



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL UNITY IN NIGERIAN
NEWSPAPER CONGRATULATORY ANNOUNCEMENTS***

TANIMU AHMED JIBRIL

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**DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL UNITY IN NIGERIAN
NEWSPAPER CONGRATULATORY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

By

TANIMU AHMED JIBRIL

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2018

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chairman : Afida Mohamad Ali, PhD
Faculty : Modern Languages and Communication

In postcolonial Nigeria, the realisation of genuine national unity within its ethnically diverse society has always been the primary challenge facing the country ever. The situation of the fragmented state of the country is ripe for the national unity discourse to take root, and consequently, a fertile soil for various parties to participate in the grand discourse in different ways. Utilising CDA and, specifically, Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b) proposed three steps of analysing discourse, the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), present study examined the discursive construction of unity through privately sponsored newspaper congratulatory announcements (NCAs) published in *The Guardian*, the *Vanguard*, the *Daily Trust* and the *Punch* newspapers. The study was focused on how unity discourse is manipulated to get other discursive actions performed in tandem with the promotion of unity by the private individuals/organisations sponsoring the NCAs. The study also highlighted the way semiotic resources were used to construct the representations of unity as well as how specific discursive strategies were employed to reproduce, normalise and promote such representations. The selected NCAs analysed in the present study covered the period between 2011 and 2016. The textual components of the NCAs were investigated to: (i) to identify the recurrent themes dominating the NCAs discourse; (ii) to describe the semiotic resources and the discursive strategies used to construct, normalise and promote unity in the NCAs; (iii) to examine the type of national unity and version of reality presented by the private sponsors of the NCAs and, (iv) to discuss further discursive actions performed in the name of promoting unity in the NCAs and how it serves the interests of its sponsors.

The results from the NCAs discourse analysis revealed five key themes, which were centred on the following: (i) forging unity through peaceful coexistence; (ii) forging unity through patriotic values; (iii) forging unity through diversity; (iv) forging unity

through nation building; and (v) forging unity through cultural diversity. Discursive strategies such as abstraction, evaluation, substitution, foregrounded or backgrounded elements, presences and absences were used to manipulate the social reality and the status quo (Carvalho, 2008) so as to discursively recontextualise, normalise and promote (Machin, 2013; van Leeuwen, 2013) the ideology of unity as envisioned by the sponsors of the NCAs. The study discovered that the discursive construction of unity was also linguistically realised through the processes of lexicalisation and metaphorisation. The dominant themes, the semiotic structures and the discursive strategies appeared to have been used to positively manipulate the social reality so as to reproduce, naturalise and promote the concept of unity (see Carvalho, 2008).

The study found that the current state and the envisioned future of the country is positively constructed and projected as a united reality by the sponsors of the NCAs, which is contrary to the common perception and lived experiences of the people. Further, the study found that other discursive actions were realised, in the name of promoting unity, by the sponsors of the NCAs. These actions include: pseudopatriotism, commercialisation and corporate social responsibility. The study suggested that these corporate entities and, most especially, the global corporations among them, utilise pseudo acts to boost profits, enhance customer index and work out on their corporate image in the eyes of the ruling regimes as well as the general public within their host communities.

The findings of this study are hope to lighten up our understanding of how individuals or corporate organisations may interfere with media coverage (Fairclough, 1995b) and attempt to control and manipulate discourses (Abousnougga & Machin, 2008; Carvalho, 2008) so as to achieve further ideological or commercial objectives (Hall, 2006). It is also hoped that this study will modestly contribute to the field of critical discourse analysis and other disciplines such as media and communication studies, journalism, visual communication and the literature of media research in general.

Abstrak tesis yang dibentangkan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PEMBINAAN DISKURSIF PERPADUAN NASIONAL DALAM
PENGUMUMAN TAHNIAH SURAT KHABAR DI NIGERIA**

Oleh

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Dalam zaman selepas penjajahan di Nigeria, kesedaran tentang perpaduan nasional dalam masyarakat pelbagai bangsa sering menjadi cabaran utama yang didepani oleh negara ini. Situasi keadaan negara yang berpecah-belah tidak membenarkan perpaduan nasional untuk bertapak dan akibatnya, dan tidak membenarkan juga keadaan yang kondusif untuk pelbagai pihak mengambil bahagian dalam wacana yang besar dalam cara yang berbeza. Dengan menggunakan CDA dan khususnya kajian Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b) serta tiga langkah menganalisa wacana, teori penetapan agenda (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), kajian semasa mengkaji pembinaan perpaduan diskursif melalui pengumuman tahniah suratkhbar yang menerima penjaan swasta (NCA) yang diterbitkan dalam The Guardian, the Vanguard, the Daily Trust dan akhbar-akhbar Punch. Kajian menjurus kepada bagaimana wacana perpaduan dimanipulasi untuk mendapatkan tindakan-tindakan diskursif lain seiring dengan galakan perpaduan oleh individu/organisasi swasta yang menaja NCA. Kajian juga menekankan cara sumber semiotik digunakan untuk membangunkan tanda-tanda perpaduan dan bagaimana strategi-strategi diskursif khusus digunakan untuk menghasilkan semula, menormalkan dan menggalakkan representasi berkenaan. NCA yang dipilih, dianalisa dalam kajian semasa dalam tempoh di antara tahun 2011 dan 2016. Komponen-komponen tekstual NCA dikaji untuk: (i) mengenalpasti tema-tema yang sering dibangkitkan yang mendominasi wacana NCA; (ii) menghuraikan sumber-sumber semiotik dan strategi-strategi diskursif untuk membangunkan, menormalkan dan menggalakkan perpaduan dalam NCA; (iii) mengkaji jenis perpaduan nasional dan versi realiti yang dibentangkan oleh penaja-penaja swasta NCA dan, (iv) membincangkan lebih lanjut tindakan-tindakan wacana yang dijalankan di atas nama menggalakkan perpaduan dalam NCA dan bagaimana ia memenuhi kehendak dan kepentingan para penaja.

Keputusan-keputusan analisa wacana NCA menunjukkan lima tema utama, yang berpusat kepada lima perkara berikut: (i) menyemarakkan perpaduan melalui kewujudan bersama yang aman harmoni; (ii) menyemarakkan perpaduan melalui nilai-nilai patriotik; (iii) menyemarakkan perpaduan melalui kepelbagaian; (iv) menyemarakkan perpaduan melalui pembinaan bangsa; dan (v) menyemarakkan perpaduan melalui kepelbagaian budaya. Strategi-strategi wacana seperti pengabstrakan, penilaian, penggantian, elemen asas atau latar belakang, kehadiran dan ketidakhadiran digunakan untuk memanipulasi realiti sosial dan kedudukan status (Carvalho, 2008) untuk tujuan membangunkan semula, menormalkan dan menggalakkan (Machin, 2013; van Leeuwen, 2013) ideologi perpaduan yang menjadi wawasan para penaja NCA. Kajian mendapati bahawa tanda perpaduan diskursif juga dikenalpasti secara linguistik melalui proses leksikalisasi. Tema-tema dominan, struktur semiotik dan strategi diskursif nampaknya digunakan untuk memanipulasi secara positif realiti sosial untuk menghasilkan semula, mensemualajadikan dan mengangkat konsep perpaduan (rujuk Carvalho, 2008).

Kajian mendapati bahawa masa depan negara yang dibayangkan dibangun secara positif dan dipaparkan sebagai satu realiti yang bersatu oleh para penaja NCA, yang bertentangan dengan persepsi lazim dan pengalaman hidup manusia. Tambahan pula, kajian mendapati bahawa tindakan-tindakan diskursif lain telah dikenalpasti, demi menggalakkan perpaduan oleh penaja-penaja NCA. Tindakan-tindakan ini termasuk: pseudopatriotisme, komersialisasi dan tanggungjawab sosial korporat. Kajian mencadangkan bahawa entiti-entiti korporat dan terutamanya, badan-badan global di kalangan mereka, menggunakan tindakan pseudo untuk meningkatkan keuntungan, meningkatkan lagi indeks pelanggan dan cuba meningkatkan imej korporat di mata rejim yang memerintah begitu juga kepada masyarakat am dalam komuniti-komuniti hos mereka.

Dapatan-dapatan kajian juga diharapkan meningkatkan lagi kefahaman kita terhadap bagaimana individu atau organisasi korporat boleh mencampuri urusan liputan media (Fairclough, 1995b) dan cuba mengawal dan memanipulasi wacana (Abousnnouga & Machin, 2008; Carvalho, 2008) untuk mencapai objektif-objektif ideologikal atau komersial (Hall, 2006). Diharapkan juga kajian ini akan menyumbang kepada bidang analisa wacana kritikal dan disiplin-disiplin lain seperti media dan kajian komunikasi, kewartawanan, komunikasi visual dan literatur kajian media secara amnya.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BZM	Biafra Zionist Movement
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CL	Critical Linguistics
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MOSSOB	Movement for the Survival of a Sovereign State of Biafra
MDA	Multimodal Discourse Analysis
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NDPVF	Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force
NDVF	Niger Delta Vigilante Force
NCA	Newspaper Congratulatory Announcements
NPC	National Population Commission
OPC	Odua People's Congress
SAT	Speech Act Theory
SFG	Systemic Functional Grammar
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VG	Visual Grammar

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a collection of independent Native States, separated from one another by great distances, by differences of history and traditions and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers - *Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor General of Nigeria (1920-1931)* (Igwe, 2014, p. 1).

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and scope of the study, objectives and research questions, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and significance of the study, limitations of the study, definition of key operational terms and overview of the dissertation. This study was intended to examine the discursive construction of national unity through privately sponsored newspaper congratulatory announcements (NCAs), with special focus on how unity discourse is utilised to get other discursive actions performed, in the name of promoting unity, by the private sponsors. It also highlights how semiotic resources and discursive strategies were employed to reproduce, naturalise and promote the concept of unity (van Leeuwen, 2013; Machin, 2013; Carvalho, 2008) within Nigeria's deeply polarised and ethnically divided society (see Okene, 2011; Ajayi, 2016).

1.2 Background of the Study

Since the attainment of Nigeria's political independence from Britain in 1960, national unity has always been the major problem facing the country. The most central and persistent debate has always been around how its diverse regional, ethnic and religious groupings would be identified as a united country (Bourne, 2015; Egharevba & Aghedo, 2016; Ome, 2013; Odeyemi, 2014; see also Solomon, 2015, p. 95). Basically, unity and social integration have been identified as the bedrock for "development" in any society. They are perceived to be among the most desired mechanisms needed to be put in place, especially in ethnically diverse nations such as Nigeria (Idowu & Sayuti, 2016, p. 67). Though, unity has been identified as very central to the "re-imagination of nations" (Haag, 2010, p. 346). From the middle of the 1960s, the survival of Nigeria's political model and its national unity are believed to have been greatly endangered due to political recklessness, internal displacement of citizens, military interventions in the polity and "secessionist movements" (Tamuno, 1970, p. 563). For example, Isaac Boro moved to secede the Niger Delta from Nigeria in an unsuccessful "twelve day revolution" in 1963 (Bourne, 2015, p. 117; Taft & Haken, 2015, p. 12; Maier, 2000, pp. 123-125; Kalu, 2008). His botched struggle later re-emerged in different forms in the late 1990s and the early Millennium with Ken Saro-

Wiwa's political movement and the activities of other militant groups in the oil rich Niger-Delta (see Maier, 2000, pp. 125-26). Likewise, the Gideon Orkar's 1990 attempted *coup d'état* was believed to have been informed by Orkar's desire to secede the southeast region. In the northeast, the ongoing *Boko Haram* insurgency, which started in 2009, is largely seen as an end result of religious intolerance, greediness and a much more ambitious plan of carving out an Islamic *caliphate* in the region (Onomuakpokpo, 2017; Pate & Idris, 2016; Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013; see Solomon, 2015, pp. 85-103).

In his supposition, Hall (2012) associates Nigeria's problem of national unity to its federal system of governance. He supposes that under the country's "federalism", national unity is seriously hampered in such a way that the system fuels "ethnic tensions" that endangers lives and properties in so many places across the country. Secondly, the system is believed to have put some groups or communities at disadvantage in terms of providing them with "basic services". Thirdly, the democratic process in Nigeria is understood to have been weakened and monopolised as power is practically shared among the country's three major ethnic nationalities, that is: *Hausa/Fulani*, *Yoruba* and *Igbo*. Lastly, the system is thought to have encouraged corrupt practices in governance, which as a result, brings about poor leadership, downplays accountability and sense of responsibility and, in due course, affects the "quality" of the services provided to the wider society (p. 55) (for more details on Nigeria's federalism, see Babalola, 2015; see also Uka, 2008, pp. 3-4).

Successive governments in postcolonial Nigeria have come up with numerous strategies and programmes, which were designed to promote national unity within the country's multicultural society (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013; Egharevba & Aghedo, 2016; see Otunko et al., 2017, p. 125). For example, the number of states in the federation were increased over the years and the federal character system of appointments and recruitments was initiated. Moreover, unity schools and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) were introduced with the purpose of arresting the worsening state of national integration and sense of loyalty and belonging to the nation among all Nigerians (see Ibietan & Itodo, 2015, pp. 3-6; Asaju & Egberi, 2015; Idowu & Sayuti, 2016). However, most of these initiatives are believed to have failed in recording the much anticipated positive outcomes (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013; Egharevba & Aghedo, 2016). Given that, Nigeria has often been described as a mere "geographical expression", and a "country", not a "nation", where the prospect of actualising a genuine unity among its people remains very uncertain. That is to say, the country is seen to have not yet attained what it requires to become a full-fledged 'nation' in terms of specifying its unified national objectives (Daramola, 2008, p. 355; Odeyemi, 2014; Bourne, 2015). A prominent Nigerian politician, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (the first Premier of the defunct southwest region), was quoted in 1947 saying that:

Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no ‘Nigerians’ in the same sense as there are ‘English’, ‘Welsh’, or ‘French’. The word Nigerian is a mere distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not (Emmanuel, 2016, pp. 33-34).

Even with the multiple challenges facing Nigeria’s unity and its current state of affairs, views from different quarters still express optimism on the country’s future. For example, it is argued that the multi-ethnic composition of Nigeria is supposed to have been a source for “blessings” and “strength” towards its growth as a thriving nation capable of exploring and utilising its numerous potential (Odeyemi, 2014, p. 9). In another positive note, a former Nigeria’s military Head of State from 1985 to 1993, retired General Ibrahim Babangida was quoted in an interview saying that:

Nigeria, my dear country, is not a stranger to crisis, nor is she immune to it. In a profound sense, she can be said to have been created out of crisis, a nation state that will continue to strive to subdue and transcend crises (see Opejobi, 2017).

In another perspective, Nigeria is projected to prosper in the future as the country withstood various challenges over the last 103 years. The view emphasised on restoring genuine national unity, among other fundamental problems that need to be addressed, so as to get the country moved forward. With Nigeria’s diverse people sincerely united, it is predicted that the country would attain a sustainable growth, which would position the country among the world’s greatest countries for so many years to come (Ugbeda & Egwemi, 2016).

1.2.1 Sociocultural and Political Backgrounds of Nigeria

The British invasion of Nigeria started around 1861 with the creation of the Lagos colony. The country became a full British Protectorate in 1899. The northern and the southern protectorates were established in 1900 and 1906 respectively (Falola & Heaton, 2008; Taiwo, 2009; Orji, 2001; Adetiba & Rahim, 2013; see Emmanuel, 2016, p. 33; see Palmer, 1983, pp. 285-286). In 1914, the colonial rulers amalgamated the two protectorates to create the present-day Nigeria, in the absence of any appropriate “roundtable agreement” between the existing numerous ethnicities. While the Premier of the defunct northern region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, described the amalgamation as “the mistake of 1914”, some political figures of the day saw it as the right time to put away ethnic prejudices and build the future country together (Odeyemi, 2014, pp. 93-94; see Bourne, 2015, pp. 3-4; see Ojeleye, 2010, p. 33). Contrary to the latter view, it is widely assumed that the British colonial rulers ‘created’ Nigeria for their “economic” convenience, without specifying any objectives that were aimed at establishing a “strong” and “united” country (Emmanuel, 2016, p. 17; see Maier, 2000, p. xxii; see also Eric, 2016, p. 66). Similarly, Nigeria’s post-independence Prime Minister, Sir

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was quoted in 1947 saying that “since the amalgamation of Southern and Northern province in 1914, Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper... it is still far from being united. Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country” (Ojukwu, 2009, p. 183).

Until today, matters related to the 1914 amalgamation had always generated controversies and heated debates in Nigeria (Oseni, 2014) as the decision had proved to be very “unpopular” right from inception (Fafowora, 2013, p. 11). For example, Achebe (2012) describes Nigeria’s religious diversity, which comprises “animists, Muslims, and Christians”, as a mysterious social framework within which people of diverse cultural backgrounds were brought together without their consents (p. 2). Nigeria’s amalgamation has also been described as a “historically forced unity” (Otunko et al., 2017, p. 131). For more details on the 1914 amalgamation and the ‘creation’ of Nigeria, see also Ugbeda and Egwemi (2016, pp. 57-63).

Nigeria occupies an estimated 923,770 square kilometres of landmass in the West African sub-region (Falola & Heaton, 2008). She gained her political independence from Britain in 1960 and became a Republic within the Commonwealth of Nations in 1963 (Sani, 2014; Orji, 2001; Adetiba & Rahim, 2013; Phillips, 2004). The country is now a federation composed of 36 states, a federal capital city and 774 local authorities (Okolo & Raymond, 2014). In addition, Nigeria’s 36 state are grouped into six geopolitical zones (see Wakili, 2014; Kalu, 2008).

Nigeria’s population is currently projected at nearly 181.5 million (The World Factbook, 2016). Its cultural heterogeneity is composed of more than 250 ethnicities (Phillips, 2004; Bourne, 2015) and almost 394 linguistic populations as recorded in 1976 (Usman, 2006). In another account, ethnologists approximate that about 350 to 500 indigenous languages are spoken in the country (Taiwo, 2009). However, it is assumed that the number has drastically gone down due to extinction and standardisation processes (Okene, 2011). Broadly speaking, apart from “New Guinea and Indonesia”, Nigeria is considered the most diverse nation on earth in terms of ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity (Blench, 2003, p. 2). Out of the country’s ethnic equation, much prominence is accorded to the three major ethnic groups: Hausa/Fulani in the north, *Yoruba* in the southwest and *Igbo* in the southeast. Other cultural entities considered of linguistic, demographic and geopolitical importance include: *Ogoni*, *Ijaw*, *Bini*, *Itshekiri*, *Nupe*, *Kanuri*, *Tiv*, *Ibibio*, *Igbira*, *Jukun*, *Gwari* and *Efik* tribes (Adetiba & Rahim, 2013; Ijeoma, 2010; Taiwo, 2009). In the official settings, the English language is adopted as the mode for all forms of communication in administration, judiciary and other sectors of the economy (Taiwo, 2009).

By constitutional provision, Nigeria is a secular state (see *The Guardian*, 2017a; *The Guardian*, 2017b). Apart from animism and other African traditional ideologies, Islam and Christianity are the two major religions practiced in the country (Achebe, 2012; The World Factbook, 2016; Sani, 2014; Dibie, 2000; see *The Guardian*, 2017b). Islam is believed to have expanded its “frontiers” in northern Nigeria around 1804 through

the *Jihadi* conquests of Othman Danfodio. On the other end, European Christian missionaries made their first efforts to propagate Christianity in the south around 1846 (Falola & Heaton, 2008, pp. xiii-xiv; Achebe, 2012; Ibrahim, 1991). Today, Muslim population in the country is estimated at around 90.5 million (almost 50% of the entire population), while Christian population is estimated at around 75.5 million (almost 40% of the entire population) (The World Factbook, 2016; see Akinade, 2014). Prior to independence in 1960, a huge reserves of oil was discovered in Oloibiri in 1956 (the present-day Bayelsa State), while the commercialised exploration began in 1958 (Palmer, 1983; Akinnaso, 2017). Today, Nigeria is the largest oil exporter in Africa (Olawoyin, 2017) and at the sixth position in the global market (Ugbeda & Egwemi, 2016). Revenues from crude oil represents 90% of Nigeria's foreign incomes (Phillips, 2004). Most of the country's oil reserves is located within the Niger Delta region (Kalu, 2008), which is potentially seen among "the most resource-rich regions" worldwide (Taft & Haken, 2015, p. 9). That is to say, the region has been so critical to Nigeria's "mono-cultural" economy, which depends heavily on oil exports, for a very long time (Ugbeda & Egwemi, 2016, p. 63; see Yusuf, 2008, p. 82; see also Hill, 2012, pp. 91-92). Having discussed the sociocultural and political backgrounds of Nigeria, the next section discusses the major issues destabilising unity in the country.

1.2.2 Factors Undermining National Unity in Nigeria

There could be many reasons why a country would need to put the promotion of national unity at the top of its agendas. For example, given Nigeria's political history and its socioeconomic reality, a number of reasons that appeared to be threatening its 'national unity' and triggering agitations for secession may be distinguished. They may include: i) military interventions in the polity and the disruption of democratic processes, ii) the threat to national disintegration due to civil unrest and disenchantment with the ruling regime, iii) the reciprocated suspicion among its diverse ethnic groupings and, hence, iii) the Nigerian nationalist identity, the religion and the multi-ethnic composition of Nigerian society that engenders competing loyalties towards ideological inclinations, tribes and nation (Odeyemi, 2014; Achebe, 2012; Haruna, 2016a; Umezina, 2012). With respect to ethnic consciousness, identity and loyalty, Hall (2012) describes the Nigerian context as thus:

Regardless of what anyone does or where they choose to live in Nigeria, they will always be defined by the ethnic group to which their forebears belonged and where they came from. There is little scope in this understanding of identity to build a sense of Nigerian-ness let alone engender loyalty to it above all sectarian allegiances. For every Nigerian's identity is already set by their parents. And central to that identity is locale and ethnic group, not nation (p. 57).

In the same vein with Hall's (2012) description of ethnic consciousness in Nigeria, Eric (2016) argues that a strong indication of division among Nigerians is manifested in everyone desires that the president of the country comes from his area, his ethnic

extraction and, of course if possible, his religious belief as well. In a way, according to Uka (2008), this may be associated with the prevailing mutual suspicion among Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious groupings as well as the perceived disproportions in the country's political and administrative hierarchy.

1.2.2.1 Military Incursions into Nigerian Politics

Nigeria's political process has been interrupted by intermittent military *coup d'état* over the years (Okoye, Egboh, & Chukwuemeka, 2012; see also Bourne, 2015, pp. 111-29). The country's first military intervention of 1966, which was bloody, is widely perceived as the genesis of virtually all sorts of social and political disquiet in the country. It was the consequences of this military *coup d'état* that triggered the Nigerian civil war, which was fought between 1967 and 1970 (Odeyemi, 2014; Falola & Heaton, 2008; Bourne, 2015; see Ojeleye, 2010; see also Siollun, 2009, pp. 42-55). Of all other challenges encountered, the civil war is held to be the most devastating as it left behind nearly three million people dead (Achebe, 2012). Until today, the country is believed to have not fully recovered from the aftermath of that military intervention of January 15, 1966 (Haruna, 2016; see also Terwase, Abdul-Talib & Zengeni, 2015, p. 249). The military establishment ruled Nigeria in two phases: i) from 1966 to 1979, and ii) from 1984 to 1999 respectively (Bello, 2011; Okoye et al., 2012; see also Onwumechili, 1998, pp. 48-50). The long period of military dispensations in the country is believed to have over-centralised as well as personalised political powers in certain individuals (Oke, 2010). As a result, interests of particular people, ethnic or regional groups may have been accorded primacy at the detriment of others (Adeoye, 2009). By implication, a lot of damage would have been done to the fragile national unity and the much needed harmonious coexistence among the heterogeneous Nigerian populace. For example, the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential elections results, by the then military regime, had generated heated political debates and put the country at the brink of total disintegration. Ironically, the perceived winner, Chief M. K. O. Abiola, comes from the *Yoruba* southwest, while the head of the then military government, retired General Ibrahim Babangida, hails from the *Hausa-Fulani* extraction of the north-central region. The military's decision to annul the election results was widely seen as a grave act of interference with a democratic process at the time. For the *Yoruba* people, it is not more than a 'northern conspiracy' to deprive them of their constitutional right in Nigeria's presidency (see Okafor, 2006, pp. 199-207; see Falola & Heaton, 2008, pp. xviii- xix; see Falola & Genova, 2009, pp. xxvi & xl; see Bourne, 2015, pp. 182-188).

1.2.2.2 Insurgency and Secessionist Movements in Nigeria

Recently, Nigeria has witnessed a rapid growth of insurgency and the re-emergence of a number of movements agitating for secession (Fadile, 2013; Nwala, 2013; Adamu, 2013; Adesoji, 2010; Bakolo, 2013). The most pronounced of such rebellions include the activities of local militia groups against oil and gas facilities in Nigeria's Niger Delta and the rise of *Boko Haram* terrorism in the northeastern region of the

country (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013; Obi, 2010; see Udama, 2013, pp. 104-106; see also Hill, 2012, pp. 22-23). In the northeast for example, the armed group *Boko Haram* has been unleashing terror in the last seven years. The central objective for the group is to carve out a *caliphate*, an Islamic political authority, within the Nigerian state (Obi, 2010; Pate & Idris, 2016; Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013). Their brutal campaign is believed to have claimed over 20,000 lives and displaced more than two million people so far (Aljazeera Media Network, 2016). The *Boko Haram* insurgents are believed to have murdered about 50,000 people and destroyed properties worth of an approximate N3.2 trillion (about \$5.9 billion) during the period between 2009 and 2015 (*The Guardian*, February 26, 2016; World Bank Report, *Daily Trust*, March 21, 2016). Moreover, the *Boko Haram* network was described as the world's deadliest terrorist organisation during the period between 2009 and 2015 (Pate & Idris, 2016; Global Terrorism Index, 2015). Today, Nigerian is placed as the third most terrorised country in the world, behind Iraq and Afghanistan, due to the activities of *Boko Haram* (see Olaniyi, 2017). (For details on the geographical and historical stages of *Boko Haram* insurgency in Nigeria, see Monguno & Bagu, 2017, pp. 33-54; see Bourne, 2015, pp. 230-235; see also Solomon, 2015, pp. 85-103).

Nigeria's "oil rich" south-south region has witnessed a number of clamours for secession over time (Peel, 2009, p. xiii; Bourne, 2015). The pioneer "micro-nationalisms" championing the agitations include the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) (Eric, 2016, p. 68). The Niger Delta is composed of "nine states", accommodating about 32 million people, which represents about 23% of Nigeria's population. Most of the country's oil reserves is found in the region (Hill, 2012, p. 75; Kalu, 2008; Taft & Haken, 2015). Given their perceived grievances against the central government, these local militia resorted to blowing up oil and gas installations in the region to sabotage the economy so as to force the central government listen to their demands (Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013). Recent figures indicate that attacks on oil infrastructures carried out by the Niger Delta Avengers alone has cost the Nigerian economy over N1.1 trillion (about \$2.5 billion) between February and July, 2016 (Abdallah & Adugbo, 2016). The most recent of these agitations is the one suggesting the restructuring of the present-day 'federalism' by either going back to the former regional system of the 1960s, or giving more autonomy to the individual states, especially, in terms of resources control (Ajayi, 2016; see Emmanuel, 2016, pp. 40-42; see also Akinrefon, 2017) (for more details on Nigeria's federalism and the problem of resource control, see also Dibua, 2005; Okolo & Raymond, 2014; Otaru, 2017). Lately, public figures, elder statesmen and traditional leaders from different parts of the country begin to throw their weights behind voices calling for the 'restructuring' of the federation (see for example Abubakar, 2017; Opejobi, 2017a; Amaize & Ebegbulem, 2017; Ajayi, 2017; Ogundipe, 2017).

It is assumed that the root causes for agitations and militancy in the Niger Delta may likely be associated with the widely held impression among the indigenous communities that the region has completely been neglected and deprived of its socioeconomic rights by successive central governments of Nigeria (Yusuf, 2008).

Such a perceived negligence is manifested in the obvious underdevelopment of the region in terms of infrastructure. It also involves the unequal distribution of oil proceeds, mostly taken from the region, which generated widespread and persistent poverty among its populace. Other factors include inadequate access to quality education, high level of unemployment, environmental degradation, an alarming child mortality as well as population density, which is thought to be “among the highest in the world with 265 people per square kilometre”(Taft & Haken, 2015, p. 173; Kalu, 2008; see Hill, 2012, p. 75). These factors could be the major driving factors flaring up the continuous agitations for secession in the Niger Delta (see Peel, pp. xiii-xx; 2009; see Hill, 2012, pp. 70-73; see also Anyebe, 2017, p. 975).

In the southeast region, the leading secessionist groups include the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Movement for the Survival of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MOSSOB), the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). The major focus of these groups has been on realising the breakaway of Igboland from Nigeria (Eric, 2016; Onunaiju, 2017). It was a similar struggle for the secession of the southeast, led by late Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, that triggered Nigeria’s civil war, which was fought between 1967 and 1970 (Nnochiri, 2016; Achebe, 2012; Odeyemi, 2014; see Ojeleye, 2010). The alleged socioeconomic and political “marginalisation” and seclusion of the south easterners as well as preventing them from holding specific ‘sensitive’ public offices since after the civil war is believed to be the root cause for their secession clamour (Ojukwu, 2009, p. 186; see also Abati, 2017). Lately, the calls for secession have grown louder, most especially, in the southeast. A number of high level demonstrations, including the widely called for a stay-at-home protest, have taken place under the auspices of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement (see Okeke, 2017, p. 76; Julius-Adeoye, 2017, pp. 17-18; Anyebe, 2017, p. 977; see also Otunko et al., 2017). Generally, it is understood that the outcome of Nigeria’s 2015 general elections has revived up “more uprisings”, in terms of agitations and calls for secession and restructuring, than the country has ever seen before. Hence, these recent events indicate how deeply polarised the country has become and how the individual stakeholders in the Nigerian project appeared to have no consensus over specific national objectives (Eric, 2016, p. 68). (For tabulated details on major militant and secessionist movements in Nigeria, see Appendix A).

1.2.2.3 Ethnic and Religious Disquiets in Nigeria

The problem of national unity in Nigeria is believed to have largely been amplified by the country’s religious diversity and by the continuous attempts of its two dominant religious groups, the Muslims and the Christians, to attain “supremacy” over one another (Nwosu, 1996, p. 151). In Nigeria these days, Muslims, Christians, and all other ethnic nationalities, do not count on one another in ordinary matters, thereby jeopardising the prospects of attaining genuine social integration, unity and peaceful coexistence among them (Uka, 2008, p. 2; see Otunko et al., 2017, p. 125; see Markus, 2015; see also Nwachukwu, 2017). The country’s post-colonial history has recorded sporadic ethnic and religious clashes over the years (see for example Anyebe, 2017,

pp. 978-982; Salawu, 2010, pp. 345-353; Adediji, 2016, pp. 17-20; Fadile, 2013, p. 20; Okidu, 2011, pp. 58-59; Sampson, 2012, pp. 107-112; Uka, 2008, pp. 6-9; Adamu, 2013, pp. 96-97; Ukiwo, 2003). Putting it up together, it appears that the armed militancy in the Niger-Delta, the activities of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC) in the southwest, the *Boko Haram* insurgency in the northeast as well as the periodic ethno-religious unrests constitute a greater threat to Nigeria's national unity and corporate existence if not decisively contained (Egharevba & Aghedo, 2016; see Anyebe, 2017, pp. 974-975; see also Udama, 2013, p. 100). (For tabulated details on major ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, see Appendix B).

In Nigeria's recent history, the period between 2011 and 2016 could be seen as the most volatile in the country as a diverse and multicultural state. For example, the aftereffects of Nigeria's last two general elections in 2011 and 2015 may be considered to be the most detrimental to the country's unity and harmonious coexistence since after the civil war of the 1960s (see Terwase et al., 2016; see also Eric, 2016, p. 68). In 2011, violent protests erupted in the north due to perceived rigged election results that saw the return of President Goodluck Jonathan for a second tenure in office (see Bamgbose, 2012). During the period between 2009 and 2015, the *Boko Haram* insurgents unleashed a ceaseless violence mostly in Nigeria's northeast region. The principal objective of the group was to establish a *caliphate*, an Islamic political authority within the Nigerian state (Bourne, 2015; Obi, 2010; Pate & Idris, 2016; Ogbonnaya & Ehigiamusoe, 2013; Solomon, 2015). In 2014, the Federal Government of Nigeria convened a National Conference (CONFAB), with representatives from all over the federation. The central objective of the conference was to discuss topical issues related to Nigeria's federalism, national unity, growth and harmonious coexistence within the diverse and multicultural Nigerian society (see Oseni, 2014).

In 2015, the aftermath of the general elections that brought President Buhari to power appeared to have revitalised either calls for secession or immediate restructuring of Nigeria's federal system (Eric, 2016; Ajayi, 2016; see also Emmanuel, 2016, pp. 40-42). On the other hand, militant groups in the Niger Delta region went back to the "creeks" and resumed deadly attacks on oil installations and pipelines. As a result, Nigeria's crude oil export was drastically brought down due to their destructive activities. The agitations in the southeast, particularly by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), has never been so intense as well (Otunko et al., 2017, p. 125; Abdallah & Aduabo, 2016; see Anyebe, 2017, pp. 975-977). In June, 2017, a coalition of youth groups from northern Nigeria issued a three month ultimatum to all individuals of ethnic *Igbo* extraction, who are resident in the North, to vacate the region. The quit notice was subsequently withdrawn after series of mediations (see Babatope, 2017, p. 23; see Anyebe, 2017, p. 977; see also Oriola, 2017). Given such a development, "the existence of Nigeria as a unified state" proves to be in absolute "jeopardy", most especially in recent years (McLoughlin & Bouchat, 2013, p. 1).

1.3 Problem Statement

National unity has always been an existential problem for post-colonial Nigeria (Egharevba & Aghedo, 2016; Ome, 2013; Odeyemi, 2014; Bourne, 2015; see Solomon, 2015, p. 95). Today, at 57 after her independence, Nigeria does not seem to have attained the most desired nationhood as its citizens are still deeply disunited, with both their loyalty and national identity shattered between ethnic and religious affiliations (Eric, 2016). In addition, the majority of Nigerians accord loyalty and sense of belonging to their respective tribes and nations more than the country and the wider society (Ugbeda & Egwemi, 2016; see Ojeleye, 2010, p. 33). Given this reality, Nigeria may not be considered as a truthfully united country. Recent challenges believed to have been sabotaging its national unity could augment this assumption (Ajayi, 2016; Ugbeda & Egwemi, 2016; see also Opejobi, 2017b). That is to say, the survival of Nigeria as a united country appears to have been greatly endangered (McLoughlin & Bouchat, 2013). Presently, Nigeria needs to restore unity among its ethnically diverse citizens more than ever before, as the country appears to be heading towards actual disintegration (Okene, 2011; see also Opejobi, 2017b).

Promoting unity for nation building is normally perceived as the business of government, which is mostly conducted through the mass media (see Kolstø, 2006; Babatope, 2017; Mohamed Salleh, 2013; Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017; Rosendal, 2009; Holliday, 2007). The importance of actualising a united and socially integrated Nigeria, for example, stems from the fact that unity symbolises the bedrock for growth and sociopolitical stability in any society. Matters associated with social disharmony as well as heightened tensions resulting from multi-ethnicity in plural societies can only be contained when proper mechanisms for ensuring unity are put in place (Idowu & Sayuti, 2016). Moreover, nation building often utilises the discourse of national unity as a rallying call, and that national unity, being essentially an “imagined” state itself (Haag, 2010, p. 335), can be manipulated to achieve particular hidden agendas. As a concept associated with patriotism, social responsibility, civic-mindedness, and all socially desirable traits, it is an ideal tool to be used to legitimise discursive actions (see Stögner and Wodak, 2016; see also Haag, 2010).

The situation of the fragmented state of Nigeria is ripe for the national unity discourse to take root, and consequently, a fertile soil for various parties to participate in the grand discourse in different ways (see, for example, Babatope, 2017; Egharevba & Aghedo, 2016; McLoughlin & Bouchat, 2013; Ome, 2013; Emeghara, 2014). The central objective to this study was to examine the discursive construction of national unity in Nigeria through the selected NCAs, which are privately sponsored by individuals, local and multinational corporations and the way other discursive actions are performed in tandem with promotion of national unity by these private individuals and corporate bodies. The study has also intended to examine the semiotic resources and the discursive strategies employed to get the concept of unity “communicated, naturalised” and normalised within Nigeria’s deeply polarised society as constructed by the sponsors of the NCAs (Machin, 2013, p. 347).

The notion suggesting a continuous threats to Nigeria's existence (Ugbeda & Egwemi, 2016) as a united federation (Osaghae, 1995), and that the country could probably "disintegrate" in the future (Otunko et al., 2017, p. 129), provides an impetus and awareness of the importance of examining the issue of national unity. It also serves as a drive for indoctrinating the concept of unity as the most appropriate mechanism towards the recovery of the nation during the crucial period in the history of the country. This study is an investigation of how private individuals and corporate organisations, with financial and political means, strive to influence the hearts and minds of the general masses towards unity by way of placing NCAs in the print media. It is of interest to examine how discourse power holders strive to achieve this construction and normalisation of the concept of unity as the current reality as well as other opportunistic self-agendas. The central objective to this study was to examine the way the discourse of unity is "communicated, naturalised" and normalised (Machin, 2013, p. 347) in an attempt to upgrade national unity and social integration within the diverse and multicultural Nigerian society.

In addition, there have been a considerable number of studies on the role of the mass media in the construction and reproduction of national unity, most especially in ethnically and culturally diverse societies (see Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017; Holman and Arunachalam, 2015; Haag, 2010; Mohamed Salleh, 2013; Rosendal, 2009; Stögner & Wodak, 2016). Further, some of these studies were focused on the promotion of unity as constructed by the "ruling elites" (Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017, pp. i-ii; see Haag, 2010). Though, the process of promoting unity for nation is normally understood to be the business of government, but sometimes people become reluctant to accept specific government proposed alternative policies associated with ethnic matters, such as Singapore's idea of "bi-racialism" (Holman & Arunachalam, 2015, pp. 501-509). However, these past studies have not investigated the promotion of unity that is privately (as opposed to public) constructed by individual or corporate entities at their own funding (not public tax money). More so, most of the studies have not approached the media representations of unity from the linguistic perspective, used CDA or conducted a thorough multisemiotic analysis of texts.

Other studies showed how construction of unity is used as vehicle for realising other objectives. For example, it is indicated that the concept of diversity has always been hijacked by nationalist projects in the process of constructing unity discourses (Haag, 2010) or castigating the presumed "unpatriotic" dangerous 'Other', who is considered as a "foreigner and Jew" (Stögner & Wodak, 2016, p. 15). This shows that the promotion of unity can be used as a tool for manipulation to achieve certain other agendas that are not necessarily meant to get people united. Moreover, Alkatiri's (2014) study revealed how global corporations utilised Indonesia's national holidays to realise further self-agendas. The study employed discourse analysis method from the historical perspective. The limitation of Alkatiri's (2014) study is that it has failed to look critically into the issue of foreign companies getting involved in Indonesia's national matters. The study appeared to be in total congruence with the text as it concluded that the contribution of the foreign firms is part of their corporate responsibility, which stands for the way "the need for national unity" would be

maintained and reminded (Alkatiri, 2014, p. 169). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how people in power/with financial and political means strive to influence the hearts and minds of the people towards unity through the media. It is believed that powerful institutions have the tendency to control discourses, (re)contextualise social practices and determine how people perceive reality (Abousnoug & Machin, 2008). In addition, it is believed that leading establishments usually attempt to manipulate the media through pseudo acts so as to get their ideological and commercial interests communicated to the audience (Hall, 2006). Further, the possibility of interfering with the media reporting in given situations to get certain social or political propaganda either promoted or suppressed has also been suggested (Fairclough, 1995b). Therefore, it is important to examine the type of united reality envisioned by these private individuals and corporate entities in the face of the status quo as much as Nigeria's unity is concerned (see Solomon, 2015; Bourne, 2015).

Ahmad Tajuddin (2017) used the media concept of framing to examine the way national unity is constructed by the "ruling elites" in multicultural Malaysia through government sponsored Public Service Announcements (PSAs). The study found revealed three "dominate" frames through which the idea of national unity is reproduced and communicated to the Malaysian public. These frames include: i) the nationalism, ii) the multiculturalism and the iii) political frames (pp. i-ii). Haag (2010) explored the construction of national unity through diversity in Germany and Australia. The study analysed the television campaign: *You Are Germany*, and the patriotic song: *I Am Australian*. The study found that the concept of diversity has always been hijacked by nationalist projects in the process of constructing unity discourses in so many contexts. This shows that unity can be used as a tool for manipulation to achieve certain other agendas that are not merely to get the people to be united. The study also uncovered the emergence of a new discursive pattern, where the mechanism of diversity is now expected "to hold the nation together" from an impending collapse (p. 346).

In another study, Holman and Arunachalam (2015) explored the media representations of multiculturalism and ethnicity in Singapore. The study analysed 87 articles from the *Straits Times* newspaper. The study revealed that Singapore's perceived multicultural integration may likely breakdown the moment "individuals or groups" feel wronged or maltreated. The findings also showed that the government purposely problematise matters related to multiculturalism and ethnicity and makes it look "fragile" in Singapore to justify its involvements in "racial" matters. The study has also discovered public unwillingness to accept specific government proposed alternative ethnic identities, most especially the idea of "bi-racialism" (pp. 501-509).

Both Ahmad Tajuddin's (2017) and Haag's (2010) studies are related to actions to construct unity attributed to the ruling government, as national unity is commonly perceived as the business of the government. In Ahmad Tajuddin's (2017) study, the promotion of unity is carried out through strategic communications organised and sponsored by the government. As the case with Haag's (2010) study, the: *You Are Germany* television campaign was publicly sponsored to restore German pride as the

case with *I Am Australian*. In Holman and Arunachalam's (2015) study, the construction of unity is done under the government policy of "development journalism approach". For that reason, the promotion of unity in Holman and Arunachalam's study may have not investigated the government's constructed unity critically to see the possibilities of having further objectives other than uniting the people (Holman & Arunachalam, 2015, p. 501). On the other hand, the present study was intended to examine the construction of unity in the NCAs funded by private individual, local and multinational businesses operating in Nigeria. This type of promotion of unity is not a government policy or government directed ideology, at least not on the surface of the discourse. Therefore, other opportunistic self-interests may have been played out in the process of its construction.

The previous studies on the construction of unity discussed above appeared to have been mostly limited to examining the promotion of unity as constructed by the "ruling elites" (Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017, pp. i-ii) or constrained by specific government policy on racial and ethnic matters (Holman & Arunachalam, 2015). Most of the studies have not examined the promotion of unity as constructed by private entities or the way the concept of unity is discursively enacted, recontextualised and normalised (Machin, 2013; van Leeuwen, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012) with the purpose of constructing an envisioned united reality in the face of the status quo (see McLoughlin & Bouchat, 2013). More so, attention should also be given to the way semiotic resources are deployed through the media, most especially through advertisements, to manipulate, reproduce and normalise the concept of unity in an ethnically diverse context (see Carvalho, 2008; Machin, 2013). Drawing from the CDA and, specifically, Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1995b) three-layered framework for analysing discourse, the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) proposed grammar of visual design and analytical tools from multimodal discourse analysis (Machin, 2013; Machin & Mayr, 2012), the present study is intended to examine the discursive promotion of unity in Nigeria as privately constructed by the sponsors of the NCAs. Moreover, the present study chooses to investigate the discursive construction of national unity disseminated through newspaper announcements as it is believed that advertisements serve as the most conducive avenues where issues that matter most to societies and politics are played out (Ademilokun & Taiwo, 2013). Further, newspapers are largely seen as suitable for critical analysis for their ability to influence public opinion and disperse information both visually and non-visually (Locke, 2004; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; see Machin & Niblock, 2008, p. 244).

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The present study was focused on the discursive construction and normalisation of national unity within Nigeria's diverse and multicultural society, as depicted in the selected NCAs. It was aimed at examining how other discursive actions are performed in the name of promoting unity by the sponsors of the NCAs. The study also highlighted the linguistic structures employed to construct the representational ideology of unity as well as how it is naturalised, normalised and reproduced using

specific discursive strategies. The selected NCAs analysed in the present study were drawn from four prominent Nigerian dailies, that is: *The Guardian*, the *Daily Trust*, the *Vanguard* and the *Punch* newspapers. The purpose of this study was expected to be achieved through realising the following objectives:

1. To identify the recurrent themes dominating the NCAs discourse.
2. To describe the semiotic resources and the discursive strategies used to construct, normalise and promote unity in the NCAs.
3. To examine the type of national unity and version of reality presented by the private sponsors of the NCAs.
4. To discuss further discursive actions performed in the name of promoting unity in the NCAs and how it serves the interests of its sponsors.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the recurrent themes that dominate the discursive construction of unity in the NCAs?
2. What are the semiotic resources employed to construct unity in the NCAs? How are the discursive strategies used to promote such a construction of unity?
3. What is national unity as constructed by the private individuals/organisations in the NCAs placed in the media? What is the version of a united reality portrayed by these private entities?
4. What other associated discursive actions are performed in tandem with the promotion of national unity in these NCAs by private individuals/organisations? How do the versions of unity projected in the NCAs serve to further the interests of its sponsors?

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the present study is situated within the CDA tradition. CDA is not a single or “total and closed” theory (Wodak, 2002, p. 7), but a “transdisciplinary” approach working together with other theoretical and methodological perspectives (Fairclough, 2012, p. 452). In addition, CDA is held to be the most appropriate method for doing media discourse analysis, with “Norman Fairclough” and “Teun van Dijk” at the forefront of media discourse analysts (Carvalho, 2008, p. 162). More so, it is recommended that the language of the media should be operationalised within three ideological dimensions: i) representations of individuals, groups of people, or systems, ii) construction of “social identities”, and iii) building “social relations” (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 12).

The present study has largely drawn from Fairclough’s (1989, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b) proposed three-layered approach to discourse analysis. This Fairclough’s theoretical foundation for approaching discourse advocates for analysing

communicative processes according to three dimensions, that is: i) discourse as a text, ii) as a discursive practice (interaction: production and consumption of texts), and iii) as a sociocultural practice (the wider social context). At the level of analyses, Fairclough proposed three corresponding steps of meaning-making, which include text *description*, *interpretation* of the interactional relationship between text production and consumption and *explanation* of the relationship between the interactional stage and the wider sociocultural practices. Working with Fairclough's three dimensions approach does not necessarily mean that they must be in a particular order, what matters is that they should all be "included" and "be mutually explanatory" (Janks, 1997, p. 329). Wang (2014) states that this approach links the "micro-analysis" of texts with the "macro-structure" of the wider society as the framework renders embedded ideologies and biases within texts deconstructed (p. 268). Figure 1.1 displays Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b) three-dimensional framework for analysing discursive processes:

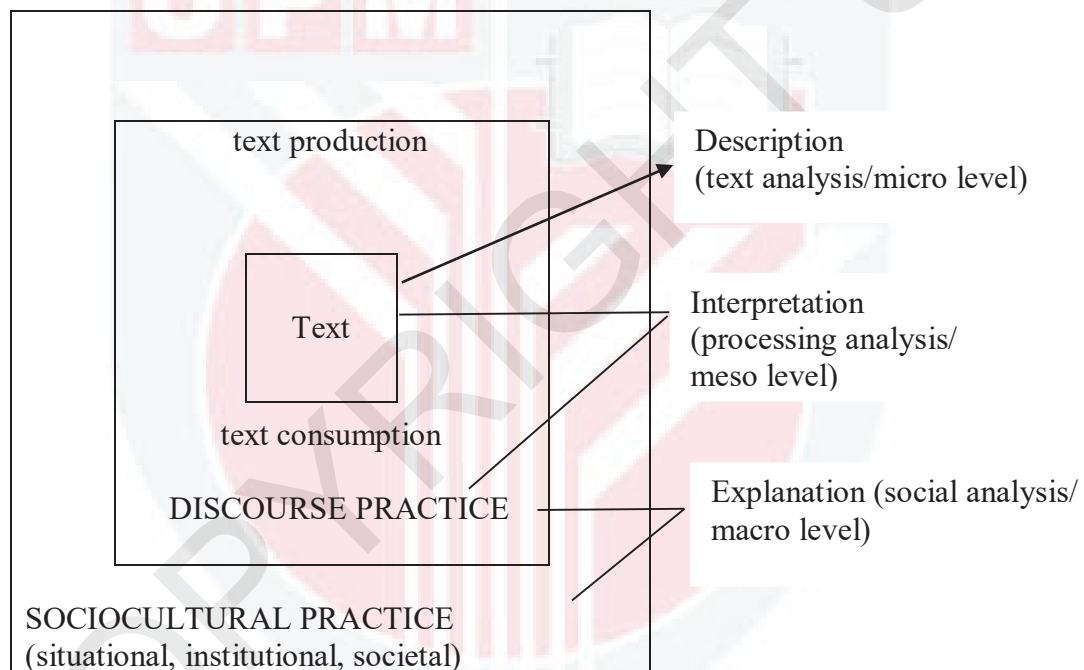


Figure 1.1 : Fairclough's discourse dimensions (1989, p. 25, 1992, p. 73, 1995a, p. 98, 1995b, p. 59)

1.6.1 Description

As proposed in his "three stages" of analysing communicative events (Fairclough, 1989, p. 109), the analysis of the various text components, which is focused on both the "meanings" and "forms", is referred to as "linguistic analysis". By its nature, linguistic analysis is "descriptive" and the texts in question comprise the "written or oral, and oral texts may be just spoken (radio) or spoken and visual (television)" (Fairclough, 1995b, pp. 57-61; see Fairclough, 2013, p. 180). This three dimensional

and interconnected analytical framework is explained in the sense that the first layer representing the texts may be composed of different semiotic components. Therefore, this segment constituting the unit of analysis needs to be properly described (Janks, 1997). Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1993, 1995a, 1995b) subscribes to Halliday's (1978) and Halliday and Hasan's (1985) proposal on the multifunctional nature of texts: the *ideational*, the *interpersonal* and the *textual*. These three metafunctions are believed to be working concurrently in any given text. In correspondence, Fairclough (1995b) proposed the *representations*, *relations* and *identities*. He further suggested that, when doing the linguistic analysis, attention should be focused on the way these three segments were explained:

- particular representations and recontextualisations of social practice (ideational function) - perhaps carrying particular ideologies
- particular constructions of writer and reader identities (for example, in terms of what is highlighted - whether status or role aspects of identity, or individual and personality aspects of identity)
- a particular construction of the relationship between writer and reader (as, for instance, formal or informal, close or distant).

(Fairclough, 1995b, p. 58)

It is further recommended that “absences” and “presences” in communicative events (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 58), in terms of discursive “abstractions and generalisations”, should be adequately described. In other words, analysts should be cognisant of the key principles of the recontextualisation process, which include: “abstraction, addition, substitution, and deletion” (Machin, 2013, pp. 352-353). This is important as analyses of representations are mostly focused on the discursive elements that are “there” within the texts, with less emphasis put on other elements that ought to be present, but they “aren't” (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 106). In addition, the description of media contents should be conducted using a multimodal analysis:

In the case of press and television, including analysis of photographic images, layout and the overall visual organisation of pages, and analysis of film and of sound effects. A key issue is how these other semiotic modalities interact with language in producing meanings, and how such interactions define different aesthetics for different media (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 58).

For the description of the visual components in the NCAs, the present study incorporates analytical tools from the visual grammar (VG) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, 2001, 2002, 2006; Wang, 2014; Meng, 2013) and the multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Machin, 2013; Abousnougua & Machin, 2010a; Abousnougua & Machin, 2013; Kress, 2010) (see subsection 2.3.2 for details on MDA and section 2.6 for details on VG). VG becomes pertinent in analysing the

NCAAs as the present-day newspaper advertisements are mostly composed of visual and non-visual semiotic resources (Fairclough, 1989). Though entrenched within the multimodal theory (O'Halloran, 2004; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Baldry & Thibault, 2006), VG is more or less proposed to get texts described as well as its "patterns" documented. The multimodal descriptive approach is designed towards a "systematic analysis of (media) texts" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 2). It is through MDA that the critical element is incorporated into the analysis of multimodal interactions. The approach is said to be much concerned with how visual resources employed interplay in communicating "power relations" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp. 7-10; see Wang, 2014, p. 267). Further, it is through multimodal approach that "complex ideas and attitudes" are communicated using diverse "integrated" semiotic devices. It is assumed that through multimodality discourses can be reproduced, naturalised and normalised outside their linguistic domain (Machin, 2013, p. 348). In describing the visual frames of the NCAAs, the respective meaning-making components in terms of visual and spatial dimensions (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Wang, 2014; Meng, 2013) constituting the NCAAs would be examined (see Table 3.3 for elaborate details on the visual and spatial dimensions examined in the present study).

1.6.2 Interpretation

The second layer of Fairclough's "three stages" of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989, p. 109) represents the situation within which the text is produced in either written or spoken forms, and the way it is interpreted and consumed as either an audio or visual material. This stage in the process embodies the *discourse practice* that explains both the production and the consumption of communicative events. This layer of the "processing analysis" poses questions about the text producers and their intentions behind the production (Janks, 1997, p. 329). This stage of the analysis is mainly focused on "participants' processes of text production" and "interpretation" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 141). More broadly explained, *discourse practices* are understood to represent, for example:

the ways in which texts are produced by media workers in media institutions, and the ways in which texts are received by audiences (readers, listeners, viewers) as well as how media texts are socially distributed. There are various levels of sociocultural practice that may constitute parts of the context of discourse practice (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 16).

The "situational" and the "intertextual" contexts have been perceived to be so essential, when it comes to the "interpretation" layer of the analysis. With reference to the *situational context*, it is recommended that emphasis should be laid on the "time and place" within which given texts were produced and consumed. For example, what would have been the situation if a specific text had been produced during a particular period or context or what are the *contextual factors* informing the production and reception of given texts? (Janks, 1997, p. 338).

1.6.3 Explanation

The third layer in the process of discourse analysis involves the *sociocultural practices* and the power behind the communicative event. Within this stage, all social and historical realities behind the production and the consumption of the text and the way the text is related to a particular discourse or social practice would be explained (Janks, 1997). According to Fairclough's (1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b) three dimensional approach to discourse, micro-texts represented in media contents are thereby contextualised within the macro-sphere of the wider society. Through such discursive processes, social biases, religious and political ideologies embedded within the micro-texts would be deconstructed (Wang, 2014). Fairclough (1995b) clarifies that:

Analysis of the sociocultural practice dimension of a communicative event may be at different levels of abstraction from the particular event: it may involve its more immediate situational context, the wider context of institutional practices the event is embedded within, or the yet wider frame of the society and the culture (p. 62)

The *explanation* stage in analysing discourse is focused on highlighting issues related to the "immediate" contexts that prompted the text production as well as other social practices and discursive environments that provide larger "contextual relevance" at both organisational and social levels. Moreover, analysing texts at this level involves questioning whether specific texts are in support of given "discursive hegemony" or social practices. It also raises the question whether a text is meant for reproducing certain social interactions, or there are some traces of "transformative impulses" within the texts (Locke, 2004, pp. 42-43) (see section 2.3 for elaborate details on critical discourse analysis approach). The next section discusses the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), from which the present study draws to inform its theoretical background as well.

1.7 Agenda-Setting Theory

In order to discover the way media contents are utilised to set an ideological agenda through highlighting the construction and normalisation of the concept of unity in the NCAs, the present study draws from the agenda-setting theory, which emphasises that the major concern of the media would become the major concern of the general public (Matsaganis & Payne, 2005; McCombs & Valenzuela, 2007). The agenda-setting theory was formulated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972 (see McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In media studies, the term agenda-setting refers to an intentional or unintentional process of influence through which importance of social events and individuals in the public opinion is determined by the successive representations of such events or individuals in the mass media. In other words, reputation is hypothetically attached to what or on whom the media reportage is always focused on. In doing so, the public attitude is said to be shaped and focused by

such repetitive media coverage. Therefore, the highlighted issues and persons would become more prominent with the constant media attention paid to them (McQuail, 2010, p. 548). It is observed that public opinions could always be formed through social agendas that have already been set using the continuous reportage of the mass media (Kosicki, 2006). In theory, the mass media influences public awareness of issues and sets the social agenda through its recurrent coverage of particular social events. In doing so, a high level of prominence is attached to public figures, political parties, or concepts, thus, public opinion is shaped and the attention of the masses is thereby focused on the highlighted attributes of the objects under media reportage (see section 2.4 for elaborate details on the agenda-setting theory). The following section discusses the conceptual framework of this study.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

As a major part of study design, a conceptual framework encompasses the theoretical foundations, ideas, and the expectations informing given studies. It elaborates the main components under study as well as the anticipated connections among the variables. It may be explained in graphs or in description (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2002). The conceptualisation of this present study was aimed at examining the how linguistic resources were invested to discursively construct the representation of unity in the NCAs and the way discursive strategies were employed to manipulate (Carvalho, 2008), legitimise and promote the concept of unity (van Leeuwen, 2013; Machin, 2013) in the Nigerian context. Figure 1.2 demonstrates the conceptual framework for the present study.

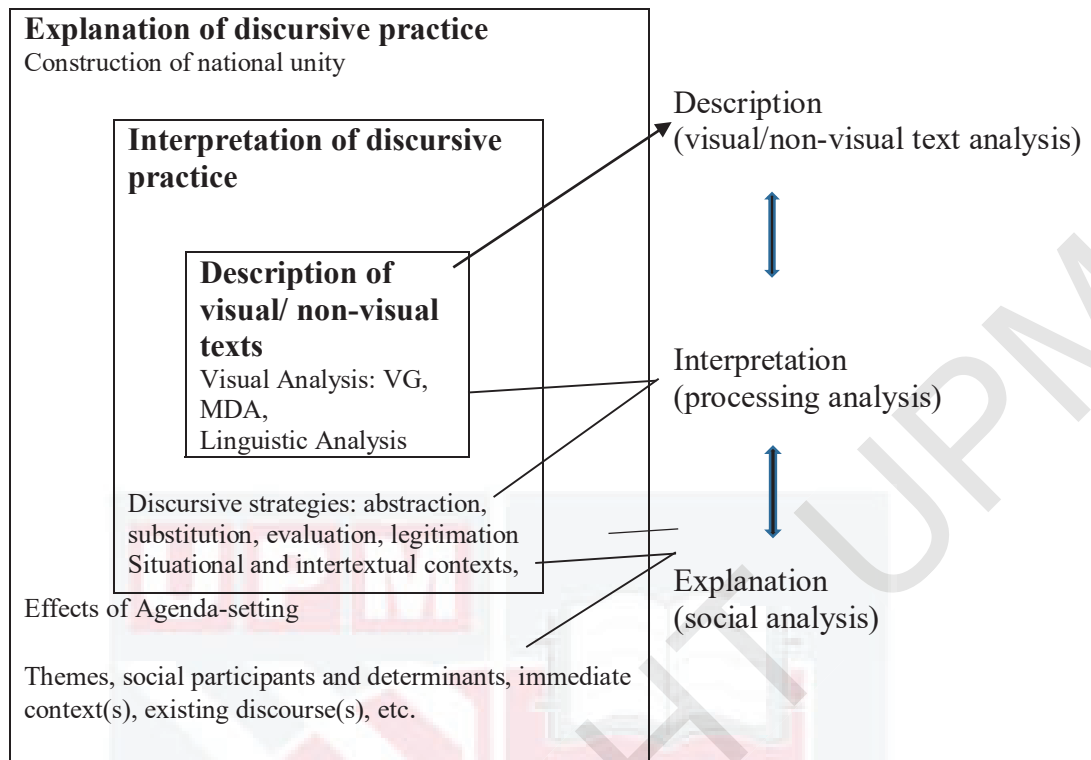


Figure 1.2 : Conceptual framework of the present study
(Amended from Jahedi, 2012, p. 87)

Having presented the conceptual framework of this study, the following segment profiles the four national dailies from which the samples of the NCAs analysed in the present study were collected.

1.9 Profiles of The Guardian, the Daily Trust, the Vanguard and the Punch

The Lagos-based Guardian Newspapers Limited began the publication of *The Guardian* newspaper in February, 1983. The paper was founded by late Chief Alex Uruemu Ibru (1945-2011) and has ever been privately owned by his family. The newspaper enjoys high reputation and wide readership, especially, within the Lagos/Ibadan axis and other parts of Nigeria. Ette (2012) describes *The Guardian* as one of the most esteemed and top leading newspapers circulating in the country (p. 5). The newspaper appeals mostly to university students and the educated elites. Its reporting is mainly focused on the corporate world. In fact, the paper has once been described as “Nigeria’s most respected newspaper” by James Brooke of *The New York Times* in 1988. Besides that, the newspaper is known for its objectivity and impartiality when it comes to sensitive issues such as ethnicity, politics, religion and other related matters (Olutokun & Seteolu, 2001). In some way, *The Guardian* is perceived to be representing the sociocultural realities as well as the religious and ideological beliefs of the people domiciled in southern Nigeria.

The *Daily Trust* is virtually considered the most celebrated and the most circulated English speaking daily newspaper in northern Nigeria today. It enjoys a widespread readership in the region and, in one way or another, represents the sociocultural background of the people in the North. Generally, the newspaper is seen as the spokesperson for the northerners. In a much more radical view, the paper is misunderstood by some quarters to be pro-Islamic, thanks to the religious predisposition of the majority of people that come from the North (Ette, 2012). With its headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, the *Daily Trust* newspaper was founded by the Media Trust Limited in 2000. A BBC World Service Trust Report (2005) states that the *Daily Trust* has been working towards taking down the dominance imposed by the “Lagos/Ibadan axis” over the print media reporting in Nigeria (p. 28).

The *Vanguard* is another Lagos-based newspaper published by Sam Amuka Pemu, a renowned journalist from Nigeria’s Niger Delta region. Founded in 1983, the newspaper has gradually attained prominence to become one of the most widely read dailies in the country today (Onifade, 2015). The production of *Punch* began in Lagos in the 1970s. The newspaper was founded by late James Olu Aboderin and Sam Amuka (Ette, 2012). It still remains privately owned by the families of its founders. The *Punch* is ranked among the “largest circulating” dailies in the country (UNDP Nigeria Report, undated, p. 3; Ette, 2012). The paper reaches out to both the middle-class and the bourgeoisie in the Nigerian society (Zeng et al., 2014). Recently, *The Guardian*, the *Daily Trust*, the *Vanguard* and the *Punch* have been listed among Nigeria’s best seven daily newspapers (Haruna, 2016b). For the *Daily Trust*, a 2015 nationwide statistics, recently compiled by the All Media and Products Survey (AMPS), has rated the newspaper as the country’s ‘number one’ as much as print media readership is concerned (see Akoshile, 2016).

1.10 Significance of the Study

This study is an attempt to investigate the discursive reproduction and normalisation of the concept of unity in the NCAs, which are privately sponsored by individuals, local and global corporations based in Nigeria. Its main focus was to examine how other discursive actions are performed in tandem with the promotion of unity by the sponsors of the NCAs. The study was also aimed at examining how linguistic structures were used to construct unity as well as the way discursive strategies were employed to reproduce, normalise and promote unity. Normally, the promotion of unity for nation building is perceived as the business of government (see Kolstø, 2006; Babatope, 2017; Mohamed Salleh, 2013; Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017; Rosendal, 2009; Holliday, 2007). Therefore, the significance of the present study lies in the fact that it was intended to examine the discursive reproduction of unity in the NCAs placed in the media by private (as opposed to public) entities at their own cost (not public tax money). Therefore, what do these individuals or corporate entities strive to achieve? Are they working to help the government in its efforts to forge unity? Or to use the socially acceptable (and expected) action to project (pseudo)patriotism and, at the same time, to achieve other purposes serving their interests?

It is hoped that the findings of the present study on the discursive construction of national unity will modestly contribute to the field of CDA and encourage the conduct of further studies in related ideological representations of issues in the mass media. The study is also expected to benefit disciplines such as media and communication studies, journalism, visual communication, researchers and the literature of media research in general. In addition, it is expected that the study would provide more insight into the role played by the media discourse(s) in the construction, manipulation and the promotion of social realities through discursive representations.

1.11 Scope and Limitations of the Study

For the purpose of proper manageability, this present study was conducted within the following scopes and demarcations:

1. This study was confined within the scope of unity discourse, as represented in the NCAs aimed at promoting and consolidating national unity in Nigeria's multicultural context. Other types of newspaper announcements outside the unity discourse were not considered for analysis.
2. This study was specifically intended to analyse selected visual frames of the NCAs published in *The Guardian*, the *Daily Trust*, the *Vanguard* and the *Punch* newspapers during the period between 2011 and 2016. No attempt was made to incorporate other media contents outside this scope.
3. In the present study, only personal (Al-Khatib, 1997) or non-commercial (Behnam & Piadeh, 2005) newspaper congratulatory announcements (NCAs) were sampled. All other varieties of print advertisements involving marketing of goods and services to targeted consumers have not been incorporated.
4. The focus of the present study was on privately sponsored NCAs by individuals, local or multinational corporate organisations. It did not incorporate samples from government sponsored advertisements such as the strategic Public Service Announcements (PSAs) (see Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017) or the ones published under the "development journalism approach" adopted in some contexts (Holman & Arunachalam, 2015, p. 501).

1.12 Definitions of Key Operational Terms

This section contains explanation and definitions for key phrases and terminologies used in the present study. These phrases and terms include:

1.12.1 Newspaper Announcements

In this framework, the expression denotes any category of written official or community notices communicated to wider audiences by means of newspaper as the medium (Danesi, 2009).

1.12.1.1 Newspaper Congratulatory Announcements

In the context of the present study, this term refers to socially inspired communicative practices mostly done occasionally through sponsored newspaper announcements. The texts of these types of announcements are always tailored toward maintaining good social bonds and healthy relationships among individuals, family members, business partners and associates and the wider society as well (Al-Khatib, 1997). In the Nigerian context for example, newspaper congratulatory announcements are mostly addressed to public office holders, traditional chieftains, business moguls, public figures, politicians and their associates. Others include specialised community such as corporate bodies, multinational corporations, non-governmental organisations, academic circles and other professional societies (see Lawuyi, 1991) (see subsection 2.2.2 for more details on newspaper congratulatory announcements (NCAs)).

1.12.2 Nation

In the Middle-Ages, linguistic zones, metropolises, universities and councils used to be referred to as nations. With the advent of modernity, the term revolved to denote independent states with geographical borders, which are normally governed through the three arms of the administrative system, that is: i) the executive, ii) the legislature, and iii) the judiciary (see Hirschi, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Gellner, 1983). Nation is, therefore, seen as an “abstract entity of people” who may not necessarily know each other “personally”, but happened to be “bound together by a particular set of commonalities”. Nations are conceived as “imagined” and “invented” entities rather than being “naturally ordained or God-given” (Haag, 2010, p. 334).

1.12.3 National Unity

The expression national unity generally goes synonymously with the expression national integration (Otunko et al., 2017; Idowu & Sayuti, 2016). The definition of national unity may differ from one context to another and among scholars as well (Ahmad Tajuddin, 2017), and it is somehow debateable as it suggests that all citizens share some common sense of belonging to the nation, regardless of any allegiances to ethnic groups, religion or cultural biases (Moran, 2011). The problem with this definition lies in the fact that nationalistic tendencies in various single-nation-states tend to put other ethnic groups within such systems on the margin, while a particular social or ethnic nationality dominates the polity (Engstrom, 2011; Anghie, 2006). Summing it up, Haag (2010) sees the concept of unity as being centralised within the perception of nationhood. Unity is seen as a “stabilising factor”, or even much more, upon which nations would not be “imagined” to have existed in our thoughts “without the re-imagination of unity” (p. 335). The focus of the present study is on the type of national unity which is aimed at bringing together the respective segments of a diverse and multicultural society, such as Nigeria, for shared benefits and achieving specified national objectives.

1.12.4 Ethnicity/Ethnic Groups

Even though the expressions ethnicity and ethnic groups are often used “interchangeably” within the academics, scholars appear to hold different opinions with respect to their definitions (Adediji, 2016, p. 57). The modern perception of ethnicity is mostly associated with “ethnic conflicts” (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998, p. 4) which is always resulted from “differences in languages, ethnic origins, complexions and religious affiliations” (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996, p. 1). Ethnicity is also related to the “ingroup-outgroup” protective borders drawn by resentful ethnic groups. In the Nigerian context for example, ethnicity is strictly connected to the country’s apparent “cultural and linguistic” heterogeneity (Otunko et al., 2017, p. 124; see Udogo, 1994, p. 160-1). Schermerhorn (1996) defines an ethnic group:

As a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical congruity (as in localism or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these (p. 117).

Consolidating Schermerhorn’s (1996) submission, Smith (1991) lists the six most important features of an ethnic group. These include “a collective proper name; a myth of common ancestry; shared historical memories; one or more differentiating elements of a common culture; an association with a specific homeland; and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population” (p. 21). In addition, an ethnic nationality has also been characterised as a group of people “sharing a language, religious practices, a homeland or culture” among them (Holman & Arunachalam, 2015, p. 499).

1.12.5 Multiculturalism

This term multiculturalism is believed to have been originated recently. It was relatively not known in the “1970s”, but it has developed to dominate most discussions on “cultural diversity” starting from the “1990s” (Bousetta & Jacobs, 2006, p. 25). Multiculturalism may be defined in the context of various cultures, “where culture includes ethnic, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles” (Takwa, 2017, p. 9). The concept is believed to have been mostly focused on “cultural origin”, while other “categories”, which include “gender, race, age or sexuality”, are virtually left out. With that said, multiculturalism, then, is basically targeted at forging “cultural diversity” (Haag, 2010, pp. 333-337). In the context of the present study, the term multiculturalism refers to culturally diverse contexts with ethnic, religious and linguistic heterogeneity, as the case with Nigeria (for more details

on the concept of multiculturalism, see Guilherme & Dietz, 2015). However, the term *cultural diversity* is used throughout the present study.

1.12.6 Pseudopatriotism

Pseudopatriotism is associated with the fabricated types of patriotism usually demonstrated by individuals or transnational companies, which are mostly believed to be diffused with concealed ideological or business objectives. These categories of pseudo acts are believed to be employed by multinational corporations with the purpose of winning the confidence and hearts of the masses and the local authorities. In so doing, they consolidate their customer index and further commercialise their goods and services within host communities (see Alkatiri, 2014).

1.12.7 Ideology

In the sense of the present study, this term refers to specific ways the ideological power of the media discourse represents nations or systems of life, and construct “social identities” and “social relations”. It is further explained that ideological meanings of texts manifest when their production or reproduction is contextualised within some imbalanced power or dominance based relationships (Fairclough 1995b, pp. 12-14). Similarly, a widespread view within the CDA network sees the notion of ideology as an essential tool normally engaged to get partial relationships established and sustained (Wodak, 2002). Ideologies are understood to be the way the world is represented as well as the way the principles guiding the human existence supposed to be accurately calculated (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In a broader sense and against the background of the Marxist theory, ideology refers to any set of thoughts accepted to be making sense to those who believe in it. In fact, the definition of the term could comprise almost the entirety of both human knowledge and thinking as well (Thomas et al., 2004).

1.12.8 Diversity

Unlike multiculturalism, as discussed in subsection 1.11.4 earlier, the concept of diversity is broadly defined to accommodate variables like origin, customs and traditions, languages, disabilities, sexualities, age, gender diversity, income and social standing, political affiliations, multiple citizenships or loyalties, beliefs and religious convictions. With these categories included, diversity appears to have been greatly repressed, most especially, in situations where races and cultures were forcefully integrated and discriminative strategies were visible in the public sphere (see Haag, 2010, p. 335-336).

1.12.9 Text

In the context of the present study, this term entails media production or texts that consist of broadcast materials (i.e. Radio and television programmes, documentaries, audio-visuals, websites, and other related media contents) the same as in-print materials (i.e. Newspapers, magazines, communiqués, periodicals, and so forth) (Fairclough, 1995b).

1.12.10 Discourse

This term refers to the usage of language for communication purposes that involves some specific stylishness in both the spoken and written forms. In the Foucauldian perception, discourse signifies the way individuals and organisations make use of language to construct social situations. The idea of discourse is perceived as a kind of representation of power for the reason that it expresses accepted wisdoms through the use of language. Discourse involves additional forms of non-verbal communication as well as other “languages (visual discourse, narrative discourse, and other discourses)” (Danesi, 2009, pp. 98-99; see Fairclough, 2003, p. 214). Mills (1997) sees discourse as the “groupings of utterances or sentences, statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by that social context and which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence” (p. 11). McQuail (2010) explains that the term discourse has a wider connotation that covers virtually all types of texts encoded in any usage or language. Moreover, discourse suggests that as much as the production of text involves the process of putting it into words, it also involves reading and interpreting the text. In his own supposition, Fairclough (1995b) sees discourse as “the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view” (p. 56). McQuail’s (2010) and Fairclough’s (1995b, 2003) definitions of the term discourse have been adopted in the context of the present study.

1.12.11 Discursive Construction

Meanings realised from discourses symbolise the highest point through which both individual and public opinions, “attitudes, ideologies, norms and values” are communicated. Though, discourses are understood to be “incomplete and implicit” most of the time. That is to say, the most critical parts of the discursive “information” are generally not clearly stated, but remain “implied or presupposed” (van Dijk, 2000, p. 90-91).

1.12.12 Discursive Strategies

Discursive strategies refer to some kinds of “discursive intervention” through which social “reality” is manipulated by represented participants with the aim of realising specific “effect or goal”. Discursive strategies include the social “angle” upon which a speaker or author focuses on. Other instances of discursive strategies include

“framing”, which in turn entails factors such as “selection” and “composition” during text production and meaning-making. Moreover, discursive strategies are also realised by way of constructing social participants into relationships with “others” through “positioning”. Likewise, it is also actualised using the processes of “legitimation” and “politicisation” in social interactions (Carvalho, 2008, p. 169).

1.12.13 Multimodality

Multimodality or “multimodal research” is believed to have been greatly influenced by Halliday’s social semiotics and systemic functional linguistics theories (Halliday, 1978), which was subsequently expounded by Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2001) and O’Toole’s (1994) works (Hiippala, 2016, p. 3). Multimodality is said to have been realised when more than one mode of semiosis is employed in discourses. These modes may include auditory, visual or physical components used in given communicative events (O’Halloran, 2005). Though, Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar (VG) approach is mostly drawn within the visual scope, it appears to be applicable to other “modes” as well. The multimodal theory involves the analysis of various semiotic resources such as “verbal, visual, aural” and other forms of communication (Khajavi, 2011, p. 47). It represents a paradigm shift from the old approach of monomodality, where semiotic modes mostly function in seclusion, to the multimodal approach, where “complex ideas and attitudes” are communicated through diverse “integrated” semiotic devices (Machin, 2013, p. 348). It is suggested that different types of multisemiotic devices have the affordability of performing different types of communicative interactions. For example, a red light at the other end of a pedestrian crossing path may be a better way to alert someone to stop for a coming vehicle than using a written statement (see Kress, 2010).

1.12.14 Recontextualisation

The way social events are represented in discourses can be understood as recontextualisation (van Leeuwen, 1993; Fairclough, 2003). It is also referred to as the “colonisation of a given field or institution by another” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 180). The concept of recontextualisation is believed to have been originated in the field of sociology. It occurs during representation of events, when a social practice is incorporated into the “context of another”, it is thus recontextualised (Fairclough, 2003, p. 139). Recontextualisation also stands for “transformation” (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 115), where the focus is on the way the discursive processes of social practices are transformed (van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999). That is to say, recontextualisation is realised when real participants and sequence of happenings are “recontextualised” and presented in “abstraction, addition, substitution, and deletion” (Machin, 2013, p. 352; see also Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 223). These principles of recontextualisation are summed up and explained in the following points:

- i. Deletion: In representing social events, not all segments of the happenings are presented. Attention should always go to the elements that have been deleted (Machin, 2013). The factors that are “present/absent, prominent/backgrounded” should be highlighted (Fairclough, 2003, p. 139)
- ii. Addition: The process of recontextualisation includes incorporating other features. In representations, three elements play a crucial role, that is: “legitimation, purpose, and reactions” (Machin, 2013, p. 352). In recontextualising, “explanations/legitimations (reasons, causes, purposes), and evaluations” should be focused upon (Fairclough, 2003, p. 139).
- iii. Substitution: In the process of recontextualising social practices, facts and intricacies could be replaced with “generalisations or abstractions”, or the other way round (Machin, 2013, p. 353). The level of “abstraction/generalisation” from the real practices should be examined (Fairclough, 2003, p. 139).
- iv. Evaluation: Social practices are always evaluated according to its concerns. Participants and events are recontextualised based on their importance, objectives and principles (Machin, 2013, p. 353). Evaluation process stands for the way sequence of events are arranged (Fairclough, 2003).

1.12.15 Intertextuality

The notion of *intertextuality* is believed to have been originated by Mikhail Bakhtin and was largely promoted by the works of Julia Kristeva. By tradition, intertextuality used to be limited to the study of non-visual texts (Wang, 2014). The concept was later expanded to include the broader approach of analysing the “interrelationship of different modes” (Barthes, 1977, p. 38). In CDA, for instance, two categories of intertextuality have been proposed, that is: i) *manifest intertextuality* and ii) *interdiscursivity* (Fairclough, 1992). Manifest intertextuality is focused on the utilisation of “other texts” when “a given text” is constructed, while interdiscursivity is concerned with how “a text” subscribes to “one or more discourses” (Locke, 2004, 43). Intertextuality is also implied by the historical relationships of discourses, which characterises them the most, where texts are mostly developed to either take up or challenge “former discourses” (Carvalho, 2008, p. 163; Fairclough, 1995b). Summing it up together, intertextuality implies the interconnectivity between texts, while interdiscursivity stands for the interconnectivity between discourses (Wodak, 2001; see also Fairclough, 2003, p. 218).

1.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the sociopolitical genesis of disunity and polarisation in the ethnically and culturally diverse postcolonial Nigeria. Various factors related to insurgency, secessionist movements, ethno-religious conflicts, which are believed to be destabilising harmony among Nigerians, have also been discussed. In addition, the chapter shed light on Fairclough’s three layered approach to discourse analysis, from which this study draws from (Fairclough, 1989, 1992, 1995a, 1995b). Applying this CDA’s multi-layered approach to study the discursive construction of unity through

the NCAs would contribute in understanding the way linguistic forms and strategies are employed in reproducing, legitimising and promoting such representations (van Leeuwen, 2013; Machin, 2013).

1.14 Organisation of the Thesis

This research thesis is comprised of five chapters. Chapter One, the Introduction, covers the background of the study, statement of the research problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, the definitions of key operational terms used in the study and chapter summary. Chapter Two, the Literature Review, explores previous relevant literature on the CDA tradition, media discourse, agenda-setting theory, visual grammar, previous studies on the media representations of the discursive constructions of unity in multiethnic societies and chapter summary. Chapter Three, the Methodology, discusses the research approach and design, sampling and data collection, procedures for data collection, pilot study, data categorisation procedure, data analysis procedure and chapter summary. Chapter Four, the Results and Discussions, presents the description of themes and topics dominating the NCAs discourse, the visual analysis and the linguistic analysis. Chapter Five, the Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations discusses the overview of the study, summary of major findings, conclusions and suggestions/recommendations for further research.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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