and social entitlements that individuals claim for themselves during interaction with others. This implies that face is both an individual and public possession. It is related to a person’s sense of identity and certain positive attributes which an individual values and which he/she wants others to respect or acknowledge during interactions rather than dwelling on his/her negative attributes. Spencer-Oatey (2008) believes that face is a universal phenomenon but it can also vary from person to person and from one context to another (Spencer-Oatey, 2008, p.14). However, rapport management is not just about face management, it includes the management of sociality rights, and obligations as well as interactional goals. These are factors that have to be balanced in order to achieve ‘appropriate management of rapport’ (Munoz, 2018, p.13). Sociality rights and obligations have to do with behavioral expectations which interactants or people believe that they are entitled to in relation

to others during interactions. According to Spencer Oatey (2008, p.18), people feel offended, uncomfortable, annoyed or angry when such rights are infringed or threatened. Interactional goals are wants or wishes which people have in mind to achieve during interactions. They can influence or affect the way an individual perceive rapport and failure to achieve them can cause frustration and annoyance (Spencer-Oatey 2008, p.17).

One of the goals of communication is to build rapport and there are some strategies which, according to Spencer-Oatey (2008), operate on five different domains (*illocutionary, discourse, participation, stylistic and non-verbal*) that are employed to build rapport. Spencer-Oatey, identified some factors that may influence the choice of these strategies namely; rapport orientation, contextual variables, and pragmatic principles and conventions. Spencer-Oatey (2008, p.32) suggests four types of rapport orientation which may influence interactants' choice of rapport management strategies. These include rapport enhancement, rapport maintenance, rapport neglect, and rapport challenge. Contextual variables have to do with participants, message content, social roles and activity type while pragmatic principles and conventions include socio-pragmatic interactional principles and pragma-linguistic interventions. Also, three main ways in which rapport can be threatened have been identified. These include face-threatening behaviour, rights-threatening/obligation-omission behaviour and goal-threatening behaviour. Any act that makes a participant lose face or credibility (e.g. criticisms or oppositions) is a face-threatening behaviour while an infringement on a participant's sense of social entitlements or any act that could get a participant annoyed is classified as a right-threatening behaviour. A behaviour is classified as goal-threatening when it impedes the actions of another participant or obstructs what he/she wants to achieve (see Spencer-Oatey 2008).

This theory is considered to be descriptively adequate to achieve the objectives of this paper namely; to account for the linguistic elements and discourse strategies and their functions in rapport management, and how these have helped in achieving speakers' communicative goals in selected speeches.

## **5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section accounts for the linguistic elements and discourse strategies employed by President Buhari and Governor Sanwo-Olu to manage/enhance rapport in the selected speeches how they have helped in achieving speakers' communicative goals in selected speeches.

### **5.1. Rapport Management in the Selected Speech of President Muhammad Buhari on #End SARS in Nigeria**

As will be revealed in the analysis below, PMB adopts some strategies to enhance harmonious relations with his addressees. Again, while some of the strategies help to mitigate threats to the face of his addressees others were deployed to achieve Face Saving Act (FSA).

Excerpt 1: As a democratic government, we listened to, and carefully evaluated the five-point demands of the protesters. And, having accepted them, we immediately scrapped SARS, and put measures in place to address the other demands of our youth. ... Government has put in place measures and initiatives principally targeted at youths, women and the most vulnerable groups in our society

Excerpt 2: Fellow Nigerians, it has become necessary for me to address you having heard from many concerned Nigerians and having concluded a meeting with all the Security

Chiefs. I must warn those who have hijacked and misdirected the initial, genuine and well-intended protest of some of our youths in parts of the country, against the excesses of some members of the now disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad. On Monday 12th October, I acknowledged the genuine concerns and agitations of members of the public regarding the excessive use of force by some members of SARS.

Excerpt 3: Sadly, the promptness with which we have acted seemed to have been misconstrued as a sign of weakness and twisted by some for their selfish unpatriotic interests. The result of this is clear to all observers: human lives have been lost; acts of sexual violence have been reported; two major correctional facilities were attacked and convicts freed; public and private properties completely destroyed or vandalised; the sanctity of the Palace of a Peace Maker, the Oba of Lagos has been violated. So-called protesters have invaded an International Airport and in the process disrupted the travel plans of fellow Nigerians and our visitors. All these executed in the name of the ENDSARS protests. I am indeed deeply pained that innocent lives have been lost. These tragedies are uncalled for and unnecessary. Certainly, there is no way whatsoever to connect these bad acts to legitimate expression of grievance of the youth of our country.

Excerpt 4: To our neighbours in particular, and members of the international community, many of whom have expressed concern about the ongoing development in Nigeria, we thank you and urge you all to seek to know all the facts available before taking a position or rushing to judgment and making hasty pronouncements.

Excerpt 5: In the circumstances, I would like to appeal to protesters to note and take advantage of the various well-thought-out initiatives of this administration designed to make their lives better and more meaningful, and resist the temptation of being used by some subversive elements to cause chaos with the aim of truncating our nascent democracy. For you to do otherwise will amount to undermining national security and the law and order situation. Under no circumstances will this be tolerated. I therefore call on our youths to discontinue the street protests and constructively engage government in finding solutions. Your voice has been heard loud and clear and we are responding.

Excerpt 6: We shall continue to ensure that liberty and freedom, as well as the fundamental rights of all citizens are protected. But remember that government also has the obligation to protect lives and properties, as well as the right of citizens to go about their daily businesses freely and protected from acts of violence. ...This government respects and will continue to respect all the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, but it will not allow anybody or groups to disrupt the peace of our nation.

President Buhari engages some rapport orientation strategies to manage his relationship with his addressees in his utterances. He uses rapport enhancement orientation and rapport maintenance orientation to manage the face wants of his addressees, mitigate the threats to their face and build rapport with them. PMB uses language to claim common grounds, express

solidarity, show empathy and enhance confidence building. For example, in excerpts 2 and 3, PMB claims common ground by expressing approval for the protest through the following descriptive adjectives.

*genuine* concerns and agitations,  
*excessive* use of force,  
*legitimate* expression of grievance.

With these adjectives, PMB establishes/maintains rapport with his addressees. He seems to agree with the reasons adduced by the protesters for their actions hence; he did not condemn the protest.

Furthermore, PMB uses positive politeness strategies to emphasise membership of a common social group thereby making the people feel that he is one of them. This is a strategy employed to achieve solidarity. The strategy involves showing empathy and expression of approval or endorsement for the actions of the addressees as shown in the examples below.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>genuine</i> and <i>well-intended</i> protest | - <b>to express approval or endorsement</b>          |
| <i>indeed</i> deeply pained                     | - <b>to empathise with the tragic loss of lives</b>  |
| <i>certainly</i> there is no way whatsoever     | - <b>to condemn the bad acts and show conviction</b> |
| <i>legitimate</i> expression                    | - <b>to express approval of the protest</b>          |

Quite significant in the examples above is the use of the emotive adjectives (*genuine*, *well-intended*, *legitimate*) and the adverbs (*indeed*, *certainly*) to manage rapport. With these PMB endears himself to the addressees and negotiates agreement and solidarity. PMB also uses empathy to enhance the relationship between his addressees and himself. In the last two sentences of excerpt 5, PMB employs the first person pronoun (I) in the phrase “I therefore call” and he assumes the institutional voice to appeal to the sense of the protesters assuring them that they have achieved their aims. This is a confidence building strategy. Note the choice of the verbs *loud* and *clear* and the expression, *we are responding* which could be reassuring to the protesters as it shows that the President empathises with their cause.

As identified earlier, confidence building is another rapport management strategy employed to achieve face saving act in PMB speech. Confidence and trust are two essential needs a leader requires from his/her followers and they are essential for cooperation and progress. In this connection, PMB employs what can be called testimonial argument to chronicle the efforts of his administration in positively impacting on the agitated youths. This is an attempt to portray his government as responsible and responsive (interactional goal). His declaration that *government has put in place measures and initiatives principally targeted at youth* (excerpt 1), could be reassuring to the youth and help builds confidence in them that government is able to cater for their needs. The following action verbs (in bold font) are worthy of note:

we **listened** to; and *carefully* **evaluated**; having **accepted** them; we *immediately* **scrapped** SARS; **put** measures in place to address (excerpt 1)

These verbs are carefully selected to present a positive progression or actions aimed at delivering good outcomes to the youth. The choice of adverbs (italicised) is also strategic as they confer on government the positive value of diligence and proactiveness. The goals of these strategies include to achieve confidence building, boost the addressees face want and to enhance the rapport between government and the people.



There are however, some utterances of PMB that are rapport-threatening as they are capable of impairing an existing harmonious relationship (rapport challenge orientation). He however, employed some strategies to mitigate the threats. The 'do the FTA on record with redressive action' (Negative Politeness) strategy, is used to reduce the threat to the face of his addressees. According to Spencer-Oatey (2008), a threat to the face of an addressee could be face-threatening, right-threatening or goal threatening. In excerpt 3, PMB expresses his disappointment about what he termed 'the selfish and unpatriotic interests' of some people. As can be seen in his choice of the adverb 'sadly', PMB laments and condemns the violence and its attendant consequences which include the loss of innocent lives. His appeal to the protesters in excerpt 5 is a face threatening act and a rapport challenge. It is a reminder, a piece of advice and indeed a warning and an accusation which constitute impediments (threats) to the realisation of the goals of the addressees. The verb phrases *to note* and *take advantage of* are important in the understanding of the utterance as a rapport challenge. In the same vein, the concluding part of the sentence "and resist the temptation of being used..." may seem to be an advice but it is an accusation in disguise that they are being sponsored. It is important to note however, that PMB attempts to mitigate the threats with the clause "I would like to appeal to protesters", not only by personalising the act, but also through hedging as exemplified by the use of the modal auxiliary verb 'would'. Further still, the last two sentences of the excerpt are also goal-threatening to the addressees. Of note is the use of passive construction to achieve warning in the sentence, "Under no circumstances will this be tolerated". This is a tactical way of concealing an open display of power through the use of passive construction. After he has assured them that his government shall continue to ensure their liberty and freedom (excerpt 6), PMB makes use of the negative politeness strategy of taking charge to remind his addressees of his obligation to other citizens (to protect lives and properties...). He concealed his intention (warning) with the expression "will not allow" which reveals his position. His choice of the inclusive *we* which he later defined as "this government" (institutionalisation) in the last sentence of the excerpt is a strategy to take control or be in charge.

PMB wastes no time in making his addressees feel his displeasure and that he is in charge. The first sentence in excerpt 2 which is the introductory statement of the speech is a case of rapport challenge/mismanagement. One would have expected PMB to begin by showing empathy and by clearing the issues surrounding the immediate cause of the violence (acclaimed shooting at Lekki Tollgate). He began the address by issuing warning and threat to those involved in the violence (hijackers). These constitute threats to the face wants of his addressees as they have the tendency to impede the fulfillment of the interactional goals of the addressees. The strategy employed in the use of the modal auxiliary verb 'must' (excerpt 2) is hedging, which is used by PMB to manage rapport and to mitigate the threat to the face of the addressees. Equally, his response to the concerns expressed by members of the international community in excerpt 4 is a face threatening act. It is an accusation/indictment that they are hasty in their pronouncements/judgements. He however, managed the threat through his choice of the verbs "thank and urge" which makes the statement look like an appreciation and a wish.

## **5.2. Rapport Management in the Selected Speech of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on #End SARS in Nigeria**

An analysis of Babajide Sanwo-Olu's speech shows that he makes use of strategies that help achieve Face Saving Act (FSA). Strategies identified include claiming common ground,

expressing solidarity, showing empathy and confidence building. He tactically avoids utterances that may constitute rapport mismanagement or FTA.

Excerpt 7: I address you today with a heavy heart, but not just as your elected Governor. I do so as a father and a brother. I do so as one who is touched by the infirmities and feelings of his people. I do so as a part of the collective humanity that we all share.

Excerpt 8: Fellow Lagosians, this may seem like the darkest hour of **our** history as a people, **our** sun will rise again. From the present ashes of **our** mourning today, a bright morning shall emerge from the womb of time and **we** shall rise again.

Excerpt 9: As **we** walk this phase of **our** history, let **us** remain one resilient people under God, with absolute faith trusting that **we** shall indeed rise again. Where **we** are now is fate. I apologise for everything that happened.

Excerpt 10: I declared my affinity with their crusade against all forms of police brutalities. I took all of their #5for5 demands to President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR) and the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu in Abuja. They were all acceded to.

Excerpt 11: Fellow Lagosians, while we pray for swift recovery for the injured, we are comforted that no fatalities were recorded as widely circulated on the social media. The leadership of our Ministry of Health led by the Honourable Commissioner, Professor Akin Abayomi worked through the night with different hospitals in Lekki and environs to monitor and provide support for the injured protesters. It is relevant to let you know that I have also personally visited the 10 patients at the General Hospital, the 11 at Reddington Hospital and the 4 at Vedic Hospital, with mild to moderate injuries as well as the 2 in intensive care. So far, 3 patients have been treated and discharged to reunite with their families.

Excerpt 12: For clarity, it is imperative to explain that no sitting governor controls the rules of engagement of the army. I have nevertheless instructed an investigation into the ordered and the adopted rules of engagement employed by the officers and men of the Nigerian Army deployed to the Lekki Toll Gate yesterday. This is with the view to taking this up with the high command of the Nigerian Army and seek the intervention of President Muhammadu Buhari in his capacity as the Commander-in-Chief to unravel the sequence of event that happened yesterday.

Governor Sanwo-Olu dwells more significantly on strategies to manage rapport and to enhance the face want of his addressees. The most significant strategy employed to achieve these is solidarity which is often interwoven with claiming common ground and showing empathy. Others include confidence building, testimonial argument and taking/accepting responsibility. As shown in the excerpts, Sanwo-Olu expresses solidarity and claim common ground with his addressees in a number of ways. He uses the inclusive 'we' to express solidarity and common destiny as in the following examples.

*we shall rise again*

*As we walk this phase*

*we shall indeed rise again.*

*Where **we** are now is fate*

As can be seen in the examples below, Sanwo-Olu uses possessive adjectives (in bold font) to show collectivism or collective interest and claim common ground or shared beliefs.

*...as **your** elected Governor*

*...**our** history as a people, **our** sun will rise again.*

*From the present ashes of **our** mourning today...*

In his attempt to express solidarity and claim common ground with his addressees, Sanwo-olu also expresses deep emotion and empathises with their situation. In the examples below, he empathises with the people by expressing emotional attachment, deep feelings and brotherhood.

*I address you today with **a heavy heart**,*

*I do so **as a father and a brother**.*

*I do so **as one who is touched by the infirmities and feelings of his people**.*

*I do so **as a part of the collective humanity** that we all share.*

Apart from expression of emotional attachment, empathy and deep feelings (in bold fonts) in the above excerpts, Sanwo-Olu also engages personalisation strategy to show his personal attachment to what he says as revealed in his use of the personal subjective pronoun (I) followed by performative verbs, e.g "...do so...", to explicitly convey his sentiments. By the same token, he assumes responsibility as a father, brother and friend. His use of the vocative, *Fellow Lagosians* to show his personal involvement in, and commitment to the situation is also significant.

Sanwo-Olu attempts to make the people feel he is one of them by emphasizing membership of a common social group. In so doing, he builds confidence, courage, trust and hope in his addressees. He makes extensive use of the pronoun 'we', the adjectives 'us', 'our' and the number determiner, 'one' (excerpts 7, 8 & 9) to stress the need for unification of purpose. Note also the use of the word 'again' in the phrase "we shall rise again" (excerpt 7); a presupposition trigger which is not just an acceptance of the collective misfortune of the violence but also to show that things were normal in Lagos State before the violence. The significance of the presupposition trigger becomes evident when you consider the introductory adverbial phrase (From the present ashes of our mourning today). Note that the violence that erupted from the #EndSARS was accompanied by wanton destruction of lives and property in Lagos. No doubt, these have negative impact on the socio-economic wellbeing of the state as the commercial hub of the country. With this in mind, Sanwo-Olu uses the entire sentence to comfort the people that normalcy would return to Lagos. This assurance is further conveyed in excerpt 8 through the strategy of repetition and the use of the split verbal chain "*shall indeed rise again*" (aux. +adv. +verb) in excerpt 9.

Sanwo-Olu also apologises for what has happened (*I apologise for everything that happened*). Apology, when genuinely and timely tendered, can reduce the negative impression of the transgressor and calm frayed nerves. It can validate feelings of hurt and therefore, help to reset and rebuild relationship.

In the bid to further achieve confidence building, enhance the trust index of his government and improve solidarity, Sanwo-Olu uses testimonial argument by deploying action

verbs to attest to, and by announcing the steps he has taken to ameliorate the situation. Here are some examples.

*I **declared** my affinity with their crusade against all forms of police brutalities.*  
(Excerpts 10)

*I **took** all of their #5for5 demands to President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR)*  
(Excerpts 10)

*...the Honourable Commissioner, Professor Akin Abayomi **worked** through the night with different hospitals in Lekki and environs to monitor and provide support for the injured protesters. (Excerpts 11)*

*I **have** also personally **visited** the 10 patients at the General Hospital... (Excerpts 11)*

*So far, 3 patients **have been treated and discharged** to reunite with their families*  
(Excerpts 11)

*I **have** nevertheless **instructed** an investigation... (Excerpts 12)*

Of note in these excerpts is that the action verbs (in bold font) are in past tense and are introduced by the personal pronoun (I). This is especially so in that most of the utterances are reports of actions personally taken or directed to be taken (personalisation). In a situation of crisis as in the #EndSARS protest and the violent aftermath, statements by political office holders, like state governors, explaining the steps taken to remedy the situation can go a long way to calm fray nerves and suppress violent emotions. Such statements can further build the confidence of the people in the ability of government to tackle the situation and achieve positive result.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper sets out to study how language is used to maintain harmonious relationship and achieve communicative goals in political speeches delivered in crisis situation. The study which investigates the speeches of President Muhammadu Buhari and Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria examines linguistic elements and the discourse strategies employed and their functions in maintaining harmonious relationship between participants in the speech situations and how they have helped in achieving speakers' communicative goals in selected speeches. As revealed in the analysis, the study has shown that President Buhari and Governor Sanwo-Olu engage various rapport management strategies to achieve Face Saving Acts (FSA) in the selected speeches. Strategies employed include claiming common ground, expressing solidarity, showing empathy, taking charge, confidence building and testimonial argument. They also make use of linguistic elements such as the inclusive "we", the institutional "I", the collective pronouns/adjectives ("us" "our" "your"), etc to manage rapport. Descriptive adjectives and emotive words were employed to endear themselves to their addressees and to negotiate agreement and solidarity. While GBS tactically avoids utterances that are may constitute rapport challenge, some utterances of PMB are rapport-threatening as they are capable of impairing existing harmonious relationships (rapport

challenge orientation). He, however, employs some strategies such as personalisation, institutionalisation and testimonial argument to mitigate the threats. This corroborates Brown and Levinson's (1987) observation that sometimes one may not be able to avoid the FTA and the only available option is for one to minimise or mitigate the threat. From the foregoing, PMB and GBO have, to a large extent, managed rapport and mitigate FTAs by employing adequate linguistic elements and discourse strategies. Significantly, therefore, they could be said to have achieved their goals in the selected speeches.

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