Grammatical Forms and Functions in Selected Political Interviews of Nigerian Presidential Aspirants in 2015 General Election

Authors : Temitope Abiodun Balogun

Abstract : Political interviews are one of the ways by which political office-seekers in Nigeria sell themselves to the electorates. Extant studies have examined the discourse of political interviews from conversational, philosophical, rhetorical, stylistic and pragmatic perspectives with insufficient attention paid to grammatical forms and communicative intentions of the interviews granted by the two presidential aspirants in the 2015 Nigerian general election. This study fills this scholarly gap to unmask their grammatical forms and communicative styles, intention and credibility. The paper adopts Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, specifically interpersonal function coupled with Searle's Model of Speech Acts Theory as a theoretical framework. A total of six interviews granted by the two presidential aspirants in media serve as the source of data. It is discovered that, in most cases, politicians' communicative intention is to "pull-down" their political opponents. While declarative and interrogatives are simple, direct and straightforward, the intention is to condemn, lambast and castigate their opponents. This communicative style does not allow the general populace to decipher the political manifestoes of the political aspirants and the party they represent. The paper recommends that before Nigeria can boast of any sustainable growth and development, there is the need for her political office-seekers to adopt effective communication strategies and styles to unveil their intention and manifestoes so that electorates can evaluate their performance after their tenure of office.

Keywords : general election, grammatical forms and function, political interviews, presidential aspirants