

Human Cloning in Nigeria Political Space: A Pragmatic Analysis of Selected Online Article 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 online media, as well as other media platforms to articulate their thoughts on the claims which favoured the possibility of the demise of the immediate past president of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, after a prolonged illness in the year 2007 and the ploy of a Jubril of Sudan clone in his place. This study examined 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. An online article titled, “Buhari: The real, the fake and the dead” authored by a Nigerian writer, Tunde Odesola retrieved from the online page of The Punch Newspaper on December 3, 2018, served as data for the study. The article was analysed using insights from the Stance Theory and the Pragmatics in general. The analysis revealed eight pragmatic strategies utilised by the writer, namely Biblical allusion, evaluative stance and positioning, epistemic stance and evocation of sarcasm, metaphors, and derogative labelling as anti-Jubrilist positioning, epistemic stance, and evocation of (dis)alignment, antithetical evocations, evaluative stance and berating, evaluative stance and justifying. These result in a pragmatic reconstruction of the readers’ views on the issue.

Keywords: Buhari, human cloning, Nigerian politics, pragmatic strategies, stance theory, online space.

Introduction

The online space has continued to be a platform for not only private and public discussions, but also a tribune for voicing critical political and national opinions. Nigerians and the international community have employed 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 rumour of a Jubril of Sudan clone in his place. Arising from the situation was the emergence of at least two extreme factions of public opinion: the pro Buhari/Jubril faction spearheaded by a popular ethnic leader, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and Buhari/Jubril rebuttals spearheaded by popular journalists, newspaper columnists and other Buhari loyalists.

Many linguistic studies have investigated the way communication is done in the online media in Nigeria covering different scope including humour (Taiwo, Odebunmi and Adetunji, 2016); terrorism (Chiluwa and Adetunji 2013; Chiluwa and Odebunmi 2016); news reportage strategies (Arrese and Perucha 2006; Chiluwa 2011) and the political discourse in Nigeria (Opeibi 2005, 2009, 2011; Adegoju and Oyeboode 2015; Omidiora, Ajiboye and Abioye 2020; Chiluwa, Taiwo and Ajiboye, 2020); Stance taking (Biber, and Finnegan,1989). From the foregoing, it is evident that no known linguistic investigation has been done on the discussions of cloning in the Nigerian political arena and especially on the rumoured cloned substitution of former president Buhari.

Adegoju and Oyeboode (2015) examine the patterns of humour in the use of Internet memes in the online campaign discourse of the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria and they found that memes deployed in the online campaigns of the presidential election mainly served subversive purposes. Oyeboode and Adegoju (2017) investigate appraisal resources on WhatsApp political broadcast messages in the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria. Their study reveals that in appropriating evaluative strategies, online text producers inscribe and invoke both

negative and positive instantiations to portray an ideological stance about the contenders. Omidiora, Ajiboye and Abioye (2020) examine political discursive practices and their socio-cognitive functions in the political jingles of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. Chiluya and Adetunji (2013) investigates pragmatic acts in the discourse of tweeters and online feedback comments on the activities of Boko Haram, a terrorist group in Nigeria. Opeibi (2011) examines the communicative strategies deployed by political candidates during their campaigns in seeking political power. Chiluya and Odebunmi (2016) investigate stance and engagement on conversations on terrorism attacks on Nairaland. From the foregoing, it is evident that no research effort has been given to the recent discussions on cloning in the Nigerian political space. This study thus examines one article on the human cloning claims against Nigeria's former president, Mohammadu Buhari with the aim to examine the pragmatic strategies and the stance acts employed by the writer in achieving his goal of rebuttal.

Methodology and Theoretical Insights

An online newspaper article titled, "Buhari: The real, the fake and the dead" authored by Nigerian journalist and newspaper columnist, Tunde Odesola and retrieved online from the online page of The Punch Newspaper on December 3, 2018, served as data for the study. The article was analysed using insights from the Stance Theory and the Pragmatic Act Theory.

According to Du Bois (2007), stance is a public act by means of which social actors dialogically evaluate objects, and position themselves in (dis)alignment with other actors with respect to any salient interactional endeavour. DuBois outlined three kinds of stance in his paper: affective stance, evaluative stance, and epistemic stance. Evaluative stance is explained as the most widely recognised form of stance-taking in that it reflects the opinion of a speaker (also called a subject) about an item of discussion (also called an object). When a subject evaluates an item, s/he orients to it and characterises it as having some specific quality or value. Through such an evaluation, a subject displays a positioning to such an object such that a positive dialogic positioning translates to an alignment.

The affective stance encapsulates the attitudinal and emotional orientations of interactants which can be expressed through verbal and nonverbal resources (Du Bois, 2007). The third type

of stance is the epistemic stance, and it refers to interactants expression of certainty or doubt about the item of discussion. In other words, epistemic stance relates to the dialogic display of the degree of knowledge a subject possesses about an object.

Human Cloning in the Nigerian Political Space

The Former General, Muhammadu Buhari was elected President of Nigeria in 2015 in his fourth attempt at leadership since he was ousted from power in 1985 during the military administration (Cullinane 2018). He further secured the votes of the masses for a second term between 2019-2023. However, from the middle of 2016, the health of the former president deteriorated until eventually he was flown out of the country for intensive medical care for months in 2017. During this period, the rumour appeared on online media spaces of the death of the president and the secrecy surrounding his purported death (Davies 2018). Different conspiracy theories evolved on the subject for several weeks afterwards. According to Davies (ibid), ‘the conspiracy has been fanned by members of the political opposition and the separatist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) party, who claim there is evidence that the president has been replaced by Jubril, a man that was believed to have been imported from Sudan’. Several weeks passed however before former president Buhari responded to the rumour which he dismissed as ‘ignorant and irreligious’ (BBC, 2018). There are various opinions on the ethical (Ogar 2019) and political implications of having a clone replace the president of a ‘constitutional democracy’ (Toomey 2019). According to Ogar (2019) cloning means to make an exact genetic copy of an existing organism. Individual human cloning occurs naturally in the case of identical twins (Ayala, 2015). Ever since the cloning of the sheep Dolly, in Scotland in July 1996, through an adult cell as the source of the genotype (Ayala, ibid; Johansson, 2003), both the excitement of human cloning and the ethical concerns have not dwindled.

Data Analysis

The author employs several pragmatic strategies in achieving his goal of rebuttal in his online article, “Buhari: The real, the fake and the dead”. The title itself suggests a dilemma as

there is a hint of the possibility of multiple identities for Muhammadu Buhari, during his tenure as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The writer employed pragmatic strategies such as stance acts, metaphors, biblical and political allusions, derogative labeling, and antithesis to achieve his intention of refuting claims of the death of president Buhari and the possibility of a clone in the person of a Jubril el-sudaniya. Some of the strategies are discussed shortly.

Biblical Allusion

This involves reference to Biblical events or characters for the purpose of creating some imagery or corroborating a point. An example of biblical allusion is presented in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1: He is awesome. He is God. His awesomeness flows from an amazing simplicity, which created Man – the ultimate mammal – from mere clay and breath, after forging the universe and everything thereof with the ‘Let-there-be’ phrase. The beauty of creation laid in its simplicity and sophistication until Man murdered simplicity to worship eternally at the altar of complication... But complication soon set in and the hue of governance changed from light to darkness.

The author begins his article by alluding to the personality of the God deity and ascribing to him the antithetical qualities of awesomeness and simplicity with respect to the creation of man from clay. He alludes to the Biblical phrase, ‘Let there be light’ and he also creates an imagery with biblical presentation of the pre-creation earth as being filled with utter darkness. Through the Biblical allusion, the author creates a deliberate background for his story and a foundation for his subtle judgement of the public opinion of the possibility of a cloned Buhari as emanating from the departure from nature’s simplicity to complexity.

Stance Acts

Stance acts refer to the communicative means by means of which social actors express their subjectivity over a topic of discussion in relation to the subjectivity of other social actors on the same subject. These acts may be evaluative, epistemic, and affective and it could reflect their positioning in alignment or disalignment with the opinions of other interactants on the same topic or object. In the data, different stance acts are utilised by the author. These will be discussed below.

Evaluative Stance and Positioning

Evaluative stance refers to the dialogic effort of a subject in attributing some qualities or values to an object. A subject's evaluative positioning stems strongly from their personal assessment and subjectivity about the object in relation to the opinions or claims of others interactants on the object. The excerpts below exemplify this:

Excerpt 2: Though simple in outlook, Nigerians loved and respected their President, on whom they showered enormous goodwill.

Excerpt 3: It was his beautiful wife, Aisha, who, in October 2016, noticed the fire dying out in the old Buhari, and she screamed on the top of her voice, alerting the nation that her once-upon-a-time tough-talking soldier-husband had been hijacked by a cabal and turned into a dripping sponge. Aisha lamented, "I have decided as his wife, that if things continue like this up to 2019, I will not go out and campaign again, and ask any woman to vote like I did before. I will never do it again. The President does not know 45 out of 50, for example, of the people he appointed, and I don't know them either, despite being his wife for 27 years. I may not back him at the next election unless he shakes up his government."

In his evaluation which is foregrounded in the excerpts 2 above, Odesola bestows upon president Buhari the quality of simplicity and modesty as a precursor to his epistemic stance which is captured in the past tense, to express the love and respect that Nigerians possessed for the President. This view also implicates a change in the affective positioning of Nigerians from "love" and "respect" for Buhari to the opposite qualities of "hate" and "disrespect" or "despise."

In excerpt 3, the author further provides his evaluation of the former first lady, Aisha Buhari as 'beautiful' and implicitly as being observant, supportive, and proactive. He goes on to reveal her efforts to notify the public of the decline in vigour and helplessness of her husband in matters of governance and in the selection of his cabinet. This revelation of the author about the former first lady of a public confession about a purported hijack of her husband's administration by a cabal is deliberate but a subtle strategy to absolve the former president of the public opinions about the weaknesses and failures of his administration. The author also indirectly positions himself in strong alignment with Aisha Buhari's report of her husband's administration in such a way to attract the sympathy of the public to the former president and diffuse their judgment and criticism.

Epistemic Stance and the Evocation of Sarcasm

Epistemic stance refers to a speaker's claims of certainty or doubt about a proposition. It is usually characterised through the use verb forms and modal verbs that reflect the degree of knowledge possessed by a speaker and their level of commitment to the truth or falsity of such knowledge. In the data, Tunde Odesola presents certain claims about the former president however as a strategy to evoke sarcasm about the public opinion of a possible cloning of former president Buhari, as presented in excerpt 4 below:

Excerpt 4: President Muhammadu Buhari is dead. He died since early last year. He's cloned. A certain body double and Sudanese Fulani prisoner, Jubril, is bestriding Aso Rock, the nation's seat of power in Buhari's stead. The rumour mill is busy. However, conspiracy and whispering, the two ancient companions of gossiping, are missing in the Buhari-is-dead rumour-mongering.

Excerpt 5: I know the dead Buhari. He is the creation of the aggressively greedy opposition bent on returning to power in 2019 through all means inglorious... Buhari has joined his ancestors, they insisted, quoting the time, the date and the circumstances of the death.

In excerpt 5 above, the author provides strong epistemic claims about the death of the president and his cloning into another double body in the person of a Jubril from Sudan. However, these claims are strategically deployed to register his harsh sarcasm about the incredibility of the cloning story. The real positioning of the author is revealed in the succeeding paragraph where he evaluates the story as a 'rumour' and as conspiracy theory. He also eventually reveals the sources of his purported strong and sarcastic epistemic claims through such formulations like, 'They said the real Buhari died a long time ago for the fake Buhari to germinate on the Rock of Aso' and arrogating the 'dead Buhari' as being the brain child of some mischievous and vicious imaginations in succeeding paragraphs of the article, where he also resorts to labelling and the use of metaphors to create vivid descriptions of the culprits.

Metaphors and Derogatory Labelling as Anti-Jibrilist Positioning

On the one hand, metaphors are figurative expressions of the semantic comparisons between two different notions. According to Grey (2008) metaphor is a tool of conceptual economy and discovery which provides a way of imposing or discovering structure within new situations. On the other hand, derogatory labels are expressions or names which reflect a

speaker's critical attitude towards the referent. Tunde Odesola employs metaphors and derogatory labels as pragmatic strategies to register his positioning regarding the story of a cloned Buhari as a Jubril of Sudan. The strategies are revealed in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 6: However, conspiracy and whispering, the two ancient companions of gossiping, are missing in the Buhari-is-dead rumour-mongering. These **rumour-mongers** don't beat silent gongs; they have modern mass communication gadgets. They don't whisper to the ears, conspiratorially; they roar on rooftops, defiantly. **They** belong to the political elite that have been feeding fat on the ignorance, illiteracy and vulnerability of the masses – long before Lord Frederick Lugard lowered the Union Jack in Nigeria on October 1, 1960. These mongers are bold and daring. Buhari has joined his ancestors, they insisted, quoting the time, the date and the circumstances of the death. Prominent among the rumormongers is a **pro-Biafra misfit leader**, whose name isn't worth dignifying with a mention. Another is a **former minister, a lawyer and backscratcher from the South-West**, who has a penchant for speaking before thinking. Both are **self-seeking hustlers** who daily crave for media attention, which I'm not ready to oblige here.

Excerpt 7: While the former is attired in a self-imposed, oversized pro-ethnic garment atop a pair of outsized shoes, the latter, a rabble-rouser, is just an opportunist on the trail of the whiff of money. Going by his recent misguided messages online, the so-called charlatan spiritual leader, who spoke from a foreign land recently, is eminently unarmed for the great task which Igbo self-determinism entails. This jester from the land of the rising sun and the hoaxer from the land of the setting sun are only exploiting the self-inflicted woes President Muhammadu Buhari brought upon himself, his All-Progressives Congress, and the country, in general.

Excerpt 8: Buhari provided the pseudo pro-Igbo activist, the Yoruba braggart and their numerous co-travellers sufficient paint to write, "Rest in Peace, President Muhammadu Buhari: (1942-2016)," on a cheap coffin purchased in the nation's political arena, where commonsense is absent.

The author employs a range of pragmatic strategies in his rebuttal of the Buhari cloning story. He creates vivid pictures of certain individuals whom he identified as the peddlers of the story using derogatory labels and metaphors. The derogatory labels used by the author highlighted in bold font in the excerpts are: 'rumour-mongers', 'a pro-Biafra misfit leader', 'a former minister, a lawyer and backscratcher from the South-west who has a penchant for speaking before thinking', 'self-seeking hustlers', 'attired in a self-imposed, oversized pro-ethnic garment atop a pair of outsized shoes', 'rabble-rouser', 'an opportunist on the trail of the whiff of money', 'jester from the land of the rising sun' and 'the hoaxer from the land of the setting sun', 'pseudo pro-Igbo activist', and 'the Yoruba braggart' reveal the writer's tone of utter distaste and displeasure for the two individuals he described as the rumour mongers of the Buhari/Jubril cloning story.

In addition, the writer also employs metaphors, as revealed in the excerpts above, in creating a compelling refutation of the Buhari cloning story. Through the imageries of the ancient publicity channel of beating gongs and the mundane primordial act of gossiping and whispering to disseminate information and their comparison with the emergence of sophisticated mass media gadgets, the writer emphasises the force and frequency of the spread of the story through new media platforms.

Epistemic Stance and Evocation of (Dis)alignment

Speakers and writers alike sometimes display their knowledge of an object in a way as to position themselves in alignment or disalignment with an existing position on the same object. This can be dialogically achieved through various communicative means. We shall consider some excerpts below to illustrate this:

Excerpt 9: I know the dead Buhari. He is the creation of the aggressively greedy opposition bent on returning to power in 2019 through all means inglorious. They've since discovered that the bleating lion of Daura is crippled, after all. Now, they're closing in on the old beast with cudgels, spears and daggers as the feverish lion battles to rise up. They want him out of the villa: dead or alive, or both!

In the excerpt above, the writer displays strong epistemic confidence about his knowledge and opinions on the metaphoric 'dead Buhari'. He displays a pseudo-alignment with the trending opinion poll on the death of the President Buhari in 2017 after a serious illness which took him away from the country for months to get the necessary medical attention for his chronic condition. The insincerity of this alignment is immediately revealed by the writer's epistemic stance of accusing the opposition of being the creators of the 'dead Buhari' story. He employs pejorative terms such as 'greedy' and creates in the minds of readers vivid pictures of the over-ambition, ruthlessness, and viciousness with which the opposition party is determined to secure the presidency in place of the former president, Muhammadu Buhari.

The writer also utilises some epistemic resources as a strategy for registering his strong disalignment with the cloning story as revealed in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 10: They said the real Buhari died a long time ago for the fake Buhari to germinate on the Rock of Aso. No.

Excerpt 11: For me, the real Buhari is not dead. The real Buhari surfaced on the nation’s political terrain on the last day of 1983 when he led a gang of military boys to overthrow the prodigal Shehu Shagari civilian administration. The real Buhari started the War against Indiscipline and brought back sanity to a corrupt nation, though some of his policies backfired, resulting in inflation and concomitant gnashing of teeth among the citizenry. The real Buhari was rigid and tough. He commanded respect and fear within the military and across the country. The real Buhari was the no-nonsense, low-profile Daura cattle owner, whose military pedigree Nigerians chose at the poll in 2015 over the corrupt, unimaginative, and small-minded Goodluck Jonathan administration...Buhari is not dead; he is only not real, and unfit to be President, like Atiku Abubakar.

Tunde Odesola associates the source of the death rumour of former president Buhari to some persons whom he refers to as ‘they’. He refutes their claim boldly with a disaffirmation to positions him in disalignment with the rumour. He makes strong epistemic claims about his knowledge about the personality of the former president by first establishing his perspective and stance poise with the perspectivization marker, ‘for me’ as a foreshadow of the epistemics-laden expression, ‘the real Buhari is not dead’. He continues to provide personal opinions using historical allusions (the military overthrow of 1983 in Nigeria, War against Indiscipline campaign in Nigeria) and political allusion (Buhari’s victory in the 2015 election over the then incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan) to recount the past achievements of the former president and his integrity and personal values of whom he portrayed as, ‘the no-nonsense, low-profile Daura cattle owner’. It is also noteworthy the fact that Odesola presents this information about Buhari in the past tense as a tactful way of evoking the admirable qualities of Buhari which secured him the mandate of the people in the 2015 polls and a strategic contrasting of those qualities with the disappointing realities that discoloured his administration. Odesola employs this style to attract the sympathy of the public for the former president and a subtle effort to shift the blame of Buhari’s failures to the cabal hijack as revealed by Aisha Buhari and previously illustrated. He concludes his article with a bold epistemic assertion that Buhari is not dead.

Antithetical Evocations

Antithetical statements contain two contrasting ideas that are juxtaposed in parallel form (Wiktionary). Tunde Odesola, the writer of the data in this study employed the use of antithetical statements articulating his rebuttal claims about the cloned Buhari story as presented in the excerpts below:

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Excerpt 12: Nigerians voted for security; they got blood on their streets.
They voted for prosperity, but poverty stalks the land, increasing suicide rate.
They voted for unity; they got clannishness.
They voted for justice; they got selective justice.

They voted for the uprooting of Boko Haram; Boko Haram flourished and gave birth to killer herdsmen.
They voted for compassion; they got cold-bloodedness with the President condoling with Rivers people over the fatal collapse of a seven-story building in Port Harcourt, seven days after the incident! But governance stood still immediately Yusuf, his son, had an okada accident in Abuja last December as top medical consultants speedily attended to him before he was flown to Germany for further treatment. ..

Excerpt 13: The prevarication in Buhari’s popular line, “**I am for everybody. I’m for nobody.**” cemented the insincerity and confusion of his government, as it let out a sign of weakness which political hounds exploited.

In excerpt 12 above, Odesola displays some epistemic awareness of the situation in Nigeria with respect to the failed expectations of the masses in their election of Muhammadu Buhari as their president between year 2015 and 2023. He adopts the perspective of the populace to construct seven antithetical statements that summarise the highlights of the failures of the Buhari administration including Buhari’s trademark slogan, “**I am for everybody. I’m for nobody.**”. These statements however are deliberately deployed to secure the trust and agreement of the readers with his stance and positioning on the Buhari cloning in such a way that the credibility of the writer’s opinions is accepted. In essence, Odesola tactfully creates these antitheses to register on the minds of the readers a positioning of objectivity to achieve his goal of rebuttal of the cloning story.

Evaluative Stance and Berating

The writer of the article, ‘Buhari: the real, the fake and the dead’, Tunde Odesola also employs the evaluative stance to demonstrate his shock towards the section of the populace who believes the cloned Buhari story. An excerpt illustrating this stance is presented below:

Excerpt 14: It is, however, laughable and sad that some Nigerians would believe that Buhari would die in a London hospital, and would be flown to Saudi Arabia for burial, without the press knowing. And Aisha, her children and all extended family members would keep quiet? Nothing can be more stupid. One fellow even said that a minute silence was observed for the repose of Buhari’s soul when African leaders met recently in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, even as there was an imaginary letter ostensibly from the Queen of England, condoling with Nigeria over the passing of Buhari. The pictures of Buhari writing with his left and right hands are no-brainers for any eight-year-old who can manipulate a simple camera.

Odesola describes the thought process that accommodates a cloned Buhari as ‘laughable’, ‘sad’ and ‘stupid’. He berates some Nigerians for allowing themselves to believe such a ridiculous story as he also probes the possibility of the death of a nation’s president without the knowledge of the press and more importantly, his immediate and extended family. His choices of words with reference to different claims ranging from some reports by ‘one fellow’ and the purported claim which Odesola refers to as ‘an imaginary letter ostensibly from the Queen of England’ etc. condoling the death of Buhari and the subsequent cloning as a Jubril of Sudan also reveals his aversion for the pro-Jubrilists. He also vehemently debunks the viral evidence of Buhari’s pictures writing with his left and right hands as a mere manipulation of the digital representation.

Evaluative Stance and Justifying

The writer further takes an evaluative stance by describing the moral inadequacies demonstrated by Buhari as a justification for the masses’ acceptance of the cloned Buhari story and opposition’s a strong reason for the opposition to launch the attack against his administration. We shall consider an excerpt below:

Excerpt 15: But by being deceitful, ineffective, insincere, unfeeling, non-proactive and distant to the masses, Buhari provided the pseudo pro-Igbo activist, the Yoruba braggart and their numerous co-travellers sufficient paint to write, “Rest in Peace, President Muhammadu Buhari: (1942-2016),” on a cheap coffin purchased in the nation’s political arena, where commonsense is absent.

Excerpt 16: Though a creation of the political elite, the masses believe in the existence of the fake Buhari because their hope for a better tomorrow through the real Buhari they voted for in March 2015 has been wickedly dashed.

The writer also employs the evaluative stance through his use of multiple synonyms to describe the unpopular attitude of president Buhari during his administration as being ‘deceitful’, ‘ineffective’, ‘insincere’, ‘unfeeling’. ‘non-proactive’ and ‘distant’. He explains that these attitudes of the former president provided the opportunity for the opposition to design their story of the former’s death and cloning. He establishes the fact that the masses believe in the existence of a cloned Buhari because their hopes in the real Buhari whom they elected to power have been dashed.

Findings and Conclusion

From the forgoing, it is evident that the writers employed eight different pragmatic strategies in his rebuttal of the rumoured dead and cloned Buhari account. These strategies are: Biblical allusion, evaluative stance and positioning, epistemic stance and evocation of sarcasm, metaphors, and derogative labelling as anti-Jibrilist positioning, epistemic stance, and evocation of (dis)alignment, antithetical evocations, evaluative stance and berating, evaluative stance and justifying. The writer deployed the stances for positioning in alignment or disalignment with the existing claims favouring the death and subsequent cloning of former president Buhari; metaphors and derogatives were utilised by the writer in creating a compelling refutation of the cloned Buhari story and the writer's displeasure for the Jubril-Buhari claimants. The writer tactfully creates antithetical statements to register on the minds of the readers a positioning of his objectivity to achieve his goal of rebuttal of the cloning story. These strategies result in a pragmatic reconstruction of readers' views on the claims of a dead and cloned Buhari, thereby restoring some confidence in the Buhari led administration.

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