

## *Original Paper*

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

Temitope Abiodun Balogun (Ph.D.)<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of English and International Studies College of Humanities and Culture, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

\* Temitope Abiodun Balogun (Ph.D.), Department of English and International Studies, College of Humanities and Culture, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

Received: August 20, 2018    Accepted: September 3, 2018    Online Published: September 14, 2018  
doi:10.22158/selt.v6n4p274    URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/selt.v6n4p274>

### **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 2015 Nigerian General election. This study therefore fills this scholarly gap with the aim of unmasking 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 theoretical framework. A total of six interviews granted by the two presidential aspirants in media serve as the source of our data. It is discovered that, in most cases, politicians' communicative intention is to "pull down" their political opponents. While declaratives 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**

*political interviews, general election, presidential aspirants*

## 1. Introduction

Right from 1999, People's Democratic Party has been the party at the central controlling the corridor of power. The party has spread his tentacle to every nook and cranny of Nigeria. It was said according to one of its former chairpersons that the party has what it takes to rule the country for sixty years because the party has produced three presidents who successfully handed over to one another. The existence and impact of the party has been felt in the grassroots right from the 1999. In the first term of President Obasanjo, he polarised and created many political parties in order to weaken the strengths of opposition parties. Notwithstanding, opposition party still thrived in Nigeria. For instance, the only opposition party noticeable in the southwest between 1999 and 2003 was Alliance for Democracy. The party later changed its name to Action Congress and finally Action Congress of Nigeria and basically controlled Lagos state. The existence of opposition party was threatened when President Obasanjo seized the allocation of Lagos State for eighteen months. The party only survived on Internally Generated Revenue. Alliance for Democracy thrived in the south west, All Progressive Grand Alliance in the southeast and Congress for Progressive Change. In order for this party to survive and wrestle power from Peoples Democratic Party, a merger was proposed in 2014. This merger came as a surprise to the then ruling party because none of such has ever happened in the history and historiography of the nation Nigeria. A faction of All Progressive Grand Alliance, Congress for Progressive Change and Action Congress of Nigeria otherwise called progressives merged and formed a mega party called All Progressive Congress. All Progressive Congress became a thorn in the flesh of the ruling party. The primary election of All Progressive Congress which the ruling party thought it would scatter ended in tranquillity. Five contestants sought to be the flag bearer of the party but at the end, former Military Head of State, General Muhammed Buhari won and he became the party flagbearer. General Muhammed Buhari, before this time, had contested three times with President Olusegun Obasanjo, Late President Umaru'Musa Yaradua and President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan but lost these presidential elections. After serious consultations and consolidations, Professor Yemi Osibajo was picked to be his running mate.

Meanwhile, the primary election of then ruling party had been conducted before this time. The election was contested and won singlehandedly by President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and on his acceptance speech; he nominated and endorsed Architect Namadi Sambo as his running mate. The election was contested unopposed because of the fear of the so-called "federal might" which GEJ had. This made the two major contestants to be President Goodluck Jonathan of people's Democratic Party and former head of state Muhammadu Buhari of all progressive congress. Other parties that contested either adopted any of the two major contestants as their presidential candidates or went for unilateral presidential aspirants.

## 2. Literature Review

Political discourse has received scholarly attention right from immemorial. The reason for this is that politics indexes power and power controls human behaviours, actions, thought, perception, and ideology. In this review, papers that are relevantly related to Nigeria presidential 2015 general election are reviewed. Among such papers are Mbutor (2006) who examined the effect of Americanisation on Nigerian election. The study opines that Nigerian election is a replica of American election. As such, there are similarities before, during and after election. Among the similarities is, personalities based campaign as against issues based campaign, political debates, opinion polls, use of foreign consultants, mediation of politics and so on. Politicians are fond of “pulling down” the opponents in order to win the confidence of the electorates. The work argues that the term *Americanisation* is ambiguous in this context; however, the paper has not examined the level of the influence of Americanisation on Nigerian politics.

Ezeibe (2006) analyses the effects of the abuse of language in pre, during and post electoral violence in Nigeria between 2010 and 2015. The paper, situated within the purview of discourse analysis, opines that hate speech is a political strategy in Nigeria. It is tactically deployed to win election and retain political powers. It concludes that speaking against hate speech in Nigeria is not enough. There is need to identify individuals who use hate speech before, during and after election and prosecute them accordingly.

Sanusi et al. (2014) focus on the synergy between televised presidential debate and the performance of political office seekers in 2011 gubernatorial election in Lagos State. The study concludes that televised presidential debate is a major factor that influences Lagosians’ voting patterns. Other factors include ethnic and religious affiliation, political subscription, family and peer group influence and many others. Another work is Ekharefo and Akoseogasimhe (2015). Their study focuses on the political advertisements in selected Nigerian newspapers between January and March 2015. The paper reveals that “change” and history of past political officers are rhetorical appeals, while “attacks and counter attacks” are prominent discursive issues. The paper concludes that relevant legislations need to be applied on political advertisers that violate political advertisement rules and policies in Nigeria to avoid replica of pre and post election violence that characterised previous Nigerian elections.

From this review, it can be observed that there is a scholarly lacuna in the investigation of grammatical form and functions of presidential interviews in 2015 presidential general elections, this study therefore intends to fill this scholarly lacuna.

### 2.1 *Ebony Life Television*

Ebony life television was established by Mosunmola Abudu popularly called Mo Abudu in 2006. Mo Abudu is a British born Nigerian. She lost her father at the tender age of eleven and strived to get good education that later earned her a job as a Recruitment Consultant with the Atlas Recruitment Consultancy in the United Kingdom and later as a Manager with the Starfom Group, also in the United Kingdom. She started her Television career and show in 2006. The television station is located in

Tinapa Resort, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The station is aired in 49 countries in Africa, Caribbean and the United Kingdom respectively. Right from 2006, the television station has gained popularity among teeming Nigerian youths and politicians. In 2015 alone, the station interviewed nearly all the presidential aspirants. Among them are former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and incumbent President, Muhammadu Buhari. These are the leading presidential aspirants in 2015.

## 2.2 Theoretical Orientation

### 2.2.1 Systemic Functional Grammar

Bronislaw Malinowski, a British anthropologist, is the father of Systemic Functional Grammar (henceforth, SFG). Malinowski carried out his research among Trobriand Islanders in which he examined the language of fishing expedition and its function. He argued that language is a form of action. Malinowski precisely coined the term “context of culture” in his work published in 1935. “Context of culture” is defined as “the institutional and ideological background that gives value to the text and constrains its interpretation” (Halliday, 1989, p. 49). Context of culture refers to cultural background that conditions and produces text. Halliday defines context of culture as “the ideas and customs and the values inherited from the past” in which “all different types of situation occurs” (Halliday, 1999, p. 17).

John Rupert Firth is a disciple of Malinowski. He further continues the theory in Great Britain with his followers by establishing the London School of Linguistics. He applies Malinowski’s idea on the centrality of context to meaning explication. His study emphasises meaning as the central focus in the study of language as against Bloomfieldian’s approach. He coined the term “context of situation”. The work of Firth is the starting point of Halliday.

Furthermore, Halliday is the most intellectual follower of J.R.Firth. Halliday introduces scale and category. The focus of Halliday’s theory is on the study of meaning in different contexts. Thus, the function of language is the thematic concern of Halliday’s model. The function is explicated at the lexico-grammatical levels. Lexico-grammatical levels trifurcate into ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. These functions are called metafunctions.

“Metafunctions”, a term coined by Halliday focuses on the functional dimension of language systems. This is the language functions in the context of situation and context of culture. “Metafunctions” refers to ideational, interpersonal and textual functions. Ideational function, otherwise called experiential functions is the expression of the outer and inner world, interpersonal function is the act of regulating, expressing and enacting social relationships and roles and textual function is the embedment of linguistic attention in context. Textual function is the orthographical representation of ideational and interpersonal functions in text and talk. Halliday’s metafunction is realisable at the clausal level which is the focus of this study.

The attention of this study is focussed on the application of Halliday’s interpersonal functions precisely mood system. Mood system accounts for sentence forms which can be declaratives, interrogatives, and

imperatives. Sentence forms in the interviews granted by the two presidential aspirants of 2015 general elections serve as a guide to the analysis.

### 2.3 Speech Act Theory

J.L. Austin propounded Speech Act Theory. The theory was popularised in his posthumous book titled: “*How To Do Things With Words*” published in 1962. Austin reacted against the logical positivists who did not examine functional aspect of language but rather dwelt on its structural configuration and classification. Speech act theory accounts for how utterances are deployed to perform actions. Such actions are naming, directing, informing, ordering, requesting, begging, and commanding. Austin opines that “every utterance a person makes performs an act such as stating a fact, stating an opinion, confirming or denying something, making a prediction, or a request, asking a question, making a promise, and thanking or condoling” (Austin, 1962; cited by Olaniyan, 2016). The theory has been seriously criticised, modified and investigated by scholars (Allan, 1986; Yule, 1996; Odebunmi, 2006; and Shisa, 2007 and others).

Austin mentioned three acts namely: locution, illocution and perlocution. Illocution is the “sense” in the act of saying something. Illocution trifurcates into phonetic, phatic and rhetic acts. Phonetic act is the act of uttering meaningful noise, phatic is the act of uttering meaningful noises which meet the prerequisite of certain vocabulary and grammar of a language and rhetic act is the “signifier” and “signified” of the noises.

### 2.4 Illocutionary Force

The speaker’s intention in an utterance is called illocutionary force. Illocutionary force is an act performs when an utterance is made. Illocutionary force is performed when the hearer understands the intention of a speaker (Odebunmi, 2003). It can be said that illocutionary force is performed when the hearer recognises the intention of the speaker. The intention can be condoling, begging, requesting, threatening, promising, informing, asserting, congratulating, asserting, condemning, apologising, regretting, predicting and so on.

Austin (1962) identifies five classifications of illocutionary force. They are verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives. Although scholars have identified the defects of Austin’s classification because “English verbs do not correspond accurately with speech act categories; but this is not necessarily so”, the fact still remains that Austin laid the foundation for many scholars (Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Thomas, 1995; Odebunmi, 2006; cited by Olaniyan, 2016). Searle is one of the scholars that modify Austin classification though Searle’s classification is preferable because it caters for interlanguage pragmatics. Searle’s classifications include the following: assertive/representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Explanations on these are provided below:

- (a) Representatives: These utterances are used to describe situation through assertions, conclusion, claims, and others (Odebunmi, 2006, p. 91). Such assertive/representative utterance is: *Tolu is guilty of the offence.*

- (b) Directive: These utterances are used by a speaker to get the hearer to do something such as ordering, commanding, requesting, suggesting, begging and instructing.
- (c) Commissives: These utterances are used by a speaker to commit himself and the hearer to some future actions. Such utterances have the intention of vowing, promising, pleading and others.
- (d) Expressives: These describe psychological stance of a speaker. Expressives deal with how a speaker feels. These feelings are thinking, apologizing, condoling, congratulating, rejoicing, cheering and others.
- (e) Declaratives: Declaratives cause a change in the external world of a speaker. For this to be appropriate, Yule (1996b, p. 53) opines that the speaker must have a special institutional role in a specific context. In an utterance like “I pronounce you as husband and wife”, the following conditions must be met (a) the speaker must be a priest or judge of a customary court or a president of a country, (b) some people must be in attendance, and (c) people (husband and wife) that need to be joined together must be present. If any of these conditions is missing, the judge or priest has misfired thereby leading to infelicitous condition.

In this study, Searle’s classification of illocutionary force is adopted and applied because of its relevance and positive effects in cross-cultural pragmatics, developmental pragmatics and interlanguage pragmatics (Odebunmi, 2003, p. 47).

### *2.5 Methodology and Analytical Procedures*

The data consists of two purposively selected interviews granted by the two presidential aspirants. The interviews are sought, collated and transcribed respectively. The interviews were conducted by Mosumola Abudu, the Chief Executive Officer of Ebony Life Television and the Executive Producer of “Hosted of Moment”. The interview conducted with Former President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was done during Presidential campaign in Ondo State, the Sunshine State and it lasted for thirty minutes. The interview with President Buhari was done in the Ebony Life Television Studio. The interviews were conducted in January 2015 and were subjected to qualitative analysis.

### *2.6 Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings*

The analysis is in two folds. First, discourse issues in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria are examined. Second, the instances of interpersonal functions particularly mood with the communicative styles and intentions are also investigated. The two presidential aspirants employed Halliday’s interpersonal function to comment on socio-cultural, political, religious and economic situations of Nigeria and Nigerians.

### *2.7 Discourse Issues in 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria*

Five discourse issues that feature prominently in 2015 presidential election include the fight against corruption, security challenges, high exchange rate, poor funding of education and healthcare system. The fight against corruption is the most prominent discourse issue that features in the presidential campaigns and interviews in 2015 general election in Nigeria Corruption is the bane of Nigeria’s development and it has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian systems. Nobody can get anything on a

platter of gold without being involved in a corrupt act. Corruption has been cultured into Nigerian systems such that, it has become the norm. Several examples could attest to this. For instance, applicants were asked to pay a thousand naira when Ministry of Interior wanted to recruit; the amount generated from this money ran into billions of naira. The whole exercise was in mess when nine applicants died. This generated national outcry and the exercise was suspended by Mr President. The government of Goodluck Jonathan was castigated for its nonchalant attitudes towards the fight against corruption and it was scored very low. Another example is the case of former Aviation Minister, Stella Oduah, who bought two billion naira bulletproof cars without anybody raising any query. Pension, arms, and police funds were looted under “the watchful eyes” of Mr President. Nigerians see the inability of the President to fight all these financial crimes as a weakness on his part. Corruption as a disease cripples every aspect of the nation. Another instance is the case of ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) which embarked on a six month strike because of non-implementation of 2009 FG/ASUU agreement. This was attributed to corruption because the inability of the government to adequately fund federal universities made private institutions to thrive. ASUU castigated federal government for the lip service it paid to the agreement. The ASUU strike was attributed to corrupt nature of the federal cabinets. Poor funding is also noticeable in the health sector. Health workers embark on strike regularly because of the non-payment of emoluments. Also, federal hospitals lack both human and infrastructural resources. There is dearth of basic medical facilities and amenities in federal teaching hospitals in Nigeria. For instance, October 1, 2014 bomb blast showed some of the dearth when victims of the Blast could not get blood transfusion. This was a national embarrassment to Nigerians.

Also, the rate of unemployment among graduates is another discourse issue. The recent unemployment rates reveal that about fourteen million Nigerian between 18 and 35 age bracket are unemployed. Nigerian universities produce thousands of graduates every year with no jobs to give them. Thus, unemployment remains a national threat. Although Jonathan claimed that the economic has been rebased and it was the largest in Africa, GDP has not translated to the meaningful life of ordinary Nigerians. Both Buhari and Jonathan see economy as a major issue which attracts attention of Nigerians. The APC manifestoes as said by Buhari in the interview focus on security and economy.

Security is another prominent discourse in 2015 Nigerian presidential election. Prior to 2015 election, Boko Haram insurgents have infiltrated north eastern part of the nation. About eleven local governments are under the control of the insurgents. Many people attributed Boko Haram infiltration to lack of weapons by the Nigerian military. It must be noted that some soldiers were sentenced because they refused blatantly to fight the insurgent for lack of weapons or being made to carry inferior weapons. Corruption in the military was highly noticeable. In fact, some soldiers who went to Liberia for peacekeeping assignments protested in Akure, the state capital of Ondo State, for non-payments of their entitlements. The soldiers were sentenced by hanging for mutinous offences.

## 2.8 Sentence Forms and Communicative Intention in 2015 Presidential Election

Instances of sentence forms (declaratives, imperatives and interrogatives) with communicative intentions are exemplified below:

### 2.8.1 Declaratives

Declaratives are sentences that give information or state a fact. Declaratives have the structure of S(subject), P(predicator), C(complement) and A(adjunct) with P as the only obligatory element. Instances of declaratives which are used to comment on socio-political, religious and economic issues are listed and explained below:

- (1) The train system was completely dead, completely dead, in about thirty years (GEJ)
- (2) We have done better than all previous governments (GEJ)
- (3) My followers have never been aggressive (GEJ)
- (4) Textile industry has collapsed in Nigeria (PMB)
- (5) Epileptic supply in power is caused by corruption (PMB)
- (6) In the north east, security is frustrating (PMB)

In sentence 1, it can be observed that the communicative intention in (1) is to condemn previous governments for their inability to resuscitate train sector of the economy. Train system has suffered neglect and it is one of the important sectors of the transportation system. Previous governments have not only budgeted millions of naira but have tactically embezzled the funds allocated to this sector. Although Jonathan indirectly condemned previous governments, he praised his government for resuscitation of the sector. He called this one of his major achievements. He praised his government for a job well done. The communication intention is to tactically accuse previous governments and praise the current government. Jonathan is mindful of the fact that the PDP which came into power about fifteen years ago also produced him as the president. He does not want to be accused of sycophancy because previous PDP governments were to be blamed for the negligence. The intention here is that of accusing and praising.

“We have done better than our previous governments” is a claim that is yet to be verified. Jonathan tactically praises his governments for a good job as against previous governments who according to him have failed in their responsibilities to provide dividends of democracy to the people. Previous and aftermath sentences reveal that the economy is the yardstick which Jonathan uses to make such unverified claim. The economy of the nation, according to him, was rebased and it was the largest in Africa such that it attracted foreign investors. The economy of the nation overtook South Africa’s GDP and such, it signals a good omen to the nation. Mo Abudu queried the claim by saying that although the economy is the largest, it has not been reflected in the lives of the common Nigerians on the street.

Sentence (3) is another declarative that is used to condemn opposition parties particularly General Mohammad Buhari. Buhari is known for his authoritarian style during his tenure as the Head of State. This leadership style, according to the then ruling party, made Buhari to lose previous elections because Nigerians did not want another military person in a civilian government. He has not changed his style



despite the fact that, he claimed to be an Apostle of change. Buhari's antecedents are known for violence, arson and disruption of social order when he lost previous elections. This has made Nigerians to reject him at the previous polls. The communicative intention is to condemn nefarious activities of oppositions' supporters. These activities are undemocratic, uncivilized, and condemnable.

Textile industry is one of the major employers of labour in the early 1960's. The demise of this industry in Nigeria increases the number of unemployment in the nation. In fact, it can be said that textile industry is capable of employing hundreds of unemployed graduates in Nigeria. Buhari in this speech tactically condemns the then ruling party for its ineptitude and carelessness. PDP has done nothing than increase the woes of Nigerian youths. The high rate of crime in the country is as a result of the failure of the governments of yesteryears. Therefore, the demise of textile industry portends evils for Nigerian economy. Not only textile industry but also industries in the nation have gone into comatose of no return. This is the result of apparent neglect on the part of the previous governments and lack of maintenance culture. The intention is to condemn the ruling party rather than informing Nigerians how he is going to revitalize the dead textile industry.

Buhari in this sentence condemns corruption and all its manifestations. Corruption is the bane of Nigeria's development. It has crippled a lot of government's policy and programme. Power supply too has its taste from the bitter water of corruption in Nigeria. Nigeria with the population of 170 millions produced less than five thousand megawatts whereas America with 76 millions produced 36 thousand megawatts. This is quite alarming despite huge amount of money budgeted for power since 1999. Corruption is an endemic problem which has permeated every gamut in Nigeria particularly the political office holders. The intention in this mood is also to condemn previous governments and blame them for the woes of the nation. Buhari in this excerpt has not told us how he intends to solve the problem of power, corruption and security if voted in as president. He only castigates previous governments. It is not surprising that the then opposition party still blames PDP for the problems of the nation almost three years in office.

Similarly, this declarative mood is meant to castigate and condemn the government of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for lack of technical expertise on insurgency. During the last president's tenure, terrorists invaded eleven local governments in Adamawa State. This made Nigeria to receive the attention of the whole world. All efforts to help the nation were futile. The situation was so bad that Nigerians became refugees in their own countries and Internally Displaced Camps (IDCs) were established to cater for the displaced. It must be said that Buhari uses this to condemn the government of Jonathan. He said the government is clueless. In one of his speeches, Buhari said the nation is sitting on the keg of gunpowder if insurgency is not eradicated. From this, it can be observed that Buhari condemns and "pulls down" his fellow contestants in government without informing Nigerians on how He will solve the same problem if voted for. He did not tell Nigerians any concrete steps he would take to tackle the endemic problem of insurgency but he kept on condemning the strategies of his counterpart in the ruling party.

### 2.8.2 Interrogatives

Interrogatives are concerned with how responses are elicited from questions. In Nigeria, interrogative mood performs other functions such as blaming, condemning, praising, asserting, affirming and so on. Some examples are considered below:

- (7) Why have Nigeria military, not to talk of police been unable to stop insurgency? (PMB)
- (8) Are we afraid of election debate? (PMB)
- (9) What have you done to get us out of the epidemic of corruption? (GEJ)
- (10) Have we stopped armed robbery in Nigeria? (GEJ)

Insurgency is a social issue that has rendered hundreds and thousands of Nigerians homeless and displaced respectively. This menace was a product of corruption of yesteryears in Nigeria. Nigeria Military, despite their glorious impact in Darfur, Liberia, and so on could not withstand Boko Harem terrorists owing to lack of amenities and weapons. The previous sentences before this question destroyed the public image of Jonathan. He was tagged a weakling; thus, he was unprepared to rule Nigeria.

The rationale behind this was that Buhari is a school certificate holder while his counterpart in the ruling party is a PhD holder. The election debate was proposed so as to see who is able to rule Nigeria well. Buhari said he was not afraid of any election debate but he would not attend any debate due to an undisclosed reason. The communicative intention here is to assert that Buhari is not afraid of any presidential aspirants.

This interrogation is meant to accuse every individual in their failure of not providing solutions to the endemic problem of corruption. Corruption is an endemic problem. It is a behavioural problem. Every individual needs to put hands together in order to end corruption. The problem is a collective issue and it needs collective approach. In sentence 9, Jonathan tactically accuses Mo Abudu of her inability to put an end to corruption. To Jonathan, corruption is a collective problem. Every Nigerian should deem it fit to tackle corruption in their small capacity. The communicative intention is to condemn all Nigerians for not exposing every corruptible act. The act jeopardizes the future of every Nigerian. Nigerians should not see the fight against corruption as government's affairs alone but collective. It is when corruption is eradicated or minimised that Nigerians will be able to live a happy life.

Although Jonathan is from the ruling party, he still condemns Nigerian constitution for its inability to curb robbery and other crimes in Nigeria. For instance, firing squad has not ended robbery in Nigeria; rather, it has increased the insatiable thirst for wealth. It is not surprising that some scholars said that Nigerian law is meant for the poor. The rich do manoeuvre their way and justice is delayed. *Justice delayed is justice denied*. For instance, some politicians who stole millions of naira were sent to six months' imprisonment where a poor man that stole a phone worth of 87,000 NGN was sentenced to death by hanging (Mail online 2017). Jonathan tactically condemns not only the judiciary but every Nigerian for not being able to right the wrongs in the nation.

### 2.8.3 Imperatives

Imperative mood is another mood type in the interviews of presidential aspirants in 2015 General election. Imperative mood performs different communicative functions. This is exemplified below:

- (11) Look at what happened in 2011 when ten youth “corpers” (corp members) were slaughtered (GEJ)
- (12) Let me tell you the oppositions are aggressive (GEJ)
- (13) Let us empower our institutions, health system, and educational system so that we can develop confidence in them and stay at home...(PMB)
- (14) Let us import less and empower our industry and develop our goods (PMB)
- (15) We have to devise ways to protect some of our industries (PMB)

The imperative sentence in 11 above is made up of independent and dependent clauses. Independent sentence refers to social unrest that happened aftermath 2011 election while the dependent sentence reminded Nigerians about the youths that were slaughtered in their prime. In the social unrest that took place in the northern part of Nigeria, ten corps members on their compulsory service to the nation, were slaughtered in their prime in Bauchi, Yobe and Kaduna. The youths were dissatisfied because General Buhari did not win 2011 election. The youths took laws into their hands. The youths were the adherent supporters of the leading opposition candidate in Nigeria. The communicative intention is to condemn this act and at the same time accuse Buhari as the brain behind the nefarious acts.

The oppositions in this statement are the coalition of opposition parties popularly called All Progressive Congress. Their supporters are aggressive and this aggression has led to vandalism of government property and disruption of social order in Nigeria. Buhari, in many instances, has not called his supporters to order. He has even worsened the situation by making a statement that he would make the country “ungovernable for Jonathan”. The statement he made that “the country is sitting on a keg of gunpowder called for national probe. The intention here is to condemn opposition parties in Nigeria.

Sentence 13 is made by President Buhari. He tactically points out the weaknesses of the then government. The weaknesses are apparent in education and health systems. The systems have suffered serious neglect and mismanagement by past governments. For instance, Buhari condemned the decadence in infrastructural facilities in the health system. Nigerians do not have confidence on the health sector. Millions of naira is wasted to fly Nigerians abroad. In education, many Nigerians study in Ghana. This is quite embarrassing and it calls for national conference. Sentence 14 is a solution to the economy palaver in the nation. Our industries are crippled because of over dependence on foreign goods. Importation has killed many industries in Nigeria. For instance, rice is one of the goods imported into the nation and millions of naira is spent on its importation every day.

Sentence 15 is a continuation of sentence 14. The tactical use of “have to” is an obligation that must be carried out by Buhari. It shows that the resuscitation of industries is the only solution to end unemployment in Nigeria. Nigerian industries are dead and this cannot help the nation. The only solution is for the resuscitation of industries. Industries such as textile, Ajaokuta Company, rubber, train,

and many others have died natural death.

Summary of communicative intentions of sentence forms in selected presidential interviews of 2015 general elections.

The excerpts are presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Summary of Communicative Intentions of Sentence Forms in Selected Presidential Interviews of 2015 General**

Mood types	Excerpts	General speech acts	Specific acts
Declaratives	1	Representatives	Condemning
	2	Representatives	Claiming
	3	Representatives	Condemning
	4	Representatives	Claiming
	5	Representatives	Asserting
	6	Expressives	Lamenting
Interrogatives	7	Representatives	Condemning
	8	Representatives	Claiming
	9	Representatives	Blaming
	10	Representatives	Condemning
Imperatives	11	Representatives	Condemning
	12	Representatives	Condemning
	13	Representative	Informing
	14	Representatives	Informing
	15	Representatives	Asserting

The table above shows that the recurrent macro and micro speech acts are representatives and condemning. The purpose of political interviews is to convince and persuade electorates. In Nigeria, political interviews do not only convince and persuade electorates but also condemn the personalities of the opposition candidates. This suggests that the purpose of political interviews is defeated and modified. The purpose of interviews is to sell the candidacy of political aspirants to the voters; however, in Nigeria, it is an attempt to “pull down” the public image of oppositions as being evils, irresponsible and unreliable.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study has examined sentence forms in political interviews granted by the two presidential aspirants prior to 2011 General elections. The communicative intentions of the presidential aspirants are to pull down other aspirants. The most recurring macro and micro acts are representatives

and condemning respectively. This communicative intention does not enhance the growth of democracy in Nigeria because voters cannot decipher the political manifestoes of the political aspirants and the party they represent. Therefore, it is very important to say that for any meaningful development and growth to take place in Nigeria, there is the need for her political office-seekers to adhere strictly to election rules and regulations in order to avoid the replica of 2011 post-election violence.

## References

- Adeyanju, A. (2016). Language and style in sermonic discourse: an illustration with selected message outlines of W.F. Kumuyi. In A. Odebunmi, A. Osisanwo, H. Bodunde, & Ekpe (Eds.), *Grammar applied linguistics and society, A festschrift for Wale Osisanwo*. Ile-Ife (Nigeria): Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University press.
- Ekharefo, D., & Akoseogasinhe, I. M. (2017). *A textual Analysis of 2015 Presidential Election Advertisements in selected Nigerian Newspapers*.
- Ezeibe, C. C. (2006). *Hate Speech and Electoral Violence in Nigeria*.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as social semiotic*. London: Edward Arnold
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1989). The notion of “context” in language education. In M. Ghadessy (Ed.), *Text and context in functional linguistics* (pp. 1-24). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: J. Benjamins.
- Leach N. (2017). *Mail Online*. Retrieved March 10, 2018, from [https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel\\_news/article-4367986/Thief-sentenced-death-stealing-phone-Nigeria](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-4367986/Thief-sentenced-death-stealing-phone-Nigeria)
- Mbutor, O. J. (2015). *Americanisation of Nigerian Political Communications: Matters arising from the 2015 General Elections*.
- Nshehe, M. (2015). *Africa Most Successful Woman: Mo Abudu*. Retrieved March 10, 2018, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites>
- Odebunmi, A. (2006). *Meaning in English: An introduction*. Ogbomoso: Critic Sphere.
- Olaniyan, I. A. (2016). Some thoughts on the aspects of the English language and the Christian Religion in Nigeria. In A. Odebunmi, A. Osisanwo, H. Bodunde, & Ekpe (Eds.), *Grammar applied linguistics and society, A festschrift for Wale Osisanwo*. Ile-Ife (Nigeria): Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.