

Pragmatic Strategies of Selected Online Articles on the Buhari/Jubril Dilemma

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Abstract : The online space has continued to be a platform for not only private and mundane discussions but also a tribune for voicing critical political and national opinions. Nigerians and the international community have employed the online media, as well as other media platforms to articulate their thoughts on the claims which favour possibilities of the demise of the incumbent president of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, after a prolonged illness in year 2007 and the ploy of a Jubril of Sudan clone in his place. This study thus examines the pragmatic strategies employed in the online articles on the national dilemma caused by the Buhari/Jubril claims and refutals, in response to the lacuna in the literature on such analytical investigations on the subject. Two online articles titled, 'Buhari: The real, the fake and the dead' and 'Taking the Buhari/Jubril story seriously', authored by two Nigerian writers, Tunde Odesola and Abimbola Adelakun, respectively and retrieved online from 360nobs.com and Nairaland blogs, on December 3, 2018, and December 7, 2018, respectively, served as data for the study. The data were analysed using the Stance Theory and the Pragmatic Act Theory. Findings showed that the writers employed stance acts, rhetorical questions, metaphors, histo-political allusions, name-calling, and derogatives, in achieving the pragmeme of disabusing. This results in a pragmatic reconstruction of readers' views on the issue.

Keywords : Buhari/Jubril claims, online articles, pragmatic strategies, stance theory

Conference Title : ICCFMS 2020 : International Conference on Communication, Film and Media Sciences

Conference Location : Cape Town, South Africa

Conference Dates : November 05-06, 2020