

**RHETORICAL ARGUMENTATION AND SELF-REPRESENTATION IN
OLUSEGUN OBASANJO'S NON-FICTIONAL TEXTS**

BY

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A Thesis in the Department of English Submitted to the Faculty of Arts

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

DECEMBER, 2021

CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

To God, the greatest teacher, and the diplomatic rhetors in my family: My mum, Charlotte Agbeke, the first to spot my passion for argument; My wife, Racheal Adegbenro who logically calms my nerves using persuasive words; Mr Bolanle Alao, my dependably unrepentant debater; Omolara Alao, my tactical sister who is not afraid to speak up for herself; My Children, Adedayo, Adetayo and Adefemi, who never stopped asking questions,

and to
those, who do not dodge arguments...

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A graph is a network of interconnections and I would like to draw mine to showcase the web of invisible connections that inspired the writing and completion of this work.

The first is my supervisor, Dr Ayo Osisanwo, an astute scholar who prioritises the **human** in the **humanities**. The academic support, advice, constructive criticisms, and unceasing dedication to my research are unquantifiable. I am very grateful for the tutelage, Sir.

During the past years, I have had the opportunity to meet many renowned professors and formed long-lasting connections at the Faculty of Arts. I thank our distinguished professors: Kehinde Ayobami, Adenike Akinjobi, Tayo Lamidi, and Akin Odebunmi at the Department of English. They pushed and motivated me and I am grateful for everything I have learned. Special thanks go to Professor Obododinma Oha and Dr Babatunde Ojebuyi for helpful comments given during and after the Departmental seminar presentation. In addition, I acknowledge the unflinching support from the following extraordinary personalities; Professor Omobowale Oni, Pastor P.O Oke, Chief Mrs Afusat Adesiji, Mr Salau A.W. and Pastor Abraham Mojisola Ojetunde.

My sincere and deepest appreciation goes to my parents Mr and Mrs Adegbenro for their support. I pray that they live long to enjoy the fruits of their labour. Special words of thanks and gratitude are due to my family, most especially my wife and children; Racheal Adegbenro, Adedayo Alex, Adetayo Allyson, and Adefemi Alfred. Special thanks to the family of Mr & Mrs Bolanle Alao, and my siblings; Bolade, Omobola, Mujibat, Aishat, Sarah, Success, Bisola, Victor, and Marley. Their encouragement and unfailing support during the years of my study have been invaluable to me. In addition, my brothers and sisters have been very supportive and encouraging. I thank Engineer Yemi Adegbenro, Mr Reuben Adegbenro, Mr Kunmi Stephen and most especially Adetayo, Yinka, Adedoyin Adegbenro, Joshua Olanrewaju, and other members of my family.

There are a number of people who, often without their knowledge, have supplied me with support and assistance, guidance, and encouragement in various ways. These include Mr Joshua Adeyemo, Oluwaseyi Adeosun, Engr Femi Ayandokun, Alhaji Isau Afolabi, Tayo Okeseni, Paul Jayeola, Mr Julius Sangodokun, L. K. Salami, Mr Nasiru

Hassan and a host of others numerous to mention. I appreciate their contributions. The following people are also worthy of appreciation; Tobi, Feranmi, Odun, Moni, and Abiola Olawumi. Their understanding of my peculiar situation is indescribable.

Last, but certainly not least, I owe enormous debts of gratitude to Dr James Ayodele Akinola and his family: Mrs Ayo-Akinola, Ayolayomi, and Ewaoluwa; Dr Ayinde Olusoga and his family; and Dr Mrs Titilope Alake. They have been my wonderful companions over the years. May His grace be with their household forever.

Sunday Adesoye ADEGBENRO,
26th December, 2021.

ABSTRACT

Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts explicate a representation of Nigerian socio-political history and have stirred up serious national political arguments. Extant studies on Obasanjo's self-constructs have mostly concentrated on his speeches, with little attention paid to his non-fictional texts and examined lexicalisation, hedges, and (de)responsibilisation strategies. This study was, therefore, designed to examine Olusegun Obasanjo's rhetorical argumentation, self-representational strategies and self-representation constructs in his non-fictional texts in order to establish his construction of discourse-mediated reality through arguments.

Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach, complemented by Paul van den Hoven's Rhetorical Discourse Analysis and Stephen Toulmin's Model of Argument, was used as the framework. The descriptive design was adopted. Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Command (MC)*, *Not My Will (NMW)* and *My Watch (MW)* were purposively selected because of the texts' influence in Nigeria's historical and political debates. Data were subjected to discourse analysis.

Fifteen rhetorical argumentation techniques, three self-representation strategies, and four self-representation constructs were used in the texts. The techniques are ethotic appeal, counterpoint, self-mentions, pseudo-logical fallacy, pathetic argument, us-them dichotomy, biblical eisegesis exemplification, ad-hominem, analogies, cause and effect, moral, perceptive, rational and quasi-logical argumentations. The strategies are predication, referential and perspectivisation. These were captured in four self-representational constructs: Obasanjo as a nationalist, Nigeria's predestined watchman, a revered Owu man and a gallant Nigerian soldier-politician. Obasanjo as a nationalist utilised perspectivisation, referential, and predication strategies phrased in the us-them dichotomy to justify self as the main actor on the stage, selfless leader, and the reformer of a modern Nigeria and others as bigots, cynics, corrupt and self-centred politicians. Obasanjo as Nigeria's predestined watchman was premised on biblical eisegesis and consciously controlled mimesis through the metaphoric construction of self as a mover and God-chosen. Obasanjo utilised syntactically-subordinated discourse units and deictic devices 'I', with its variants 'my' or 'me', to show commitment, shouldering of national responsibility, and assertion of personal authority and power. His representation of self as a revered Owu man was premised on historical facts (1821 Owu Massacre) and presumptions (Ifo Market Day) phrased in an elliptic evocation (Pre-colonial Nigeria) and generalised beliefs (Owu ancestral civility). Obasanjo used pseudo-logical fallacies, ethos, and counterpoint as argumentation strategies for clarifying and modifying positions. The discursive construction of Obasanjo as a gallant Nigerian soldier-politician utilised the linguistic process of us-them narration that was grounded on moral, perceptive, rational, and quasi-logical argumentation. These were manifested by metaphoric descriptions, ethos, analogies, cause and effect, definition, and exemplifications in presenting the credibility of the discourse world to establish, affirm and vindicate self. While *MC* establishes Obasanjo's quest for nationalism, *NMW* focuses on the description of self as Nigeria's reformer, and *MW* updates and reaffirms his divine commitment as Nigeria's watchman.

Obasanjo's rhetorical argumentations were built on culture-implicit beliefs, and formed a constitutive part of his self-representation strategies and constructs and these accounted for the discrepancies between the mediated discourse world and the constructed reality in the texts.

Keywords: Olusegun Obasanjo, Rhetorical argumentation, Self-construct, Political autobiography

Word count: 480

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Political autobiographies are public discourses that engage logical and emotional reasoning aimed at proving that a particular course of action is either good or bad. The political and social reasoning in these public non-fictional narratives is capable of exerting considerable influences on national and international politics, plays an important role in the development of personality and identity, as well as the ability to cope with political and life-related events. Researchers like Bruner (1991), Aldridge (1993) and Fisher-Rosenthal (1995) are of the opinion that people's selective recall and interpretation of autobiographical memories are motivated by objectives, reasons, and intents that are related to or affected by their self or identity. As a genre of creative non-fiction, an autobiographical discourse is not just a way of telling someone or oneself about one's life as it enables writers to re-interpret or re-negotiate 'self' for the reading of others. Thus, the discourse is considered rhetorical when the writer has created and organised materials in a discursive manner to impact the reader's attitude.

The argument of Lejuene (1989) is that the ultimate goal in narrating a personal story is to tell the truth and the purpose is to relay some meaning to an audience. Despite this claim, Lejuene admitted that 'truth' can be difficult to define because it is a very subjective entity. Thus, the reader needs to determine whether or not the story being read is true by evaluating the author's/narrator's credibility and by that decide if one wants to believe that the truth is told or not. The rhetorical choices made by the writer are, therefore, instrumental in guiding the readers towards a specific perception of the writer's mediated discourse world and the constructed reality. The manner with which the writer describes problems, establish assertions, validate premises, and state conclusions has an influence on reader's perception of the discourse world being constructed by the writer (Hoven, 2015). Remarkably, rhetorical autobiography has been analysed in a multi-dimensional way ranging from discourse analysis, psychology, philosophy, sociolinguistics, rhetoric, and pragmatics (Solomon, 1991, Sandall 1999, Griffin, 2000, Purnell, 2002, Merghan, 2008, Kangira, 2011, Odeunmi

2019, Osisanwo and Adegbenro 2021) but with less attention from an argumentative perspective.

Renowned politicians in the world use their political autobiography as a tool to depict not only an important part of their memory politics but also as a contribution to the stabilisation of social conceptions about their heritage (Egerton, 1992). Nigeria is no exception as there are many notable politicians across the country that have utilised the genre of autobiography as a vehicle to deliver an alternative historical account of their actions while in government. At the heart of autobiographical writings is language, man's unique gift that sets him apart from other creatures. Language is used to communicate information, ask questions, settle scores, formulate arguments, and perform numerous other functions. It is conventional and diverse (Osisanwo, 2008). To understand the significance of many utterances, it is critical to look beyond what is said and consider what is suggested in the dialogue. Thus, it is imperative, as humanities scholars, to probe, what occupies the minds of world powerful leaders while making decisions that could affect humanity as exemplified in their use of language. It is necessary to examine, through the lens of autobiography, how language use in political contexts leads to the formation of ideologies that instigate social change for the growth or destruction of humanity.

Going forward, the role of language brings to the fore, the need to seek the meaning of the structure and function of language in another dimension that is separated from the existing differences between mentalist and behaviourist perspectives (Yaacob, 2016). Analysing the use of language by some of these political leaders gives an insight into their world of reasoning and why they act in one way and not in the other. This, most probably, is why autobiographies written by some of these political leaders are of interest to linguists and equally draw much attention to the reading public compared to those written by others (Egerton, 1992). For example, would it not have been of interest to linguists if the likes of Idi-Amin and Mamman Gaddafi write an autobiographical account of their dictatorial regimes in Uganda and Libya respectively? Such would have given scholars an insight into what informs their political decisions, and their use of language in justifying the same. One noticeable trend is that most autobiographies are designed for specific purposes or probably as an answer to some questions.

A notable figure in Nigeria, whose autobiographical narratives have perpetuated Nigeria's political history is the former Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Olusegun Obasanjo is, arguably, Nigeria's most celebrated elder statesman. He was a significant figure in the events that brought the turbulent Nigerian Civil War to a conclusion. Also, he was the first Nigerian military leader to hand-over power to a democratically elected civilian leader, after ruling the country for a total of twelve years as both a military and civilian leader. A feat no other Nigerian has surpassed and may never surpass. His penchant for writing, most especially in documenting important facts about Nigeria's political history is undeniable. Adeoti (2003:7) affirms that 'The seed of military officers' narratives in Nigeria was sown by Olusegun Obasanjo with his publication of *My Command* (1980) and *Nzeogwu* (1987).' He published *Not My Will* in 1990, *This Animal Called Man* in 1998 and, *My Watch* in 2014. *My Command* and *Not My Will* are political memoirs. The former is a graphic description of the traumatic conflict that ravaged Nigeria between 1967 and 1970 narrated from Olusegun Obasanjo's perspective while the latter detailed the general direction that the military administration of Muritala/Obasanjo pursued from July 1975 to October 1979. *My Watch* (Volumes 1-3) completes a trilogy of his two previous memoirs and it chronicles Obasanjo's early life, his civil war experience, the stewardship of his first stay in power, the interregnum, his return to the political landscape as well as his thoughts on the current and future of the 'Project Nigeria.'

All of these books revolve around Obasanjo's account of Nigeria's political history in his quintessential role as a leader and an elder statesman and have generated (and still generates) intense arguments among Nigerians. The description and chronicling of events in Obasanjo's non-fictional texts satisfies Merghan's (2008:5) definition of autobiography as 'a retrospective narrative about the author's life or a significant part of it, attempting to rebuild his/her own growth within a certain historical, cultural and social context.' His autobiographical accounts are presented in such a way that the segmentation and organisation of different topical issues in the texts make the analysis of argumentation in a discourse that is purely narrative, a less daunting exercise.

The autobiographical accounts have attracted a lot of attention and are the catalyst for critical and acrimonious national debates amongst politicians, media houses, religious groups, and even many referred scholars of note in Nigeria. It is noteworthy to state here that his autobiographical accounts have actuated the publications of other texts

like Alabi Isama's *The Tragedy of Victory* (2013), Yinka Odumakin's *Watch the Watcher* (2015), Wole Soyinka's *InterInventions* (2015), and a host of other published articles and editorial comments. Reading some of these counterclaims has continued to draw attention to the texts as presumably predicted by the author.

One undeniable fact about Olusegun Obasanjo's autobiographical accounts of Nigeria's political history is that the debate about who got the facts right or wrong has diverted attention away from how language has been used to lend legitimacy to specific truths or claims. The unceasing controversies surrounding the texts have, once again, brought to the fore, questions on what constitutes narrative arguments, rational persuasion, and autobiographical reasoning.

The sustenance of democracy in a society is dependent on the public having a high quality of reasoning (Hundleby, 2018). Thus, a better grasp of good argumentative practices is crucial to preventing anarchy. The present study is an examination of the rhetorical arguments deployed by Olusegun Obasanjo in validating claims and counterclaims, and the influence of these arguments on the presentation and representation of the *self* (and others) in his non-fictional texts. The interest of this study is not in the controversies or reactions generated by the autobiographical accounts. It is imperative to assess the strategies used by the author in presenting claims and counterclaims and validate premises towards an identity negotiation and critique how the author was constructed as an authority whose account can be relied on.

Thus, the present study teases out the rhetorical effects of the arguments deployed in the texts to unpack the presences, absences, and motives of Obasanjo's narration and sheds light on the roles that language plays on the construction and reconstruction of the *self* (and others). The critical enquiry of the present study is on two aspects of the autobiographical accounts; the discourse or language, and how its subjects negotiate identities in public and private spaces. The focus is to examine the rhetorical underpinning of the texts by using the instrument of language to explore how Obasanjo successfully or unsuccessfully projected the *self* in the texts. The theoretical insights are therefore informed by Reisigl and Wodak's (2001) Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), Hoven's (2015) Rhetorical-Discourse Analysis (RDA) with a special interest in Toulmin's *Model of Argument* as part of the analytic tools.

1.1 Obasanjo's life and Nigerian politics

In his landmark piece titled *Rhetorical situation*, Bitzer (1968) has drawn attention to possible forms of reflexive text-context relationship and the need to consider the context in which a text is written. As a result, “for all rhetorical discourse, there exists a prior rhetorical context.” Exploring a text producer's sociocultural background and how it leads to self-description and identity is an important way to understand his production strategy. The assumption behind the analysis of Obasanjo's autobiographical writings is that the writer's development and process from childhood to the age of responsibility must have had a substantial impact on his ideology and style of writing. The present study of Obasanjo's autobiography revolves around this insight and that is why multidisciplinary approaches like DHA and RDA were adopted for the study. A critical study of his autobiographical writings, past research on him by other academics, and series of articles and editorial comments on his actions as a former military and civilian head in Nigeria reveal facts about his personality both as a soldier, a politician, and an elder statesman.

Olusegun Obasanjo asserts that he was born on an *Ifo* Market Day, an assumption that is premised on a historical phenomenon and couched in his mother's assertion. The absence of an authoritative document to determine his exact date of birth has led him to arbitrarily choose March 5, 1937, as his official birthday. Obasanjo was born in Ota area of Ogun State, Nigeria and attended Abeokuta Baptist Boys High School and the Mons Officers Cadet School in Aldershot, England. His official records showed that he married Oluremi Akinbiwon and has two sons and four daughters. However, facts have since emerged that Obasanjo has more than twenty children from different women both in and out of wedlock. From his autobiographical accounts, the only woman dear to his heart was the deceased Stella Obasanjo (the former Nigerian First Lady).

In 1958, when he was 21 years old, Obasanjo enlisted in the Nigerian army as an officer and received military training in India and Wellington. He rose steadily through the ranks in his about two decades in the military. From 1958 to 1960, he served in the 5th Battalion in Kaduna and the Cameroons, commissioned as Second Lieutenant, and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. In 1963, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and appointed commander of the Nigerian Army's sole engineering battalion. He rose to the rank of Major in 1965, Lieutenant Colonel (1967), and Colonel (1969).

Although there were several criticisms of his role during the Nigerian Civil War, the fact cannot be disproved that it was Obasanjo's 3rd Marine Commando Division that captured Owerri, which eventually brought an end to the Civil War. He accepted (on behalf of the Nigerian Federal Military Government) Biafran forces' surrender in January 1970. Obasanjo returned to his prior role as Chief of Army Engineers after the war. The Royal College of Defence Studies in London offered him an advanced training course after his promotion in 1972. Later, he held the position of Nigeria's Federal Minister for Works and Housing, for two years and in 1975, he gained international attention when he became General Muritala Muhammed's Second-in-Command (FMI blog).

General Muritala Muhammed died in 1976 and Obasanjo became Nigeria's Head of State from 1976-1979. In 1979, he oversaw the transition to civil rule. For this singular act, Obasanjo became a celebrated world leader as Nigeria's first military dictator to relinquish power voluntarily and allow democratic governance. After he left office in 1979, Obasanjo moved to his home in Ota, Abeokuta where he maintained his image as a man of the people. During this time as well, he wrote books, joined the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, co-founded the African Leaders Forum, and accepted positions on various international commissions (Gale contemporary Black Biography 2007).

During Nigeria's first presidential election in sixteen years, Obasanjo ran as the People Democratic Party's candidate (PDP) and received 62.2 percent of the votes, sweeping the mostly Muslim North and the highly Christian South East. Meanwhile, he lost his native area, the South West, to his fellow Yoruba and Christian, Olu Falae, the only other contender in the election. He contested for a second term in office in 2003 in a tumultuous election and won 61.8% of the votes, defeating his fiercest competitor, Retired General Muhammadu Buhari with more than eleven million votes. When Obasanjo was president, his attempts to abolish white minority rule in South Africa and Zimbabwe earned him international admiration. He backed neighbouring countries like Angola and Mozambique. and embarked on a series of reforms that changed the face of developmental strides in Nigeria (Osisanwo 2020).

Religious riots, introduction of Sharia laws in some parts of the North, Niger-Delta crisis, and Odi massacre in Bayelsa are part of the criticisms against Obasanjo's

government. Also, election violence, controversies on the sixteen-billion-dollar power project, the Presidential Library imbroglio, and the third term saga are some of the recurrent issues that predominated Obasanjo's rule. A great flaw of Obasanjo's administration was his inability to conduct a free and fair election. The worst being the 2007 general election which Obasanjo allegedly described as a 'do or die affair' and which the eventual winner and beneficiary (Umaru Musa Yar'adua), also described as fraudulent.

After his handing-over in 2007, Obasanjo enrolled for a degree programme with NOUN (National Open University of Nigeria) which was resuscitated during his civilian regime after several years of abandonment. He bagged a Ph.D. in Christian Theology in 2018 as the first person to do so in the history of the institution. This placed him as the most educated Nigerian former president after Drs Nnamdi Azikiwe and Goodluck Jonathan. Olusegun Obasanjo is a serial writer and a critic. The former President is widely known for his stubborn stance against criticism of all sorts and has the flair for responding to any perceived insult or misconceptions about his activities while in government. Reading the ancestral description of his family heritage in his latest autobiographical account (*My Watch*), it is not in doubt that Obasanjo's socio-political consciousness is something he grew up with.

Since he left office, Obasanjo has formed a habit of fiercely criticizing his predecessors and successors most especially on issues of national unity. He was sentenced to death for an alleged involvement in an abortive coup under General Sani Abacha's dictatorial regime (1993-1998). He regained his freedom after General Sanni Abacha's death on June 8th, 1998. The epistle he wrote before this study was a letter addressed to former President Goodluck Jonathan dated 2nd December 2013, where he lambasted the administration for not doing enough in solving the country's myriads of problems and expressed irritation at the ways Jonathan's administration was handling the affairs of the Nigerian state.

As a result of the disagreement, Obasanjo resigned from the ruling PDP. He officially withdrew from all activities of the party and dramatically shreds his PDP membership card on February 16, 2015 (All Africa Archive 2016). The same bashing was doled out to the former President in his latest life narrative *My Watch*. The latest is another open letter addressed to the incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari where, as usual, he

criticised the President's style of governance, especially his handling of Fulani-herdsmen/farmers menace in Benue State and a perceived nepotistic stance in the affairs of the country. He went as far as 'advising' the President not to seek re-election and urged Nigerians to form a Coalition for Nigerian Movement (CNM).

The socio/political history of this great man popularly called Eborá Owu (The Demon of the Owu kingdom) has a lot of relevance to the rhetorical discourse analysis that this study is interested in. Understanding the background of the writer's political travails and the military training he received from childhood to adulthood illumines our path to the discovery of his political adroitness and linguistic craftsmanship that results in the way he uses words and approaches issues. The former president has appeared in local and international media and have written various books and letters that have sparked controversy and passionate debates across the country.

My Command (1980), *Nzeogwu* (1987), *Not My Will* (1990) and *This Animal Called Man* (1998). *My Watch* is his latest and was published in 2014. It completes a trilogy of his previous memoirs as *odes to a life of service to country, humanity, and God* (Obasanjo 2014). The rhetorical discourse analysis in this work aims to unearth the socio-political and linguistic discourse employed by the writer in fusing the politicking and governance in Nigeria to weave a narrative projecting his image. The interest is in the way the writer utilised different rhetorical arguments to present *self* and the strategies employed to establish his claim on different issues raised in the texts.

1.2 A conspectus of Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts

As stated earlier, Obasanjo has many published books to his name, however, for this study, the three texts adopted for the analysis are summarised. These include; *My Command* (1980), *Not My Will* (1990), and *My Watch* vol.1-3 (2014).

1.2.1 *My Command* (An account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970)

As the subtitle makes clear, *My Command* is an account of the Nigerian Civil War written by one of the War's most successful Divisional Commanders. The book is an account of the thirty-month-long war that caused havoc on the military and population, claiming an estimated 1.5 million lives and destroying approximately 3.5 billion dollars in property. The author, while describing the motive for putting the war memory together maintained that his mandate in writing the book was not 'vain-glorious self-adulation but to put down for 'my country and posterity, my account of

my experiences during the war.’ Mindful of possible counter-narratives of his memoir, he challenged others on both sides in the crisis and the civil war to record in writing, whilst memories are still sharp and clear, their experiences and contributions for posterity.’

In the new edition published in 2015, Obasanjo introduced some new photos, a revised index, and impressions of operational maps used in the Southern sector of operations of the Federal Government during the Civil War. This, invariably, resulted in a change in the number of pages of the original text published in 1980. The page references in this thesis reflect that of the 2015 edition. The prologue and the introductory paragraphs give the readers an overview of events that resulted in the traumatic conflict and how Obasanjo came in to rescue the situation at a time he claimed it had almost gone out of control. The accounts are distributed into thirteen chapters with each chapter thematically labelled to give a chronological description of events starting from the background to the war up to the end of the Biafran republic on 14th January 1970 and post-war reconciliation efforts of the Gowon administration.

Obasanjo delved into Nigerian political and historical development by giving the background to the war. He traced the remote causes to the constitutional crises of pre-independent Nigeria, shoddy preparation for independence by Nigeria’s political class, 1962 Action Group crisis, controversial 1962 census, and the mother of them all (allegedly) was the general election of 1964. The immediate causes of the war were attributed to the January and July 1966 coups. Obasanjo affirmed that the coups hastened Nigeria’s collapse at the time. The counter-coup culminated in general lawlessness and disorder especially in the North where Nigerians (civilians and military) from other regions, apart from the North, were molested, maimed, and killed. It led to a Lagos 1966 ad-hoc conference that recommended regional postings of military officers. This is a move Obasanjo alleged to have nailed the coffin of the secessionist agenda. The author used this to establish his undying love for the unity of Nigeria by refusing all entreaties from his Yoruba political gladiators to relocate to the West to avoid political persecution in Kaduna, his place of abode at that time.

He acknowledged the efforts of well-meaning Nigerians and friends of Nigerians towards averting the looming Civil War that resulted in the Aburi accord, the aftermath of which was the promulgation of Decree no. 8 of 17th March 1967. Obasanjo also

attributed the immediate cause of the war to the creation of States on 27th May 1967 and the breakdown of the Aburi accord with its mischievous interpretation from both sides. The war was imminent and there was no going back hence;

The month of June was used by both sides to prepare for the war. Each side increased its military arsenal and moved troops to the border watching and waiting until the crack of the first bullet at the dawn of 6th July 1967. The first bullet was from the Federal side. (MC: p.18)

The pivot of Obasanjo's narration is a graphic representation of the actors and actions of the War as he subtly denigrated the actions of some officers and at the same time praised others. With his eagle-eyed description of events, the author could be regarded as an officer, whose gallantry and steadfastness coupled with his belief in the unity of Nigeria brought Biafra to her knees. Chapter II focuses on the description of the preparation for the war from both sides and the divisive bloodshed that was witnessed at the early stages of the war before he took over the command of the 3rd Marine Commando Division. From the Federal side;

By May 1967 preparations for war were set in motion. Already, at this time, four of the six regular infantry battalions of the Army were under the command of 1 Brigade of the Nigerian Army already re-designated 1 Area Command after Aburi. The mobilization of ex-servicemen was ordered by the Commander-in-Chief. Out of all those called up, some seven thousands of them, another four battalions -20,21,22 and 23 were formed. p.20

From the Biafran (rebel) side;

The training was embarked upon both for officer cadets who were mainly lecturers and students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and for normal recruits. The training plan even at this stage envisaged an all-out war. p. 21

In his description of the early stages of the Civil War, the author describes the exploits of an old American B26 aircraft piloted by a Pole nicknamed *Kamikazie* and how it dampened the morale of the Federal troops, the capture and recapture of Nsukka, the rebels' sentimental attachment to the defence of the university town and its significance to the rebels were mentioned. The efforts of Captain Wushishi and his men of 22 Battalion, Captain Isa Bukar, Lt. Magoro, the death of Ojukwu's half-brother Tom Bigger and the death of Obasanjo's long-time friend Major Kaduna

Nzeogwu were described. Obasanjo also used this chapter to explore the enigmatic personality of Nzeogwu as he was given a befitting burial by the Nigerian Army. He was buried in Kaduna with full military honours.

In the same vein, the killing of the renowned poet, Christopher Okigbo ‘as a result of his own bravado’ in subsequent advances from Nsukka was slightly mentioned.

He completes the account in chapter II by detailing the exploits of the Federal troops in capturing Gakem and Obudu, the rebels’ advances towards the Mid-West on 9 August 1967, the capture of Enugu by the 1 Brigade led by Lt. Col T.Y. Danjuma, the execution of Lt. Col. Banjo, Maj. Ifeajuna, Mr. Alele, and Sam Agbam on 24th September 1967 by Ojukwu and, a shower of encomiums on Mr. Asika. The description of various diplomatic talks held between 1966 and 1967 was also reiterated at the end of which, Ojukwu’s ambitious invasion of the Mid-West changed the narrative of the war and served as the turning point and a blessing to the Federal troops as detailed in Chapter III. He claimed here that, but for the timely intervention of the 11 Battalion in Akure and Owo, the rebels would have had a break-through in Lagos and Ibadan after the use of political pressure and manoeuvre had failed. The author covertly alleged here that the same political manoeuvre had once been applied on him through an unnamed celebrated Playwright and his ally, Col. Victor Banjo.

Chapter IV and V chronicles the Mid-West operation and the Southern sector. The author painted an image of the dreaded battle famously nicknamed ‘Oleku Ija Ore’ that made a once-powerful Brigadier Ejoor, a ‘helpless spectator and a bicycle-riding fugitive.’ The Federal troops were led by Major Alani Akinrinade 6 Brigade, Lt. Col Francis Aisida 8 Brigade, Lt. Col Godwin Ally 7 Brigade, and many others. The travails of the Federal troops in river-crossing from Onitsha to Asaba after three unsuccessful attempts, the capture of Obubura, Imo, Port Harcourt following on the capture of Bonny, Enugu, and Calabar, and the killing of Major Isaac Boro were explicitly narrated. Also mentioned is Col. Adekunle’s spirited efforts in launching operations OAU which the author described as self-serving.

The crux of Obasanjo’s narration was packaged in chapters VI and VII. Here, the author obscurely placates the efforts of the previous commanders who had been at the war front for almost fifteen to twenty-two months. He pictured a beleaguered Nigerian troop whose morale was at its lowest ebb and seemed a quick victory to have eluded

them. At the time he took over, ‘a drastic change was needed to arrest the dangerous military development which could lead to military and political disaster.’ Hence, a change of Command to arrest the situation brought in Obasanjo as the Commander of the 3rd Marine Commando Division after Col. Adekunle was relieved of that position. Obasanjo emphasised here that before he took over the command on 12 May 1969, it had got to a stage where eminent personalities recommended peaceful resolution of the conflict by any means possible in order to prevent a disastrous ending for Nigeria and its supporters if rebel victory seemed imminent. Also narrated in this chapter is the author’s visitation to every division and unit of the Federal force to ascertain the causes of low morale within the army. Having identified poor remuneration, distrust, gross indiscipline, favouritism, and poor supply of equipment as the cause of utter demoralisation of troops, the author promoted troop’s welfare and enforced discipline by setting the right example.

What follows is a technical reorganisation of the army formations in chapter VIII and the stabilisation and straightening of the defensive lines in chapter IX leading to the final offensive in chapter X. This restructuring, the author claimed boosted the morale of the troops and effectively brought the war to an end in a faster way that surprised the Army headquarters in Lagos. The capture of Uli Ihala airstrip and Obasanjo’s announcement of the supremacy of the Federal Government on Radio Biafra, General Philip Effiong’s address, and the subsequent address by General Gowon effectively brought the war to an end. Obasanjo concluded his narration by establishing his position that;

Apart from all the tactical and strategic lessons that could be drawn from the different operations of the Civil War, I have also come to the conclusion that personal motives and relationships are not the only major determining factors for organisation in combat; officers and men must be motivated, they do not need to agree on details of social philosophy or be bound by ties of ethnic affinity or personal friendship in order to evolve a properly functioning and efficient organisation.

His narration of the war account is personalised, and it would take a strong member of the Army Division or an insider that partook in the execution of the war to refute Obasanjo’s claims. Most of the reactionary stories on *My Command* failed in this respect, hence the controversy lingers on. In this study, the systematic representation of

facts and argumentative presentation of the historical account will be explored in order to, as much as possible, give an objective analysis of Olusegun Obasanjo's narratives.

1.2.2 *Not My Will*

Not My Will was published in 1990, a decade after Olusegun Obasanjo voluntarily handed over power to a democratically elected Civilian Head. It is an account of the general direction which the military administration in Nigeria pursued from July 1975 to October 1979 and an exclusive account of Olusegun Obasanjo's stewardship while serving as the Nation's Head between 1976 and 1979. Obasanjo asserts that what brought the Muritala/Obasanjo's regime to the fore was not his will, but a concerted effort of some military officers to halt the drift of ineptitude of the Gowon's administration. The coup that ousted Gowon according to Obasanjo was planned by four notable officers; Colonel Ibrahim Taiwo, Colonels Abdul Mohammed, Sheu Yar'adua, and Joe Garba. He was only invited to join in the formation of a new government that would bring the desired change in the country.

The new government was formed and Obasanjo accepted to be the Second-In Command to Brigadier Murtala Muhammed in deference of his seniority to him in the Nigerian Army. Accepting this offer, Obasanjo claimed, was borne out of his desire not to count any sacrifice, career, or otherwise too big to make for Nigeria's political stability and development provided such sacrifice is appreciated and acknowledged. Within the first few months of the new administration, drastic changes have been felt in the country such as the cancellation of the controversial 1973 population census, sacking of all former Civilian Commissioners, Military Governors and Service Chiefs on 30 July 1975, a release of almost all military detainees, the formation of a new Supreme Military Council and a host of other actions. Meanwhile, the new administration was put in reverse gear when some military officers struck and killed the Commander in Chief, Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, in an abortive coup on 13th February 1976.

Chapter Two is a documentation of the coup, its plotters, some of the intrigues, betrayals, and the supreme punishment meted out to those convicted by Major-General Abisoye's court-martial. The chief planners; Lieutenant Colonel Buka Zuka Dimka, and Major-General Iliya Bissala, together with some thirty-five other accomplices

were summarily executed on 11th March and 17th May 1976. What next in Chapter Three were the consolidation efforts geared towards restoring confidence and mutual trust within the army and the civilians generally that had hitherto been disrupted by the incidence of the abortive coup. What could have resulted in a national disintegration was swiftly dealt with by Obasanjo and he claimed that, fortunately for the regime, the Government was able to stem the tide of mass movement from the North to the South and vice-versa and succeeded in putting out the embers of religious mistrust resulting from the coup. A renewed effort at repositioning the country gave birth to the reorganisation of the security architecture of the country, leading to the formation of NSO. He used this opportunity to dispel rumours about his Government's seizure of Chris Okolie's NEWBREED Magazine in 1977. Murtala was buried with full military honours. The preoccupation of chapter four is a renewed focus on the political programmes, the creation of additional States, the location of a new Federal Capital, Local Government reforms, the National identity card scheme, and efforts of the Constitution Drafting Committee.

In chapter five, there is an explanation of the efforts of the regime towards repositioning the economy and various infrastructural developments embarked upon. There were descriptions of various economic measures that were put in place by the regime like *Operation Feed the Nation* (OFN), the *Land Use Act*, and the reorganisation of the telecommunications industry. Next was the social tuning in chapter six in a bid to fine-tune Nigerian social order geared towards the restoration of sanity. There were major shake-ups in the civil service, judiciary, and especially the education sector where the infamous increase in the cost of feeding in Nigerian tertiary institutions led to the much-touted *Ali Must Go* saga. His consolidated efforts at restoring Nigeria's image globally equally led to a series of reforms and a redefinition of Nigeria's foreign policy geared towards maintaining good relations with neighbours and the world at large.

The indigenisation policy, courtesy visits to many African and European countries, Nigeria's activities in OAU, OPEC, and Nigeria's spirited effort towards ending apartheid in South Africa were documented in *NMW* (123-139). The roles of the different organs of government under the regime occupied the eighth chapter. Here, Obasanjo described the workings of each of the organs. The composition of the Supreme Military Council (SMC), the judiciary, the Federal Executive Council (FEC),

and the reforms in many other sectors were discussed. Also, this chapter is a documentation of Obasanjo's countrywide state-by-state visits which has often been applauded as unprecedented.

The last two chapters cover the regime's exit plans and the eventual homecoming of Olusegun Obasanjo after he had voluntarily relinquished power to a democratically elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 1st October 1979. This is a feat that had set him apart from all other Nigerian Military dictators. The intrigues, politicking, and controversies surrounding the now infamous 1979 Presidential elections were argumentatively laid bare as the author tries to absolve *self* of the disputation associated with the contentious litigation that greeted the emergence of Alhaji Sheu Shagari as the winner of the elections. Obasanjo's strategy of defence against some of these allegations, his description of others, and the self-representation techniques adopted in the narration are of interest in this thesis. The aim is to unpack the presence and the absences in his narration to unearth the motive behind the narration.

1.2.3 *My Watch* (Volumes 1-III)

The present study of Obasanjo's autobiographical accounts is premised on Bitzer's (1968) argument that a work of rhetoric is pragmatic; it exists for the sake of something greater than itself and eventually serves to elicit action or change in the world. *My Watch* is in three volumes. Volume one is titled: *Early Life and The Military* (Henceforth *ELM*), Volume Two is *Political and Public Affairs (PPA)*, and the third volume is labelled *Now and Then (NT)*. This synoptical sketch of *My Watch* offers an opportunity to have a glimpse of the content, the line of thought of the author, and the themes that pervade the three volumes. As earlier said, *My Watch* completes a trilogy of Obasanjo's previous memoirs *My Command* (1980) and *Not My Will* (1990) and for this reason; there were many references and quotations from the two texts in the new autobiography. The author describes the books as a memoir of a lifetime totally devoted to serving Nigeria and Nigerians.

Before it was launched, there were several reactions, claims, and counter-claims regarding its content and that led to litigations of different sorts in a bid to stop its publication and distribution in and outside Nigeria. Despite this, the book was officially launched in Lagos on Tuesday 9th December 2014 and in London on 11th

February 2015. It was at a time Nigeria was on the verge of conducting her general elections and some critics believed the publication of the books was intended to alter the political calculations of the contending parties in the general elections. Obasanjo annotated the accounts and distributed them into fifty-eight subheads arranged in six parts. Each part is thematically labelled to reflect the overriding thought pattern the autobiographer wants his reader to follow.

A reading of the autobiography reveals that Obasanjo is not just narrating an account of his life. He weaved the political history of Nigeria in his life story and offered commentaries about the nation's politics and the many issues that should be recorded for posterity. One prominent feature of the autobiography is that Obasanjo unfolds his ideology and philosophy about life as one guided and guarded by God Almighty and uses that to advise readers on what should be done to excel in any situation of life. The text answers many questions about the man and his philosophy of life both in public and private spheres. Obasanjo begins the introduction of all the three volumes by quoting Ezekiel 33:7-9 (New International Version):

Son of man, I have made you a Watchman for the people of Israel; so, hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. When I say to the wicked, 'You wicked person, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways that wicked person will die for their sin and I will hold you accountable for their blood. But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved (Ezekiel 33:7-9).

Politicians employ numerous religious tales as a rhetorical approach to appeal to specific religious adherents. The above quotation portrayed the perception of the writer and serves as the propelling force towards the publication of the book. The author assumed his role to be the watchman over the 'project' (Nigeria). The three volumes, written in chronological order and at almost 1500 pages, contain one hundred and eighteen historical pictures, seven maps, twenty-two letters, twenty-five speeches, and well over fifty correspondences comprising government internal memos, press releases, private documents, and investigative reports.

Biblical allusions, metaphoric expressions, self-glorification, exemplifications, division and classifications, sarcasm, and flashback are some of the rhetorical strategies that are pervasive in the book. The introductory chapter was designed to

ascertain the author's role as the only man that God Almighty has endowed with the power of watching over the people of Nigeria. In the text, Obasanjo uses language in a way that establishes his disposition as the 'watchman working for Nigeria, humanity and for God and whose watch is an all-embracing watch.'

ELM has three parts. The first part describes the writer's lineage, a history of his ancestors in the Owu Kingdom in particular, and Abeokuta in general backed with pieces of evidence from historical documents. There is a vignette of his birth on an *Ifo market day*, his childhood reminiscences, and a description of his movements across major Nigerian cities that were significant to his developmental years (Abeokuta and Ibadan). The controversies surrounding the author's paternity and his original birth date were slyly laid bare. The author projected his family as one of the greatest and co-founder of the Owu community and as such could not be underestimated in the history of the entire Owu people and the Yoruba in general. In summary, as a typical Nigerian, the author tries to make a convincing argument here that he has a strong root and that his family background is a force to reckon with in the history of Ogun State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Part II focuses on his military career and administration, from Teshie where his military career officially began, his adventures in the United Kingdom and his stay in Kaduna. Combat operations in the Congo, the first military coup, his command of the Army's Engineer's Unit, and the Indian Staff College course were all described in this part. Also, his military assignment in Ibadan, his association with Chukwuma Nzeogwu, his Nigerian Civil War heroics and his first stint as Nigeria's Military Administrator were weaved and presented to project the author as a complete gentleman Officer of the Nigerian Army. There is a digression to some of the stories earlier told in his previous memoir *My Command* (1980), *Nzeogwu* (1987), and *Not My Will* (1990) and he used the present book to update and address some of the questions raised in them. Also, in this part, the author exonerated himself from any involvement in the coups and counter-coups that took place during the period. In his watchman role, he buttressed the fact that all his actions during the period were borne out of his undying love for the progress and unity of Nigeria.

The third part of *ELM* is about Obasanjo's life after retirement from military services and the imprisonment in 1996 which inspired the publication of '*This Animal Called*

Man' (1998). Projecting his image as a successful farmer and an entrepreneur, the author painted a picture of an Obasanjo who was trying to ignore further interest in politics. However, 'pressure' from within and outside Nigeria ignited his desire to engage in international politics as he contested for the post of the UN Secretary-General in 1992 but lost. Also, Obasanjo used this part of the text to cement his position as a national figure as opposed to 'parochial ethnic bigots' by taking an active role in the formation of NOUN (National Unity Organisation of Nigeria) in 1994 rather than joining forces with NADECO in the fight against impunity and the restoration of MKO Abiola's mandate. His incarceration during the Abacha era did not deter him from giving his all to his beloved country Nigeria as exemplified in his resolve to put everything in the hands of God after being jailed for thirty years by Sanni Abacha but spent three years, three months, and three days in prison before being elected as President in 1999.

The 648-page *PPA* has the highest number of pages and it is divided into two parts. In continuation of the previous three parts in volume one, part four covers the period from his release from prison in 1998 until the end of his second tenure as Nigeria's civilian President in 2007. Here, the author detailed all events that culminated in his ascension to the throne as the democratically elected President of Nigeria despite stiff opposition from his region and fellow Yoruba. As usual, the author did not hold back in naming and shaming those he believes have hampered Nigeria's growth.

Obasanjo defended his actions and inactions during his reign as he spins a compelling story that absolves him of any culpability while demonstrating where the blame should be placed. It is noteworthy to state here that Obasanjo provided evidence to defend his decisions on some of the actions taken during his regime while characters of some notable Nigerians were presented as defective. Some of those people who received raillery and derision from the author included Atiku Abubakar (former Vice-President), Bola Tinubu, Nasir El Rufai, Wole Soyinka, Goodluck Jonathan, and many others. In part five, the author analysed his efforts while in government. He states his creed and the administration's many reform efforts: Economic, Financial Management, Social Welfare, Civil Service, Administrative Enhancement, Fuel, Energy and Power Reforms, Conflict Resolution, and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The analysis of the data in chapter four pays critical attention to some of these issues to

identify the standpoints the rhetor is trying to impose on the readers and the manner with which the argument is constructed.

NT has 386 pages and looks at the *Now and Then* of the Nigerian *Project*. It describes the author's resentment towards some notable Nigerians including the then incumbent President (Goodluck Jonathan). The author decided that, as a watchman, with a divine calling to oversee the affairs of his people, in or out of office, it is incumbent on him to fix any anomaly that is spotted. As a result, he criticized the then-current president, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, and asserts unequivocally that the President is a failure. This Volume presented a chronicle of what he believes is President Jonathan's missed, missing, and lost chances.

As earlier observed, a major preoccupation of the autobiography is self-reconstruction and vindication. Despite admitting that he was the primary architect of the Yar'Adua/Jonathan presidency, the author absolves himself of all responsibility or culpability for the disastrous leadership. Rather, as a watchman, he is once again speaking up in order to avoid the fate advocated in the biblical statement from Ezekiel 33: 7-9.

In summary, *My Watch* is designed to project the image of the author as the first among equals in the history of Nigerian politics and to dissuade any erroneous assumptions of who Obasanjo is. The concern in this study is not to contest the truthfulness or otherwise of Obasanjo's account, the interest is on the way language was used to present facts and fabrications and its possible influence on readers' worldview. Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992) have observed that the performative act in an autobiography manifests in the manner with which an individual recounts his/her story which in turn shapes what he/she can claim of his/her life (s). The approach in this study considers *My Watch* as a performative act of textual identity to espouse the underlying ideology in autobiographical writings that personal tales are more than just a technique to write about oneself but means of shaping one's identity.

1.3 Statement of the problem

For the vast majority of world-renowned politicians, their autobiographies serve both as a vital aspect of memory politics and the construction of national history, as well as a contribution to the stabilisation of social perceptions of their legacy. Autobiography is often used as a vehicle to deliver an alternative historical account of their actions

while in or out of government. However, most of these life writings often embed the language in the social, history, and political consciousness of an individual on the pretence that it is a genuine description of what actually occurred (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Thus, public self-narratives constitute a valuable category of discourses that are associated with the social ecology of everyday life. The importance attached to these public self-narratives necessitates the need to probe the manipulation of language in political autobiographies.

Of all past Nigerian leaders, Olusegun Obasanjo's documentation of Nigerian political history in his life narratives is unmatched, though not without criticisms. Despite the criticisms, many still revered his political autobiographies as important historical documents. Meanwhile, previous studies on Obasanjo have largely concentrated on his speeches (Awonuga 2005, Tenuche 2009, Taiwo 2009, Odebunmi and Oni 2012, Oni 2013, Osisanwo 2013, Ngozi and Emeka-Nwobia 2014 and Oghogho and Aworokoroh 2016). The few available studies on Obasanjo's public life writings have focused on lexicalisation, hedges, and (de)responsibilisation strategies (Abolaji 2011, Illiffe 2011, Odebunmi 2019 and Osisanwo and Adegbenro, 2021). Many other publications are in form of book reviews, newspaper commentaries, and blog posts. Despite the controversial nature of the texts, there has not been enough attention from the rhetorical and argumentative perspectives. This has robbed the reading public of the rational evaluation of the different maneuvers made in the discourse, and the strategic patterns behind Obasanjo's representation of self and others in his non-fictional texts.

The implication is that the infrequent attention on Olusegun Obasanjo's life narratives, especially his representation of *self* with emphasis on rhetorical argumentation makes the exploration of rhetorical practices in his autobiographical accounts all the more important. The present study brings the needed attention to this critical aspect of his life narratives. The researcher's interest is to explore the identity complexities in life writing by identifying and analysing the rhetorical arguments deployed in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts and how they are used in projecting the image of the author with a view to establishing his construction of discourse-mediated reality through arguments and to try as much as possible in explicating its influence on the reader's worldview.

1.4 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to analyse the construction and reconstruction of *self* (and others) using rhetorical argumentation in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts. To achieve this, the objectives of the study are set to:

- i. identify the forms of self-representation constructs in the texts.
- ii. describe the strategies for the identified forms of self-representation and,
- iii. analyse the texts' argumentation structure and their (im)plausibility in the construction of discourse-mediated reality.

1.5 Research questions

The major research questions which guide the pursuit of the objectives in this study are:

- i. What are the forms self-representation constructs in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts?
- ii. What are the self-representational strategies used in constructing the self?
- iii. How (im)plausible are Obasanjo's deployed arguments in the construction of the rhetor's discourse mediated reality?

1.6 Significance of the study

The present study draws its significance on the need to consolidate the influence of rhetoric on autobiographical writings by taking a new dimension in analysing the deployment of rhetorical arguments in autobiographies. The study reveals the utilisation of rhetorical arguments in an autobiography and significantly shows how persuasive arguments can be used to construct individual identity in a political autobiography. This will assist in intimating writers with what to take into account while constructing a discourse world through argument and the reader's expectation of such discourse reality. Also, the juxtaposition of the mimetic and diegetic relationship in positioning the credibility of a rhetor is given expert attention in this study. Potentially, this research will assist in expanding the scope of rhetoric, by considering autobiography as rhetoric through which history can be persuasively rewritten.

1.7 Scope of the study

Although the focus of the present study is on the areas of rhetorical criticism and arguments, self-representation, and political autobiographies, there are limitations to its scope. First, the present study is qualitative and it is limited to the study of political

autobiographical accounts of a former Nigerian president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. The focus is on the rhetorical argumentation deployed by the author to represent the *self* and others in the texts.

Also, Obasanjo has several publications to his name, ranging from political memoirs (*My Command* 1980, *Not My Will* 1990), a biography (*Nzeogwu*, 1987), Christian treatises such as (*Guides To Effective Prayer* 1998, *This Animal Called Man* 1998, *Women of Virtue: Stories of Outstanding Women in the Bible*, 1999, *Sermon From The Prison*, 2000), *My Watch* 2014 and, a host of other books, pamphlets, speeches, and letters. However, the present study is limited to the study of his political memoirs *My Command* (1980), *Not My Will* (1990), and his latest political autobiography *My Watch* Vol. 1-3 (2014). This is because these three books fall into the category of political autobiography which is the interest of this study and they reflect the socio-cultural development and political identity/beliefs of the author as represented in his use of language.

1.8 The operational definition of terms

In this study, the use of some basic concepts in rhetoric and argumentation studies needs clarification. This is to remove the ambiguity of expressions in the course of the analysis. Some of these terms are:

Rhetor: Ordinarily, a rhetor and an orator are used synonymously to mean a teacher of rhetoric. A rhetor is not necessarily the same as a rhetorician who is described as a critic that specialises in rhetorical analysis. A rhetor, in this study, is a public writer who writes rhetorically in an attempt to change the view/perception of the audience on a topical issue. Obasanjo is considered a rhetor in the context of this study.

Argument/ argumentation

Argumentation, as used in this study, is not a typical exchange of diverging or opposing views as we have in everyday conversations between/among people where the goal is to win against an opponent. Rather, it is a reason or set of reasons given in support of an idea, action, or theory.

Premise

A premise is a proposition on which an argument is based or from which a conclusion is reached; in a deductive argument, either the main or minor proposition of a syllogism. A premise is not a point of contention, but rather a piece of reasoning in

which one or more statements are presented as support for another proposition. While the statement being supported is the argument's conclusion, the reasons offered in favour of the conclusion are referred to as premises.

Validity

In logic, validity is the property of an argument in which the truth of the premises logically ensures the truth of the conclusion. Because of the nature of the argument, if the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true. In other words, if the premises of an argument are related to the conclusion, it is valid. As such, the validity of an argument in this study does not imply *good* and invalid does not mean *bad*. An argument is *valid* if and only if it is not possible that all of its premises are true and its conclusion false. This, however, does not connote truthfulness or correctness.

Warrants

Stephen Toulmin's description of warrants as the sequence of reasoning that links the data to the claim in an argument is adopted in this study. Warrants legitimises the claim by showing the ground to be relevant and it answers the question 'Why does the answer mean your claim is true?' It may be explicit or implicit.

1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter gave the background to the study. The introduction situates the present study within the confines of rhetoric and discourse analysis and it provides the direction for the analysis. The chapter introduced the objectives of the research, the identified problem of the study, as well as the significance of the study. There was also a biographical sketch of the author and the selected non-fictional texts. The focus of the next chapter is on the examination of some conceptual issues, the review of the literature, and the theoretical framework adopted for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter explores existing literature and the theoretical issues related to the study. There is the need to review the existing approaches to rhetorical discourse for us to have a grasp of the place of context and its influence on political narratives. This will help in determining the role language plays in organising human life. In doing this, conceptual issues related to the study are examined while studies in autobiography as a form of rhetoric, rhetorical argumentation, political autobiography and self-representation, Obasanjo's language use, and the theoretical framework adopted for the study among others are discussed.

2.1 Conceptual issues

Some key concepts are germane to the present study. It is important to discuss some of these terms to situate them within the purview of the approach that this study threads. These include; autobiography, autobiography and memoir, political autobiography, Nigerian political language and culture, Nigerian politics and autobiographical writings. Others are the art of rhetoric, Aristotle's rhetorical appeals, rhetorical strategies, rhetorical argumentation, the fallacy in argumentative discourse, narrative argument, rhetorical analysis and rhetorical criticism, the nexus between rhetoric and critical discourse analysis, and rhetorical discourse.

2.1.1 The concept of autobiography

The history of autobiography dates as far back as antiquity and the Middle Ages. Studies show that Robert Southey coined the term autobiography (as being used in its present sense) in 1809. The term is derived from three Greek words meaning *self, life, and write*, which can be simply defined as an account of a person's life written by him. This means that it is a nonfiction story, that the author is the topic of the story, and that it documents a considerable process of self-analysis on a bigger scale (Smith and Watson, 2001). It can be deduced, however, that only these three elements may be taken as unarguably the striking feature of an autobiography. Gusdorf (1956:30), often identified as the *dean of autobiographical studies* claimed that autobiography is a distinctly Western genre that is considered to have originated with St. Augustine's *Confessiones*. It arose from Greek and Roman literature, as well as the Christian practice of admitting one's sins to God.

In his essay, *Conditions, and Limits of Autobiography*, Gusdorf (1956:31) asserts that "autobiography is not possible in a cultural landscape where the consciousness of *self* does not properly speaking exist". He writes that every autobiography is a work of art and at the same time a work of enlightenment, it does not show us the individual seen from the outside but the person in his inner privacy, not as he was, not as he is, but as he believes and wishes himself to have been. As human beings, we all have a sense of a unified self, authentic memories that can be quite vivid, and feelings of ownership and action over the events of our own lives. Autobiography is more than a mere chronicle of one's experiences; it represents "the efforts of a creator to give the meaning of his narrative".

Scholars have written extensively on the truthfulness or otherwise in an autobiography. The argument is that if a person is narrating his personal story, it must be close as much as possible to the verifiable truth. Just as Barthes (1986) has warned that the writer is always present in a book, even if it claims to be objective and realistic. He recommended that the text be used as the major analytic emphasis, rather than the actual person who wrote it. Stanley (1989:43) has equally observed that autobiographers cannot lie because whatever they say, no matter how deceptive, is the truth about themselves, whether they realize it or not.

Smith and Watson (2010) take this position further by contending that any utterance in an autobiographical text, no matter how false or skewed, defines its author. As a result, when one person is both the narrator and the protagonist of a story, as in life stories, the reality of the story becomes undecidable. They submitted that what needs to be done as a critic is to adjust one's expectations of the truth told in life-writings. Autobiographical assertions, such as date of birth, can, of course, be validated or refuted by referring to documents or facts outside the text. Autobiographical truth, on the other hand, is an intersubjective interplay between narrator and reader that aims to produce a shared understanding of the meaning of a life. The decision in this study is to do a qualitative study of the texts by focusing attention on an objective analysis of the content in relation to linguistic deployment. In this study, autobiography is not considered as a 'genre' in the real sense of the world as self-narratives can take different forms. Instead, this study agrees with Seyhan's (2000) description of autobiography as a non-generic genre' in the sense that it can take many different forms, yet it is all about self-expression. In the present study, life-writing, life-narrative, memoir, self-narrative, and self-writing have been used interchangeably as being synonymous with autobiography.

2.1.2 Autobiography and memoir

In this study, the discussion focuses on two memoirs and an autobiography written by Olusegun Obasanjo. It is imperative to justify our preference for using the two words interchangeably. The line between an autobiography and a memoir is a close one and this explains the reason why both words are used interchangeably by many writers for centuries. A memoir, like an autobiography, is a story about events that occurred during the author's lifetime. However, certain distinctions exist between them. In contrast, an autobiography covers the author's entire life to the present and is expected to include details about his or her public and private life. Zinsser (1987:27) makes a better clarification with the submission a memoirist brings us back to a time in his or her life that was exceptionally vivid or intense, such as childhood, or that was framed by remarkable circumstances. The writer obtains a focus that is impossible to achieve in autobiography by narrowing the lens.

The definition of the two genres by Gore (1995) gives an apt description of the dissimilarities between memoir and autobiography. Memoirs are typically less formal, less encompassing, more concerned with emotional truth toward a particular section of

one's life and how it makes you feel now, less obsessed with factual events written by the subject. An autobiography, however, is essentially written by the main character or at least drafted with a collaborative writer made up of detailed chronology, events, places, reactions, movements, and any other relevant information that inhabited the life of the subject focused on facts. By implication, an autobiography follows a chronological order while a memoir can begin anywhere. An autobiography is written in the first or third person, whereas a memoir is written in the first person. Both words were used interchangeably in this study despite their differences because the texts being studied (based on Gore's description of the two genres and Obasanjo's personalised description of events) contain elements of both genres and succinctly suit the aim of the study.

2.1.3 Political autobiography

To Vidal (2003:76), autobiography can be used as a political instrument, as generations of political leaders from different regions of the world have attempted to transmit to the future, an account of their lives and achievement. They use the genre of autobiography as a vehicle to deliver an alternative historical account of their actions while in government as it is evinced in the selected texts for this study where more than half of the entire texts were dedicated to the public account of the author's political activities. Eagerton (1992) sees political memoir as an endeavour by a retired politician to recount the important political engagement of his or her career to explain and interpret the choices made and forces encountered in the course of political activity. It is an avenue to offer some precepts or wisdom to assist political successors. In contrast to Eagerton's definition, political autobiography is not restricted to retired politicians alone as some use it as a campaign tool during elections and most times to sustain their relevance in the game of politics.

A political autobiography usually intertwines personal and political notions. This seems to be the focus of many books in this category. For example, Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk To Freedom* (1994) describes the author's political travails and his resolve to continue the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Barak Obama's *Dreams From My Father* (1995) describes the author's upbringing and his family's influence on his later political upheavals. Gerda Lerner's *Fireweed* (2002) resonates with Lerner's moral courage and commitment to social change in the events of the twentieth century and repression of dissent and Bill Clinton's *My Life* (2004) covers his life

chronologically, beginning with his early years and the family and how his upbringing had a peripheral role in his political and public appearances. The impulse generated by these writings has overshadowed the works of professional historians and political scientists as they have presented powerful attractions to many readers across cultural and linguistic boundaries through the excitements generated in the book industry with their major revelations, political insights, and general doses of entertaining gossips.

Autobiography may be tense and boring but most political autobiographies are designed to elicit responses from the readers. Gray (1998:21) argues that because political autobiography can be both a captivating tale and a weapon for political persuasion, rhetorical theorists and critics should pay more attention to it. Most critics of political autobiography assert that writings by politicians to justify their career are flawed with inaccuracies and fabricated facts, thus they are unlikely to produce accurate history or convincing political analysis. This explains why most political autobiographies are usually shrouded with controversies.

The categorisation of Obasanjo's non-fictional texts as political autobiographies is therefore not out of tune. This is because the texts have all the characteristics mentioned above. However, to his credit, of all the former Nigerian Heads since independence in 1960, Obasanjo's flair for documenting important political history through his autobiographical accounts is unrivalled. Although this study is neither particularly interested in the controversies surrounding the texts nor trying to apportion blame(s) on any character, the interest is on the deployment of the linguistic instrument as a precursor to the presentation of facts and fabrications in the texts to ascertain the role of language in expressing our ideas about life. The combination of DHA and RDA coupled with Toulmin's argumentation model adopted for the study is enough to determine whether the text is plausible or not effective for its purpose.

2.1.4 Nigerian political language and culture

Language is often at the centre of all human communication. Osisanwo (2008:1) describes language as the arbitrary graphic representation of the human noise which is used in a community mainly for communicative purposes. Nigeria's democratic order is not exempted from the role language plays in establishing social order interaction. How Nigerians use language deserves expert attention. Oha (1994) avers that language influences many things about our life. He emphasizes the role of language in life vis-à-

vis its function in communication; a concept that ensures interaction in which people participate in activities that build a life. By implication, the context of language use enhances communication in a speech community.

Context is the element of a dialogue that surrounds and aids in the understanding of a language unit. It determines whether utterances are clear or ambiguous and provides insight into how humans generate and comprehend meaning. People will be able to decipher what others say based on the situation they are in (Paltridge, 2006). Understanding and interpreting the meaning of what someone says requires an understanding of the situation in which they are speaking. It would be a herculean task to understand fully the argumentation strategies deployed in a text without an adequate examination of the cultural perception of the people. In this case, an understanding of the culture of Nigerian politics and her history in the context in which the books under study were written is essential to analysing and interpreting the selected autobiographical accounts.

Nigeria is a conglomeration of hundreds of ethnic groups, spanning across different geographical zones, and language, the human-specific system of communication through conventional signs and representations is ‘man’s all-in-all as a genetic inheritance, a mathematical system, a social fact, the expression of individual identity and cultural identity and the outcome of dialogic interaction’ (Falola and Genova, 2009:2). From 1960-2021, Nigeria’s political culture has often been underwritten by a host of factors, which includes ethnicity, religion, and social class. These forces have played (and continue to play) visible roles in Nigerian political writings, both individually and collectively, even after sixty years of political independence.

Godwin (2008) goes on to say that the way Nigerians utilise language is a matter of concern for linguists because it has previously resulted in preventable loss of lives and property. One incident that comes to mind is the allegation that President Muhammadu Buhari’s unguarded statements in 2011 sparked the violence that resulted in the deaths of not less than ten Nigerian youth Corps members and a host of others. The commission that probed the post-election violence submitted that ‘Though Gen. Buhari was also a victim of the violence, his statement to his followers that they should *guard their votes* may have been misread by those who took the law into their own hands to commit the horrific crimes (Vanguard Oct 11, 2011). Jonathan’s famous phone call to

Muhammadu Buhari, during the 2015 General elections, conceding defeat in the presidential race would go down in Nigerian history as a remarkable move that doused the tension that had already surrounded the country almost to the point of devastation. This explains the fact that language can be a powerful tool to initiate violence and can also be a means of conflict resolution depending on how it is deployed.

Thus, if language is so powerful and had to be at the centre of all human activities, there is the need to examine its nature and the complexity in helping to organise life and individual identity. Many questions engage the mind in the course of this study. There is a need to query the motivation behind Nigerian autobiographers' use of language that makes it an important ingredient in ascertaining existence and relevance to the social community. Again, we must be worried about what exists in man, his knowledge about language that connects his desire to construct and reconstruct his identity physically or metaphysically the reality of his existence to the way(s) he uses language. The deployment of rhetorical strategies/argumentation to project identity is the concern in this study. As Falola and Genova (2009) have rightly observed, the colonial legacy of Western models of communication greatly influenced how our rhetorical practices are structured and internalised. In the present study, therefore, there is an attempt to situate the use of some rhetorical arguments to the African context to aid an understanding of the different rhetorical usage and the forms in which it manifests in their culture.

2.1.5 Nigerian politics and autobiographical writings

Autobiography has a long tradition of existence in Nigerian literary/political culture. With a long history traceable to Olaudah Equiano's indispensable slave narrative (*The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa*) published in 1789, autobiographical writing could be said to have gained prominence in Nigeria with the advent of missionary education in the 19th century. Patricia (1997) affirms that even to the casual observer, looking at the development of contemporary African writing, autobiography would certainly seem to stand out as a major component in the vast array of cultural productions from that continent. It is no gainsaying to say that praise chants or heroic poetry generally bears fragments of self-representation even though they adopt literary resources like exaggeration and symbolism in the representations to make them fictive, however, references to actual people and places establish their

(auto) biographical motive (Adeoti,2003). This is buttressed by Babatunde (2016:1) that ‘the literary enterprise mirrors the society through a reflection of life, ideas, norms, values, religion, and language. Across the globe, over the borders, these things unite the society in many ways, irrespective of colour or race.’

The works of Nigerian nationalists and statesmen like Obafemi Awolowo’s *My Early Life and Awo* (1960), and Nnamdi Azikiwe’s *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* (1970) showed the resolve of these great men in documenting an important life for the sake of posterity. Others include; Trevor Clark’s *A Right Honourable Gentleman: The Life and Times of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa* (1971), David Jemibewon’s *Combatant in Government* (1978), and a host of other published autobiographies. Nigeria has a complex political history most especially after her independence in 1960. In Osisanwo’s (2016) account, the country had experienced different types of government in her sixty years of existence (1960-2020). There have been ceremonial (1960-1966), military (1966-1979; 1983-1999), transitional (August-November 1983), and democratically (1979-1983; 1999 to date) elected leadership in Nigeria.

Thus, the post-independent Nigeria has spent twenty-nine years, governed by the military, and has only had the privilege of a little over twenty years in democratic dispensation (Osisanwo, 2020). It is therefore not surprising that for a long period, autobiographical writings by military men dominated the country’s life narratives. Many of the officers have written extensively trying to share with the reading public, experiences of the first military coup of 1966 and several other coups, the Civil War, and Post-Civil War military governance. These events are the major challenges in the intriguing history of the Nigerian state and in particular the Nigerian Army.

As said earlier, the catastrophic Nigerian Civil War gravely damaged her economy and reputation and it had a great influence on the country’s literature for decades. Most notable autobiographical writings in the country portrayed the devastating effects of ‘this traumatic conflict’ which ravaged the country between 1967 and 1970. However, as Adeoti (2003:6) has observed, the seed of this development had been sown earlier with the publication of Olusegun Obasanjo’s *My Command: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War 1967-1970* (1980), and *Nzeogwu* (a biographical portrait of Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu who led the 1966 coup but died during the Civil War while fighting on the side of Biafra). Also, we have Elechi Amadi’s *Sunset in Biafra*

(1975), Alexander Madiebo's *The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War* (1980), Adewale Ademoyega's *Why we struck: The story of the first Nigerian coup* (1981) and, Odumegwu Ojukwu's *Because I am involved* (1989).

Others are; David Ejoor's *Reminiscences* (1989), Samuel Ogbemudia's *Years of Challenge* (1991), Olu Bajowa's *Spring of a Life: An Autobiography* (1992), Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn* (1993), Abdul-Karim Adisa's *Loyal Command: An Autobiography of Major-General Abdul-Karim Adisa* (1999). James Oluleye's *Architecturing a Destiny: An Autobiography* (2000), and Alfred Obiora Uzokwe's *Surviving in Biafra* (2003) are some of the many life writings narrating the ordeals of the Civil War and its resultant negative effects on the political development of the country. The political cum socio-economic problems in Nigeria can be adjudged to have emanated from poor leadership and ethnic rivalry. Despite the controversies generated by these books, they have shot in a direction that would later attract many other fellow professionals, in or out of uniform.

In another category, we have those who weaved in their narratives, an assessment of those in the corridors of power in Nigeria and they have used the resources of (auto) biography to either espouse or censure the political and social activities of some of these leaders. John N. Paden's *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria* (1986), Tai Solarin's *To Mother with Love: an Experiment in Autobiography* (1987), and Wole Soyinka's trilogy of *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1981), *Isara: a Voyage Around Essay* (1990), *Ibadan: the Penkelemes years* (1994), *'You Must Set Forth At Dawn'* (2006), and likewise Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country* (2012) are some of the examples in this category.

A critical study of many of these (auto)biographies provides a significant site for the interrogation of the travails of democracy in Nigeria and also an opportunity for a deeper understanding of the inner workings of those in government. It is often common that the image being sold to readers is that of a man who rises from a modest background and arrives at remarkable success through hard work, even if evidence from performance while in government says otherwise. In summary, every society has its means and methods of chronicling events, and lives, in a way peculiar to it and Nigeria is no exception.

It is noteworthy to mention here that, with very few exceptions, most Nigerian political gladiators are not fond of documenting political history. When they do, it is usually shrouded with controversies. This is perfectly captured by Chidi Amuta (2017) in his foreword on Segun Adeniyi's book *Against the run of play: How an incumbent President was defeated*. He posits that:

One graphic way of putting it would be that Nigerian politicians have the appetite of elephants but the memory of mice. Our national political memory is short and mostly undocumented because the political events themselves are suffused in hearsay and myths. Our politicians hardly keep diaries let alone write memoirs. They play it as a game, albeit an unserious one disconnected from any commitment to national history and goals

Amuta's submission is that those who have made efforts to document important Nigerian political history should be evaluated constructively. In line with Amuta's observation, Olusegun Obasanjo's life narratives have equally generated a lot of controversies that are capable of rendering all that is written in the book as mere gibberish. Within the purview of uncovering the rhetorical and argumentation strategies of self-representation in Obasanjo's non-fictional texts, this study is designed to examine how the author uses language to project identity in the texts. This is why the focus is to use the instrument of language to establish the construction of self and others in the texts by subjecting them to a rhetorical and discourse analysis to bring out how Obasanjo constructs Nigerian socio-political realities that project his image as the sole watchman.

2.1.6 The art of rhetoric

Research shows that rhetoric has its origin in the school of pre-Socratic philosophers known as the Sophist Circa (600BC) in Ancient Greece. It began as a civic art, addressing the necessity to train public speakers and authors to persuade audiences in public forums and institutions such as courtrooms and assemblies using persuasive arguments (Hudson, 2003). Since its evolution, different definitions of rhetoric, both as the art of discourse and as a study of its resources and consequences, have dominated research in the field from the Sophists in the 5th century BC, Plato (427 – 347 BCE), Aristotle (384 – 322 BCE), Cicero (106 – 43 B.C.E), Quintilian (35 – 95 B.C.E), and other classicists, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance period and up till today (Legget, 2012). Rhetoric was negatively interpreted that it denoted 'hollow words and

flashy language' for centuries and that it was associated with deceit and tricks that mask truth and sincerity. However, Aristotle engineered a major turnaround in the description of rhetoric by describing it as a useful art that supplements rather than imitates nature. To Aristotle, rhetoric is scientific in that it is not just the art of persuasion but as "the faculty of finding, in any subject, all the available means of persuasion".

Aristotle's (350 B.C.E) definition successfully bridges the gap between the sophist and the dialectic method by claiming that rational arguments played an important, but not exclusive part in persuasion. In *Art of Rhetoric*, his first major work about rhetoric (1355b: 27-28), Aristotle (2009) avers that rhetoric has no specific territory or subject matter of its own since it is found everywhere (Kuypers 2009:2). Scholars in the field also agree with Aristotle's (2004) notion that there is almost nothing in the human experience that cannot be viewed through a rhetorical lens. The present study employs the contemporary scholars' definition of rhetoric that defined rhetoric as an act of using symbols that are designed to change the view or perception of others (Foss, 2004).

The latest development in the field of rhetoric is the Neo-Aristotelian rhetoric which was propagated by the Chicago School; Ronald S. Crane, Elder Olson, Richard McKeon, Wayne Booth, and others (Kuypers 2009:2). Its critical features were first suggested by Wichelns in 1925 in his treatise *The Literary Criticism of Oratory*. Named after Aristotle, Neo Aristotelianism dwells on the analysis of the traditional concepts of rhetoric technically referred to as the five canons of rhetoric. It follows a chronological order of evaluating the context by determining the rhetor, the occasion, and the audience to whom the rhetor tries to communicate. After which, the five canons are applied to determine the structure of the artefacts by analysing the *invention* (how the argument was built), *arrangement* (the organisation of ideas), *style* (the use of language), *the memory* (especially in spoken discourse) and the *delivery* or the virtual appeal to the audience. This enables a critic to analyse the possible rhetorical effects of an artefact on the audience/reader. This implies that the focus is no longer on the aesthetic qualities of a speech as we have in literary criticisms but rather on the persuasive effects of texts on the audience. Rhetorical argumentation is built around this insight as it enables critics to effectively determine the arrangement of ideas in a text and their persuasive intent. The lean towards persuasion in texts is why the

Aristotelian rhetorical appeals have continued to dominate discussions on rhetorical discourse analysis and argumentation.

2.1.6.1 Aristotle's rhetorical appeals

Unlike philosophy, rhetoric is related to the art of arguing within a specific social context and aims at the most efficient way to achieve a speaker's goal (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958, Kennedy, 1994, Aristotle, 2004). To Aristotle, the rhetoric/persuasive appeals are the cornerstone within the field of rhetoric and writing and embody the use of the artistic proofs: logical (logos), ethical (ethos), and emotional (pathos) by a speaker to persuade recipients. These, he technically referred to as the 'rhetorical triangle.'

2.1.6.1.1 Ethos

Ethos, also known as ethics, is linked to the charisma of the speaker or writer as an ethical appeal to convince readers that the writer is credible (Aristotle (1992, Gottweis, 2007, Demirdögen, 2010). Aristotle described ethos as perhaps 'the most authoritative form of persuasion.' It uses the speaker's authority for persuasive purposes to prove that the writer's words have weight and must be taken seriously. Thus, it can be regarded as the role of the writer in the argument and the credibility of his/her argument. It is how a speaker/writer is perceived by the audience or readers. Writers use ethos when they demonstrate that they are credible, good-willed, and knowledgeable about their subjects, and when they connect their thinking to readers' own decisions. It is the perception or opinion of the audience on the credibility and the personality of the writer/speaker that makes persuasion effective. To influence the decision of the audience on a particular topic, the rhetor has to be credible. If the audience does not like the personality of the speaker, they are not very likely to go along with his case Murphy (2006:864).

To Corder (2004:79), a person with an ideal ethos "lives in a place large enough to accommodate inconsistencies." Thus, emphasising that it is the language that lets us defines ourselves fully into existence and with others. Carlo (2015), takes this position further by emphasizing that ethos is not just about the perceived character in written texts as she expanded the traditional definition of ethos beyond stylistic interpretation. She argues that our surroundings (material, natural, cultural) help construct and inform a living ethos. She maintains that 'when an author practices a generative ethos (the

process of making oneself and liberating audience to make themselves), a threshold is created that invites others into the world of the author, and the crossing of the threshold can be thought of as a type of fold'. The folding of the self and others serves as a central metaphor for rhetorical identifications.

In argumentative discourse, most writers use ethos first because of the need to create in the audience, a mental picture of a speaker/writer who knows what he/she is talking about, that he/she has the credentials, experience, and know-how to be believable and to be worthy of attention. The manipulation of formal and informal language, the use of narrative or quotations, and the tone of familiarity or objectivity come as a result of writers considering their speaking voices on the page. Ethos appeals to the intelligence, virtue, morals, and the perception or trustworthiness of the writer by appealing to the readers' subconscious knowledge. In modern rhetoric, ethos remains a vital concern to writers in addressing socio-political arguments.

2.1.6.1.2. Pathos

Pathos is a rhetorical appeal to emotion. It accesses the emotions and deeply held beliefs of the audience to draw them into the subject matter (Aristotle, 1992). This, according to Burke (1969), is accomplished by 'identification' (sociality). Pathetic appeals are characterized by evocative imagery, description, visuals, and the likes to create within the reader or listener a sense of emotion, outrage, boredom, sorrow, excitement, pity, and many others. William, (2008:39) reminds us that the use of metaphoric imagery, linguistic manipulation, and other non-literal language helps to construct emotional appeals that are culturally grounded and institutionally specific. In rhetorical argumentation, pathos appeals to readers' or listeners' opinions by invoking sympathy or pity in the readers. It triggers the audience's feelings such as happiness, sadness, satisfaction, pity, or fear. Though these appeals are difficult to assess, it is easily recognisable because audiences tend to know when what they hear or read swells emotion within their hearts and minds. It should be noted that pathos adds value to logos and ethos and it serves as a link between the three elements in the triangle as it is interconnected and provides the other two with strength and coherence. The dominant use of pathos in a text can undermine the credibility or sincerity of the writer.

2.1.6.1.3. Logos

Logos are used by writers to convince and persuade readers via logic and reason, and usually make use of statistics, cited facts, and statements by authorities to persuade. It is referred to as a logical appeal to reason because it represents the substance of the speech and the meanings behind the words (Aho 1985, Green 2004). In this proof, the speaker tries to structure the speech in a way that makes sense to the listeners (Andersson, 2005:4 and, Murphy 2006:864). The use of logical evidence and facts to support an argument appeals to the more rational side of the audience's minds and provides support for the subject matter. Thus, strengthening the impact, pathos has on the audience. This is why Holt & Macpherson (2010) described logos as the clarity and integrity of the argument.

To assess the logical appeal of a text, critical questions are to be evaluated.

Are the author's statements credible?

Is there enough proof to back up those claims?

Is the speaker drawing logical conclusions?

Does he/she discuss counter-arguments, opposing viewpoints, or points of view?

These and many others can help the rhetorical critic to determine the credibility of a particular argument. However, in rhetoric, Logos is not merely rationality, but the appearance of reason, more like "common sense," hence, does not require the same linguistic arguments as logic to be compelling (Higgins and Walker 2012). In logical appeals, consideration is given to those textual components suggestive of argumentation and systems of reasoning. There is an emphasis on the identification of data, the major claims, and warrants utilised within formal communication, and techniques of attribution with a significant focus on justifications and defences (Clatworthy and Jones, 2003, 2006). Facts and figures help confirm the way we feel about something, they justify our feeling with proof. However, Higgins and Walker (2012) warned that we should be brief and to the point, lest we lose our audience with too much data.

In essence, rhetorical appeals are interested in how writers attract readers into their imaginative world, particularly when those readers have conflicting viewpoints and can be considered adversarial. They help writers to create and foster empathy, expose inquiry to readers through provisional reasoning, and aid writers in how best an argument can be framed, the tactics they can employ to mitigate the potential threat posed by readers, as well as how authors and readers use story in rhetorical contexts.

RDA is built around Aristotle's rhetorical appeals and this is why the theory is able to account for the links between an author's creation and a reader's interpretation of a discourse world through an examination of the various reasonings offered in support of a standpoint in an argumentative context. The links between/among numerous actions made in a rhetorical discourse analysis are shown in Fig 2.1, which is a triangular description of Aristotle's three rhetorical appeals.

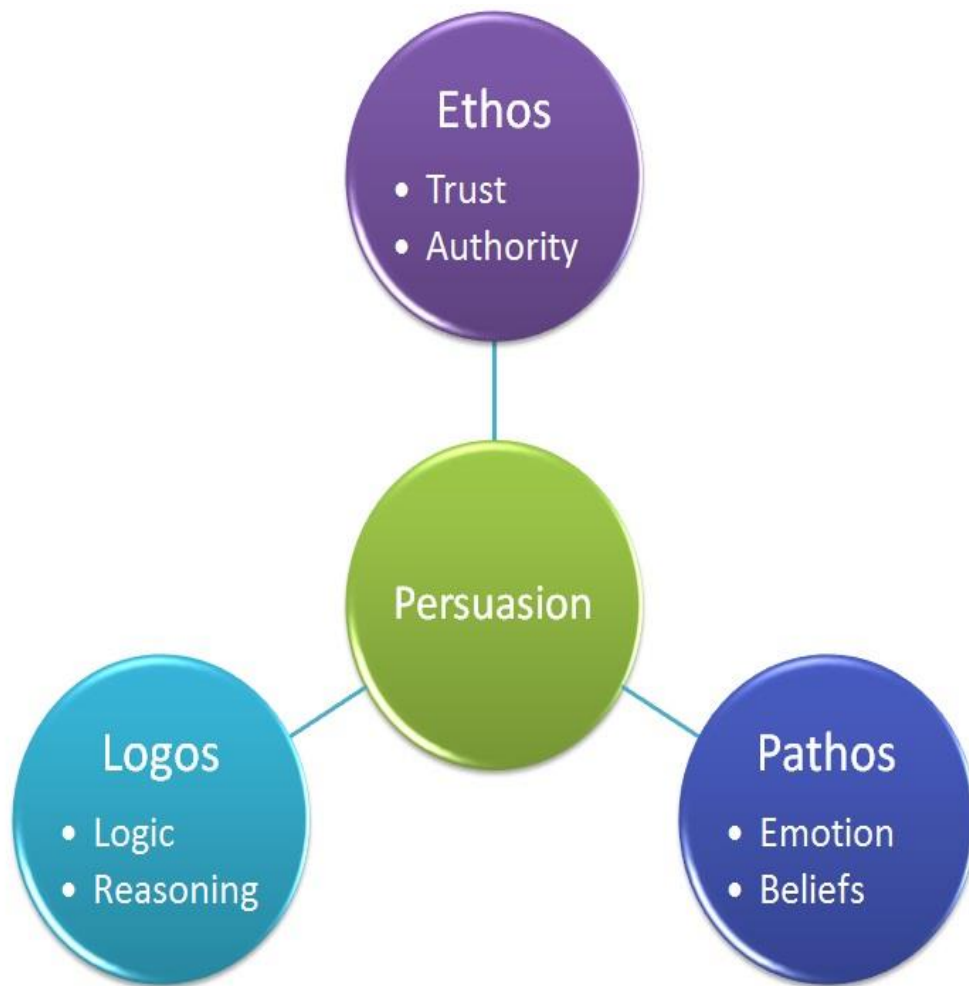


Figure 2.1: Aristotle's rhetorical triangle

Source: Aristotle, 1992

2.1.7 Rhetorical strategies

In line with Burke's claim that there is rhetoric everywhere there is persuasion, and persuasion where there is meaning. (Burke 1969:72), it is consequential to say that

rhetoric is argument and argument is rhetoric. Rhetorical devices/tropes are linguistic tools such as sentence structure, sound, or pattern of meaning used by writers to invoke a particular reaction from readers. Rhetorical strategies can also be described as how a paragraph or a discourse is organised and the methods used to support and explain the main idea or thesis. Each rhetorical device is a distinct tool that can be used to construct an argument or make an existing argument more compelling. Rhetors employ these devices as strategies of persuasion in argumentative discourse.

Rhetorical effects of an argument manifest when an attempt is made to enlighten, convince, or argue with someone. or when an emotional reaction to discourse changed the audience's mind about an issue after hearing a skilled debater's rebuttal. Basic knowledge of rhetorical devices helps to improve the ability to process and convey information while also strengthening an individual's persuasive skills. For this study, a few rhetorical devices such as enthymeme, anecdote, metaphor, us-them dichotomy, exemplification counterpoint/counterargument, self-mention, biblical exegesis, cause and effect, and rhetorical argumentation, that are germane to this study are discussed. others are fallacy in argumentative discourse, narrative argument, moral argumentation, quasi-logical argumentation, rhetorical analysis and rhetorical criticism, the nexus between rhetoric and critical discourse analysis, rhetorical discourse

2.1.7.1 Enthymeme

There had been different definitions of enthymeme by rhetoricians, political scientists, philosophers, and individuals in several fields. Several scholars have constructed varied definitions based upon their interpretations of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and, to a lesser extent, *Prior Analytics* (E.M. Cope 1867, R.C. Seaton 1914, Carol P.1992). Aristotle's description of enthymeme in *Rhetoric* surmised that an enthymeme is an argument that is based upon an assumption as opposed to a topic or idea that has scientific support or is based on indisputable fact (Aristotle, 2007). Bitzer (1959:189) summarised the exploratory definition of enthymeme by asserting that "The enthymeme is a syllogism based on probabilities, signs, and examples, whose function is rhetorical persuasion. Its successful construction is accomplished through the joint efforts of the speaker and audience, and this is its essential character. He, however, emphasised that although "many enthymemes are formally invalid, they still constitute rhetorical proof" (Bitzer 1959:182).

In rhetoric, an enthymeme is an informally stated syllogism with an implied premise. With this technique, the writer builds an argument with one element removed, leading readers to fill in the missing piece. A complete syllogism is often represented by the example: “All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.” These statements do not require any inference from the audience, nor does it rely upon any assumptions. All parts of the syllogism are stated and can be proven to be true (Lawson, 2010:3). However, in an enthymeme, one of the elements goes unstated, as it is generally assumed to be a shared knowledge or a belief held by the audience and that is why an enthymeme is described as an incomplete argument. Aristotle’s definition of enthymeme, though not explicit, emphasised that to execute a successful enthymeme, some elements are essential. One of which is basing one’s assumptions on a defined group rather than a general populace and that one should not, or need not state all parts of one’s argument to avoid redundancy. These two elements make up the basic formula for an enthymeme; an incomplete or truncated rhetorical syllogism in which one of the elements goes unstated.

In an article published in 1994, Walker asserts that:

The generally prevailing concept of the enthymeme, or the one most frequent in the world of rhetoric and composition studies, tends to define it either as a kind of elliptical, informal syllogism based on probable rather than certain premises and tacit assumptions shared by audience and rhetor, or as a kind of "Toulmin argument," or as a general model of intuitive reasoning representable in syllogistic or Toulminian terms, or, most simply, as the juxtaposition of any idea with another that is offered as a reason for believing it (1994:46).

This study aligns with Walker’s description of enthymeme as expressed in his article *“The Body of Persuasion: A Theory of the Enthymeme* that “Effective argumentation that is ethically and intellectually responsible is indeed a matter of dialogic reasoning that seeks to incorporate the audience's knowledge and beliefs as well as the rhetor's”. His definition bridges the gap between Aristotelian philosophy and contemporary scholars by drawing inferences from Toulmin’s view of informal reasoning which emphasises that the effectiveness of any argument is dependent upon both the audience and the speaker. The consensus among varied definitions of enthymeme is that it is the combination of the explicit with the implicit warrants.

2.1.7.2 Anecdote

An anecdote is a short interesting story, often amusing but serious, revealing the account of a person or an incident. It is usually a short narrative or biographical incident that is significant to the topic at hand adding personal knowledge or experience to the topic. However, unlike stories, an anecdote is something that happened but lacks a basic plot and is most often told through speeches (Lawrence, 1989). It must be a true and short story that illustrates a point. In communication, anecdote adds social and political values by promoting understanding of social, cultural, or economic phenomena grounded in anecdotal evidence. Anecdotes gives casual account of evidence and it is often used in opposition to scientific claims Kennedy (2005). The problem lies in its atypical nature and lack of statistical evidence and this is why it I regarded as fallacious when used improperly.

2.1.7.3 Metaphor

Metaphors assert that something is something else (Jones and Peccei, 2004:45). It is a linguistic phenomenon employed for artistic and rhetorical purposes based on a resemblance between two elements that are compared and identified, as well as conscious and deliberate usage of words that is not indispensable. Aristotle, in *Poetics*, says “Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy”. Metaphors can be concrete to abstract, synaesthesia, anthropomorphic and, or animistic as it is employed to facilitate memorizing, and to refresh readers’ minds (Ullmann, 1978:242). The theme, vehicle, and ground are three types of metaphor discovered by scholars. The issue is the object being compared, the vehicle is the concept being compared to, and the ground is the foundation on which the comparison is being made. Emotions such as anger, pride, and love are conceptualized structures in everyday language and they illustrate the cognitive idea of metaphor as mediation between human understanding and world view.

The study of metaphor is also the study of meaning since the metaphorical essence of language is the reflection of human nature and cultural perspectives suggesting that metaphors are universal phenomena. Typically, it is assumed that concrete entities are easier to think about and discuss than abstract ones. Thus, it is common to find concrete images in political discourse. Metaphor plays a central role in the structure of discourse and carries out a greater expressive function that is directed to attaining the

maximal communicative effectivity. Metaphors have a persuasive effect on the recipients, as they can persuade and influence attitudes. It enforces the strength of the message on the specific situation, as well as on the audience by provoking the audience to search for both the explicit and implicit messages. It strengthens the credibility of the speaker and also helps the speakers to create new meanings and ideas to find an appropriate way of expressing the inexpressible thought.

2.1.7.4 Us-them dichotomy

The aspect of blaming others for wrongdoings and/or faults has been widely applied in politics-related discourses to construct and normalize the negative *them* (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). Us-them dichotomy is the categorisation of good people for us and bad ones against us van Dijk (2006:735-739). According to Oyeleye & Osisanwo (2013:763), ‘ingroups generally stress their own positive deeds while de-emphasizing their own negative deeds; on the other hand, outgroups de-emphasis or even entirely deny their own terrible deeds while emphasizing their own good ones, Thus, in an argument, a positive *us* can be constructed through blame denying (I did not say) or blame avoidance (I did not mean) to (re)produce a positive self-image (van Dijk, 1992).

2.1.7.5 Exemplification

The use of specific, vivid examples to add more information, to explain, persuade, define, or illustrate a general idea in writing is generally referred to as exemplification. Exemplification helps the writer to stimulate the reader’s interest by adding additional who, what, when, where, why, and how information to elaborate on the main idea of a paragraph or discourse. In Aristotelian rhetoric, exemplification is a particular instance that serves to illustrate a principle or support a claim and is divided into *factual* and *fictitious*, the former relying on historical experience and the latter invented to support the argument (Lyons, 2001).

It is especially useful when there is the need to explain complicated, abstract, or new ideas and it can be in the form of quotations, facts, narratives, statistics, details, analogies, opinions, and observations to give a logical and firm foundation in argumentative writing. Exemplification performs important organisational and rhetorical functions that are essential in persuasive writing by introducing a topic, hypothesising, summarising, contrasting, exemplifying, explaining, evaluating and,

concluding convincingly to accomplish clarity of the speaker's intended meaning. Transition words and phrases such as; *for example, for instance, such as, like, in particular, in fact*, and a host of others signal to the reader that additional specific details follow.

2.1.7.6 Counterpoint/ counterargument

Counterpoint is one of the components of arguments that recognises the opposing viewpoint and attempts to refute it. It is a strategy used in argumentation to defeat an opposing standpoint by first concedes or even partially accepts an opponent's argument then debunk it by giving a superior argument (Johnstone, 1965). Also known as concession-refutation, counterpoint is an effective persuasive technique that allows arguers to identify the weak spots in standpoints, recognize and show understanding of potential problems with their argument, and plays the 'Devil's Advocate' by dealing with any circumstances or conditions that might affect/hinder own thesis and, or support. Rhetors use this technique to build ethos as it makes the rhetor sound more credible and knowledgeable on the topic and therefore more believable. Refutations and counterarguments are signalled in writing with transition words like; *however, but, although* and a host of other words (Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004).

2.1.7.7 Self-mentions

Writers seek to promote themselves by transmitting their values, ideas, beliefs, and claims in their writing. Self-mentions (i.e. first person single and plural pronouns, possessive adjectives, and self-citations) give writers an authorial voice through which they can depict themselves as knowledgeable, trustworthy members of a certain community. Self-mention is considered a powerful rhetorical strategy for constructing authorial identity in writing. Self-mention pronouns such as first person pronouns *I, me, or my* frequently dominate autobiographical discourse because writers need to write with authority, represent their voices and contributions to a field, and seek to embrace its ideals and terminology. (Hyland, 2002).

2.1.7.8 Biblical eisegesis

Eisegesis and exegesis are two concepts that are related but have different meanings. While exegesis entails determining the meaning of scripture's words through the lens of their original context, eisegesis entails reading into the text with a preconceived perspective (Young, 1997). In other words, a biblical exegesis is simply a term that

refers to a critical academic approach to biblical scripture and it involves a critical examination, interpretation, or explanation of a biblical text in its original context. Biblical eisegesis, on the other hand, is the practice of twisting scripture to support a particular point of view. Politicians, sometimes take a Bible verse out of context and interpret it according to their own prejudices in order to justify a standpoint and when such is done, it is technically referred to as biblical eisegesis (Young, 1997).

2.1.7.9 Cause and effect

Cause and effect is a logical system that arranges information to illustrate how something happened. It is a rhetorical mode that is used to link an action, event, or decision, with its consequences by examining root causes and avoid labelling coincidental occurrences as causes (Grasso, 2003). In argumentation, cause and effect is a logical reasoning that investigate how an event or condition came to be (cause) and what is happening as a result of it (effect). The goal is to understand the why or how of a situation and answers the question, ‘Why X?’ with a response ‘X *because* Y.’

2.1.8 Rhetorical argumentation

Argumentation is essentially the process of developing reasons, justifying beliefs, relying on premises, research, evidence, and logic to draw a conclusion in order to influence the actions of others. Logical, Dialectical, and Rhetorical perspectives are the three major strands in argumentation. In Logic, a deductive argument’s standard is measured by the soundness or validity of the claim. The Dialectical concerns itself with the procedures of arguing while the Rhetorical is all about the process of persuading (Wenzel 1992:121). The present study favours the Rhetorical school of thought in argumentation study. Therefore, the discussion of argumentation will revolve around this insight. To build up a strong argument, the rhetor should consider what the audience can assume adherence to (premises). Also, in the rhetorical spirit of argumentation, premises should comprise not only facts but less strict beliefs and feelings of the audience. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) classified premises into those relating to the real and those relating to the preferable.

From its origin, rhetoric has features of communicative dimension and emphasises the adaptation of the speaker’s behaviour on the audience. In the philosophy of Corax and Tisias (500 BC), rhetorical argumentation is an act by rhetoricians concerned with determining what will persuade an audience in a certain situation. Of Aristotle’s

treatises, the emphasis in this study is on rhetorical which emphasises argument as a process. The focus is on the meaning used in argumentative communication between rhetor and audience paying critical attention to the context, the nature of the audience, and the character of the rhetor (Tindale 2004). In rhetorical argumentation, what is said has to be considered with who is saying it and why. These and some other features are the shortcomings of the logical and dialectical approach to argumentation. However, the emphasis placed on rhetorical argumentation in this study does not mean the other two perspectives (logical and dialectic) can be dismissed. A good argument must be able to accommodate the relationships among the three. This is what informed the choice of Toulmin, which is premised on an informal logic in analysing a rhetorical discourse

The term rhetorical argumentation can be summed up in an assumption that the information provider with a personal objective must persuade the information seeker of the accuracy of the information offered. The presumption is that the receiver cannot be expected to trust everything communicated without some sort of reinforcement before accepting it. The information seeker may be guided by his/her intuitive knowledge grounded in a pre-existent set of well-supported beliefs (Grasso, 2003).

The attempt by the information provider to, not only inform the information seeker convincingly, but also to try and change the information seeker's attitude, or even behaviour, towards the topic under discussion is what we termed rhetorical argumentation. From the foregoing, therefore, rhetorical argumentation is one in which soundness is not necessarily the priority, arguments are judged to be more or less successful when their premises make the conclusion plausible to a greater or lesser degree. In a simpler term, rhetorical argumentation is how or what a rhetor used to persuade others to change their minds, apart from coercion, and why they are or are not effective. (Grasso 2003).

2.1.9 Fallacy in argumentative discourse

As earlier discussed, an argument is about the connection between premise(s) and a conclusion. The premise is a statement that is provided in support of the claim (also known as Ground in Toulmin's Model). The two types of arguments are inductive and deductive and they are described based on the logical interconnectedness between premises and the conclusion. Sound premises underscore a sound argument. However,

there are situations whereby the inference from the premise to the conclusion may be faulty. This error in reasoning is technically referred to as a fallacy by argumentative scholars. A fallacy is an argument in which the premises do not give the needed degree of support for the conclusion. In a simpler term, fallacies are defects that cause an argument to be invalid, unsound, or weak. The modern definition of fallacy summarises that there are three conditions for describing a fallacy. It is (1) an argument that is (2) invalid but (3) appears to be valid. Invariably, a fallacy may be subsumed as an argument that seems better than it is (Stanford Encyclopaedia of philosophy 2019).

2.1.9.1 Logical fallacy

The logical fallacy is invariably a flaw in thinking which appears to be true but does not make sense or “does not follow” logically. It is oftentimes used knowingly or unknowingly as a way to trick others into believing that an argument is good even when it is not (Bennet, 2013). Logical fallacies can be divided into formal and informal fallacies.

2.1.9.2.1 Pseudo-logical argument

As previously stated, logical fallacy is an error in reasoning and not a factual error that is deceptive and are commonly applied to an argument. Pseudo-logical fallacies, on the other hand, are fallacies that do not match the requirements for being classified as logical fallacies. Argument by dismissal is a good example of this, in which an argument is dismissed without explanation (Bennet, 2013). This could be a choice made by the arguer rather than a logical error and this is why pseudo-logical argument is also referred to as an incomplete logical argument.

2.1.9.2.2 Ad hominem

Arguers utilise different strategies to defeat an opponent’s claims (Brinton, 1995). One of such is to argue against a claim indirectly, by attacking the person who makes the assertion. Ad hominem is an argumentative strategy that is used to counter another argument by attacking the character or circumstances of an individual who is advancing the argument thus avoiding genuine discussion of the topic at hand and instead of seeking to disprove the truth of the statement or the soundness of the argument (Van Eemeren, and Grootendorst, R. 1992). Most debates are about persuading and winning, which is all about the individual rather than discovering the

truth. So, by doubting this individual, or at least their credibility, we are disputing their assertion. Walton (1987) clarifies that saying something unpleasant about X does not automatically constitute an ad-hominem; it is only an ad-hominem if the purpose of the attack is to criticize some claim (or argument) made by that person. Copi and Cohen (2002) in consonance with scholars such as Frans van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst, and other members of the pragma-dialectical school, agree that this strategy of argument is fallacious because it is not premised on logic.

2.1.9.2.3 Argument from authority

A fallacious appeal to authority is committed when a belief or an argument is accepted based on an inappropriate appeal to authority (Walker, 1994). This is committed when the person in question is not a legitimate authority on the subject. It follows that the reasoning is flawed because the fact that an unqualified person makes a claim does not provide any justification for the claim. However, this type of reasoning becomes fallacious only when the person is not a legitimate authority in a particular context (Walton 2006). Therefore, some form of acceptable standards of assessment must be provided for uniformity. The standard assessment stipulates that the person in question has sufficient expertise in the subject matter and the claim being made is within her area(s) of expertise, and he/she is not significantly biased.

In another category, there is an appeal to belief; a line of reasoning that subsumes popular opinion is a sound opinion even though this may not be so in all cases; An appeal to ignorance that is made when one argues that something is the case since no one has shown that it is not the case (Walton 2006). Appeal to Common practice that is based on the idea that the mere fact that most people do something does not make it correct, moral, justified, or reasonable. Appeal to Pity (Ad Misericordiam) is a fallacy in which a person substitutes a claim intended to create pity for evidence in an argument while appeal to popularity is based on the assumption that a claim is accepted because most people approve of the claim.

2.1.9.2.5 Red Herring

This is also known as *Smoke Screen or Wild Goose Chase* and it is a fallacy in which an irrelevant topic is presented to divert attention from the original issue. The basic idea is to “win” an argument by leading attention away from the argument and to another topic. It is sometimes used intentionally as a tactic of evading, weaving the

topic by beating around the bush all in an attempt to lead people astray and divert attention from the main issue being discussed (Walton, 1987).

2.1.9.3.1 Strawman fallacy

When someone's argument is misrepresented to make it easier to attack, the strawman fallacy is committed. By exaggerating, misrepresenting, or just completely fabricating someone's argument, it becomes much easier to present your position as being reasonable or valid (Feteris, 2009). This kind of dishonesty not only undermines rational discourse but also harms one's position because it brings their credibility into question.

2.1.9.3.5 Begging the question (Circular Reasoning, Reasoning in a Circle)

An argument commits the fallacy of *begging the question* when it assumes the very conclusion that it is trying to establish (Feteris 2009). Here, a circular argument in which the conclusion is already included in the premises is presented. This logically incoherent argument often arises in situations where people have a very ingrained assumption, and therefore taken in their minds as a given. Some of these strategies and the fallacies are examined in Olusegun Obasanjo's narratives to bring to the fore, the structural defects or plausibility of his argument.

2.1.10 Narrative argument

Considering the nature of the data and the approach adopted in this study, it is imperative to justify the analysis of the argument in purely narrative texts. Ordinarily, the presence of argument in narratives may seem incredulous. However, as Khamaiel (2017) has rightly pointed out, narratives, like traditional arguments have both an act and a product component. Storytelling is an act while story narrated is the product. To Khamaiel (2017), narrative argumentation should be viewed as an argumentative process, not a product. Narrative arguments are transactional phenomena where the persuasiveness of narratives cannot be reduced to just products because their meaning is not isolated units but rather couched in interrelations of arguers and audiences and the context and background of the situation.

Khamaiel's argument is that oral and written narratives are riddled with gaps and multiple interpretations. This means that the story is rarely completely clear to the reader, for there is always room for misinterpretation, multiple interpretations, and

questions, which is an inevitable aspect of all human communication. No matter how clear or well-constructed the story is, we still have to fill things in to make sense of the narrative we read or hear. He opined that the analysis of narrative argument does not rely on truth or rationality, but rather, on exchanging arguments through a virtuous process. Although there are different forms of storytelling, there are some features that are present in almost all of them. Most stories have a sequence of events that are chronologically connected and happen over a while with a beginning and an end. Most definitions of narratives emphasise this temporally ordered sequence of events.

To have a narrative argument, the story must be presented in a chronological fashion where the audience can tell the temporal and causal connection between events or actions. Thus, a narrator who uses stories to make an argument and to provide support for their claim is using narrative as a mode of arguing. Although, the position of Kvernbekk (2003:1) is that a narrative cannot function as an argument because a narrative does not have the required premise-conclusion relation, which is the core issue for deciding whether a narrative can be considered an argument or not and that in a narrative, the conclusion is known beforehand whereas the role of an argument is to take an audience to a conclusion that is not yet known. She opined that, since the role of arguments is to justify the conclusion, narratives cannot function as arguments because no justification takes place, as the narrator already knows the conclusion.

However, Tindale (2017:3) counters this opinion by explaining that even if the narrator knows the end and the conclusion, the audience does not. Our approach follows this line of thought as elaborated by Tindale and the segmentation and organisation of different topical issues in the selected texts make the analysis a less daunting exercise. The analysis of argument in narratives is a worthwhile adventure as it could prompt and encourage the activation of the outcome of the intended argument and makes the information given in the story intelligible in a way that the reader did not recognise before, and allows them to understand differently what they already know.

2.1.11 Moral argument

A moral argument is a conclusion-driven argument that presents a moral claim and is based on the belief that everyone has an intuitive sense of what is good/bad or right/wrong. Moral arguments are justifications for accepting or believing claims that

have a moral outcome and they are significant because of their importance in popular apologetic reasons for religious belief (Fisher, 1984).

2.1.12 Quasi-logical argumentation

Quasi-logical arguments are similar to logical or mathematical demonstrations and therefore having an effect on the audience. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca defined quasi-logical reasoning as a specific argumentation strategy that speakers can employ in the formation of an argument to persuade the audience to accept a standpoint (1969:193). They described quasi-logical argument as an argument scheme whose efficacy for the audience is expressly tied to the similarity of these arguments to formal demonstrations. The audience is the central concept of the argumentative strategy, and the goal is to analyse the various approaches that can be used to persuade the audience to accept a thesis.

2.1.13 Rhetorical discourse

Bitzer (1968) defines rhetorical discourse as a specific response to a specific situation and that “it is the situation which calls the [rhetorical] discourse into existence. Rhetorical discourse is a discourse that is meant to bring about changes in the way an audience perceives its reality. In rhetorical discourse, there is an attempt to influence an audience’s attitude towards the text which in essence is the main goal of rhetoric Hoven (2015). Hoven (2015:19) explains further that many materials can be used by a rhetor to construct rhetorical discourse; “a rhetor can find texts, write texts, make movies, use clips from the Internet, quote people, sing, and draw or take pictures, use pictures made by others in constructing a rhetorical discourse. Therefore, a discourse is rhetorical when a rhetor has created and arranged materials in such a way that a discursive attempt results to influence an audience’s attitude. The concepts that have been discussed so far and many others are applied in the analysis of data in chapter four.

2.2 Review of related studies

To situate the study of Olusegun Obasanjo’s non-fictional texts within the purview of autobiographical rhetorical discourse and argumentation, there is the need for a review of related scholarly works that are germane to the present study.

2.2.1 Studies on autobiography as rhetoric

In his definition of autobiography, Starobinski (1971:286) pointed out that autobiography is self-interpretation and is primarily concerned with the narration of a life striving for a truthful recollection or transmission of life events. Solomon (1991) buttressed this stand by insisting that aside from serving as an account of a person's life, autobiography also serves as persuasion because it is an attempt by the autobiographer to demonstrate that his/ her values are desirable and should be adopted. Going with these submissions, therefore, it is logical to conclude that autobiography is rhetoric. Previous studies that thread this path of research are discussed. Previous studies on autobiography and rhetoric have established that autobiography humanizes people and helps the public better relate to life experiences outside their own. Thus, it involves persuasion.

With a particular focus on Azikwe's representation of the multilingual and multicultural self as a model of the 'new' and progressive Nigeria, Oha (2003) discusses the importance attached to language and texts from other cultures in the rhetoric of Nnamdi Azikwe's *My Odyssey* (1970). This was made possible by exploring the autobiographer's focus on cultural/cross-ethnic communication and cooperation, especially in an African nation, and the challenges to cultural homogeneity. The study accentuated Azikwe's use of language as poetic, partially confessional, deliberate and, an important part of the journey Azikiwe makes to a new intellectual and patriotic selfhood in *My Odyssey*. He submits that Azikwe writes his own life story to prove the possibility and necessity of demolishing barriers associated with colonialism and finds in life-writing, a historical and stylistic narrative and a great resource for moulding perspectives and feelings to deconstruct ethnic and linguistic politics of exclusion which has always been pronounced in Nigeria. The current study differs as it focuses mainly on the analysis of the rhetorical arguments deployed by auto-biographers in negotiating individual identity.

A key aspect of Hales's (2006) analysis of Moran's *Massacre myth* (1999) is the examination of the autobiographical effects of the rhetorical tropes employed in the introduction that prefaces Moran's 1999 account of the 1926 police massacre of Aborigines at Forrest River in North-West Australia. The author employs Derrida's analytic method of Deconstruction in teasing out the role of language in the construction of the authorial subject (and others). The focus of the study is on how rhetorical tropes such as the *journey metaphor*, *stake inoculation*, and *binaries*

produced the authorial subject by analysing the rhetorical construction and autobiographical effects of *The Introduction As Memoir* and show how these are entangled with broader social, political, and epistemological issues.

The analysis underlines the dialogic relationship between text, reader, and society, and the instability of truth claims and the authorial subject of autobiography. He concludes that because of its construction in/through text, the authorial self is always fragmentary, mutable, diffuse, and therefore, cannot produce the definitive, authentic, and unbiased autobiographical account. Hales' submission prepares the ground for the present study as it bridges the gap between autobiographical writings and rhetoric and enables our focus on the rhetoric of self-representation and identity manoeuvring in autobiographies a worthwhile adventure.

From the discussion of the above studies, it is established that autobiography is rhetoric in the sense that the goal of most political narratives is persuasion. This assumption guides the analysis of Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts.

2.2.2 Studies on political autobiography and self-representation

The purpose of political autobiography according to Butterfield (1974) is 'to teach, to exhort, to change opinion and behavior, and to organise.' According to Burke (2011:13), the modern emphasis on the autobiographical subject as a solitary subject is characterised by the "secularization and the temporalisation of experience." It is not specifically about the facts and events as they happened, it is about how the writer chooses to interpret and make sense of these events. Therefore, autobiographical critics are often interested in analyzing how the writer uses storytelling to explore questions about meaning, the self, and the social and political forces that affect that self. Also, there are questions about how language and narrative give meaning and give us a sense of self. To do this, critics analyse wordplay and imagery, ideological structure, narrative structure, language, and self-representation by excruciating how writers of autobiographies explore the relationship between language and identity. Previous studies on the relationship between autobiography and self-representation are explored.

In a study that set out to critically analyse Nigerian ex-soldiers' life narratives, Adeoti (2003) points out the act of self-rewriting in the biographies and autobiographies written by the military personnel (tagged as the green-gods) that dominated the sphere of governance in post-independence Nigeria. Adopting a qualitative analysis and

intertextuality, the study observes that the military officers deployed (auto) biography as a form of political writing, motivated by mercantilist calculations and goaded by the quest for immortality to mediate the negativity of their sheer lawlessness and banditry while serving in order to secure positive public valuation. He concludes that their texts are dominated by admiration, hero worship, and self-deification. For the sake of objectivity, the critic should engage both the text and the world beyond the book to authenticate assertions and should be aware of gaps, absences, silences, and omissions in the narrations in order to have a better understanding. The current study is similar as it focuses on the rhetorical argumentation and the self-representation strategy of a former military dictator that falls into the category of Adeoti's "Green-gods" in his non-fictional texts by analysing the rhetorical strategies deployed.

In another dimension, Ogunyemi, Akindutire, and Adelokun (2011) examined self-created metaphors in male autobiographical writings in Nigeria through the use of extensive and relatively unstructured interviews to investigate the dichotomy of language, the use of irony and situational metaphors in visualising the negation of female gender in art. The study engaged twenty-five diverse respondents in analysing the structural and interactive context of the gender theme in art through the application of narratology and autobiographical approach to unearthing the issues of gender in Nigerian literature and indeed, in autobiographical narratives written by male writers. Adopting a blend of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the study uncovered some salient themes about a man in Nigerian society and formulates a tentative model of autobiographical approach that is academically valuable and result-oriented.

They posit that the characterisation of women in Nigerian autobiographical literature is exaggerative, problematic, and misconstrued by writers to satisfy self-glory. Therefore, critics should consolidate social and psychological meanings with its multiplicities of interpretations in Nigerian autobiographical writings to realise a gender-free society that is devoid of male dominance in Nigeria. The present study differs because the issue of gender is not within the scope of the research.

The focus of Kangira (2013) was to unpack the presences, absences, and the motive of Morgan Tsvangirai's autobiographical narrative *At the Deep End* (2011). The paper contends that Tsvangirai's analysis of events is compromised by his view of the self as a possible leader in Zimbabwe. He prioritises political identification among the many

selves formed by his erratic experiences in order to establish an aura of relevance in Zimbabwe's difficult political environment. Thus, the autobiography is constructed in a way that shows remembrance and re-membering of historical accounts. Kangira interrogates the autobiography from the perspective of the standpoint theory and argued that Tsvangirai used the strategy of elevating childhood recollections of banality, extreme poverty, and misery in order to inscribe the self into the past, into history, and to better lay a claim to Zimbabwe's leadership position. The autobiography was largely characterised by progressive rhetoric or rhetoric of change and he submitted that Tsvangirai guides the reader to see characters and events from his perspective. He positions himself as a reliable narrator although reliability is not incongruous with historical accuracy. Kangira's position in his study aligns with the present study's assumption of Obasanjo's political autobiographies as they are also an expressive account of Nigerian political history projecting the author as the sole watchman.

In a close textual analysis of activist autobiographical writings of African-American social movement between 1965-1975, Graaf (2016) reveals a pattern of persuasive social movement tactics in the life narratives of three Black nationalists Malcolm X *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, (1965), James Forman's *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (1972), and Angela Davis' *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (1974). The study reveals the ways the three autobiographers used persuasive tactics to motivate more people to join the Civil Rights Movements they were part of. Building on the work of Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian's *Collective Behaviours* (1957) which was based on an understanding and assessment of historians' narratives of the Black Power movement (BPM), Graaf uses the social movement psychology concepts, consensus mobilization, action mobilization, and efficacy as persuasive strategies to create a strong body for the literature analysis and clarifies the underlying motivations of the activists, their roles in stimulating protests and their attempt in convincing the reader of their sincerity and goals.

The analysis established that the intentions of activists in civil rights organizations such as the NOI, SNCC, and the BPP is to deliberately manipulate their narratives by framing stories of their childhood and youth, proving that their memory is vivid and, a justification of their past. Other found patterns of persuasion are the justification of the life choices of the writers, shaming the reader for not participating in the protest,

sparkling a sense of agency with the reader, focusing on a shared enemy, and the use of peritexts. He concludes that the autobiographers attempted to recruit the reader by including comprehensive descriptions of the authors' childhood and youth which were consciously framed with the aspiration to create recognition and a sense of shared sorrow with the readers and by doing so, old anecdotes became tools for the mobilization of their readership.

Graaf's (2016) work has buttressed previous studies that have established that persuasion is a powerful tool to driving readers to action through life narratives by explicating the narrative techniques the three autobiographers used in stimulating the interest of their audience. In the present study, there is a detailed analysis of the use of persuasive strategies in mediating between the writer's diegesis and the reader's mimesis through rhetorical argumentation in life writing.

The interrogation of how African woman's political autobiography represents the public and private subjective identities of African political womanhood is the concern of Marciana (2017). The research examines the autobiographies and memoirs of fifteen African women politicians and former politicians. The specific focus was on how a merger between (Western) modes of narration prevalent in traditional (and masculine) autobiography and African narrative techniques are drawn from women's narrative practices in oral, visual, and written traditions (re) conceptualise the writers' identities. The study conducts a *womanist* reading (rather than feminist) of thirteen autobiographies written by African women who serve(d) as politicians, on the continent or elsewhere through the conceptual framework of "historical consciousness", as advanced by Marcus and Olney's notion of "metaphors of selfhood." She interrogates the myriad representational strategies African women politicians use to grapple with intricacies of identity construction as liminal subjects in hybrid space(s).

The representational strategies identified including but not limited to; naming, genealogies, maternal figure, and the woman's body that are foregrounded in their texts to inscribe their private selves. She argues that the African woman's political autobiography is a site where public and private conceptions of African political womanhood are (de)constructed and she concludes that public and private are hybrid notions that intersect with the literary form, autobiographical subject, and discourse of

African women's political autobiographies. The work successfully bridges the gap between political ideology, African women's identity, and rhetoric in a hybridized conceptualisation. However, Marciana's analysis is prescriptive rather than descriptive as it is teleological in approach and failed to give a detailed analysis of each of the selected texts based on their contextual issues and discursive structures. The present study dwells more on the discursive structures of rhetorical argumentation in life narratives using relevant descriptive tools (such as Toulmin's model) that are devoid of subjective conclusions.

2.2.3 Previous studies on Olusegun Obasanjo

Before the publication of *My Watch*, previous studies on Obasanjo's speeches and life narratives have indicated that Obasanjo has often demonstrated his resolve to always fight for the unity of Nigeria and have often used expressions that portray him as a messiah of Nigeria. Many of these previous researches have also affirmed that Obasanjo's use of language resources is laden with traits of self-deification and adulation. Some of these works are examined in this review.

Drawing from the perspectives of general stylistics, Awonuga (2005) examined the linguistic features of Olusegun Obasanjo's broadcast to the nation titled '*Sustenance of Democracy*' which was delivered at a time the Nigerian parliament was planning to impeach the former President. Obasanjo's use of personal pronouns, lexical objects or phrases, metaphors, and scriptural echoes were the focus of Awonuga's research. Personal pronouns, coupling, strings of words, eight metaphorical categorisations, analogy, repetition, and Biblical echoes dominated the speech, according to Awonuga's findings. The study concluded that Obasanjo's choice of words is influenced by his first language (Yoruba). This is due to his usage of string words and coupling, which places his lexis in the mainstream of language use of prominent Yoruba politicians such as Obafemi Awolowo and Adegoke Adelabu on the one hand, and the creative writer Wole Soyinka on the other. However, the study is silent on the implications of using these linguistic elements for the overall goal of the speech and fails to contextualize the usage of these lexical items. The current study strives to fill this vacuum in the literature by not only identifying Obasanjo's choice of words in defending claims that are subject to controversies but also examine his linguistic manipulation of words in offering good justification to claims that can stand up to criticism and earn a favourable verdict.

Another one is Tenuche (2009), who examined the relationship between the language of former President Olusegun Obasanjo, and the nature of the conduct and results of the April 2007 General Elections in Nigeria. The study investigated the public statements and speeches of Obasanjo as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as documented in some selected Nigerian dailies (The Guardian, Daily Trust, and Daily Sun), to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the language of politics that an actor articulates and his or her behaviour in politics. The theoretical framework was based on an assumption that the interrelationship between language and politics has an effect on the user's notion of politics in general or electoral competition in particular.

In the analysis, Tenuche (2009) discovered that Obasanjo's most quoted dictum that "This election is a do or die affair for me and the PDP. This election is a matter of life and death for the PDP and Nigeria", depicts his perception of politics and electoral competition as a continuation of warfare in consonance with the Machiavellian principle of politics as a power game. He concluded that the rhetoric of Olusegun Obasanjo as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a key factor that influenced the nature and conduct of the 2007 general elections. His language, in most cases, informed the actions he took and actions taken by State Agencies. In his submission, Tenuche asserts that Obasanjo's use of language was influenced by his years of experience as a Military General. Likewise, in this study of Obasanjo's non-fictional texts, the interest is on his expressive use of language both in private and public spaces and how they are used in constructing his identity.

In a similar vein, Taiwo (2009) scrutinates the enactment of power in Obasanjo's political discourse through the use of a speech delivered by the former president at an elders' and stakeholders' meeting of his party, PDP in preparation for the 2007 General Elections in Nigeria. Motivated by Van Dijk approach to CDA, the study critically analyses Obasanjo's statements by relating his linguistic behaviour to the socio-political context of the campaign and explores Obasanjo's choice of language in portraying his distancing and inclusions strategies to establish his ideological stance and a metaphorical description of himself as the 'kingmaker.' He avers that Obasanjo exercised power through his description of oppositions as criminals, rouges, and spoilers and his direct suggestion of threat and intimidation of the opposition by his description of the then-forthcoming elections as a 'do or die affair.' He concluded that

Obasanjo's choice of pronominals and other reference items was strategically used to legitimise himself and his party's stand in coercing the opposition and to affirm his egoistic stance of handing over to no one else but his anointed candidate in the election. Taiwo's analysis tends towards a preconception of opinion as the analysis lacks an unprejudiced contextual analysis of the sampled utterances. In contrast, however, the present study, though from a rhetorical-discourse perspective, is grounded on an objective analysis of each standpoint put forth by the rhetor.

A historical assessment of Obasanjo's political career and his sociolinguistic skill was done by Iliffe (2011) in his book, *Obasanjo, Nigeria and the World*. The author mainly used published sources, especially Nigerian newspapers, and Obasanjo's political memoirs, as well as the FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) documents in Britain as his sources of data. In his biographical narrative, Iliffe presents to the readers, an Obasanjo, a Yoruba elite figure, and a self-made man who 'integrates qualities of Igbo brashness with the devil-may-care attitude of the Hausa-Fulani politicians.' Iliffe adopts a philosophical cum historical approach to asserting his view that 'it was not the power which corrupted Obasanjo, as many of his critics believed, but the vigour of his patriotism', a 'messianism', an 'almost fanatical allegiance to the concept of Nigerianness' (Iliffe 2011:3).

In his review of Iliffe's work, Kohnert (2011) avers that John Iliffe's biography is the most authoritative, comprehensive, and well-informed account of Obasanjo's rule and personality up to now. In harmony with previous studies on Obasanjo, Iliffe also describes him as a man who sees himself as a "messiah" without whom Nigeria could not advance; his style is pompous and forceful, and he may be spiteful. This same Obasanjo's messianic view on Nigeria runs through the chapters in his new autobiography *My Watch* and the interest in this study is to explore how this is marshalled using rhetorical argumentation in the texts and the possible influence on readers.

Abolaji (2011) conducted an analysis of reader comments on Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Command*, a book that documented the account of the Nigerian civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970. The concern of the study was on how *MC* generated readership, controversies and comments that further promoted interest in the study of the history of the 1967 to 1970 civil war in Nigeria. Drawing a list of sixty-one articles and

comments spread across pages of several newspapers, the study examined the generative thoughts, motives and controversies surrounding the production and readership of the texts and concluded that Obasanjo's style of writing and choice of words are abusive and faulty. The study proposed that some issues raised in the text that were capable of generating offence could have been written in a discreet manner if Obasanjo had been conscious of his language used in the description of others. Abolaji's study is a valuable contribution to the present study as it gives a perspective of Obasanjo as an individual, a war veteran and a politician.

In an effort to investigate the cognitive values of Olusegun Obasanjo's recurring lexicalisation of national doom in his inaugural speeches, Odebunmi and Oni (2012) deployed the tools of Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, Paul Chilton's concept of political discourse and cognitive semantics to demonstrate Obasanjo's lexicalisation of the socio-political gloom of Nigeria with respect to political decadence and change. According to the study, Obasanjo used lexical relations, grammatical traits, and implicatures to evoke his long-term and short-term memories, as well as those of Nigerians, in connection with their shared political and social experiences, and to legitimize or delegitimize his regime and others. They posit that Obasanjo's wording of Nigerian gloomy socio-political experiences is largely seated in his personal bitterness against past Nigerian governments rather than a strictly objective assessment of the state of the nation. The conclusion of the paper is that the lexicalisation of national issues in Obasanjo's inaugural addresses demonstrates, in large part, a relationship between Obasanjo's language and his Messianic ideological tendencies. The conclusion reached by Odebunmi and Oni in their study has further bolstered previous researches on Obasanjo's garrison commandeering status in Nigerian politics.

An exploration of the interplay between language and power is what drives Oni (2013) to unearth the hidden ideological expressions of power in various speeches delivered by former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo. The speeches chosen for the study were Obasanjo's addresses to the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in 1978 and 2000 representing the two dispensations that Obasanjo presided over the country. The study utilises Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFG) to determining the interpersonal component and linguistic features that instantiate power in his speeches. The study discovered that Obasanjo uses language to silence oppositions by utilizing lexical elements with negative expressive values. His use of

power as strategy of domination is achieved mainly through imperative and declarative statements to impose opinions and to neutralise perceived opponents of his policy. She posits that Obasanjo's raw manifestation of power in his speeches is borne out of his militaristic traits of domination and suppression. The conclusion of the study is that Obasanjo's lexis portrays him as authoritarian and that his suppressive militaristic trait and dominance adds validity to his raw display of power. Oni's study affirms previous assumptions that sustain the argument in the present study as regards Obasanjo's use of language and the influence on Nigerian politics.

An examination of the forms and functions of media representations to test the authenticity or validity of allegations of an unconstitutional third term agenda against former President Olusegun Obasanjo as reported in selected editions of *TELL* and *The News* was carried out by Osisanwo (2013). Using Volosinov's and Fairclough's parameters and Halliday's register variables, the paper studies the mode, boundary maintenance, and contextualization of the description and presentation of discourse in the selected media reports to determine the factuality of the reports from non-factuality, formality from non-formality, and documentation from orality. Osisanwo demonstrated in the analysis that both publications used the quotation sequence pattern as Quoted-Process-Sayer to discursively shape the readers' perception. As a result, he argued that the discourse representation modes and functions are not limited to faithfulness, but also to the magazines' or reporters' personal involvement in picking and processing what to report. The conclusion of the study is a testament to the position of this study that existing literature on Olusegun Obasanjo have mostly excoriated his use of language both in public and private spaces. The current study seeks an objective analysis of Obasanjo's non-fictional texts, and, like Osisanwo's study, opposes an analysis that leans toward a more personal/subjective discourse.

A pragmatic analysis of Obasanjo's speech on imposition of state of emergency in Plateau State was done by Ngozi and Emeka-Nwobia (2014). The focus of the paper was on how Obasanjo exploited pragmatic principles and strategies as a tool to instil social justice, restoration of man's dignity and peace in a somewhat chaotic and crises ridden environment. Utilising the Speech Act theory, the paper argues that president Obasanjo exploited the rich domain of pragmatics in his speech delivery to quell the incessant violence in Plateau and adjudged the former president's speech to be felicitous. The paper concluded that a temporary social justice system was achieved by

the former president through the utilization of declarative illocutionary act to back up his words with action. The study buttresses previous assumption on Obasanjo's utilisation of linguistic resources in the enactment of political power.

The focus of Oghogho and Aworo-okoroh (2016) was on the pragmatic values of the open correspondence between former President Olusegun Obasanjo and the then incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan. Obasanjo's open letter, *Before It Is Too Late* published on 12th December 2013, and Jonathan's reply on 20th December of the same year. The two open letters sparked off a lot of controversies and heightened the already tensed political environment in Nigeria at the time. Twenty-two sampled sentences, eleven each from both Obasanjo's letter and Jonathan's reply sourced from *Daily Trust* of 12th December 2013 and *Leadership Newspaper* of 23rd December 2013 were analysed to find out face-threatening, face-saving, and face mitigating acts as well as instances of hedges in the data.

Drawing on Lawal's theory of Speech Acts and Levinson's Face Negotiation theory, the study identifies and interprets the direct and indirect illocutionary acts in Obasanjo's letter as well as the perlocutionary acts in Jonathan's reply to account for speech act functions and face management acts in the correspondence.

The study discovered that there is a dominant use of directive acts in Obasanjo's letter while the expressive acts predominate in Jonathan's reply. Therefore, the linguistic choices employed by Olusegun Obasanjo in his letter were face-threatening to the then president-Goodluck Jonathan and may have influenced his loss in the 2015 General elections. In *My Watch vol. III*, there is a personalised assessment of Jonathan's administration and a lengthy discussion of this same letter by Obasanjo and he has also used the medium to update some issues raised in the letters. Therefore, Oghogho's analysis has a lot to offer the current study.

In an attempt to highlight Olusegun Obasanjo's cognitive conceptualization of practical governance questions in Nigeria, Odebunmi (2019) exposes Obasanjo's acceptance of high responsibility (responsibilising) or reduced/low responsibility (deresponsibilising) for his actions/inactions during his two terms in office as Nigeria's civilian Head between 1999 and 2003. Drawing insights from the concepts of Deresponsibilisation and Responsibilisation, Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMP), Relevance, and the Appraisal Theory, the paper examined about 1000 sentences extracted from the

Volume II of Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch* subtitled: *Political and Public Affairs*, with a special focus on (de)responsibilisation strategies employed by Obasanjo in his justifications of leadership, socio-economic, ethnopolitical, politico-economic, security and education issues/decisions during his administration.

The identified issues were discussed under six conceptual mappings *Nation as a jungle, leader as a stalker, leader as a cape buffalo, leader as a booster, subordinate as a hump, and leader as a two-headed snake* to unearth Obasanjo's political positioning and at the same time provide insights into the cognitive, sociological and political frames that have driven governance in Nigeria especially under Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's longest-serving Head of State/President. Odebunmi's analysis of the text reveals that the responsabilisation and deresponsibilisation strategies employed by Olusegun Obasanjo are an indication of not just what he prioritises or his strengths and achievements but also his weaknesses and the extent to which he overtly or covertly accepts credit or blame for his negative and positive actions. But for the limitation of the research data and the approach used in the analysis, Odebunmi's study is a valuable adjunct to the present study considering the scrutinization of metaphoric instantiations in the selected text. The present study examines the non-fictional text written by Olusegun Obasanjo, and the focus is on his justification of standpoints on contending public issues concerning his image.

Osisanwo and Adegbenro (2021) investigated the pragma-rhetorical devices and the strategic patterns utilised by Olusegun Obasanjo in *My Watch*. The study adopted van Eemeren and Grootendorst's pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation to specifically analyse Olusegun Obasanjo's argument on Odi killings and the Third Term issues during his two terms as Nigeria's President as presented in PPA to provide clarifications for the differences of opinion at issues and the author's positions on those issues that have continued to generate heated debates in the Nigerian political circle. The emphasis is on a rational evaluation of the various moves made in the discourse and the strategic patterns underlying Obasanjo's dialectic and rhetorical goals. The study identified five presentational devices: positive pragmatic argument, facts, presuppositions, negative lexicalization, passive construction; and six strategic manoeuvring techniques: blame game, smokescreen techniques, prerogative argument, fallacious appeal to authority, ad-hominem attacks, and ethotic appeal that were used by Obasanjo.

The paper posits that Obasanjo's presentational devices and strategic manoeuvring techniques are adapted strategically to the beliefs and preferences of his audience. It concludes that Obasanjo's narration focuses not on 'redemption' but 'justification' and the argument adopted the standard strategic manoeuvring of political rhetoric. Hence, his strategic manoeuvring derails. While Osisanwo and Adegbenro focused on only a volume of *My Watch*, the current research focuses on all of Obasanjo's political life stories.

2.2.4 Studies on rhetorical argumentation

The concern of Hurley (2014) was on what persuades American audiences to adhere to contemporary discourses of spirituality and the experiential truth using fourteen selected Catholic and Anglican texts spanning from 1983 to 2013 as data. The study employs the framework of Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric* and Critical Discourse Analysis to analyse how the persuasive machinery of Catholic and Anglican spirituality texts guide readers to experience and understand a subjective union with an ineffable God, and at the same time maximizing the social inclusivity of audiences to find out how exactly do contemporary writers of spirituality adhere audiences to reasonable understanding and pursuit of a union with a higher power.

The study shows how argumentative strategies of association and dissociation were simultaneously used by writers of spiritual texts to allow audiences to adhere to the epideictic discourse. With these, it was discovered that the associative and dissociative schemas found in the contemporary discourse of spirituality can persuade diverse audiences into pluralistic communication, pragmatic contemplative action, and public service: all of which foster and strengthen human solidarity. The study concluded that the content of the discourse, spiritual experience, and ineffable unions with God, resist immediate linguistic expression and scientific explanations. With this submission, Hurley's (2014) work has a lot to offer the present study as it provided the ground for a possible connection between a writer's persuasive argument and the evocation of spirituality in texts.

Lilleker (2014) used microanalysis of political communication to examine Obama's *Dreams from My Father* (1995) and *The Audacity of Hope* (2006), focusing on both meta-level and micro-level features of political marketing directed toward the creation

of an "Obama brand." Through a discourse analysis and a detailed narrative, the study examines what Obama said and did not say, as well as how he positioned himself in relation to American society and the political system. His examination of the autobiographies offers some insights into the role of narratives in political communication as well as how Obama positions himself throughout the texts, both in terms of how he constructs narratives about himself and others in his life and how the texts use event, evaluative, and explanatory narratives to build arguments.

The study concludes that Obama's identity is complex, encompassing the history of racial segregation and the African-American journey, and that the authenticity of Obama's narrative is determined by the structuring of his arguments around events, which are then explained and evaluated to arrive at a teleological conclusion. Lilleker's method of analysis is similar to the approach applied in the present study. However, while the focus of his research was on elements of political marketing in Obama's life narratives through rhetorical argument, the present study concerns itself with an examination of argument structure and self-representational strategies in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts.

From the foregoing review, it is discovered that existing studies have analysed the deployment of rhetorical arguments in autobiographical discourse. Many of these studies have also linked the use of rhetorical techniques in political narratives with identity negotiations in texts. However, in doing so, Stephen Toulmin's model of argument which offers an informal logic approach to rhetorical argument has not been deployed to examine argumentation in political autobiographical narratives. Also, previous studies on Olusegun Obasanjo's self constructs have mostly concentrated on his speeches with little attention paid to his non-fictional texts. The few available studies have also examined the lexicalisation, hedges, (de)responsibilisation strategies. The present study filled this identified gap in literature as the focus is on Olusegun Obasanjo's rhetorical argumentation techniques and self-representation strategies in his published life narratives.

2.3 Theoretical framework

In this section, issues relating to the theory of discourse analysis and rhetorical argumentation are discussed. This enhances the understanding of the main theory and

other approaches that are adopted in the analysis. There is an attempt to justify the interconnectedness of DHA and other sub-theories that are used in this study.

2.3.1 Discourse historical approach (DHA)

The development of Critical Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis is traceable to classical rhetoric, text linguistics, and sociolinguistics, with the assumption that language is a social phenomenon and that readers/hearers are not passive recipients in their relationship to texts. There are many approaches to the study of CDA and as Lamidi (2016) has emphasised, Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995), Teun van Dijk (1995, 2006) and, Ruth Wodak's (2001, 2006) Discourse Historical Approach seem to be at the forefront. DHA adheres to the socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory with influence from other schools and sub-disciplines like Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics (Fairclough 1989, 1992, 1995a, Van Leeuwen, 1993, 1995 and 1996), and classical and new rhetoric as well as argumentation theory.

As Wodak (2001) claimed, it was the need for a more pragmatically oriented theoretical approach that is capable of explaining the contradictions and tensions which occur between nation-states and supranational entities on many levels and most especially on communication that gave birth to the Discourse Historical Approach. DHA is a context-sensitive theory that focuses on the historical and political dimensions of discursive actions. The theory was initially developed to trace the constitution of an anti-Semitic stereotyped image, as it emerged in public discourse in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign of Kurt Waldheim by analysing the linguistic manifestations of prejudice in the discourse, embedded in the linguistic and social context.

The approach follows a complex concept of social critique which embraces at least three interconnected aspects, two of which are primarily related to the dimension of cognition and one to the dimension of action (Wodak 2001:65). The *text or discourse immanent critique*, the *socio-diagnostic critique* and, the *prognostic critique* are the three aspects that attempt to integrate much available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive "events" are embedded (Reisigl and Wodak 2001:35). In *Text or discourse immanent critique*, the aim is to discover inconsistencies, (self-) contradictions, paradoxes, and dilemmas in the text-internal or discourse internal structure. The focus of the analysis

is on logico-semantic, cohesive, syntactic, performative, presuppositional, implicational, argumentation, fallacious and interactional structures (Reisigl and Wodak 2001:32). Also, the basis of the analysis is on a hermeneutic exegesis through specific linguistic and discourse-analytical tools employed in the interpretation without completely leaving out the place of context.

The '*sociodiagnostic critique*' is "concerned with the demystifying exposure of the manifest or latent persuasive, propagandist, populist, 'manipulative' character of discursive practices". Here, the discourse analyst takes a step further by exceeding the purely textual or discourse internal sphere, using personal background and contextual knowledge embedded in the communicative or interactional structures of a discursive event in a wider frame of social and political relations, processes, and circumstances (Wodak 2001:65).

The *Prognostic critique* is associated with the ethical-practical dimension by attempting to contribute to the solution of specific categories of analysis of social problems and dysfunctionalities. It aids the transformation and improvement of communication by elaborating proposals and guidelines for reducing language barriers in public institutions as notably practiced by the Viennese critical discourse analysts. To Wodak, CDA is not concerned with evaluating what is 'right' or 'wrong.' Citing Walzer (1990:79) Wodak warns that critics are not disembodied hermitic individuals, but interested members of specific societies and social groups with specific points of view and to avoid an excessively simplistic and one-sided perspective, social critique has to be carefully and self-reflectively applied (Wodak, 2001:66).

The principle of triangulation implies using various methods of data collection and the analysis of different corpora and genres, depending on the topic in question. It is based on a concept of 'context' which takes into account; the immediate language or text-internal co-text, the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres, and discourses, the extra linguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frames of a specific 'context of situation'. It also includes the broader sociopolitical and historical context to which the discursive practices are embedded in and related; that is to say, the fields of action and the history of the discursive event as well as the history to which the discourse topics are related (Reisigl and Wodak 2001:41). The principle would afford analysts the opportunity to carefully examine the

data, prudently apply analytical tools, and reconstruct the context of the discursive events meticulously, to provide transparent and intersubjectively comprehensible interpretations and analyses.

2.3.1.1 The principles of DHA

DHA favours a description of text as a product of linguistic action, a part of discourse assigned to a specific genre, and sees discourse as;

- (a) A cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices that are situated within specific fields of social action;
- (b) Socially constituted and socially constitutive;
- (c) Related to a macro-topic;
- (d) Linked to argumentation about validity claims, such as truth and normative validity (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016).

In Discourse Historical Analysis, there can be a direct or an indirect link between or among texts (intertextuality) or the transfer of an argument from one text to another (recontextualisation), or the transference of elements of previous texts taken out of specific contexts (de-contextualization) underscoring the role of ‘historicity’ in the production and interpretation of discourse. This interconnectedness of texts, discourses, and genres and, the ideological underpinnings of discourse are made manifest through a multi-dimensional analytical framework proposed by DHA scholars. The analytical categories constitute textual meaning and are involved in the construction and perpetuation of discourses. The analytical framework embraced by DHA scholars proceeds from the identification of the main *topics* or contents of the artifact followed by an investigation of the *discursive strategies* and conclude by examining the ways (*linguistic means*) that particular constructions (such as stereotypes) are linguistically achieved (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, 2009, 2016).

In identifying the discourse topics, the historical background information necessary to understand the object under investigation is provided. There is an attempt to outline how persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes, and actions are named and referred to linguistically and the characteristics that are attributed to them. Five discursive strategies are examined in a typical Discourse historical analysis. *Nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and intensification or mitigation strategies* are examined in discourses to identify the linguistic means

through which the dichotomous ‘Us’ vs ‘Them’ is realized (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001:45).

Nomination or referential strategies assign membership categorization by representing and constructing social actors via references to biological, naturalizing, and/or other personal/ group characteristics. Metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoche can be used to enact in or out-group categorizations. *Predication strategies* assign (positive or negative) evaluations and attributions to the constructed groups, actors, events, or actions and they can be realized linguistically via stereotypes and evaluative adjectives. *Argumentation strategies* aim at justifying and legitimizing the adoption of exclusionary actions or policies directed towards the out-group and encompass topoi and fallacies that are used in justifying actions (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001:75).

Perspectivization strategies on their own indicate speakers' involvement and how they position their points of view, for example, through narrating, describing, reporting, and so on, whereas intensification or mitigation methods are those by which actors modify and qualify a proposition's epistemic status. Appendix A is a table of discursive strategies as provided by Reisigl and Wodak, (2009). The only modification to the table is the addition of legitimisation strategy to the list.

For this study, however, the review dwells more on the argumentation strategies in DHA not only because it is the exclusive focus of this research but as Reisigl & Wodak, (2001) rightly pointed out, other strategies such as nomination and predication are subordinated under the argumentation strategies. The deliberate choice of focusing on key categories and devices allows an easy coverage of the various dimensions of analysis recursively. Therefore, the saliency of the social actor categorisation calls for an analysis of nomination/referential and predication strategies in the construction of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’, ‘friends and foes’ description in the selected texts.

2.3.1.2 Argumentation strategies

Persuasion is a fundamental dimension of argumentative discourse Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), Walton (2007, 2009), van Eemeren (2009) and, argumentative discourse consists of a constellation of propositions advanced in defense of a standpoint (van Eemeren (2014)). Therefore, the approach in this thesis is in line with Fairclough and Fairclough (2012:1) that views political discourse as

“fundamentally argumentative in nature and primarily involves “practical argumentation; argumentation for or against particular ways of acting, argumentation that can ground decision”. The concern in the present work is on the strategic aspects of self-representation in political narrative utilising persuasive argument. Therefore, discussions would focus more on plausible argumentation schemes (*topo warrants*) and fallacious argumentation schemes (*fallacies*) in the DHA.

In the DHA, the treatment of topoi is influenced by Kienpointner (1992:194) that sees “topoi as parts of argumentation which belong to the required premises. They are the formal or content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connect the argument(s) with the conclusion, the claim. As such, they justify the transition from the argument(s) to the conclusion”. Topoi are not always expressed explicitly, but can always be made explicit as conditional or causal paraphrases such as ‘if x, then y’ or ‘y, because of X Reisigl and Wodak (2001:69). They are considered to be highly conventionalized parts that belong to the obligatory elements of argumentation and take the form either of explicit or inferable premises” (Wodak et al. 2009:34). In the list of topoi presented by DHA scholars, many topoi can be utilized in argumentative discourse, but for the purpose of this research, Toulmin’s treatment of topoi as warrants is discussed in line with his informal argument Model.

2.3.2 Stephen Toulmin’s model of argument

The science of argument is traditionally referred to as logic. Logic focuses on the general forms of argument by taking into consideration the fundamental principles for distinguishing good arguments from bad ones. It is the study of those abstract patterns of reasoning that makes certain patterns of argument valid and other patterns of argument invalid that are technically referred to as formal logic. Stephen Toulmin (2003) identified the inability of formal logic to explain everyday arguments and developed his model of practical reasoning. Toulmin’s (2003) position is that arguments do not occur arbitrarily, they are constructed out of statements. To convert statements into arguments requires argument markers signaling that the statement following it is a *conclusion*, and the statement or statements that come before it are offered as *reasons* on behalf of this conclusion. The model has some semblance to a syllogism. In classical rhetoric, a syllogism is an example of formal logic comprising three parts; the Major premise, minor premise, and a conclusion. The major premise is a generalisation, a broad proposition, the minor premise is a specific application of the

major premise, and the conclusion follows logically from the premises. Here is a famous illustration of syllogism by Aristotle:

All men are mortal
Socrates is a Man
Therefore, Socrates is mortal

In this example, each of the three premises represents a category. The second premise is tested against the first premise to reach a logical conclusion. This implies that if both premises are considered valid, there is no other logical conclusion than determining that Socrates is a mortal. Closely related to the syllogism is an enthymeme the only difference being that an enthymeme occurs as a claim with a reason attached but with an unstated premise. Toulmin's (2003) model resembles the enthymeme, in that a claim is connected to a reason. The unstated premise of an enthymeme is called the warrant in Toulmin's model. His work moved beyond the traditional syllogism into a model that does not depend on absolute truths. Instead, it takes into account probabilities and contingent circumstances to create a system of "practical reasoning." Toulmin's method is an informal method of reasoning drawing upon Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of language games. The model offers a comprehensive layout for rhetorical argumentation that focused on examining bias, support, and assumptions.

Toulmin (2003) believes that a good argument can succeed in providing good justification to a claim, which will stand up to criticisms and earn a favourable verdict. The critical enquiries that will occupy this thesis in several chapters later are that; if an argument does give a reason to believe that the conclusion is true, it follows that there is a reason to believe that its premise is true. However, if there is no reason to believe the premise, then the argument gives no reason at all to believe its conclusion. The implication is that an argument that aims at justification is no good unless its premises are justified. Based on Toulmin's (2003) definition, in the context of this study, an argument is defined as a set of claims, one of which (the principal claim or conclusion) is supposed to be supported by the rest (the reasons or premises). He introduced the concept of argument fields; in his famous work; *The Uses of Argument* (Toulmin, 2003) and states that some aspects of arguments vary from field to field, and are hence called "field-dependent", while other aspects of the argument are the same throughout all fields, and are hence called "field-invariant". To illustrate his philosophy of argument, he gave an example as in:

Harry was born in Bermuda,

(So) Harry must be a British subject.

Here, the data is "Harry was born in Bermuda to support the claim "Harry must be a British subject." The implicit warrant is that "A man born in Bermuda will be a British subject. As shown here, the speaker of the sentence assumes the listener already knows the fact that all people born in Bermuda are British subjects (Toulmin, 2003). Toulmin suggested that the context and the type of audience determine the structure of an argument and proposed six parts of every argument. He claimed that questions of science, logic, and ethics need to be looked at inside of real-world situations, not imaginary, impossible ones made up by philosophers. As distinct from Classical argument structure which has three elements, Toulmin's model opined that the audience is not going to be easily convinced only by your reasons. To get them to agree with you, you need to:

- a. Explain the background values that make you believe this.
- b. Explain how the values that you and your audience share (common ground).
- c. Connect the reasons you believe with those values.
- d. State and answer objections.
- e. Show how you are willing to limit or qualify your argument (optional).

He, therefore, identified six elements of a persuasive argument and based his method of argumentation on a model of law in which a person makes a claim, then gives ground to support that claim, and backs the ground with a warrant. These three are present in every argument. Other additional elements are backing, rebuttals, and qualifiers. This implies that, in this model, one moves from grounds to claim, based on evidence, interpreted by a warrant, and making allowances for reservations. The model is presented in a table format as shown in Fig. 2.3 below.

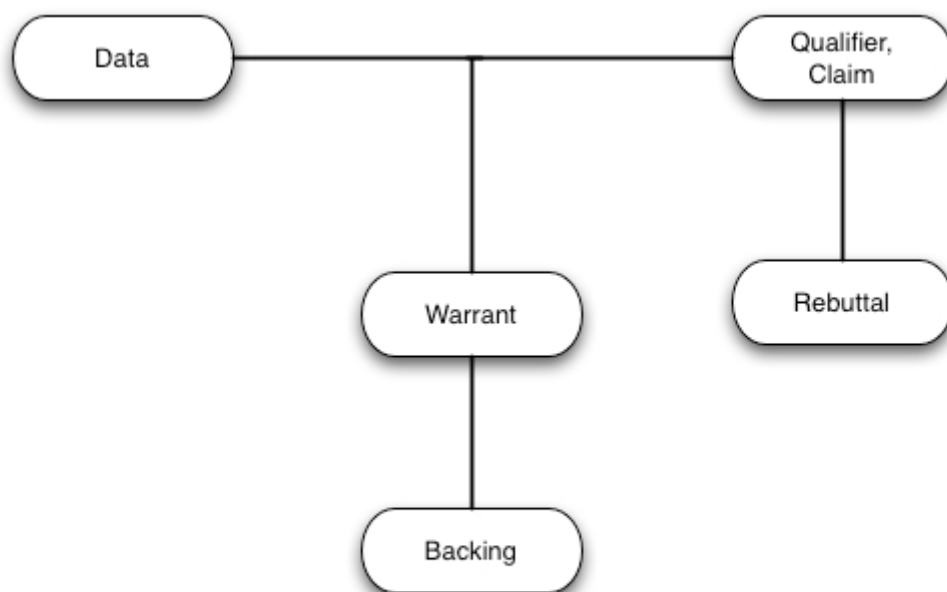


Figure 2.2: Toulmin's model of argument

Source: Toulmin (2003)

2.3.2.1 Claim

The claim is the conclusion, proposition, or assertion a rhetor wants an audience to accept and includes information or actions that are being presented as true and which the audience is being persuaded to enact. It is the point a rhetor is trying to make and answers the question, "So what is your point?" The claim serves as an umbrella statement under which all other parts of an argument must fall, and it has been divided into three components namely; factual claims, value claims, and policy claims. A factual claim focuses on empirically verifiable phenomena; value claims involve opinions, attitudes, and subjective evaluations of things while policy claim advocates courses of action that should be undertaken. It should be emphasised however that, as Wood (1995) noted, claims need to be qualified to make them more believable. Although unqualified claims are not necessarily a bad argumentation strategy, they do allow ample room for challenges to be made to an argument. An appropriately qualified claim is much easier to defend. According to Wood (1995), the model invites common ground and audience participation in the form of shared warrants or beliefs, which increases the possibility of interaction between audience and rhetor.

2.3.2.2 Ground

Grounds refer to the proof or evidence a rhetor offers and it is the basis of real persuasion. It is made up of data and hard facts, plus the reasoning behind the claim. Reasons may be offered as proof of assumptions already held by the listener. It is the “truth” on which the claim is based and may also include proof of expertise and the basic premises on which the rest of the argument is built. Grounds are the support the rhetor offers on behalf of his/her claim and answer questions such as: What is your proof? How do you know? And why? For a rhetor to be believable and convincing the evidence provided should satisfy three conditions; it should be sufficient, credible, and accurate.

2.3.2.3 Warrant

Warrants are generally accepted beliefs, values, and cultural norms that the author of a message and the audience may share or sometimes may be in conflict with each other. A warrant links the grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant is a generalization that may be explicit or implicit and it answers the question 'Why do those grounds mean your claim is true?' It is an inferential leap that connects the grounds with the claim and requires the audience to recognize the connection between the claim and grounds. The implicit nature of warrants means the underlying meaning of an argument is shared by the audience. A sound warrant in an argument gives the rhetor the authority to proceed with his/her case. It tells your readers what your assumptions are (Toulmin, 2003). Shared warrants invite the audience to participate by unconsciously supplying part of the argument and serve as a bridge between both parties by explaining why or how the data supports the claim, the underlying assumption that connects your data to your claim.

If the warrant is accepted by the readers, then specific evidence can be presented to develop the claim and if readers challenge it, there would be the need to defend it by “backing it up. The warrant performs a "linking function by establishing a mental connection between the grounds and the claim and it can be based on any of the following overlapping categories:

Ethos: source credibility, authority

Logos: reason-giving, induction, deduction

Pathos: emotional or motivational appeal

Value premises: values shared by, or presumed to be shared by, the receiver(s)

Fig. 2.4 below displays the three basic elements that are present in every argument.

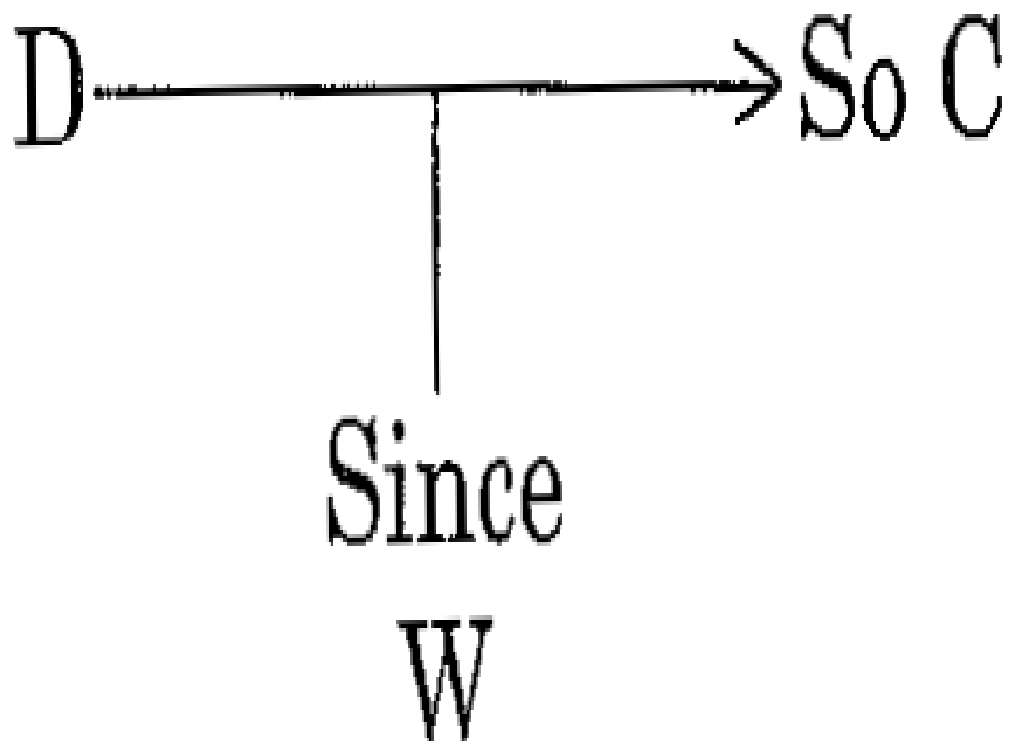


Figure 2.3: Basic elements of an argument

Source: Toulmin (2003)

The other three additional (optional) elements in Toulmin's model are Backing, qualifier, and rebuttal.

2.3.2.4 Backing

The backing is an additional logic or reasoning that may be necessary to support the warrant and it is also referred to as the foundation. In the Toulmin Model, potential objections to the argument's reasons are analysed by the rhetor as shown in Fig. 2.5 below.

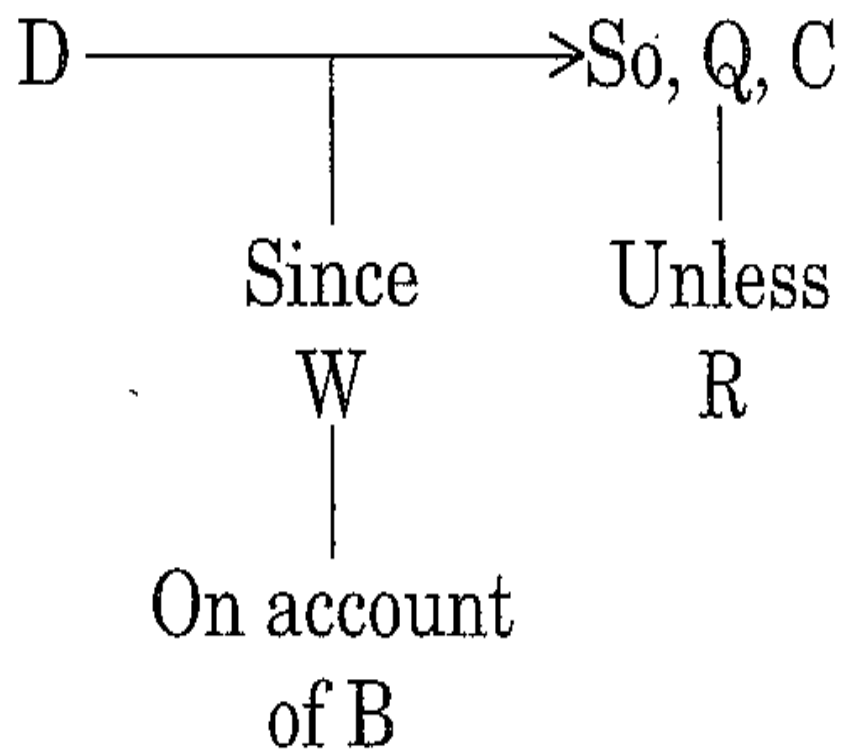


Figure 2.4: Backing in Toulmin's model

Source: Source: Toulmin (2003)

2.3.2.5 Qualifier

The qualifier indicates the intensity of the leap from the data to the justification and may limit the universal application of a claim. They include words or phrases expressing the speaker's degree of force or certainty concerning the claim. Such words or phrases include possible, probably, impossible, certainly, presumably, as far as the evidence goes, or necessarily (Karbach, 1987). Qualifiers and exceptions are similar in that they both put limits on how far a claim may be carried and their value to an argument is immeasurable. Qualifiers in an argument is represented in Fig. 2.6 below.

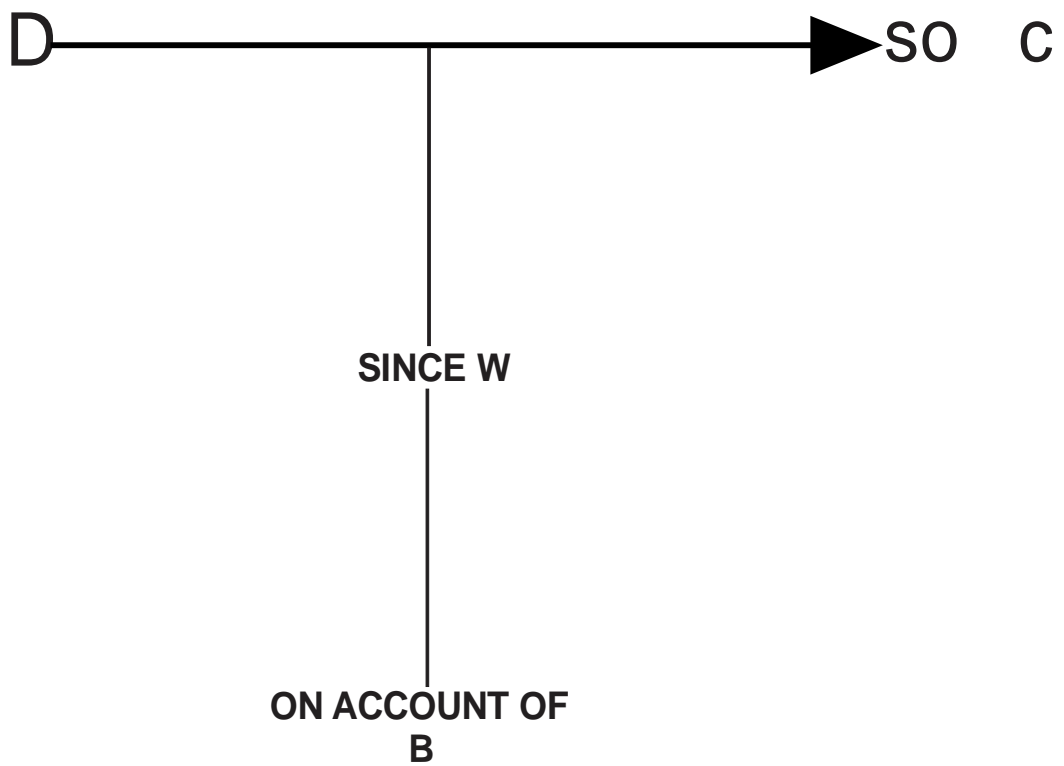


Figure 2.5: Qualifier in Toulmin's model

Source: Toulmin (2003)

2.3.2.6 Rebuttal

Rebuttals are pieces of evidence that refute or contradict the counterclaim. It is the point at which the author answers any competing opinions or potential objections raised by the audience in order to reinforce his/her argument (Karbach, 1987). Once a rhetor has identified potential counter-arguments, it would be counter-productive to announce such counter-arguments without arguing against them. As a result, after stating opponents' objections, most rhetors will reject or disprove the objections. A good rebuttal frequently necessitates proof, therefore seek for support for the rebuttal viewpoint in that section of an argument. Rebuttal evidence, like all evidence, must be sufficient, accurate, and believable (Toulmin, 2003). Sometimes, it may be directed towards counter-claims, alternate interpretations of evidence, or new evidence. The rhetor acknowledges any flaws in his or her argument as well as strengths in opposing arguments, but carefully qualifies the impact of these flaws on the overall soundness of his or her original argument. Fig 2.7 is a model representation of how rebuttals work in informal argumentation

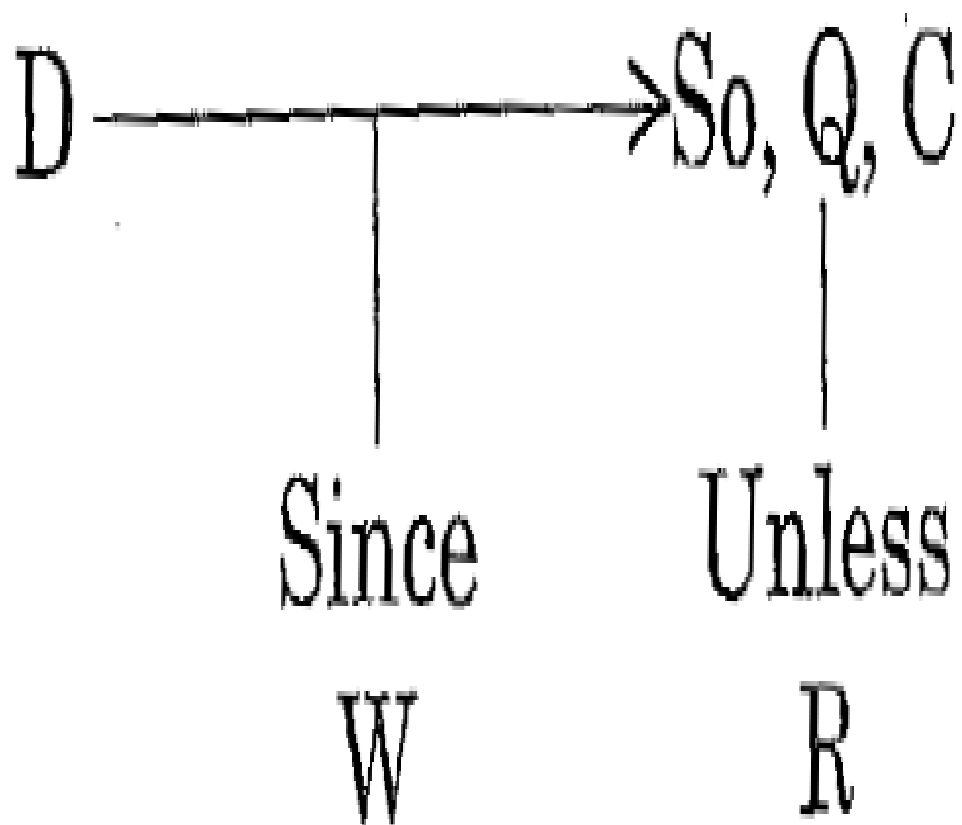


Figure 2.6: Rebuttal in Toulmin's model

Source: Toulmin (2003).

In summary, the Toulmin model of reasoning is more flexible than formal logic and therefore works better in real-life situations. The model is applied to examine Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts.

2.3.3 Rhetorical discourse analysis approach (RDA)

Rhetorical discourse analysis (RDA) brings together methods and theories from strands of discourse analysis (DA), classical rhetoric, and rhetorical analysis (Andrus 2013). It is based on a series of theories about language and other sign systems, communication, discourse, human cognition, storytelling, filmmaking, graphic design, persuasion, and argumentation. To Hoven (2015), all these can be summed up under semiotic theories. Thus, RDA has its roots in semiotics and the analysis and assessment of rhetorical discourse are done based on semiotic theories with a close relationship with social, philosophical, and ideological frameworks.

The way a rhetor organises the rhetorical process and the way an audience responds to it reflect the entire physical, social, historical, and ideological network in which the rhetorical process takes place. It is an approach that focused on the analysis of the linguistic devices used by rhetors to guide their audiences in their perception and evaluation of their discourse mediated reality. It is premised on the assumption that the discourse world that a rhetor presents to his audience, compared to the continuous unmediated stream of sensory input, is carefully formatted, designed to be effective in

a specifically designed rhetorical situation. Here, the emphasis is that a rhetor can never confront his/her audience directly with a purported reality that he claims his/her discourse to be about, not even if he claims his discourse to be a “true” and “live” experiences of such a reality because discourse is a complex structure of signs.

RDA is a structured way to approach discourse as it uncovers a significant proportion of the choices upon which every discourse is based and exposes the knowledge and values that every discourse presupposes Hoven (2015). Rhetorical analysts try to understand how public rhetorical discourse works by trying to examine how this process of an audience encountering a discourse in a specific situation works.

2.3.3.1 Key terms in RDA

The terminologies used in RDA are specific to Hoven’s description of basic concepts. It is germane to discuss some of these terms to situate them within the confines of the present study. The terms include:

- i. Discourse world
- ii. Mimesis and diegesis in argumentative discourse
- iii. Kairos situation

2.3.3.1.1 Discourse world

The discourse world is the world as presented in the discourse. It is not the same as reality the discourse is about Hoven (2015). What a rhetor does is try and influence an audience’s behavioural intentions. RDA focused on an attempt to find out what intentions an artefact is brought into the world. The insight is that it is often the rhetor who, through his narration invites the audience to build up a discourse world by analysing how the discourse world looks like and what interpretations and evaluations of that world it conveys, explicitly or implicitly, and at the same time determine how the discourse guides the audience in relating that discourse world to its reality. The discourse world is the reality that the discourse is about. In constructing a discourse reality, there is an interplay between/among the discourse structure or the sign-vehicle that our cognition identifies as a meaningful form, the mental image considered to be a fairly straightforward interpretation of the sign-vehicle; an assessment of the credibility of this discourse world and the fidelity of the presentation and a projection of this discourse world onto our perceived reality.

This implies that, in RDA, the sign-vehicle relates to the discourse world and it is assessed to give an emotive response. Building a discourse world is similar to what a mime player is doing on stage in front of his audience. Whatever relations to reality the discourse world may claim; it is always mediated by a narrator as well as by the audience's reality. This is what Hoven (2015) technically referred to as *the mimesis of the discourse world* and the relationship between the mimesis of the discourse world and the audience's reality he called the *mimetic relation*. The discourse world is often a complex mixture of mimetic and diegetic elements with complicated mimetic and diegetic relations to the audience's reality.

2.3.3.1.2 Mimesis and diegesis in argumentative discourse

Discourse is consciously designed to guide an audience towards mentally constructing a discourse world that relates to its perceived reality in a specific way. A rhetor constructs a selective set of elements (person, objects, events) while also implicitly or explicitly inserting interpretations and evaluations. Mimesis is used to describe the rhetorical situation of a discourse world in relation to reality. The relation between the mimesis of the discourse world and the audience's reality is very complicated and arbitrary. The narrator's interpretations and evaluation of elements in the discourse world are called diegesis. In a simpler term, mimesis (rhetor's creation) is showing and diegesis (audience interpretation) is commenting.

To Aristotle, mimesis involves a framing of reality that announces that what is contained within the frame is simply not real. Thus, the more 'real' the imitation, the more fraudulent it becomes. The mimesis of the discourse world is constructed through verbal expressions that claim to convey facts by describing what the discourse world looks like. The truth of an expression conveying a mimetic element may be supported by an argument. Such an expression then becomes a (sub) standpoint. This does not mean that the mimesis is a true mime of that reality. The diegesis of the discourse world, however, consist of one or more interpretive or evaluative expressions, to be clearly distinguished from the mimetic elements. In argumentative discourse, we have a discourse world, trying to distinguish mimesis from diegesis and relating it with a mimetic and a diegetic relation to the audience's reality.

2.3.3.1.3 Kairos situation

RDA begins with a description of the opportune occasion for the discourse and that is why Kairos's situation is central to any rhetorical discourse analysis. Kairos is a Greek word from Greek mythology indicating the importance of the context, time, and opportunity in which the rhetorical discourse is presented. Sometimes it is easy to describe the kairos and more often than not, it requires a bit of research. A rhetorical situation is built on the insight that it is always the rhetor who through his narrator invites the audience to build up a discourse world. Therefore, a rhetorical analyst needs to do two things. The first is to determine the picture and interpretation of the discourse world and secondly, identify how discourse guides the audience's relationship with the reality being projected. This is why rhetorical discourse analysis is considered an art that requires a conscious and careful interpretation of the rhetorical situation. This makes it worth spending time thinking about how discourse creates a discourse world and how this discourse world relates to 'reality.' The scheme is illustrated in Fig 2.8 below:

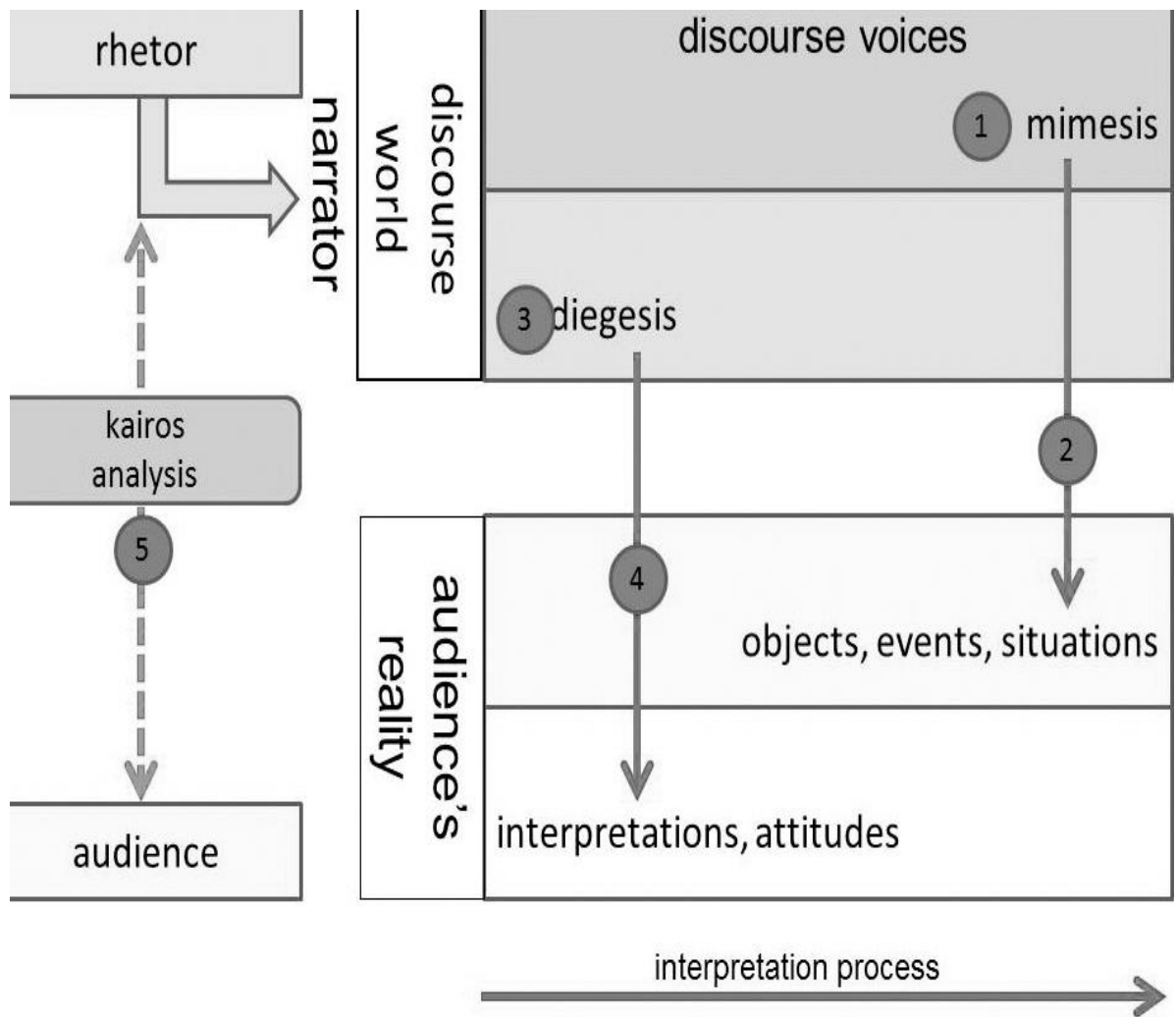


Figure 2.7: Basic scheme of the rhetorical situation in RDA

Source: Paul van Den Hoven, (2015)

2.3.3.2 Rhetorical devices in RDA

In his discussion of RDA techniques, Hoven (2015) maintains that discourses are designed to guide an audience's interpretation towards stories, comparisons, argumentations, and framed mindsets to keep a much too complex reality manageable. Thus, he emphasised that 'it is a misconception to assume that applying rhetorical devices is akin to indecent manipulation.' There are four major rhetorical devices in RDA which are used to influence an audience's perception of reality. These devices are directly based on the way human beings try to comprehend the world they live in and they can also be called cognitive devices as it helps to present a consciously constructed, well-ordered world to the audience called *discourse world*. These devices are used to process data, to make sense out of data, and can be described from many levels of specificity. The four rhetorical devices are; narrative, comparison, argumentation, and contextual framing.

The narrative employs the human inclination to understand acts and actions in their world predominantly as elements of narratives; of motivated, focused causal chains. Comparisons employ the human inclination to understand all kinds of elements in their world by comparing them with other elements. Argumentation employs the human inclination to reason from generalised knowledge and values to understand their world. Contextual framing employs the human inclination to understand all kinds of complicated data by considering them within a limited frame and values thereby reading the complexity. However, for this thesis, the discussion is limited to the argumentative device only because of its peculiarity to the present study.

2.3.3.2.1 Argumentative device

Argumentation is an intellectual rhetorical device wherein a rhetor claims the acceptability of his position concerning a specific situation because he claims it follows logically from general principles, rules, or regularities the audience is supposed to accept. The rhetor claims that utterance A (standpoint) is acceptable because utterance B (data) is assumed to be shared already by the intended audience and because it is assumed that A follows B, according to some general principle, rule, or regularity (inference rule). The argument structure appeals to the audience's inclination toward abstract reasoning. It is based on the knowledge that is formalised in general statements such as legal and social rules, physical or sociological regularities, and a host of others. It is described as a reflective device used by humans to

deliberately test their standpoints against sound reasons and make sense of their world as it reveals itself through sensory data. The combination of the data provided and the inference rule is what is referred to as an argument while the communicative act of bringing forward a standpoint, supported by one or more arguments is called argumentation.

An argument can be implicit or explicit as a rhetor can explicitly formulate all the relevant data by revealing in detail how he thinks this argument supports the standpoint and could also implicitly leave the inference rule and the grounds on which the inference rule is based unexpressed. A critical analysis by a skilled rhetorician would reveal that discourse that emphatically presents an argument structure suggesting sound reasoning may be based on sloppy inferences exploiting the fact that argumentative device is held in high esteem in most modern communities. In assessing the use of an argumentative device, an analyst needs to look carefully into the content of the argument.

For a rhetorical argument to be acceptable, it is assumed that the rhetor should start by being clear about the intended rhetorical effect that he is out to establish (mimesis), clearly formulate the standpoint, and overtly present the reasons why his audience should adopt the standpoint as its standpoint. In a simpler term, a skilled rhetor should attempt to distinguish the mimetic elements from the diegetic elements (interpretations and evaluations). In an attempt to present an acceptable standpoint, the rhetor may include several related arguments (subordinate arguments) to support the standpoint. This is what we referred to as argument structure.

The definition of argumentation in this thesis is about public rhetorical discourse, not about interpersonal dialogues. An argumentative discourse, the type being utilised in this study is highly informative and a hard to process forms of discourse because a lot of information is given within a limited space. Analysing the argumentative device makes it clear that rhetorical discourse analysis is also critical discourse analyses as an assessment is an inevitable part of both method and our analysis lean to a theoretical approach called the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation considering argumentation as an implicit dialogue, as a discourse phenomenon, as appealing to a concept of argumentative reasonableness and so on.

There are two extreme uses of the argumentative rhetorical device; sincere and expedient use. The sincere use is where a rhetor has sincerely reflected upon a dialogue with his audience and believes he has a good case by answering critical questions that may likely be raised by the audience. The expedient use is applied by the rhetor by avoiding some critical questions that may likely be asked by the audience and instead focused on irrelevant ones. This is technically referred to as a strategy of fallacy. Most discourses employing the argumentation device are situated in between the sincere and the expedient use.

New development to rhetorical argumentation has been exemplified by Hoven (2015) asserting that there is now high regard for argumentative rationality in modern societies. This he termed argumentative reasonableness. By this, he implied that ‘members of a modern community expect rhetors to ground standpoints on cognizable sources of generalised knowledge, norms as well as empirically funded regularities, established and authorised expertise.’ Six schemes frequently appear in all kinds of argumentative public rhetorical discourses according to Hoven (2015), one is an argument based on factual regularity. Here, the ground is often common sense or some scientific theory and results in four relevant questions;

1. Is A indeed the case?
2. Is the A we are talking about the same in the inference rule?
3. How strong is the relationship between A and B?
4. Is the certainty of the standpoint claimed by the rhetor in accordance with the strength of the regularity?

Another is an argument based on a definition: Definitions are efficient in discussing our reality and can become very complicated due to their professional roots and formal functions and therefore argumentations based on definition can be lengthy. Others are; Argument based on the normative rule, a pragmatic argument, an argument based on authority and, an argument based on examples. In RDA, discourse constitutes reality and discourse analysis is not just the study of social reality but the construction of that social reality. The theoretical foundation of RDA is on the insight that all interpretation is a partially creative problem-solving process. The discourse world is not reality but claims to represent reality. Therefore, RDA analysts should always be open to unexpected complications.

Overall, the treatment of rhetorical argumentation in the DHA and RDA are similar except that while DHA emphasises the historical and contextual dimension of arguments, RDA focuses on audience interpretation of the reality presented by the rhetor through discourse. Both ideas are taken as one in this study. The point of departure is that while DHA focuses on the historical dimension to argumentation, Toulmin's recognition of warrants as the base of all argument is eclectic, and Hoven's emphasis on reasonableness in argumentation is very instructive. Also, the emphasis on Aristotle's rhetorical appeal (Ethos, Pathos and Logos) in the Toulmin's Model is significant in the analysis of rhetorical argument in a political discourse and this is adapted to the analysis of Olusegun Obasanjo's arguments in the selected texts for the study. The theoretical framework adopted for the present study has, therefore, been able to employ the sociodiagnostic approach in the DHA to present a comprehensive layout for rhetorical argumentation that focused on examining bias, support, and assumptions as exemplified in Toulmin's model to understand the mimetic cum diegetic relationship in Obasanjo's representation of self in his life narration.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has described the necessary conceptual tools and the general theoretical background required to understand how the discursive construction of Olusegun Obasanjo's self-representation and the rhetorical arguments in his political narratives are approached. Also, issues in rhetoric and argumentation were explored, the nexus between rhetoric and (C)DA were buttressed and various issues in autobiography as a form of self-representation were discussed. Extant studies on Olusegun Obasanjo's speeches and life narratives were also reviewed to give a footing for the present study. The theoretical framework adopted for the study was explained to give a direction for the method of analysis in the next chapter. As a result, the next chapter presents the many assumptions that underpin the research's findings, and offers the groundwork for understanding how some viewpoints become discursively salient while others fade into the background.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter elaborates on the research questions, describes the data in detail with the synoptical sketch of the selected texts drawn in chapter one bearing in mind the overall methodological framework and how it applies to rhetorical discourse analysis. The focus is to justify how the various datasets were built and to clarify the methods adopted for the analysis of data. Therefore, there is a discussion of the research method employed and an explanation of the choice and nature of the data for the study.

3.1 Research design

The present study examines the rhetorical argumentation and self-representational strategies in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts. It is a sociodiagnostic critique of Olusegun Obasanjo's rhetorical arguments. Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), which is aimed at an analysis of historical and political dimension to argumentation, combined with Rhetorical Discourse Analysis (RDA) that focuses on argumentation reasonableness and Toulmin's model of argument that recognises warrants as the base of all argument was adopted in the analysis of the data. Above all, the present study is an exercise in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) within the confines of narrative rhetoric and argumentation. However, insights are drawn from Aristotelian rhetoric and pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). This has offered the study the unique advantage of probing the subjective while operating from the level of the objective.

The research was designed in line with the analytical framework embraced by DHA to facilitate the categorisation of the author's standpoints and the self-representational constructs. The argument structures of the standpoints were subjected to Toulmin's

model of argumentation to make the analysis of the data less daunting. The descriptive design was adopted and the research was also structured to cater for the set objectives of the study. The main task of the study was centred on how social reality was mediated by rhetorical discourse and the possible perception of such reality by the audience.

3.2 Sampling method and data collection procedure

The data for the present study were sourced from Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts; *My Command (MC)* (1980), *Not My Will (NMW)* (1990), and *My Watch* (2014). However, unlike the other two, *My Watch* is in three volumes and for this research, there is an abbreviation of each of the three volumes for easy identification. Volume One (*Early life and Military*) becomes *ELM*, Volume Two (*Politics and Public Affairs*) becomes *PPA* and Volume Three (*Now and Then*) becomes *NT*. The texts were purposively selected not just because of Olusegun Obasanjo's political influence but also because of the influence of the texts in Nigeria's historical and political debates. The concern in this study, however, was not to contest the truthfulness or otherwise of Obasanjo's narration, the interest was on the way language was used to present facts and fabrications and its possible influence on readers' worldview. Samples that reflect Obasanjo's argument on several intricate issues were drawn from the text and were analysed using Toulmin's model of argumentation in order to understand Obasanjo's construction of reality through discourse.

3.3 Method of data analysis

Some assumptions sustain the arguments of this research. One is that Obasanjo carefully constructs text around any subject matter of his choice and there is the need to examine the discursive strategies employed to detect how this is done. Besides, identifying the contextual frames of each of the standpoints in his life narratives brings to the fore critical questions on the origin of the episteme attached to his narration of Nigeria's socio-political history, his representation of others, and the discourse world created by Obasanjo. What is more compelling in this research is the use of language to construct realities.

Qualitative data analysis was adopted and the layouts of the data adopted in the analysis are aligned with the multi-dimensional analytical framework embraced by the DHA scholars. The discourse topics are identified by providing necessary historical

background information to carefully select and label the main arguments. The analysis is in two dimensions. First, there is an analysis of the specific self-representation strategies employed by the rhetor in representing self and others using DHA and RDA principles, and the second tease out the arguments constructed by the rhetor in justifying *self* on various controversial issues about his person and his military and civilian administrations in Nigeria. The discursive strategies employed in each standpoint were analysed and the rhetorical arguments put forth by the author were examined by drawing portions that were purposively sampled to validate claims and counterclaims using Toulmin's (2003) model of argument.

The analysis dwells more on how Obasanjo invites common ground and audience engagement in the form of shared warrants or views, which boosts the likelihood of connection between readers and the author. What has been done in this study is to try as much as possible to quote the exact words of the rhetor in the analysis of the argument. This is to reduce subjectivity to the barest minimum. The analysis also explores whether Obasanjo successfully/ unsuccessfully projected the self in providing good justification to claims that can stand up to criticism and earn a favourable verdict. The layout of the analysis is presented in Fig. 3.1

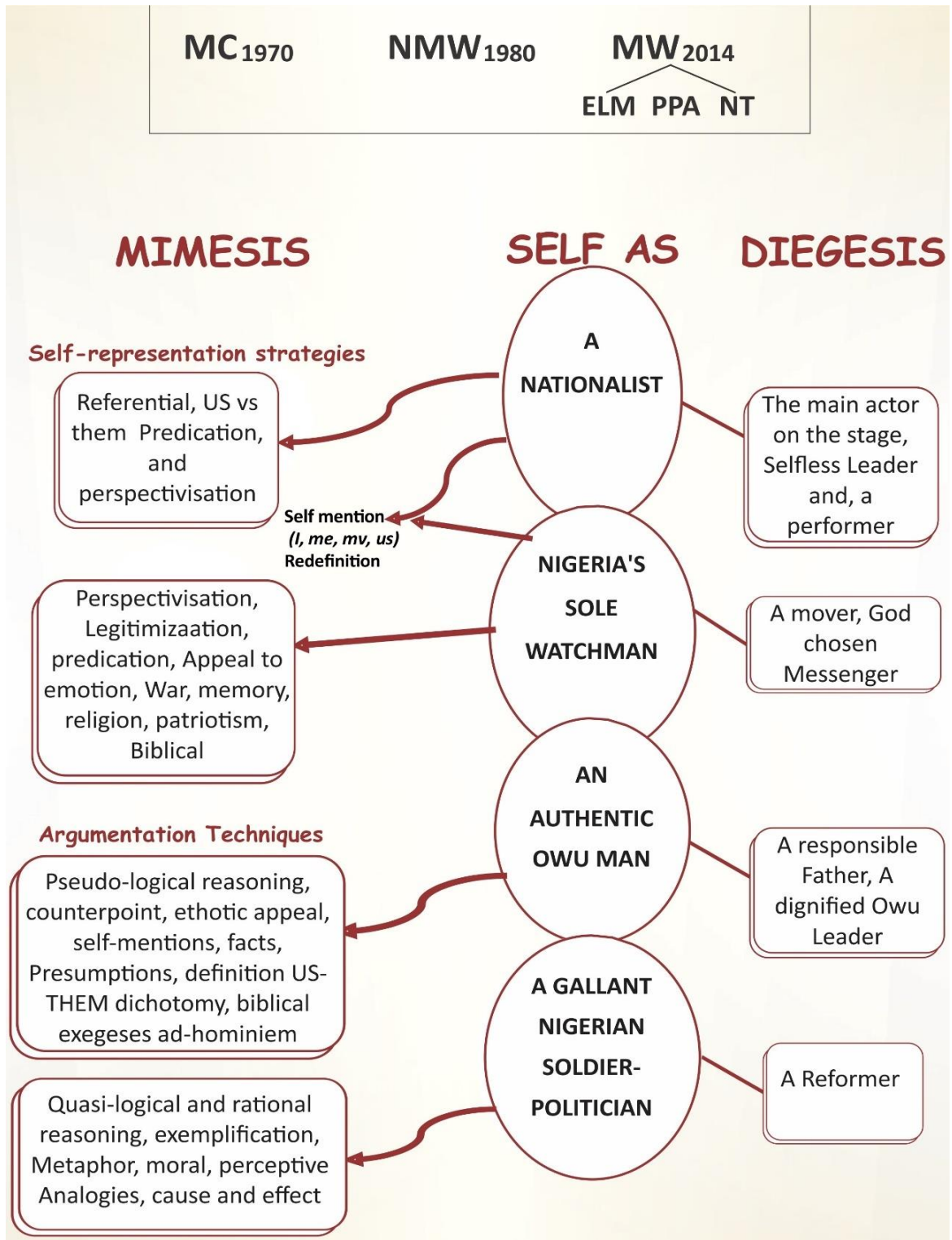


Figure 3.1: Data analysis schema

Source: Researcher (2021)

3.4 Chapter summary

What has been done in this chapter is to carefully chart the course on which the analysis of the data treads. The aim was to justify the data that make up the corpus of the present study. In line with this, the research design and the procedure for data collection and analysis were discussed. On the whole, the data selected constitute representative discourse suitable to meet the objectives of this research. The next chapter focuses on the analyses of Olusegun Obasanjo's argument structure and the self-representation strategies employed.

CHAPTER FOUR

OLUSEGUN OBASANJO'S ARGUMENTATION AND SELF REPRESENTATION STRATEGIES IN *My Command, Not My Will*, AND *My Watch* (Vol. I-III)

4.0 Chapter overview

In this chapter, the textual and contextual structures of the selected texts are discussed following the DHA and RDA principles. Samples of the texts reflecting the discursive and argument strategies that are employed by the text producer in representing *self* are analysed. The data analysed uncovered the narrative structure of Olusegun Obasanjo's autobiographical accounts. The analysis in this chapter stems from the three research questions by probing the forms and the strategies of self-representation deployed in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts as well as a discussion of the argument structures adopted in his presentation of the discourse reality. The conclusions will link findings with the concept of identity negotiation in political/autobiographical communication and argumentations.

4.1 Presentation of findings

The narrative and argumentative devices in rhetorical discourse examined in this study are contextually analysed using the operational techniques in the DHA and RDA and Toulmin's tool of rhetorical argumentation. Four major self-representational constructs emerge: *Obasanjo as a nationalist, a watchman, a revered Owu man and a gallant Nigerian soldier-politician*. The forms of self-construct and the argument structures are presented in turn.

4.1.1 Forms of self-representation in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts

In this section, the forms of Olusegun Obasanjo's representation of self as *a nationalist* and *a watchman* were analysed. The representation of self as a nationalist is presented within four discourse topics: consecration of Nigeria's unity, Yoruba leadership debate, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and Nigeria's primordial racial distrust. Three discursive strategies; perspectivisation, referential and predication with a structural appeal to history, appeal to cultural beliefs, appeal to past glory/achievement, and re-inscription were utilised. This was phrased in the us-them

dichotomy to justify self as the main actor on the stage, selfless leader, and the reformer of a modern Nigeria while others were branded as bigots, cynics, corrupt and self-centred politicians. Obasanjo as a *watchman* is enclosed under three topical issues: Divine leadership, the 2007 succession tussle, and the description of Nigeria as a *project* awarded by God to him. These were presented using referential and predicational strategies and appeals to emotion, patriotism, war memory, and religion that were premised on biblical eisegesis and consciously controlled mimesis. He used syntactically subordinated discourse units and deictic devices ‘I’ with its variants ‘my’ or ‘me’ to metaphorically construct self as a mover, God chosen, and to show commitment, shouldering of national responsibility and assertion of personal authority and power

4.1.2 Olusegun Obasanjo’s representation of *self* as a nationalist

Nationalism is a movement characterised by the advancement of national interest and in most cases to the exclusion of other nations or entities. A nationalist is, therefore, a person that strongly identifies with this view and vigorously pursues it. Obasanjo’s representation of self as a nationalist is discussed under the following discourse topics.

4.1.2.1 Consecration of Nigeria’s unity

The pre- and post-independent Nigeria up till 1966 were characterised by the ugly embers of tribalism and sectionalism triggered by the regional system of government being practiced at the time. It eventually catalysed the devastating Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). Olusegun Obasanjo defines *self* as a symbol of a united Nigeria during the turbulent period. The first sign of his ‘Nigerianness’ was brought to bear when he alleged that the Western Regional government asked military officers of Western origin to desert their military posts in the North and move Southward in the build-up to the Civil War. Obasanjo used this regional call to build his credibility. He presented *self* as a symbol of unity placing national interest above sectional interest by refusing the offer.

Sample I

After thorough deliberation on the existing situation and **the future of the country, as I perceived it then**, I expressed appreciation on behalf of **all of us** still in the North and politely turned down their suggestion. We stood firmly with all **our men**,

and **we** commanded them as officers of the Nigerian Army. *MC*
(13)

In sample I, the beta clausal construction **as I perceived it then** is a perspectivisation strategy to limit allegiance to Obasanjo's claim of being a nationalist as the rhetor was, at the time, insignificant in the Nigerian political circle and by extension, her governance. It also gave credence to the claim that rejecting the offer was to secure **the future of Nigeria** which is paramount to him as against selfish ethnic bigotry. Despite the rhetor's admittance of the involvement of others in the process through the nominal categorisation **all of us**, and **our men** signalling collaborative efforts of all officers involved, the rhetor manipulates the pronominals **I** and **we** in combination with the verbalisation processes **expressed, stood firmly, and commanded** to unmark the point of view of others. Thus, he manages to omit other participants and foreground **self** as the main actor on a mission to unite Nigerians. This suggests that others were influenced by his decision being the most senior officer at the time. To buttress this position further, Obasanjo insists that;

Sample II

That orientation, feeling, and attribute, which **I** acquired from my childhood, remains with **me** and will remain with **me** till **I** die. **I** see people for what they are; as good or bad as human beings. **We** all have different identities, but **I** use the identity of tribe or language only when it is **absolutely necessary**. The commonest and most important identity for **me** is **Nigerian**. *ELM* (195)

Sample II demonstrates Obasanjo's pursuance of Nigeria's unity by using the positive explicit predicates **I, me, and my** to fix his unrepentant nationalist point of view and at the same time utilised the implicit predicative evocations **most important** to vaguely frames those who do not share in this perspective as ethnic bigots or sectionalists as against nationalists. The use of the addressee-inclusive **we** is fairly broad and it is a vague deictic expression that manipulatively contrasts the rhetor's perspective as against those of others who may not share in his opinion or his definition of a **Nigerian**. The coordinator **but** and the modifying adverb **absolutely necessary** are stereotypical predication that are used to boost this point of view and to rebut dissenting opinions. As an emotive appeal to the readers, the rhetor uses the relativised adjectival construction **the commonest and most important identity** to emphasise his definition of Nigerianness and the prepositional phrase **for me** to exert

authoritative opinion and a symbol of re-inscription and redefinition to foreground the position that he is the symbol of Nigeria's unity during her turbulent period.

4.1.2.2 Yoruba leadership debate

There has always been a raging debate regarding the leadership (political) of Yoruba. Although Obafemi Awolowo was crowned as the leader of the Yoruba by some sections of the group, this is, however, not acceptable to some others. Olusegun Obasanjo sees self as a national leader of Yoruba origin and considers the appellation of a Yoruba leader as diminishing. It is against this backdrop and in anticipation of objections to his definition of self as a nationalist most especially by some sections of the Yoruba who have consistently questioned Obasanjo's *Yorubannes* and *Nigeriannes* as regards some of his decisions while in office, that the rhetor tries to dissuade other people's negative opinion of him in *My Watch* when he claimed that:

Sample III

But I have always refused and I will always refuse to be constrained, diminished, or reduced to the level of Yoruba leadership. Without being immodest, I am a national leader, an African leader, and a world leader in my own way. *PPA* (42)

What is presented in Sample III is quite typical of argumentative discourse. A lot of predominantly mimetic information about what is going on in the discourse world is assumed to be known already to the audience. This is because argumentation typically ensues when a difference of opinions pops up in a community. The background for this sample was given by Obasanjo earlier in the text, where he reinstated his position on a purported outcry among the Yoruba that Obasanjo is an impostor who had oftentimes short-changed the Yoruba in the scheme of things in Nigeria. Obasanjo manages to construct a profile of his enemies to whom acts of ethnic chauvinism and bigotry are directed in contrast with positive self-representation. This is achieved through the metaphorical construction of *self as a world leader* by employing perspectivisation strategies to impose his personal opinion as a national opinion.

Although this is done subtly as he refrains from giving specific names, it becomes obvious however that the personality being **constrained, diminished, and reduced** in this sample is the supposed Yoruba leader. He casts aspersions on Obafemi Awolowo's pedigree and his supporters whom he accused of manipulating the Yorubas through their ethnic politics. By rubbishing the legacy of Obafemi Awolowo, the

Kairos situation is that readers are aware of this imputation, and to dissuade this erroneous belief about his person, Obasanjo argued that Awolowo, to him, was **never a Yoruba leader** as claimed by some of his supporters. In fact, to Obasanjo, there was no single Yoruba leader. The discourse here merely presents this mimesis in explicit elements that claimed to respond to the audience's perception of its reality.

The rhetor relies on personal pronoun **I** to negotiate and at the same time disparage and vilify the supporters of Awolowo. However, he seems to treat average readers as lacking clear thinking, sensitivity, and pragmatism, and most probably in need of expert guidance in his attempt to dissociate *self* from the controversies surrounding the Yoruba leadership. This is exemplified in his use of participial-clausal construction **without being immodest** supposedly signalling humility, but, ironically, he went ahead to negate the proposition. He used three-part list or what is known as tricolon in rhetoric to stamp his conviction of not only being a **national leader** or just an **African leader** but also a **world leader**. There is further evidence of such inter-personal strains in Obasanjo's text:

Sample IV

My knowledge of Nigeria convinced me that whoever would lead Nigeria politically **must** be **tolerant, accommodating, and forgiving**. Some of the antecedental actions of chief Awolowo that I know had not convinced me that he had these commodities in sufficient quantities. *NMW (172)*

Ethos is the major appeal used in Sample IV and it presented Obasanjo's subjective interpretation of Nigerian leadership as infallible. He subtly expresses his authority by validating his interpretation of Nigeria or Nigerian leadership through the use of deontic modality **must** which also adds supreme value to his views. His use of the adjectivals **tolerant, accommodating, and forgiving** in the positive forms rather than negative is deceptive and achieved the dual purpose of naming self and shaming others. The presupposition is that those who have democratically ruled the country have these traits in abundance while others like Obafemi Awolowo and his supporters do not. It is ironic, however, that despite his denial of being in contention for consideration as the leader of the Yorubas, Obafemi Awolowo, the celebrated Yoruba leader is singled out for vilification as he labelled him as intolerant, unaccommodating, and unforgiving. He insisted that Chief Awolowo's supporters fixed the title of Yoruba

leader on him and that many people like Richard Akinjide and Adisa Akinloye do not accept Awolowo as Yoruba leader (*PPA*:). Therefore, the Yoruba people who cling to the idea of Yoruba leadership do so for their self-interest. What is discovered in this sample is predominantly an argumentative justification and also a narrative that projects the author as a nationalist. He went further in exemplifying this perspective by stating that;

Sample V

There are Yorubas of the mentality that if they cannot permanently rule Nigeria, then Nigeria should be broken up in the euphemism of confederacy. They would rather be rulers in hell if they cannot be rulers in heaven. They are mainly those who see themselves as heirs apparent to Awolowo. I neither share their philosophy nor their mindset. They are the same people who claimed that I denied being a Yoruba man. I am more Yoruba than all of them. I was able to share with Chief Awolowo my philosophy and my thoughts and the difference between his and mine when he was alive. We agreed. Those who are crying more than the bereaved like Olaniwun Ajayi and Femi Okunroumu are self-centered and lack integrity. *PPA* (42)

In Sample V above, pathetic appeal is utilised to arouse reader's emotion on the subject of Nigeria or Yoruba leadership. As an enhancement of his ethical pedigree, Obasanjo's quest for self-identification takes another dimension as he shifts the focus of attention from his troubles with some Yoruba elders to a concern with the unity of Nigeria. He had earlier alleged that the virulent and unfair attacks and persecutions mostly from self-centred and selfish leaders and their supporters from his zone were because of their belief that he did not do their bidding nor join in as one of them in and out of public office (*ELM*:267). He subtly fixes this opinion by equating his ideological disagreement with Awolowo's supporters with the sharp differences between **heaven** and **hell** implying that Awolowo supporters fixed the title of Yoruba leadership on him because of their self-interest, while he (Obasanjo) would prefer to be honoured as a national leader. This position activates the sense of pity in the reader. Here, Obasanjo is presented as having a larger interest of the Yoruba people.

The referential strategy employed here is made explicit through the metaphoric description of the metonymic contradiction between **rulers in hell** which could be synonymous with ethnic leadership, evil or wishful thinking, and **rulers in heaven** being pure, selfless, or angelic attributes as synonymous with national leadership. This presupposes that those who see themselves as heirs apparent to Awolowo are **devilish**

and do not even have the true interest of the Yoruba people while the *self* is branded as the main actor on the central stage, a national leader, and **more Yoruba than all of them**. He goes further to aggregate the differences between self and others by claiming that Chief Awolowo agreed with him when he was alive. With this, he ironically puts *self* on the same pedestal with Chief Awolowo.

The other-representational choice is that of the referential and individualisation process as evident in the use of proper names Olaniwun Ajayi and Femi Okunrounu who are described using the grammatical metaphor **crying more than the bereaved**. The point in this metaphoric declaration is evident in his use of the attributive adjectives; **self-centered and lack of integrity** to qualify the supporters of Awolowo. The sample above supports previous studies that affirmed that language or text helps in the process of reality and identity construction. The metonymic categorisation of Awolowo's supporters as described above gives an insight into some of the ideas governing Obasanjo's thinking, what he believes and who he is. This is because individuals and the positions they advance privilege certain constitutive elements of their identities and by so doing they illustrate how these positions offer important insights into their persona. He is known for his flair for responding to criticisms and opposing views right from his first taste of power in 1976 and most cases, in a despicable manner. The next sample describes what occupies Obasanjo's mind each time there is a question on his definition of 'Nigeriannes'

Sample VI

If I must say, I was in government not for the love of power but for the power of love and the best for Nigeria and Nigerians. And in this regard, I love the whole and not in part.

In Sample VI above, Obasanjo attempts to achieve multiple goals, one is to deny the accusation of being a power monger while in office, and his purported indifference to the Yoruba, the other is to point accusing fingers on political opponents, strengthen his credibility among Nigerians, and appeal to readers' emotions through the conditional subordinating construction introducing the clause **If I must say** presupposing that previous accusations necessitated the need to reinstate his commitment to Nigeria's unity by affirming that he uses power to benefit Nigerians and not the other way around.

Through the meaning potentials inherent in the framing **love, power and Nigeria**, the rhetor emphasise his undying love to keep the nation united by claiming that **I love the whole and not in part** presupposing that those that have regional interest, and by extension, the regional leaders of the pre and early independent Nigeria are not nationalists like himself. To do this, he chooses to direct his criticisms against those he believed to be his detractors. The rhetor managed to inherently achieve his re-inscription objective by exploiting the nominal entities **love, power, Nigeria, and Nigerians** to frame his responses to accusations and to conform with his undying principles and nationalist views.

The preponderance of the deictic **I** buttresses this stand as he focuses on a clinical definition of *self* as a former president who has a pioneering democratic role not only in Nigeria but Africa in general. He uses this to establish his credibility as an objective, disinterested and rational critic by emphasising his authority as an expert on Nigerian political affairs. This is done to prepare the readers for his coming decisions as so giving him the right to do or say whatever he thinks is right. Thus, it would be inappropriate to accuse someone of his status who had twice relinquished power both as a military and civilian of being power drunk. It is therefore easy to describe the *self* as the one with genuine love and interest in the nation.

4.1.2.3 Operation Feed the Nation (OFN)

Operation Feed the Nation was launched in Nigeria in 1976 by the Obasanjo regime to tackle the danger of inadequate production of locally manufactured food items and to discourage mass importation. However, Nigerians later saw it as a mere propaganda campaign that did little to raise food production. Many Nigerians mocked the programme giving it different appellations like *Obasanjo Finish Naira*, *Obasanjo Fooled the Nation*, and very much later *Obasanjo Farms Nigeria Limited*. In an attempt to arrest this ugly development, Obasanjo used his memoir published after he had left office in 1979 to respond to the criticisms.

Sample VII

When **we** launched Operation Feed the Nation, the cynics who would never see anything good nicknamed it Obasanjo Fooled the Nation. I said to **my colleagues** in government that **we** should not be diverted in the serious pursuit of raising consciousness and awareness for the importance of increased and accelerated food production and undertaking actions for food security. The cynics

would later find out that they were the ones fooling themselves
(*NMW*:120).

The two instances of the pronoun **inclusive ‘we’** used in the sample VII above are to depersonalise his role as the brain behind the introduction of the programme. This suggests that it was a government programme involving **my colleagues** and not specifically about Obasanjo. It is a pathetic appeal to win readers' sympathy and cast aspersions on the critics who are presented as targeting Obasanjo for criticism without cause. Naming those opposed to OFN as **the cynics** is a referential strategy indicating that Obasanjo is fighting a personal battle with some known rivals. The definite pronoun **the** qualifying **cynics** buttressed this position further as it suggests that Obasanjo is directing his rebuttal on some known foes, not just everybody that criticised OFN. It is a direct attack; a demonstration of Obasanjo's despicability and desperation and the extent he can go in adjudging his opponents.

The adjectival clausal construction **who would never see anything good** invites a reading in which the criticisms against OFN, the different nicknames it generated is given the force of a natural hatred against Obasanjo. This invariably reveals his innermost feeling about criticism and his disgust for any opposing view. All these are geared towards redefining self as a mover of Nigeria's development.

4.1.2.4 Nigeria's primordial racial distrust

In the build-up to the 1999 elections, the first in sixteen years after several years of military rule, the ugly mistrust and heightened sectional rivalries between/among different socio-political groups in the country reared its ugly head again. In the next sample, Obasanjo exposes some of the intriguing intricacies hovering around Nigerian political development implying that sectionalism is not restricted; it cuts across every part of the country. His resoluteness on Nigeria's unity is demonstrated when he claimed that he refused to sign a purported agreement schemed by some Northern leaders in the build-up to the 1999 democratic dispensation which eventually culminated in his second coming as Nigeria's Head. He uses this to redefine his commitment to Nigeria's unity against all odds.

Sample VIII

A group of distinguished leaders of PDP from the North under the leadership of Prof Jibril Aminu with **Hassan** from Gombe as the secretary invited all the aspirants to the Presidency from the South to a

meeting individually. They wanted us to sign ahead of the Convention an agreement, which to me was tantamount to accepting to reign and not to rule. The Vice-President who would, of course, come from the North would rule. They listed a number of areas that were of interest to the North, which must be reserved for the North. Unfortunately, it was the North, not Nigeria that was their interest. Nigeria as a whole was my own interest and concern. And I believed that if I catered for the total Nigerian interest, no doubt, that sectional, regional, tribal, local and state interests would be taken care of. *PPA* (33)

In Sample VIII, **They** or the **Northern elders** are qualified as sectional, tribal and are alleged for attempting to coerce Obasanjo to sign an agreement that is meant to serve their own rather than the national interests. The ‘other group’ attribution also includes **local** and **regional interests** and are negatively evaluated and qualified through an undesirable adjective **unfortunate**. With this description, a discourse world is activated in the readers that there are very few Nigerians like himself who championed the cause of **nationhood** as against **regionalism**. The rhetorical goal is an emphasis on, and an exposure of the dichotomy between **their belief** and **my belief, their interest,** and **my** (Obasanjo’s) **own interest, regional interest** versus **Nigerian interest,**

4.1.3 Representation of self as Nigeria’s sole watchman

The title of Olusegun Obasanjo’s autobiographical account *My Watch* is rooted in biblical hermeneutics. This is made manifest through his significant quotation of Ezekiel 3:17-19 to introduce the three Volumes. The biblical story of Ezekiel’s calling, his crazy antics, visions, his ability to withstand criticisms, his capacity to move on after his wife’s death, and most importantly, to get God’s message to the Israelites readily creep into the mind. Just as Ezekiel was to prophesy about the fall of Jerusalem, judgement on Israel, and its glorious future, the narrative plot of Olusegun Obasanjo’s *My Watch* equally follow this arrangement by delving into Nigeria’s (Obasanjo’s) *Early Life And The Military*, stewardship of *Political And Public Affairs* and an assessment of the *Now and Then* of the ‘project Nigeria.’ Obasanjo’s representation of self as a watchman is discussed under the following discourse topics.

4.1.3.1 Divine leadership/assignment

Starting from the introduction, Obasanjo has swayed opinions about the book by declaring that just as God commanded Ezekiel to stand, listen, speak, and be courageous because he is to expect torment and animosity against him from the rebellious Israelites (Ezekiel 2:1), he is on the same mission with Nigeria. Therefore,

as a watchman who is on a divine mission, he must be ready to give his all. He posits that if a watchman defaults, the entire people could be endangered or even perished. He laments further that the greatest danger to Nigeria today is the inaction of those who should serve and save it. It is on this ordained calling that Obasanjo concluded the introductory part of *ELM* by asserting that God has a reason for choosing him among many others for this assignment.

Sample IX

The all-knowing God who does not make a mistake and who has His purpose for everything that happens in our lives knows why He created Nigeria and allowed it to be what it is during our own lifetime. He knows that Nigeria will need to be fixed, and for all of us, to varying degrees, will be fixers. Therefore, in working for Nigeria, I see myself working for humanity and God. My watch is an all-embracing watch. *ELM* (xiv)

Emphasizing the supremacy of God in this sample Sample IX an emotive appeal to the readers and an inclination towards the pervading influence of religion on most Nigerians. By using the same word **Watchman** for *self* and the biblical Ezekiel as well as Ezekiel's dreadful prophecies, the author seems to place *self* on the same mental and spiritual level as Ezekiel. This postulation is obliquely framed through an interplay of the possessive and objective case of an implied editorial **we** in **our lives, our own lifetime** and, **for all of us** which dramatically metamorphosed into **I** to avoid creating the image of a leader but rather mark him as part and parcel of the Nigerian populace.

An embedded claim made throughout the autobiographical account is that just as Ezekiel's mission was multifaceted, he is also called to show the people of Nigeria the consequences of their rebellion and sin against God and humanity, prophesy about Nigeria's restoration, and give specifics about how a new Nigeria could be attained. In doing so, Obasanjo assumes his authority that as a watchman, he can speak for and on behalf of Nigeria because he has a divine calling to do so. With this, a discourse world is constructed in the reader defining Obasanjo as an authority who is on an ordained mission to speak and act for Nigeria and Nigerians. Meanwhile, this attitude of a watchman, Obasanjo claimed, has been adopted very early in life and helped in shaping his future role in the Nigerian polity and it was not surprising that his choice of the military was ordained by God.

Sample X

As it turned out in the end, the training came easy. I believe that the choice of a military career was made for me by God Himself. There was nothing in me, my educational or parental background or early life experience to make me choose the military as a career. But so it happened. *PPA (98)*

Sample X is an assertive claim foregrounding the fact that Obasanjo's journey as a dignified Nigerian soldier was divine, predestined, and beyond human comprehension. Therefore, every action taken in this capacity during his political and military travails was not designed by humans but by God. It is a circular argument that reinstates the claim right from inception and it would, therefore, seem difficult for any mortal to counter this position. With this technique of begging the question, the premise gives no rational grounds for accepting the conclusion. The fact that **the training came easy** does not imply that **the choice of a military career was made for him (Obasanjo) by God Himself**. Thus, the conclusion that his choice of a military career is ordained is not deductively invalid but lacks any power of conviction since the premise could not be conceded if the conclusion is questioned.

The preponderance of the personal pronouns **I**, and **me** is manipulatively used to cement his position that God sets him on a mission to salvage Nigeria. Reminding the readers of his Civil War prowess is an ethotic appeal and an indication of his divine role in salvaging Nigeria from disintegration. The sample above sets the rhetor apart from other Nigerian leaders as one who has more roles to play than being a President. This is why any attempt to rubbish his civil war heroics is vehemently opposed.

For instance, *MC* was Olusegun Obasanjo's self-styled descriptive account of Nigeria's prosecution of the 1967-70 Civil War. It generated several reactions because of the chest-thumping nature of the narration as roles of some characters of the war were questioned. One of such is General Alabi-Isama who was described in *MC* as 'a very intelligent man who would have been one of the best officers of the Nigerian army but for his flamboyant character and his inability to fully apply his intelligence to productive and positive action in the army' (108). In response, Alabi-Isama published his account of the war to counter Obasanjo's narration. The publication of *My Watch* in 2014 is an avenue for Obasanjo to respond to some of the allegations raised against his person in Alabi-Isama's book for it would have been a big dent on his image if he had failed to react to Alabi Isama's claim in his new account.

Sample XI

A. Alabi Isama's book *Tragedy of Victory*, which he wrote in 2013 to criticise my book, *My Command*, which I wrote in 1980 to give a personal account of my operations and exploits during the civil war, is typical of him- clever but dubious, unreliable and arrogant. Following a cursory look at the book, I realised Alabi Isama had at least two objectives for writing it; one, to denigrate Obasanjo and rubbish his achievement as a military leader. Two, to try to make money from the book as he complained that most of them who participated in the war were wallowing in poverty. True to his character, he wrote a book of fiction which he wanted people to believe as factual.

B. Alabi Isama's position that the war had ended before I got to the war front could not be supported by writings and reports from all sides of participants and journalists during the war. If the war had ended before I went to the war front, Alabi Isama would not have unceremoniously withdrawn himself from the Third Marine Commando war front claiming unbearable atrocities by his own commander, my predecessor. *PPA (112)*

Also, on a divine mission just like Prophet Ezekiel, the rhetor was to expect criticisms and rebellion as recorded in Ezekiel 3: 7-9 where God has forewarned Ezekiel *to fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they may be a rebellious house*. In Sample XI (A), the rhetor advances an argument from pity as he manages to construct self as a victim of vexatious antagonism. He denies Isama's accusations through a mendacious comparison of the year of publication of both books. It is a tool to discrediting whatever is written in Alabi-Isama's book as an afterthought and thereby destroys the exceptions and the legitimation of his standpoint through authorisation. In Sample XI (B), the fallacy of sweeping generalisation is committed as he uses general proposition **writings and reports from all sides of participants and journalists during the war** as the premise without giving attention to the restrictions and qualifications governing the claim.

The main issues are ignored as the argument is directed towards an irrelevant conclusion. It is assumptive reasoning to conclude that **if no writing or report from all sides of participants and journalists during the war could not support the claim that that the war had ended before I got to the war front**, then it means that

the claim that the war has ended is untrue. Obasanjo relies on predication strategies and ad hominem attacks to disparage and vilify Alabi-Isama's account of the war. The predication strategies are revealed through antithetically juxtaposed undesirable adjectives **clever but dubious, unreliable, and arrogant** which are used to construct Alabi-Isama as relatively fictitious and better ignored. The presupposition is that, just as Ezekiel has been destined to face tribulations and denigration in his journey to salvage the Israelites, criticisms of this sort are not unexpected in the life of a man that has been anointed as a watchman over Nigeria.

It is still on this definition of this unique role in Nigeria and the circumstances surrounding his divine calling that he referenced Buhari/Idiagbon's regime that toppled his successor, Alhaji Shehu Shagari's civilian administration. The structure of the then military regime was in semblance with Murtala/Obasanjo's with a promise of total eradication of corrupt practices that characterised the ousted civilian administration and which Obasanjo had also criticised. Obasanjo boasts that Buhari/Idiagbon's regime attests to the uniqueness of the Murtala/Obasanjo's administration as a model of how Nigeria should be governed.

Sample XII

By their pronouncement, they (Buhari/Idiagbon) dubbed themselves an offshoot of the Murtala-Obasanjo regime. The visits to my farm by appointed officials did not diminish. My farm became a resort centre of sorts. I suddenly realise the position that was being cut out for me- not a captain but a watchman *ELM (301)*.

After relinquishing power in 1979 and having settled down as a farmer, the rhetor admits that consultations by various eminent Nigerians signalled a new role being fashioned for him by God. The ethical appeal in **Sample XII** embodies the idea of professionalism and evokes the state of perfection emphasising the uniqueness of Obasanjo's affinity with Nigeria. The metaphoricity is made manifest through the discursively logical justification of **the visits by appointed officials** as the hallmark of his divine assignment which invariably presupposes that the signs and symbols of Obasanjo's calling as Nigeria's divine watchman are strategically linked to Ezekiel's prophetic career that dramatically started in Babylonian exile and ended gracefully in Jerusalem. Unlike many other prophets, Ezekiel's calling is unique as it is primarily political and not directly religious. He received his call through political symbols such

as chariot wheels, an army, a throne, and a sentinel (Ezek. 1:16-26, 3:16). This description is inherently embedded in a precluded juxtaposition of **a captain** and **a watchman** making it difficult for readers to understand the difference(s) in the use of both words.

This entry's particular tone of ipseity denotes a remarkable consequentialist intent that tends to define Olusegun Obasanjo's indispensability in Nigerian affairs. The presumption is that whoever wants to rule Nigeria should, as a matter of necessity, listens and take advice from a divine watchman who holds the compass to Nigeria's direction. Thus, when the opportunity presented itself to be a captain again, it was not for self-interest but because the nation was already on the verge of ruin and restoration was desirable. Inviting the readers into this inventive universe, Obasanjo boastfully describes the state of the Nigerian nation before his second coming:

Sample XIII

At the point of my release from prison, Abacha had squandered all the goodwill of Nigeria. There was no good news from Nigeria for Nigerians inside and outside the country or friends and well-wishers of Nigeria, wherever they might be. It was gloom and despair. *PPA*
(3)

Abacha's regime is adjudged to be one of the most repressive military administrations in Nigeria. The regime was characterised by arsons, corruption, wanton destruction of properties, and human rights abuses. His death in 1998 birthed a new democratic dispensation that brought Obasanjo to power. Obasanjo tries to empathize and establish a bond with the people by referring to difficulties that Nigerians have gone through and linked this with his prison experience. Through his hyperbolic descriptions of **all the goodwill of Nigeria**, Obasanjo creates a consensual adjudication of the state of things before his second coming as he carefully manipulates the adpositional phrasal constructions **from Nigeria for Nigerians inside and outside the country or for friends and well-wishers of Nigeria** to assign specific semantic roles of painting the state of hopelessness enveloping the country at this critical stage.

It is a perspectivisation strategy to raise the feeling of togetherness and agreement and to create sympathy, harmony, and a shared feeling between *self* and the readers.

Obasanjo places *self* as God-chosen to lead the country back to her former place in the comity of nations. His rhetoric is saturated with emotionally coloured lexicon such as **gloom and despair** signifying total darkness and an atmosphere of despondency. The implication is that Nigerians were hopeless and depressed until the *light* (Obasanjo) came at the end bringing hope to the people. The metaphoric description of Abacha's era prepares the ground for Obasanjo's assessment of *self* as a reformer during his civilian administration and to sustain this reformation, no stone should be left unturned in choosing a successor, hence the need for divine guidance.

4.1.3.2 The 2007 succession tussle

Atiku Abubakar was Obasanjo's Vice-President between 1999 and 2007. Both had a frenetic but soured relationship principally because of egoistical (if not egotistic) beliefs and ideological differences as events later unfolded. The power tussle between the two on who becomes the next Nigeria's President after 2007 heated the polity. The political upheavals that heralded the 2007 elections made the election one of the most criticised in Nigeria's history. Most Nigerians accused Olusegun Obasanjo of imposing Umar Yar'adua, his anointed candidate and the eventual winner of the 2007 Presidential elections on the country at the detriment of other qualified candidates. The former president defended his decision by claiming that:

Sample XIV

A. What informed my position was the question, my Chaplain, Revd (Dr) William Okoye asked at the beginning of May 2006 about who I had anointed to succeed me since we were almost one year away from the election. I told him no one yet. He was curious but he believed me. We moved on as all sorts of clouds started to gather around Atiku if not at home surely in the US... By 30 May, I told Revd Okoye, at a morning devotion session in my residence that I wanted to embark on one-month fasting and praying in June to God to show us (PDP) how to proceed in getting a successor candidate. He joined me in the fasting and prayer with some other members of the Red-Carpet Prayer Group. *PPA (191)*

B. And knowing all that I discovered about him, what would have been an unpardonable mistake and sin against God would have been to foist him on Nigeria. My mistake was containable and it was contained

Obasanjo's position in Sample XIV is that Atiku is not a worthy successor because he is disloyal, unfaithful, and not committed. However, he attempts to couch his

assessment in a misty abstraction by enforcing religious indoctrination to execute his pre-contrived agenda. The syntactically subordinated discourse construction **who I had anointed to succeed me** in the sample reveals his sentry disposition and a signal of his democratic credentials. The juxtaposition between his personal assessment and God's become problematic when he fallaciously manipulates the deictic devices **I** and **us** by declaring that **I wanted to embark on one-month fasting and praying in June to God to show us (PDP)** to establish that the decision to frustrate Atiku from contesting the 2007 election as a candidate of the PDP was not unilateral, rather, a collective decision of the party guided by God.

The claim is romantically falsified to imply that God and not Obasanjo rejected Atiku and chose Yaradua as the anointed successor. Obasanjo's contention here is that what he said is the truth and he attempted to validate his conception of Atiku's divine rejection through the use of pseudo-logical fallacy as exemplified in his choice of the words **unpardonable mistake** and **sin against God**. Obasanjo uses this to add supreme value to his interpretation without providing convincing evidence. This is because despite the brouhaha, though indicted, Atiku Abubakar was neither convicted in Nigeria nor in the United States up to date as Obasanjo wants readers to believe.

By assigning divine supremacy to his claim as exemplified in his declaration, **what would have been an unpardonable mistake and sin against God would have been to foist him on Nigeria**, he presents his subjective interpretation as infallible implying that; as a watchman, he is a representative of God as far as Nigeria is concerned. This places him as the only one to forgive Atiku before he could be forgiven by God and Nigerians. It is a circular argument that could have devastating effects on the rhetor's ethos in that the claim finished where it started and vice versa. Therefore, it would be neither surprising nor shameful, though supercilious, if the rhetor eventually forgives Atiku and expects Nigerians to do the same. Also, his choice of the word **foist** buttresses previous research on his use of language that Obasanjo speaks with messianic fervour with a devil-may-care attitude and a signal of his despicability at swaying public opinion.

4.1.3.3 The Nigerian project

To Obasanjo, Nigeria as a country is a project that has been awarded by God to some devoted watchmen to coordinate and control. He sees himself in this position and that

is why every attempt at rubbishing the Nigerian image is rebuffed. It is on this mission to right the wrongs in Nigeria that the rhetor passed judgement on the administrations of Yaradua/Goodluck which he orchestrated.

Sample XV

If Yaradua's was a government of reversal, Jonathan's was a government of denial, wrong statements, actions, and excuses. Nigeria's performance in the last few years has been disappointing, to say the least. I have run short of excuses to give to those who point out where Nigeria's presence or voice had been miserably and disappointingly missing. *NT (229)*

In Sample XV, Obasanjo continues along the same lines of emphasizing his divinity and political pedigree as he tries to manipulate the reader's minds through an authoritative but assumptive role of commenting and passing judgements on others. Yar'adua and Jonathan are negatively compared through negative lexicalisation **a government of reversal** and **a government of denial** to paint a beleaguering picture of both former Presidents as grossly **miserable, disappointingly missing, and voiceless**. This is an indirect semantic technique to emphasise *self* good properties and others' bad ones. The referential strategy used in this sample buttresses previous research on Obasanjo's categorisation of negative others especially on Nigeria's affairs. The creative and persuasive power of this metaphoric description is exploited to cement his assumed position as Nigeria's watchman; one that is duty-bound to speak for and on behalf of Nigeria at all times and it is also in this capacity that he gives admonitions to Nigerians.

Sample XVI

When people feel despondent and somewhat hopeless and in despair about our situation in Nigeria, I always take consolation in three changed situations that I have witnessed in my lifetime. God is a dramatic and great game changer. He has done it before for Nigeria; I trust He will do it again. When the second coup happened in 1966 most Nigerians thought that was the end of the road for Nigeria, and it nearly was, as we stumbled along from 'araba', meaning divide into pogrom and the Civil War. The Abacha era was another hurdle we scaled. But within the space of eight years, my administration transformed Nigeria

from a pariah state into one counted and wooed by almost all countries. *NT* (283)

In sample XVI, the goal is to dissuade readers from focusing on the real issues undermining his credibility by presenting a pretence of equality geared towards an emotive commitment of self as a representative of the people. Still, on the mission as a watchman and the same calling as the biblical Ezekiel, Obasanjo asserts that Nigeria's future is secure if Nigerians retrace their steps and listen to divine guidance which he symbolises. He admonishes that **God is a dramatic and great game changer** and Nigerians should trust Him. He appeals to the socio-cultural and historical values of the people as an invaluable means of persuasion by alluding to historical exemplifications framed as **three changed situations** that are critical to Nigeria; **the second coup in 1966, the Civil War, and the Abacha era** to illustrate emotional rather than logical categories. This short historical anecdote serves to appeal to the reader's patriotism, reinforce a moral point and get the audience to respond emotionally. The emotional appeal helps in boosting his character and credibility, and invariably advances his ethos. With this position, it is easy for Obasanjo to submit that he laid the foundation for a new democratic dispensation and invariably a new Nigeria when he handed over to Alh Musa Yar'adua on 29 May 2007.

4.2 Rhetorical argumentation structure in Olusegun Obasanjo's non-fictional texts

In this section, the structure of Olusegun Obasanjo's rhetorical argumentation in his construction of self as *a revered Owu man* and *a gallant Nigerian Soldier-politician* were analysed. Obasanjo used pseudo-logical fallacies, ethos, and counterpoint as argumentation strategies for clarifying and modifying his position as an authentic Owu man. These are grounded on facts and presumptions phrased in an elliptic evocation and generalised beliefs. The discourse topics are Owu identity, birth date disputation, and parental responsibility. Obasanjo's representation of self as a *gallant Nigerian Soldier-politician* utilised the linguistic processes of us-them narration that was grounded on moral, perceptive, rational, and quasi-logical argumentation. These were manifested by metaphoric descriptions, ethos, analogies, cause and effect, definition, and exemplifications in presenting the credibility of the discourse world to establish, affirm and vindicate self.

4.2.1 Representation of *self* as a revered Owu man

The focus here is on how the rhetor presented *self* as a thoroughbred Owu man through rhetorical arguments by disproving stories or any misinformation about his family and birth credentials.

4.2.1.1 Owu identity

The sacking of Owu Ipole and the displacement of the Owus in Yorubaland between 1820 and 1826 triggered the imputed identification of all Owu descendants. The once-mighty Owus were said to have committed a sacrilege by invading Ife, believed to be the ancestral home of all Yoruba. It pitted them against other Yoruba and they are given negative inscriptions. Although these events had faded into anachronism, it is believed that the tale inspired Obasanjo's thorough portrayal of the Owus in *ELM*. This is an attempt to revalidate the history of the Owus in general and his personal identity in particular.

Sample XVII

My maternal grandmother hailed from Apaara's Compound in Owu, Abeokuta. It can now be seen that on both my father's and mother's sides, I am a thoroughbred Owu, and I'm proud of my progenitors and identity. *ELM* (27)

In Sample XVII, Obasanjo presented the credibility and felicity of the discourse world by using the assertive syntactic construction **It can now be seen** as a metaphorical expression presupposing that what is unseen is now seen. Thus, he appeals to readers' subconscious minds as regards the controversies on his birth credentials. The referent of the pronoun *it* in the expression is a sign vehicle activating in the readers, a mediated reality suggesting that previous assertion on his paternity is unfounded and should, therefore, be discarded. The only authentic information has been recorded here for posterity. In this sample, the rhetor presented self as a thoroughbred Owu man, disproving stories or any misinformation about his family and birth credentials by claiming that **I am a thoroughbred Owu man**.

In a related development, there had been an outrageous controversy in the Nigerian media as regards the true progeny of Olusegun Obasanjo. The storyline was orchestrated such that there was an insinuation that Obasanjo is the product of an affair between a Yoruba woman (Ashabi) and a supposed supposed Obi of Onitsha (1962-

1970). To counter some of these narratives, Obasanjo begins his account with a description of his family as the next sample below explains one of the reasons why the rhetor claimed that;

Sample XVIII

If others can hide their identity, I cannot, because my two parents were from Owu in Abeokuta. And you cannot be more Yoruba than an Owu man as the first child and daughter of Oduduwa- the father of the Yorubas was the mother of all Owus. What is more, I bear Owu tribal marks. And better or worse still, I speak English with my Owu dialect. I have always maintained and felt proud of my Owuness, Yorubanness, and Nigerianness in that order. They are all part of my cherished identity.

In Sample XVIII above, the subordinate clause **if others can hide their identity** has a mixture of real and unreal conditionals that suggests that it is possible for others to hide their identity. Obasanjo used this to ascertain his claim that he is a true son of Owu. This affirms the rhetor's belief that, his ancestry progeny is not in doubt and at the same time cast aspersions on other people's opinion of him. The phrasal construction **what is more** takes this position further by emphasising Olusegun Obasanjo's Owu tribal marks which are signs of cultural affinities in African societies. The argument is multisided and takes alternative views into account by delving into historical facts and personal convictions to establish a common ground with the readers. The argument structure of this standpoint is presented in Fig. 4.1.

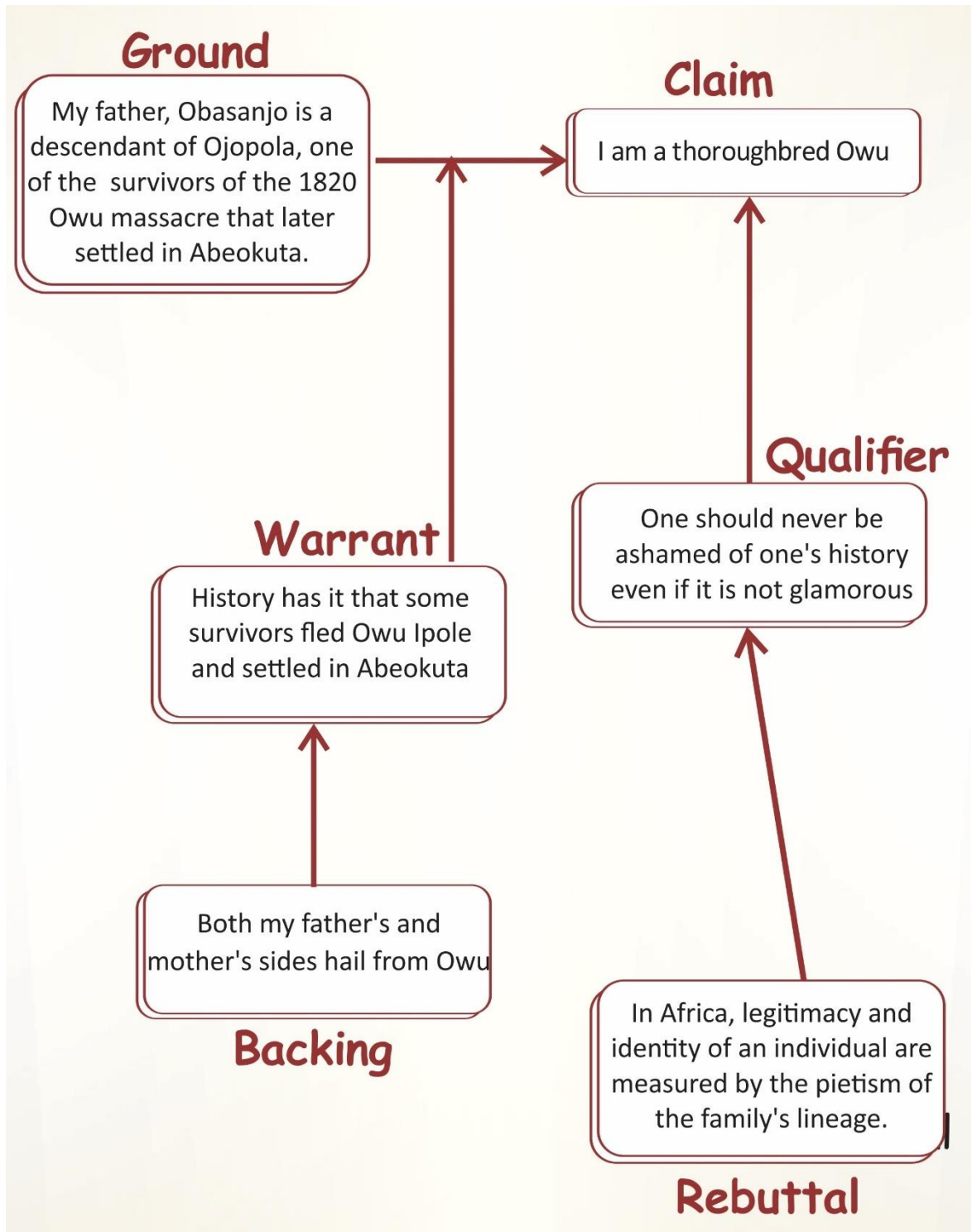


Figure 4.1: Representation of Obasanjo’s argument as an authentic Owu man

In Fig 4.1 above, the ground for the claim is the presentation of a family tree detailing the lineage of Obasanjo's great grandfather, Ojopola (nicknamed Olusomi) who fled Owu Ipole during the 1820 Owu massacre and later settled down in Abeokuta. The warrant is explicitly stated and cannot be easily disputed as it is built on a historical document (1821 Owu Massacre) assumed to be shared by the reader and successfully activated a discourse world. The backing of the warrant **both my father and mother hail from Owu** supports the claim that Obasanjo is an authentic Owu man by every standard. The rhetor employs analogically deductive reasoning within the specific argumentation line to counter any possible refutation of his claim by stressing that his ancestors are pious and legitimate placing *self* as a suitable leader in all climes. The retelling of Owu history is employed here as a social and political weapon to revalidate the Owu identity or position in Yorubaland. The claim here established the rhetor as one who is qualified to watch over others and guide them on the right path any time any day. Also, the desire to situate the writer as a man of candour with no blemishes whatsoever guides the reader to the conception of the issues surrounding the controversies about his age.

4.2.1.2 Birthdate disputation

Obasanjo is conscious of his cultural environment and to be seen as a man of integrity, there should be no trace of fraud in his life. So, there is the need to clarify the issues surrounding his birthday.

SAMPLE XIX

But whatever it was, I was happily born on Ifo Market Day, not before 1934 and not later than 1937. I gave such a wide gap to take account of twists, errors, and miscalculations. Since I do not know my exact date of birth, and mindful of the foregoing account, I have arbitrarily chosen March 5, 1937, as my official birthday.
ELM (4)

In Sample XIX, the emotive description of the circumstances surrounding Obasanjo's birth date signifies its portentousness to his credibility. The subordinating construction **but whatever it was** is used to limit allegiance and to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints and so, withhold complete commitment to his arbitrarily chosen official birthday. The self-mention pronoun **I** in combination with the verbal processes **was happily born, gave such a wide gap, have arbitrarily chosen** foreground his

authoritative voice as opposed to alternative positions, and attribute more argumentative qualities to his linguistic behaviour. It is implausibly precise statistics that is used to give an appearance of truth or validity of the claim that his declared birthday was precise. Hence, the internal co-text becomes problematic and that necessitates the need for the choice of the boosters **happily** and **arbitrarily** qualifying the arguments as well as solidifying his credibility. The leap of the argument from the ground to the claim is presented in Fig 4.2.

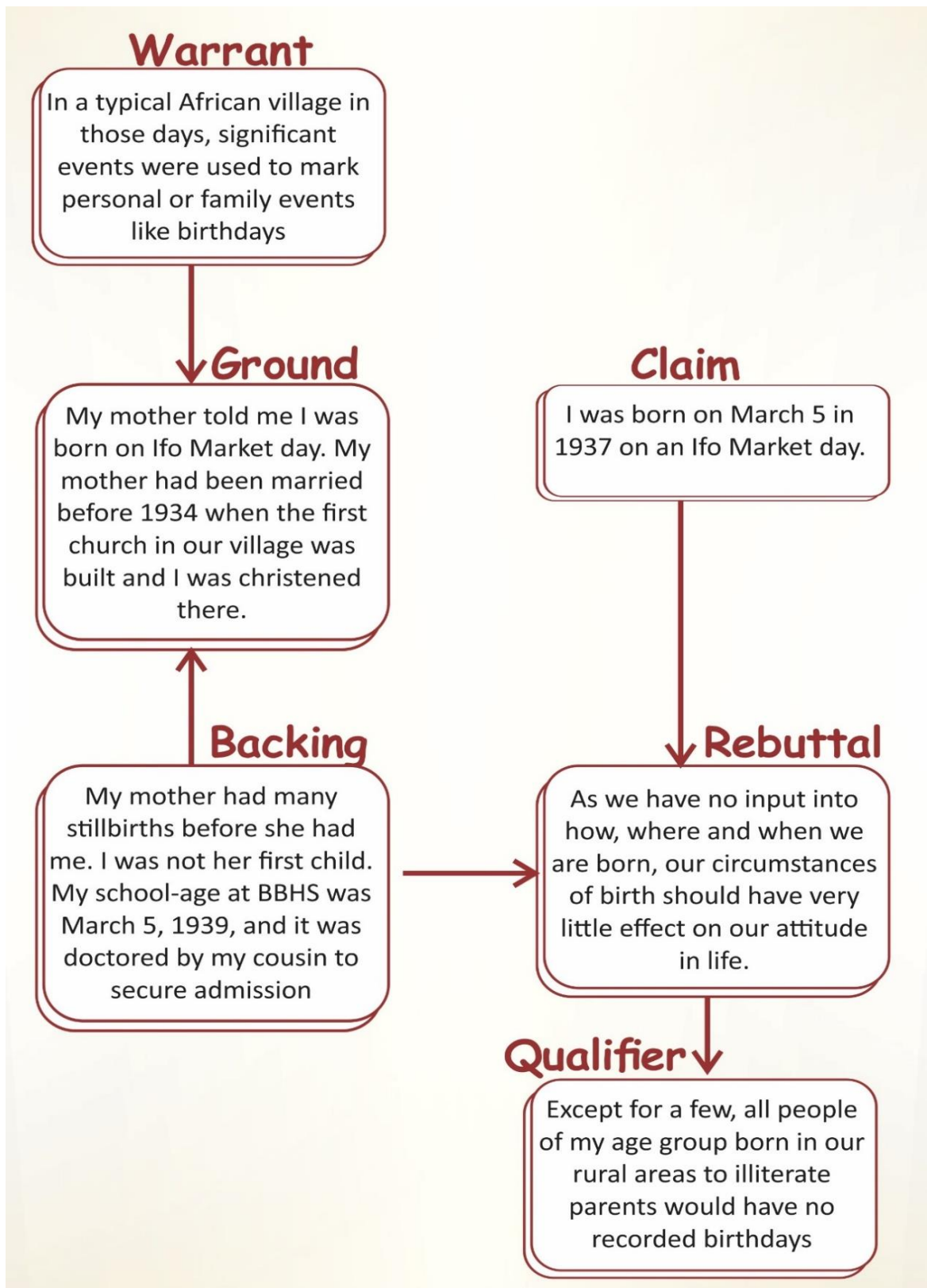


Figure 4.2: Representation of Obasanjo's argument on his birthdate controversy

In his effort to establish that his reported date of birth was, after all, accurate, he intermingles facts and opinions on the ground that his mother had confirmed that he was born on an Ifo Market Day, at a time when the first church in the village had just been built. Ordinarily, this is a fallacious appeal to authority but the enthymematic argument deployed here uses *topoi* of history to validate the ground, by stressing a shared belief in most African villages of those days, when significant events were used to mark personal or family events like birthdays. This gives strength to the claim. He gave a backing by stating that he was not his mother's first child and that his declared age in BBHS was probably doctored by his cousin to secure an admission. The use of the discourse marker *Except for a few* in introducing the qualifier is to avoid hasty generalisation indicating the strength of the leap from the grounds to the claim.

In anticipation of a possible rebuttal, Obasanjo modifies his position by stating that **since** no one could influence the circumstances of birth, he advised that it should have very little effect on an individual's attitude in life. An anecdote was used to narrate his attempts to get the real truth about his age through visiting Indian astrologers. The analysis above supports previous researches on self-representation bordering on the influence of culture and family in shaping a person's identity. It is this conviction that motivated the rhetor to declare, in the next sample, the influence of his upbringing on his latter social and political achievements.

4.2.1.3 Parental responsibility

Despite the introduction of Western education, the consensus in most African traditional settings is that it is the parents that have the sole responsibility of instilling moral and societal discipline in the children. Societal values, beliefs, and attitudes are inculcated in the children to categorise them as a good fit for society. Parents get the bigger part of the blame when children exhibit traits that are detrimental to societal beliefs. Obasanjo is proud of his moral upbringing as an Owu man who was brought up in a very dignified society.

SAMPLE XX

And if, as most scientists would want us to believe, intelligence owes much to genes than to the environment, I have much to thank God and my parents for. Ibogun Olaogun with its environs was my incubator. I was nurtured, baked, and saturated with its rurality. I imbibed its values, virtues, and ethics. It made me essentially what I am- a man without guile or pretensions. *ELM (46)*

The claim in Sample XX is radically elliptic and evokes a common agreement with the readers that Obasanjo's rural background has much to do with his philosophy of life. This presupposes that, as a dignified Owu man, the values and virtues of Ibogun Olaogun are ingrained in his blood and therefore qualified him in all ramifications to be an Owu man. This position is to sway readers' opinion on the outrageous controversies and questions on Olusegun Obasanjo's rectitude, especially concerning his immediate family, wherein accusations and counter-accusations, abuse, public insults from wives and children labelling the former President as a liar, manipulator, a bully, and all sorts of names. Also, in an attempt to refute many of the accusations and in cognizance of the place of children in African traditional family setting, Obasanjo expressly construct *self* as a successful father with an ingrained Owu ancestral civility by asserting that;

SAMPLE XXI

I must say that, to a great extent, I have tried to inculcate into my children most of what I received from my parents and our community in terms of upbringing. I had one handicap: my frequent movement as a military officer from one posting to another lent some physical instability to the orderly development of the family. *ELM (30)*

In most African societies, communal history and placement are indispensable to one's definition of who one is. An individual's identity is defined by that person's connection to the wider society and that person's ancestry. It is not surprising therefore that Obasanjo glorified the cultural and societal values of the Owus as one worthy of being bequeathed to the younger generation in Sample XXI. It is a communal task that is cherished not only in Owu or Nigeria alone but in Africa generally; a task, which the writer has been able to exert **to a great extent** on his children. Thus, the inability of the children not to inculcate some of these golden traits should not be blamed on a

father **whose military assignment deterred him from performing this role fully.** The discourse fragment **to a great extent** is a rationalization strategy admitting the fact that there are some reservations in his role as a father. It limits the claim and placed the rhetor in a vantage position against his detractors who may want to use the misdemeanors in his family as a tool to undermining his credibility.

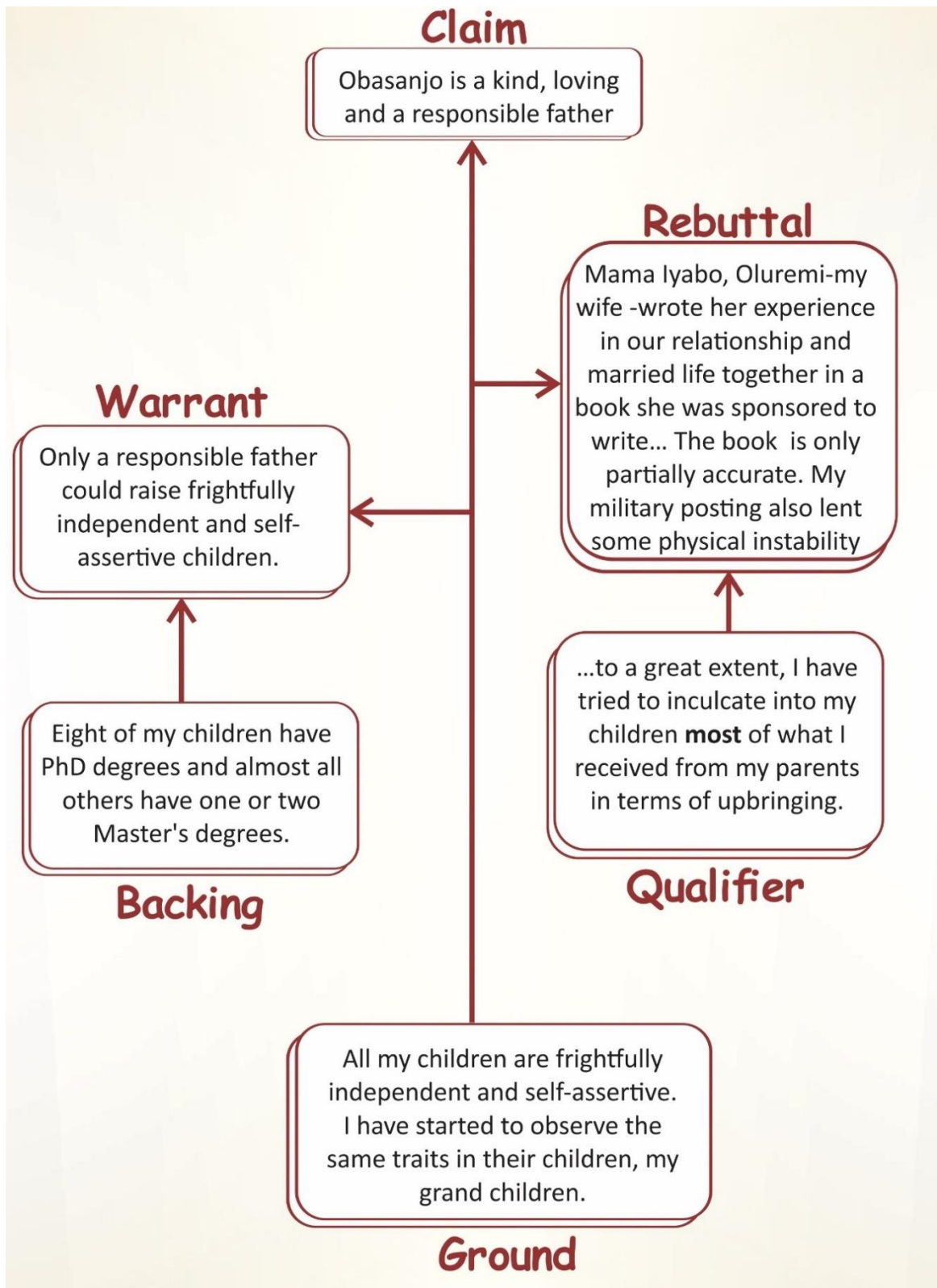


Figure 4.3: Obasanjo's representation of self as a responsible father

The claim in Fig 4.3 is value-laden and is grounded on the conviction that it takes a responsible and loving father to **raise frightfully independent and assertive children** with good and qualitative educational attainment. The warrant, though contentious, satisfies the immediate requirement of the argument by providing a footing for the claim. The backing of the warrant is timely as it uses an exemplification strategy to sell the emotive ideology into the reader's innermost consciousness. Therefore, Mama Iyabo's claims in her book are considered mischievous and may have been sponsored by some unnamed detractors. To qualify this claim, the rhetor used **a great extent, tried,** and **most** to limit the possibility of over-generalising his standpoint. This suggests that dissenting ideas were taken care of.

He uses pseudo-logical fallacy **all my children are frightfully independent and assertive,** ethos; **I have tried to inculcate into my children, most of what I learned from my parents,** and counterpoint; **Mama Iyabo was sponsored to write her book** as argumentation strategies for clarifying and modifying his position as an authentic Owu man. These are grounded on facts and presumptions phrased in an elliptic evocation and generalised beliefs

4.2.2 Representation of self as a gallant Nigerian soldier-politician

The discursive construction of Obasanjo as a distinguished Nigerian soldier cum politician is an interesting argumentative discussion. The analysis here covers Obasanjo's narration of major events especially those that are very controversial during his military and civilian administrations in Nigeria. The representation is entwined in several discursal issues such as his civil war heroics and a host of others.

4.2.2.1 The Third Marine Commando Division

The 1967-70 Nigerian Civil War left an indelible scar on the country's social and political development. Obasanjo places *self* as the anointed one who engineered the formula that won the war in Nigeria's favour much to the chagrin of the Biafrans. His appointment as the Commander of the 3rd Marine Commando Division in late 1969 was presented as a singular act that savaged the impending doom that would have threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria. He painted a gloomy picture of the beleaguered Federal troops that were being plagued by desertion, despondency, and a general lack of will to fight before he was appointed to correct the situation. He,

thereby, downplayed the relevance of two other officers that were appointed alongside him as GOC of the Nigerian Army during that time.

SAMPLE XXII

In fact, some highly placed Nigerians started to suggest that the Federal Government should sue for peace at all costs to prevent the disaster that would befall it and its supporters if rebel victory seemed imminent. This was the position when I was appointed the General Officer Commanding of the 3rd Marine Commando Division of the Nigerian Army. *MC (78)*

Using Sample XXII above, it is possible to state that the discourse world the rhetor wants to enact is that (ground) because of the impending danger of losing to the rebels, Obasanjo was appointed as the GOC of the 3rd Marine Commando Division of the Nigerian Army to save the situation (the fact), therefore, the possibility of the rebels winning the war was averted and the apprehension of some highly-placed Nigerians doused (the claim) since the appointment was timely and the best decision ever (the warrant). The structure of this argument is presented in Fig 4.4.

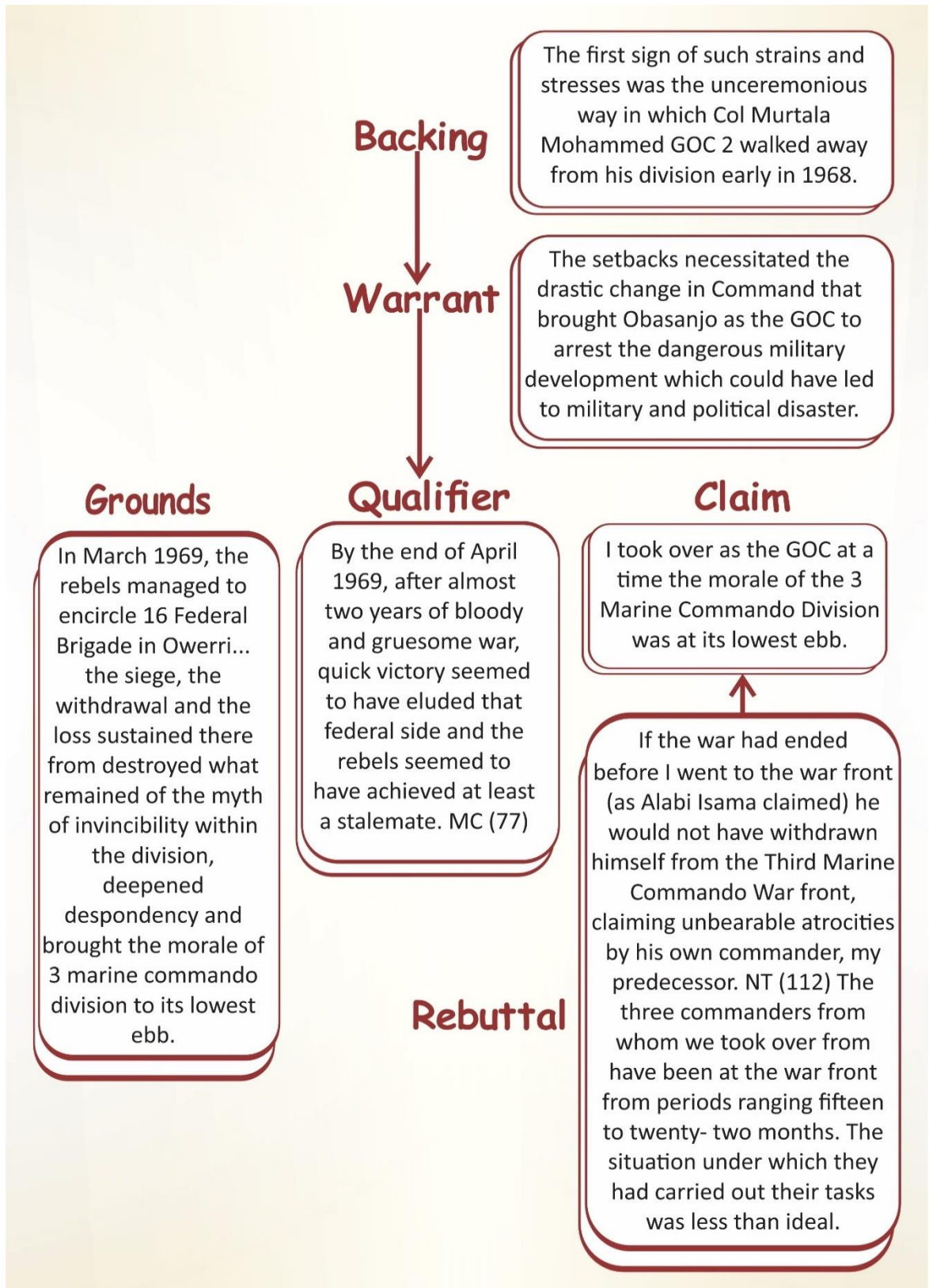


Figure 4.4: Obasanjo’s argument on his Civil War heroics

The claim that Obasanjo wants to establish here is that his appointment was desirable and it was timely suggesting that failure to appoint him at that moment would have spelled doom for the entire Nigerian Federation. This standpoint is rooted in a war account of the offensive launched against the Federal troop in March 1969 by the rebels as they managed to encircle the 16 Federal Brigade in Owerri which resulted in heavy casualties on the Nigerian side. The siege culminated in a widespread call for a ceasefire among the Nigerian elites but as the warrant states, the appointment of Obasanjo stemmed the tide. The warrant is logical but implausible because several measures and reorganisations of the troops were taken to arrest the situation, not just the appointment of Obasanjo as the GOC as he wants readers to believe.

To support this assertion, he uses exemplification by citing the case of Col. Murtala Mohammed leaving his duty post as a kind of protest or sign of fatigue influenced by the low morale of the troops at the time. Also, during the Civil War, several claims and counterclaims surrounded Obasanjo's first military action and questioned his leadership credentials as it was claimed that his military tactic was very poor leading to the loss of thousands of Federal Troops. To counter some of these narratives, the rhetor explained that this was due to the fatigue plaguing the Division at the time he took over.

Sample XXIII

Soldiers then came to believe that the only way to secure any rest at all was to become a casualty; hence they set out to inflict injuries on themselves so that they could be evacuated to Port Harcourt, Calabar, or Lagos. They had so perfected this unmilitary act that it seriously affected the operational capability of the Division. Within the first month, I had almost as many casualties as I had reinforcements and more than fifty percent of my casualties were self-inflicted *MC (112)*.

The embedded phrasal construction **the only way to secure any rest at all** actively objectified the assertion that the troops were desperate for rest at the time he took over. The rhetor limits the effects of the disaster by directing the cause of the loss to the troop and some senior officers that promoted unmilitary actions among the troops. Not oblivious of the effect of such on his image, the rhetor slyly indicts his predecessor as the one who tolerated indiscipline among the troops and therefore should be blamed for the loss. This also gives strength to his earlier position that his tactic won the war

and not the other way around as being alleged. The argument is constructed such that, every indication pointed at the problems inherited not those created.

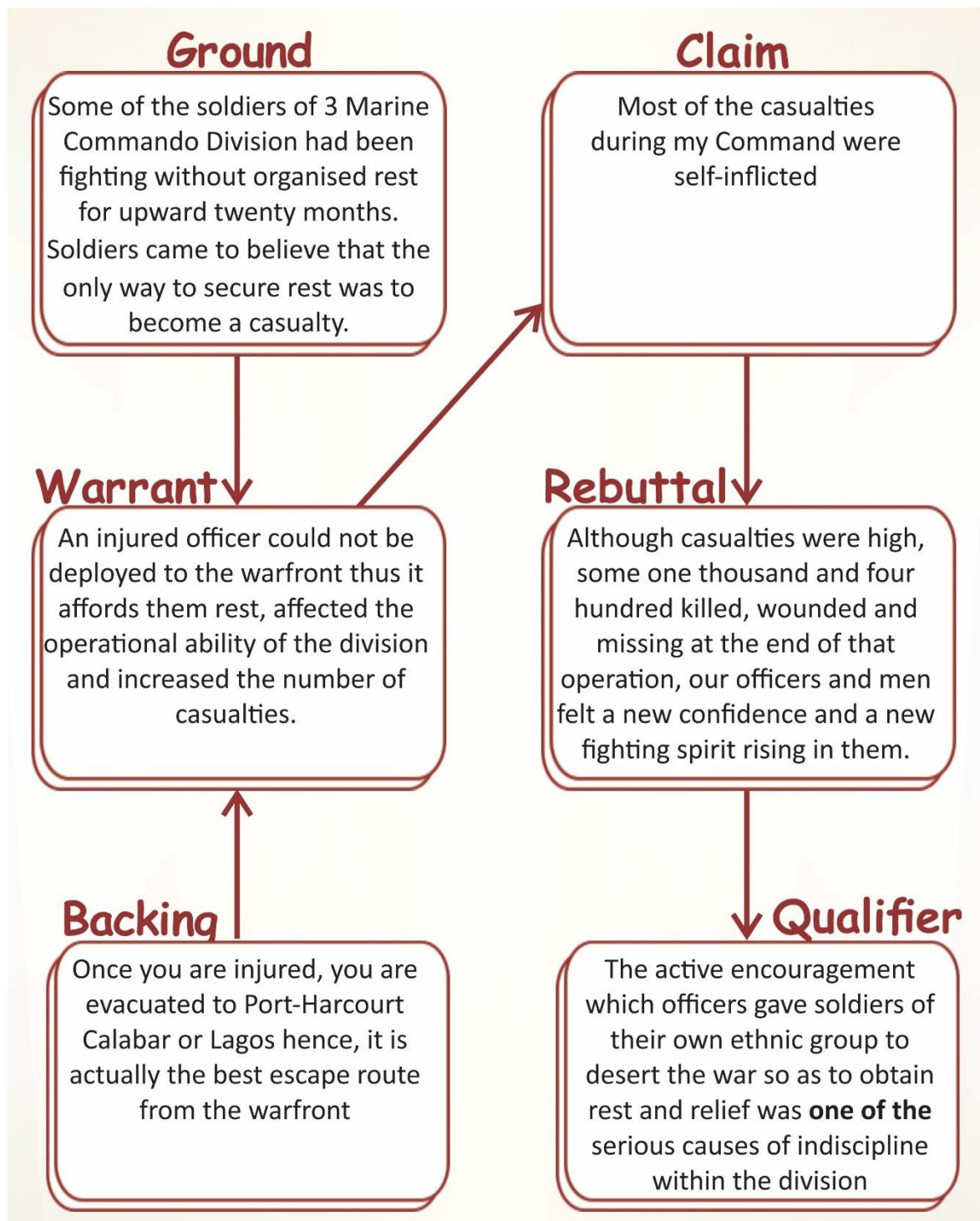


Figure 4.5: Obasanjo's argument on the casualties recorded on his first Civil War assignment

To redeem his image and direct the blame on others, the rhetor asserts that the casualties recorded during his first military operation were self-inflicted and according to him, this is partly because as at the time he took over, the soldiers were already showing signs of fatigue. This position also gives credence to his earlier claim that the morale of soldiers was at its lowest ebb. Therefore, those who accused Obasanjo of poor judgement by making soldiers' remuneration his priority has been defeated emotionally. The ground for the claim appeals to the emotion of the readers just as the warrant can also be inferred to mean that as a responsible and caring commander, deploying injured officers to the war front would be suicidal. Qualifying this claim is deemed unnecessary as those who might want to raise an eyebrow would be regarded as inconsiderate and wicked. Despite this, the rhetor points accusing fingers at senior officers who dilated this criminal act for personal and ethnic interest and smartly limits allegiance to the claim using the verbal process **was one of the** to nominalise the categories of problems inherited. The standpoint needs to be rebutted to answer those who still feel otherwise regarding this claim. That is why the rhetor deployed the concessional adverbial unit **although** to claim that the loss of the men was a morale booster rather than killing the spirit of the fighting officers and men and this was why the final offensive that ended the war became successful.

SAMPLE XXIV

I returned to Port Harcourt, issued my orders, moved 12 Brigade through 14 Brigade position, and launched the final offensive at 6 am on 7 January 1970 at Obokwe, with 31 Battalion of 12 Brigade leading. *MC (154)*

The preponderance of the pronominal **I** and the possessive determiner **my** in Sample XXIV above remotely activate a sense of individuality and commitment of the rhetor to his standpoint suggesting that the tactic that won the war was his design with no external input whatsoever. Others are backgrounded such that they only obeyed and had no input in the general direction of the final offensive that won the war even

though it is obvious that winning a war was never a singular act. They may have contributed to the success. The argument structure in Fig. 4.6 solidifies this standpoint.

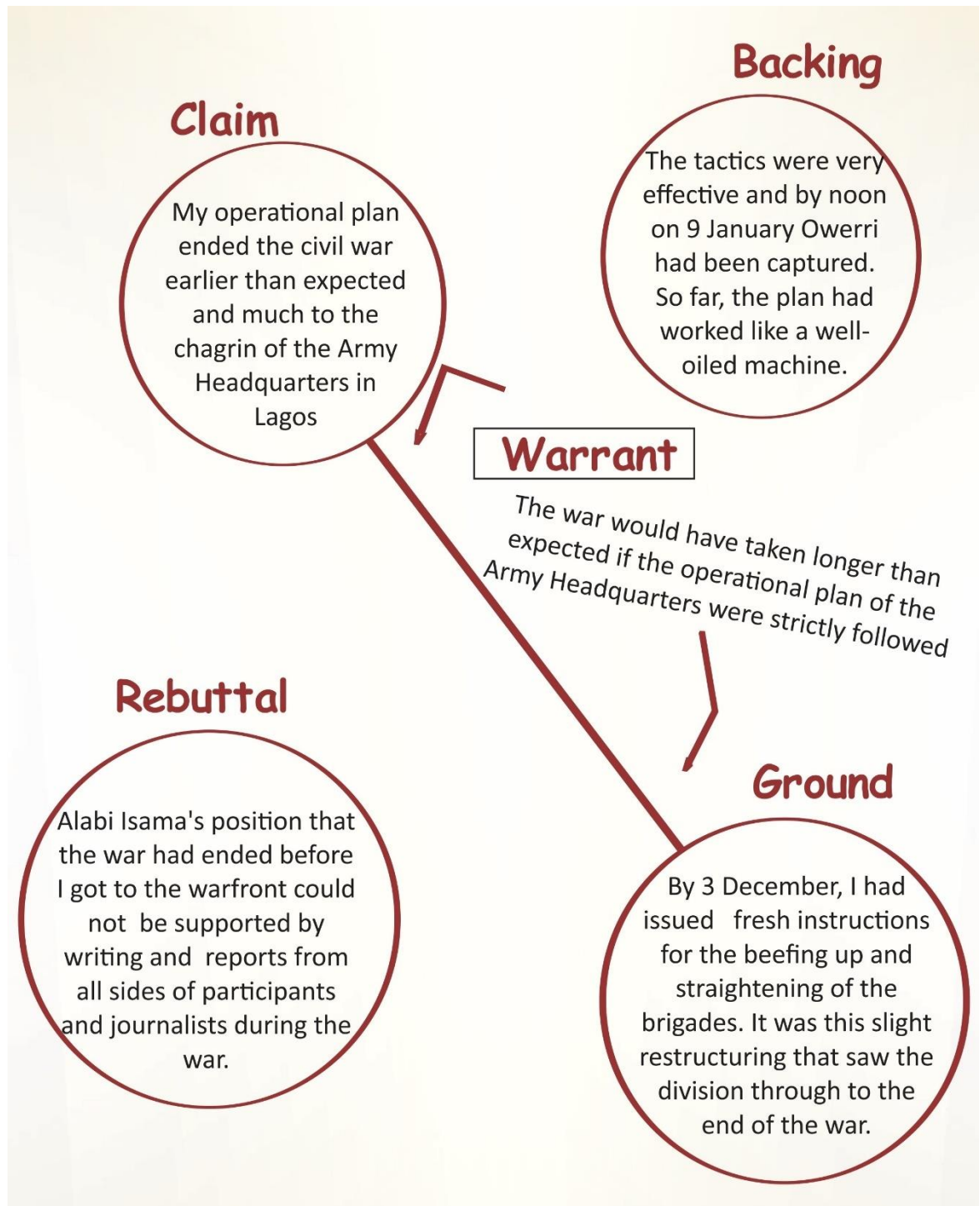


Figure 4.6: Obasanjo's argument on the final offensive that won the Civil War for Nigeria

Obasanjo asserts here that the technique that won the war for the Federal side was not fully supported by the Army Headquarters in Lagos even though it was later applauded. This was grounded on various reorganisation and reorientation exercises embarked upon by his Division when he took over. It is built on the assumption that if all those measures were not taken, it would have spell doom for the Federal side. The assertion is that it was the 3 Marine Commando Division that devised the plan that defeated Biafra thereby downplaying the efforts of the two other Divisions. The backing of the claim rests on the fact that the final offensive that ended the war was successful as it led to the capture of strategic flashpoints which drew the attention of the Army Headquarters. The Army Headquarters praised the General Officer Commanding (Obasanjo) through a commendation letter. The claim by Alabi Isama that Obasanjo's account of the war was inappropriate and self-serving was rebutted in the new autobiographical account as the rhetor attacked *ad baculum* claiming that Isama's story could not be substantiated by any active participant or journalist during the war. This is used to validate Obasanjo's position that Isama published his account to rubbish Obasanjo's personality or for financial gratification. The discourse world constructed by the rhetor through this narration is the representation of *self* as the real victor of the war. With this, the argument presented on this topic needs further evidence or facts to be believable.

4.2.2.2 The 1975 bloodless coup

Obasanjo was one of the major beneficiaries of the coup that toppled Gowon's administration and the controversies continue as regards his involvement in the alleged bloodless coup. His insistence that he had no hand in the coup is still subjected to series of arguments among Nigerian elites.

SAMPLE XXV

I would not know how the coup that toppled Gowon was planned in detail, but as it unfolded, the key dramatis personae became obvious and they were Abdullahi Mohammed (Abdul), Sheu Musa Yar'adua, Joseph Garba, and Ibrahim Taiwo. MW 1 (240)

In his bid to avoid committing self, Obasanjo skirts around the truth through his prevaricated linguistic construction **I would not know... in detail** to tactically veil his honest intent rather than a direct admittance. He did this smartly by not making an unqualified statement because claiming outright ignorance would undermine his integrity as there are pointed pieces of evidence of his foreknowledge. He, however, commits the fallacy of equivocation because the contradiction between the two expressions highlighted above has a tone of deception instead of just a simple misunderstanding. He mentioned the names of those who are involved and exonerated *self* from all rumours of involvement in the coup. The argument is that;

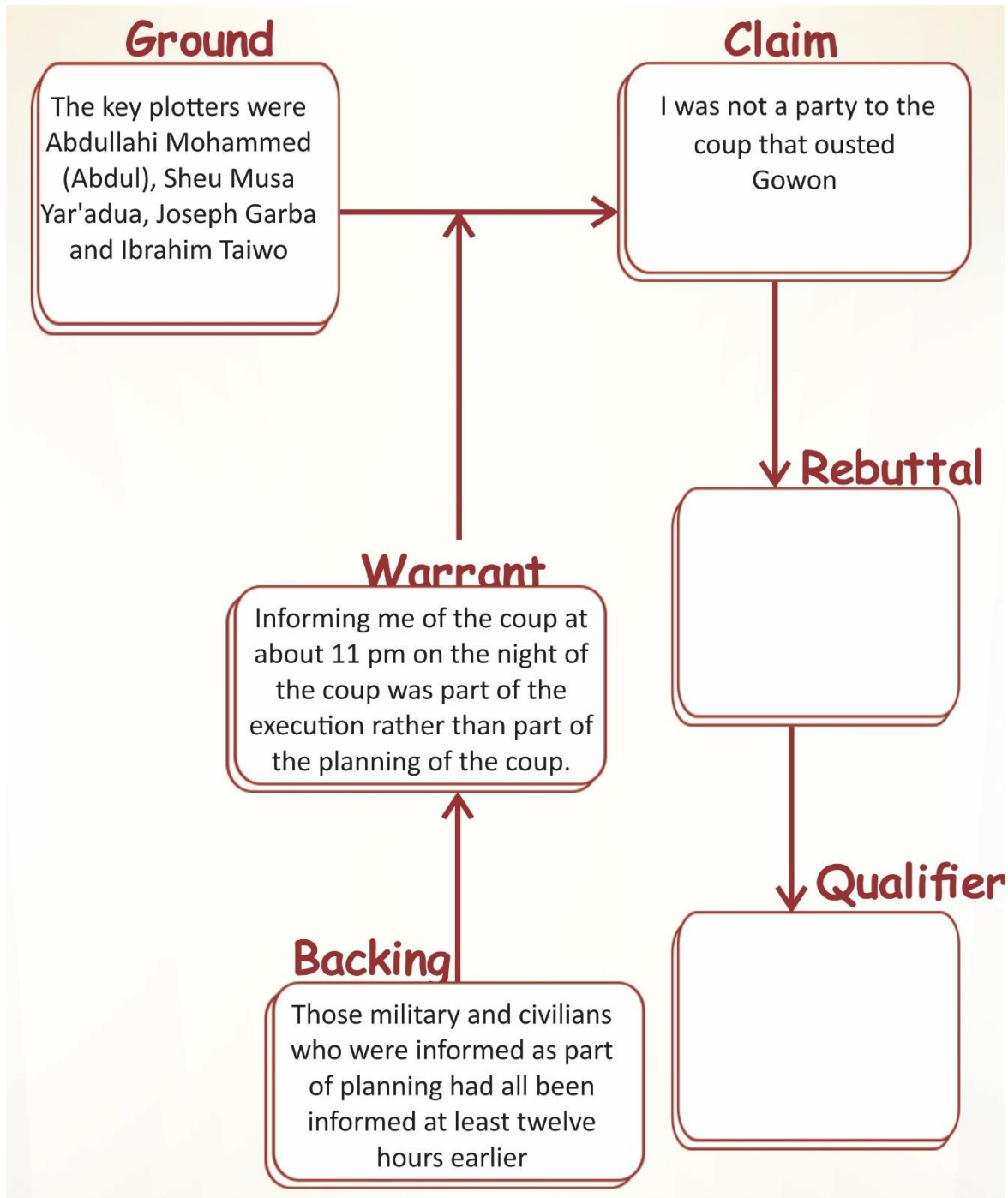


Figure 4.7: Obasanjo’s argument on the 1975 bloodless coup that ousted Gowon

The key plotters of the coup were obvious and their names were mentioned and the link between this and the claim is that the information of the coup he got at the

eleventh hour was only part of the execution rather than planning because those that were involved in the planning have been briefed earlier and carried along in all the stages of the coup. His position requires neither further backing nor anticipated rebuttal because it is a factual claim that can be proven judging from all the available shreds of evidence provided. Thus, the argument is straightforward and will need a strong evidence to counter this narrative.

4.2.2.3 Proscription of the NEWBREED Magazine in 1978

The Nigerian press has witnessed different forms of repression, discriminatory decrees, persecution, and rejection under various military governments since independence in 1960. Historically, the Obasanjo government (1976-79) introduced a decree that forbade press freedom. As enforcement of this directive, the government banned the Magazine NEWBREED in June 1978 and the action was greeted with widespread condemnations by the Nigerian press. Obasanjo attempts to absolve *self* or his administration of any blames by stating that;

Sample XXVI

Contrary to ill-informed and mischievous peddlers of rumours, it was alleged that Chris Okolie's Newbreed was seized and banned for criticising my administration. Personally, I enjoy criticism because it keeps me on my toes. I also enjoy discussion because it whets my appetite and sharpens my intellect. I believe that Chris Okolie had lunch with me at Dodan Barracks once at the instance of Yar'adua, I cannot remember if he cut any impression on me or if I thought that he had much to offer other than his association and connection which he tried to capitalise on and the threat and 'influence' of his ownership of a press *NMW* (44).

Obasanjo attempts to justify this action of his government using definition as a strategy when he defines *self* as someone who **enjoys criticism...** This is to prepare the ground for the claim that he is about to make. The claim presupposes that Okolie's NEWBREED was banned by his administration except that it was for a different purpose and the allegation affords the rhetor to publicise his personal qualities as someone who likes criticism thereby rubbishing others' opinion of him.

Through this technique, Okolie is described as an opportunist who **tried to capitalise on his association with Yar'adua and the threat and 'influence' of his ownership of a press.** Others are categorised as **ill-informed** and **rumour peddlers** while the self is presumably branded a rational or proactive emotional intelligent character. Even

though it contradicts measures of emotional intelligence as supported by most psychologists that those who can handle criticisms are people that do not minimise the problem/issue at hand, do not rationalise, shift blame, sidestep the issue, make excuses when criticised, and do not justify themselves. The representation of *self* by the rhetor on this particular issue betrays these stated measures of Emotional Quotient. The argument expanded this position further by exploring cause and effect through an argument construction insisting that;

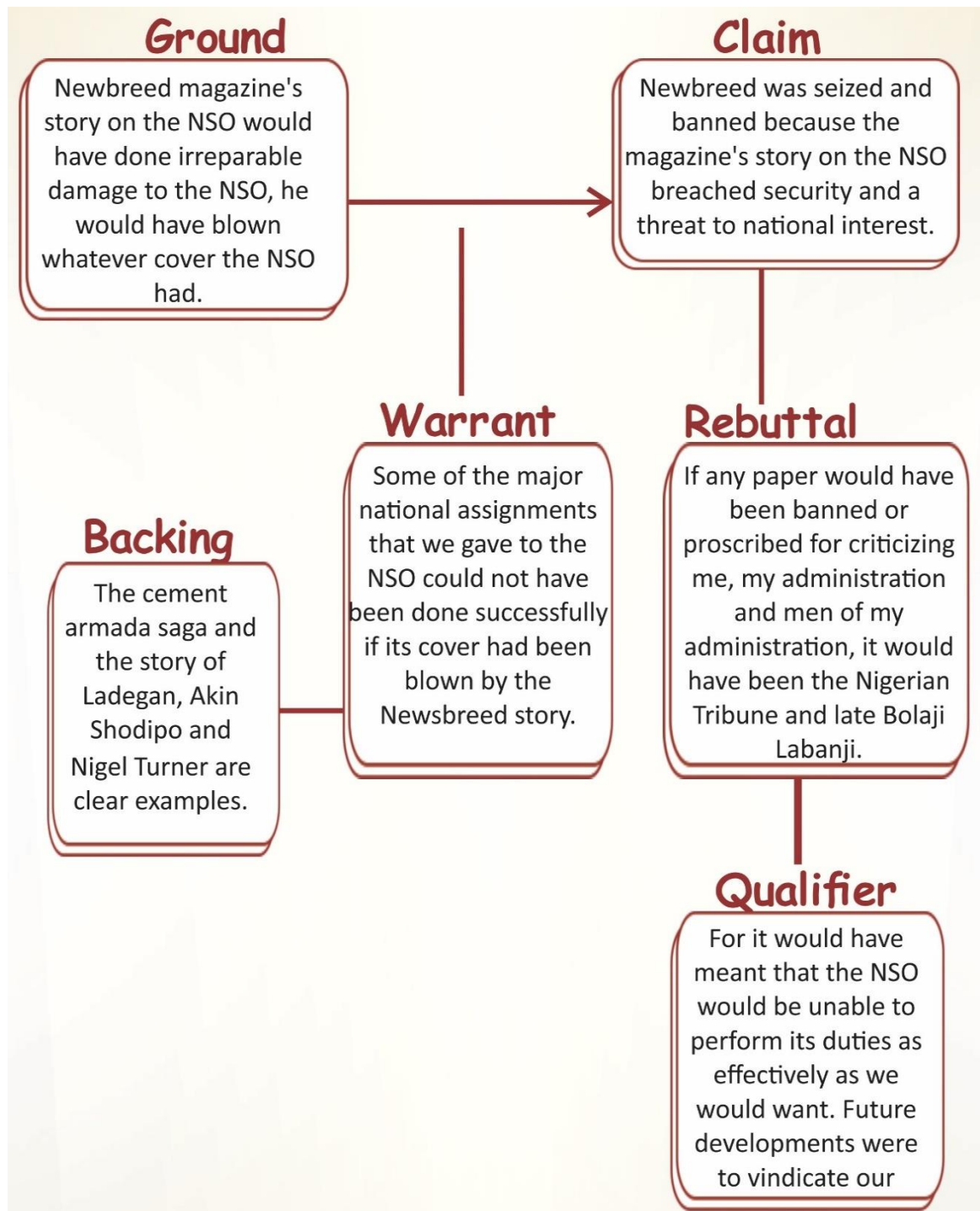


Figure 4.8: Obasanjo's argument on the 1978 Proscription of the NEWBREED Magazine

Portraying *self* as a selfless leader, Obasanjo avows that NEWBREED was not banned for criticising him or his administration rather; it was to protect the national interest on the ground that the Magazine's publication on the newly reformed NSO would have threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria. Exemplification was used to state the warrant that some cases that were pivotal to economic development were handled successfully by the NSO something that would have been jeopardised if NEWBREED went ahead with its publication. Citing the vicious critic of his administration, Bolaji Labanji, the rhetor appeals to the reader's reasoning that if Labanji was not attacked despite his provocative criticism of Obasanjo's regime, it would be illogical for anyone to have accused his administration over NEWBREED's. With this, the rhetor manages to appeal to the subconscious minds of the readers that if NEWBREED was not banned, it would have affected the security architecture of the country. Invariably, NEWBREED was banned because (cause) its action threatened military formation and (effect) would have had serious negative implication on security. Using the reasoning provided, it can be concluded that the argument is plausible.

4.2.2.4 The 1978 Land Use Decree

The 1978 Land Use Decree promulgated by the Obasanjo administration was one that affected the generality of Nigerians more than anything else. The Decree abolished the existing structures of freeholding and transferred all lands in each State of the Federation to the Government of that State. The decree neglects the representatives of the communities who pride themselves on being the legitimate owners of lands in their respective communities. This then created more problems than it was meant to address, as this crucial portion of the act triggered conflicts between the government and the populace, combined with a horrible misuse of power by many state governors. Obasanjo asserts that;

SAMPLE XXVII

As a government, we kept a totally open mind on the issue of land and land reforms. But we observed that impeded access to the land created problems of maladministration of land and population in Nigeria. The implication for agricultural development and food production is obvious. The land use decree was meant to make land readily available to those who need it to protect and preserve their tenure. It was meant to discourage land hoarding and land speculation. *NMW (106)*

The attempt here is to dissuade public sentiment against the decree by making an argument from definition; **The land use decree was meant to make land readily available to those who need it to protect and preserve their tenure.** However, his choice of the verbal process **was meant** suggests that the standpoint has a mixture of unsure hypothesis; it is as though the rhetor makes an admittance of the fact that the decree was not very successful hence the need to clarify the purpose for its design and whose blame it is for not being successful.

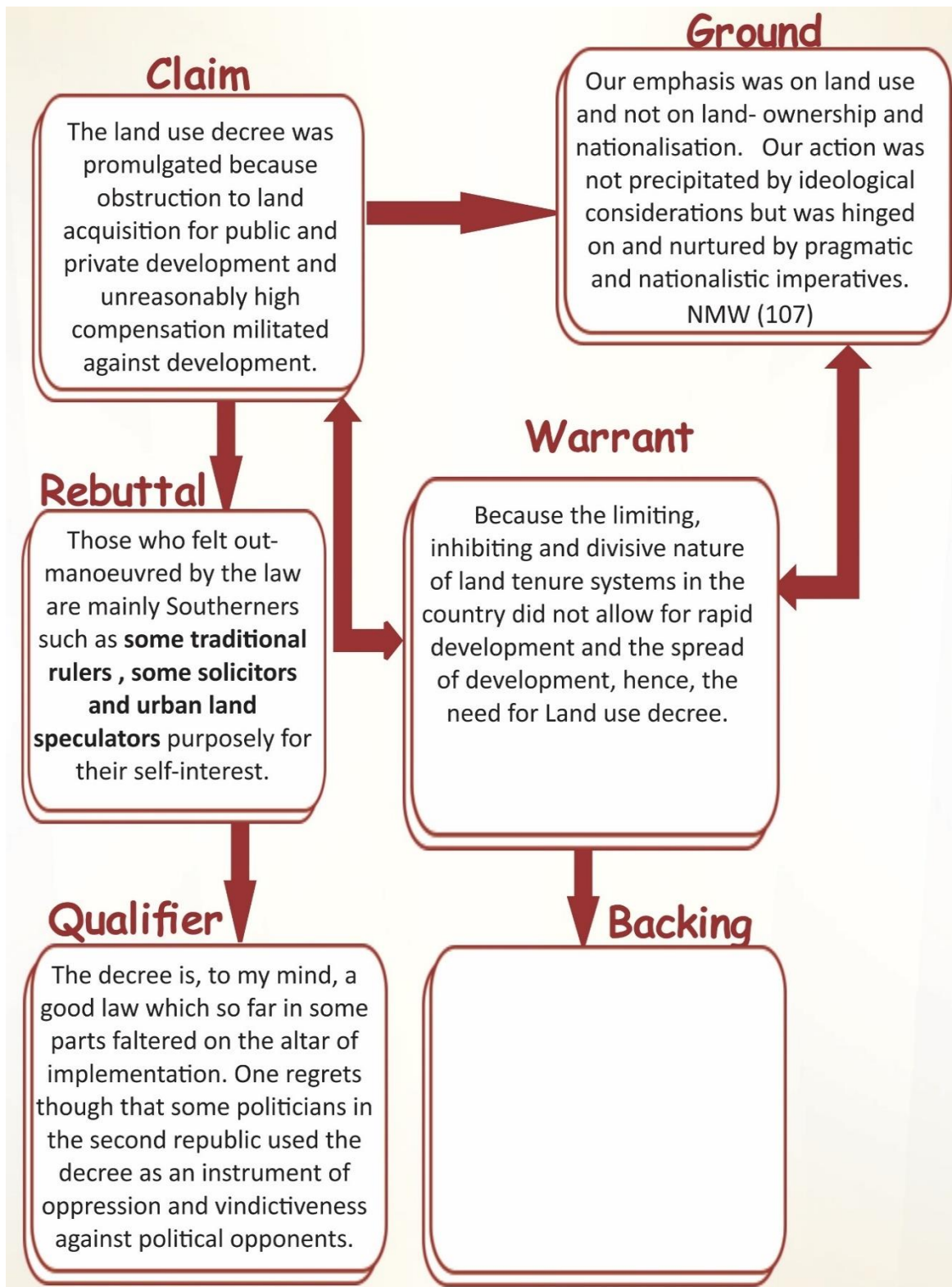


Figure 4.9: Obasanjo's argument on the 1978 Land Use Decree

The claim is to justify the promulgation of the Land Use Act by insisting that it was made with the sole aim of defeating the problems associated with land use for public and private development. It is grounded on a well-known phenomenon of the land tenure system prevailing in Nigeria at the time. The intention of making the decree is emphasised **Our emphasis was on land use and not on land-ownership and nationalisation** and this is made manifest using a common persuasive technique of including counter-arguments **our action and our emphasis was... and not...** and providing rebuttals. The counter-arguments and his subsequent rebuttals are used to strengthen the position that the land use decree was for the public good.

The pretence in airing both sides of the argument while representing the debate in selected terms is pseudo-logical. The warrant is explicitly stated and that gives strength to the claim. The warrant is assumed to be shared by both participants in the argument and therefore requires no backing. The warrant gives an impression that the abuse of the Act by Obasanjo's successive administrators should not be blamed on the promulgation of the decree but rather on individuals who are crying wolf and they are those that have been benefiting from the existing exploitative status quo like some traditional rulers, solicitors, and urban land speculators. He qualifies the claim by stating that the decree achieved its purpose but for those public officials that abused it. The ad-hominem attacks in this narrative weakened Obasanjo's argument and therefore requires further evidence to be believable.

4.2.2.5 The 1978 *Ali Must Go* riot

The 1978 *Ali Must Go* riot is a historically significant episode in Nigeria's education history. An increment in the cost of a meal in Nigerian universities at that time pitted the students under the umbrella of the National Union of Nigeria Students (NUNS) against the military government headed by General Olusegun Obasanjo. It was a bloody confrontation that led to loss of lives, wanton destruction of public properties, and disruption of academic and social activities across the country. Though the students accused the then Minister of Education Colonel Ahmadu Ali of being the brain behind the increment, emerging reports later proved otherwise.

SAMPLE XXVIII

In 1977, when we asked students to pay more for their meals, I had expected that they would riot **as usual** because they were paying seventy-five kobo a day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We felt we could not continue to sustain such a heavy subsidy in the long run (NMW:112).

Olusegun Obasanjo defends this decision through the manipulation of an inclusive-**we** to express group participation in the decision to increase the cost of a meal because the action was negative but the expectation of the act was personalised **I had expected that they would riot** to show commitment to the action and the phrase **as usual** as used in the context is an analogous distraction that has a red-herring effect. It is meant to confuse the readers. The analogy is faulty in the sense that, the riot would seem a natural occurrence not necessitated by the increase rather, an egoistic urge characteristic of Nigerian students right from independence. The argument structure of this claim is constructed in Fig.4.10

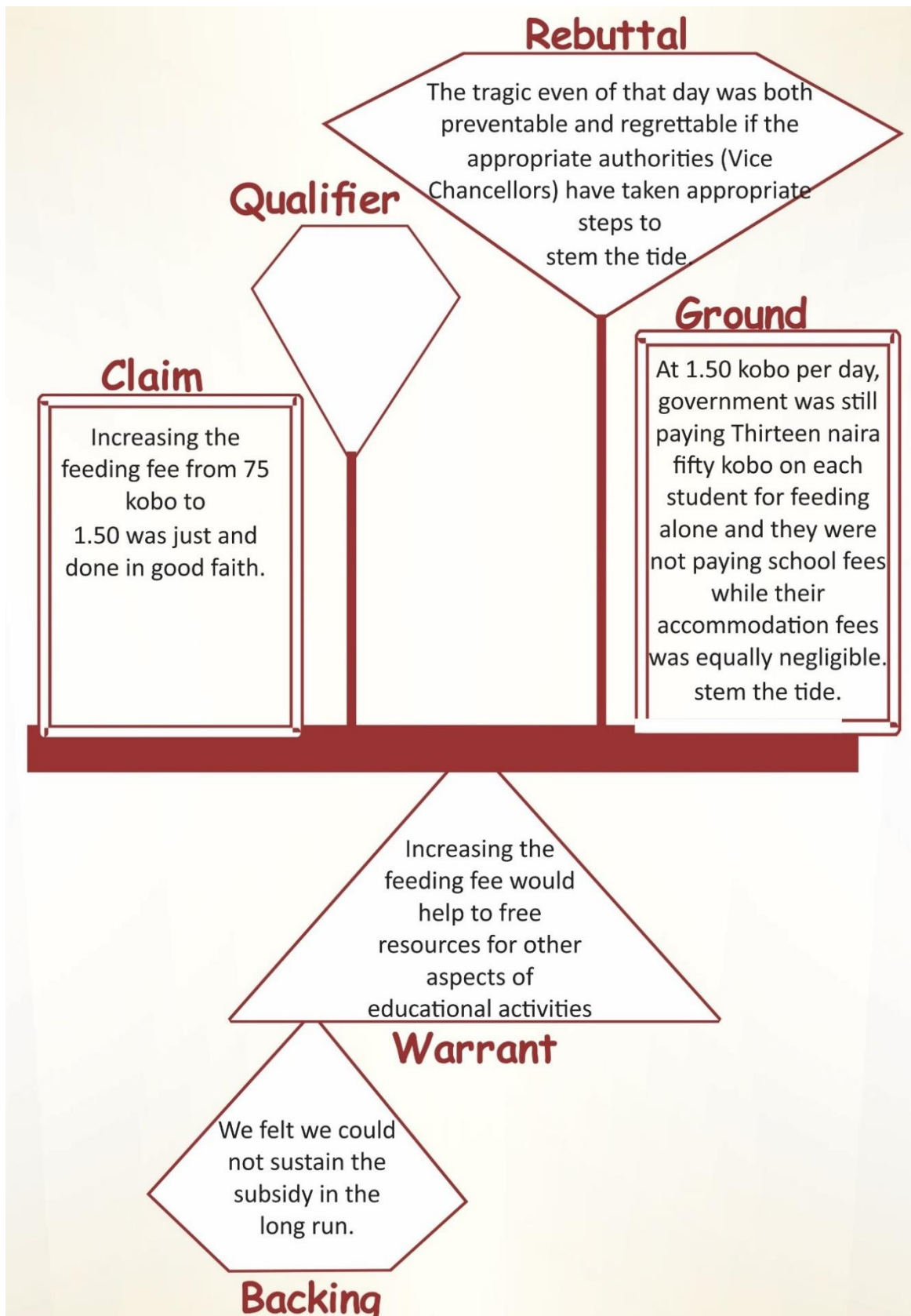


Figure 4.10: Obasanjo's argument on 1978 *Ali Must Go* riot

The rhetor utilises analogically-deductive reasoning **at 1.50 kobo per day, the government was still paying thirteen naira fifty kobo on each student on feeding alone** to persuasively psyche the readers that the increment was to pave way for other developmental projects and that it is felt not to be too much for the students to bear since the government still subsidises their feeding and accommodation. The connection between the warrant and the standpoint is rooted in idolised patriotism expected of a committed Nigerian which presupposes that without increasing the feeding fee, national development would be crippled because **we felt we could not sustain the subsidy in the long run**. Therefore, those who opposed the increment did not prioritise Nigeria's interest and that **the appropriate authorities** that failed to prevent the riots were unpatriotic. Regardless of the deleterious aftermath of his decision and in a bid to register his preference for Nigeria's development, Obasanjo shifts the blame to the Vice-Chancellors by rebutting that **the tragic event of that day was both preventable and regrettable if they had taken appropriate steps to stem the tide**. The deployment of false cause fallacy in this argument structure negatively affected its plausibility.

4.2.2.6 The 1979 Presidential elections

The infamous 1979 Presidential election in Nigeria was full of intrigues, controversies, and heightened tension. The resulting court case generated a lot of furore and birthed the much-touted *2/3 of nineteen* when the Supreme Court ruled Per Curiam (A joint decision of the court with the authorship of the decision not indicated) in favour of Shagari and adopted the *Obita Dictum* principle discounting the judgement as to its binding judicial precedent. Olusegun Obasanjo blames Obafemi Awolowo and his party; the UPN for the media condemnations that greeted the Supreme Court's verdict especially in the Western Region.

SAMPLE XXIX

To objective and discerning observers, the cry of the UPN that they had been rigged by my administration out of the election is either a great cover-up or grandly political mischief aimed at discrediting my administration and the administration that succeeded us...

In Sample XXIX above, the prepositional phrase **to objective and discerning observers** is a loaded diction meant to sway opinions before making the claim. He

uses this to castigate the critics of the 1979 elections as subjective and undiscerning. The accusation **that they had been rigged by my administration out of the election** is produced to prove a conclusion different from the one under dispute because the fact is that Obafemi Awolowo, the man at the center of the disputation, never alleged rigging in the election. His petition was purely on point of law by challenging the constitutionality of Shagari's declaration as to the winner of the election despite, allegedly, not meeting the constitutional criteria. Obasanjo's attempt at discrediting some of the facts of the case by classifying it as a form of mischief against his government is rather an implication of his repulsion of the UPN and a question on his veracity judgement. He structured the argument such that the reality constructed to project the infallibility of the election became repulsive

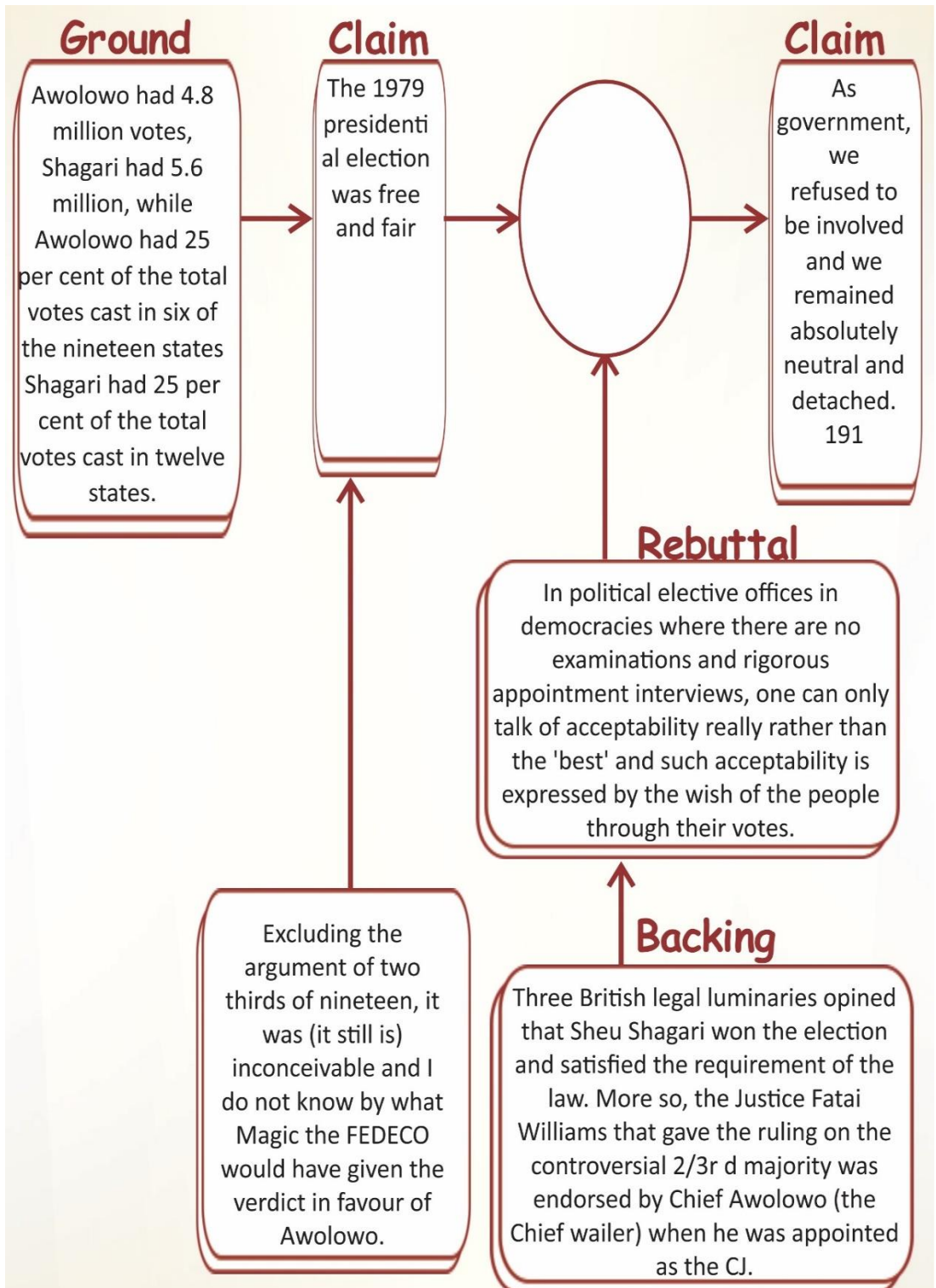


Figure 4.11: Obasanjo’s argument on the 1979 Presidential elections imbroglio

Obasanjo's emphasis in this argument is on the moral obligation that he holds towards the public, which is giving them a free and fair election devoid of favouritism or manipulation. He, therefore, constructs *self* as a credible and trusted leader whose main goal is to hand over to the people's choice. In this case, Obasanjo is counteracting a general assumption: 1979 election is dubious, fraudulent, and does not conform to the constitutional provisions, through evidence derived from one example **Awolowo had 4.8 million votes while Shagari had 5.6 million** to submit that **it was (it still is) inconceivable and I do not know by what Magic the FEDECO would have given the verdict in favour of Awolowo.** This is an instance of argumentation based on the structure of reality. For instance; Awolowo could not have won the election considering the margin between him and the winner encourages the reader to apply their (positive) view of scoring the highest votes in an election to that of a winner.

With this construction, he expertly contrasts the prayers of Awolowo before the court on the argument of two-thirds of nineteen states with his subjective interpretation of the election results. To this end, Obasanjo depicts them (the UPN) as those who rely on false assumptions and arrive at the wrong conclusions. The points that can be deduced from Obasanjo's reference to the opinions of the three British legal luminaries and his self-styled definition of political relevance are that he relies on arguments from example, authority, and analogy to effectively psyche the readers and as such falsely presumes that agreement is established. The presupposition is that personal reasons are offered as justifications for the standpoint, rather than as evidence for his beliefs. Thus, he expertly escapes the burden of proof by presenting his claim as enjoying agreement even when it is not.

4.2.2.7 Presidential election of 2007

The 2007 general elections in Nigeria is one that received the widest condemnations not only in Nigeria but across the globe. Notable foreign observers like The European Union (EU), International Republican Institute (IRI), and National Democratic Institute (NDI) released damaging reports about the election. Olusegun Obasanjo's pre and post elections utterances also did more harm than good as he boastfully made some damning statements that were capable of stoking violence in the polity. In an apparent desire to absolve the *self* of all blames regarding the obvious flaws in the conduct of the election, the former president asserts that;

SAMPLE XXX

All the resources INEC requested for the elections were given. The 2007 elections showed a little deviation from the pattern of 1999 and 2003 and the subsequent 2011 election *PPA (218)*.

In Sample XXX, the unqualified nominal category, **all the resources... were given** is used to strengthen what follows it and it is an important part of the argument. Obasanjo is rejecting the argument that the 2007 Presidential election was the worst. Yet, the argument has a peculiar twist in the sense that the intention is to establish a point through trickery. Comparing the 2007 elections with some others does not tend to answer the real question regarding the credibility of the standpoint. Below is a breakdown of the argument:

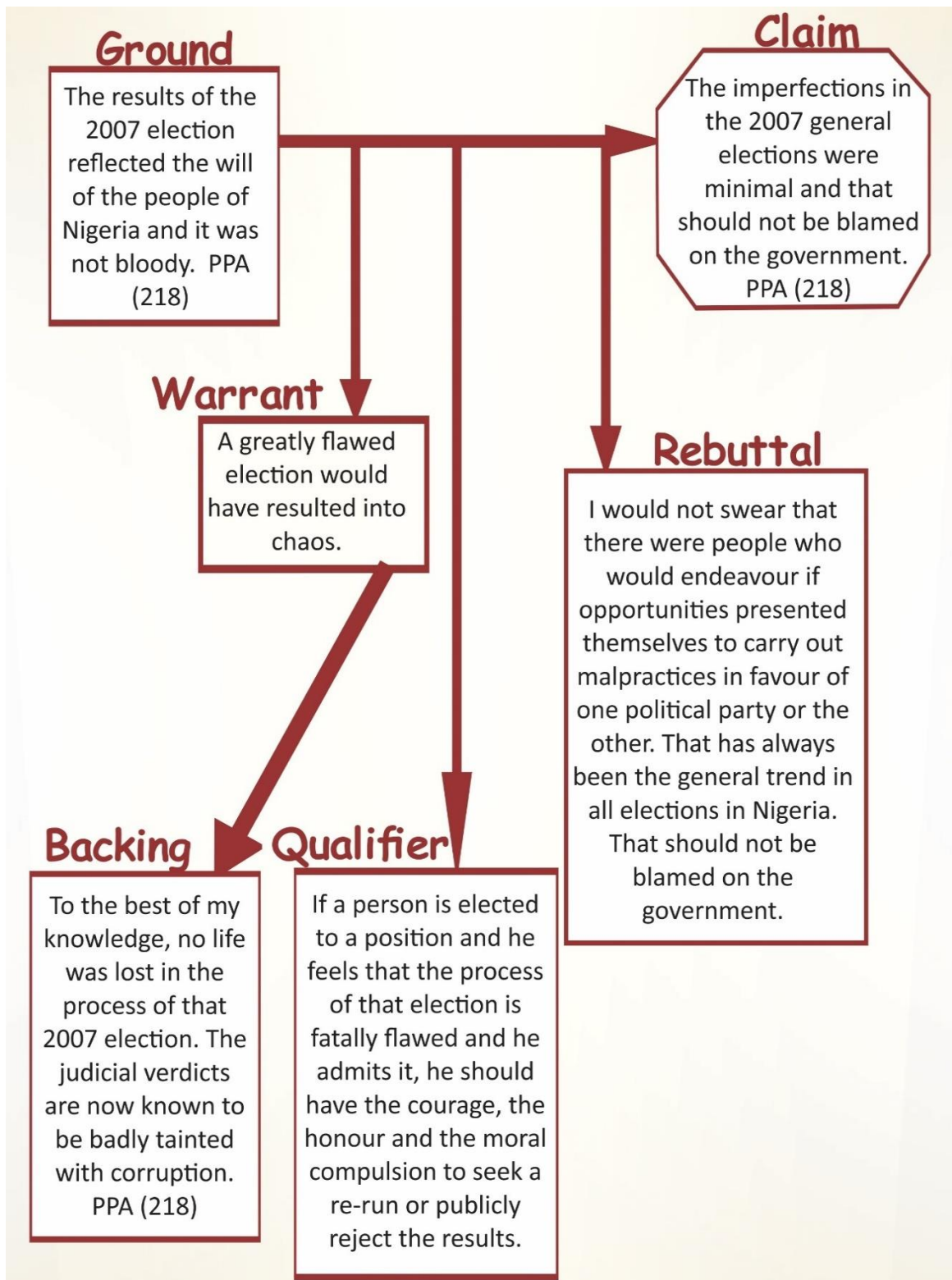


Figure 4.12: Obasanjo's argument on the 2007 Presidential election

The rhetor states a factual claim that the imperfections of the 2007 general elections were minimal and requests that the blame should not be on the government. The ground for this claim is that though, the elections might not be perfect, they reflected the will of the Nigerian people. He employs argumentation, by comparison, to mitigate the castigation of the 2007 general elections as the worst by juxtaposing it with previous elections especially the bloody 2011 elections that came after it. The implicit connection between the claim and the ground is that, if the 2007 elections were greatly flawed as being alleged, it would have been bloody like the 2011 elections. The warrant, even though contestable, bears a high degree of probability and gives strength to the claim. The inferable deduction is that the lack of violent protests against the 2007 elections would mean acceptance by the people. The warrant is supported with another counter-restrictive statement **to the best of my knowledge** to accommodate opposing views and validate the standpoint that the imperfections of the 2007 elections were minimal.

The backing could not be easily refuted and it is rhetorically necessary to invite readers into the world of the rhetor. Obasanjo's tone of objectivity in rebutting pre-emptive views against his account is veiled in a familial but deceptive Nigerian social phenomenon of swearing or taking an oath to prove innocence on sensitive issues. This is an affirmation of his cultural credentials and an attestation to his knowledge of most Nigerians' deep-seated social behaviour. He acknowledges that there are actually electoral manipulators but refrains from giving specific names. This strategic vagueness aims to solidify his position that election malpractice is ingrained in the Nigerian democratic process from independence.

The qualifier offered by the rhetor is couched in the public acknowledgement of the fraud in the 2007 election by the major beneficiary, Umar Musa Yar'adua. Through the use of the conditional clausal construction, **if a person is elected to a position and he feels that the process of that election is fatally flawed and he admits it**, the rhetor implicitly tagged Yar'adua's admittance as double standard and self-serving. He probes Yar'adua's sincerity of purpose for only admitting the flaws but lacks **the courage, the honour, and the moral compulsion to seek a re-run or publicly reject the results**. He employs this as rhetorical tools with which he appeals to the readers' subconscious knowledge and creates in them a mental picture of a writer that has the credentials, experience, and know-how to be believable and to be worthy of attention.

However, an appeal to common practice is fallacious. The fact, that the 2007 elections showed a little deviation from the pattern of 1999, 2003, and the 2011 elections do not make it correct, moral, justified, or reasonable. Also, an election need not be bloody to be greatly fraudulent. Insisting that the bloodless nature of the election indicates minimal imperfections is a smokescreen technique meant to weave the topic, lead readers astray, and divert attention from the main issue under contention. Therefore, the premise, though relevant, is not sufficient and does not give the needed degree of support for the conclusion. This undermines the credibility of the argument and exposes Obasanjo's democratic understandings. A further twist that weakens this line of argument is the fact that Obasanjo's party (PDP) won all the elections referenced. 2003, the election was conducted under his watch and he was directly or indirectly involved in the 1999 and 2011 elections. Therefore, it is asophistical argument that, though it may baffle, it rarely convinces. Readers may not be able to pick the error in the argument despite its persuasive nature.

4.2.2.8 Military action in Odi

Nigerians woke to the news on the early morning of 20th November 1999 that Odi, a heavily inhabited average-sized village at the mouth of the Nun River in Bayelsa State, had been destroyed by Nigerian soldiers. Numerous news sites stated that shells were hurled into the town, fighter jets bombed residences and yam barns, and that by the end of the brawl, most of the houses in the community had been razed and many people had been murdered, including the town's king. Human rights organizations estimate the death toll at 2,500 or more. The Federal Government of Nigeria, led by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, argued, however, that the figure was lower. Regardless of which account is right, the reality remains lives and properties were wrecked. As the head of the newly inaugurated democratic government, Olusegun Obasanjo was at the center of the storm and was blamed for authorising such a dastardly act against his people. The former President defends his position by narrating that;

SAMPLE XXXI

In Odi area, four policemen on legitimate security duties were killed. When the news of the killing of the policemen broke, soldiers were sent on similar security duties and five of them were killed too. I appealed to the Governor to use his local

knowledge to ferret out information to track down some if not all, the killers. He retorted that there was nothing he could do. I then instructed the commander of the military to use **all necessary intelligence** to **investigate** and **arrest** some of the killers of the policemen and the soldiers. *PPA (303)*

In Sample XXXI, the kind of complexity inherent in the narrative argument tends to lead readers astray as it is capable of creating uncertainty and ambiguity. For instance, the agentless passive construction **four policemen on legitimate security duties were killed** (by who) persuasively defined the victims, and strategically anonymised the killers. This strategic silence is a deliberate attempt to construct **the police** as victims and demonise Odi. It would seem that there is no difference between the killers and the Odi people. This presumes that Odi villagers are the killers or an accomplice in the killing. Thus, it lends credence to Obasanjo's ideological disposition that if the killers could not be tracked, Odi should be razed. However, this underlying ideology is rhetorically achieved through the manipulation of specific lexical items **necessary intelligence, investigate** and **arrest** to vague the interpretive implicitness in his line of argument and to shroud his beliefs. To justify the military action in Odi, the argument structure follows this pattern;



Figure 4.13: Obasanjo's argument on Odi Military action

The moral argumentation that Obasanjo advances on this particularly sensitive issue presupposes that the decision to strike Odi is morally correct. He shifts the blame on the governors. It follows that **the attack on Odi Community** is an act that should be appreciated and not condemned on the ground that security operatives should be protected and given confidence, and that it would be unsafe if he had acted otherwise.

To arrive at this conclusion, Obasanjo advances an argument scheme from moral values by rebutting dissenting voices on the pretext that he **believes in human rights just as he believes in citizen's obligation and sanctity of life** to justify the goal that **impunity in taking other people's (in this case soldiers and the police) lives, which only God alone can create must not be condoned**. The warrant; that **it would be unsafe for all if our security operatives were without assurance of protection or protective reaction** does not hold any legal strength as it is based on Obasanjo's convictions and attitudes but, still, difficult to be refuted with any legal evidence. The backing of the claim that after Odi, **there was no repeat of impunity killing of any security officer anywhere in the Niger Delta area** complicates the understanding of the roles and obligations of citizens and the security operatives who are being paid to provide protection. The argument fails persuasively because the rhetor did not give due consideration to the preference of his assumed audience, if he does, his argument on the Odi massacre ought to be explanatory rather than justificatory as we have in this case.

4.2.2.9 Third term issue

At the twilight of Olusegun Obasanjo's second and final term in office, various Nigerian news media were awash with the speculation that the President was concocting a tenure elongation scheme that would allow him to serve one more term after the constitutionally allowed two terms. The rumour was quite disturbing that Nigerians were expecting the President to make a statement to either denounce or affirm the rumour. The former President, however, failed to make his position officially known to the public until after the nullification of the whole constitutional amendment process by the 5th National Assembly. The much-awaited detailed clarification only came out in his autobiographical account published after almost seven years where he explained that;

SAMPLE XXXII

The constitution amendment which contained more than one hundred issues was turned into a one-issue affair – term of office. Whereas the committee considering “term of office” had put up three recommendations for the National Assembly, the chief mischief-maker personalised the issue to refer to my own term of office and called it “the third term”. The so-called third term developed a life of its own. *PPA (89)*

In Sample XXXII, the passivisation process in the first sentence **the constitution amendment... was turned...** obscures the agent of the action and at the same time discloses the intention of the speaker to shift blame on others. This is used to give strength to the claim that the amendment was about **term of office** and not **the third term**. This line of argument was orchestrated such that the whole allegation would seem frivolous and unfounded. Obasanjo defends his position as represented below;

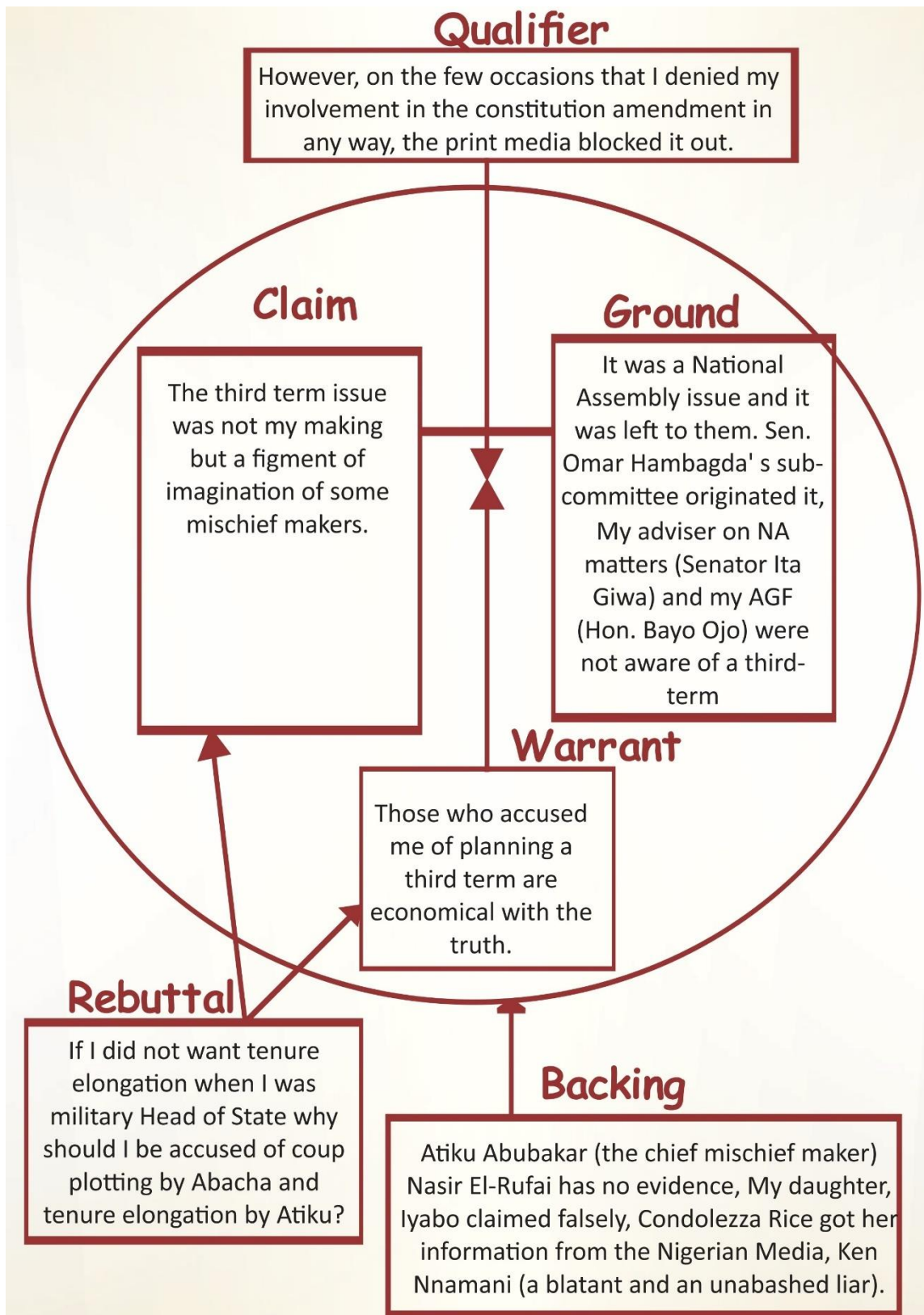


Figure 4.14: Obasanjo's argument on the third term issue

Obasanjo decides to commence his defense of the standpoint with rational argumentation in which the process of the emotional action begins with a direct attack on his detractors. The intention here is to prove that Olusegun Obasanjo did not plan the much-touted tenure elongation termed “the third term” and to establish that Atiku Abubakar, whom he described as **the chief mischief-maker** masterminded it. To ascertain this claim, he asserts that the issue of the constitution review was a National Assembly matter and therefore, decided not to meddle in their affairs. He buttresses this position on the ground that the idea was originated from a sub-committee of the National Assembly chaired by Senator Oman Hambagda and that neither his Liaison Officer with the National Assembly, Senator Florence-Ita Giwa, nor the nation’s Attorney General, Honourable Bayo Ojo was secretly or openly requested to work on a third term agenda. Thus, it would be implausible for anyone to accuse him of planning for a third term. Ordinarily, this is plausible reasoning that is capable of convincing rational minds that accusing the former President of masterminding a third term may not be justified.

However, Obasanjo’s affirmation that; he established a national political conference (that was not sovereign) to deliberate without limitation on the constitution amendment, picked members of the conference to include all groups that needed to be represented, received the report of the conference, and submitted same to the National Assembly without giving readers clues as to whether the report of the conference has anything to do with the third term issue or not betrays his line of argument and shows an intent to deceive and to withhold vital information that could have possibly guides readers in forming an objective opinion. Also, his use of abusive and circumstantial ad hominem attacks in backing the warrant further weakens Obasanjo’s argument and signals elements of desperation and lack of quality. For instance, his description of Atiku Abubakar as the Chief mischief-maker is completely irrelevant to the argument, and poisoning Condolezza Rice’s source of information is an explaining away technique that is logically incorrect and structurally unsound.

The rebuttal offered by the rhetor is in the form of a loaded question that has a strong emotional attachment to the circumstances surrounding the third term controversies. The emotive appeal becomes complacent with his rebutting statement; **If I did not want tenure elongation when I was military Head of State why should I be accused of coup plotting by Abacha and tenure elongation by Atiku?** It draws its

strategic significance from Obasanjo's political antecedents and emotionally compels readers to share in Obasanjo's reasoning that the accusation was rather gratuitous and vindictive. However, the inflammatory nature of this purgation derails the rationality of the argument and the qualifier offered did not help. His position that the print media blocked his attempt to officially rebuff the allegations further exposes the ineffectiveness of the rhetor's rhetorical argumentation strategy.

4.2.2.10. The \$16billion power projects

An unceasing debate that has continued to ravage the polity in Nigeria is the controversies surrounding the awards and execution of the purported US 16 billion dollars power projects during Obasanjo's administration. There had been accusations and counter-accusations as to nature, finance, and the actual funds expended on the various power projects. Most Nigerians ascribed this to be one of the effects of institutional corruption that has continued to threaten Nigeria's corporate existence. At the centre of these controversies is Obasanjo, who awarded the projects and had even been quizzed by successive administrations as regards the nature of what really happened. Obasanjo puts up his defense to denounce the accusations against his government's handling of the power projects by stressing that:

SAMPLE XXXIII

Various figures have banded around ranging from US 4billion to US 16billion. They may all be right or they may all be wrong depending on what anybody takes as expenditure most of which is constant no matter what amount of power is generated, transmitted, or distributed, your figure can be as high as you want to make it.

In this sample, Olusegun Obasanjo's overall goal is unclear. The first sentence presents an argument to justify his position that the \$16billion claim is a fabricated figure. The paradoxical expression **they may all be right or they may all be wrong** however makes it hard to tell what his argument is even intended to establish. This is because he speaks in an unqualified way through the manipulation of epistemic modality **may** and the indefinite pronoun **anybody** that weakens his commitment to the stated claim. This suggests that the rhetor is either confused or unsure of his standpoint or, perhaps, trying to confuse his audience. When the standpoint is strong, it is easy to argue straightforwardly. The appearance of a tangled argument is a sign that the argument is weak. The structure of the argument is presented in a rather unusual way.

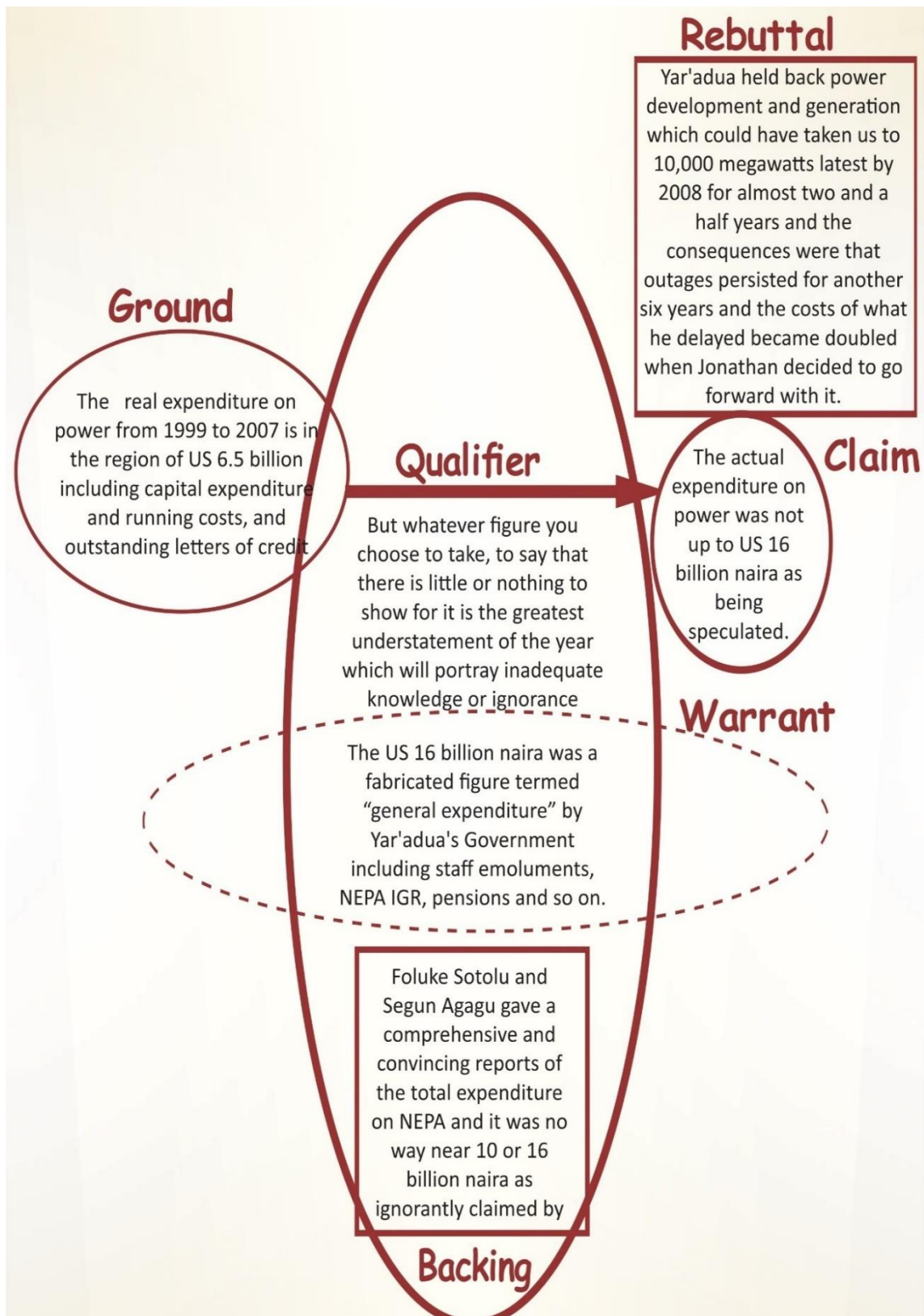


Figure 4.15: Obasanjo' argument on the controversial \$16billion power project

The claim advanced by the rhetor is in form of refutation that **the actual expenditure on power was not up to the US 16 billion naira as being speculated** and it is built on an explanation that the real expenditure on power from 1999 to 2007 is in the region of US 6.5 billion including capital expenditure and running costs, and outstanding letters of credit. This subsumes that money was spent but not up to the amount being alleged. The warrant rests on a shared assumption with the audience that false accusations of this sort are not uncommon in the Nigerian polity. However, a greater threat to this warrant has been predicted by the rhetor and that informed his decision to explicitly infer that Yar'adua's government fabricated the figures and termed it "general expenditure" which according to him included Government staff emoluments, NEPA IGR, pensions, and so on. The warrant needs to be supported by evidence to make it more believable and he makes references to **Foluke Sotolu's and Segun Agagu's comprehensive and convincing reports** and that it was no way near 10 or 16 billion dollars as **ignorantly** claimed by the Yar'adua administration. The contrastive **but** in the qualifier further illustrates Obasanjo's insistence of possible blackmail against his person and failed to explicate his argument in a logically convincing manner. For instance, the qualifier **but whatever it was...** subsumes that Obasanjo is guilty of the accusation only that it has been fabricated by the accusers. The rebuttal offered was an alternative interpretation of the evidence.

4.3 Discussion of findings

This study has demonstrated that rhetorical argument is a text production strategy that can be deployed to discover self-representation constructs enacted in autobiographical texts. With theoretic tools designed to present and interpret the construction of self and others and the discourse world presented by Olusegun Obasanjo through argumentation, the study answered questions about how Obasanjo, as a text producer, invited common ground and readers' participation in the form of shared warrants or beliefs in the controversies surrounding his image. The questions were tied to the ways self-representation strategies were deployed to contexts that ensure argumentative reasonableness. That way, argumentation (im)plausibility was interpreted accordingly.

Obasanjo's arguments on many of the controversial issues about his person were built on factual but emotive premises, unsure hypotheses, and fallacious argumentative appeals that exposed the implausibility in the arguments that were analysed. Besides,

his justification of varying standpoints is value-laden. There are, therefore, discrepancies in his mediated discourse world and the constructed reality.

The findings of the study are consistent with extant studies on the forms of self-representation in autobiographical discourse Adeoti (2003), Ogunyemi, Akindutire, and Adhlakun (2011), Kangira (2013), Graaf (2016), and Marciana (2017) where the submission is that political autobiographical narratives are motivated by mercantilist tendencies and are often dominated by self-admiration, hero worshiping, and self-deification. Also, there is a semblance in the findings in this study on the strategies of self-representation and rhetorical argumentation in political narratives with Hales's (2006) analysis of Moran's *Massacre myth* (1999) and Lilleker's (2014) examination Obama's *Dreams from My Father* (1995) and *The Audacity of Hope* (2006), that because of its construction in/through text, the authorial self in autobiographical discourse is often complex, fragmentary, mutable, and therefore, cannot produce the definitive, authentic, and unbiased autobiographical account.

The study aligns with previous studies on Olusegun Obasanjo's self-constructs that his lexical choices are influenced by the sociocultural background and the belief systems of his native Yoruba people (Awonuga, 2005, Taiwo 2009 Abolaji 2011,) and that his choice of words is often laced with messianic fervour (Tenuche, 2009, Oni, 2013), subjective (Odebunmi and Oni, 2012) and evasive (Odebunmi, 2019). However, while these extant studies used Olusegun Obasanjo's speeches and fragments of his autobiographical narratives to arrive at their conclusions, the present study takes this further by analysing Obasanjo's published autobiographical texts to arrive at the conclusion that the self-representational constructs in Obasanjo's life narratives are not only egoistic, the argumentation processes deployed to justify his standpoints are fraught with linguistic inconsistencies, ad-hominem attacks, loaded diction, and faulty analogies. These errors in reasoning affected the constructed discourse reality, crippled the intended rhetorical effects and, therefore, failed to achieve their persuasive purposes.

4.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter analyses the structure of rhetorical argumentation deployed by Olusegun Obasanjo to represent self in his autobiographical accounts. The analysis has revealed several facts about the application of rhetorical argument as a text production

technique in life writings to represent positive self and negative others in the course of nation-building especially in a country like Nigeria. The DHA principles and Toulmin's model of argument were applied to analyse the underlying argument structure used and the plausibility or otherwise of the mediated discourse world constructed by the rhetor. The analysis has exposed that, like his autobiographical accounts, Olusegun Obasanjo is a controversial figure in Nigerian politics and administration. As a result of this, his use of language generates arguments that bring to the fore, critical questions about the democratic principles that are ingrained in Nigerian political leadership. Obasanjo's representation of self and his arguments on various discourse topics discussed in this thesis revealed that there is a need for a serious political reorientation in Nigeria.

In the next chapter, there is the conclusion and the summary of the usefulness of the findings from this study to the means of actualizing sociopolitical relevance through the application of rhetorical argumentation devices to public rhetorical discourse.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter overview

This chapter summarises the main arguments of the research. This summary is provided by first considering the contributions of the study to the general field of argumentative discourse and identity research as well as to the wider sociopolitical tradition. The chapter also includes the conclusion on key findings of the research and the suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary

This work has examined rhetorical argument as text production processes to discover self-representation strategies enacted in autobiographical texts. The data for the study were sourced from the non-fictional texts written by the former Nigerian President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to document Nigerian sociopolitical history and his roles in the reformation of Nigeria after independence in 1960. The need to seek answers to questions about how Obasanjo, as a text producer, invites common ground and readers' participation in the form of shared warrants or beliefs is one of the guiding questions. The questions are tied to the ways self-representation strategies are deployed to contexts that ensure argumentation reasonableness. That way, argumentation (im)plausibility is interpreted accordingly.

As noted in the introductory section, the selected non-fictional texts are analysed to provide answers to questions about Obasanjo's representation of self and others in his expressive narration of Nigerian sociopolitical history. In doing this, missing links in the body of existing studies that necessitated this research were spelt out. General issues such as Nigerian political language and culture, autobiographies of notable Nigerian leaders as it relates to Nigerian politics, and Obasanjo's life and Nigerian

politics as it specifically concerned the present study were explored. Also, there was a synoptical sketch of the selected texts to prepare the minds towards contextualizing critical issues dealt with in the body of the work.

Additionally, the study was designed to properly contextualize its findings in the field of rhetorical discourse analysis and argumentation. The significance of the study in relation to the analysis of arguments in narrative discourse, the scope of the study as well as the operational definition of terms were elaborated. An elaborate discussion of the conceptual issues, previous studies related to the study, and the theoretical framework adopted, issues such as autobiography/memoir and self-representation, Aristotle's rhetoric, rhetorical argumentation, and fallacies as well as narrative arguments were examined. Also, previous studies on autobiography and rhetoric, self-representation, and Obasanjo's narratives were reviewed. Specifically, the combination of DHA, RDA, and Toulmin's Model in analysing the data was justified. Toulmin's model of argument was used to unearth the line of argument deployed by the author in negotiating identity. Other related sub-topics useful for argumentation discourse were mentioned and their importance highlighted.

Qualitative data analysis was adopted and the data for the study were sourced from Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Command* (1980), *Not My Will* (1990) and the three volumes of *My Watch* (2014). Approaching this study from the perspective of persuasive discourse, the mapping and schematization of the data were clarified. This is to prepare the ground for an easy codification of arguments in a purely narrative discourse. The data analysis presented in the study has exposed revealing facts about how Obasanjo, as a text producer, deployed many self-representation strategies to construct persuasive arguments on several issues that surround his image as Nigeria's divine watchman. The main task in the analysis section was the scrutinization of Olusegun Obasanjo's text production processes that bring into the discourse, the presence of the text consumer in form of mimetic and diegetic relationships. The summary, discussion of findings, conclusion, suggestions for further studies and the contribution of the study to knowledge climaxed the research in the concluding part.

5.2 Findings

The study is premised on examining Olusegun Obasanjo's persuasive arguments as a text production process and his representation of self and others in his non-fictional

texts. In the study, self-representational strategies were analysed and this has led to reaching some conclusions that are significant to the practice of rhetorical discourse analysis on one hand, and, on the other, the deployment of rhetorical arguments in autobiographical discourse. On the question of self-representation constructs deployed in Obasanjo's non-fictional texts; four self-representation constructs were discovered in the accounts. These are Obasanjo as a nationalist, Obasanjo as a watchman, Obasanjo as a revered Owu man, and Obasanjo as a gallant Nigerian soldier-politician. Each exposes the use of language to construct and reconstruct self and others in a way that justifies his actions in and out of office.

Obasanjo's representation of self as a nationalist is wreathed in discourse issues such as consecration of Nigeria's unity, Yoruba leadership debate, Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), and Nigeria's primordial racial distrust. It is discovered in the data analysis that Obasanjo employed perspectivisation and referential strategies through the manipulation of pronominals *I*, *me*, *we*, and *us* to fix his nationalist point of view and at the same time brand those that oppose his stand as cynics, bigots, corrupt and self-centred. He uses metaphoric descriptions that should deliberately prompt readers into taking steps towards accepting his definition of Nigeria and Nigerians as absolute. These metaphors are deliberately constructed to build ideologies that place him as the mover and the main actor on the central stage in the preservation of Nigeria's unity. In Obasanjo's narratives, the Yoruba leadership debate is inconclusive and for Nigeria to survive, ethnic or sectional interests should be vehemently discarded.

The analysis shows that Obasanjo's representation of self as a watchman has a mixture of bridled emotional relationship to the reality it is designed to represent as it is grounded on factual but emotive premises. This representation, entwined in three topical issues, uses referential and predicational strategies and appeals to emotion, patriotism, war memory, and religion. The issues are; Divine leadership, the 2007 succession tussle, and the description of Nigeria as a *project* awarded by God to him. The first one allows the rhetor to represent the *self* as a prototype of the national community. The rhetor, as a divined political leader, functions as an overseer by linking his own policy goals to a broader national story, presenting ideological stance as public affirmation. The second confirms that Obasanjo's life narratives are fraught with administrative extremisms that are characteristic of the Nigerian polity. Lexical choices such as **anoint**, **foist**, **my successor**, and a host of others used in narrating the

intrigues surrounding the 2007 succession tussle buttresses previous research on his garrison commandeering status in Nigerian political affairs.

The metaphoric declaration of Nigeria as a project points to Obasanjo's reliance on his knowledge of historical, cultural, and religious practices and their consequences on humanity. He uses this to cement his position as the one ordained by God, just like Ezekiel, to speak for and on behalf of Nigerians. His use of circular argumentation technique, ad hominem attacks, and consciously controlled mimesis exposes the rhetorical weaknesses in his portrayal of self as Nigeria's divine watchman.

What has been found in this research is that, truly, Obasanjo is a polemical politician whose use of language is laced with messianic fervour. Presenting *self* as a thoroughbred Owu man without guile on his birthdate and parental responsibilities, Obasanjo goes to extremes with an admixture of facts and presumptions phrased in an elliptic evocation and generalised beliefs to dissuade dissenting opinions against his person. The deployment of explicit warrants and analogically deductive reasoning to counter possible refutations of his narration of Owu's ancestral origin give strength to the claim that he is an authentic Owu man. His arguments on his Owu origin delved into historical facts and personal convictions, took alternative views into account, and persuasively established common ground with the readers.

The discursive construction of Obasanjo as a distinguished Nigerian soldier cum politician is an interesting argumentative discussion. The analysis here covers Obasanjo's narration of major events (especially those that are very controversial) during his military and civilian administrations in Nigeria. The representation is entwined in several discursal issues such as his civil war heroics, the 1975 bloodless coup, the 1978 NEWBREED Magazine proscription, Land Use Decree, and *Ali Must Go* riot. Others are the 1979 and 2007 Presidential elections controversies, Odi massacre, third term issue, and the controversial US16 billion power projects. As found in the data analysed, Obasanjo demonstrates his mastery of the power of language in constructing a discourse world that places him as a trusted narrator. He uses his knowledge of Nigerian history, political culture, and the belief system to ground his arguments on premises that are appealing but contestable.

He constantly reverberates the consequences of placing personal/sectional interests above national interests and pointedly emphasized that the political machinery for ensuring national development must always override sectional or individual interests. This is one of the conclusions reached from the analysis of Obasanjo's argument on the proscription of Newbreed Magazine, Alli must go riot and the promulgation of the Land-use decree of 1978. It is found in the analysis that his autobiographical accounts lean towards justification rather than an explanation of his actions while in government.

5.3 Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that;

- i. Obasanjo's non-fictional texts rely on the autobiographical effects of rhetoric as well as a description of historical virtues anchored in larger political, epistemological, and historical debates to achieve a variety of goals, including self-adulation, praise, political justification, and vilification of opposing viewpoints.
- ii. Although there is considerable utilisation of pathos, ethos was the major rhetorical appeal used in constructing the texts' argumentation.
- iii. He guides the reader to see characters and events from his perspective and positions himself as a reliable narrator.
- iv. Obasanjo premised his argumentation on a culturally-inclined mimetic and diegetic relationship in the construction of the discourse world that invariably had effects on the readers' perception and interpretation of the discourse mediated reality.
- v. Although he included many convincing logical arguments through the use of historical facts and verifiable information sources, many of these were fabricated and fallaciously applied. As a result of this, the objectivity of his arguments is in doubt.
- vi. Obasanjo's rhetorical argumentation schemes were built on culture-implicit warrants, biblical eisegesis, and formed a constitutive part of his self-representation constructs.

On a final note, the discussion of the conclusion has shown that the research questions posed in chapter one found answers in the analysis. For instance, Obasanjo's non-fictional texts are designed to construct his image as a nationalist, a watchman, an Owu man, and a distinguished Nigerian soldier-politician. In doing this, he used three self-representation strategies; predication, referential and perspectivisation and fifteen rhetorical argumentation techniques which are ethotic appeal, counterpoint, self-mentions, pseudo-logical fallacy, pathetic argument, us-them dichotomy, biblical exegeses exemplification, ad-hominem, analogies, cause and effect, moral, perceptive, rational, and quasi-logical argumentations.

On whether his use of rhetorical argumentations is plausible or implausible, it is found in the study that the argumentation processes deployed are fraught with linguistic inconsistencies, ad-hominem attacks, loaded diction, and faulty analogies. These errors in reasoning affected the constructed discourse reality, crippled the intended rhetorical effects on the audience, and, therefore, failed to achieve their persuasive purposes. There are, therefore, discrepancies in his mediated discourse world and the constructed reality.

5.4 Suggestions for further studies

The suggestions provided in this section are designed for two purposes. One is to open up areas for further research, and the other is to provide insights into the usefulness of the present study to the possibility of adopting the precepts of informal logic movement to the analysis of political narratives. Obasanjo's non-fictional texts are constructed texts that are open to multiple readings and as stated earlier, the present study offers one of the many possible readings. It is a rhetorical discourse analysis of Olusegun Obasanjo's autobiographical narratives of Nigeria's socio-political history. The study, therefore, encompasses political discourse. The main task is the analysis of Obasanjo's arguments on various issues surrounding his identity and the purpose for this is to unearth how Obasanjo, as a text producer, invites common grounds in form of shared warrants or beliefs in arguments that can stand up to criticism.

The study benefited from CDA, RDA, and informal logic. However, the explorations of these areas were inadequate to provide clues to how the rhetorical effects of arguments on the text consumers could be sieved in political narratives. Further studies need to be carried out on political narratives that are potentially designed to shape

readers' worldview and their impressions of the author. This would help to understand the bewildering admixture of facts and fabrication in political discourses to sieve veridical information for historical acceptance.

Also, the crusaders of the informal logic movement have often emphasised that the refutation of other people's arguments does not connote being unkind or unpleasant. Arguments are appreciated when the person making the argument accepts and respects the other person or people involved, appreciates them as people, and of their reasoning for their case, then shows how they are sadly mistaken. Therefore, it is recommended that writers and critics whose allegiance is to the public and posterity should show more interest in contemporary life narratives by investigating the linguistic manipulations of facts geared toward a critical assessment and engagement of the personalities who shape or distort history through personal aggrandisement. This would ensure a proper re-presentation of history and create a greater awareness of the identity productions and rhetorical manipulations of facts in political autobiographies.

5.5 Contributions to knowledge

In this study, a new dimension has been taken in analysing the deployment of rhetorical arguments in autobiographical discourse and this has exposed the use of rhetorical arguments as a text production process in political autobiographies to represent self and others in the task of nation-building. Thus, this study reveals the utilisation of rhetorical arguments in an autobiography and significantly shows how persuasive arguments can be used to construct individual identity in a political autobiography. This will assist in intimating writers with what to take into account while constructing a discourse world through argument and the reader's expectation of such discourse reality.

Also, the juxtaposition of the mimetic and diegetic relationship in positioning the credibility of a rhetor in this study contributes to the study of rhetorical studies on one hand and autobiographical argument on the other. The study reveals the argumentative strategies used in presenting facts and fabrications in political life narratives.

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APPENDIX A

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	DEVICES
Nomination	How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named, and referred to linguistically?	Membership categorization devices, deictics, anthroponyms, etc. Tropes such as metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches (<i>pars pro toto, totum pro parte</i>) Verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions
Predication	What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?	Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of: Negative or positive traits (e.g. in the form of adjectives, appositions, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, and participial clauses or groups) Explicit predicates or predicative

		nouns/adjectives/pronouns Collocations Explicit comparisons, similes, metaphors, and other rhetorical figures (including metonymies, hyperboles, litotes, euphemisms) Allusions, evocations, Presuppositions /implicatures, etc.

STRATEGY	OBJECTIVES	DEVICES
Argumentation	What arguments (justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness) are employed in the discourse in question?	Topoi (formal or more content-related Warrants) Fallacies
Perspectivization, framing, discourse representation	From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?	Deictics Direct, indirect, or free indirect speech Quotation marks, discourse markers/particles Metaphors Animating prosody, etc
Intensification, Mitigation	Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated?	Diminutives or argumentative (modal) particles, tag questions, Subjunctives, hesitations, Vague expressions, etc.

		Hyperboles, litotes Indirect speech acts (e.g. question instead of an assertion) Verbs of saying, feeling, thinking, etc.
Legitimization	How does language serve as an instrument of control and authority?	Rationality, altruism, construction of hypothetical future, the voice of expertise

A selection of discursive strategies

Source: Reisigl and Wodak (2009)