Productive and Counterproductive Spin Doctoring: Case Studies on the Outcomes of Nyesom Wike's Rhetoric

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Abstract
The terrain of politics is one in which politicians regularly use spin doctoring while making speeches or while granting press interviews. The outcomes of their spin doctoring are sometimes favourable but some other times counterproductive. It is this bipolarity in the likelihood of outcomes that the paper dwells on. Contextualizing the study on Nyesom Wike's rhetoric, the work selected five extemporaneous speeches of the politician, using a survey methodology to test the speeches on a sample audience of 400. From the responses, it was found that the politician's spin doctoring in two of the speeches produced a favourable effect but backfired on him in two other speeches. In the two cases where the outcomes were counterproductive, the politician's rhetoric was identified to have fallen short of *êthos*. Hence, to ensure that spin doctoring produces favourable outcomes every time, the recommendation proffered was that politicians, particularly by proxy of their media consultants and professional communications staff, should check with their audiences from time to time to ascertain whether their audiences still find them believable or whether they still enjoy the goodwill of their audiences, then, where necessary, make amends in their character, in their conduct, or in their relations with their audiences to assure credibility and authenticity every time they communicate with their audiences.

Keywords: Wike, Spin doctor, rhetoric, political communication, ethos

Introduction

Scholars generously acknowledge that spin doctoring can and does produce audience effects that are generally desirable and that can be verifiable and measurable (Nordquist, 2020; Vilajoana-Alejandre & Aira, 2019; Sharlamanov & Jovanovski, 2016; Valentini, 2015; Klemp, 2012; Manson, 2012; Esser, 2008; Lilleker, 2006; Monoley, 2006; Esser, Reinemann & Fan, 2001; Grattan, 1998; Rosenstiel, 1994). What scholars note less generously is that as much as spin doctoring does produce desirable effects sometimes, some other times it backfires on its initiator to produce a boomerang.

In the world of politics where public communication in the forms of speechmaking and granting press interviews is a given, as much as it is possible for a politician's spin doctoring to produce a desirable effect, it is also possible that it may produce a counterproductive effect. The case studies examined in this work underscore this. Drawn from the corpus of the extemporary speeches of a significant South South Nigerian politician, Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State, the case studies cast light on whether the same politician's spin doctoring can produce desirable effects sometimes and counterproductive effects some other times. It is this bipolar likelihood of spin doctoring's outcome that this work set out to provide illumination about.

Objective of the Study

As already indicated, the study sought to explore the bipolar likelihood of the same politician's spin doctoring producing favourable outcomes sometimes and counterproductive effects some other times, contextualizing the investigation on the rhetoric of a South South Nigerian politician, Nyesom Wike, and the type of effect his rhetoric produces in his South South Nigerian audiences. Does Nyesom Wike's rhetoric produce favourable outcomes sometimes, or does it backfire on him some other times? The case studies answer the question.

Theoretical Underpinning

George Campbell's rhetorical theory provides the work a foundation on which it rests. Rhetorical theory, as Campbell (1963) propounded it, states in summary that by accurately premeditating one's rhetoric and intentionally applying it to all of five specific psychological appeals, a speaker should ordinarily produce favourable effects in his hearers. The specific psychological appeals identified in the theory are: 1) enlightening the hearers' understanding; 2) impressing the hearers' memory; 3) pleasing the hearers' imagination; 4) moving the hearers' passions; and 5) influencing the hearers' will. By premeditating one's rhetoric and adapting it accurately to these five appeals, a speaker's rhetoric gets to produce positive audience effects. Conversely, by inaccurately pre-assessing his audience or by mishandling his rhetoric, a speaker gets to produce the inverse, namely, negative effects.

Campbell put forth these submissions in his book, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, first published in 1776. At the time of its publication, it marked a major leap forward in rhetorical studies of that era. Some scholars consider Campbell's work a milestone in the turn from the classical era of rhetorical studies to the modern era. Rivers (2020), for example, singles out *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* "as the turning point in the development of rhetoric in the eighteenth century, as the first modern rhetoric, and even as the first real advance in rhetorical theory since Aristotle." (p. 901).

Reviewed side by side Aristotle's theory on rhetoric, Campbell's theory begins by aligning with Aristotle's earlier theory before extending it by adding new learning to it. For starters, Campbell wholeheartedly subsumes Aristotle's 'three *pisteis*'. Rhetoric, by Aristotle's definition, is the art of "finding all the available means of persuasion" (Prosser, 2009, p. 103), the 'available means of persuasion' being three *pisteis*, namely, *êthos*, *logos* and *pathos*.The table below summarizes the main points of extension of Aristotle's theory by Campbell's.

Table 1 The Main Points of Extension of Aristotle's Theory by Campbell's Theory

Rhetorical Theory according to Aristotle	Rhetorical Theory according to Campbell
There are three *pisteis*(three available means of persuasion): *êthos*, *pathos* and *logos*	There are three *pisteis* and five faculties: understanding, memory, imagination, passion, and will
Rhetoric is defined as finding all the available means to persuade	Rhetoric is defined not only as finding all the available means to persuade, but also as enlightening understanding, pleasing imagination, moving passions, and influencing will
Theory targets the three *pisteis* selectively	Theory targets all the three *pisteis* and all the five faculties altogether
Theory's assumptions are based on observations from classical oratory, an art	Theory's postulates draw from classical oratory, an art, but are founded on findings in faculty psychology, a science

Being rooted in psychology, Campbell's theory was epistemically utilitarian to this work which set out to seek how the same politician's use of spin doctoring can produce bipolar effects in his audiences, positive sometimes and negative some other times. Spin doctoring being an orator's efforts at presenting an "interpretation or slant" that provides "a positive angle" to his audience (Esser, 2008, p. 4783; Valentini, 2015, p. 3), the study found in Campbell a pre-explanation of how and why an effort at persuading an audience can sometimes actually end up dissuading them, putting them off, irritating them or disgusting them. Campbell was useful to this work to bring the science of psychology to bear on the art of rhetoric, so to speak. The study relied on the theory to pinpoint what manifestations to look out for in data collected before the study could say with definiteness that the politician's rhetoric was indeed effective on his audiences, either positively or negatively.

Methodology

The study adopted survey, relying on the responses of a sample audience to draw inferences on the type of effect (productive or counterproductive) that the selected speeches of the politician in focus had on

them. Using a purposive sampling criterion of sampling particularly those speeches which spotlight the politician's use of spin doctoring in his interpersonal rivalries or in his rebuttal of claims made against him, five speeches of the politician were selected to be tested on the sample audience. This purposive criterion was informed by the fact that interpersonal rivalries and rebuttal of claims are typical situations in which a politician would naturally present an "interpretation or slant" that provides "a positive angle" of himself to his audience, categorizing such speeches, by Esser's and Valentini's definitions (Esser, 2008, p. 4783; Valentini, 2015, p. 3), as speeches that use spin doctoring.

The sample audience was drawn from the population of subscribers of four online media, namely, the YouTube channels of two national media, *Channels Television* and *Arise News* on the one hand, and the YouTube channels of two South South regional media, *NDNTV*'s *Inside the Niger Delta* and *SYMFONI* on the other hand. Using Taro Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973) for determining a manageable sample size for a survey, four hundred respondents was arrived at. Accordingly, from each of the four online media, one hundred subscribers were drawn into the sample of respondents, totaling four hundred. A 3-step digital protocol, consisting of two residency tests and a knowledgeability test, was employed to ensure that the four hundred respondents selected to constitute the sample audience were resident within the South South geopolitical region of Nigeria and were also knowledgeable in the politics of the South South region. The instrument for collecting data from this sample audience was online questionnaire designed using *Google Docs* technology.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The study data are presented and analysed as follows.

Distribution of the Respondents according to their States of Residence and the Online Media to Which They are Subscribers

A distribution of the study's respondents according to their states of residence and the online media to which they are subscribers is presented in the table below.

Table 2 Distribution of the Respondents according to their States of Residence and the Online Media to Which They are Subscribers

States of Residence	***Channels* YouTube**	***AriseNews* YouTube**	***NDNTV* YouTube**	***SYMFONI* YouTube**	**No. of Respondents**
Akwa Ibom	16	15	17	17	65
Bayelsa	15	16	18	17	66
Cross River	17	16	16	16	65
Delta	18	18	16	16	68
Edo	16	18	16	17	67
Rivers	18	17	17	17	69
No. of Respondents	100	100	100	100	**400**

Productive and Counterproductive Outcomes of Wike's Use of Spin Doctoring: The Case Studies

The case studies spotlighting the politician's use of spin doctoring in his interpersonal rivalries and in his rebuttal of claims made against him are treated hereunder.

Case Study I: Wike vs Akpabio

In a video posted by *NDNTV* on September 28, 2021 titled, *Gov Wike vs Sen Akpabio: Vice President Osinbajo Intervenes*, an episode of interpersonal rivalry between Gov Wike and the then Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Godswill Akpabio, plays out. The Nigerian Vice President Yemi Osinbajo in the video calls what plays out a "controversy between Governor Nyesom Wike and Honourable Minister

Godswill Akpabio". From the video, it is clear that it was Akpabio who initiated "the controversy" and that Wike's response was necessitated by Akpabio's sneering. A transcription of the video as posted by *NDNTV* is presented verbatim as follows:

> Godswill Akpabio [The then Minister for Niger Delta Affairs]: "Let me also salute the presence of His Excellency Governor Nyesom Wike, the governor of Rivers State. Your Excellency, I thank you for being here also. I will not join others who are lobbying you to come over to the APC… because we have enough problems in the APC to add more but [eh] we are… we are happy that everybody spoke so well about you…"
>
> Wike: "The former governor of Akwa Ibom State, I thought we came fully to commission this project. I didn't know that Former Governor Akpabio will turn it to a political rally. But let the records be straight: I prefer to stay where there is malaria than to go to where there is cancer. So [eh] Former Governor, malaria is treatable; cancer at fourth stage, you're likely to die. So… I don't want to die now."
>
> Osinbajo: "I'm also here to settle the controversy between Governor Nyesom Wike and Honourable Minister Godswill Akpabio. We will settle that controversy in a most uncommon way."

From the foregoing, we see a use of spin doctoring by Wike in his banter with Akpabio. Whilst Akpabio's rhetoric verged on 'painting' Wike as a problematic personality, Wike's response presented an "interpretation" and "slant" to provide "a positive angle" of himself to his audience, which in essence is Esser's and Valentini's definition of spin doctoring (Esser, 2008, p. 4783; Valentini, 2015, p. 3). What kind of effect did his spin doctoring produce in the sample audience? His rhetoric was tested on them and the data of their responses is presented in Table 3 that follows.

Table 3 Data of Responses on Wike's Use of Spin Doctoring in His Banter with Akpabio

Which one of these statements best captures your view about Nyesom Wike's personality? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Wike is a nuisance**	**Wike is a no-nonsense man**	**I am not sure**
	Wike is a problematic personality **and a nuisance**	Wike though a problematic personality is **not a nuisance** but a no-nonsense man	I am not sure of how to assess Wike's personality
	44%	53%	3%
Which one of the following statements best traces how you arrived at the view that you hold about Wike's personality?	**Views Influenced by Akpabio's Speech**	**Views Influenced by Wike's Speech**	**Views Influenced by Osinbajo's Speech**

(CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	It was Akpabio's speech in the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	It was Wike's speech in the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	It was Osinbajo's speech in the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold
	44%	47%	9%

N = 400

From the data in Table 3 above, even though more than half of the respondents view Wike as a problematic personality who is not a nuisance but rather a no-nonsense man, not up to half of them were influenced to hold this view about him by the rhetoric of Wike himself. Therefore, although an effort at spin doctoring can be clearly identified in Wike's remarks in the video, the data of the responses of the sample audience leaves the study undecided as to whether the outcome of Wike's rhetoric in the video was productive or counterproductive.

Case Study II: Wike vs Ayade

In a video posted by *SYMFONI* on February 20, 2022 titled *Wike Storms Calabar, Shames Ayade Over Attempt to Stop PDP Rally Ahead of Cross River Bye-Election*, Wike evidently uses spin doctoring in interpersonal rivalry with Ben Ayade, the governor of Cross River State. A verbatim transcription of excerpts of the said video is presented below:

> Wike: "When I was told that they don't want you to hold this rally, I say fa fa fa [Crowd: Fawul!]. I say fa fa fa [Crowd: Fawul!]. I say this rally must hold today; and I must come. Whatever will happen let it happen today! ...Let me tell you now: I have come here today to let you know I'm going to give you every support... every support! ...Whatever Cross River State Government can do, PDP can do it better. I don't understand how a governor will... I thought the only way to test whether you have done well for your people is to allow them to hold the rally and see whether people will go. When people don't go, you now know that, true, my people are with me. But now that people have come, it should give you that, my brother, things are not well. No be so? [Crowd: Na so!] Things are not [eh?] well. ...As I dey for Rivers State here, I no need to tell you anything. If you call for rally nobody go go. Because if dem say... wetin you want come tell dem? Dem go tell you say na Flyover 1, Flyover 2, Flyover 3, Flyover 4, Flyover 5, Flyover 6, Flyover 7, Flyover 8, Flyover 9, Flyover 10!"

In the foregoing, the orientation of Wike's rhetoric is definitive of spin doctoring. That Wike said those words in Calabar, the Cross River State capital, gives the speech away as calculated to swing sentiments away from the Cross River State governor who had lately jumped the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) ship to the All Progressives Congress (APC) party. The fulcrum of all of Wike's spin doctoring is that being a better performer than Ayade as a governor and as a South South governor, he was qualified to step in to fill the leadership gap that Ayade's defection to the APC had left in the PDP family in Cross River State. What kind of effect did Wike's rhetoric produce on the study's sample audience? The data presented in Tables 4 and 5 that follow summarizes their responses in this regard.

Table 4 Data of Responses on the Outcome of Wike's Use of Spin Doctoring While Gibing Ayade

Which one of these statements do you consider to be a true assessment of Nyesom Wike and Ben Ayade? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Both Wike and Ayade are poor-quality politicians**	**Wike is a poorer-quality politician than Ayade**	**Wike is a better-quality politician than Ayade**
	Both Nyesom Wike and Ben Ayade are poor-quality politicians	Nyesom Wike is of poorer quality than Ben Ayade as a politician	Nyesom Wike is a better politician than Ben Ayade
	29%	4%	67%
Which one of these statements do you consider to be a true assessment of Nyesom Wike of the PDP and Ben Ayade who has defected to the APC? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Both Wike and Ayade are poor performers**	**Wike has performed poorer than Ayade**	**Wike has performed better than Ayade**
	Both Nyesom Wike and Ben Ayade are poor performers as South South state governors	Nyesom Wike has performed poorer than Ben Ayade as a South South state governor	Nyesom Wike has performed better than Ben Ayade as a South South state governor
	28%	3%	69%
Which one of the following statements best traces how you arrived at the view that you now hold as your assessment of Nyesom Wike and Ben Ayade? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Views Influenced by Wike's Rhetoric**	**Views Influenced by Title of the Post**	**Views Influenced by Fellow Subscribers**
	It was Nyesom Wike's speech in the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	It was the title of the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	It was the comments of my fellow subscribers that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold
	51%	8%	41%

N = 400

The data on Table 4 shows that Wike's spin doctoring was favourably effective in influencing the views of more than half (51%) of the respondents. Additional data gathered, as presented in Table 5 hereunder, further shows that the effect of Wike's rhetoric on the study sample was favorable.

Table 5 Additional Data of Responses on the Outcome of Wike's Use of Spin Doctoring While Gibing Ayade

Which one of these statements best captures the way you feel about Nyesom Wike's and Ben Ayade's personalities? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**I do not like both Wike and Ayade**	**I like Ayade better than Wike**	**I like Wike better than Ayade**
	I do not like both Nyesom Wike's and Ben Ayade's personalities	I like Ben Ayade's personality better than Nyesom Wike's	I like Nyesom Wike's personality better than Ben Ayade's
	38%	11%	51%
Which one of the following	**Views**	**Views Influenced**	**Views Influenced**

statements best traces how you arrived at the way that you now feel about Nyesom Wike and Ben Ayade? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Influenced by Wike's Rhetoric**	**by Title of the Post**	**by Fellow Subscribers**
	It was Wike's speech in the video that influenced me to feel the way that I now feel	It was the title of the video that influenced me to feel the way that I now feel	It was the comments of my fellow subscribers that influenced me to feel the way that I now feel
	51%	3%	46%

N = 398

As the data shows, Wike's spin doctoring was favourably effective in this case of his gibing of Ayabe.

Case Study III: Wike vs Shuaibu

In a video posted by *SYMFONI* on March 12, 2022titled *"Who is Your Father" Wike Threatens Obaseki's Deputy, but Hear What Shuaibu Said that Angered Wike*, Wike uses spin doctoring while disparaging Philip Shuaibu, the deputy governor of Edo State. The situation that warranted Wike's remarks is self-evident in the video. A transcription of relevant excerpts of the video is presented below:

> Wike: I was in Madrid when I was reading and watching what a deputy governor ranting in the media... a deputy governor threatening the party that there are alternatives to PDP. This is the same deputy governor that they were kneeling down to beg for us to give them umbrella; today has the effrontery to threaten PDP... A deputy governor will come out on television to tell PDP that there's alternative... It's a... and he lost his election at the local government when we were in Edo. He lost! ...If you're that strong, why did we lose? It's only those who can win their local government that can say, look, if you don't give me... not somebody who has lost his local government, will come and threaten us. A loser, threatening us.
>
> Wike's speech presented in the foregoing is evidently expressive of a calculated use of spin while disparaging the Edo State deputy governor. On the whole, Wike was spin-doctoring to put across the thought that he was a politician of a much higher category and quality than the Edo State deputy governor. The speech was tested on the study's sample audience and the data of their responses is summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Data of Responses on Wike's Use of Spin Doctoring While Disparaging Shuaibu

Which one of these statements do you consider to be a true assessment of Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State and Deputy Governor Philip Shuaibu of Edo State? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Both Wike and Shuaibu are poor-quality politicians**	**Wike is a poorer-quality politician than Shuaibu**	**Wike is a better-quality politician than Shuaibu**
	Both Nyesom Wike and Philip Shuaibu are poor-quality politicians	Nyesom Wike is of poorer quality than Philip Shuaibu as a	Nyesom Wike is a better politician than Philip Shuaibu

politician

	22%	1%	77%
Which one of the following statements best traces how you arrived at the view that you now hold as your assessment of Nyesom Wike and Philip Shuaibu? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Views Influenced by Wike's Rhetoric** It was Nyesom Wike's speech in the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	**Views Influenced by Title of the Video** It was the title of the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	**Views Influenced Fellow Subscribers** It was the comments of my fellow subscribers that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold
	59%	9%	32%
Which one of the following statements best traces how you arrived at the way that you now feel about Nyesom Wike and Philip Shuaibu? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Views Influenced by Wike's Rhetoric** It was Wike's speech in the video that influenced me to feel the way that I now feel	**Views Influenced by Title of the Video** It was the title of the video that influenced me to feel the way that I now feel	**Views Influenced Fellow Subscribers** It was the comments of my fellow subscribers that influenced me to feel the way that I now feel
	61%	6%	33%

N = 400

The data on Table 6 above shows that Wike's rhetoric produced a favourable effect on the respondents.

Case Study IV: Wike vs Obaseki

In another video posted by *SYMFONI* on March 14, 2022 titled *"I Am the Bully that Made You Governor & You Will Be Smoked Out" - Wike Vows to Frustrate Edo Governor*, Wike uses spin doctoring while maligning Godwin Obaseki, the governor of Edo State. Again, the situation that warranted Wike's remarks is self-evident in the video. A transcription of relevant excerpts of the video is presented below.

Wike: "...I woke up this morning and I read the ranting of the Governor Mr. 'Memorandum of Understanding' Godwin Obaseki. ...If you watch, and if you ask anybody, if you go and check the DNA of Godwin Obaseki, what you will see in that DNA is betrayal, serial betrayal and ungratefulness. ...I will never betray any man. Because in my DNA, what you see in my DNA is sincerity, consistency and teamwork... ...Now, I read you said Nigerian needs leadership, not bullies. No problem about that. You came to beg a bully for you to have a ticket. A bully was your DG Campaign. And a bully bullied you into Government House [Applause]. You came to beg a bully. A bully was your DG Campaign. A bully bullied you into Government [eh] House. What a shame! You did not only end there; you came back with

your wife to thank the bully, that after God the bully made it possible for you to be there. People say it's politics. It is only politics that exposes human being, know their character. Without politics you won't know who is who. Without politics you won't know. ...I don't abandon people who made it possible for me to be governor. I cannot betray them. ...Some people say look, don't say too much, be presidential. Am I a president? Am I a president?

In Governor Wike's speech excerpted above, the main point he seeks to drive home with his rhetoric is that Governor Obaseki is a genetically flawed personality while he, Wike, is time-tested and proven to be a dependable politician. This spin was tested on the study's sample audience and the data of their responses is summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7 *Data of Responses on Wike's Use of Spin Doctoring While Maligning Obaseki*

Which one of these statements do you consider to be a true assessment of Governor Godwin Obaseki's personality by nature? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Obaseki is loyal by nature**	**Obaseki is a betrayer by nature**	**Obaseki is a politician by nature**
	Gov. Obaseki is loyal by nature	Gov. Obaseki is a betrayer by nature	Gov. Obaseki is **not** a betrayer by nature; it's just that the nature of the game of politics makes a politician to not keep to his agreements sometimes
	13%	4%	83%
Which one of the following statements best traces how you arrived at the view that you now hold as your assessment of Governor Obaseki's personality by nature? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Views Influenced by Wike's Rhetoric**	**Views Influenced by Title of the Video**	**Views Influenced by Fellow Subscribers**
	It was Nyesom Wike's speech in the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	It was the title of the video that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold	It was the comments of my fellow subscribers that influenced me to hold the view that I now hold
	2%	2%	96%

N = 400

As the data on Table 7 shows, Wike's rhetoric was abysmally ineffective in influencing the respondents to view him (Wike) in good light, or to view Obaseki as a betrayer by nature. The data of his ineffectiveness being so abysmal, the study turned to the responses in the subscriber comments section of the post to look for any insights into why the data on the effect of his rhetoric in producing a favourable outcome showed very low figures. A number of comments from users provided some insight. The said comments are presented as follows:

"You talk to much, you too are not a sant" [sic]

- Comment by Elijah Edoba, a *SYMFONI* subscriber

"Oga go seat down you talk too much you are not God, wike pls talk less" [sic]

- Another comment by Elijah Edoba, a *SYMFONI* subscriber

"Wike is insane no doubt about it, what a useless Gorvernor who attack anyone except himself" [sic]

- Comment by And Roid, a *SYMFONI* subscriber

"despite Obaseke been ungrateful u too talk too much you also don't have regards for the section of the country ." [sic]

- Comment by kkboy Mike, a *SYMFONI* subscriber

"Wike I like you but please tune it down. Move on. !" [sic]

- Comment by Willy M, a *SYMFONI* subscriber

With the insight provided by the orientation of the user comments as presented above, Gov. Wike's rhetoric was put to the respondents again, this time with the statements that follow the question rephrased to test for the likelihood of a counterproductive effect. The data from the second survey of the respondents is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8 *Additional Data of Responses on Wike's Use of Spin Doctoring While Maligning Obaseki*

Which one of these statements do you consider to be a true assessment of Governor Godwin Obaseki's personality by nature? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Obaseki is loyal by nature**	**Obaseki is a betrayer by nature**	**Obaseki is a politician by nature**
	Gov. Obaseki is loyal by nature	Gov. Obaseki is a betrayer by nature	Gov. Obaseki is **not** a betrayer by nature; it's just that the nature of the game of politics makes a politician to not keep to his agreements sometimes
	11%	4%	85%
Gov. Wike said there is betrayal in Gov. Obaseki's DNA. What is your assessment of this statement by Gov. Wike? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**It is merely political**	**It is appropriate**	**It is irresponsible**
	It is mere political banter	It is an appropriate statement	It is an irresponsible statement
	3%	1%	96%
Gov. Wike said there is betrayal in Gov. Obaseki's DNA. How does this statement make you view Wike? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**As I have always viewed him**	**As a blunt communicator**	**As an immature talker**
	It does not change how I view Wike	It makes me view Wike as a communicator who says it as it is	It makes me view Wike as an immature talker

	4%	3%	93%

N = 400

As the data on Table 8 above shows, Wike's rhetoric in the speech in question was overwhelmingly counterproductive. Rather than cast aspersions on Obaseki as Wike had intended, it put Wike, the very speechmaker himself, in bad light.

Case Study V: Wike Rebutting Claims that He Sent Soldiers to Kill Igbos in Oyigbo

In a video posted by *Channels* on November 4, 2020 titled *Governor Wike: I Didn't Send Military to Kill Igbos in Oyigbo*, Wike uses spin doctoring to rebut a claim making the rounds that he sent soldiers to kill Igbos in Oyigbo. The situation warranting his remarks is self-evident in the video as the transcription below shows.

> Wike: "...Let me also attest to the fact that it was your support, and other people's support, that Rivers State was peaceful during the End SARS Protest. There was no... like what happened in other states, looting of people's properties, except where you have criminals in one of our local governments who tried to paint the state black. ...If we did not take the step we took in imposing curfew in Oyigbo, today there would have been a reprisal. It would have been the Hausas and the Igbos fighting; and nobody knew to what level it would have been. ...I've never seen people who would not like peace. The Igbos are very peaceful people. Igbos are people we have lived with. And so it is difficult for anybody to say: You don't want Igbos to stay" or "You're killing Igbos". You must differentiate between criminality... So anybody saying that I sent soldiers to kill Igbos, so the soldiers when they go there, you're Igbo they kill you, you're Igbo, you're Igbo they kill you. I mean, does it make sense? If you see the findings, even in our own schools, IPOB will put flag, trying to change the names of communities. Who will take that? If you see in their house where they found them, shrines, with Nnamdi Kanu's picture. And some people will be talking, "Oh, if they see anybody they kill". How is that possible? My party chairman is from Oyigbo. So if I will destroy Oyigbo, I will go and destroy where my party chairman comes from. That is not true. ...Last night they got two of them and handed over to security agencies. Oyigbo people are peaceful people. That does not mean that because they are peaceful, you go and live there, then you begin to cause problems for them. Who will be happy that part of my own state, somebody will come and put flag that they now control that area. You want me to be happy? No it's not my own time o. I will not allow it. I will never never allow it..."

What kind of effect did Wike's speech in the foregoing produce? It was tested on the study's sample audience and the data from the survey is presented below.

Table 9 Data of Responses on Wike's Use of Spin in Rebutting Claims that He Sent Soldiers to Kill Igbos in Oyigbo

Which one of these statements do you consider to be the truth about Wike's involvement in the killing of Igbos in Oyigbo by soldiers? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**He had no hand in it**	**He had one hand in it**	**He had both hands in it**
	Wike did not have any hand in the action of the soldiers	Wike had an understanding with the soldiers to go and maintain security, not to kill anybody	Wike gave consent to the soldiers to kill if need be
	4%	23%	73%
Which one of the following statements best traces how you arrived at the view that you now hold to be the truth about Wike's involvement in the killing of Igbos in Oyigbo by soldiers? (CHOOSE ONLY ONE OF THE THREE BOXES)	**Views Influenced by Wike's own Words**	**I do not know what to believe**	**Views Influenced by Fellow Subscribers**
	It is Wike's own words in the video that have influenced what I now believe to be the truth about his involvement	I do not know what to believe about his involvement	It is the comments of my fellow subscribers that have influenced what I now believe to be the truth about his involvement
	69%	12%	19%

N = 400

Here again the data from the responses, as presented in Table 9, show a counterproductive/backfiring effect. Whereas Wike set out to achieve a rebuttal to a claim that he sent soldiers to kill Igbos in Oyigbo, his very words were what gave the majority of the respondents their reason to be convinced that he indeed had a hand in the killing of Igbos by the soldiers.

Finding, Conclusion and Recommendation

The data of the responses from the sample audience establish the study's postulate of bipolarity in the likelihood of the outcome of spin doctoring by the same politician. In the case studies from Nyesom Wike's speeches examined, his rhetoric produced a favourable effect in two of the cases (Case Study II and Case Study III) but produced a counterproductive outcome in two other cases (Case Studies IV and V). In other words, in IV and V, Wike's rhetoric boomeranged/backfired on him.

Is there any explanation for this boomerang? In other data collected for the study (Papamie, 2022) but not presented in this paper, the responses indicated that Wike's speeches in IV and V failed to deliver on the count of *êthos* as articulated in Aristotle's theory. Where a politician's credibility on a matter is contestable or in doubt, or where the claims he makes in his rhetoric fall short of his audience's minimum expectations for believability, the politician's rhetoric usually not only fails to appeal to his audiences' five psychological faculties as enunciated in Campbell's theory, but his rhetoric also practically irritates and repulses them. Another way to say it is that where rhetoric fails on the count of *logos* or *pathos*, it fails to appeal to an audience's five faculties and fails to persuade them; but where rhetoric fails on the count of *êthos*, it nauseates the audience, it irritates them, it boomerangs on the speaker and produces a counterproductive outcome.

Hence, what recommendation can be proffered for productive spin doctoring as opposed to counterproductive spin doctoring? Every politician must come to terms with the reality that of all the three *pisteis*, *êthos* is what his audience most expects of him as a politician. No matter how logical his *logos* is, or how passionate his *pathos* is, if his credibility is in doubt or if his audience has cause to

disbelieve him, he will irritate them when he speaks to them and his rhetoric will produce a counterproductive effect. Politicians should therefore always check with their audiences from time to time, auditing their reputation to ascertain how they stand in the perception of their audiences; to make certain that they come across to their audiences as authentic, as credible and as believable; and to verify that they still enjoy the goodwill of their audiences. Where believability/credibility gaps are identified, politicians should make necessary amends in their character, in their conduct, or in their relations with their audiences in order that their audiences may approve of them every time they communicate with their audiences.

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