

**DISCOURSE AND IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE 2015 AND  
2016 PRO-BIAFRA PROTESTS IN SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

The Pro-Biafra Protests (PBPs) by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and other pro-Biafra groups for the rights of the Igbo and their secession from Nigeria gained widespread attention in Nigerian newspapers. Existing studies on the PBPs have examined discourse acts and (im)politeness strategies, particularly in digital communities such as *Nairaland* and Facebook, with little attention paid to discourse and ideological representation in newspaper reports. This study was, therefore, designed to examine the discourse and ideological reportage of the 2015 and 2016 PBPs in selected Nigerian newspapers, with a view to analysing the discourse and ideological underpinnings.

Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, complemented with Van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors and Halliday's Transitivity model of Systemic Functional Linguistics served as framework. The interpretive design was used. Four widely circulated Nigerian newspapers were purposively selected: *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Sun* and *Vanguard*. Sixty news reports on the PBPs between 2015 and 2016 were drawn from the selected newspapers (*The Punch* (9), *The Nation* (13), *The Sun* (20) and *Vanguard* (18)), covering a period when the protests were prominently reported in the print media. Data were subjected to critical discourse analysis.

Six discourse issues, three representational projections and five ideologies were identified in the reports on the PBPs. The discourse issues identified were marginalisation of the Igbo, worsening economic situation, human rights abuse, injustice, corruption and unemployment. The three representational projections of the protesters were as freedom fighters, economic saboteurs and law-abiding citizens. These representations were explicated mainly through four transitivity processes: material, verbal, relational and behavioural; and eight discursive strategies: aggregation, functionalisation, differentiation, determination, genericisation, association, categorisation and collectivisation. The voices projected in the representation included those of the protesters, the reporter and the government. The reports in *The Nation* and *The Punch* newspapers projected the protesters as economic saboteurs, while those in *The Sun* and *Vanguard* depicted them as law-abiding citizens and freedom fighters. Five underlying ideologies – separatist, pacifist, liberationist, dissident and indifferentist – were projected in the representation of the protests. While the separatist and the liberationist advocated a radical approach that would lead to self-determination, the pacifists proffered the milder approach of negotiation and dialogue. The dissident ruled out the idea of self-governance, while the indifferentist was unconcerned about the status quo. The reports in *The Nation* and *The Punch* newspapers featured more of the dissident ideology, while those in *The Sun* and *Vanguard* tended towards the liberationist, pacifist and separatist ideologies.

The discourse issues, representational projections and ideologies identified in the reports on the pro-Biafra protests reveal the strategic management of the voice of social actors in the reportage of the protests. This, therefore, underscores the contextual relationship that exists between language and social practices.

**Keywords:** Representation of protests, Pro-Biafra protests, Ideology in Nigerian newspapers

**Word count:** 464

### **Certification**

I certify that this research was carried out by **OSAS CHARLES KAYODE IYOHA** of the Department of English, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, under my supervision.

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.0 Chapter overview**

This chapter presents a general background for the study. The chapter traces Biafra from the time it was first conceived to the contemporary times, witnessing the emergence of widespread agitation and uprising in Nigeria in 2015. A survey of the relationship between the news media and social movements such as protests and demonstrations, is also presented. The gap the research seeks to fill in existing studies, its aim and objectives as well as its significance are presented in this chapter.

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

One event that has continuously generated heated argument within and beyond Nigeria is the *Biafra War* or the *Nigeria Civil War* that broke out in 1967 and ended in 1970 (Falola and Heaton, 2008). The war had sparked off serious allegations of genocide and its effects have been felt more by the easterners – the Igbo – who had to grapple with the pains of defeat and the carnage experience (Audu, Osuala and Ibrahim, 2013). The war had had debilitating effects on the country, especially on the perceived victims of the war, and today, the Biafra experience has come to be associated with issues bothering on nationalism, ethnicity, tribalism and marginalisation – issues that have become current realities in Nigeria. Though the war had since ended, yet a number of these issues that engendered the war, in the first place, remain largely unresolved, causing perceived and suppressed grievances.

However, events took an entirely new posture in October, 2015, as there emerged a prolonged widespread wave of protests in the eastern part of Nigeria, a region occupied predominantly by the Igbo. The protests which quickly spread to other parts of the country, had its toll on economic activities in the country and attracted a lot of attention both nationally and internationally. The protest took different forms as it spread to other nations of the world, especially in major cities in

continents like America, Asia and Europe. The protest can be said to have arisen out of fresh feelings of nationalism and solidarity amongst the Igbo, especially amongst the youths, who were calling for an independent nation – *Biafra*, because they were supposedly being marginalised in the affairs of Nigeria. *Biafra* itself had been conceived prior to an attempt by the easterners to secede from Nigeria in 1967 out of what they perceived as marginalisation against the Igbo. When Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra) and director of Radio Biafra was arrested and detained by security operatives in Nigeria, despite having been tried and granted bail, it sprung up reactions and grave nationalistic feelings amongst the Igbo. Pro-Biafra protesters took to the streets in their numbers to protest Kanu's continued detention. The protests later escalated to more intense agitation against what was perceived as marginalisation towards the Igbo in Nigeria and fresh demands for secession from the country.

The protest subsequently made the headlines of newspapers both within and outside Nigeria. These newspapers, and the news media in general, have represented and constructed the agitation in different ways. This difference in the construction of events, as Fowler (1991) observes, is what makes news reportage hardly objective; the news media would often subtly constitute viewpoints and opinions about what is being reported. According to Fowler (1991), the language of the news media is not neutral as it often surreptitiously reflects the opinions and the worldviews of reporters. This is invariably why different media houses would often present or construct the same events or issues from different perspectives Fowler (1991). This, in turn, may affect and influence people's opinion, attitude and value judgement about the issues being reported (Richardson, 2007). The influence of the news media on the formation of belief and opinion of people is enormous. History is replete with the incredible influence of the news media on people's opinion about certain events (van Dijk, 2000). During the Nigerian Civil War, for instance, the news media played an important role in the representation of the war and in the opinion people, especially the international community, had about the war (Arua, 2014; Audu, Osuala and Ibrahim, 2013). Hence, the role of the news media cannot be underestimated in the scheme of event representation.

Much more than merely reporting events in the society, newspapers and the news media in general have contributed significantly in shaping the attitude and belief



of their audience about the issues they report. It is sublime how society is surreptitiously influenced and its values shaped through the opinions and viewpoints the news media express in the guise of relating information to the people. This sublimity is even more expressed in the subtle ways the news media propagate the activities of the elite and the powerful in the society (van Dijk, 2000), as well as other activities directed at the imperative of maximising profit for the owners of media houses. This is why a news source as well as the way the news is presented or constructed is usually intricately linked. News also cannot be separated from the opinions of (usually the elitist) social groups.

The form as well as the content of the messages that the news media transmit, and the discourse processes through which these are relayed to the society call for inquiry. For example, it is usually easy to recognise the meanings of texts and understand the meaning of a news report as well as what they may be trying to make us think, but locating and situating how this meaning construction occurs can be quite difficult (Richardson, 2007). This is similar to how we perceive a news item as being bias or malicious even when we cannot actually point out why we have reached this conclusion. The reason this is so is not unconnected with the inconspicuous ways news reporters represent issues in their reporting. Most times, as Gladwell (2008) points out, bias which could be as a result of the reporter's personal ideological inclinations or the firm's corporate underlying ideology is not what the individual reporter is aware of or does deliberately.

One important fact that has been established by existing studies on the language of the news media is that news in itself cannot be said to provide an objective presentation, creation or interpretation of events, it would always be smeared by inconspicuous biases in the form of underlying ideologies of the news agencies, not to mention other rather seeming unobtrusive factors. Hence, only a systematised and objective enquiry into the language of news reportage can reveal these nuances and identify the linguistic means that have been used to conceal certain elements of 'subjectiveness' and ideology in the news. The study therefore examines how the media have represented the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests and other issues revolving around it. Given the enormous influence that the news media wield through the number of people that rely on it for information, it is pertinent that a study

such as this interrogates how events are represented and constructed in the news. Meanwhile, since Biafra is not merely a 2015 issue, a historical overview should suffice here.

### **1.1.1 The conception of Biafra**

On May 30, 1967, the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, consisting the Igbo as the majority and other minority groups like Ijaw, Edo, Ibibio, Efik, Tiv, Udoma, and other groups, declared themselves a sovereign state – *Biafra* (Arua, 2014). This declaration came barely seven years after Nigeria was granted self-rule by the British colonial lords. The secession, as Ojo and Fagbohun (2014) observe was prompted by a number of causes, remote and immediate. One was that the country was divided along ethnic and religious lines with the Hausa in the North who were predominantly Muslims, the Yoruba who were mostly Christians in the West, and the Igbo who were predominantly Christians in the East. This situation also extended to the country's politics, as each region also had a regional political party. This difference bred ethnic nationalism and loyalty, engendering suspicion and distrust amongst the different groups. From colonial times, the Igbo had always felt marginalized in the control of the affairs of the country which was left mostly in the hands of the northerners at the country's independence.

It is in this ethnic tussle that Nigeria was torn. At the time the secession was declared, Ojo and Fagbohun (2014) report that the Federal Government was mostly composed of northerners, with scarcely any Igbo in it. Prior to this, there had been a counter military coup in July, 1966 which was a reprisal against the very first military coup in Nigeria in January 15, 1967. The January 15, 1967 coup was perceived as an Eastern conspiracy, as the leaders of the coup were mostly of eastern origin while the victims of the coup were mostly northerners. The Head of State that also emerged after the coup, Lt. Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi, was also of eastern origin. Hence, the July 1967 counter coup was seen by the Igbo as an aversion to them. The victims of the counter coup were Igbo, and the uprisings which followed in the North were against the Igbo, with death toll totaling about 30,000 Igbo persons (Raji and Abejide, 2013).

With threat to their lives and calls from their regional leaders, the Igbo who lived in the North and other parts of the country fled back to the East in their millions (Herbert, 1990; Falola and Heaton, 2008). This engendered perceived threat amongst

the Igbo and perhaps made their feeling of nationalism stronger. Attempts at resolving this conflict and integrating the Igbo back in the country proved abortive, as the Federal Government of Nigeria, led by Gen. Yakubu Gowon also failed to implement the agreement reached at the Aburi (Ghana) Accord in January, 1967 that the East and other regions in Nigeria should be given more autonomy. Instead, the Nigerian Government further created more states to weaken the autonomy of the regions (Raji and Abejide, 2013). Subsequently, the secession of the Eastern part of the country from the rest of the country was announced by the government of the Eastern region then led by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. This declaration was met with heavy resistance by the Nigerian Federal Government, resulting in a civil war that lasted for 30 months. Recognised by no more than five nations during the war (Audu, Osuala and Ibrahim, 2013), the new country, the Sovereign state of Biafra, however, had its joy shortlived as they had to partake in a war that they were sadly doomed to lose (Achebe, 2013). Biafra, at the war, as Falola and Heaton (2008) report, had barely 30,000 soldiers against the Nigerian Government that had an enormous over 120,000 soldiers. This action of the Federal Government has been queried by scholars who felt the enormous oil wealth of the eastern region was what made the Federal Government declare the war (Achebe, 2013). This claim has often been refuted by the argument that the same motivation brought the secession about in the first place (Raji and Abejide, 2013). The Civil War had also been strongly criticized for its potentially perceived genocidal tendencies against the Igbo. The war itself spanned a torturous period of close to three years, especially for the Igbo who were reportedly poorly equipped and less prepared for the war, not to mention the series of death that were caused by hunger and starvation.

As the war ended, the Gowon-led Federal Government proclaimed the famous ‘no victor, no vanquished’ cliché and launched the 3Rs initiative of Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation. The effectiveness of this programme has however been criticised in several quarters, as the programme did little to integrate the easterners into the Federal structure. In fact, shortly after the war, the regions of the country were further broken down into more states to abort future agitations, weaken loyalty to the regions and reduce the power of the regions. This move by the federal government, in so many ways, demolished the federal structure of the country which had been so brilliantly constructed and was still being built. Also, the country was

made even more porous and susceptible as the move did very little to reduce or eradicate ethnic loyalty.

The war had devastating consequences on the Easterners, especially the Igbo who were the major actors and victims. First amongst the chief consequences was the deep suspicion it created among the Easterners. More than ever before, the Igbo not only came to abhor the other two regions for their hand in the war but also treated with suspicion and resentment sensitive issues involving all the regions, such issues as power sharing or allocation of resources. The war also invariably led to more intense feelings of nationhood amongst the Igbo who saw their experience as a near pogrom one. This feeling has encouraged the creation of a Biafran nationalism (Ojo and Fagbohun, 2014) which has been sustained, and more importantly, nationalist groups have sprung up among the Igbo such as the *Ohaneze Ndigbo*, and more recently, more radical groups such as the *Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)*, the *Independent People of Biafra (IPOB)*, to mention a few. Finally, the Igbo have had relatively far more misgivings at being marginalised than other regions in the country. This feeling has persisted over the years and has given birth to numerous agitations.

Many persons of Igbo decent, both those who were alive during the war and those who were born after the war have expressed their dissatisfaction about the situation of the country, especially as it has to do with the perceived marginalisation of the Igbo in the polity as this was what led to the war in the first place. Chinua Achebe's book, *There was a Country* is an example of an expression of such sustained feelings. This feeling of nationhood and dissatisfaction, amongst other things took a new posture in September, 2015 with the outbreak of widespread protests in the country.

### **1.1.2 The 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest**

The arrest of Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (henceforth IPOB) and director of Radio Biafra on the 17th of October, 2015, and his continued detention after he had been arraigned before the law court and granted bail, had generated mass protests across the South-East and South-South geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The rising wave of protests (sometimes accompanied by violence) which have enjoyed wide coverage in the media all over the world had crumbled economic

activities in these regions of the country on several occasions and had caused nationwide hysteria and panic. The protest has however evolved from simply the struggle for the release of Kanu to agitations for the secession of Biafra (which is supposedly the South-East geopolitical zone, the South-South as well as some regions of the Middle Belt such as Benue State) from Nigeria. Biafra, as pointed out earlier, was conceived in the period after the second military coup in Nigeria, where mostly Easterners were killed. The coup, which was conceived as against the Igbo, led to mindless uprisings in the country, especially in the North where many Easterners were also killed. Consequently, the Nigeria Civil War/ Biafra War broke out, out of the Easterners' desire for self-government. Now, the protesters cum agitators had since been sometimes resisted calmly by security forces and sometimes fiercely, leading to several casualties as well as loss of lives and property. Now, these incessant protests have become a sensitive national issue, generating fundamental ideological questions of nationhood and federalism and raising serious questions of identity, marginalisation, oppression, discrimination and so on.

The news media, on its own part, has been very *active* in these discussions. It has consistently and constantly kept the citizenry abreast of events as they unfold. News reports from different media houses have seen and reported this event in different ways as is expected (Fowler, 1991; van Dijk, 2000). Each has also chosen a perspective from which to view the events. These reports have also chosen to pitch their tent with a particular side. It is therefore important that a study as this examine the 'how' and 'what' of these reports.

### **1.1.3 The discourse of protest**

One of the events that have an enormous propensity of being newsworthy is public protest. This is not just because people want to be kept abreast of protests, but also because 'journalistic attention is mostly driven by official initiatives and controversy, since they breed a constant and reliable news flow' (Blanco, 1997:1). To Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993: 115), protest is a 'sustained and self-conscious challenge to authorities or cultural codes by a field of actors – organisations and advocacy networks – some of whom employ extra institutional means of influence'.

In the end, the purpose of a protest or any social movement should not merely be to mobilise people but to influence a change in a particular situation. Dr Martin Luther King Jr (1963) puts it aptly that ‘a social movement that only moves people is merely a revolt. A movement that changes both people and institutions is a revolution.’

Protests are important in contemporary societies; they constitute a veritable means through which citizens give voice to their plights and concerns (Lee, 2014). Protests constitute a prominent feature of democratic societies as protests have, in so many ways, shaped, formed and helped to build popular democracies in the world (Tilly, 2005). Even in non-democratic societies, Melucci (1996) notes that protests also remain important in the struggle for citizenship rights. He notes that protests perform the crucial role of serving as a link between the public, opinion formation and policy makers.

On protest and the media, Cottle (2008: 854) avers that ‘the politics that animate [protests] are not only seen in public squares and on public streets but, necessarily, in and through the media’ especially the news media. However, protests and demonstrations have questionably pursued too much attention from the news media, and the media has not only contributed to protest *hype* but also to the politics of protest and dissent conveyed to wider audiences, and it is by this same means that wider support and legitimacy for their actions and aims can be potentially won or lost (Cottle, 2008). Although protests have been seen in themselves as a form of ‘media’ (Alberto, 1996), ‘there is still no avoiding the centrality of mainstream news media for the wider communication of dissent and the pursuit of instrumental or expressive goals’ (Cottle, 2008). Protests need the media not just for the coverage of their activities but for ‘wider mobilisation, validation and to broaden the scope of conflict (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). Increasingly, as Tilly (2005) observes, it is not the protesters that are more important in protests, but those who read, listen and watch the media coverage, and most often the elites and authorities watching and coordinating responses (Koopmans, 2004: 368).

In the same light, Cottle (2008) observes that as politics takes centre place in protest activities, it has also affected how the media represent protests. Fang (1994) and Lee and Craig (1992), studying how newspapers represent protesters, discover some trend in how the newspaper’s bias are based on their country’s government’s

relations with the country where the protests take place. The argument here, however, is not directed at ascertaining which of these representations is more sincere, but rather as Hart (2012) observes, that language provides options in representing events and that it is therefore ‘the essence of representation that it is always representation from some ideological point of view’ (Fowler, 1991: 85). Social practices such as who and what gets to make the news have consequences on how newspapers report protests. The elite and powerful represented in authority figures usually get their views and opinions expressed in the press. The lower strata of the society hardly ever get into the news and when they do, it is when they are reported as heroic figures in which case they appear mostly in entertainment sections of the media. While the elite get reported in terms of what they think and say, the poor are reported in terms of what they do and what is done to them; that is if they ever make the news. Protests are mostly non-elitist. It is perhaps an instance in which the interest of the elite is restricted. However, this is not to mean that the manipulation involved in representing and constructing protest activities by the media is not reflective of the whims and caprices of the elite and the powerful in the society. Part of what constitutes the focus of this study is how this is done and the strategies used to present this. This subliminal message of the media, as have been observed earlier, is usually based on the ideological proclivities of the media houses that present them, which is mostly elitist.

#### **1.1.4 Language and representation**

The ways in which humans use language is profound. Language is not used arbitrarily; it is used to represent what constitutes the human world. Language is used to represent reality, but it is not reality. Hence, language is used by humans to achieve several ends and should not be perceived as an end in itself but a means to an end. The perception of language in this way helps us understand that humans could use language in subtle ways to accomplish their ends. As Fowler (1991:2) asserts, language use is not neutral, but a ‘highly constructive mediator’. Substantiating this, Pickering (2001) observes that representation through language has the power to tweak language in a way that favours the language user

Fuller and Collier (2004) observe that language does not stand apart from the natural order it passively represents but is part of the natural order, and has the capacity to move and be moved as anything else. Fairclough (1993:134) defines language as a ‘mode of action’ which is socially and historically situated and which is always in a

dialectical rapport with the social context. He observes that language is constitutive of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief.

Humans grant meaning to their actions and also remove it through their use of language. Bloomaert (2005) notes that language is never 'non-social' as several factors come into play in the use of language such as purpose, accent, gender, age, social position, situation or domain and style, hence its being naturally manipulated by its users.

The news media in its entirety represents an instance of language use. As Richardson (2007) observes, the news media, just like other situations of language use, can be studied based on five fundamental assumptions. The first assumption is that language is social. This means, as is common to humans, language is used to grant meaning and remove meaning from actions. Hence, every instance of language use is reflective of a social nuance. Language also 'reflects speaker's identities, expectations as to what speakers intend to accomplish in a particular act of communication, elements of a wider social structure in which speakers are caught, and so on.' (Blommaert, 2005: 11)

Another assumption, according to Richardson (2007), is that language use enacts identity. This illustrates how humans project themselves in several ways and the identity that humans project has to do with what they seek to achieve. This is why the way and manner with which we talk differ depending on the situation. Consequently, utterances would have several shades of interpretation because of the numerous factors involved in the interpretation, such as the identity of the writer and the context of its being uttered.

The third assumption about language (and a basic one at that) is that 'language use is always active'. This corroborates J. L. Austin's stance in *How to do things with words* that language is always directed at doing something and that context largely determines how language achieves this. Hence, an instance of language use in the news media may be an instance of *condemning, exposing, informing, supporting* or *opposing* something. Therefore, language should not merely be seen as an event of communication but as a social action.



Richardson also holds the view that ‘language use has power’. This has largely to do with the inequality that exists in communication, especially as it has to do with how communication is achieved as dependent upon factors such as who and what is communicated. Just as some manners of communicating are more potent than others, the opinions of certain persons are usually perceived to be more newsworthy than others. Apparently inherent in the *power* of language as evident in the news media is the proclivity for belief reinforcement and opinion shaping through the news media’s power to ‘shape issue agendas and public discourse’ (Richardson, 2007: 13).

Akin to the language – power assumption mentioned above is that the use of language is political. This is expected, since, as have been mentioned earlier, language use is both social and powerful. What is predicated in this assumption is that language is ‘an instrument that is shaped according to the material circumstances and the purpose that we want it to serve[...]a medium of power that can be used to sediment inequalities of power and legitimate iniquitous social relations’ (Richardson, 2007: 13-14).

Richardson, then, submits that language use exists as a form of dialogue with society and through its effects on people, it invariably helps to recreate it. Hence, language represents social reality and contributes to a great degree to the production and reproduction of this social reality or social life. That language is social is reflected in the way people interact or communicate based on social context. Also, language use reflects speakers’ identity and expectations as to what speakers intend to accomplish in a particular act of communication which could be in a physical or institutional setting (Bloomaert 2005:11). Bloomaert goes on to opine that language use goes beyond reflecting the way things are done to recreating these social and institutional expectations, for example, we expect that when we pick up a newspaper, it will be written in a particular way. In addition, news writers use language to do things. Through their power to shape issues and public opinion, they can reinforce beliefs and shape people’s opinion of the world. Most often, the news media can influence people’s opinion on certain subjects, and in doing this, they can help shape social reality by shaping people’s views of social reality.

Hence, representation through language refers to the process through which words and images stand for ideas, individuals, social groups and other categories.

Forms created in language serve as a means of representation. People, events, situations and conditions are usually surreptitiously represented by the newspaper in a particular way. This way, the audience is not allowed to make judgements or arrive at conclusions on their own but made to view certain events in certain light. Consequently, when a news item is read, the readers do not only understand it in the same way, but in the way the writer wants it to be understood which is fundamental to how it has been written.

Representation, according to Franklin, Hamer, Hana, Kinsey and Richardson (2005: 233), is ‘the process through which words and images stand for ideas, individuals, social groups and other categories. Representation in media discourse is the ‘manner in which the news media help to discursively construct (versions of) ‘reality’ Hamer, Hana, Kinsey and Richardson (2005: 234). It refers to ‘the interaction between the media’s role in forming the “frames of understanding” we construct in our heads about the material world, and the actuality of our behaviour and attitudes’ (MacDonald, 2003:14). There has been intense argument about the point of convergence and divergence between representation and reality and whether or not words can accurately characterise reality.

Forms are usually created in language as a form of representation. People, events, situations and conditions are surreptitiously represented by the newspaper in a particular way. This way, the audience is not allowed to make judgements or arrive at conclusions on their own but made to view certain events in certain light.

The media represent actors in the news they report in different ways (van Leeuwen, 2008). Osisanwo (2011) submits that representation through linguistic processes and visual strategies play a great role in the propagation and perpetuation of implicit and dominant ideologies.

### **1.1.5 The language of newspaper**

How news is written and presented has undergone centuries of linguistic evolution; it is not a ‘natural’ form of writing. It is also a particular discourse with its own rhythms, tones, words and phrases (van Dijk, 1988; Fowler, 1991). News, as has been asserted earlier, is an instance of language use, and as with other instances of language use, it is an instance of the representation of reality and must not be

misconstrued as reality. Hence, the presentation of news constitutes an instance of representation through language.

News is basically written for the purpose of communication and as a way of disseminating information to a large group of people. In order to be successful in their trade, news writers and editors are always mindful of the use to which language, the medium of news reportage is put. Fowler (1994:4) commenting on the importance of language to news notes that news is a way of representing the world in language, hence, 'it is not a value-free reflection of facts'. Observing that the language of the news is not as neutral as it seems, Fowler concludes that every particular form of linguistic expression ranging from text-wording to syntactic option has its purpose. It is important to mention that the language of newspapers has been largely influenced by the language of the elite. This has affected the style as well as the ideological perspective of newspapers (Fowler, 1991). This is not unexpected as newspapers are filled with reports of statements, claims, promises and judgements of prominent people in the society; 'reporter's writings are even more influenced by this manner of writing because some are written in the formal, authoritative style which prominent personalities such as politicians habitually use' (Fowler, 1991). An instance of this is found in Fowler (1991), which analysed an 'investigative' article in *Sunday Times*, which exposed and condemned the inadequate surgical provision in British hospitals. It was discovered that the article only appeared to deplore the situation, its language was very similar to that of the bureaucrats, politicians and surgeons involved in the problem that the 'caring point of view was undermined'. The article, according to him, depersonalised the patients, allowing them no individuality or initiative, and reserved all power to high-ranking people who 'deal with them'. Other sections in this study will hint at issues on the language of newspapers.

In Nigeria, the newspaper is largely the most popular news medium as both the television and the radio sometimes resort to the print media as news source. Often, listening and viewing times are dedicated to newspaper reviews daily. Just like in other countries, a whole lot of ideological and political underpinnings characterise the Nigerian newspaper medium (Dele and Soromekun, 2013), and this is what this study examines as would be presented later in sections of this study.

### 1.1.6 News lead and the presentation of news

An indispensable part of news is the lead. It is so important to the structure of the news that media houses require reporters to train specially for writing good leads. The lead is important to the news because it should not only draw readers in so that they read on, but also give them a solid grasp of what the news is about. According to Pape and Featherstone (2005), the lead of a story should grab attention and draw readers in so that they read on. This is why it is the most important paragraph in the story. The facts and information presented in the lead determine the focus and direction of what comes next. If the lead is enticing, the reader's attention is captured and sustained. The lead, most often, deals with the outcome of an event or the latest, most interesting or most dramatic thing to have happened. However, because news is about people, a lead should also answer the question 'who?' The focus should be on people and what has happened to them. Apart from this, a lead should always be a self-contained summary that, if the rest of the story were to be cut, would be capable of standing alone as a stop-press or news-in-brief paragraph.

News leads can be categorised along the lines of function, structure and orientation. However these categories often overlap in the presentation of news leads. According to function, a news lead would contain all of the five Ws and H which include the who, what, why, when, where and how of the news. Sometimes, a news lead does not contain all of the five Ws and H. What the lead should contain is determined by the news writer. Based on structure, a lead can be *single (one)-sentence*, *two-sentence* or *clothesline*. Pape and Featherstone (2005) observe that the single-sentence lead involves some, but not all, of the Ws and it sums up the news story in one sentence. The two-sentence lead is used in a single par where the writer has two strong newsworthy points. The clothesline lead is one in which you can hang everything. A clothesline lead contains all the Ws. The danger in a clothesline lead is that the writer tries to say too much, does not say it well and may confuse the reader in the process. Along the line of orientation are news leads like the *hard news lead* which gives just the details in a straight forward way and *features* which delays the details. Other news lead types include the *immediate identification lead* which focuses on the person who the action is happening to, not the action (often used in *hard news*); the *delayed identification lead* which tells the reader who the story is about in a delayed way (often used in *features*); the *summary (news) lead* which gives an

overview of what happened without giving any specifics (also used in *hard news*); *the multiple – element lead* which tells the reader about more than one thing in a simple kind of summary way; and the *soft or second-day lead* (used in *features*) which gives the news in a more interesting, non-timely way.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

The pro-Biafra protest broke out in October, 2015 at the outset of a new administration in Nigeria. At the outbreak, it became obvious that the country still had a number of lingering unresolved matters as the widespread protests threatened the continued coexistence of the country. Apart from the fact that the protesters – who were mainly Easterners at the beginning of the outbreak – demanded for secession from Nigeria, the protests affected economic activities in most states where they were carried out. As the protest spread to other parts of the country, it quickly became an urgent national issue. How the government handles this issue goes a long way to determine if the country continues to exist as one or divide into several units, and certainly the news media representation of this event has implications for government policy and public perception.

Studies on news reportage have been conducted from both the linguistic and non-linguistic perspectives. On representation in the media, as a case in point, some previous studies (Baker, 2006; Majid, 2008; Mahdi, 2009; Talaat, 2011; Osisanwo, 2011; Orimogunje, 2012; Igwebuiké, 2013; Amir, Kazem & Hussien, 2013, Oyeleye & Osisanwo, 2013 a & b; Omojuyigbe, 2014; Onoye, 2014) have focused on how selected persons or groups are represented in the media based on their religious inclinations, tribal proclivity or ideological stance. Some others have examined how crime, especially heinous crimes, such as insurgency and terrorism are represented in the media (Chiluwa, 2011a; Chiluwa, 2011b; Iyoha, 2015; Osisanwo, 2016 a & b). Such studies have examined how actors and their actions in these events are represented in the news. Additionally, a number of studies (Egbunike, 2015; Hall, 2011; Newlands, 2009; Cottle, 2008; Lee and Craig 1992; Fang, 1994) have been conducted on the discourse of protest and these studies have examined both the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of the discourse. Those that have focused on the linguistic aspects such as Ajayi and Bamgbose (2019) and Chiluwa (2018) have given

more attention to areas such as pragmatics, ideology and framing. Also, there have been studies on the pro-Biafra protest which have examined pro-Biafra discourse in digital communities such as *Nairaland* and Facebook with little attention paid to discourse and ideological representation.

Hall (2011), for instance, only carries out a speech act analysis of how UK broadsheet newspapers (*The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Times*) represent students' protest in the planned increase in University tuition fees in the UK in November, 2010 while Egbunike (2015) employs framing theory to examine the frames employed by the media in reporting the *#Occupy Nigeria* protests in January 2012, following government's removal of subsidy on premium motor spirit (PMS), though it is not clear how these frames are linked to underlying ideologies and opinions, as all frames would do. Fang (1994) is a Critical Analysis of how foreign protesters are represented in Chinese newspapers; the study, however does not reveal the strategies utilised in making this happen. Lee and Craig (1992) also examines US newspaper coverage of the civil action in Poland and South Korea through its syntax, style and graphic representation to determine its ideological structure; but the study does not present the ideology represented in the newspaper since it does not use a theoretical framework that could do this.

Investigating how protest and insurgency are framed, Sandig (2015) compares Boko Haram and MASSOB's approach to achieving their purposes. The study, following the framing approach, investigates the signifying work and meaning construction of both movements. The author discovered that the different protest behaviour emanates from the different context of culture of the movements, from the agency of the framers, and from successful frame alignment, which results in frame resonance and, thereby, the successful mobilisation of collective action.

Chiluwa (2018) investigates discourse acts in online discourse forged by IPOB in furtherance of the actualisation of the independence of the Eastern region. The study examines how outrage is produced by the group. Chiluwa discovers that the main players in the discourse have conflicting opinions which leaves so much to be desired about the actualisation. Ajayi and Bamgbose (2019) examines impoliteness strategies in ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria. The study investigates online agitation for the release of Nnamdi Kanu in 2015. Their study reveals the way and

manner in which linguistic tools are used by various groups online to construct identities and perception about others. Ajayi and Bamgbose discovered that Kanu's supporters show optimism about the realisation of the Biafran State. Kanu's supporters also have a negative construction of Nigeria and her people. Ajiboye (2019) also examines the stance towards the protest within digital communities using the stance theory.

The current study differs from existing studies in that it examines the discourse representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest in news reports which has hardly been researched. This is perhaps because the protest is a very recent development in Nigeria. This work will therefore examine the discourse strategies deployed by Nigerian newspapers in (re)presenting and constructing the protest as well as the identity constructed for the actors.

### **1.3 Aim and objectives of the study**

The aim of the study is to examine the divergent language and discourse features through the voices expressed in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify the discourse issues in the representation of the pro-Biafra protest in selected Nigerian newspapers;
- ii. examine the representational strategies deployed in the representation of social actors and actions in the protest;
- iii. identify and explore the ideologies constructed in the representation of the pro-Biafra protest; and
- iv. discuss the lexical and grammatical choices employed in the construction of the pro-Biafra protest in selected Nigerian newspapers.

### **1.4 Research questions**

- i. What are the discourse issues in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest in selected Nigerian newspapers?
- ii. To what extent do representational strategies help in the representation of social actors and actions?

- iii. Which ideological inclinations are deployed in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest?
- iv. How do lexical and grammatical choices help in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest in Nigeria newspapers?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

Most studies on media discourse generally have paid attention to politics. Others have focused on media representation of militancy, insurgency and terrorism which have come to be the present day realities for Nigeria. This study, however, focuses on media construction of protest events, the 2015 and 2016 Biafra protest. The study contributes to knowledge by tracking and unravelling the discursive strategies deployed in the representation of social actors involved in protest events. The study also significantly unravels the ideological inclinations projected in the representation of protesters and the protest events in order to aid the understanding of how language is used ideologically to (re)present issues as the news media do more with language than merely reporting issues. It is hoped that the study will inspire further inquiry into the language of the media because of the enormous implications that media construction of events could have on public perception and reception, and in turn, on policy making and implementation. Suffice it to say that this linguistic inquiry into the pro-Biafra protest from the point of view of the social actors involved in the protest could help bring about a deeper understanding of the protest and proffer a lasting solution to it, thereby preventing similar future uprisings surrounding the Biafra issue.

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

The source of data for this study is limited to four widely circulated Nigerian newspapers which include: *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Sun* and *Vanguard* newspapers. Though other Nigerian newspapers reported the protest, our data source is limited to these four newspapers as they had a relatively frequent reportage of the protests. The reports selected are also limited to the period between 2015 and 2016, this being the period when there was a prevalence of the protests in Nigeria. The study also focuses on ideology construction and social actor/ action representation; it has not investigated stance/ appraisal and identity negotiation in the reportage of the protest which are central areas to protest discourse.



## 1.7 Operational definition of terms

The working definition of terms important to this study includes the following in no particular order. More discussion on these terms are provided in the review of conceptual issues section in chapter 2.

**Discourse:** Discourse is the use of language in speech or writing which is a form of social practice.

**Representation:** This refers to the patterns created in language to portray events, people, situations, and so on in certain ways.

**Biafra:** Biafra is the name the Eastern region of Nigeria adopted during the civil war between 1967 and 1970, when the region declared itself a sovereign state.

**Protest:** This is the act of gathering to show that you disagree with something.

**Ideology:** This is an idea or a belief that is held and associated with a specific social group or class.

**Newspaper:** This is a publication containing news and comment on current events, together with features and advertisements, that usually appear daily or weekly and is printed on large sheets of paper that are folded together.

**News:** This is information about current events printed by the newspaper or broadcast by the media.

**Media:** These are the various means of mass communication considered as a whole, including television, radio, magazines, and newspapers, together with the people involved in their production.

## 1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter presents a background to the research. The chapter begins with an introductory background to the study that is premised on fundamental assumptions of language as evident in the news media. The background is on language, representation, newspaper research and the discourse of protest. Immediately after the background is the statement of the problem and the aim and objectives of the study. In

all, this research is carried out with the aim that it will add to existing knowledge on the language of the news media, knowing well that how the media construct issues, and in this case protests, has implications not only on how such issues will be perceived but also on how it endears responses from the masses and its wider implications for decision making and policy implementation.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2. 0. Chapter overview**

This chapter begins by broadly examining conceptual issues relevant to the study. It examines central concepts, including discourse, ideology, identity, and social movements with a view to establishing their connection with the media. Also, related existing studies are explored here in order to situate the research within the body of existing works. Since the research is a descriptive - analytical one, a description of the theoretical framework that underpins the study as well as the suitability of the framework is further explored.

#### **2.1 Conceptual issues**

Some conceptual issues central to a study of this nature will be examined here with a view to clarifying the dimension of their usage in this study. Such topics include discourse, ideology, identity, media and social movement as well as news.

##### **2.1.1 Discourse, ideology and identity**

Discourse, ideology and identity are concepts that cut across a wide range of disciplines, and they have become important over the years in multidisciplinary studies. Their definitions are not so easy to narrow down as each of these concepts has evolved over time to mean different things to different people in these areas. These concepts are also closely related that their use has become interdependent over time in the various disciplines. Given the indispensability of the concepts, they have allowed for smooth interdisciplinary studies to be conducted. Below is a discussion (though not exhaustive) of each of these concepts and how they are to be perceived in this study.

### **2.1.1.1 Discourse**

The term 'discourse' has been used across disciplines in different ways. According to Richardson (2007:21), the term has generated several modes of usage that seem 'to go beyond the scope of discourse itself'; it has been radically extended by scholars to include a lot of things. Schiffrin (1994) opines that there are two general approaches to the definition of discourse. They include the formalist or structuralist approach and the functionalist approach to discourse. The formalist approach to discourse focuses on the form of language and sees discourse as a particular unit of language that is larger than the sentence. Formalists would normally pay attention to stretches of language and language patterns that are more than one sentence, as well as elements of language that are used to connect them. The focus in this formalist school is systems, and structures within these systems, especially how these structures interact within these systems. This approach to discourse has however been criticised for its inadequacies. Most often, how we make sense of discourse goes beyond merely understanding forms or structures to understanding certain social and contextual nuances. It is this social aspect of language that is more expressed in the functionalist approach.

The functionalists see discourse as 'language in use'. Functionalists are of the opinion that language is active and hence, the analysis of discourse should be the analysis of the purpose language serves in its use. Functionalists are interested in what is communicated in language and how language is used for communication when it is used for a particular purpose or in certain instances and communication contexts (Cameron, 2001). The analysis of language in use is to be connected to its wider interpersonal, institutional, sociocultural and material contexts, since discourse exists in a kind of dialogue with society. Fairclough (1989) avers that discourse is language in its form as social practice. He locates discourse in language by observing that 'language is a social process, a socially conditioned process, conditioned that is by other non-linguistic parts of society' (Fairclough, 1989: 22). What Fairclough insinuates here is that discourse cannot be separated from social practice, which means that discourse is invariably indicative of social practice. So, if discourse reveals oppression of minority groups in language use, it is indicative of such oppression or trends as being present within society (Hardman, 2009). Drawing from this view of discourse, Mills (1997) argues that discourse then becomes an element which does not

exist in or of itself but rather produces another element which could be an utterance, concept or an effect. This then means that discourse should not be analysed in isolation, thus establishing the role of discourse analysis within society. It is from this functionalist approach to discourse that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) sprang from. CDA involves the analysis of how discourse relates to and is implicated in the (re)production of social relations (Fairclough, 1995).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) explain that CDA takes discourse as the use of language in speech or writing which is a form of social practice. The description of discourse as social practice, as they observed means a dialectal relationship existing between a specific discursive event and the situations or institutions or the social structures which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. What this implies is that 'discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it contributes to transforming it'. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) go on to emphasise the importance of discourse and its relationship with ideology by explaining that discursive practices often constitute major ideological tropes as these practices sometimes produce and reproduce unequal power relations between different people across class, race, belief and other divides.

#### **2.1.1.2 Ideology**

Conceptualising ideology is not an easy task. This is because like discourse, ideology has also engendered some multifaceted meanings in its usage. It has come to be associated with different things to different people in diverse disciplines. This diversity of its usage is occasioned by its long use in a wide range of scholarly disciplines, and in everyday life. The meaning of the term is most often over extended to cover a wide variety of topics and areas, so much so that almost every idea at some point would perhaps be taken as ideological (Eagleton, 1991). Koerner (2002) posits that the diversity in the use of the term has made it to also acquire a rather negative connotation.

However, Eagleton (1991:5), in his epoch-making study, *Ideology* lists the most widely used (but not exhaustive) meaning of ideology across disciplines to include the following:

- i. the process through which meanings are produced and consequently reproduced in social life ;
- ii. ideas that are held and associated with a specific social group or class;
- iii. ideas and assumptions that help to legitimate a particular political power;
- iv. ideas which are false and help to legitimate a particular dominant political power;
- v. communication that is systematically and technically distorted;
- vi. whatever gives a position about an issue
- vii. thought forms that are influenced by social gains;
- viii. thinking associated with identity;
- ix. illusions that are held up because of social necessity;
- x. the intersection of discourse and power;
- xi. the manner through which conscious social actors derive meaning from the world;
- xii. action-oriented held assumptions and beliefs;
- xiii. the confusion of associated language and phenomenal reality;
- xiv. fixed semiotic meaning;
- xv. the societal established medium through which people relate based on established social structure;
- xvi. the process through which social life results subtly into natural reality.

As Eagleton observes, ideology does not only relate to belief systems, as is often assumed, but to questions of power and its legitimation in a dominant social group or class.

Eagleton further asserts that 'ideology is matter of 'discourse' rather than 'language'. It has to do with 'the actual uses of language between particular human subjects for the production of specific effects' (pg 9). The discursive context in which a statement occurs is what determines its being classified as ideological. Thus, the linguistic features of a work of art contribute less to its ideology than its discursive context. The same stretch of language that may be ideological in one context may not be ideological in the other context. Ideology, invariably, 'is a function of the relation of an utterance to its social context' (Eagleton, 1991: 7). Therefore, to say that a statement is ideological is then to mean that it is backed by an ulterior motive and the legitimation of certain interests in a power struggle.

For the purpose of this work, the following definition of ideology, as put forward by Eagleton (1991: 9), is adopted:

Ideas and belief (whether true or false) which symbolise the conditions and life-experiences of a specific social significant group or class [...] the promotion and legitimation of interests of such social groups in the face of opposing interests. Ideology can here be seen as a discursive field in which self-promoting social powers conflict and collide over questions central to the reproduction of social power as a whole.

Ideology could also be perceived as signifying ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the motives and interests of the elite specifically through distortion or dissimulation. Ideology equally constitutes the bedrock of critical discourse analysis as it deals largely with situations of power and dominance (van Dijk, 1998b). van Dijk avers that ideology can be seen as ‘political or social systems of ideas, values or prescriptions of groups or other collectivities, and have the function of organising or legitimising the actions of the group’. It is the way in which meanings within texts serve to establish and maintain domination (Knowles and Malnkjaer, 1996). van Dijk (1998a) posits that to discover embedded ideology within media texts, its social function must be identified. According to him, this social function serves to coordinate the social practices of group members in order to effectively realise group social goals and protect its interest. van Dijk (1998a) goes on to point out that apart from identifying social function, cognitive structures could also be identified. These cognitive structures are expressed in ‘self’ and ‘others’, ‘us and them’, and so on. van Dijk equally notes that there are a number of ways through which ideologies are discursively expressed and reproduced in discourse. Among these ways, he identifies the choice of certain lexical items with ideological connotations, such as the use of evaluative premodifiers, modals, clause structure, implicature and presupposition, and so on.

### **2.1.1.3 Identity**

The concept of identity has been studied in linguistics and in a wide range of other disciplines. Within linguistics, it has enjoyed more attention especially from sociolinguistics, and from gender and discourse studies (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998; Talbot, 1995; Tajfel, 1982; Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003; Stokoe, 2006; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). It has also engendered different conceptualisations.

Hardman (2008) notes that the traditional view of identity until the 1990s is that it is fixed, meaning that identity is innate and cannot be changed or negotiated. According to Hardman, this view of identity belongs to the essentialist approach where individuals are seen as belonging to fixed categories that are static. However, constructionist approach holds that identity can be negotiated and constructed based on the context of situation as well as the social goals of a person (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). Identity within critical discourse analysis, as Benwell and Stokoe (2006) opine, can be identified through the linguistic analysis of transitivity, mood and modality, pronouns, presupposition, intertextuality, vocabulary and theme to uncover the identities being created by the text producer.

Scollon (1998:21) submits that identity is a complex issue for at least two reasons. The first is that 'identity is always a construct of intersecting and interacting social practices as these are situationally grounded in the actions of agents.' Apart from this, Scollon observes that identity is 'analytical'. This is because identity construction involves 'complex intersections of socio-historical practices by which the disciplines of psychology, political sciences, history, discourse analysis, sociology and anthropology are constituted'.

Though the analysis of identity is not part of the objectives of this study, it is important that we take a cursory look at it as identity is closely associated with ideology. As would be seen later, it is often the practice that an analysis of ideology can help point out features of identity construction in language use situations.

### **2.1.2 The media and social movements**

Social movements take different forms and are usually organised by people who feel the need to make specific demands from constituted authority. Sometimes, the formation of social movements is precipitated by the need to create awareness about certain issues. Social movements are often expressed in demonstrations, protests, strike action, public march, and so on. However, these expressions in themselves may not constitute social movement. The relationship that exists between the media and social movements seems to be complex one (Lee, 2014). The media do not only need to feed on issues and happenings in the society such as protest, but actors in protests also rely on the media to sustain their protest. To establish this complex relationship between social movements and the media, Cammaerts (2012)



puts forward the notion of mediation opportunity structure. This structure has to do with how the mainstream media represent protests, the discursive environment with which movements articulate their frames, and the technological environment within which media practices may constitute protest actions (Lee, 2014). Protesters are aware that the success or otherwise of their venture depends, to a large extent, on the news media – an institution that has the capacity to enable the events of a protest travel far and wide (Guillen, 2016; Corbett, 1998). Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) notes that successful movements were dependent on news media agencies for mobilisation of participants, validation of their cause, and enlarging the scope of their sympathisers since what constitutes their goal is winning the sympathy of the audience. Positive and popular coverage goes a long way to help boost the image of the protesters and can amplify or legitimise the voice of protesters, enhancing the tendencies for protest to attract public support and influence governmental authorities (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993).

However, the rapid change in the news media outlet, especially in technological advancement, is fast affecting how protest movement interact with the news media. The sole reliance of protest actors on the mainstream media is no longer a practice. The internet now provides alternatives for protest actors, and this has become very significant. Nonetheless, the mainstream media still retains, to a large extent, enormous power to ‘set agenda, reach a more diverse audience, and confer status and legitimacy’ (Lee, 2014: 272). Guillen (2016) reports that the news media has loosened the grip that traditional media has hitherto had on the report of protests. Gitlin (1980) also points out that a number of reasons make movement actors to cling to the news media. They include recruiting, challenging the authority, to appeal to third parties, for protection through publicity, intimidation, and addressing of grievances.

How the media represent protests impact on how the protest will be viewed or accepted by the audience, as well as whether or not it will achieve its aim or get the desired outcomes (Agnone, 2007; King, 2011). In the history of the relationship between the media and social movements, there has been misunderstanding and argument over the negotiation of meaning (Guillen, 2016). Most times, there are conflicting constructions of events between the protesters and the media in ways that

suggest that their different perspective is reflective of reality. Guillen (2016:20) submits that ‘in studying movement success with news making involvement, success should be measured through successful interaction with news makers and the public and not solely success in the overall movement message’.

Studies such as Chan and Lee (1984), Boykoff (2006), Gitlin (1980) and Small (1995) have challenged the mainstream media for marginalising and delegitimising protests through representing their actions as deviant, threatening, or impotent (Lee, 2014). This act of the news media is referred to as protest paradigm (Chan and Lee, 1984). According to Lee (2014), research on the concept of protest paradigm investigates how media coverage is used as a variable, in other words, one do not set out to assume or try to establish that the mainstream media are prejudiced against social protests, instead, the manner of delegitimising coverage is presented as existing to varying degrees in the representation of different forms of protests, by different media, or in different types of societies.

The report of protest has been subjected to selection biases in the news. Research has shown that protests have the tendency to be reported if they align with the media house’s agenda or possess features that make them news worthy (McCarthy, McPhail and Smith, 1996; Meyers and Caniglia, 2004; Wikes, Corrigan-Brown, and Myers, 2010).

### **2.1.3 The concept of news**

The question of what constitutes news has been a very controversial one in the parlance of journalism. Numerous attempts have been made to provide an answer to this question. One popular conception of news is that ‘news is new’. From this perspective, Reah (2002:3) observes that news is ‘something new that has just happened or is about to happen; something that is immediate, exciting, unusual, unexpected, amazing, vital, important and interesting’. It could also mean information just received that has not been previously published or broadcast (Pape and Featherstone, 2005). Sheridan (2000) also defines news as what brings people together in a sense of community. This is in the sense that news is something that individuals want to share with one another. Sometimes, what makes the news will not

necessarily be the awkward or dramatic, even the most ordinary occurrence may make the news or may be newsworthy because of the relative impact it can have on people.

Looking at the different views about what news is, one would come to the conclusion that it is difficult to agree on a precise definition. Hence, Pape and Featherstone (2005) list out a number of criteria which makes news actually news. First is that it has to happen at the right place; it has to affect people; and it has to be based on facts. News has to be based on fact because as Glover (2000:18) observes, ‘facts are the crucial standard by which opinions can be judged’. It is not possible for people to make accurate and informed judgements about their society without facts. It is pertinent that news is based on facts since it provides the information from which people draw their “cognitive maps” or reality (McNair 2001:12). Also, what the news says informs people’s opinions about events and issues.

Pape and Featherstone (2005) comment on what makes one person more likely to make the news than another and why an event is likely to be covered and not another. It was declared that the celebrity status of the person concerned matters. Buttressing this, van Dijk (1988b) observes that it is the opinion of the elites that are reflected in the news since they own most newspaper industry. So, it is not surprising to view newspapers as elitist. Most often it is when the unfortunate happen to the poor that it is reported in news. van Dijk (1988b) also opines that non elitist do not feature as active participants in the news and often their views are not seen as credible enough compared to elitist views which often makes the news. According to van Dijk, non elitist persons make the news only when they are seen to constitute nuisance to the society in situations such as strikes, protests or demonstrations. In business news, the focus is on business elites, relegating those who work on the floor, except when they supposedly become violent.

In fact, events about the third world nations only constitute news when they are negative. Accounts like coups, war, civil war, oppression, dictatorship, and violence are usually reported about the third world. These news matters, as van Dijk observes, are still the staple of news reports about third world countries especially when they can be perceived as a threat to the countries of the first world. This situation is true for reports on poverty, hunger, underdevelopment, misery, and so on. The news report will often play down the direct effects or legacies of Western colonialism, corporate practises, military intervention, international trade, and politics

while Western aids are emphasized and presented as beneficial (van Dijk). It is not surprising to see news present and adopt the perspective and legitimate the dominance of the elites.

There are several criteria of newsworthiness that guide the news media selection of events for reporting; so news is not simply what happens, but what can be regarded and presented as newsworthy (Fowler, 1991). Hence, the more newsworthy criteria an event satisfies, the more likely it is to be reported. Negative or catastrophic events score high on most criteria and receive massive newspaper coverage. Fowler (1991:12) discusses twelve of these criteria. The first is 'frequency' which means that an event "is more likely to be reported if its duration is close to the publication frequency of the news medium. 'Threshold' refers to the 'size' or 'volume' needed for an event to become newsworthy. The more the size or volume of a news event, the greater the tendency for its becoming newsworthy. 'Unambiguity' refers to the fact that clear events are newsworthy. 'Consonance' refers to categories of events which people either expect to happen or want to happen. 'Unexpectedness' suggests that an event is more newsworthy if it happens without warning or is unusual. 'Continuity' refers to the fact that 'once something has hit the headlines and has been defined as 'news', then it will continue to be defined as news for some time even if the amplitude is drastically reduced'. The next factor, 'composition', refers to 'the balance and make up of a paper news bulletin: an item will be more newsworthy depending on what else is available for inclusion'. 'Reference to elite nations' depicts that only events that portray the first world nations are reported. As for 'elite persons', only events about important persons make the news. The only time less-privileged persons are portrayed in newspaper is when their activities affect the elite. 'Reference to persons', or 'personalisation' functions to promote straightforward feelings of identification, empathy or disapproval.

Fowler (1991:14), citing Whitaker, lists out sources of news reports:

1. Sources monitored routinely
  - a. Parliament
  - b. Councils
  - c. Police
  - d. Others
  - e. Courts

- f. Royalty
  - g. 'Dairy' events
  - h. Airports
  - i. Other news media
2. Organisations using statements and holding press conferences
    - a. Government departments
    - b. Local authority departments
    - c. Public services
    - d. Companies
    - e. Trade unions
    - f. Non-commercial organisations (pressure groups, charities, etc.)
    - g. Political parties
    - h. Army, Navy, Airforce.
  3. Individuals making statements, seeking publicity, e.t.c.
    - a. Prominent people (e.g bishops and film stars)
    - b. Members of the public

Fowler observed that newspapers are full of reports of statements, claims, promises and judgements which have been voiced by prominent people. For example, 'reports of parliamentary debates, the findings of official inquiries; summing-up and judicial comments by magistrates, judges and coroners; political manifestoes; statements by ministers; statements by the chairmen of large companies'; and so on .

That newspapers are filled with such reports makes the style of newspapers seemingly prestigious and official. In fact, Fowler (1991) suggests that this event has affected the articles for which the editor or journalist take responsibility. These articles are now 'tinged with an official ideology, because they are written in the formal, authoritative style which prominent figures such as politicians or experts habitually use'. This is however not to say that newspapers do not have the language of their own, but in 'deploying their language, they reproduce the attitudes of the powerful elite'.

Harcup (2004: 36), cited in Pape and Featherstone, acknowledging that there are often exceptions to rules concludes that news stories should generally meet one or more of the following to qualify as news:

- i. The leading elite: stories that concern influential and powerful people, institutions or establishment
- ii. Celebrity: stories that concern individuals who are famous.
- iii. Entertainment: stories relating to sex, showbiz, human interest, animals, an unfolding drama or offering opportunities for humorous treatment, entertaining photographs or witty headlines.
- iv. Surprise: stories containing the potential for surprise or contrast.
- v. Bad news: stories that have negative connotations, often containing events that are tragic or very violent.
- vi. Good news: stories that have particularly positive nuance, such as rescues or great scientific discoveries.
- vii. Magnitude: stories that involve an unwhelmingly great number of people or have an impact that is huge or sufficiently significant.
- viii. Relevance: stories about people, issues, groups, events and nations that are perceived as relevant to the audience.
- ix. Follow-ups: stories that are sequels to issues already being reported in the news.
- x. Newspaper's agenda: stories that serve the ideological front of the news organisation or fit their agenda.

At some level, all news stories answer the question 'who and what?' – who the story happened to and what happened to them.

Pape and Featherstone also make a distinction between hard news and soft news – as categories of what might constitute news. Hard news stories are the categories of news that deal with event or issues that have an immediate or catastrophic or life-changing effect on the individuals concerned. Apparently, hard news is often bad news and will often deal 'with serious matters that require equal weight to be attached to both 'the who and the what'. A terrorist hijacking an aeroplane for example will qualify as bad news. So will a murder or rape qualify too. Soft news, on the other hand, has a human interest focus and the events that make them may equally be immediate or important for the individuals concerned.

Pape and Featherstone go on to give some criteria as to what makes a story newsworthy as well as instances: These include:

- i. Whatever has an effect on many people such as a new government policy or legislation or political or social issues.
- ii. Negative events or bad news such as accidents which may include terrorist attacks, natural disasters, plane and rail crashes, etc.
- iii. Human interest stories involving ordinary people doing remarkable things.
- iv. Topical stories featuring a 'today' line.
- v. Informative stories telling the reader about something new
- vi. Unexpected events such as unfortunate circumstances happening to famous people in the society.
- vii. Something that deals with a subject that is currently in vogue – such as road rage, hospital bugs, etc.
- viii. Issues that have to do with scandals and disgrace associated with famous and powerful people
- ix. Of general interest – that is, interesting to the widest possible audience
- x. Something that is associated with a celebrity.
- xi. Geographically appropriate to the receiver
- xii. Dramatic – life-saving rescue, etc.
- xiii. Popular campaigns that portray activism

Who decides what constitute news is also a very important question: is it the editor, the reporter or the audience?

## **2.2 Empirical studies**

This section examines previous studies on representation and media studies. It equally presents a review of previous discourse studies on the representation of news actors in the media. The section then goes on to examine existing similar works on the construction of protest. It also gives a survey of Biafra-related studies.

### **2.2.1 Review of existing studies on representation and the news media**

Several studies have been carried out on how individuals or groups, identities and relations are represented in the media. Many of them identify 'representations' with language use in order to account for how opinions and ideologies are expressed and reproduced. Particularly prominent of these studies are Baker (2006) and Majid (2008) who in their separate studies analyse how refugees and asylum seekers are represented in UK newspapers. They prove in their study that refugees and asylum

seekers are generally constructed or represented as a natural disaster, problematic, nuisance and as criminals; which invariably reflects racism, intolerance and prejudice. Majid shows some main directions and trends in the representation of these groups of people across different periods and events. He discovers that they are systematically represented as a homogenous group, sharing similar characteristics, backgrounds, motivations and economic status, all of them different to UK citizens – thus a discursive process of ‘othering’ and ‘social backgrounding’ occurs throughout the press reporting.

Also important is Mahdi (2009) who studies the representations of the Hizbulah-Isreali war in Iranian and American newspapers. He studies how embedded meanings of texts are socially constructed. In his study, he demonstrates that the representation of the same news actors, Hizbullah and Isreali forces by two different newspapers opposed each other. He observes that newspapers and magazines often mystify the agency of processes by using various linguistic strategies such as passivisation and nominalisation. The study concludes that these choices enable writers to manipulate the realisations of agency and power in the representation of actions to produce particular meaning which are not always explicit for all readers. This goes a long way to reflect the agenda of newspapers, which is not just to present facts but to present it in a way that will influence the reader’s view of what is being presented. Talaat also studies how Islamists are linguistically represented in government-oriented and controlled newspaper in Egypt. He shows that they are labelled as terrorists and extremists. Citing Said (1981:43), he observes that newspapers and the news media in general constitute the ‘apparatus’ through which the West derives its perception of Islam and Muslims. This goes a long way to reflect how much the news can indoctrinate people in imbibing certain assumptions, beliefs and values.

On print media’s representation of the Nigeria’s Joint Military Task Force in the Niger Delta Crisis, Chiluwa (2011a) examines how several linguistic strategies are used to positively represent the Joint Military Task Force in the crisis, some of which includes ‘exaggeration’, ‘labeling’ and ‘agency attribution’. According to him, the strategy of labeling were used to portray the insurgents negatively, for instance, he observes that the insurgents are labeled ‘militants’, ‘hoodlums’, criminals, or ‘terrorists’, hence making their killings by the JTMF excusable. He also observes that



the press often applies agency attribution to make the actions of the JTMF all the more important. While positive actions are attributed to the JTMF, negative actions are attributed to the militants. He discovers that the insurgents are often constructed as the aggressor while the JTMF are the victims which lay credence to the fact that language plays a pivotal role in constructing images. Chilwa (2011b) also studies how social and political crises are constructed, represented and mediated in Nigerian newspapers. The study shows that newspapers represent people, events and situations in certain ways and can be an instrument for moulding attitudes and perceptions. He also shows that how they do this is traceable to the linguistic choices made by individual journalists and the media houses they represent.

Amir et al (2013) also studies how Western newspapers present and represent the Iran Nuclear program, Iran sanctions and the Syria crisis. The study shows that linguistic tools can be used to represent certain persons in certain light. Such linguistic tools as lexicalization and collocational patterns, presupposition, intertextuality and modality are identified as items with the highest frequency of use in the representation of such news stories. His findings show that the language of Western newspaper – and particularly American and British ones – is highly ideological while representing the conflicting ideas between Iran and Western countries. According to him, such ideological representations and biased language in news media can result in legitimating one side and suppressing the other side.

### **2.2.2 Review of notable works on representation of news actors in the media**

Notable studies have also examined how news actors are represented in the media. Simmons and Lecouteur (2008), for one, investigate how the media represent two Austrian ‘riots’ that involved the youth and the police. They study the media reports, as portrayed by newspaper reports, television and radio interviews, amongst others. The study observes the ways in which attributions of blame and negative stereotypes were represented by the media.

Similarly, Ayoola (2008) studies how Nigerian newspapers report some Niger Delta conflict issues. He investigates the linguistic as well as the pragmatic features utilised by writers in representing the setting, topics and participants in the news reports. Employing van Dijk’s (2003) and Fairclough (1995) models of CDA, as well as Verscheren’s (1999) as theoretical framework, he discovers how discourse

participants use language to polarise, i.e., presenting themselves positively and others negatively. Ayoola observes that the discourse participants use several pragmatic and discourse strategies like logic, the use of figures and percentages, the persuasion of science, interdiscursivity and intertextuality, rumour mongering, name calling, dysphemism, obfuscation and flattery in their bid to have political edge over their opponents. The study concludes that the reports smear of bias and subjectivity which is a reflection of the reporters and media houses' ideological inclination.

In Britain, Hardman (2008) investigates how British newspapers, *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* and *Mirror* have constructed identities for political leaders which they feature in their editorials. The study also examines how newspaper editorials encode newspapers' stance towards political leaders, placing particular emphasis on the ways in which newspapers construct their own ideological stance through the construction of identity for political actors. The study shows that the linguistic strategies employed by newspapers to evaluate political leaders and their actions in ways that serve the newspaper ideologies. Hardman also discovered that the linguistic strategies used to reflect this stance in tabloid and broadsheet newspapers differ. In broadsheet newspapers, for instance, dual stances are adopted in that the decisions and actions of individuals are positively and negatively represented while the tabloids take a rather 'polarised, partisan view, offering only either a positive or negative stance' (pg 258). Also, tabloids use more evaluative premodifying adjectives before nouns than broadsheets which suggests that broadsheets were more balanced and neutral in their views than the tabloids which are relatively more subjective in their views.

Hardman shows in the study that the examined newspapers ideological stance, or identity positions 'were better characterised in terms of their associations with specific political parties. In the diachronic investigation of how identities are constructed by the newspaper, both in their lexico-grammatical choices, and their discursive practices, Hardman observes that the identities constructed by each of the newspapers did not change over the course of the period studied, which insinuates that the 'British newspaper discourse has a fixed set of discursive means of encoding their ideological stance' (pg 248). The newspapers studied also constructed different identities for their political subjects at every period of time. Hardman shows that certain lexico-grammatical choices were made by the writers of the editorials which

are instrumental to the constructed professional, personal and social identities for the political leaders featured. Such lexico-grammatical choices include the use of noun phrases which are used with categorical assertions or other epistemic modals to construct individual identities. How these noun phrases are used is dependent on the news house's ideological stance. Hardman also observes that the noun phrases are used with certain verbs as part of the epistemic system of modality. This is used to assert the newspaper's constructed identity or representation. Lexical verbs are also used to construct identities by representing the processes in which the politicians are involved. Perception verbs are also used to indicate doubt in abilities or propositions made about politicians.

Also, epistemic and attitude stance adverbs are used to construct positive and negative identities for politicians. Epistemic adverbs in the editorials serve to express confidence and otherwise in the actions of individuals as a way of directing attention at their positive or negative qualities.

Hardman also identifies intertextuality and the use of metaphorical blends as discursive practices that are keys in constructing identities in the newspapers. Intertextuality in the text is manifest in the use of direct quotation and reporting of speech to construct professional identities for subjects. Metaphors are used within the editorials both to encode stance towards issues and events, and to represent individuals. Hardman goes on to posit that group identities were also used to construct a self-identity and a synthetic community of practice which invariably encourages to share the newspapers' ideological stance. This, as Hardman opines, is not isolated or unrelated to the profit motive of the newspapers. The synthetic community of practice is formed textually using consensual pronouns such as 'we', 'our', 'us', etc. Rhetorical questions were also used to encode stance as well as construct a group identity for the newspapers.

Osisanwo (2011) examines how Nigeria news magazines represent the 2003 and 2007 general elections. The study investigates the intricacies inherent in the relations of powers which are at the core of discussions about issues such as the 2003 and 2007 general elections. Osisanwo exposes these intricacies as practised in the mediated political discourse, relating it to the Nigeria General Elections, by studying the linguistic and visual representation of social actors in the general elections as well as the ideological underpinnings of such representations.

Using a combination of Fairclough and van Dijk's models of Critical Discourse Analysis, complemented with Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, Leeuwen's Representation of social actors, Kress and Leeuwen's Representation of Interaction Theory on Reading Images as theoretical basis, Osisanwo discovered that the discourse of the stories showed the proclivity of the reporters to influence the opinions of the readers, hence, their being non-neutral. It was discovered that linguistic devices such as affixation, blending, borrowing, compounding and collocations were used to represent the actions of the actors in the reports based on their role. Osisanwo also observed that lexicalisation and intertextuality intermingled to depict contextual lexical choices.

Furthermore, linguistic tactics such as nominalisation, premodification, post-modification and circumstantialisation were used to activate social action, and linguistic features such as ellipsis, especially in non-finite clauses, infinitival clauses and adjectival premodification were also employed to realise passivisation and exclusion. Passive clauses were also used for obscuring agency. Osisanwo further discovers that material and relational transitivity processes were predominantly used in propagating dominant ideologies, and paratactic and hypotactic clause complexes in reflecting social actors' desires and gains in the elections'. In addition, it was observed that the cover stories in the magazines attempt to shape the perspective of the readers, and the cover stories are also usually far from being the writer's objective viewpoint but a representation of the ideological inclination of the magazine as an institution. Osisanwo affirms that many times, the ideological affiliations of the magazines contradict the position taken by some social actors.

Osisanwo's study corroborates and substantiates the opinion that the print media should not be seen solely as a means of objective information dissemination, as is often the case, but as a medium conditioned by certain ideological proclivity or inclinations which undermine the objectivity or fairness that the media often claims to maintain and uphold. The study views the media as always surreptitiously trying to convince the reader to believe their stand point, and in the end, the media shape the reader's perspectives; influence their judgements and in the long run affect their beliefs.

Osisanwo, then, opines that a sound knowledge of how the media use linguistic patterns and visuals to represent social actors could help to unravel the

ideologies that are inherent in such use. He observed that magazine's representation of electoral issues which is realised through linguistic and visual strategies plays a great role in the propagation and perpetuation of implicit and dominant ideologies. Osisanwo concludes that representation through linguistic processes and visual strategies plays a great role in the propagation and perpetuation of implicit and dominant ideologies. The present study, however, differs from Osisanwo's in that it examines the discursive strategies in the construction of the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protest. The choice of the discourse historical approach in the examination of the discursive strategies employed also makes it relatively distinct from Osisanwo.

Orimogunje (2012) investigates the discourse strategies and political ideologies in selected radio news of Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC). The study reveals the interaction between the strategies and the ideologies inherent in the news. Employing the CDA models of Ruth Wodak and van Dijk, in addition to Halliday's SFG, three political ideologies, namely 'historicist', 'humanitarian' and 'welfarist' were observed to influence the deployment of the discourse strategies in the construction of political news in the OSBC radio. He observed that government was projected as welfarist and humanitarian in its political agenda. The historicist ideology, she observed, was characterised by the use of temporality and historical comparison of events.

She observed that the 'linguistic tool of lexicalisation was used to foreground the humanitarian and welfarist ideologies of the government' (Ogungbe 2012: ii). Also, the historicist ideology was characterised by the use of transitive clauses with a high degree of transitivity which comprised spatio-temporal adverbials and verbal choices for detailed material, mental and relational processes representing the actions and activities of prominent political actors in the news events. For humanitarian and welfarist ideologies, Ogungbe observes that the strategies utilised were blame transfer, source avoidance, positive self – representation and negative other representation, foregrounding of figures and statistics, manipulation and authoritarianism. Blame transfer exonerated the political actors from the ills of the society and shifted the blame on the opponents. Also, events that portrayed the ruling political party positively and the opposition negatively were emphasised and given prominence while those that represented the ruling party negatively and the opponents positively were suppressed. Ogungbe observed that there is a close interaction

between political ideology and the discourse strategies used to project it in OSBC radio news texts which throws useful insights into the ideational process that is crucial in the construction of radio news. The study concludes that the media, especially the radio, is not as objective as it claims to be. It contains discourse strategies and ideological based opinions of the media organisation which is often hidden and implied' (2012: 198)

In addition, Ogungbe (2012) studies pragmatic acts, framing strategies and pictures in news reports, as well as what has motivated the acts. Ogungbe does this with a view to unravelling the ideologies underlining the acts in the newspaper. He uses aspects of Mey's pragmatic act theory, with Hoyer and Kaiser's visual act theory, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis as theoretical framework. He studies four Nigerian newspapers which include *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust*. Ogungbe discovers that newspapers use headlines that are arranged with eye-catching, controversial and emotive words. These headlines, in turn, perform certain pragmatic acts such as exposing and reporting which are then now used to educate the readers and allay anxiety; 'recommending, urging, cautioning, accusing and blaming to influence public taste and enforce social norms; praising and eulogising to praise reader's aspiration' (Ogungbe 2012: ix). Ogungbe observed that the framing strategies that are used include 'metaphoric and statistical framing, quote and source selection, agency and action attribution to perform such acts as condemning, challenging, indicting, blaming, extolling and glorifying' (2012: ix)

He suggests that these acts signify 'the media social roles of changing negative public attitudes, broadening the economic and socio-political reform dialogue and conferring status on certain policies'. According to Ogungbe, the pictures used are chosen, cropped and captured for revealing, confirming and asserting, which he observed are foundational acts for condemning and satirising to enforce order; 'challenging and inciting to affect attitude wrongly held; acclaiming and commending to tactfully garner support for certain policies and personalities. He also notes that the acts could be sometimes performed with biased language, framing strategies and pictures. He notes that 'while the Nigeria media roles may be significant, the adequacy and fairness with which they perform the roles is questionable' (238). He noticed that the structuring of the headlines, framing strategies and news photo

revealed that the reports ‘ have ideological meanings, being divided along some ideological lines reflecting the views of those whose interests are being undermined through news report’ (238).

Ogungbe also discovers that *The Nation* and *Nigeria Tribune*’s choice of controversial headlines, slanted framing strategies and appalling pictures is often influenced by their desperation to confer status on national policies that are consistent with Awoism. Also, *Daily Trust*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Nation* occasionally covertly modify the language and framing strategies of their reports to accommodate the interests of their operational location and target audience. The Guardian employs verbal and photo cues as pragmatic strategies for denouncing and condemning poor socio-economic policies and corrupt practices in Nigeria. Ogungbe avows that ‘the hidden power of news reports and the capacity of power-holders to exercise the power depend on systematic linguistic patterning, picture cropping and captioning in news reporting and news framing strategies’ (240).

Similarly, Igwebuiké (2013) studies linguistic tagging – how people and their actions are labelled – and the underlying social, political and economic ideologies in newspaper reports on the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon in border areas. Igwebuiké focuses on unravelling the relationship between the tagging and the ideologies in the reports. Using van Dijk’s socio cognitive model of CDA, Halliday’s systemic linguistics and the theory of lexical decomposition as theoretical framework, he discovered that there exists a unique relationship between socio-political and economic ideologies and linguistic tagging in the reports

In his study, he identifies five conflict-related themes which include terrorism, resistance, dispossession, suffering and economy. He draws a connection between the themes and the different forms of linguistic tagging in the report. For instance, he connects the theme of terrorism with the lexical tags of violence and the theme of resistance with the tags of militancy. The theme of dispossession and suffering took the linguistic tags of dislocation while the theme of economy took the tag of ownership. Igwebuiké also affirms that these tags had emotive and evaluative adjectives and intensifying adverbs as features. He notes that the themes of terrorism and resistance were tagged by transitive clauses of action while, on the other hand, dispossession and suffering were represented by metaphors and verbs signifying mental conditions’.

Igwebuike also discovers that positive representations were given to economic interests in the peninsula while negative ones were given to violence, militancy and dislocation. He further posits that the tags were motivated by certain values. For instance, the economic value of consumerism, to him, motivated the tagging of ownership in both Nigerian and Cameroonian newspapers. Also, the values of social justice and altruism mediated the tagging of dislocation while in the Cameroonian reports, the political ideals of pacifism and patriotism triggered violence and militancy tags.

He also notes that people were put in categories and groups using several linguistic tags at different levels. He opines that words portraying violence such as ‘gunmen’, ‘attacker’, ‘pirates’ and ‘assassins’ were used in tagging people as terrorists. Again, words suggesting resistance, such as ‘rebels’, ‘insurgents’, ‘freedom fighters’ and ‘activists’ were used to tag people as militants. He also finds that words that denote dispossession and suffering were used to tag people as the dispossessed or victims. Such words include ‘refugees’, ‘returnees’, ‘the displaced’, etc. In addition, words such as ‘indigenes’, ‘natives’, ‘residents’ and ‘inhabitants’ were employed in tagging people as territorial owners and non-owners.

Igwebuike further cites the use of tags at the grammatical level where people and their actions were tagged by transitive clauses, passivisation, nominalisation and metaphors. He notices that the tagging of violence and military were strengthened by material processes of actions, agentless passives, passives and nominal clauses, amongst others. Igwebuike also points out that the linguistic representations of people and their actions are motivated by five fundamental ideologies which include economic interest, altruism, social justice, patriotism and pacifism. He concludes by observing that there exist an intricate link between socio-political and economic ideologies and linguistic tagging in the reports. Like Igwebuike (2013), Igwebuike and Taiwo (2015) examined how Nigerian and Cameroonian security forces are represented in the Bakassi Peninsula conflicts in the print media of both countries. The study showed that the news media represent participants and assign roles to them in certain ways in the report of the conflict. The study discovered that the reports as reported in Nigerian print media represented the Cameroon security forces as brutal and violent attackers. They were also portrayed as perpetrators of evil and victims of violence. The Nigerian newspapers also portray the Nigerian forces as the defender of



the people. On the other hand, the Cameroonian newspapers represented the Cameroon forces as ‘victims of the Nigerian militants’, ‘saviour’ of the Cameroonian people and ‘patriotic’ to Cameroon.

Also, Ononye (2014) investigates media reports on the Niger Delta crisis in Nigeria. The study draws a connection between lexico-stylistic choices and reporters’ ideological stances in the reports. Ononye, hence, explores the styles, contexts and strategies that exist in Nigerian newspaper reports of the Niger Delta conflicts in order to establish how media ideologies relate largely to the existing lexico-stylistic choices in the reports.

The study incorporates context-oriented stylistic and socio-cognitive tools in investigating the relationship ‘between media ideologies and lexico-stylistic choices in the reports’ (Ononye, 2014:241) instead of paying attention to the linguistic and contextual areas of the media reports as previous studies have done. According to Ononye (2014), existing studies on the Niger Delta reports have not studied this relationship and have only concentrated on the general stylistic, pragmatic or discursive features of the reports, ignoring the interaction between the ideology and the styles employed by newspaper reporters, preventing an understanding of ‘group-induced motivators for the crises and reports’(2014: ii). Integrating Lesley Jeffries’ Critical stylistics, Teun van Dijk’s context model and aspects of evaluative semantics and conceptual metaphor, Ononye discovers three styles (evaluative, manipulative and persuasive styles), influenced by the Niger Delta issues and contexts, and three media ideologies: propagandist, framist and mediator ideologies.

According to Ononye, the styles are achieved through four stylistic strategies: naming/describing, equating/contrasting, hypothesising, and viewing actions/events. He discovers that the evaluative style is represented by emotive metaphors from three source domains – crime, hunting and military. The manipulative style, he holds, ‘is indexed by synonymous, hyponymous and meronymous lexical items and intentional material actions that highlight the effect of armed struggle in discourse’ (216). The persuasive style is achieved with reiterations, lexical fields and collocation.

Ononye notes that corresponding ideologies, propagandist, framist and mediator are each dominated by naming/describing and equating/contrasting, and are enacted by reiterative and emotive labels and so on. For instance, he observes that the mediator ideology has to do with hypothesising and ‘is constructed with reiterations,

lexical fields and collocations that express epistemic and boulomaic meanings, which project news actor's views that align with those of the news reporters. Hence, he observes that each of the ideologies motivates a corresponding style.

Ononye's conception of the evaluative style captures the way news writers use 'value-laden language to express an opinion or point of view' (2014: 152). By manipulative style, Ononye means the way news reporters use 'calculated language with an underlying message aimed at influencing or controlling the reader to the reporter's advantage' (155). He observes that this style makes news readers 'at the mercy of the reporters in seeing what the reporters foreground or include or make explicit to them, and not noticing what is backgrounded or excluded or made implicit to them' (155). He observes that the style is reinforced through agency deletion, Gricean maxim violation, and thematisation.

The persuasive style means the manner in which news reporting use 'rhetorical language with an underlying message aimed at convincing or influencing the reader to see things in the reporter's way. According to him,

...one of the major advantages of the news reporter and by extension the newspapers he/she represents is to be in a position to provide a mediated context – relying on the reader's expectation of neutrality – to all ideas to the reader in a subtle but persuasive manner from which the reader may not be able to reason differently' (2014: 157-158)

He observed that the style is reinforced by voice attribution and illocution.

Ononye observes that the propagandist ideology is motivated by the persuasive style and associated with two stylistic strategies: naming and describing, and viewing actions and events' (195), manifested in two media practices of 'thematic representation of violence, and the roles of the participants involved in the Niger Delta conflict' (195).

Framist ideology 'allows media practitioners to attach their assessment on the entities in the news in a way that will present the entities in positive or negative light' (212-213). The ideology, according to Ononye, is motivated by the evaluative style and is manifested in how news participants are represented and the intentions triggering their actions in the discourse as positive or negative as it relates to the issues in the conflict discourse.

Mediator ideology, to him, is a kind of media ideology with a structure of social cognition and professional norms, which mandates media practitioners to act as a go-between, especially in conflict situations'. It is motivated by the manipulative style and is achieved by 'the representation of news participant's position on issues in the news as commendable and the representation of news participant's conditions in the discourse as (un)favourable' (219). The stylistic strategies used are hypothesising, equating and contrasting.

Ononye concludes by observing that there exist an intricate relationship between lexico-stylistic choices and ideological positions in Niger Delta media reports which is deployed through lexical relations and stylistic strategies motivated by reporters ideological roles as propagandist, framist and mediators.

Omojuyigbe (2014) examines how Nigerian newspapers represent appellate court judgments of election petition (especially in South-Western Nigeria). The study investigates the linguistic representation of diverse points of view in the reports and the ideologies that underlie them.

The study identifies four categories of divergent points of view which include supportive, hypocritical, critical and hypercritical with a range of functions. The supportive, according to Omojuyigbe, is evident in the approval of the appellate court's judgments as a victory for democratic process devoid of electoral rigging. The hypocritical and critical, he observed are opposed to the judgments based on perceived bias in the rulings. The hypocritical view, however, looked indifferent, reflecting the general indifference towards the Nigeria electoral process. He notes that the difference in the points of view as expressed in approval and disapproval in the judgments was minimal which suggests to a large extent the divided opinion on the court rulings.

In comparing what each of the newspapers selected reflected, he notes that while the reports in *The Nation* showed approval, the ones in *The Nigerian Tribune* and *The Guardian* indicated disapproval while *The Punch* remained indifferent. He also observed that while the ideology of social justice constituted the supportive point of view, political apathy motivated the hypocritical while legalism, revolutionist and perfectionist perspectives were behind the critical and hypercritical. Also, he observes that 'lexicalisation of supportive and hypocritical points of view deployed words of praise while critical and hypercritical used words of frustration and disapproval'. He

notes that repeated positive collocations suggest approval while metaphors of stealing signified disapproval. Words such as ‘failed’ and ‘commended’ suggest negative and positive attitude respectively.

Iyoha (2015) studies how the media represent the criminal justice system in crime reports. He observed that though the reporter seeks objectivity, the reporter’s choice of a way to present or represent this report surreptitiously represents his view or opinion even though he seeks objectivity. He observed that crime reports were presented in a way that portrays the media as non-neutral. He discovers this through the language choices that the reporters employ, for instance, the use of passive structures and agentless clauses which brings the crime to the fore and not the perpetrators.

In the study, it was discovered that the structures employed in the crime reports mostly place the criminal justice system in the background when they have done something laudable but foregrounds them when they are to blame for a negative occurrence, therefore constructing an opinion about the criminal justice. This, invariably, affects how the criminal justice system is named or viewed. The work concludes by noting that in suppressing the positive action of the CJS and in foregrounding their negative actions, crime reports can no longer be said to maintain objectivity and fairness.

Osisanwo (2016) examines linguistic and discourse strategies used in the construction and representation of the *Boko Haram* group in Nigerian newspapers. The study uses the transitivity system of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar and Van Leeuwen’s version of Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate the different representational strategies through which the Boko Haram group is labelled and framed by the news media. Osisanwo discovered that in the Nigerian newspapers studied, there is a convergence to negatively represent Boko Haram. Several discourse strategies were used to negatively represent the Boko Haram. Osisanwo identified 13 of these which were developed in the reporting. Osisanwo observed that Boko Haram was discursively represented as insurgents/terrorists, militants, attackers, religious fundamentalists, killers/murderers, gunmen/shooters, outlaws/criminals, abductors, political gangsters, miscreants/evil perpetrators, bombers, al-Qaeda affiliates and wasters/damagers.

Osisanwo's study corroborates earlier studies on how the news media influence people's opinion or belief system. He posits that the news media 'set the agenda by orientating their readers to negatively perceive the BH terrorism in Nigeria' (pg 19) which invariably gives 'allegiance to the agenda – setting prowess of the media'. He then insinuates that the negative representation of BH as terrorists could help in no small way to proffer solution to the problem of Nigeria. The study opines that the obvious negative disposition of the newspapers to the insurgents in their reports cannot be separated from the view and position of the citizens about the group in Nigeria, but Osisanwo forgets to add the fact that this view and value judgement of the citizenry must have been shaped by the news media itself in the first place. Or how else would the citizens have had such opinions and beliefs?

### **2.2.3 Review of notable works on the media construction of protests**

Studies on the representation of protest in the media have been examined both in Nigeria and internationally. Lee and Craig (1992), for instance, study US newspapers' representation of civil action in South Korea and Poland as represented in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. They discover anti Communist sentiments in the reports, as well as the 'us versus them' ideological dichotomy of the cold war. They found that US newspapers' coverage of civil actions in Poland and South Korea differ. While the civil action in Poland is constructed as being caused by communism, which was the system of government practised in Poland at the time, the Labour strikes in South Korea is blamed on 'deviant and violent protesters'. It is important to point out that South Korea's political system is patterned after that of the United States. It also has similar ideologies with the US. In examining the news report at the textual level, especially, syntax, style, news grammar, rhetoric and graphic representation, to determine its ideological structure, Lee and Craig conclude that US news representation of civil action in foreign countries usually has an ideological or political undertone. The study, however, does not examine how the news actors in the reports are represented as well as the discursive strategies used in the report which is how the present study differs from Lee and Craig (1992).

Similarly, Wang (1993) studies how ideologically opposed newspapers report the same news. Wang does this by comparing and contrasting how American and

Chinese press represent the failed 1991 Soviet coup. Studying the macro level (topics, thematic structures, schematic structures) and micro level (styles and lexical features) in *New York Times* (*NYT*) and *Remin Ribao* (*RR*) for the week of the coup, Wang discovered that the representation of the event by the two newspapers is both structurally and quantitatively different. The study observes that the *NYT* covers the news more completely while the *RR*, the official paper of the Chinese Communist Party, leaves out all background and contextual information about the event. The study avows that this variation is a product of ideological and political interests. The present study differs from Wang's study in that it does not merely examine the macro and micro level of structures in news items but the discourse strategies as well as the ideological inclinations of newspapers.

Also, Fang (1994) examines rhetorical strategies such as lexical and syntactic choices in reporting civil actions employed by mainland China's official newspaper *Renmin Ribao* (The People's daily). Like Lee and Craig (1992), Fang discovers that how conflicts in foreign countries are represented or labelled depends largely on China's policy towards these countries and their governments. Countries that are favourably disposed to China's policy are positively represented while the opposite is the case when the country being reported is at logger heads with China. For instance, the protests are represented as deviant and lacking resolve when they take place in countries with good relations with China. However, when the protests take place in countries hostile to China, the protests are constructed as resulting from state oppression. Fang (1994) reveals that similar events may be represented differently by the same newspaper, depending on the news house's ideological inclinations. However, the study does not expressly show what the ideological inclinations of these newspapers are, at least not objectively. It only makes statements about how China's relationship with the countries reported in the news affect the representation in the media.

Like works above, Fang (2001) studies how two ideologically opposed newspapers, namely mainland China's mouthpiece, *The People's Daily* and Taiwan's *KMT* newspaper, *The Central Daily News*, represent the civil unrest in South Africa and Argentina. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis as a framework, the study investigates the lexical choices, headlines, themes/topics and the transitivity patterns of the two newspapers and how they reflect the crises. The study also shows that

lexical choices and agent attribution in syntactic structures play a great role in revealing the ideological viewpoint of the newspaper. Fang also demonstrates that issues which are not in alignment with the newspaper's perspective could also be downplayed or completely ignored. He proves that issues which are not favourable with the news ideology of the media houses could be suppressed, 'backgrounded' or downplayed. The study concludes that the discourse strategies employed to represent the events serve to legitimise and uphold the policies enacted by the regimes in power. Fang's study differs from the current study as the current study, in addition to exploring the discursive strategies and ideology in newspapers, also examines how social actors and actions are represented in the newspapers on protest.

In a similar study in 2008, Wang investigates Chinese newspaper reports and opinion articles on the event of the September 11 US terrorist attacks. The study investigates how the newspaper reports on the attack are discursively constructed textually, intertextually and contextually. The study notes that Chinese writers tend to employ unidentified external sources and sources with high status for maintaining some distance from these sources in their reports. The study however does not show how this construction relates to the ideological proclivity of the newspapers.

Hall (2011) also studies how UK broadsheet newspapers (*The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Times*) represent students' protest in the planned increase in University tuition fees in the UK in November, 2010. Hall observes that the language of reporting the protest in the newspapers contained speech acts. These speech acts are identified as informing, deliberating and witnessing. The speech acts are observed to have influenced the tone of the articles in each of the newspapers and reflect their political leanings. As Hall discovers, while *The Guardian* appears more questioning, especially towards the government and the police for their role in the protest, *The Daily Telegraph* demonstrates respect and compliance with authority and *The Times* seems to vary between these two extremes. Hall's choice of the speech act theory has however made it difficult to actually tell the ideological inclinations of the newspaper under study since what the speech act theory does is to merely reveal and categorise the functions of certain linguistic stretches.

In Nigeria, Egbunike (2015) studies newspapers and social media reports of the protests that emanated from government's removal of subsidy on premium motor spirits in Nigeria. The study examines the frames used by both media in framing the

protest. Egbunike identifies ‘motivation’, ‘diagnosis’ and ‘prognosis’ as the three ‘collective action frames building tasks proposition’ of the framing theory which were all utilised in the data analysed.

Egbunike discovered, as reflected from his data (three national newspapers—*Nigerian Tribune*, *The Guardian* and *The Punch*, as well as social media samples – the *#Occupy Nigeria* Facebook page, blog posts, conversations in Nairaland and Twitter) that newspapers’ framing of the motivation, diagnosis and prognosis of the protest was better and their narration of the protest more heterogeneous, hence, making newspapers better contributors to the discourse of the *#Occupy Nigeria* protest than the social media. The social media and the news media are, certainly equally important in the representation of events, especially in this case, protests. However, Egbunike posits that the relationship between the social media and the news media is imbalanced, as the media often distort the message of movements. This asymmetrical dependency, as he observes, ‘is seen in mass media preference for catchy headlines which promotes the deviant behaviour of protesters’.

Egbunike’s findings show that the social media and the news media validated the protest and their message; they also offered support to them. But more importantly, the social media, surprisingly, promoted the violence displayed by the protesters, in addition to the protesters’ deviant behaviour. Egbunike equally demonstrates that the *#Occupy Nigeria* Protests had ‘similarities in the first choice of frames that defined, attributed causes and proposed solutions for the demonstrations’. However, ‘the differences in other predominant frames revealed that traditional media was more faithful to the message of the protest than social media’ (pg 59). This is perhaps so because, as Egbunike submits, social media users were trying to make the protest resemble the Arab Spring, therefore, overstating the violence and emotional display; while, on the other hand, journalists reported and offered several sides of the event.

Egbunike’s study is laudable as he considers frames in themselves. However, the research leaves us in the dark about how these frames are contextually linked to underlying ideologies and opinions, as all frames would do. Consequently, it becomes difficult to associate these frames to the corresponding ideologies that they signify. This is so, perhaps because Egbunike had not employed a theory such as Critical



Discourse Analysis to track ideologies as expressed in the representation of the protest.

Mitu (2015) studies how the online news media framed international protests. Choosing the Romanian news website – *hotnews.ro* – as a case study, he examines how different protests – the Egyptian protests at Tahir square in Cairo, the protests at Taksim square in Istanbul, the Indignants movement in different countries and the Indignants movement that led to the Occupy Wall Street movement - are represented online. Relying theoretically on the framing analysis approach, Mitu observed that the protests are not negatively presented by the Romania online news. However, the violence is usually foregrounded and emphasised. He discovered that the representation of the protest is usually favourably disposed towards the protesters but not always towards the protests as a whole. According to Mitu, the protests are not usually placed within a broader socioeconomic context. Instead, they are presented as individual events and are not mostly linked with social movements.

Mitu's study is however clearly not representative enough as it becomes difficult to generalize or reach a reasonable conclusion based on only one arbitrarily sampled online news media outlet. The conclusion of the study would have been more authentic if more online news outlets had been equally considered. In addition, Mitu's study does not show us how the identity of the protesters is constructed in the online news. This is perhaps because the study focused mostly on quantitative statistical counting and discussion. Mitu's study also has not examined issues related to ideology, discursive or representational nuances which is the gap this study fills.

#### **2.2.4 A survey of Biafra-related works**

Most studies on Biafra have been historical (Falola and Heaton, 2008; Achebe, 2012; Audu, Osuala and Ibrahim, 2013; Arua, 2014). However, a few linguistic studies have investigated linguistic dimensions of the discourse. One notable study in this class is Oha (1994). Oha's work falls suitably within the confines of language use in war situations, especially in the speeches of war leaders. Selecting the speeches of the leaders of the Biafra War (the Nigeria Civil War), Gowon and Ojukwu, for the study, Oha investigates the styles employed in the speeches, as well as the contextual factors that necessitated the styles. Oha discovers that persuasion and coercion were prominent tactics used in the speeches to appeal to the audience. Also, lexico-

grammatical devices were employed to show what was termed ‘rigid polarity’ – for threatening face in some cases and for saving face in some others. In addition, Oha reveals that pronouns for solidarity and ‘decivilising’ lexical items were also prominently used by Ojukwu in his speeches.

Concerning the use of coercion tactics, Oha observes that the speakers used obligation and compulsion which clearly negates what was presupposed in the persuasion tactics. He however noticed that the use of tactics was predicated by a number of factors such as the ‘complex audience situation’, presupposed by ‘diverse interests and behavioural orientation’, ‘power differences and relationship quality’, ‘the nature of the wider situation’, as reflected in ‘the multi-ethnic and religious circumstances’, ‘subject matter and pragmatic purpose’, and so on.

Oha’s study corroborates the belief that the stylistic choices made in war rhetoric enhance polarity – a style of language that frames meaning that either canvasses support for the speaker’s side of war or condemns sympathy for the opponent’s side (Oha 1994:313). The study also establishes that the rhetorical communication in war bears a lot of resemblance with the rhetoric of everyday communication, especially as it has to do with verbal cues like quarrelling and argument. He concludes by arguing that both instances of rhetorical communication ‘share stylistic strategies due to the fact that they also share contextual constraints’ (314). He finally puts forward that it is then not out of place to say that ‘interactions involve ‘wars’, and life itself is a kind of war which could be conducted by verbal or other means’ (Oha 1994: 314). The present study differs from Oha (1994) in that it focuses on recent Biafra uprisings in Nigeria in 2015.

Also on Biafra, Chilwa (2015) examines the way in which social media have been used to campaign against oppression and perceived marginalisation allegedly meted out against the Igbo as projected by the Biafra Online Campaign Groups (BOCG), a group composed by the Igbo in Nigeria and diaspora who clamour for the fair treatment of the Igbo in Nigeria. Chilwa avows that the social media have been instrumental in the widespread protest in the Arab world than other media, and in recent times, the social media have been used successfully in Nigeria to champion several courses. Chilwa, in his study, analyses different forums such as blogs used by the BOCG. Chilwa examines how issues such as identity and language variations are used to champion self-determination and the agitation for political independence

in the discourse, as well as how ideology is reflected through these expressions produced by the BOCG as it has to do with the Nigeria. Like Egbunike (2015), Chiluwa takes his cue from studies on the incidents of resistance and campaign for political change in North America and the Arab nations, which have been spurred by vibrant social media campaign. He discovers that there is the strategy of ideological self-interest in the discourse of the campaign group as reflected in the polarity discourse that was maintained by the group (Egbunike, 2015: 224). Members also used derogatory expressions to refer to Nigeria while the Biafrans are tagged 'proud Igbo Biafrans'. Biafrans are also portrayed as victims of political, economic and educational marginalisation. Also, while the negative actions of the Nigerian government are emphasised, the bad actions of the BOCG are minimised, and the Igbo are represented as still in slavery or bondage even when the Nigerian government claims this is not so.

The study concludes by observing that though the protests have not been as successful as that experienced in the Arab world, it has some potentials of becoming even more successful given the increasing rate of awareness of youths about the alleged genocide meted against the Igbo by the Nigerian government. Chiluwa, therefore, predicts a future of widespread protest or severe ethnic nationalism, which could have untoward consequences if the present situations are not addressed by the appropriate authorities. It is pertinent to state here that Chiluwa's prognosis manifested in the 2015 Biafra protests that rocked many parts of Nigeria. The protest has shown that the Biafran identity is still almost alive as it was when it was first conceived. Chiluwa (2018) also investigates online discourse forged by IPOB in furtherance of the actualisation of the independence of the Eastern region. The study examines how outrage is produced by the group. Chiluwa discovers that there are conflicting opinions produced on the platform and this has its effects on the overall self-determination efforts of the Biafra nation.

Ajayi and Bamgbose (2019), in a similar manner, studying ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, examine online agitation for the release of Nnamdi Kanu in 2015. Their study reveals how linguistic tools are employed by different groups online to construct identities and perception about others. Ajayi and Bamgbose discovered that Kanu's supporters show optimism about the realisation of the Biafran State. Kanu's supporters also have a negative construction of Nigeria and her people. Ajiboye

(2019) equally examines the stance towards the protest within digital communities using the stance theory.

The current study differs from previous studies in that it examines the discursive construction and representation of the 2015 and 2016 Biafra protest in news reports which has hardly been researched. This is perhaps because the protest is a very recent development in Nigeria. This work will therefore examine the discourse strategies deployed by Nigerian newspapers in (re)presenting and constructing the protest as well as the identity constructed for the actors.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

The analysis of the data was carried out using the analytic techniques of Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis – Discourse Historical Approach, Van Leeuwen's conception of the Representation of Social Actors (Van Leeuwen, 2008) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. This eclectic theoretical framework, the rationale for its choice as well as its suitability and relevance for the study is discussed subsequently.

#### **2.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is 'a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (Dijk 2001). It has its roots in Classical Rhetoric, Textlinguistics, Sociolinguistics, Applied Linguistics and Pragmatics (Wodak, 2002). CDA sees language as social practice (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) and believes the context of language use to be crucial. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a framework provides an interpretation to how meaning is derived from texts.

CDA stemmed out of the functionalist approach to discourse analysis. Its aim is to link linguistic analysis to social analysis (Woods and Kroger, 2000: 206) as language is seen as a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). What it seeks to achieve is to have an effect on social practice and social relationship (Tischer et al, 2000: 147), particularly on relationships of disempowerment, dominance, prejudice and/or discrimination (Richardson, 2007). CDA sees both written and spoken discourse as a form of social practice (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997).

It is important to note that one major assumption of CDA is understanding the nature of social power and dominance (Dijk 1993). It is believed that power involves the control of one group over other groups', that is, a group that has power over another group may limit the freedom of action of members of that group by influencing their minds. According to Dijk (1993:254), this kind of power is "mostly cognitive, and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to *change the mind of others in one's own interests*" (emphasis in original). And, managing the mind of others is essentially a function of text and talk. Such mind management is not always bluntly manipulative, rather, dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear 'natural' and quite 'acceptable'. The form of power that is different from legitimate and acceptable forms of power is referred to as *dominance*. However, if the minds of the dominated are influenced in such a way that they accept to be dominated and act in the interest of the powerful willingly, it is referred to as *hegemony* (Gramsci 1971).

CDA reveals how discourse conceals the politics and intricacies of power as well as how inequalities are normalised, hence, it would be a viable theoretical framework to adopt in this research. Studies in CDA seek to link linguistic analysis with social analysis as language ought to be analysed in relation to the social context in which it is being used and the social consequences of its use; and, especially, the relationship(s) between discourse and its social conditions (Richardson, 2007).

Wodak (2009: 8) notes that 'through discourse, social actors constitute objects of knowledge, situations and social roles as well as identities and interpersonal relations between different social groups and those who interact with them'. CDA sees discursive acts as

socially constitutive in a variety of ways. Firstly, they are largely responsible for the genesis, production and construction of particular social conditions. Secondly, they can contribute to the restoration, legitimation or relativisation of a social status quo (ante). Thirdly, discursive acts are employed to maintain and reproduce the status quo. Fourthly, discursive practice may be effective in transforming dismantling or even destroying the status quo.

Based on the foregoing, Richardson (2007: 27) identifies four major themes of CDA which include:

- i. **The constituted and (re)creative character of discourse.** Here, discourse is perceived as one way in which society can be acted upon. Journalistic discourse, for instance, can bring about a change through opinion shaping, influencing attitudes and beliefs, and transforming the consciousness of those who read and consume it. However, to understand how this works, one must have a solid grasp of power and relations of power in society.
- ii. **Power and social relations in discourse.** CDA bothers on the questions of power. It engages, critiques and analyses social power and how this is represented both subtly and conspicuously wherever it is observed. Power occurs through discourse, especially in the ability of language to act ideologically.
- iii. **Ideology.** CDA also investigates how ideology (re)produces inequitable social realities. Ideological sites such as the press make up the site and ideological conditions of the transformation of the relations of production. However, elitist ideological dominance arises 'as a property of the system of relations involved, rather than as the overt and intentional biases of individuals' (Hall, 1982: 95)
- iv. **Hegemony.** Hegemony deals with unequal class relations which is also a major concern of CDA. It relates to the way the subordinate class consent to the rule of the elite and the dominance of their institutions and values. As it is, the news media mediates the relationship between elitist ideology and news content (Murdock, 2000), sometimes supporting this hegemony or overlooking it.

### 2.3.2 Approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is a broad movement within discourse analysis, having a number of approaches or models in it (Fairclough & Wodak 1997). Each approach consists of a set of philosophical premises, theoretical methods, methodological guidelines and specific techniques for linguistic analysis. However, there are some key elements

shared by all the approaches identified by Jorgensen & Phillips (2002: 61-64) and they are explained below.

- i. **The character of social and cultural processes and structures is partly linguistic-discursive:** Discursive practices are seen as an important form of social practice and it is through them that texts are produced and consumed. This social practice contributes to what constitute the social world. Since discourse involves not only written and spoken language but also visual images, it is accepted that the analysis of texts which have visual images must account for the special elements of visual semiotics and the relationship between language and images. It should be noted that within CDA, there is a tendency to analyse images as if they were linguistic texts.
- ii. **Discourse is both constitutive and constituted:** Critical discourse analysts see discourse as a form of social practice which constitutes the social world and, as well, is constituted by other social practices. Discourse does not just contribute to the shaping and reshaping of social structures, it also reflects them.
- iii. **Language use should be empirically analysed within its social context:** CDA carries out concrete, linguistic textual analysis of language use in social interaction and this makes it different from other discourse theories which do not carry out systematic, empirical studies of language use. An example is this project work which is set to do a textual analysis through CDA.
- iv. **Discourse functions ideologically:** In CDA, it is believed that discursive practices contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups. CDA's research focus is both the discursive practices which construct representations of the world, social subjects and social relations, including power relations, and the role that these discursive practices play in furthering the interests of particular social groups. CDA aims at revealing the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world and this includes those social relations that involve unequal relations of power. It also aims to contribute to social change along the lines of more equal power relations in communication processes and society in general.
- v. **Critical research:** The term 'critical' can be traced to the influence of the Frankfurt School and Jürgen Habermas. 'Critical theory', according to them

means that social theory should be oriented towards critiquing and changing society as a whole. They also believe that critical research should improve the understanding of society by integrating all the major social sciences, including Economics, Sociology, History, Political Science, Anthropology and Psychology. CDA sees itself as a critical approach that is politically committed to social change. It does not see itself as politically neutral.

According to Rashidi and Souzandehfar (2010), quoting Dijk (2007), there are four approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis and they are Critical Linguistics, developed by Fowler et al. (1979), Fowler (1991, 1996), Kress (1985) and Kress & Hodge (1979); Sociological approach introduced by Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1995); the Discourse-Historical approach, proposed by Wodak (1996, 2001) and Wodak et al. (1999); and finally, the Sociocognitive approach proposed by Dijk (1998, 2002). Critical Linguistics (CL) is regarded as the earliest linguistically-oriented critical approach to discourse analysis (Rashidi and Souzandehfar 2010). Rashidi and Souzandehfar (2010), quoting Fowler (1991:90), define critical linguistics as “an enquiry into the relations between signs, meanings and the social and historical conditions which govern the semiotic structure of discourse, using a particular kind of linguistic analysis”. CL makes use of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar for its analysis. Fowler’s approach focuses on the media’s representation of events, the linguistic analysis of that representation and the ideology encoded by it (Rashidi and Souzandehfar 2010).

Fairclough built on the analytical methodology of CL and developed his Sociocultural analysis in 1995 (Rashidi and Souzandehfar 2010). Fairclough believes that language is connected to social realities and that it brings about social change. He also believes that government involves the manipulation and use of language in significant ways, and is concerned with the connection among discourse, ideology and power relations within the society. Fairclough also makes use of Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar in his analysis. He studies texts and specific discourses and also emphasises a text as the product of a process in which discourse is closely related to social structures in its production and interpretation. He examines critically, specific situations where relations of power, dominance and inequality are represented in discourse. This model of CDA works with a dialectal relationship between the micro-



structures of discourse (linguistic features) and the macro-structures of society (societal structures and ideology).

The Discourse-historical approach of Wodak (1996, 2001) was advocated by the Vienna School and it has its focus on the impact of historical socio-political contextual factors since the 1980s. Here, the importance of context to meaning cannot be overemphasized. Attention is given to the contribution of non-verbal aspects of texts, that is, semiotic devices. Also, texts are not just to inform us of some reality, they, in addition, construct the reality (Dijk 1985). In the discourse-historical approach, discourse is seen as structured forms of knowledge and the memory of social practice, while text refers to concrete oral utterances or written documents (Reisigl & Wodak 2001). CDA, therefore, aims at revealing the sources of dominance and inequality observed in the society by analyzing texts, whether written or spoken. It is to find the discursive strategies utilized to construct or maintain such inequality or bias in different contexts (Rashidi and Souzandehfar 2010).

van Dijk's Socio-cognitive approach is set on the belief that cognition mediates between 'society' and 'discourse'. Our perception and comprehension of discursive practices are shaped by long term memories, short term memories and certain mental models (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). The basic conceptual and theoretical frameworks identified by Dijk (2010) are: macro vs. micro and power as control. The micro level involves language, discourse, verbal interaction and so on, while the macro level involves power relation such as inequality and dominance. Power as control involves control of public discourse and mind control.

In this approach, social power is seen as a means of controlling the minds and actions of other groups. Social power may not necessarily be negative but misuse of power may bring about inequality in the society. Dijk (2002) sees ideology as the attitude of a group of people towards certain issues. In order to reveal ideology generated in discourse, Dijk resorts to social analysis, cognitive analysis and discourse analysis of the text. However, the approach that will be adopted for this research work is Fairclough's model of CDA

The approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis also fall along regional lines. For instance, we do have the British model that draws largely from Foucault's theory of discourse and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (Fairclough, 1993; 1995;

Fowler, 1991) and popularised by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Roger Fowler and Van Leeuwen; the Dutch socio-cognitive approach (van Dijk, 1993; 1998; 2001), made popular by Teun van Dijk; the discourse historical approach of the Vienna school (Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak, 1996, 2002; Wodak *et al.*, 1999) made popular by Ruth Wodak; and the social psychological approach of Wetherell and Potter (1992). Fairclough and Wodak's methods of CDA are adopted in this research. Fairclough's conception of CDA is one that analyses the relationships between concrete language used and wider social cultural structures. To Fairclough, there exist three dimensions to every discourse event- which include text, discursive practice (which includes the production and interpretation of texts – and social practice.

The choice of Fairclough's model is predicated upon the fact that, as Richardson (2007) observes, it provides a more accessible model of CDA than alternative models. To Fairclough, a fundamental way of analysing discourse in order to understand what discourse is and how it works is to draw out the form and function of the text, the way that the text relates to the way it is produced and consumed, and the relations of this to the wider society in which it takes place (Richardson 2007:37).

Fairclough proposes that doing CDA involves certain processes. The first is textual analysis. Here, how the propositions in the text are structured, combined and sequenced are analysed (Fairclough 1995b). Adequate attention is also paid to representations in text (ideational function), identities and social relations (interpersonal function) as well as cohesion and coherence (textual function) in the text. Second is the analysis of the discursive practices of news discourse in the text. This involves various aspects of text production and consumption. According to Fairclough (1995a), the meanings encoded and decoded in texts are the result not only of producer intentions but also of 'the outcome of specific professional practices and techniques, which could be and can be quite different with quite different results' (204). Third is the analysis of social practices. Here, Fairclough suggests that a robust CDA should include the analysis of text's socio-cultural practice or social and cultural going-on which the communicative event is part of' (Fairclough 1995a: 57). The analysis of social practices '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 culture' (Fairclough, 1995:62).

### **2.3.3 Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to CDA**

Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009; Wodak, 2001; 2009), as have been mentioned earlier, is anchored on the Vienna school of discourse analysis which has its roots in Bernstein's sociolinguistic approach (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 1996) 'as well as within the philosophical and sociological tradition of Critical theory' (Wodak and Reisigl, 2009). According to Wodak, when analyzing historical and political text, the discourse historical approach dwells largely on the historical background of discourse events. The approach 'integrates and triangulates knowledge about historical sources and the background of the social and political fields within which discursive events are embedded' (Wodak, 2009: 38.)

The following layers of context are taken into consideration in the systemic quantitative analysis in Discourse Historical Analysis (DHA).

- i. The intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between utterances, text, genres and discourses;
- ii. The extra-linguistic social/sociological variables;
- iii. The history and archaeology of texts and organizations; and
- iv. The institutional frames of the specific context of a situation

(Wodak, 2009: 38)

This, according to Wodak, would help one to understand how discourses, genres and texts change due to socio-political contexts. Wodak (2009:8) opines that CDA investigates 'authentic everyday communication in institutional, media, political or other locations rather than on sample sentences or sample texts constructed in linguists' minds'.

CDA will be used to account for how the Biafra protest is represented in the newspapers. The ideological underpinnings and discursive strategies in the reports as represented in the linguistic content of these newspapers will be studied.

### 2.3.4 Criticisms of CDA

Several criticisms have been levied against CDA. Hardman (2008) cites Toolan (1997) and Widdowson (1995a, 1995b, 1996) as demonstrating that CDA lacks objectivity and a truly close detailed textual analysis. These critics also argue that CDA employs over-elaborate theorisation and circularity. The weakness with this criticism, as Hardman observed, is that the critic does not understand what discourse is within the CDA framework, nor 'its status as a form of analysis, the relationship between its theoretical underpinnings and the practice of analysis [as well as] Fairclough's (1992a) approach to context' (2008: 51-52)

Widdowson also finds it difficult to grapple with the distinction between 'text' and 'discourse' as conceived by the proponents of CDA. He opines that the definition of 'discourse' as a form of social practice is foggy while what constitutes 'texts' remains unclear. He argues that discourse is the process of negotiating meaning while the text is a product of discourse which makes it possible for a text to point out different discourses within the product. Widdowson then affirms that CDA takes the form of an interpretation than an analysis, like stylistics. To Widdowson, analysis should be 'the illustration of how different discourses can be drawn from texts through the demonstration of different interpretations and the linguistic evidence for these' (Hardman, 2008: 53).

Refuting these claims, Fairclough (1996) posits that Widdowson's definition 'would invalidate many conventional types of linguistic analysis (given that all approaches invariably look at a text from a single perspective) and that analysis should be more widely defined as a "reasonably systematic application of reasonably well-defined procedures to a reasonably well-defined body of data"'. (Widdowson, 2008:54)

CDA has also been criticised for lacking agreement on precise methodology (Meyer, 2001) while Wodak (2001:5), cited in Hardman opines that 'the often very large theoretical framework which does not always fit the data... and... the political stance taken explicitly by researchers'. However, CDA has always emphasised the provision of real examples from texts that illustrate what is being examined so as to nullify the allegation that it lacks detailed textual analysis (Hardman, 2008).

### 2.3.5 Van Leeuwen's concept of the categorisation of social actors

Van Leeuwen's (2008) categorisation of social actors exists within the framework of CDA. The concept enunciates the manner in which social actors are projected in terms of the roles they are given in a text (Osisanwo, 2016). As the representations of people and event in the news media seem to be the focus this research, Van Leeuwen's categorization of social actors becomes an indispensable tool in revealing concealed ways in which the news media represent social actors and their social action. Leeuwen (2008) puts forward a number of categories for defining social actors. They include: *Exclusion*, which has to do with whether or not actors are present in a text. *Exclusion* bifurcates into *backgrounding* and *suppression*. *Role allocation* has to do with how social actors are assigned roles. This can be done through grammatical activation or passivation. The roles of agent or actor, sayer, senser, behavior and assigner can be assigned to social actors. *Genericisation* and *specification* project social actors as either a class or as specific individuals that are identifiable. *Assimilation* sees social actors as either individuals (individualisation) or a group (assimilation). Assimilation is further categorized into *collectivisation* and *aggregation*. *Association* and *dissociation* equally project social actors as a group. While *association* sees the group as having a common interest, *dissociation* sees the association as broken. Often, groups could associate and dissociate within a discourse. In *indetermination*, social actors are represented as a group that is unspecified. Often, anonymity is attached to the identity of the group. In *determination*, the identity of social actors is represented as specified. *Differentiation* has to do with how social actors mostly in groups polarize between 'us' and 'them' in discourse. *Nomination* identifies individuals in terms of peculiarity in identity. *Categorisation* projects individuals in the identities and functions they have with others. *Functionalisation* refers to how social actors are defined in the activity they perform or the things they do. *Identification* refers to how social actors are seen in terms of permanence.

### 2.3.6 Systemic Functional Grammar

The view that language performs representational functions is largely based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) proposed by Michael Halliday. SFL sees language as being a "social semiotic" (Halliday, 1978). Taiwo (2006) asserts that SFL is a unique approach to the study of language due to its view of language as a social phenomenon. According to him, SFL studies language in relation to the social

interactions which the language encapsulates and the societies within which these social interactions are preserved. He enumerates the following as the tenets of the model:

- i. Language is functional,
- ii. The function is to make meaning,
- iii. These functions are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they are engaged,
- iv. The process of using language is a semiotic process, the process of making meaning by choice.

The model analyses language at different levels – syntax, semantics and pragmatics; and at different layers – substance, form and situation.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) looks at how language is structured for use. Unlike the structural approaches that focus on syntactic constituents, SFL looks at how language is constrained and influenced by the social context. Halliday identifies three fundamental components of grammar which he names “meta-functions” namely: the ideational function, interpersonal and textual function. In the clause, for instance, the ideational function or experiential component is represented by the participants, process (verbal elements) and the circumstances of transitivity (circumstances). The grammar of transitivity shows events, states, processes and the related entities. The interpersonal function is represented by mood and modality. This component covers utterances that express the speakers’ attitude towards one another, viz, their attitude towards their interlocutors and social actions.

The textual function is the construction of texts, and texts are perceived as sets of options from a system of options from among language forms – lexical, grammatical, and phonological, etc. These components of language are reflected in the non-linguistic context of situation which comprises *Field*, *Tenor* and *Mode* of discourse. *Field* refers to the activity – a part of which language occurs; *Tenor* refers to the participants involved in the activity and the relationship between them; and *Mode* refers to the role of language in the activity, including the form linguistic interaction takes and the effects it achieves (Halliday, 1978).

The ideational function of language can be used to examine the processes (verbal elements) in clauses and how they mediate actions and experience. Also, the Hallidayan grammar of transitivity can be applied to reveal how the clauses are used

to represent actions, events and entities. Apart from the foregoing, other analytical tools in systemic grammar that are relevant to revealing how language can be used to conceal language users' motives are the grammar of modality (the interpersonal relations of speaker and hearer); the manipulation of linguistic materials, linguistic ordering and so on.

The transitivity system, which is favoured in this study, is situated within the ideational function of the clause as meaning 'representation' and it operates on the clause to realize experiential meanings (Halliday, 1994: 101). The transitivity system includes processes (realised by the verbal group), participants in the process and the circumstances associated with the processes (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The process types include material, verbal, mental, relational, behavioural and existential (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). The material process describes processes of doing and happening; the verbal process states verbal actions; the mental process has to do with mental responses such as thoughts, feelings and perceptions; the relational process connects different domains of experience through attribution and identification; the behavioural process expresses physiological and psychological behaviour; and the existential process points out that something exists or happens.

## **2.4 Chapter summary**

This chapter has focused mainly on the review of related existing literature, the clarification of key concepts related to the study, as well as a review of the theoretical framework. The chapter has examined the concepts of discourse, ideology and identity. It has also presented a review of notable works on the construction of protest in the media and a survey of existing Biafra-related works with a view to situating the research within the body of existing works. The chapter has equally reviewed a number of related studies on the representation of social actors in the media. The chapter ends with a description of the theoretical framework that underpins the study as well as an explanation of the suitability of the framework for the study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0. Chapter overview

This chapter focuses on how the data for this study were collected and the method of analysis. It has subsections such as data collection, sampling procedure, method of data analysis and analytical procedure.

#### 3.1. Research design

The interpretive design was used since the research is a descriptive qualitative one. The Discourse Historical Approach to CDA and Systemic Functional Grammar provided the theoretical insights upon which the data were analysed and the research questions answered. Data for the study were interpreted and analysed using insights from the theoretical framework.

#### 3.2. Data collection

The data for the study consist of news reports sourced from Nigerian newspapers' reportage of the Biafra protest. The data were purposively drawn from four widely circulated Nigerian national dailies, *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Sun* and *Vanguard*, which frequently cover the protest. The period covered was between 2015 and 2016, a period where the protest was most intense in the country. These national dailies were purposively selected as they enjoy large readership and wide coverage in Nigeria. They also have the relatively most frequent reportage on the Biafra Protest since they follow daily happenings on the protest.

#### 3.3. Sampling procedure

News reports for the study were purposively sampled from *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Sun* and *Vanguard*. Sixty news reports on the PBPs between 2015 and 2016 were drawn from the selected newspapers (*The Punch* (9), *The Nation* (13), *The*



*Sun* (20) and *Vanguard* (18)), covering a period when the protests were prominently reported in the print media.

#### **3.4. Method of data analysis**

This research is a qualitative one. The data were analysed using Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis – Discourse Historical Approach, Fairclough's Sociological approach (Fairclough, 1993; 1995; Fowler, 1991; Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), van Leeuwen's conception of the Representation of Social Actors (van Leeuwen, 2008) and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (Reisigl and Wodak, 2009; Wodak, 2001; 2009), for instance, 'integrates and triangulates knowledge about historical sources and the background of the social and political fields within which discursive events are embedded.' (Wodak, 2009: 38). CDA was used to account for how the Biafra protest is represented in the newspapers. CDA reveals how discourse conceals the politics and intricacies of power as well as how inequalities are normalised, hence a viable theoretical framework to adopt in this research. Also, studies in CDA seek to link linguistic analysis with social analysis as language ought to be analysed in relation to the social context in which it is being used and the social consequences of its use (Richardson, 2007). CDA relies mostly on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics for its analysis and the view that language performs representational functions is largely based on SFL.

van Leeuwen's (2008) categorisation of social actors also exists within the framework of CDA. The concept enunciates the manner in which social actors can be defined and/or described as it has to do with the roles assigned to them (Osisanwo, 2016). As the linguistic and discursive construction and representation of people and event in the news media seem to be the focus of this research, Van Leeuwen's categorization of social actors becomes an indispensable tool in revealing concealed ways in which the news media represent social actors and their social action.

#### **3.5. Analytical Procedure**

As mentioned earlier, Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to CDA, van Leeuwen's concept of the Representation of Social Actors and Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic constitute the theoretical framework for this study. Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach to CDA is used to track the discourse issues and ideologies in the reports while the linguistic tools used to triangulate the ideologies

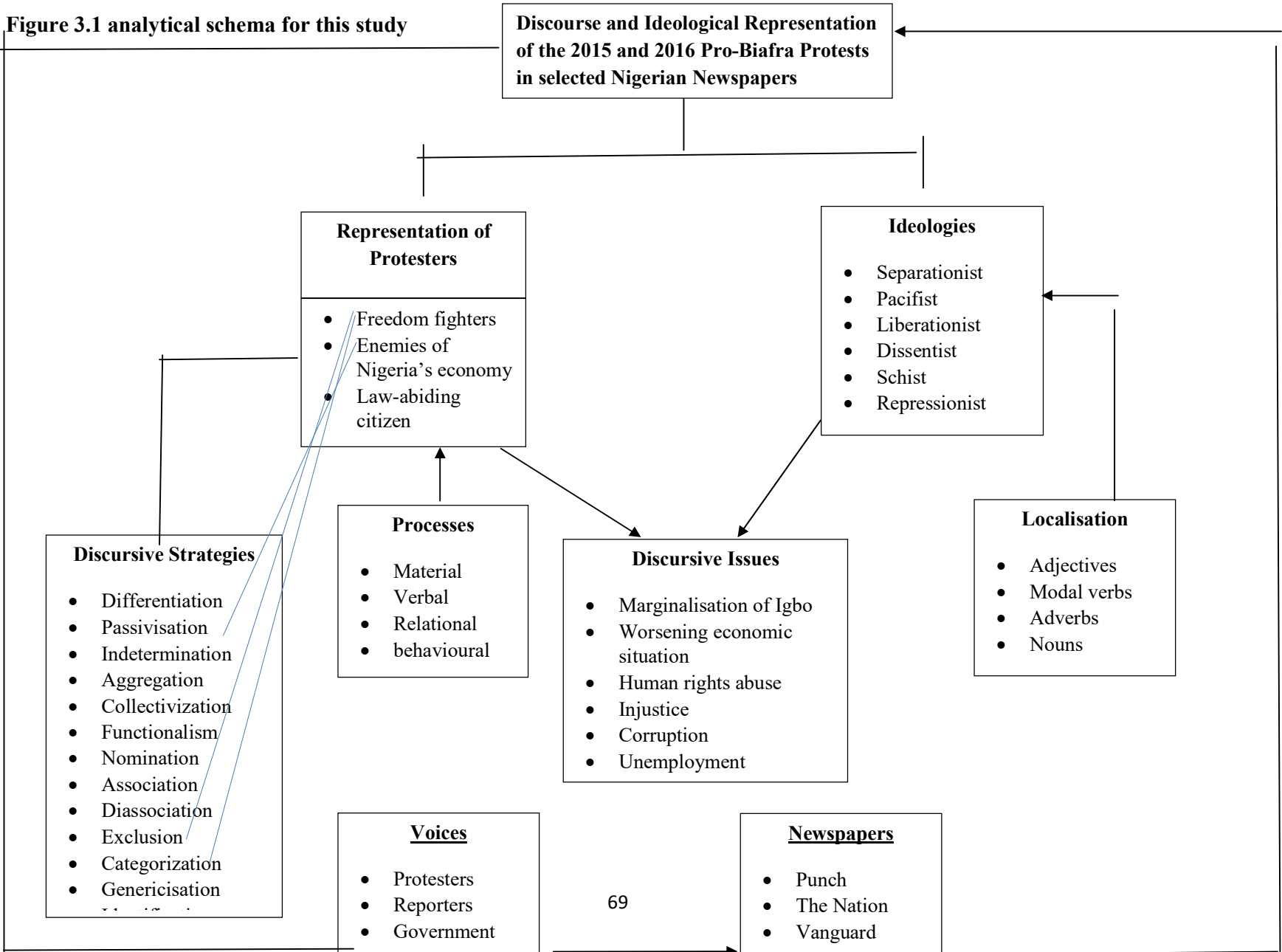
are enhanced by Halliday's SFL, especially the textual part of Halliday's SFL. Van Leeuwen's model of CDA is used to capture the representation of social actors in the reports on the protest, while Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics is used to lexically index the linguistic features in the representation. Hence, the first procedural task in the analysis is the identification and examination of the discursive issues in the representation of the pro-Biafra protest in selected Nigerian newspapers. This follows what is enunciated in Wodak's (2001) Discourse Historical Approach to CDA. The discourse issues are usually indexed by linguistic devices that can be lexically identified with Halliday's SFL. The discursive issues are the thematic concerns identified in the discourse. The next procedural task is the examination of the discursive strategies deployed in the representation of the social actors and actions in the protest as observed in the reports on the protest. After this is the identification and exploration of the ideologies constructed in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest.

The study goes on to analyse the lexical and grammatical choices employed in the construction of the Biafra protest in selected Nigerian newspapers. These lexical and grammatical devices are identified using Halliday's SFL. A diagrammatic representation of this analytic framework is presented below.

### **3.7 Chapter summary**

This chapter gives an insight into the research design used in the study. As a result, issues like method of data collection and analysis and rationale for the choice of data and instrument were explored. Chapter four begins the analysis of the data.

Figure 3.1 analytical schema for this study



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.0. Chapter overview**

This chapter focuses on the discourse issues that form the background of the discourse events investigated in this study. It is important to investigate discourse issues because they are indispensable in tracking discourse representations and ideologies. In addition to the discourse issues, the representational strategies in the reports on the protests are also explicated. How social actors are represented in media reports on the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests and the strategies deployed in the representation in the discourse of the protests are equally investigated here.

#### **4.1. Discourse issues in the protest**

According to Wodak (2001), discourse issues are key issues or thematic preoccupations embedded in discursive events. When analyzing texts, the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) dwells largely on the background of discourse events. In the DHA approach to CDA, it is held that for a proper investigation of discursive events, there has to be an integration and triangulation of ‘knowledge about historical sources and the background of the social and political fields within which discursive events are embedded’ (Wodak, 2009: 38).

The identification of discourse issues in text helps to espouse the representation and projected ideologies concealed in them, and this is what makes DHA socially constituted as well as socially constitutive. In the news items examined, six discourse issues stand out as identified in figure 3.1. They include: marginalisation of the Igbo, worsening economic situation, human rights abuse, injustice, corruption and unemployment. The discourse issues in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest in selected Nigerian newspapers as identified in figure 3.1 are discussed presently.

#### 4.1.1 Marginalisation of Igbo

The marginalisation of the Igbo, the alleged exclusion of the Igbos in the running of government and scheme of events in Nigeria, is a major discourse issue in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest reported in Nigerian newspapers. The Igbo lament the perceived marginalisation they suffer not only in the distribution of resources but also in political office sharing in the nation. Important and strategic political offices are supposedly being ceded to the north and west while the south east is allotted less political offices. To the Igbo, the north and west are the first class citizens while the south east is in the second class tier in the distribution of political appointments. Let us examine the following excerpts:

##### **Excerpt 1:**

Fourthly, it is the believed marginalisation of “Biafrans” in the scheme of things in Nigeria...

For many of them, Biafra is just their rejection of every injustice they suffer, unemployment, marginalisation in high places, bad roads, lack of infrastructure, etc. Not only are we poorly represented in government, we are treated beggarly...

Other factors that have fuelled our agitation for Biafra are the slavery Nigerian government have subjected Ndigbo to, which includes economical, political, academic, religious, cultural and social slavery. Nigeria is a State, where others are first class citizens, but they treat the Igbo as second class citizens. This is a state, where others are born to rule, but treat the Igbo as perpetual outcasts. This is a state where state policies deliberately deny Igboland critical developmental infrastructure.

*The Vanguard Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

##### **Excerpt 2:**

Biafra: Igbo leaders want end to street protests

- **Lament politics of exclusion**
- Demand true federalism

No fewer than 60 prominent Igbo leaders met yesterday in Lagos where they called for an end to the ongoing pro-Biafra street protests in Nigeria.

**The leaders noted that the alleged exclusion of the zone in the sharing of key political offices, informed the protests.**

**The Sun Dec 22, 2015. Pg 28**

In excerpt 1, the major cause of the protest is the marginalisation of the Igbo. The marginalisation of Igbo is an important discourse issue in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. The Igbo, as captured in ‘marginalisation of “Biafrans”’ were allegedly being marginalised in the political administration of the country. It was this perceived marginalisation, amongst other issues that led to a thirty-month civil war in Nigeria in 1967. The war led to the destruction of lives and properties, leading to the death of millions. The Igbo in Nigeria were not only poorly represented but regarded as ‘second class citizens’ as explicated in excerpt 1. The protest was a product of the perceived injustice meted out against the people from the region.

In the excerpt, this marginalisation is believed to be synonymous with slavery, and slavery, as shown in the excerpt is made manifest in social, political, academic, cultural and religious affairs. In the political scene, it is believed that there is lopsided appointment against people of Igbo extraction. This lop-sidedness was an apparent manifestation of marginalisation against the Igbo.

In excerpt 2, the perceived exclusion or marginalisation of the Igbo in the occupation of political offices was believed to have led to the protest. The Igbos were believed to have always been sidelined from occupying important political offices in the country. For instance, there has always been a debate about when a president will emerge from the Igbo speaking part of Nigeria.

#### **4.1.2 Worsening economic situation**

Another discourse issue that is recurrent in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest is worsening economic situation prevalent in the country, a situation caused by bad management of the economy resulting in unfavourable living conditions for the citizenry and for business owners. The Federal Government of Nigeria, it is believed, as captured in the excerpt 3, has failed in its responsibility of delivering essential promises to Nigerians on economic issues as well as on social and infrastructural facilities. Nigerians have hitherto lost faith in the government of the

nation. There is also the proclivity of Nigerian politicians to become absolutely focused on lining their pockets with public fund when they get hold of power. This has resulted in a decline in the country's economy, consequently impoverishing the masses. David Cameron, former English Prime Minister was attributed to have said that if the amount of money embezzled in Nigeria in the last thirty years had been stolen in the UK, the UK would have ceased to exist. Let us consider the following excerpt:

**Excerpt 3:**

Governance failure at all levels has exacerbated the plight of these youths and supposed elders who have also lost their means of livelihood due to the precarious economic situation of the country. Lack of good governance had grossly accounted for the impoverishment of these jobless and unemployable youths and elders who ordinarily would have found succour as factory hands if we had attained significant industrial growth and development, even the unemployment rate among tertiary institution graduates has worsened the already bad situation.

*The Nation, Thurs. Nov. 19, 2015. Pg 16*

**Excerpt 4:**

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) representing Imo North, Senator Athan Achonu has attributed the on-going agitation for the realisation of Biafran state on worsening economic situation in the country.

*The Vanguard. Mon. Nov. 23, 2015 Pg 7*

The above excerpts show the adverse effects of government inability to perform its constitutional function. Apart from having a quite clueless government as claimed, the government also fails to provide employment for the jobless while those who had jobs were retrenched and government did nothing to salvage the situation. The outbreak of the protests as well as the protests' intensity has been attributed to the teeming population of underemployed and jobless youths in the country which is a direct product of bad economic choices made by the government. The failure on the part of government has made many people to lose their means of livelihood while the younger generations have nothing. This has also led to harsh economic life, attributed to bad economy. The country has also witnessed economic recession that led to

massive retrenchment of workers such that these retrenched workers become nuisance to the nation. It has also crippled small scale businesses and multinational companies. Job loss, amongst other issues has made the protest the last resort of the masses.

**Excerpt 5:**

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) representing Imo North, Senator Athan Achonu has attributed the on-going agitation for the realisation of the Biafran state on worsening economic situation in the country.

*The Vanguard. Mon. Nov. 23, 2015 Pg 7*

The excerpt above attributed the failure of government to worsening economic situation in the country. Government failed because it could not judiciously manage the nation's economy. The fall in the price of petroleum which was the source of the nation's income had adverse effects on the people and the economy. With the worsening economy, government still pays lip-service to other sources of income. This neglect led to massive unemployment.

**4.1.3 Human rights abuse**

Human rights abuse, the denial of the fundamental and basic rights of an individual or individuals, is one of the discourse issues in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. Such rights include freedom of association, speech, movement, religion, life, and so on. In news reports on the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests, human rights abuse was prevalent. The instances of abuse are exemplified below:

**Excerpt 6:**

MASSOB people wanted to do anniversary, a peaceful protest; no gun, no machete, a non-violent one for that matter; they were descended upon and 12 of them were mowed down and many injured. Now one of them went under the Freedom of Information Act, freedom of expression and he is caught, detained, tortured and eventually bailed. Then, people are protesting his detention, and I was told the protest turned bloody. **Not that the protesters attacked anybody, but that those who are supposed to protect them turned the weapons against them. That is not the kind of Nigeria we want.**

*The Sun Wed. Nov. 18, 2015Pg 27*



From excerpt 6, it is apparent that there was perceived gross human rights violation of the protesters who were supposedly peaceful in the protest. In fact, it is evident from the reports that the protesters were non-violent, peaceful and calm. They carry out their activities within the confines of the law. They do not have in their possession dangerous weapons because they are not terrorists or militants. The police who are constitutionally supposed to protect and safeguard their lives have invariably turned against them. The police were allegedly reported to have shot at the protesters. The protesters were also allegedly attacked with teargas canisters, leading to the death of some protesters. Here, the police were projected as serial killers, killing many protesters. This is apparently the zenith of human rights abuse. Some protesters, as it seems, were then illegally prosecuted for conducting themselves within the ambit of the law. This situation is equally illustrated in excerpt 8, 9 and 10:

**Excerpt 7:**

Two pro-Biafra protesters were on Tuesday feared killed by purported stray bullets from the police after thousands of youths trekked about 40 kilometres from Aba to Port Harcourt in protest against the continued detention of the Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

***Punch, Wed. Nov. 11, 2015Pg 21***

**Excerpt 8:**

The police have arrested 22 members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra and those of the Indigenous People of Biafra in some parts of the country. The police (sayer) said four suspects were apprehended in Anambra, six in Imo, 11 in Delta and one in Abia State.

***Punch. Tue. Nov. 17, 2015***

**Excerpt 9:**

Anambra Commissioner of Police, Mr Hosea Karma, confirmed the arrest of the protesters, saying it was because they were parading along the Enugu-Onitsha expressway thereby causing breach of peace. According to the CP, “there is nothing like Indigenous People of Biafra. Those people constituted nuisance on the high way and that was why they were picked.

***Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14***

Excerpt 7 deploys the use of passivisation to foreground the number of people the police allegedly killed. This strategy aims to condemn the activities of the Nigerian Police Force as inimical and inhuman. The circumstantial element “on Tuesday” ascertains and confirms the originality of the news because the news reports could not authoritatively reveal the identity of the police officers that committed the heinous crime. The circumstantial element “from the police” was also deployed because the news could not authoritatively say the police killed two pro-Biafra protesters. This is another tactical approach to avoid another social unrest because the killing of two protesters attributed to the Nigeria police could incite another social unrest.

In excerpt 8, the behavioural process is tactically used to bring to prominence the activities of the Nigerian police who arrested twenty-two suspected members of MASSOB and IPOB. The verbal process in the last excerpt authenticates the information of the protesters’ arrests by the police. The police deploy the strategy of mitigation to reduce the mental and social effects of the “arrests”. Other strategies used are aggregation and functionalization. The deployment of aggregation and functionalization strategies was to condemn the activities of the Nigerian police.

It is apparent that the rights of the protesters are violated. This is against international practices. The police are supposed to protect lives and properties. In Nigeria, as can be insinuated from the reports, the reverse is the case. They use live ammunitions to disperse angry youths leading to loss of lives. It reflects the deliberate infringement on people’s right and this does not augur well for a evolving democracy like Nigeria’s.

#### **4.1.4 Injustice**

Injustice is another discourse issue in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. It is the major cause of the protest. The rights of the protesters were violated through imprisonment, illegal arrests, inequality, inequity, unfairness, political discrimination and so on. The easterners believed they were discriminated against. They suffer untold hardships. In the political landscape, as mentioned earlier, an easterner has never occupied the position of President of Nigeria, and thus, the Igbo were regarded as third class citizens in Nigeria. Now let us exemplify excerpts explicating injustice in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests:

**Excerpt 10:**

For many of them, Biafra is just their rejection of every **injustice they suffer**, unemployment, marginalisation in high places, bad roads, lack of infrastructure, etc. **Not only are we poorly represented in government, we are treated beggarly.**

*The Vanguard Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

From excerpt 10, it is clear that apart from hunger and unemployment, injustice is another discourse issue prevalent in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. Despite the fact that the easterners are very industrious and contribute enormously to the nation's wealth, they still suffer various degrees of injustice. The easterners are allegedly killed and oppressed despite the fact that the region together with others fought for the independence of the nation. The excerpt below expatiates this further:

**Excerpt 11:**

Biafra started, **because of the injustices and marginalisation of Ndigbo in Nigeria. These injustices triggered** the Civil War of 1967 to 1970. Those of us, who went to that war, were very much convinced that we were fighting to liberate our people and we were prepared to give it our all.

*The Vanguard Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

According to the excerpt above, the major cause of the Nigeria civil war was injustice against the Igbo. This perceived injustice led to the Civil War between 1967 and 1970. The period was regarded as the dark days of military junta in Nigeria. It must be noted that Ojukwu, the supposed leader of the defunct Biafra Army, could not condone the injustice in the first republic; he had to declare the eastern region a Republic in 1967. The protesters allegedly believe that the injustice in the first republic was minute compared to its enormity which is apparent in the fourth republic. This is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 12:**

We want to go, we want to remain on our own, **because of the injustices** that have been so entrenched that the Igbo man no longer has future in

Nigeria. What was happening then was child's play compared with what Ndigbo are going through now. If Ojukwu were alive, I know he would have declared another war, which perhaps, would have been the departing point in Nigeria. I am not afraid to die, I am passionate about Biafra and I want to die fighting its cause.

*The Vanguard Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

What gave birth to Biafra in the first republic was injustice and it is quite unfortunate that the nation has not learnt its lesson from the thirty months civil war. The nation has not corrected the past events that led to the war. All the issues that led to the war were still unresolved after well over forty-five years. The protesters lamented the enormity of injustice against the Igbo. This is the major cause of the siege of protests that crippled commercial activities in the zone and other parts of the country.

It must be noted that many of the protesters who see themselves as disciples of Ojukwu also lament how law and order have become extinct in the country. Federal character in political appointments has become a thing of the past. Nepotism, tribalism, favouritism and many other vices have come to be the order of the day in Nigeria. All these issues and many more triggered the Nigerian civil war. Despite the fact that years have passed, Nigerians have not learnt from their past.

#### **1.1.5 Corruption**

Corruption is another discourse issue in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. Corruption manifests in bribery, embezzlement, diversion and misappropriation of funds among other vices. Corruption has been normalised into the Nigerian fabric that it has become very difficult to define. Corruption has made it such that despite the abundant human and natural resources, Nigerians still wallow in poverty. The government of Nigeria at all levels have, to a great extent, failed to nip corruption in the bud. Nigerians have hitherto lost faith in the administration of the nation because of this. This situation has also made the Nigerian government fail in its social responsibility and consequently impoverished the masses.

#### **Excerpt 13:**

Governance failure at all levels has exacerbated the plight of these youths and supposed elders who have also lost their means of livelihood due to the

precarious economic situation of the country. Lack of good governance had grossly accounted for the impoverishment of these jobless and unemployable youths and elders who ordinarily would have found succour as factory hands if we had attained significant industrial growth and development, even the unemployment rate among tertiary institution graduates has worsened the already bad situation.

***The Nation, Thurs. Nov. 19, 2015. Pg 16***

Excerpt 13 shows the adverse effects of government inability to perform its constitutional function. Government fails to provide employment for the jobless while those who had jobs were retrenched and government did nothing to salvage the situation. Failure on the part of government has made many older people lose their means of livelihood while the younger generations have nothing. This has also led to harsh economic situation in the country.

Failure of government was attributed to bad economy. Bad economy evident in economic recession has led to massive retrenchment of workers such that these retrenched workers have become nuisance to the nation. It has also crippled small scale businesses and multinational companies. These workers who lost their jobs embarked on massive protest to express their sufferings.

#### **1.1.6 Unemployment**

Unemployment, a condition in which a person of employable age does not have a means of providing ends meet for himself or his family. It is usually accompanied by under-employment. According to the excerpts here, many youths have resorted into crime because of lack of job. Many who are employed are underpaid. This situation is demeaning and people have no option but to express their annoyance about the economic hardship in the nation. In fact, the siege of protest is attributed to the lack of employment opportunity in the country. This is exemplified in the excerpt 15:

#### **Excerpt 14:**

The unemployment rate is too high. Government has to tackle unemployment and get the youths fully engaged and pay them salary.

***The Vanguard. Mon. Nov. 23, 2015. Pg 7***

It is very clear that unemployment is very high in the nation. Thousands of graduates are turned out by Nigerian universities every year without the economic resources necessary to cater for them. Many of these youths often become viable

weapons in the hands of perpetrators of evil. Sometimes, they end up as political thugs and miscreants. The issue of unemployment is closely linked to worsening economic situation. The excerpt, for instance, attributed the failure of government to worsening economic situation in the country. Government failed because it could not judiciously manage the nation's economy. The fall in the price of petroleum which was the source of the nation's income had adverse effects on the people and the economy. With the worsening economy, government still pays lip-service to other sources of revenue such as agriculture, mining, small scale business and so on which can provide viable sources of employment. This neglect led to massive unemployment. This is exemplified in the excerpts below:

**Excerpt 15:**

These youths in the past were usually engaged in various forms of entrepreneurship apprenticeship after primary education for upwards of 6-8 years before their masters set them up in the same business. Majority of the primary and secondary school leavers in recent times no longer have the patience and endurance to undergo this entrepreneurship apprenticeship that the typical Igbo youth was known for because of avariciousness and the get-rich-quick syndrome that has pervaded their psyche.

*The Nation, Thurs. Nov. 19, 2015. Pg 16*

Excerpt 15 emphasises the loss of social values, which arises from unemployment. The easterners are known for their business acumen. They practice the apprenticeship tradition where a young person undergoes apprenticeship and after some years graduates to start his own trade. However, this culture is fast dissipating due to the encroaching influence of formal education. Now, young people who go to school instead of the entrepreneurship training acquire certificates without commensurate jobs to fend for themselves. This has turned out to have very grievous implications on the youths in the south-east region of Nigeria.

## 4.2 The representational strategies in the media reports of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest

The representational strategies identified in the study include *protesters as freedom fighters*, *protesters as economic saboteurs*, and *protesters as law-abiding citizens*. These representations are explicated by four dominant processes and ten discursive strategies. The four dominant transitivity processes identified in the study include material, verbal, relational and behavioural. The following discursive strategies are tactically deployed in the representation of social actors and actions as well as the ideological inclinations in selected Nigerian newspapers. The discursive strategies include passivisation, aggregation, collectivisation, functionalisation, nomination, association, disassociation, exclusion, inclusion and categorization.

**Table 4.1: The representation of social actors and actions with the grammatical choices and discursive strategies deployed.**

	<b>Representation of social actors and actions</b>	<b>Grammatical choices via transitivity process</b>	<b>Discursive strategies deployed in the representation of the 2015 – 2016 Biafra protest</b>
1	Protesters as freedom fighters	Relational process	Differentiation, categorisation, genericisation
2	Protesters as enemies of the nation's progress	Material and behavioural processes	Indetermination,
3	Protesters as law-abiding citizens	Material process	Functionalisation, identification

Table 4.1 shows the representation of social actors and actions with their grammatical choices and discursive strategies employed in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. The representation of social actors and actions is expatiated below.

### 4.2.1 Protesters as freedom fighters

The protesters are labelled as freedom fighters. Protesters are groups of people who complain about certain issues. They express their disapproval and dissatisfaction about such issues. Protesters here are members of MASSOB and IPOB who fight for

the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra. The notion of freedom fighters runs through all the newspapers. Apart from fighting for the freedom of the supposed Biafra Republic, the freedom fighters image also reflects on the fight for the unconstitutional release of Nnamdi Kanu, the supposed Biafra boss and leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra. The excerpt below shows that the protesters are freedom fighters:

**Excerpt 16:**

“We are not terrorists, **we are freedom fighters**”,  
“We are tired of intimidation and harassment by  
Nigeria Government”, “Biafra on the move” amongst  
others, the protesters said they were no longer  
comfortable with the Nigeria government.

*Vanguard Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14*

In excerpt 16, the reporter manages the voice of the protesters who identify themselves through ‘genericisation’ as freedom fighters as against their being conceived as terrorists. The first two clauses employ the relational processes of claiming and disclaiming. “We are not terrorists” is to disclaim the idea of comparing Biafra agitators in groups such as MASSOB and IPOB to the terrorist group, Boko Haram which have killed and maimed thousands of Nigerians in the northern part of the nation. There is also the use of ‘differentiation’ and ‘categorisation’. The agitators therefore try to vehemently disassociate themselves from the terrorist group. The use of ‘not terrorist’ is to re-construct their ill-conceived identity by Nigeria and consequently project what they stand for. Using the ‘us’ and ‘them’ construct, they project themselves as liberationists, fighting for freedom from their supposed captors, the Nigerian government, and from its shackles of social, political and economic bondage.

MASSOB and IPOB try to disassociate themselves from the terrorist group and express their displeasure in strong terms about why they should be compared with the deadly insurgent group.

**Excerpt 17:**

“Tell me a country where non-violent freedom  
agitators are chased around the way MASSOB is. It  
is not done anywhere. But that cannot deter us.”

*The Sun Wed. Sep. 16, 2015 Pg 10*



Excerpt 17 further reinforces the identity of the agitators as not only ‘freedom fighters’ but ‘non-violent’ ones. They continue to foreground the fact that they are not an armed group like Boko haram. Hence, there was no reason for their being hunted and chased around since they do no harm to anyone. The agitators in groups such as MASSOB and IPOB represent themselves as groups that believe in the sanctity of life. They compare themselves to freedom fighters in other climes and opine that it is a misnomer for them to be called terrorists and be treated cruelly the way they are being treated by the Nigerian government.

The pragmatic implication of “non-violent freedom agitators” is that the group is not armed. It is not like the terrorist group that maimed and render many Nigerians homeless. The logic drawn here is that if it is not a terrorist group like Boko haram, members of MASSOB and IPOB should enjoy their Fundamental Human Rights. MASSOB and IPOB members are shown here to be law-abiding groups with a sacred belief in the sanctity of life. Hence, to chase MASSOB and IPOB members all around like a terrorist group is uncalled for as it is against their Fundamental Human Rights.

**Excerpt 18:**

It was gathered that the police in Anambra arrested about 43 members of MASSOB and IPOB during the protest, notably in Nnewi, Onitsha and Awka. One of the protesters Ikechukwu Okoye once said, “we were not protesting to cause any form of trouble but for the release of our leader, Nnamdi Kanu. **We are freedom agitators, we obey the laws of the land, knowing that there is freedom of speech and freedom of movement,” he said.**

*Vanguard* Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20.

Excerpt 18 showed that the protesters conducted themselves within the confines of the law. They are lawful freedom agitators unlike armed insurgent groups in Nigeria like Boko Haram and the Niger Delta Militants. Their quest is freedom and this is enshrined in the constitution of Nigeria as reflected in the freedom of speech, movement, religion, association and so on. Freedom agitators act within the law and they should not be coerced by security operatives.

As shown in the excerpt, Nnamdi Kanu’s perceived ordeal in the hands of Nigerian security operatives also reflects that he is a law-abiding citizen. Kanu was

disallowed from holding public meetings despite having met all the constitutional provisions. He was also supposedly arrested, detained and bailed. This is to show that he is a law-abiding citizen. The protest was initially peaceful until the police began to arrest and attack the protesters. This is the critical stage in the protest because it turned bloody. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 19:**

MASSOB people wanted to do anniversary, a peaceful protest; no gun, no machete, a non-violent one for that matter; they were descended upon and 12 of them were mowed down and many injured. **Now one of them went under the Freedom of Information Act, freedom of expression and he is caught, detained, tortured and eventually bailed.** Then, people are protesting his detention, and I was told the protest turned bloody. **Not that the protesters attacked anybody, but that those who are supposed to protect them turned the weapons against them.** That is not the kind of Nigeria we want.

*The Sun Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 27.*

From excerpt 19, it can be observed that pro-Biafra protesters projected themselves as law-abiding citizens. In fact, by the constitutional provision, they were supposed to be protected by security operatives. This is the common international practice. However, what they supposedly experienced was the reverse as security operatives allegedly attacked them. They were arrested, detained, and charged to court for crimes, which undermine the peace and tranquillity of the state by the security operatives.

#### **4.2.2 Protesters as economic saboteurs**

The agitators are also portrayed as economic saboteurs because their activities hinder the social and economic activities of Nigeria. The voice, this time, is that of the media house who construct the protesters as constituting nuisance to the Nigerian populace. This representation is explicated by the material process that has the actor

‘the protesters’ and the goal ‘activities in Port Harcourt’. The process is explicated in verbal elements ‘cripple’, ‘shut down’, and so on. This is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 20:**

Pro-Biafra protesters **cripple** activities in Port Harcourt

The protesters, who gathered at the Oyigbo junction as early as 6:30am, **crippled** commercial and other activities in major parts of the city.

*The Nation, Wed. Nov. 11, 2015 P. 44*

**Excerpt 21:**

Pro-Biafra protesters storm Umuahia.

The pro-Biafra protesters, who last week, **shut down** economic activities in the commercial city of Aba, arrived in Umuahia on Monday, marching through major streets of the capital city, under the watchful eye of security agencies.

*Punch. Nov. 17, 2015. Pg 43*

Excerpts 20 and 21 above represent the protesters as malevolent as their protest paralysed social and economic activities in Aba and Port Harcourt. ‘The pro-Biafra protesters’ is activated as the actor carrying out this ‘crippling act’ while ‘commercial and other activities’, ‘economic activities’ and ‘activities’ in excerpt 20 and 21 are the goal. The process is explicated in ‘cripple’ and ‘shut down’ respectively. To shut down and cripple economic and social activities is inimical to Nigeria’s development, following the economic state of the nation. Genericisation is employed in this representation to present the protesters as coming together to perpetrate this act.

**Excerpt 22:**

Vehement in their resolve to get the detained Radio Biafra boss Nnamdi Kanu released and to actualise their agitation for the Sovereign State of Biafra, no fewer than 40,000 members and sympathisers of Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, yesterday, shut down commercial and business activities in the South East states as they took to the streets to vent their spleen.

*The Sun, Wed. Dec 2, 2015*

**Excerpt 23:**

The protesters, who later became violent, pulled down Nigerian flags wherever they were seen, while motorists, who failed to chant the Biafra song got their vehicles smashed by the irate youths.

*The Punch, Wed. Nov. 11, 2015 P. 21*

From excerpts 22 and 23 above, the voice is also that of the reporter of the media house who implicate the protesters as being violent, pulling down the Nigerian flag and smashing vehicles. The material process derides the activities of the protesters as being destructive.

In the Nigerian newspapers, the pro-Biafra protesters were also labelled as violent and unruly. This is because the activities of the protesters constitute threats to the socio-political and economic realities. In some states, especially in the South-east, the protesters barricaded vehicular movements and the economic activities are hampered. This is the major concern for the nation because the South-east is the economic hub of the nation. Hence, an attempt to paralyse economic activities is an attempt to ground the economic growth of the nation. This is the major reason why the pro-Biafra protesters are tagged violent and unruly men and women. Being violent means that pro-Biafra protesters are lawless and unruly. Their presence constitutes a major threat to the peace and tranquillity of the nation. This can be exemplified below:

**Excerpt 24:**

Gwary, who spoke in Awka during his familiarisation tour of Anambra State Police Command, condemned the activities of the two organisations, which he said, were **inimical** to the peace of the people and warned that the police would not fold their arms and watch **the peace enjoyed by the people to be derailed.**

*The Sun Wed, Oct 7, 2015. Pg 12*

From excerpt 24, Gwary who is the commissioner of police in Akwalbom State described the activities of MASSOB and IPOB as a threat to the Nigerian state. They want to destroy the peace hitherto enjoyed by Nigerians. The functionalization

strategy is deployed to justify the position of Gwary in the excerpt. Functionalization describes the activities of social actors in terms of the role they play of position occupied in the discourse. The voice of Gwary here is authentic and is validated by the position which he occupied in the state. As the chief security officer in the state, he must ensure that peace and tranquillity reign in the state. The tactical deployment of his name is to show that he is the man at the helm of affairs. He also excludes himself and Nigerian police from any activities that derailed the peace and tranquillity of the nation.

The pragmatic implication in the excerpt above is that MASSOB and IPOB have constituted a threat to the peace of the state. Their activities have paralysed economic activities, which hampered growth and development. The activities of the protesters have brought untold hardships, not only to the government but to the entire citizenry also.

In the same vein, the Commissioner of Police in AnambraState also condemns the activities of MASSOB and IPOB members. This is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 25:**

**Anambra Commissioner of Police, Mr Hosea Karma, confirmed the arrest of the protesters, saying it was because they were parading along the Enugu-Onitsha expressway thereby causing **breach of peace**. According to the CP, “there is nothing like Indigenous People of Biafra. **Those people** constituted **nuisance on the high way** and that was why they were picked.**

***Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14***

The fronting of the Anambra Commissioner of Police is to authenticate the voice of the CP. No other person could say such a thing. If any person does that, he must have misfired. The CP had ordered the arrest of the protesters. Here, the CP, through the verbal process “confirmed” the arrest of the protesters because the presence and activities of the protesters breach public peace and social cohesion in the state. The CP almost indicted himself because the police allowed the activities of the protesters to paralyse socio-economic activities. They allowed the protesters to parade themselves and therefore, their activities constitute nuisance to the society. The strategy of indeterminacy is used to deny the existence of the group with their

activities. The protesters are not specified because their presence is injurious to public peace. Indetermination purposively denies the activities and the existence of neither MASSOB nor IPOB. The strategy of disassociation is exemplified in “those and they”. The strategy is deployed to create oppositional polarity “we” and “they”. The strategy shows that the police distance themselves from the group because the protesters are law-breakers while the police are law-keepers or law enforcement agents. Their ideologies are antithetical. This is the reason the police distance themselves from the activities of the protesters.

In another instance, categorisation strategy was used. The strategy identifies individuals in terms of their identities, functions and ideologies which they share with other groups (van Leeuwen, 2008). This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 26:**

The truth is if these Biafran agitators do not retrace their steps, they would be treated like the Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram insurgents – that is as common criminals.

*The Nation, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2015Pg 17*

The protesters were called Biafra agitators. This is because agitators have political dimension and orientation. In the previous years in the nation, there have been many instances of agitations, mostly common among Nigerian students in Tertiary institutions in which they express their displeasure as well as hear their voice during students-management faceoff. Unlike students’ agitation, the Biafra agitators clamour for a collective sovereignty. This invariably affects economic activities in the zone in particular and Nigeria in general. The activities of the group are compared to the Niger Delta Militant and Boko Haram insurgents. Niger Delta militants clamour for 50 percent derivation because their lands and waters are desecrated and polluted due to oil spillage (Chiluwa, 2011). Among the treatment given to them is the total demolition of “Odi”, a city in Bayelsa State. The city was ruined by Nigerian soldiers during Olusegun Obasanjo’s first term in office. The villagers were killed in a genocidal mission. The city was turned into ruin. Apart from this, some militants were arrested and prosecuted, particularly those that did not surrender their arms during amnesty programme.

The Boko Haram insurgents during the early days of Jonathan's regime took over eleven local governments in Yobe State and instituted their flag and governance. Before February election in 2015, the strongholds of Boko Haram were totally destroyed and the incoming President finished the works. This is how the Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram insurgents were treated. Both the Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram insurgents were treated like common criminals.

The strategy of categorisation is used to describe Biafra agitators as enemies of the nation. The persistent protest is injurious to the collective economic growth of the nation. If such activities like protests are allowed, the economic and social life of the zone would be affected grossly.

In the excerpt below, the strategies of categorisation and aggregation are used. Another categorisation is used when the protesters are referred to as a group of individuals. Aggregation means when social actors are quantified. Lexical items explicating aggregation are some, many, over, few, a few and so on. These strategies are exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 27:**

The presence of **over 200 men** of the Joint Task Force (JTF), deployed in the Aba/ Port Harcourt Expressway did not deter them. **The protesters**, who gathered at the Oyigbo junction as early as 6:30am, crippled commercial and other activities in major parts of the city.

***The Nation, Wed. Nov. 11, 2015 Pg 44***

In excerpt 27, there is the use of the strategies of categorisation and aggregation. The post-modification of "over 200 men of the Joint Task Force" through circumstantialisation shows the numerical strength of the security operatives. Despite the military presence, the protesters were undeterred. They continued with their protest and this marred activities in the state, particularly the ever busy Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway. Their activities crippled economic activities in the state.

It can be inferred from the excerpts above that the pro-Biafra protesters are labelled as being violent and unruly because their activities cripple socio-economic activities. As their activities constitute nuisance to commercial activities, the security operatives had to man strategic places in Port Harcourt. The labelling of the protesters as being

violent and unruly by Nigerian newspapers is as a result of the number of the protesters involved and how the protests spread to other zones and states in Nigeria such as Lagos and Oyo.

#### **4.2.3 Protesters as law-abiding citizens**

The protesters cum agitators are further projected as law abiding citizens that must not be intimidated by any security agent because they neither carry arm nor weapon. They are portrayed as law abiding citizens, honourable men and women who should be protected by security agents and not victimised. The perceived victimisation which protesters underwent in the hands of security agents is seen as uncalled for and unlawful. It is a total violation of their fundamental human rights because MASSOB and IPOB members are peace-loving people who embarked on peaceful demonstration without causing any fear or threat. The following excerpts exemplify this.

##### **Excerpt 28:**

It was gathered that the police in Anambra arrested about 43 members of MASSOB and IPOB during the protest, notably in Nnewi, Onitsha and Awka. One of the protesters Ikechukwu Okoye once said, “we were not protesting to cause any form of trouble but for the release of our leader, Nnamdi Kanu. We are freedom agitators, we obey the laws of the land, knowing that there is freedom of speech and freedom of movement,” he said.

*The Nation* Nov. 15, 2015. P. 20

##### **Excerpt 29:**

MASSOB people wanted to do anniversary, a peaceful protest; no gun, no machete, a non-violent one for that matter; they were descended upon and 12 of them were mowed down and many injured. Now one of them went under the Freedom of Information Act, freedom of expression and he is caught, detained, tortured and eventually bailed. Then, people are protesting his detention, and I was told the protest turned bloody. Not that the protesters attacked anybody, but that those who are supposed to protect them turned the weapons against them. That is not the kind of Nigeria we want.



*The Sun* Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 P. 27

**Excerpt 30:**

“Tell me a country where **non-violent freedom agitators** are chased around the way MASSOB is. It is not done anywhere. But that cannot deter us.”

*The Sun* Wed. Sep. 16, 2015 Pg 10

**Excerpt 31:**

Similarly, 150 pro-Biafra agitators, yesterday, dragged the Federal Government to court.

*The Punch*. Thurs. Dec. 24, 2015. P. 49

Excerpts 28 to 31 reveal that pro-Biafra protesters are peace-loving Nigerians. They obey the laws of the land. They do not carry any ammunition and engage in any social vices. They engage in their protest peacefully; however, those who are supposed to protect them attacked them and the protest was bloody. Exclusion strategy is employed such that the identity of those who attacked them was de-emphasised. This strategy is tactically deployed to condemn the activities of security agencies in Nigeria. The security agencies attack those who they are supposed to defend but when the real enemies appear, the security agents are nowhere to be found. In fact, the security agents are supposed to be arrested and prosecuted for violating the fundamental rights of bona fide Nigerians. In excerpt 32, for instance, the protesters drag the Nigeria government to court. This action shows their civility and belief in the rule of law.

The pro-Biafra protesters see themselves first as law-abiding citizens who live within the confines of the law and then as bona fide citizens of the nation Nigeria. Invariably, they do have the fundamental rights to engage in peaceful protests so far as the necessary constitutional requirements are met. It is clearly stated in the constitution that every citizen has the right to engage in peaceful association. The protesters in Nigerian newspapers are said to be harmless because they do not carry weapons. Thus, the protesters are not terrorists and they should not be compared to them. Unlike Boko Haram terrorists, the protesters do not kill, steal nor destroy lives and property.

**Excerpt 32:**

You don't shoot at people who have **no fire arms** but only have **placards** on them; this is an act of man's inhumanity to man

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 7, 2015*

Excerpt 32 shows that the protesters are harmless and armless. They carry no guns, weapons and ammunitions that could cause deaths or injure persons but go with placards in order to express their minds. This is the acceptable way of protesting all over the world. It is demeaning that despite the fact that the protesters are armless, the police still shoot at them, resulting in the death of many protesters.

In excerpt 33, the protesters stated categorically that they are armless. They do not have any weapons to inflict injury on anybody. This is because the protesters believe in law and order. They are law-abiding citizens of Nigeria and the supposed Biafra Republic. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 33:**

Speaking, one of the coordinators of IPOB, Mr Chidiebere Aguodi said, "the main reason for the protest is that our able chairman, **the father and founder of IPOB worldwide** has been held by President Muhamadu Buhari. We need him to be released to us unconditionally. The protest **for now** is peaceful, but we need freedom. **We are armless, we have not harmed anybody** and we owe nobody any apology for what we are doing. As Biafrans, we stand for **peace and justice** will reign.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14*

The object in "**the father and founder of IPOB worldwide** has been held by President Muhamadu Buhari" is passivised. This is because the founder of IPOB is the focal attention here. Instead of suppressing or backgrounding the actor, the beneficialised object (the founder of IPOB) is fronted. He was negatively affected by the action of Muhamadu Buhari's malevolence. Buhari's action supposedly fuelled the protest because the government insisted on not releasing Nnamdi Kanu. Despite court verdict, the Buhari-Led government still detained Kanu. The use of the deontic

modal verb “need” twice shows that peace could only return to the zone if Kanu is released unconditionally.

The circumstantial element “for now” reveals that the protest could turn bloody if the police refuse to release Kanu. Although the protesters are armless, they could change if police interfere in the protest or if Kanu still remains in police custody. The strategy of inclusion is explicated in the pronominal “we”. The “weness” shows the collective decision of the protesters. They all go out in mass to show their displeasure.

Nnamdi Kanu is a major social actor in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. In fact, the whole protest erupted in the first place due to the arrest of Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB. Kanu mobilises fellow easterners who are within and outside the region through social media. The mobilisation later gathered momentum and Kanu was arrested and detained by security agencies for unlawful social activities. Against the backdrop, Kanu, a grassroot mobiliser, is referred to as a law abiding citizen and an uncelebrated public hero. He is represented as disciplined and a true leader indeed.

**Excerpt 34:**

Indeed Kanu is the most celebrated leader of Biafra today because of his uncompromising nature. He is the opposite of Ralph Uwazuruike, who cannot publicly attend any Igbo function or appear in public for fear of being lynched by angry Igbo.

*Vanguard Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

From excerpt 34, it can be inferred that Kanu is a true Igbo leader after the demise of Odumegwu Ojukwu. Kanu is a dogged fighter who believes that the actualisation of the Republic of Biafra is realisable. The tactical use of the intensive identifying relational process shows that Kanu is supposedly a true leader of Igbo people. He is uncompromising in the face of threats and fears that gripped the protest.

**Excerpt 35:**

Similarly, 150 pro-Biafra agitators, yesterday, dragged the Federal Government to court.

*Vanguard. Thurs. Dec. 24, 2015. Pg 49*

Excerpt 35 reveal that pro-Biafra protesters are peace-loving Nigerians. They obey the law of the land. They did not carry any ammunition and engage in any social vices. They engage in their protest peacefully; however, those who are supposed to protect them attacked them and the protest was bloody. Exclusion strategy is employed such that the identity of those who attacked them was de-emphasised. This strategy is tactically deployed to condemn the activities of security agencies in Nigeria. The security agencies attack those who they are supposed to defend but when the real enemies appear, the security agents are nowhere to be found. In the last excerpt, for instance, the protesters drag the Nigeria government to court. This action shows their civility and belief in the rule of law.

Finally, the news reports further project the protesters as law abiding citizens that must not be intimidated by any security agents because they carry no arm or weapon that contradicts the law of the land. These law abiding citizens are honourable men and women who should be protected by security agents. The protesters are not to be victimised. The victimisation which protesters underwent in the hand of security agents is uncalled for and unlawful. It is a total violation of their fundamental human rights because MASSOB and IPOB members are peace loving people who embarked on peaceful demonstration without causing any fear or threat in the heart of people.

#### **4.3 Analysis of the ideological inclination constructed in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest**

The ideologies projected in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest as summarised in the schema in figure 3.1 are presented in this section. These include separatist ideology, pacifist ideology, liberationist ideology, dissentist ideology, and indifferentist ideology. While the separatist (which bifurcates into subtle and radical) and the liberationist advocate for a radical approach to self governance, the pacifists proffer the milder approach of negotiation and dialogue, the dissentist jettisons the idea of self governance and the indifferentist has an indifferent stance.

### 4.3.1 Separatist ideology

Separatist ideology is used to capture the movement and agitation for independence and the actualisation for self-governance by a group or race within a particular country. The group of people or race is embittered by the socio-political happenings in a nation. Therefore, they see the need to secede from the larger group as a clarion call and a solution to their oppression. In the reports, the protesters who are mainly Igbo, are embittered by the actions and inactions of the Federal Government of Nigeria. They see secession as a solution to their perceived socio-political and religious oppression. They put forward the idea that the Igbo should be allowed a sovereign state. The ideology, basically reflected in the voice of the Biafra protesters, underpins the rationale for the agitations of the Biafra protesters for a sovereign state. The agitation paralyses socio-economic activities in the south-east geopolitical zone and in many parts of Nigeria. In the reports, the separatist ideology bifurcates into radical separatist and subtle separatist.

#### 4.3.1.1 Radical separatist

The radical separatists can be seen as having a constant and seemingly unflinching commitment to the realisation of the state of Biafra. The radical separatist ideology can be historically traced to 1967 when Odumegwu Ojukwu declared Biafra as a nation. The declaration culminated in a thirty-month civil war in Nigeria. The civil war was described as one of the deadliest wars in the world in which about three million children died of hunger. Holding the radical separatist ideology are the pro-Biafra agitators who express their position and views through linguistic, paralinguistic and non-linguistic means. The excerpts below exemplify radical separatist ideology:

#### **Excerpt 36:**

He (the Zonal Spokesman, Mr Okpa Ignatius) said they have **vowed that no amount of intimidation or arrest will** deter them from achieving their objectives, which is the realisation of the state of Biafra.

***Punch, November 2, 2015***

Radical separatist ideology is projected in the words of the Zonal Spokesman, Mr Okpa Ignatius. Mr Okpa Ignatius as the spokesperson of the group expresses the inordinate determination of the group to achieve and actualise the Sovereign State of Biafra. The spokesperson vowed that the group cannot be deterred by intimidation, threat, and arrests of members and any other means that government may employ. This statement is sequel to the arrest of Nnamdi Kanu. The arrest was a tactical means to frustrate the quest for the Biafra State. The Federal Government's action infuriated the Biafran agitators such that the whole region was flooded with protesters. In fact, in Lagos, there was a solidarity protest by the easterners. The peaceful protest is meant to register their dissatisfaction with the Federal Government of Nigeria. It must be noted that Mr Okpa, therefore, had earlier on called on the security agencies to release the Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu before the attack took place. The speaker, Okpa Ignatius, is determined and resolute about his decision on the arrest of Nnamdi Kanu. To him, the arrest of Nnamdi Kanu is not only illegal and unconstitutional but a violation of his fundamental human rights. Mr Okpa succinctly deployed the modal verb "vowed". The use of the modal verb "vowed" shows the resolve of Mr Okpa and his allies. Also, the grammatical modal "will" reveal that Biafran agitators have, in many instances, been intimidated and arrested. The arrest and intimidation have frustrated the quest for the actualisation of the Biafran nation. The verbal group "vow" reflects the determined position of Ignatius and generally, the pro-Biafra protesters to stay committed to their objective. Likewise, the expression "no amount of intimidation and arrest will deter" which hints at the subjugation power of the Nigerian government indicates the unrelenting posture of the Biafra protesters. The reporter also manages the voice of Ignatius as though Ignatius might have truly chosen, for instance, the verb "vowed", the reporter surreptitiously reflects his alignment with Ignatius' strong position.

**Excerpt 37:**

It would appear that the dust raised by last August 20 **bloody** clash between members of the indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB and teams of Naval and Police personnel, which resulted in the death of two IPOB members and injuring about 10 others, including a Naval personnel, is yet to settle. **This is because members of IPOB are insisting that the attack on their members and**

**their death would not deter them from  
agitating for the realisation of Biafra.**

*Vanguard Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 34*

From excerpt 37, it can be observed that IPOB members did not want to be deterred by attacks, counter attacks and continuous attacks in the hands of the Nigerian Army, Navy and Police. These government agents seek to frustrate the group's agenda of achieving self-governance. They represent the federal might and have in many instances been reportedly seen attacking the peaceful Biafran protesters. The excerpt reflects the radical separatist ideology.

Like excerpt 36, excerpt 37 reflects radical separatist ideology in which "Biafra" protesters seem to be given completely to their goal. This is basically reflected in the emboldened aspects of the excerpt above. There, the writer presents the IPOB protesters as very determined in bringing about the actualisation of their goal. The choice of the verbal groups "are insisting", "would not deter" and "agitating" all point to the determination of IPOB protesters. The semantic inference here is that the "radicalness" of the separatist ideology can be further explained in relation to the stretch of utterance that comes before the emboldened part. It is said that two people died as the result of the clash that ensued out of the protest; yet the IPOB members register their willingness not to give up on their demand.

#### **4.3.1.2 Subtle separatist**

Subtle separatist is a type of separatist ideological movement that intends to achieve independence in a mild non-confrontational means. The approach intends to positively present the Igbo as law abiding citizens. The subtle separatist ideology intends to achieve self-governance in a non-violent manner. The ideology intends to present the protesters as a law abiding people. Instances of subtle separatist ideology are exemplified below:

#### **Excerpt 38:**

You don't shoot at people who have no fire arms  
but **only** have **placards** on them

*Vanguard Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 3*

Excerpt 38 presents IPOB members as a non-violent group. The grammatical choice of the adjectival clause ‘who have no fire arms’ as a qualifier element for the nominal group headed by ‘people’ qualifies the protesters as a peaceful group. The qualifier ‘who have no fire arms’ is a container of attitude reflecting the predisposition of the group. The group went with their placards to register their grievances. This is a peaceful protest and carrying placards is a non-violent way of protesting. This is acceptable all over the world as a peaceful protest. Then federal agents have no right to shoot at lawful people who lawfully carry out their duties. Carrying placards is not a crime and the Nigerian police have no right to arrest and intimidate IPOB members. Carrying placards shows that IPOB members are non-violent and peace-loving.

The use of the adversative conjunction ‘but’ here is significant as it shows the contrast between the reported violent reaction of the security operatives and the peaceful procession of the protesters. The lexical choices “only” and “placards” tacitly express the ideological posture of IPOB members which is that IPOB members are non-violent. The lexical choice “only” is tactically used to express a subtle comparison between the actions of the protesters and the federal agents who supposedly attacked them. The later came with guns, tear gas canisters, armour tanks and other weapons of mass destruction to attack a peaceful demonstration carried out by IPOB members. The federal agents shot, arrested and killed easterners who went on their fundamental rights. The peaceful protest is a pointer to subtle separatist ideology. Other instances of the ideology are exemplified below:

**Excerpt 39:**

The protesters, who were **non-violent alleged** that the Federal Government was determined to **relegate** Igbos to **the background, vowing that no amount of intimidation and harassment could dampen their spirits**

***The Sun Wed, Oct 21, 2015***

The lexical modifier “non-violent” also explicates the subtle separatist ideology. The tactical deployment of the term “non-violent” and the equative verb ‘were’ shows that IPOB members are not favourably disposed to engaging in any form combat with federal agents. Their intention is to have a peaceful political change which is the actualisation of the Biafran nation. The subtle separatist ideology calls



for peaceful negotiation so that violence and shedding of blood will be avoided. The quest for political change arises from the actions and inactions of the federal government of Nigeria. The action of the federal government is explicated in the lexical choice “relegated”. Easterners were allegedly being politically and socially discriminated against. In terms of appointment, the Igbo were perceived to be regarded as second class citizens and were marginalised. All these necessitated the quest for secession of easterners from Nigeria. It must be noted that the harassment and intimidation of protesters were perhaps strategies employed by the federal government to frustrate the quest for secession. Despite all these, Biafran protesters are determined to achieve their goals. The recent attacks and intimidations, instead of dampening the spirit of the protesters, ignited the feelings of nationalism, loyalty and patriotism in the protesters.

**Excerpt 40:**

We are **armless**, we have not harmed anybody and we owe nobody any apology for what we are doing. As Biafrans, we stand for **peace** and **justice** will reign.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14*

There is the use of the positive subject complementation ‘armless’ as well as the nominal choices “peace” and “justice” for self label. These lexical choices – “armless”, “peace” and “justice” explicate the subtle separatist ideology. The word “armless”, for instance, shows that IPOB protesters are without any destructive weapons. They carried nothing but placards which is acceptable in many parts of the world. To be armless means the state of not having any weapons and equipment that can kill, destroy and injure people. The protesters see themselves as civilians that should be protected. They are for peace and not war. This ideology which is based on the subtle separatist movement is averse to shedding of blood and confrontation of military men and women.

Despite the fact that IPOB members are without any arm, the Nigerian military and paramilitary see their protest as a threat to national peace and prosperity, and capable of causing social unrest and upheavals. The attack on the protesters is necessary in order to curb the spread of the protest to other regions in Nigeria. The excerpt below exemplifies the attack and counter-attacks of the military men and non-violent nature of the protesters.

**Excerpt 41:**

On whether they intend to launch a **counter-attack** against the Navy and the Police, he said they were still waiting **for directives** from the IPOB Directorate on their next line of action

***Vanguard Wed, Oct 7, 2015pg 3***

Excerpt 41 shows that Biafran protesters are subtle in their quest for self-governance. The spokesperson for the group did not assure the media that there would be counter-attack. Mr Okpa declines counter-attacks because he did not want the group to be tagged radicalists or terrorists. Waiting for directives shows that IPOB is an organised and structured group. The members in a general assembly take decisions for the group. This is the major reason that Mr Okpa cannot involve the general public on the next line of action. Although actions are taken against IPOB members, the group members remain non-violent. This action shows that IPOB is a non-violent group. The group believes in the fundamental human rights of every Nigerian. The fundamental rights are clearly stipulated in the nation's constitution. Therefore, the group should not be declared as a terrorist group because its actions are within the ambits of the stipulation of the constitution. It must be noted that waiting for directives shows the democratic nature of the group. In this contemporary world, violence should be avoided in the quest for self-governance. Unlike Boko Haram that preaches violence, IPOB is not violent. It is dully registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission. It has a constitution and executive officers. It can also be observed that the group should not be compared to other violent groups that preach terrorism.

**Excerpt 42:**

We want our **freedom**, that is why we are here. We are not comfortable with the Nigerian government, the intimidation, killing and all that; that is why we want our **freedom**. We feel very bad about his detention and it is affecting each and every one of us. We are not comfortable; we want to go," he said.

***Daily Sun Wed, Oct 21, 2015***

In excerpt 42, subtle separatist ideology is explicated in the lexical choice “freedom”. “Freedom” is repeated twice to show the importance of not only the word but the need to secede from Nigeria. Freedom, here, means the condition, right and state to be governed by oneself rather than imposition. By implication, the agitators are supposedly not free as they see themselves as being under the hegemony of the Nigerian state, and now, the intimidation and killing have ignited their need to be free.

#### 4.3.2 Pacifist ideology

Pacifist ideology is defined as the belief that war, or anything that can spur it such as protest, agitations, and demonstration is bad and should not be ventured into. It again captures the idea that engaging in war or any act capable of causing war is not worth pursuing. This, invariably, suggests that actions such as chanting of war songs in protests or social unrests, violent demonstrations, and other acts capable of causing social disillusionments are not to be undertaken. The excerpts below exemplify the pacifist ideology in the discourse of the Biafran protest:

##### Excerpt 43:

The governors from the Eastern States **must** come **together, reason together and dialogue** on the demand for a Biafran state. It is painful that majority of the protesters were not born before the war. Those who suffered as a result of the civil war and alive today will likely think twice before venturing into another war....

Excerpt 43 advocates a democratic method of resolving national crises and differences. This is the basic tenet of the pacifist ideology. The pacifist ideology is concerned with non-violent ways of resolving political or cultural differences. In excerpt 43, the tactical use of the collocate “come together and reason together” suggests that the governors from the region must think and make judgements based on the practical facts before them on why they think the government of the day has failed them. The collocates “come together” suggest that governors in the region irrespective of their parties’ affiliation must see themselves as one and champion the cause of the Biafran nation instead of plunging the country into social unrests and an eventual war.

The nation Nigeria has been battling a lot of issues such as terrorism, insurgency, tribal conflicts, kidnapping and other crimes. It is therefore necessary to avoid issues that would aggravate the current situation.

The tactical use of the verb “dialogue” shows that there should be formal talks among governors from the regions. The talk should centre on the demand for self-governance by the easterners. After the dialogue by the governors from the regions, easterners within the region and diaspora must meet to “reason together” on the need for self-governance. “Dialogue” and “reason together” involve two steps, namely, consultation and consolidation. These steps are accommodated by governments all over the world and are preferred to confrontation or war. The grammatical modal “must” in excerpt 43 suggests that it is necessary for the agitators to conduct themselves within the ambit of the constitution. This implies obligation and necessity. The deployment of “must” in the discourse suggests that the agitators must be civil in their protest. The excerpt below expatiates why the protesters must conduct themselves in a civil manner.

**Excerpt 44:**

The Igbo youths have the rights to express themselves and to demand for their needs. But it **must** be done in a **civil manner**. The **burning of Nigerian flags and the tearing of Nigerian passport** are **violation of the law of the land**. No government will fold its arms when a group of people felt aggrieved and take laws into their hands. From state to state, the agitators **can** march **peacefully** to the State Assembly with **their demands for separate states**. They **could** hold meetings with their state representatives at the National Assembly with a **written letter demanding for the state of Biafra**. **It is those that are alive that can benefit from the demand for a new Biafra**. **To confront the state with the security agents in a violent manner could be termed felony**.

Excerpt 44 explicates pacifist ideology. The ideology tactically calls for peaceful resolution of differences between the Federal Government of Nigeria and pro-Biafra protesters. The writer frowns at the burning of the Nigerian flag and tearing of Nigerian passports. This is a clear violation of the constitution of Nigeria.

This act is capable of generating social unrest among the opposing groups. What is perceived is that it is better to be democratic than to be violent. This is the opinion and tenet of the pacifist ideology. Excerpt 45 further substantiates the peaceful ways of resolving differences among the opposing groups.

**Excerpt 45:**

We **must** call all the parties involved in the campaign for Biafran state to come to the negotiating table as a matter of necessity before things get out of hands

*The Nation, Sunday, November 15, 2015*

Excerpts 44 and 45 aptly reflect pacifist ideology. The writers see the pursuance of peace by everyone in the country a necessity. This is first reflected in the first line where the writers choose the modal auxiliary, the deontic “must” to emphasise the need for the Eastern states to rise up to the responsibility of ensuring the sustenance of peace by “coming together”, “reasoning together” and “dialoguing”. In Lines 6 and 7, the writer again uses the deontic “must” to invite the “Biafra” agitators to tow the path of peace in bearing their grievances. The three instances where the deontic “must” is used, not breaching the peace of the nation is projected as a civic obligation that those clamouring for the sovereign state of Biafra must uphold.

The writer in excerpt 46 evokes the image of horror the Igbo suffered during the civil war where starvation and hunger led to the death of over one million Igbo persons (Falola and Heaton, 2009). The writer presents the agitators as inexperienced and naive, having no first-hand experience of the civil war and consequently, the setbacks it brought to the Igbo people. The writer avers that **“Those who suffered as a result of the civil war and alive today will likely think twice before venturing into another war.”** He instead advocates for peaceful talks which he presupposes would have stopped or not made for the 1967 Civil war in the first place if the *Aburi Accord* had been honoured by both the Nigerian government and the then Eastern Region. He therefore vehemently rejects the idea of a war as an option in the fight for self-governance.

It can be said that pacifist ideology preaches peace. The ideology is focused on the pursuance of social and political tranquillity in Nigeria. Thus, chanting of war songs, confrontation with the military men and women are tantamount to incivility

which will ruin the quest for self-government and invariably another civil war which Nigerians are not prepared for.

#### 4.3.3 Liberationist ideology

The liberationist ideology is first hinged on the notion that a particular group within society is not favourably treated. The ideology as represented in the reports is captured in the idea of wanting the perceived disadvantages experienced by the agitators and the Igbo generally to be removed. The agitators want to cease to be part of the Nigerian nation as they claim to want to be liberated. Freedom is paramount to them as well as the freedom of their supposed leader, Nnamdi Kanu who has been arrested and unlawfully detained (since he has been granted bail by a law court). This action is a clear violation of Nnamdi Kanu's fundamental human right. The following excerpt exemplifies the libertarian ideology in the discourse of the pro-Biafra protest:

##### Excerpt 46:

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Orlu zone yesterday held a peaceful protest and called on the Federal Government **to immediately release** the detained Nnamdi Kanu, Director of Radio Biafra, who was arrested last week by security agencies. The Zonal Spokesman, Mr Okpa Ignatius called on the security agencies **to release** the Director of Radio Biafra, Mazi Nnamdi Okpa from detention **without delay**

*The Sun October 24, 2015 page 7*

##### Excerpt 47:

Biafra started because of **injustices and marginalisation** of Ndigbo in Nigeria. These injustices triggered the Civil War of 1967-1970. Those of us who went to that war were very much convinced that we were fighting to **liberate** our people and we were prepared to give it our all. It did not matter whether we died in the process.

**The Vanguard Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20**

The liberationist ideology is hinged on freedom – physical, emotional, psychological and so on. Nnamdi Kanu is detained because of igniting the quest for a sovereign Biafran State. The call made by IPOB spokesperson is to demand for the immediate release of the leader. The tactical use of 'immediately' is socially

constituted because the continued detention of Nnamdi Kanu will prolong the protest as IPOB members will continue to protest not only the detention of their leader but also the apparent violation of their fundamental human rights.

Freedom is the major tenet of the liberationist ideology. Freedom is lexicalised as “release” and “liberate” in excerpts 46 and 47 respectively. In excerpt 46, Mr Okpa calls for the release of Kanu from “detention without delay” so as not to infuriate IPOB members. The continued detention of Kanu by Nigerian security agencies is uncalled for. Excerpts 46 and 47 respectively state the reasons for the actions and inactions of Kanu in particular and Biafra in general.

It can be observed from excerpt 47 that injustices and marginalisation are the major causes of the IPOB protest. Right from 1960, the easterners have been relegated to the background. They are regarded as second class citizens. The injustice and maladministration led to the 1967 civil war in Nigeria. Excerpt 47 exemplifies the skewed political appointments.

**Excerpt 48:**

A chieftain of Ohaneze ndigbo, Chief Ozo Anaekwe has blamed President Muhammadu Buhari’s marginalisation of Ndigbo in his few months in office for the renewed agitation for Biafra by the members of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast and South-south parts of the country.

In Excerpt 48, by referring to the “injustice, marginalisation and unfair treatment” as “perceived”, the writer indicates that they are rather unreal, a position that reflects dissident ideology. The writer also uses expressions such as “funny characters”, “misguided elements”, “co- travellers”, “their so-called Biafra Republic” and “the London-based illegal Biafra Radio” to reflect his dissent for the idea of the sovereign state of Biafra.

**Excerpt 49:**

Look at the way President Muhammadu Buhari has made **his appointments**, it is purely skewed against Ndigbo and even at this age, I still feel I should fight again if that can remedy the situation. I want to see Biafra in Igboland before I die. They should give us Biafra and that will settle

***The Sun, November 15, 2015***

It can be observed that skewed political appointments led to the Biafran protest. The Buhari -led government did not appoint easterners in the key political portfolio. Easterners are supposedly regarded as second-class citizens.

The recourse to the Biafra war of 1967 – 70 was a result of the skewed political appointments characterised by nepotism and ethnicity at that time. The easterners were relegated to the background in the first ten years of Nigeria’s independence. These actions led to the Nigerian civil war. Though at this time, an easterner, Dr Nnamdi Azikwe, was Prime Minister, the region was dissatisfied by political appointments leading to the first coup led by another easterner, Major General Nzeogwu in 1966. Subsequently, these skewed appointments, which was also carried into the Nigerian Army made Major General Ojukwu then to declare Biafra as a sovereign state. Some easterners who witnessed the Biafra war still felt the need to engage in another fight because the vision was not actualised.

By saying “[t]hose of us who went to that war were very much convinced that we were fighting to liberation our people..”, Chief Chukwu is asking for the Ndigbo to be “liberated” from the “Nigerian” government from whose hands the Ndigbo have suffered “injustices” and “marginalisation”. Chief Chukwu uses “we” and “them” to show that the Igbos are the victimised who need to be liberated and the “Nigerian” government is the actor or agent of victimisation from whom the Igbos are seeking liberation. In excerpt 49, the Nigerian government (they) is called on to give “us” (the Ndigbo) a sovereign state.

**Excerpt 50:**

He (the Director of Information, MASSOB, Mr Uchenna Madu) said, “we will continue to protest until his (Kanu’s) release. The protests continue. The condition is that he must be released. A court has granted him bail and we have fulfilled the bail condition but the DSS is frustrating all the moves we made.

In Line 2 of excerpt 50, the inclusive “we” in “we will continue to protest until his release” used by the Director of Information, MASSOB reflects the oneness in the demand of MASSOB members, which is to seek the release of their leader. They demonstrate solidarity with Nnamdi Kanu who is actually an IPOB leader, even though MASSOB and IPOB defer on a number of issues, they still demonstrate



solidarity in propagating the release of Nnamdi Kanu and by extension, the secession of Biafra. Although MASSOB and IPOB have different issues, they still believed that Nnamdi Kanu was illegally detained and his release is the only condition to end the continuous protests. “The condition is that he must be released” shows that IPOB members are determined to fight for the freedom of their leader. The continuous detention of Nnamdi Kanu suggests that it is the eastern region that is detained because Kanu has become a metonymy for the region. It is therefore an ethnic assault for Kanu to be detained. Hence, the freedom of Nnamdi Kanu and that of the Igbo by extension is situated within the liberationist ideology.

It must be said that liberationist ideology believes in the freedom of people. People should not be coerced to do what they do not like and government should not deprive them of their rights, freedom, behaviour and many others. Nnamdi Kanu is detained for kicking against the law of the land. Despite meeting enormous bail conditions, Kanu still remains in detention.

#### **4.3.4 Dissentist ideology**

Dissentist ideology is used to capture or show strong difference of opinion on a particular subject, especially about an official suggestion or plan or a popular belief. In this case, dissentist ideology refers to the show of disagreement with the idea of creating a sovereign state of Biafra. It is also used to capture the notion that the idea being projected by a group of people is of no value. Therefore, it should be discarded.

#### **Excerpt 51:**

Biafra...was the idea of the late Ikemba Nnewi Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, who felt that he had no choice than to pull his people out of Nigeria in 1967 because of **perceived injustice, marginalisation and unfair treatment.**

*The Nation, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2015Pg 17*

Excerpt 51 reflects the dissentist ideology. The writer shows a strong disapproval for the agitation of a Biafra state. The pragmatic implication for the use of “perceived” injustice is that it is not only associated with the Igbo but all other ethnic groups in Nigeria. The agitators have as one of the bases for their agitation “injustice and unfair treatment” by the “Nigerian” government as shown in:

**Excerpt 52:**

...But, unfortunately, some **funny characters who knew nothing about the origin of Biafra are today making noise all over the place, claiming that they want to resuscitate Biafra. Only those living in a fool's paradise believe that they can resuscitate Biafra.** To resuscitate Biafra for what? To fight another civil war? With who? It cannot be with Nigeria because the country has gone past that stage of fighting itself.

*The Nation, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2015 Pg 17*

From excerpt 52, it can be observed that a different view concerning the quest for the sovereign state of Biafra is expressed. The speaker here does not believe in the resuscitation of the Biafra state because he sees Biafra as an attempt to fight another civil war. To fight a civil war in this contemporary time is very disastrous. The questions in the excerpt are meant to question the rationality of IPOB members and protesters. “To resuscitate Biafra for what? To fight another civil war? With who?” are questions that call for deep reflection. Easterners need to deliberate on what the purpose of resuscitating Biafra is. The questions depict dissident ideology as the writer does not align with the ideology behind resuscitating Biafra. There is the use of terms of reference like “funny characters” to describe those who call for Biafra, with the claim that they live in a “fool’s paradise”. The writer finally warns Biafra agitators to retrace their steps so as not to incur the wrath of the present government. The protesters should learn lessons from other groups that threaten the peace and stability of Nigeria. Dissident ideology is further exemplified in the excerpts below.

**Excerpt 53:**

Like others (MASSOB and BZM), its (IPOB’s) agenda is not clear beyond seeking a sovereign state of Biafra. What I do not understand is why they are so crazy about having **their so-called Biafra Republic.**

What can be observed in excerpt 53 is that the writer is perplexed on the reason for the quest for Biafra Republic by the easterners. Biafra has come and gone. It is irrational to resuscitate Biafra again. In fact, the writer tactically uses the modal adjective “crazy” to show his degree of disapproval. The use of “crazy” shows that the protest of the quest for Biafra Republic is annoying and insensible. The writer

could not fathom the rationale behind the quest for Biafra Republic. The writer while demonstrating dissident ideology warns that the protesters would be treated like terrorists – Boko Haram insurgents and Niger Delta Militants.

**Excerpt 54:**

In the last few weeks, IPOB sympathisers have been marching through some Southeast and Southsouth states, **whipping up sentiments** for a Biafra state. Their action was sparked by the detention of Nnamdi Kanu, Director of the London-based illegal Biafra Radio.

From excerpt 54, it can be observed that the writer shows dissident ideology with the tactical deployment of the collocate “whipping up sentiments for a Biafra state”. By sentiment, the writer means feelings, supports, and affiliations that are considered irrational and silly. To the writer, irrationality is demonstrated by the way protesters marched throughout the South-East and South-South geopolitical zones, as well as other regions in Nigeria, soliciting sympathy from the people. Although the protest was ignited by the arrest and detention of Nnamdi Kanu, the writer still could not fathom the rationale behind the quest for Biafra Republic. Biafra Republic is a dead issue and easterners should not bring up another sentiment that will lead to social unrest and peradventure civil war.

**Excerpt 55:**

The Biafra project is not popular among easterners, save for some **misguided elements**, who are ready to swear by Kanu, as some did by the late Ojukwu some 48 years ago.

Furthermore, excerpt 55 demonstrates dissident ideology. The writer asserts that the quest for Biafra is unpopular among Easterners. The lexical items “not popular” suggest that the quest does not receive the people’s supports. The protesters are perhaps doing this because of their selfish interests. The writer of this excerpt calls Nnamdi Kanu and his supporters “misguided elements” to express his dissident views. What this suggests is that despite the havoc that wrecked the eastern region in 1967, the easterners have not learnt from past mistakes.

### **Excerpt 56:**

Kanu's cry for a Biafra state is taking **ethnic jingoism** too far. There is nothing like Bini nation, Yoruba nation, Hausa nation, Igbo nation, Okun nation, Ijaw nation, Itsekiri nation, Nupe or kanuri nations. There is only one nation state to which we all belong and that is **Nigeria**. Why then do some people want to tear the societal fabric? Biafra is an idea which time has gone; that is if it was ever an idea in the first place. The earlier Kanu and his **co-travellers** know this the better.

*The Nation, Thursday, November 19, 2015*

In Excerpt 56, the writer reflects dissident ideology showing an avowed disapproval of the agitation for a Biafra state. The writer calls the agitation for Biafra republic, ethnic jingoism because there is only one nation-state. This nation-state is called Nigeria. Loyalty and patriotism to a Nigeria nation should supersede any other loyalties. Belonging to the Nigeria nation should be as paramount as belonging to Bini, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Okun, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Nupe or kanuri nations.

The excerpt shows that the writer openly disapproves the agitation for Biafra Republic. To the writer, Biafra has come and gone and it is unreasonable for any individual under any guise to resuscitate the issue. The writer opines that Nigerians all belong to one indivisible nation. It is a tragedy for any individual to cause social unrest in the name of agitation of any sovereign nation.

The use of rhetorical questions in excerpt 52 is deployed to query why some people want to cause trouble in a volatile nation. "Why then do some people want to tear the societal fabric?" shows that the writer disapproves the agitation of the IPOB members and protesters. The question queries the protest and why some misguided people are bent on fomenting trouble in a volatile Nigerian state. The writer regards the act as being responsible for causing political and social unrests in Nigeria.

#### **4.3.5 Indifferentist ideology**

Schism is used to capture the ideology of upholding a different view to others in a group where members are considered to have ideas and views in unison. This could present different views as alternatives to a national issue. The ideology suggests that there are two groups who hold tenaciously to their ideologies. Each of these groups

considers its ideology as superior. In the data, it is observed that a group sees others as deviants because of their own views. In the Biafra protest, the South-south sees the protest as an infringement on their rights and an invasion of their land. The south-south region of Nigeria comprises Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers. These states see the protest on their land as an infringement. The following excerpts exemplify schist ideology:

**Excerpt 57:**

The South-South nationalities said, “We **will not allow any inch of the land** of the **ethnic nationalities** mentioned above and other lands of the South South to be part of the **ill-thought-out enterprise**.”... “We call for a halt to demonstrations for Biafra on our land henceforth as it touches on the collective sensibilities of our people and could provoke ethnic crisis. We are not only surprised but shocked that Igbos who returned to Nigeria after **the fall of Biafra** in January 15, 1970 with tales of woes and horrors can talk about Biafra,” they asserted.

What can be observed from the excerpt is that the South-South states disassociate themselves from “the so-called ill-thought Biafra Republic”. In 1967, both the South-East and South-South regions were regarded as the eastern part of the nation. However, perspectives have changed since then. From the excerpt, it can be noted that the Biafra protest is called an “ill-thought out enterprise”. This shows the schist ideology. The reason is that the Biafra protest has perhaps come to be conceived as an ethnic agenda. The agenda which started in 1967 and ended in January 15th, 1970 should not be resuscitated. The south-south states see it as an infringement on their land. The south-south states are quick to warn the protesters to desist from their land as such protests could lead to ethnic-jingoistic wars.

Indifferentist ideology is projected through the use of negation expressed in the verbal group “will not allow” in the excerpt above. The South-South states express their detachment from the agitations of some eastern agitators who clamour for the sovereign state. The detachment is further shown in the description of the Biafra protesters’ objective by the South-South nationalities. By describing the Biafra protesters’ objective as “ill-thought-out enterprise”, the South-South nationalities clearly show their disaffiliation and disposition towards the Biafran agenda.

The ‘us’ and ‘them’ ideological dichotomy is quite obvious in the use of deitic expressions such as ‘we’, ‘our’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ as used in the extract. By implication, the south-south is trying to be distant from the agitation which they were unable to do in the 1967 Biafra War. They make it clear that they are not part of Biafra. It has been argued (see Raji and Abejide, 2013) that part of what led to the war was the discovery of enormous oil deposit in the South-south, which resulted in several areas of the South-south region being battlegrounds for the war between the Nigerian Army and the Biafran Army during the Civil war. It is therefore not surprising that they try to isolate themselves from the Eastern region despite their proximity to the East so that they would perhaps not be pawns in another war in Nigeria.

#### **4.3.6 Repressionist ideology**

This ideology is concerned with the way people and individuals are controlled through force. It is also an attempt to act within a particular principle or law which could be to defend or protect a nation, group or individual. Excerpts exemplifying repressionist ideology include the following.

##### **Excerpt 58:**

Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police Usman Gwary, in charge of Zone 9, has declared **categorically** that the police are **ready to battle** the Movement for Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB)

*The Nation, Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 42*

Excerpt 58 shows that the Nigerian police have the directive to control people’s activities and behaviours. The police declare that they are battle ready for the protesters who are allegedly going about the protest peacefully. For instance, in excerpt 58, the use of the collocation “ready to battle” shows that the police are ready to go violent on the protesters. Apart from this clampdown on the protesters, IPOB and MASSOB members are allegedly chased around like criminals as shown in excerpt 59. It is saddening to note that the Nigerian government in the contemporary world still engages in such despicable act.

**Excerpt 59:**

Members of Movement for the actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, (MASSOB) in Onitsha, Anambra State have said that **the clampdown** on its members by President Muhamadu Buhari would not silence the movement until the Biafra State is actualised.

*The Sun Wed. Sep. 16, 2015, Pg 10*

From excerpt 59, the deployment of the lexical item “clampdown” shows that the Nigerian government is repressivist in its attitude to handling the protest. The sudden action by the Nigerian police to stop a peaceful and non-violent demonstration is perceived as appalling in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The “clampdown” involves the use of force to disperse protesters through several means including the use of force-teargas canisters and other military weapons. This is expatiated in excerpt 26 below

**Excerpt 60:**

MASSOB Deputy Director of Information, Mazi Chris Mocha, stated this yesterday in Onitsha while speaking with journalists. His words, “Buhari cannot stop us from the actualisation of a sovereign state of Biafra even if he sends **the entire security operatives** in the country to the South-East and South-South geo-political zones.”

*The Sun Wed. Sep. 16, 2015 Pg 10*

The hyperbolic expression “the entire security operatives” suggests the magnitude of attention government pays to the protesters. This also suggests the repressivist ideology in the action of the federal government. It must be noted that repressivist ideology aims to control the activities of people forcefully. Excerpt 61 decries this action of the government.

**Excerpt 61:**

“Tell me a country where non-violent freedom agitators are **chased around the way** MASSOB is. It **is not done anywhere**. But that **cannot deter us**.”

*The Sun, Wed. Sep. 16, 2015 Pg 10*

Excerpt 61 suggests that protesters are “chased around” like criminals. They are repressively attacked by government security operatives. The security operatives

are the Nigerian police, Civil Defence Corps, and Nigerian army. These federal security operatives are agents of government repressive ideology.

#### **4.4. Lexicalisation and grammaticalisation in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests**

This section analyses the lexicalisation and grammaticalisation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests in selected Nigerian newspapers. The analysis begins with lexicalisation and proceeds to grammaticalisation. Lexicalisation, according to Halliday (1994), is the use of words to express a concept. It is otherwise called ‘wording’. There exists over-lexicalisation (over wording), relexicalisation (rewording) and underlexicalisation (under wording). Grammaticalisation focuses on transitivity choices, modality, substitution, pronominalisation, clause complex and interdiscursivity. Now, let us examine each of these concepts in selected Nigerian newspapers.

##### **4.4.1. Lexicalisation in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

Lexicalization is concerned with the use of words in the expression of concepts according to context (Oyeleye and Osisanwo, 2013). Lexicalisation is also concerned with the meaning, structure and history of words (Ezeife, 2014). There are different approaches to lexicalization according to the models of grammar; some include the traditional approach, cognitive approach, historical-philological approach, (post)-generativist approach, (neo)-generativist transformational approach, systemic functionalist approach and so on (Cruise, 1995; Allwood, 1999). In this study, our notion of lexicalization is hinged on Systemic Functional Linguistics.

The Systemic-Functional approach to the study of lexicalisation is pivotal for the understanding of the relationship between language and context. Lexis is a social phenomenon and is manifested at phonological, lexico-grammatical and discourse levels. Phonology, for instance, deals with the manipulation and exploitation of sounds to produce lexical and grammatical choices. The combination of lexical and grammatical choices helps to convey meanings, and meaning is context-dependent. Lexicalisation focuses on the way a word is used to express a particular concept which can be over-expressed (over-lexicalisation), under-expressed (under-lexicalisation) and



reworded (relexicalisation) (Fairclough, 1989 and Halliday, 1978). In this study, we utilise insights from Halliday's Systemic Functionalist Approach. The approach to lexicalisation helps in the comprehension and understanding of words to express a particular concept. It can be said that lexicalisation examines the structure of words, relationships between/among words, and the image which words might convey in the minds of speakers and hearers. It also has to do with the meaning potential of words according to context.

#### **4.4.1.1 Modal words**

Modality is the speaker's attitude towards the possibility of his utterance (Palmer, 2001: 43). Modality is the speaker's judgment of the probabilities or the obligations involved in what s/he says (Halliday, 1976). Modality manifests at lexical and grammatical levels. In this section, our attention is focused on the lexical level. At the lexical level, we intend to examine the following: modal nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.

##### **4.4.1.1.1 The use of modal nouns to show speaker's attitude**

Modal nouns are nominal elements that express the attitude of a speaker to a particular proposition. Modal nouns, through tactical deployment, have the capacity to reveal a writer's expectations and intentions. In the excerpt, it would be observed that in many instances, it was not intended that blame should be apportioned; but there are trickles of it in the reports which makes it look like there is a subtle support for the agitation of the pro-Biafra protesters. This is shown in the choice of modal nouns. It can be said that modal nouns categorically reveal not just the attitudes of the secessionists but the stance of the news writers. Instances of modal nouns are exemplified below.

#### **Excerpt 62:**

**MASSOB, the IPOB and the Biafra Zionist Movement, BZM** have expressed optimism that **the much desired Biafra Republic** would soon be restored or actualised

*Vanguard*, October 7, 2015 Pg 35

Excerpt 62 above reveals the attitude of the writer. Topicalising the groups in the excerpts foregrounds not only the importance placed on the groups but reveals the attitude of the writer also. The groups are perceived as being the most prominent ones at the forefront of the agitation for secession, though they are not the only groups agitating for the rights of the Igbo. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), as a case in point, was established as a secessionist group in 2004. Its leader, Nnamdi Kanu who has always made the headlines, was on several occasions arrested by Nigerian security agencies. IPOB protests in 2015 allegedly paralysed socio-economic activities in the South-East and South-South regions. The group was called the true secessionist group after the failure of MASSOB because Nigerian government allegedly bribed its leaders. The Biafra Zionist Movement is another secessionist group that fought for the realisation of the Republic of Biafra. Although the group is not as renowned as the other two groups, the similitude in orientation and ideology makes the Nigeria media and government reckon with the group.

The Biafra secessionist groups have been seen to constitute a threat to the peace, stability and growth of the nation Nigeria. This made the federal government to arrest and chase after members of the secessionist groups. Consider the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 63:**

**The clampdown, incessant arrest, detention, prosecution of unarmed and non-violent agitators for the state of Biafra should end**

***The Vanguard, November 15th, 2015***

Excerpt 63 above showed that the arrest of members of the Biafra secessionist groups by the federal government is unlawful and condemnable. The writer of this article called Biafran protesters, non-violent. This shows that the protest was non-violent and peaceful. Although the protests paralysed socio-economic activities, members of groups called it a peaceful one because no life was lost. The protest was peaceful until Nigerian security men and women began to clampdown on the protesters and dispersed them with the use of tear gas canisters. This reportedly resulted in the death of some of the protesters and this received national and international uproars. The police and army's dispersion of the protesters, in fact, brought the protesters into limelight and Nigerians from different geopolitical zones

began to pay keen attention to the activities of the group and federal government's actions. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 64:**

**The siege of protest** had raised a fresh consciousness, as the protesters looked very regimented and coordinated.

'The siege of protest' showed that the protests had gained popularity especially in the south-east and south-south region as protesters partook in the protest in large numbers. The intimidating nature of the turn-out of protesters probably made Nigeria security operatives intervene and disperse the lawful and peaceful protesters. The modal noun used here implies that the federal government needs to take urgent action to stop the protest because the number of protesters participating in the lawful and peaceful protest is disturbing in terms of their enormity. In order to stop the siege of the protest, the federal government decided to arrest the leaders of the protesters and declared the secessionists, terrorists. The arrest was declared as unlawful and illegal because the protesters had not violated any fundamental human rights. The arrest of Nnamdi Kanu and other leaders of the groups received national uproar by many Nigerians, particularly activists. The government has been reported to have infringed on their rights by arresting them. The next excerpt is a call for the unconditional release of the protesters arrested by the Nigerian police.

**Excerpt 65:**

Protesters in Rivers, Delta, and Anambra demand an  
**unconditional release of Biafra boss**  
*Vanguard* October 21, 2015

The nominal group "unconditional release" reveals what is permissible in Nigeria. Although it is always said in police parlance that "the police is your friend and bail is free", this expression is quite far from the truth because Nigerians pay a lot of money to be bailed. This is why it is perceived that the unconditional release of Nnamdi Kanu is non-negotiable. This excerpt mocks the Nigerian security system because Nigerians often go through difficult situations such as paying huge amounts of money to get bailed. It is highly lugubrious that a learned person like Nnamdi Kanu should go through a difficult process in order to get bail. The use of 'unconditional release of the Biafra boss' reveals the attitude of the writer to the Nigeria security

systems. The system needs total overhauling. It is not a surprise that the Acting President ordered the restructuring and overhauling of the system.

Modal nouns help to reveal the attitude of social actors represented in the reportage of the pro-Biafra protest. The secessionist groups and Nigerian government are the major players in the protests. The roles each player plays generate either positive or negative reactions.

#### **4.4.1.1.2. The use of modal verbs to express attitudes, emotions and ideologies**

Modal verbs are used to express attitudes, emotions and ideologies. In the discourse of the protest, modal verbs show the position and stance of a speaker. They reveal the position of a speaker in the discourse of Biafra. This is exemplified in the excerpts below.

##### **Excerpt 66:**

The protesters in Rivers State, who **stormed** Port Harcourt, were split into seven groups **appeared** peaceful, although, chanting war songs also called for the creation of the sovereign state of Biafra.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14*

In the excerpt above, the verbal elements “stormed” and “appeared” reveal the attitudes of the actors of the Biafra protests. They somewhat show modality. “To storm” has to do with attacking suddenly and violently. It refers to a sudden attack, control, and hijack of a particular thing without any prior notice. Also, this modal verb shows the anger and displeasure of the writer to the protest. The tactical use of “appeared” revealed that the protests were not peaceful because the protesters were chanting war and solidarity songs which disrupt the peace and tranquillity in the states. The “songs” showed that the protest was not peaceful. The ironic deployment of the modal verb “appeared” is to condemn the activities of the protesters. It must be said categorically that the writer ironically criticised the civility of the protesters for chanting war songs. The next excerpt revealed the attitudes of Nigerian police force to the protesters. The protesters were allegedly arrested, detained and molested.

##### **Excerpt 67:**

According to the CP, “there is nothing like Indigenous People of Biafra. Those people

constituted nuisance on the high way and that was why they **were picked**.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14*

The use of the verb element “picked” is to mitigate the effects of the arrest of the protesters. The CP knew that Nigerians would raise an eyebrow about the protest and this could cause social unrest if he uses the modal verb “arrested” because of the public perception of the force involved in arrests. Suffice it to say that the Nigerian Police Force had a reputation for corrupt practices and human rights abuse; they are also allegedly notorious for making illegal arrests. The use of the verbal element “picked” is reductionist and seems to portray the protesters as non-living things thereby reflecting the attitude of the CP to the protesters. To the CP, the protesters constitute nuisance and they cause social unrests which stampede social and economic activities in the south-south in particular and Nigeria in general. The use of “picked” here dehumanised the protesters and metaphorised them as misfits and miscreants. The next two excerpts showed how the protesters were arrested. They were bundled away and the arrest was devoid of the respect accorded to notable and law abiding Nigerians.

**Excerpt 68:**

On conducting a screening exercise on the suspects, 11 of the ring leaders were **bundled away** for interrogation and would possibly be prosecuted after investigation.

*The Punch, Tue. Sep. 8, 2015. Pg 4*

Excerpt 68 above showed how the pro-Biafra protesters were arrested. The arrest was not only unconstitutional but also inhuman. The protesters were denied bail. This is a clear infringement on their fundamental human rights. They were packed like sardine into the Nigerian Police Force’s bus. The people that were arrested are the leaders of the movement. This was a calculated attempt to discourage the protesters and end the protest abruptly. To be bundled away means to be fastened and held together. The word “bundle” reveals that the protesters were tied up and subjected to various degrading and inhuman treatment. The excerpt further showed that the protesters constitute nuisance to the Nigerian society. They were to be arrested by any means.

The next excerpt further showed the perceived malevolent acts of the Nigeria Police Force. Before they were bundled away into the police van, the police descended upon them heavily. The protesters were battered and assaulted by the police. This is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 69:**

They **were descended upon** and 12 of them were **mowed** down and many **injured**.

*The Sun* Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 27

The use of the impersonal passive “were descended upon” showed unequal power relations. The police represented the government. They were the privileged and armed. The protesters, on the other hand, were the less privileged. They were the armless and represented the majority who were civilians. The police arrived without being noticed and scattered the peaceful protests. Although the police were officially informed about the protest of the Biafra loyalists, the sudden intrusion which resulted in the arrest, dehumanisation and molestation of the Biafra protesters is uncalled for. The police were uninvited; thus, their intervention is unconstitutional and uncalled for. The arrests of 12 members of the group received public outcry from Nigerians because Nigerians knew that the protesters would be reprimanded without trial. The arrest without proper trial characterises the Nigerian legal prosecution system.

Apart from the arrests, many protesters were injured and manhandled by the police. The injuries range from major to minor. The injuries were sustained during the open confrontation with the police who descended on the protesters unnoticed. The confrontation was widely condemned by Nigerians and the outcome of the confrontation was the threats issued by the group against police confrontation. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 70:**

...Group **threatens** fire for fire over arrest

*The Sun*, Mon. Sep. 7, 2015. Pg 10

The arrests, prosecutions, and trials of 12 members were seen as an infringement on their rights by other group members. The modal adjective “fire for fire” shows that the pro-Biafra protesters were ready to defend themselves against the Nigerian police. The perceived attacks by the Nigeria police on defenceless and armless protesters have become quite recurrent, and it is seen as unthinkable and

unbearable by the protesters. Therefore, the protesters have decided to defend themselves, perhaps they would take laws into their hands. This action of the police is condemnable and barbaric in the twenty first century. The threat of fire for fire suggests that the pro-Biafra protesters have been pushed to the wall. They have been dehumanised, arrested and prosecuted. It must be noted that the unconstitutional arrests of the protesters attracted international outcry. That is why, perhaps, in order to blackmail the protesters, the Federal Government had to declare them a terrorist group. Declaring the protesters a terrorist group caused an uproar among Nigerian intelligentsia because Boko Haram has not been declared a terrorist group.

**Excerpt 71:**

The MASSOB Director of Information, Awka South region, Paul Obi-Okoye, disclosed this yesterday, in Onitsha, while *lamenting* the frustrations they were passing through over the safety of their members **being hounded** by security agents

*The Sun, September 21, 2016*

From excerpt 71, the MASSOB director of information lamented the incessant arrests of his members. They were not only arrested but also hounded by security agents like sardines. This is unacceptable because the protesters have every right to engage in peaceful protest. The protesters were not happy about the level of injustice suffered by the Ndigbo extraction. This was what caused the Nigerian civil war and yet the nation has not learnt its lesson. The protesters could not walk freely in their country because of security operatives who pursued, threatened and arrested them. They were hounded into police van like criminals. The protesters were dissatisfied by the injustice lavished on the Igbo. The next excerpt revealed the reason behind the pro- Biafra protests that paralysed socio-economic activities in the country.

**Excerpt 72:**

Biafra **started**, because of the injustices and marginalisation of Ndigbo in Nigeria. These injustices **triggered** the Civil War of 1967 to 1970.

*Vanguard, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

The sole remote and immediate cause of the pro-Biafra protest is basically injustice. Injustice caused the Nigerian civil war. Although the first coup was led by Kaduna Ezeogwu, majority of those that were killed were Hausa. The Hausa retaliated

after six months. While the Igbo saw this as retaliation, the Hausa called it a cleansing coup. The Igbo under the hegemony of their leader, Odumegwu Ojukwu, declared their region a republic. The action led to protracted civil war. The civil war lasted for thirty months. The Nigerian civil war remained indelible in the history and historiography of the nation.

The lexical investigation of modal nouns and verbs reveals the attitudes of participants in the protest and the immediate and remote cause of the protests. The protests were triggered by many factors – social, economic, political and historical. These factors could be traced to the ineptitude of the government of yesteryears and the current one.

#### **4.4.1.1.3 The use of modal adjectives to express attitudes and sentiments**

Modal adjectives are another lexical strategy used in the discourse of the pro-Biafra protests to explicate attitudes, feelings, emotions and sentiments. Modal adjectives describe events, situations and happenings. They are deployed in the discourse of the pro-Biafra protests to depict the extent of the clash between the Nigerian police and the protesters as well as the pervasive effects of the demonstration on the economy. The excerpts below exemplify the tactical deployment of modal adjectives in the pro-Biafra protests.

#### **Excerpt 73:**

It would appear that the dust raised by last August 30 **bloody** clash between members of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB and teams of Naval and Police personnel

*Vanguard, October 7, 2017*

The deployment of the modal adjective “bloody” showed that the clash was violent and brutal. The violence is the result of the open confrontation between the two opposing forces which led to the death of the protesters. Hundreds were injured and many protesters were killed. It also depicted that dangerous ammunitions were used by both sides. The security lapses, the level of high handedness and impunity in Nigeria were also brought to limelight. The clash is uncalled for and was condemned in its totality because the protesters were unarmed. They only carried placards and moved in unison on the streets to express their grievances and displeasure against



injustice leveled against them. The confrontation made the protesters to develop new tactics so as to actualize the Republic of Biafra. This is exemplified in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 74:**

MASSOB, IPOB, others have devised **new** tactics to actualise Biafra. MASSOB, the IPOB and the Biafra Zionist Movement, BZM have expressed **optimism** that **the much desired** Biafra Republic would soon be restored or actualised

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35*

The tactical deployment of modal adjectives – *new*, *optimism* and *the much desired* shows the attitude of the pro-Biafra protesters to the protest in the course of actualising the said Republic. The modal adjective “new” means that the old tactics have not yielded the required outcome, hence the need to employ a new one. The old tactics was violent and it led to the demise of many, mostly children. The new tactic is non-violent and democratic. It is in accordance with international laws. The laws have been used in Singapore, South Sudan, Belgium and others.

It can be concluded that modal adjectives are used to describe the protest, protesters, security men and women, and even government. It revealed the centrifugal attitudes of stakeholders. Modal adjectives are an analytical tool in expressing feelings, attitudes, and ideologies. It reveals the attention paid on the protest by security officials and media.

**4.4. 1.1.4. The use of modal adverbs to express attitudes and sentiments**

Adverbs generally are used to qualify a verb, an adjective and another adverb. In the discourse of the pro-Biafra protests, adverbs reveal the attitudes of the protesters and the media to the Biafra protests. It must be noted that protesters, security officials and the Nigerian media use adverbs to express their opinion, emotions and show their attitudes to the protest. The attitudes of the various actors could be positive, negative and ambivalent. Now let us exemplify modal adverbs in the excerpts below.

**Excerpt 75:**

Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police Usman Gwary, in charge of zone 9, has declared

**categorically** that the police are ready to battle the Movement for Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB)

*The Sun, October 7, 2015*

In excerpt 75, the police chief is determined to battle all the protesters who have decided to make the country ungovernable for the president. The police chief has gathered his men and artillery in order to battle members of MASSOB and IPOB. The decision to battle members of MASSOB and IPOB is without historical antecedents. In 1967, when Ojukwu declared the eastern region a republic, the army fought until the secession failed. The fight which was called a civil war in the annals of Nigeria history showed that the Nigerian army used all the strategies it had to win the war. It involved the use of weapons. However, the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protests are civil and that is why the Nigerian police was called upon to intervene and stop the protests. The collocative elements “battle ready” showed the alacrity of the Nigerian Police Force. The collocation aimed to send signals to members of MASSOB and IPOB to beware and stop disturbing the peace and tranquillity in Nigeria. The reasons why the Nigerian Police Force decided to fight members of MASSOB and IPOB are stated in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 76:**

Port Harcourt, the Rivers State Capital, was **literarily** shut down for several hours yesterday by members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB).

*The Sun, Wed, Oct 21, 2015*

The modal adverb “literarily” showed that the Rivers State capital has been derailed of peace and orderliness. The tactical use of “literarily” explained that all meaningful interactions are paralysed and economic activities stand still. This is because MASSOB and IPOB members have taken over the activities of Port-Harcourt. They have blocked all the roads that lead to the city. This act has made commuters to groan. This is the major reason the newspapers used “literarily”. Also, “literarily” means that all the newspapers relay the news. This is because Port-Harcourt is a metropolitan state. It is very strategic to the people of the South-south and South-west in particular and Nigeria in general. The protest started in Port-

Harcourt and it spread to other parts of the region and even to Lagos. The leader of IPOB, Kanu, was arrested and detained by the Nigerian Police. This arrest and detention aggravated the protest and many protesters trooped into the streets in anger. The demand for the immediate release of Nnamdi Kanu is exemplified below.

**Excerpt 77:**

We need him to be released to us **unconditionally**. The protest for now is peaceful, but we need freedom. We are armless, we have not harmed anybody and we owe nobody any apology for what we are doing. As Biafrans, we stand for peace and justice will reign.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14*

The modal adverb “unconditionally” tactically implicates the Nigerian police force. Over the years, the slogan “police are your friend” has been used. In actual sense, Nigerians pay huge amounts of money to get bailed on small issues. All the malevolent acts made Nigerians not to trust the Nigerian Police Force. The protesters were oppressed and victimised. The oppression and victimisation is unlawful because the protest is peaceful. The use of the prepositional phrase “for now’ revealed that the protest is peaceful for now. If there is any misdemeanour from the police, the protesters will rather go bloody. This is as a result of the unholy interference of the police. It must be noted that the modal adverb “unconditionally” further shows that bail is not free in Nigeria. Nigerians pay huge amount of money to get bailed, including a hectic process. This is against constitutional stipulation. Suspects should be released unconditionally after thorough investigation. In Nigeria, there is a high level of shoddy investigation and justice is sacrificed on the altar of ethnic and religious favouritism and prejudice.

It must be noted that protesters gave the reasons for the protests as poor representation and unequal treatments. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 78:**

Not only are we **poorly** represented in government, we are treated **beggarly**.

*The Sun, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

“Poorly represented” and “treated beggarly” suggest that the protesters feel they are being relegated to the background. This is not only of the fact that their

leaders only relocate to the region when elections are near and after election. They will disappear after elections. Not only this, in the appointments of ministers and permanent secretaries, the region perhaps feel they are being underrepresented. All these are responsible for the protests which have become a very serious issue for the government.

In conclusion, lexical modalities deployed in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests have revealed the immediate and remote causes of the protests, the unlawful arrests and detention of Nnamdi Kanu and the public outcry that greeted the arrest. It really revealed that the protesters justify their actions.

#### **4.4.2 Overlexicalisation and relexicalisation**

Overlexicalisation is otherwise known as overwording. It is the density of words in a particular domain. These words are pointers to ideologies (Halliday, 1978, Fairclough, 1992, Osisanwo 2011). Overlexicalisation is an overrepresentation of a particular concept by using varying degrees of words. Overrepresentation unmasks ideological inclinations and it expresses certain thematic preoccupations of a writer. Relexicalisation, on the other hand, is otherwise called rewording. Relexicalisation is when words generate new lexical elements to re-emphasise a concept (Halliday, 1978 and Fairclough, 1992). Osisanwo (2011) opines that re-lexicalisation is when new words serve as alternatives to the existing ones. The notion of alternative words has ideological underpinnings. In the discourse of the representation of the pro-Biafra protests, certain lexical items are overlexicalised and relexicalised. Overlexicalisation and relexicalisation are exemplified in the discourse below.

#### **Excerpt 79:**

Iloh said the current **agitation** for Biafra is wrong and that the **agitators** were not even ready. The large number of young people **agitating** shows just how much people believe in Biafra. What other factors fuelled this **agitation** for Biafra? Other factors that have fuelled **our agitation** for Biafra are the slavery...

*The Sun*, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20

In excerpt 79, “agitation” is overlexicalised. Agitation is the kind of protest, especially in public, that takes place in order to achieve a particular type of change. In the first sentence, the author situates the current agitation as against previous agitations that have disrupted the peace and tranquillity of the country. Such agitations are “Ali Must Go”, “Aba Women Riot”, and “Nigeria Fuel Subsidy Crises”. The use of “the current agitation” is untimely because the nation is now united more than it was in 1967. Iloh, in the excerpt, lambasted the Biafran agitators, observing that they were not ready. The agitation causes distractions and Nigerians should frown at the protests.

The second sentence of the excerpt showed public avowal of the protests. The large turnout included youths who were not born between 1967 and 1970. The youths who comprise seventy percent of the population have represented the general opinion of the easterners. The belief in Biafra is a reflection of the general opinion of the region. The agitation is as a result of injustice and prejudice levelled against the region. Among all the geopolitical zones, the eastern region has only five states. The youths have no other options than to express their dissatisfaction to Nigerians. This is because they were marginalised. The lexical items “agitation” and “agitating” showed that the protest is an avowal. It is a reflection of collective wishes of the easterners.

**Excerpt 80:**

The **clamour** for the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) made up of majorly youths who only heard about the entity called Biafra has increased in recent times in proportion to the level of impoverishment and disillusionment of the South-eastern Nigerian masses

***The Nation, Thurs. Nov. 19, 2015***

In this excerpt, “agitation” is relexicalised as “clamour”. A clamour is a public complaint or cry made by people about a dissatisfied state or condition. The agitation is synonymised as clamour. The clamour for the actualisation of the Biafran Republic showed an apparent uproar. The easterners were dissatisfied with the current socio-political situations in Nigeria. These were the major reasons that made Odemekwu

Ojukwu to declare eastern region as a republic. Ojukwu declared the eastern region as Biafra Republic. This action led to a 30-month civil war in Nigeria. The war was one of the deadliest one ever fought in Africa. The tactical use of clamour is to mitigate the socio-political effects of the agitation. Agitation may suggest social unrest. However, clamour mitigates the socio-political, economic and ideological effects of such a word. In the last two excerpts, there is the tactical use of agitation to overlexicalise the importance of the agitation. This is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 81:**

Biafra **agitation** shows Nigeria is fragile, says  
Oyegun

*The Nation, Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 42*

**Excerpt 82:**

President of Igbo Question Movement, Ben  
Onyechere, has described **the agitation** for an  
independent Biafra State as a blackmail against the  
Igbo

*The Nation. Mon. Jan. 18, 2015*

In the two excerpts above, the lexical item “agitation” is repeated. This showed that agitation assumes a central focus in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. Although there are diverse definitions and opinions on the essence of the protest, what can be inferred from all is that the protest shows the fragility of Nigerian nation.

It can be seen from the first excerpt above that the threat of secession by the easterners is a pointer to the fact that Nigeria is not united. Despite the unity in diversity preached in every corner of the country, Nigeria is still on the precipice of another civil war. This is because if the easterners are allowed to secede, all other regions or ethnic group for that matter will also demand for secession, leading ultimately to chaos. This, in a way, shows how fragile and volatile the country has become over the years.

This section has examined relexicalisation and over-lexicalisation of “agitation” in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. “Agitation” is overlexicalised in the discourse of the protest. This is because the protest is seen as a

threat to the unity of the nation Nigeria. Words like “clamour”, “demonstration”, “protests”, “uproar” are used to relexicalise “agitation” for Biafra Republic.

#### **4.5 Grammaticalisation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest**

section analyses the grammatical choices deployed in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. Here, we first examine transitivity choices in the discourse and later move to grammatical modality and cohesive elements. Cohesive elements such as substitution, pronominalisation and so on are examined in the text in this section as well as clause complexes. Topicalisation and nominalisation also receive attention here. All these help to unravel the ideological inclinations in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests.

##### **4.5.1 Transitivity choices**

In this section, we focus on the transitivity choices deployed in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests in selected Nigerian newspapers. The transitivity choices are significant because they reveal the different processes, participants and circumstances employed by news magazines in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. The identified processes include material, mental, verbal, behavioural, existential and relational processes.

##### **4.5.1.1 Material process**

The material process is a process of action. It is explicated in the verbs of “doing” and “happening”. It is concerned with “who does what to whom and why”. It is a process that focuses on a change in the external world. The participants in the material process include actors, goals, and recipients. Instances of material process in the protests are discussed below.

##### **4.5.1.1.1 Participants of the material process in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

Participants in the material process include the following: actors, goals, recipients and range or scope. The actors are the doers of an action or the person that

carries out a particular action. Goals are the participants to whom an action is performed. The goal is the sufferer of an action. Recipients are the human participants that benefit from an action. Both goals and recipients are traditional beneficiaries. The scope and range have to do with the content of what is being said. Now, let us exemplify participants in the material process in the discourse of the protests.

**Excerpt 83:**

**Protest turns bloody**

*The Sun, Wed, Oct 21, 2015*

From excerpt 83, it is clear that the participant is a non-human entity. The author's use of protest is to background the role of the protesters as troublemakers. According to Osisanwo (2016), lexicalisation helps in ascribing roles to social actors. For instance, "liars" is derivable from "lie", schemer is from "scheme" and finally, "play" from "players". "Protesters" is derived from "protest". The actors receive their names from the type of action they perform. This shows that the pro-Biafra agitators are protesters. The co-referentiality between "protest" and "bloody" suggests that the protest which was peaceful at the beginning suddenly turned bloody because of the unholy interference of the Nigerian security officials. The following sentences show that police interference led to the bloodiness of the protest.

**Excerpt 84:**

**The siege of protest** had raised a fresh consciousness, as the protesters looked very regimented and coordinated.

**Excerpt 85:**

**Members of the group** defied the early morning rain to protest the arrest, detention and trial of the Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

*The Sun, Wed, Oct 21, 2015*

In excerpt 84 and 85, the participants here are "the siege of protest" and "members of the group". They are both human and non-human participants. In the previous excerpt, the tactical deployment of "siege of protest" is deliberate. This is to show that the siege spread like harmattan fire to different parts of the country. It



shows that the idea of Biafra Republic has grown to mature in the mind of the easterners. The siege shows that the protesters were heavily guarded by heavy security men and this also showed that human action can be abstracted.

In excerpt 85, it is evinced that “members of the group” is the participant. The fronting position helps in emphasizing not only the activities of the protesters but their personality. The writers tactically try to foreground members of the group in both negative and positive light. The positive sense is that they are freedom fighters, and perhaps great people who will make history. In the negative sense, the writer condemns the activities of the protesters because they constitute social nuisance. This is done because they paralyzed social-economic activities in the South-South and South-East. These geopolitical zones are the backbones of the nation’s economic buoyancy. Any attempt to make the economy standstill will definitely affect the nation. “Members of the group” negatively portray the protesters as the enemy of the nation’s economy. The newspapers portray the protesters as both evil and trouble-makers. The excerpts below precisely topicalise the protesters. This is exemplified below.

**Excerpt 86:**

**The protesters**, drawn from different parts of Rivers State, assembled as early as 7.am before they took over the major streets of Port Harcourt, causing heavy vehicular and human traffic in Aba, Azikiwe, Ikwerre, Rumuola roads, among others.

***The Sun, Wed, Oct 21, 2015***

Excerpt 86 shows the people that comprise the group. Although previous excerpts have already attested to the fact that they are mainly youths, the protesters comprise people from all walks of life who are determined to actualise the republic of Biafra. The activities of the protesters were noticeable as they (protesters) troop out in their hundreds to protest and call for the actualisation of Biafra Republic. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 87:**

**Hundreds of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) members calling for the creation the sovereign**

**state of Biafra yesterday** protested in Port Harcourt,  
the Rivers State capital

***The Nation, Wed. Nov. 11, 2015 Pg 44***

Hundreds of Biafran protesters express their grievances on the roads in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital. They barricaded the roads and this left many commuters stranded. The economic activities in states were paralysed. This was done in order to let the government know that Biafra is ripe. The nation Nigeria has called the activities of the protesters irrelevant and constituting nuisance. When the protests continued, the protesters were named terrorists.

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Movement for the Emancipation of Biafra (MASSOB) have gathered their resources together to see the actualisation of Biafra. In fact, MASSOB and IPOB are a threat to the government. This is the reasons why members of MASSOB are arrested. Although MASSOB had existed before the establishment of IPOB, the activities of MASSOB were not pronounced. This is because many easterners believed the leaders of MASSOB, particularly its leader Uwazurike and key officers, have been bribed by the federal government. However, the formation and establishment of IPOB resuscitated the quest for the actualisation of the republic of Biafra. This can be exemplified in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 88:**

**Police** storm Uwazurike's house, arrest 50 MASSOB members...Group threatens fire for fire over arrest

***The Sun, Mon. Sep. 7, 2015. Pg 10***

The use of 'storm' in the excerpt 88 is deliberate. The media uses the word "storm" to demonstrate the illegal activities of the Nigerian police. The police were ruthless, unconventional and unconstitutional in their approach. They entered into the house of the MASSOB leader, Uwazurike, without prior notice or any search warrant. It shows that the police practices in Nigeria do not meet and follow the required international standard.

The use of "storm" is to condemn the practices of the police. This is the major reason the media deliberately used 50 MASSOB members. The number 50 is very

significant. The names of the MASSOB members were not mentioned probably because they were people who are not public figure. There is the intrinsic tactical deployment of these lexical items to criticise not only the illegal arrests of the protesters but to show the popularity and acceptability of the group in the region. The people that were arrested were not all adult male protesters, some were children, women and relatives of the MASSOB leader. For instance, when Nnamdi Kanu was to be arrested, the Nigerian army invaded Kanu's house and arrested him. The arrest of Kanu has attracted international condemnation. This is shown in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 89:**

**Kanu** was arrested in Lagos last Wednesday by the Department of the State Security (DSS), arraigned in Abuja and granted bail.

*The Sun, Wed, Oct 21, 2015*

In excerpt 89, the Department of State Security (DSS) in Nigeria carried out the arrest of Kanu in Lagos. Though arrested in Lagos, Kanu was arraigned in Abuja. Abuja was probably chosen because it is not only the Federal Capital Territory but as perceived by the protesters as the centre of political victimisation. The transfer of the case from Lagos to Abuja generated public outcry. The Buhari-Osinbajo government was indicted for this arrest. In fact, the declaration of the protesters as a terrorist group was blamed on the Buhari-led government because he saw the protest as a threat. Buhari was simply indicted and the protesters threatened him because, as against 1967 Nigerian civil war, the protesters are determined to actualise the vision of Biafran Republic. The excerpt below exemplifies the attitudes of the protesters to Buhari:

**Excerpt 90:**

**Buhari** cannot stop **us** from actualisation of a sovereign state of Biafra even if **he** sends **the entire security operatives** in the country to the South East and South South geo-political zones.

*The Sun, Wed. Sep. 16, 2015 Pg 10*

Another important participant is Buhari, the President of Nigeria. Buhari was portrayed as evil and an enemy of progress. This is because he tries to frustrate the actualization of the Republic of Biafra using security forces. The participants in the excerpts above are lexicalized by pronominals "us" and "he" and nominal entities

“Buhari” and “the entire security operatives”. This shows unequal power relation, the “we” versus “them”. The verbal elements “cannot stop” show that the protesters are frustrated by Buhari’s security forces. The exaggerative element is deliberate. This is to show that the protesters are fully determined to wrestle and fight against the federal government of Buhari.

In conclusion, participants in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests are members of IPOB and MASSOB, Kanu, Buhari, and Nigerian security operatives. The participants are human and they play a key role in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. The non-human participant is the siege of protests. The nominalize element shows the enormity of the protesters. The protests are a threat to the socio-political stability of the country.

#### **4.5.1.1 Material verbs in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

Material verbs are verbs of “action” and “doing”. They are verbs in which actions are transferred from one participant to another. In the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests, material verbs reveal not only the action carried out but the communicative functions of the verbs. This is with a view to identifying and explaining the pattern of media reportage of crime related stories. Material verbs are exemplified in the excerpts below.

##### **Excerpt 91:**

On whether they **intend to launch** a counter-attack against the Navy and the Police, he said they were still waiting for directives from the IPOB Directorate on their next line of action.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 34*

“Launch” in this context means to send out with a new tactic and strategy to attack an opponent. To launch is to send something out such as a new ship into water or rocket into space. Now, to launch in the discourse of 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest means a new tactical strategy which is meant to fight against security operatives. The new tactics could be an attack or counter-attack against the enemies, Nigerian security operatives.

The communicative function of the word “intend” in the verbal element revealed the intention of the protesters. The protesters have the utmost intention to attack the Nigerian Police Force. However, the use of directives from the IPOB directorate showed the group is a well-structured and organised one. The group is organised; thus, it revealed that the protest is a planned activity. Unlike the Nigerian police officers, members of the two groups are law-abiding citizens. That is why they carried placards during protest. This fact is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 92:**

‘You **don’t shoot** at people who have no fire arms  
but only have placards on them

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35*

In excerpt 92, “shoot” is a material verb of action. It shows that the Nigerian Police officers shot innocent and harmless protesters who exercise their constitutional right. To shoot at somebody simply means to fire an arrow or a bullet in such a way that the bullets or arrows lead to the death of the person or cause injury. The members of the group are seen as not bearing arms or harming people. From the above excerpt, there are two participants namely “you and people”. This is further exemplified as Nigerian police officers and the protesters. This showed unequal power relations – ruled and ruler, privileged and less privileged, the have and the have nots, oppressed and oppressor and so on.

It must be noted that the protesters are orderly and harmless. They marched across the road in order to express their dissatisfaction on the Buhari-led Federal Government. The protesters only carried placards. Some of the inscriptions of the placards read thus: “Buhari is a beast”, “Biafra is ripe”, “easterners are not second class citizens in Nigeria” and so on. The security operatives dispersed the protesters using teargas canisters after stiff oppositions from the protesters. This is exemplified in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 93:**

They **marched across** the major roads as security  
operatives comprising soldiers, police and other  
relevant agencies followed them

*The Punch, Nov. 16, 2015 pg 6*

From excerpt 93, the security operatives keenly followed the protesters in order to avoid the protests being hijacked by hoodlums. Along the line, the protest turned bloody and the security operatives shot few protesters and arrested some. The protesters “marched” across the major roads because of the following aforementioned reasons: (i) to show their readiness on the need for the actualisation of Biafra Republic, (ii) to express support for Nnamdi Kanu’s quest for secession, (iii) to avowedly express annoyance about the police arrest and detention of Nnamdi Kanu, and finally (iv) to openly express their anger against the maladministration of the Buhari-Led Federal Government. The lexical item “marched across” showed that the protesters are determined to confront any security operative that comes their way. “Marched across” shows the readiness and alacrity of the protesters. They are resilient and resolute in their quest to actualise Biafra. This is manifested in the way they reacted against security officers and some of them were arrested. An excerpt showing this is exemplified below.

**Excerpt 94:**

...the police in Anambra **arrested** about 43 members of MASSOB and IPOB during the protest, notably in Nnewi, Onitsha and Awka. One of the protesters Ikechukwu Okoye once said, “we were not protesting to cause any form of trouble but for the release of our leader, Nnamdi Kanu

***The Vanguard Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20***

The material verb in excerpt 94 is “arrested”. To arrest means to take somebody away in order to ask questions on a particular crime committed. The police arrested 43 protesters because they disrupted social order. The protest threatened the social-political tranquillity of the nation, Nigeria. It is on this that one of the protesters recalled that the leader of the group was arrested. Ikechukwu Okoye justified his action by demonstrating that they were disappointed in the current Nigerian government. The cause for the agitation is the arrest and continuous detention of Nmandi Kanu, the supposed leader of IPOB.

In conclusion, the material process does not only reveal the doer and sufferer of an action but the peculiar ways of media reportage of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. The media revealed the determination of the protesters and the stiff

opposition the protesters faced in the hand of the Nigerian security operatives. The security operatives are ever ready to slug it out with the protesters because they (protesters) threatened the unity and sovereignty of the nation Nigeria.

#### **4.5.1.2 Circumstances in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

Circumstances in Halliday's meta-functions play a significant role. Circumstances are explicated mostly by prepositional and adverbial phrases. They add meanings to a discourse by indicating, when, where, how, to what extent, and how often an action takes place. In the excerpts below, circumstantial elements are exemplified.

##### **Excerpt 95:**

Federal Government's recent stance against the activities of the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) **has brought** the activities of the group to public inquiry **once again**.

*The Nation, Sun. Nov. 8, 2015 Pg 34*

The circumstantial element "once again" reflects the federal government stance on the activities of IPOB and MASSOB. The leaders of the groups were arrested and detained by security operatives because the activities of the groups constitute a major threat to the unity and sovereignty of the nation, Nigeria. "Once again" reiterated the position of the Federal Government that both IPOB and MASSOB are terrorist groups. Their presence constitutes a threat to the nation at large. It must also be noted that the continuous position maintained by the government brought the group to limelight.

The participants and verbal elements in the excerpt are federal government stance, activities of the group and "has brought". The stance has made the activities of the group to be a national discourse. Many notable Nigerians reacted to the protest to either support or counter it. For instance, former President Obasanjo, a major key player in the Nigerian civil war said Biafra died so many years ago. It suggests that the protest for secession for the actualization is a mirage. It should be noted that Obasanjo was the leader of the third commando that finally conquered Port Harcourt and made Ojukwu to run into exile. At the defeat of Ojukwu in a thirty-month civil

war, the Biafran soldiers surrendered and the flag of Biafra was lowered. Other retired Nigerian soldiers that participated in the civil war condemned the activities of the groups as inimical to the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria.

Another circumstantial element is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 96:**

Thousands of the protesters mostly **dressed** like refugees marched **along the Bridge Head area of Onitsha before proceeding towards Awka old road causing serious traffic gridlock in the process**

*The Sun. Nov. 8, 2015. Pg 6*

The expression in bold is a circumstantial element. The element showed the procession of the protest – how it started and then where it proceeded into coupled with economic setbacks, which the protests have caused. For instance, Bridge Head Area of Onitsha is a major street. The street is the economic hub of the state. The street houses major companies that serve as the economic capital of the state. Suffice it to say that the bridge connects the eastern part of Nigeria to other parts of the country. The idea of starting the protest in the street is strategic because the state governments of the south-eastern region in Nigeria have been passive. Therefore, beginning the protest in the bridge head area is a means of punishing the state government for keeping silent. An excerpt below tactically revealed the practical effects of the protests on the state in particular and zone in general.

**Excerpt 97:**

**For three days**, members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) very nearly crippled the commercial city. **For about eight hours on each day**, shops and other business facilities were shut as the protesters took over the streets

*The Nation, Friday November 30, 2015 pg 21*

Excerpt 97 above showed the duration for which the protesters took over major streets thereby paralysing the socioeconomic lives of the people. For three days, the protesters took to the street and paralysed all activities in the state. Shops, offices, private institutions and other outlets were shut.



The circumstantial elements in the reports help in stating the implicit rationale behind the action of the protesters. They explicate the systematic actions taken by the protesters and their communicative intention. It must be noted that the dressing of the protesters is to show their dissatisfaction with government programmes and policies as well as the hardship and poverty that are apparent in the nation.

#### **4.5.1.3 Mental process in the discourse of the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

The mental process is a process of “sensing”. It deals with the cognitive, affective, emotive and perceptive faculty of a person. It is concerned with people’s inner consciousness. Participants in the mental process are “senser” and “phenomenon”. The senser is the person, a human participant, while what is being experienced is the phenomenon. Let us exemplify participants of the mental process in the discourse of the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protest.

##### **4.5.1.3.1 Participants of mental process in the discourse of 2015 - 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

Participants in mental process are senser and phenomenon. Senser is the person that experiences a certain phenomenon. Senser is always a human participant. Phenomenon is what is felt by the senser. The process is explicated by verbal elements, which are mostly verbs of cognition, desideration, perception and emotions. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

##### **Excerpt 98:**

**“The large number of young people agitating**  
shows just **how much people** believe in Biafra  
**The Vanguard, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20**

The mental verbs in the excerpt above are “shows” and “believe”. The participants include “the large number of young people” and “Biafra”. The use of “how much people” depicts that the protest had a great spread in the south-south and south-east regions. The participant “much people” is the superordinate of “young people”. This is to show that the protest is a common denominator. The protesters feel

that it is the right time to actualize Biafra. To believe is to think that the course of actualizing Biafra is right, correct and timely.

Another use of protesters as senser and the discourse of actualizing Biafra as phenomenon is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 99:**

**They** (protesters) still believe their dream of actualising Biafra must surely come to pass

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35*

From excerpt 99, the participant is the protesters. They hold on to the dream of actualising the supposed Republic of Biafra. They have faith in actualising the Republic of Biafra because it is overdue. The idea of Biafra Republic started with Late Ojukwu in 1967. Many believed he was unhappy with the choice of the Head of State. The protesters are central to the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. This is because they are the most important participants. Also, they are the principal participants because they are the people that experience the sufferings. They are attacked, oppressed, afflicted, and humiliated. It can be observed that participants of mental process are the protesters and the protests as phenomenon.

**4.5.1.3.2 Mental verbs in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

Mental verbs are verbs of emotion, perception, cognition and desideration. These verbs are used to express inner consciousness. Instances of mental verbs include the following.

**Excerpt 100:**

They still **believe** their dream of actualising Biafra must surely come to pass

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35*

The mental verb “believe” shows that the protesters think it is now time for Biafra to be actualised. The adverb “still” is used to perpetuate the quest of the protesters. Although many people thought Biafra had ended when Ojukwu surrendered in 1970, but this has been proven not to be the case. The reason for this is

the perceived prejudice the easterners allegedly suffer in the country. They were regarded as second-class citizens in Nigeria. The zone has been discriminated against in terms of political appointments and infrastructures. The highest political position ever attained is Senate President and Secretary to the Federal Government. The idea of “still believe” shows that, although the spirit of Biafra died in 1970, it (Biafra) has been resurrected and the republic seems achievable according to the protesters. It is not only the protesters that are concerned with the actualisation of Biafra, some other groups such as the Ohanaeze Youth Council registered their opinion on the protesters and proposed that the situation requires a state of emergency. This is seen in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 101**

The Ohanaeze Youth Council (OYC) has **urged** President Muhammadu Buhari not to impose a state of emergency in the Southeast because of agitations for the state of Biafra *The Nation*, **Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 42**

From excerpt 101, OYC gives a strong advice to persuade the President not to impose the supposed state of emergency on the eastern region. The agitation for the sovereign state of Biafra was seen as a threat to the sovereignty of the Nigerian state. The position of OYC is to ensure that economic activities in the zone are not paralysed because of the protests. The protests have grounded socio-economic activities in the zone. OYC takes its views from the economic point of view. The group tactically begs Mr President to consider the economic situation of the region. This is necessary because the zone is the backbone of economic activities in the nation.

In conclusion, the relational process in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest helps in the expression of inner consciousness. The inner consciousness is a reflection of protesters’ image, identity and ideology. The mental verbs “urge” and “believe” have the phenomena as the protests and President of Nigeria.

#### **4.5.1.4 Relational process in the discourse of 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

The relational process is a process of “having” and “being”. It is a process of characterizing and identifying explicated in the “be-verb”. The relational process is of two types namely: identifying and attributive mode. In the identifying mode, the identified and identifier are switchable such as “Tunde is the leader of the group” can be “The leader of the group is Tunde”. However, in attributive mode, the attributive and the carrier are not reversible. Such an example is “Tunde is wise”.

##### **4.5.1.4.1 Participants of relational process in the discourse of 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

The relational process is divided into two namely; identifying and attributive. The participants in the identifying relational process are identifying and identified. The participants in the attributive relational process are attributive and attributes. Identifying relational process is another relational process. Unlike attributive relational process, the subject and complement in identifying relational processes are switchable. They are capable of being reversible. The participants in identifying relational process include identifier and identified. The identified is the given information while the identifier is the new information. Let us now exemplify identifying and attributive relational processes in the 2015 – 2016 Biafran protests in selected Nigerian newspapers below.

##### **Excerpt 102:**

**This** was even as hundreds of agitators thronged the court located at Wuse Zone 2, Abuja, yesterday, to show solidarity to Kanu who **has** been in detention for the past two months *Vanguard*, **Wed. Dec 2, 2015**

##### **Excerpt 103:**

**This** (shooting at civilians who carried placards) is an act of man’s inhumanity to man  
*Vanguard*, **Oct 7, 2015**

From excerpt 103, the demonstrative pronoun helps to show that the 2016 Biafran protest is a popular discourse not only in the southeast but in other zones. In fact, in Abuja and Lagos, protesters went out in mass to solicit support for Biafra and

for Nnamdi Kanu who was standing trial for alleged treasonable offences. Nnamdi Kanu was arrested and detained for more than two months by the Nigerian security operatives. The arrest and detention generated a lot of arguments and controversies in the front burner of Nigerian newspapers. “This” is tactically used in the first excerpt to show that many notable Nigerians showed their solidarity for Nnamdi Kanu. This solidarity led to the second excerpt. This is the place where people carried placards and showed their support for Kanu. The use of “this” tactically refers to the act of shooting at civilians who carried placards and went about exercising their rights. It is perceived as inhuman, therefore, for security operatives to shoot at innocent and harmless Nigerian citizens. It must be noted that, prior to the arrest of Nnamdi Kanu, the Nigerian government issued several warnings against the activities of the protesters. The use of “this” is an antecedent referral pronominal, which explicates the modus operandi of the demonstration. Both referral elements are attributive in nature. The participants are not reversible and switchable. In the two excerpts above, the identifiers are “this” and the identified are “even as hundreds of agitators” and “act of man’s inhumanity to man”. They referred to man’s actions or the gathering of man in terms of number (hundred). Finally, participants in relational process are non-human participants.

#### **4.5.1.4.2 Relational verbs in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests**

The relational process is mainly explicated by the intensifying anomalous verbs. These verbs include “is”, “was”, “are”, “were”, “am”, “has”, “have”, “had” and so on. These verbs are used for identifying the attributive relational process. Examples are demonstrated below.

##### **Excerpt 104:**

Biafra **is** not a new phenomenon. It **was** the idea of the late Ikemba Nnewi Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, who felt that he **had** no choice than to pull his people out of Nigeria in 1967 because of perceived injustice, marginalisation and unfair treatment.

*The Nation, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2015Pg 17*

The attributive relational verbs “is”, “was” and “had” were used in the excerpt above. These verbs are used to historicise the quest for Biafra Republic. Biafra started in 1967. It was spearheaded by Ojukwu who felt that easterners were being marginalised, maltreated and oppressed. He had no option but to declare the eastern region as Republic of Biafra. The “it” in the second paragraph referred to the Biafra discourse already mentioned. The protest generated a lot of reactions, opinions and arguments among well-meaning Nigerians. The former national chairman of All Progressive Congress, Chief John Oyegun, said the Biafran protest showed that the country is still fragile. This can be exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 105:**

The National Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Chief John Odike-Oyegun, said yesterday that the re-emergence of the struggle for the Sovereign State of Biafra **is** a sign the country **is** fragile.

***The Nation, Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 42***

From excerpt 105, it can be said that Oyegun decried the re-emergence of the struggle for the Sovereign State of Biafra as evidence of failure of the political leaders. The leaders failed to harmonise various tribes, ethnic groups, religious affiliations and political subscription. Rather than unifying the nation, the political office holders, during elections, divide the nation via the weapons of religion, politics, and ethnicity. This “divide and rule strategy” has worked like magic and has been the bane of socio-economic, political and infrastructural development in Nigeria. Nigerians are more divided on the ethnic, tribal and religious lines than ever.

**4.5.1.5 Existential process in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests**

The existential process focuses on the fact that something exists or happens in the external or outer world. What exists or happens in the external world is lexically realised as “there”. It must be noted that “there” does not have a referential or adjunctive function. It is a non-salient element. It is believed that something or somebody “exists” or “happens” in the outer world. The object or person that exists or happens in the outer world is called existent. This is exemplified in the anomalous

verbs and it contains the circumstantial elements which explicates the time and place of events. Participants in the existential process include the existent explicated in “there”. Existential process in the discourse of the protest is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 106:**

**There** are other Igbo statesmen like former governor of old Anambra, Chief ChukwuemekaEzeife, who insists that the present agitation is rooted in the way the South East is treated, even by the present administration that is swelling the ranks of MASSOB.

Excerpt 106 showed that an important person exists in the external world. This person is a respectable man in the south eastern region in particular and in Nigeria in general. This man has held an important position (a governor) in the region. It is, therefore, believed that his voice is to be reckoned with because he has held a political office and could detect the problems of the polity. Chief ChukwuemekaEzeife saw a nation’s inadequacy in the protest. To him, the protest is as a result of political and economic maladministration apparent in the nation. This is evident in the high rate of unemployment in the nation, among other issues. It can be said without any iota of doubt that the present administration also contributed negatively to the struggle for the sovereign state of Biafra because of nepotic appointments. The eastern region is seriously lagging behind in terms of political appointments. These and many more made MASSOB and IPOB to begin the struggle for the sovereign state of Biafra.

It is important to say that various protests in the south-eastern region have been viewed from different perspectives. While some saw the protest as out of place, some others saw it as a plan to repay the supposed corrupt government the evil they perpetrate. This is exemplified in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 107:**

No doubt, **there** is a war raging in the South Eastern part of the country. Yet, **there** are some others who define the ongoing agitation for an independent Biafra republic as a façade.

*The Sun. Dec. 12, 2015. Pg 47*

Excerpt 107 recognises the fact that a war is currently ongoing in the south-eastern region of the country. The tactical use of “there” showed that the protest

according to some people is a mirage while others see it as war against humanity. It must be noted that the fact still remains that a war is currently ongoing in the region. The use of “there” is to counter some people that the protest cannot hold water because Biafra died forty-seven years ago. The protest is being masterminded by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Actualisation of Biafra (MASSOB). Although MASSOB was established in 2000, its activities were not wholly acceptable by easterners because they (easterners) believe the leadership of MASSOB have compromised their tenets, principles, theories and ideologies. The establishment of IPOB was welcomed tumultuously because easterners see IPOB as a better alternative. An attempt to deny the activities of IPOB was exemplified below:

**Excerpt 108:**

According to the CP, “**there** is nothing like  
Indigenous People of Biafra.

***Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14***

Excerpt 108 showed the attitude of the Nigerian security operatives to IPOB and its activities in the country. The commissioner of Police tactically denied the existence of IPOB because the group poses a great threat to national security. It was the anger that the Commissioner of Police released on IPOB members such that the members of IPOB who engaged in the peaceful protest were arrested and the protest was inadvertently stopped by teargas canisters.

The existential process has tactically revealed the attitudes of the Nigeria security operatives to the activities of IPOB and MASSOB. Although Nigeria security operatives deny the existence of IPOB and MASSOB, it is very crystal clear that IPOB and MASSOB remain a major threat to Nigeria.

**4.5.1.6 Verbal process in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests**

The verbal process is concerned with the speakers’ expression of thought. The speech is said or reported. The participants in the verbal process include sayer, receiver, verbiage, and target. The person that produces an utterance is the sayer. The receiver is the participant to whom the utterance is addressed. The content of the utterance is the verbiage and the entity referred to by the verbal process is target. Now, let us



exemplify the verbal process in the discourse of the 2015 media reportage of the pro-Biafra protests.

**Excerpt 109:**

Oyegun **spoke** while receiving a faction of the Peoples Democratic party (PDP) in Anambra State, led by the governorship candidate of the party in the April 11 election.

*The Nation*, Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 42

**Excerpt 110:**

The protesters **asked** the Federal Government to order Kanu's release

*Punch*, Tue. Nov. 17, 2015

#### **4.5.1.6.1 Participants of verbal process in the discourse of 2015 and 2016 Biafra Protest**

**Excerpt 111:**

**A northern socio-political organisation, Arewa Consultative Forum**, has asked the Federal Government to check the activities of pro-Biafra groups in the South-East of the country. The group **said** the nation could not afford to engage in another civil war 43 years after the Biafra ended.

*Punch*, Thursday, Nov. 12, 2015. Pg 19

**Excerpt 112:**

**The police** said four suspects were apprehended in Anambra, six in Imo, 11 in Delta and one in Abia States.

*Punch*, Tue. Nov. 17, 2015

**Excerpt 113:**

Reacting to the development, **Anambra State Coordinator of the group, Ikechukwu Okoye** said their main goal is to restore Biafra as a republic, adding that they are still waiting for further directives from their Directorate to determine their next line of action.

*Vanguard*, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 34

**Excerpt 114:**

**MASSOB, the IPOB and the Biafra Zionist Movement, BZM** have expressed optimism that the much desired Biafra Republic would soon be restored or actualised.

*Vanguard*, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35

**Excerpt 115:**

One of the protesters warned Aba residents to stock up food because the protest would cripple activities **for a week**

*The Nation*, Fri. Nov. 13, 2015. Pg 21

#### **4.6 Grammatical modalities in the discourse of 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest**

Grammatical modalities are concerned with the attitude of a speaker to the truthfulness or possibility of a proposition or utterance (Palmer, 1981 and Simpson, 1993). They are used to unveil the judgement of a speaker on the probability or the obligation involved in what he says (Halliday, 1980 cited in Ogunsiji et al, 2013). There are different types of modality, namely; epistemic, deontic and boulemaic. Epistemic modality is concerned with the attitude of a speaker to a particular proposition. Deontic is the speaker's attitude to the degree of actual participation in actions (Simpson, 1993; Ogunsiji et al, 2013). Boulemaic is the speakers' desire and wishes in the execution of particular events. Halliday (2004) mentions three values of modality namely: low, median and high. Hence, Halliday (2004) classifies modality into low, median and high values: the three values are tabulated below.

**Table 5.2.2: A table showing Halidayan classification of grammatical modality**

	<b>Grammatical realization</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>Usuality</b>	<b>Obligation</b>	<b>Inclination</b>
High	Must/need to	Certain	Always	Required	Determined
Median	Will/shall	Probable	Usually	Supposed	Keen
Low	May/can	Possible	Sometimes	Allowed	

Examples of grammatical modalities in the discourse of Biafran protests are exemplified below:

**Excerpt 116:**

MASSOB, the IPOB and the Biafra Zionist Movement, BZM have expressed optimism that the much desired Biafra Republic *would* soon be restored or actualised.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35*

**Excerpt 117:**

Gwari, who spoke in Awka during his familiarisation tour of Anambra State Police Command, condemned the activities of the two organisations, which he said, were inimical to the peace of the people and warned that the police *would* not fold their arms and watch the peace enjoyed by the people to be derailed.

*The Sun, Wed, Oct 7, 2015. Pg 12*

In excerpts 116 and 117 above, the grammatical modality “would” is recurrent in the discourse of 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. The grammatical modality “would” is used to express strong determination of the two opposing sides. The police are determined to curb the siege of protest that had gained widespread attention in the country. The protesters are strong bent on actualising the Biafra ambition. It can be said that the modal element “would” is the common feature in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest.

Further classifications of grammatical modality into epistemic and deontic showed the speakers’ knowledge and their attitudes to the proposition of the Biafra protest. The classifications are expatiated and exemplified below:

#### 4.6.1 Epistemic modality

Epistemic modality is concerned with the attitude of a speaker to a particular proposition. It deals with the knowledge a speaker has towards a proposition. Epistemic modality is used by speakers to express judgment on the truthfulness of a proposition. Examples are shown below:

##### **Excerpt 118:**

The protest for now is peaceful, but we need freedom. We are armless, we have not harmed anybody and we owe nobody any apology for what we are doing. As Biafrans, we stand for peace and justice *will* reign.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015. pg 14*

From excerpt 118, Biafra protesters are peace loving people. They are armless and they do not have any weapon that could inflict injuries on people. This shows that they stand for peace. Peace here is not only the absence of crises but the preservation of justice. The tactical use of modal “will” shows that the speaker has the knowledge of the fact that despite humiliation from the government and security operatives in Nigeria, justice is going to prevail.

It must be noted that the speaker is certain about the truthfulness of the certainty of the action that justice and peace are going to prevail and the dream of Biafra is going to be actualized is the knowledge which the speaker .

Epistemic modality is used to explicate the certainty of the knowledge of the actualization of Biafra as a republic. The protesters are certain that the dream of Biafra is certitude.

#### 4.6.2 Deontic modality

Deontic is the speakers’ attitude to the degree of the actual participation in actions (Simpson 1993, Ogunsiji et al 2013). It is concerned with how a speaker views future events whether necessary, possible, desirable and obligation. Deontic modality is exemplified in the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protest below: for peace sig

**Excerpt 119:**

“The federal government *should* release our Director, Dr Nnamdikanu and we also want our freedom. As a nation that is due for freedom, we want to go; we are tired.

*Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14*

**Excerpt 120**

A factional leader of the Movement for the Actualisation of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Comrade UchenaMadu, said that MASSOB *would* continue to protest and fight till Kanu is released. He equally warned the Federal Government to release Kanu or face civil disobedience.

*Vanguard, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

Excerpts 119 and 120 above show the attitudes of the protesters to the arrest of Nnamdi Kanu. In the first excerpt, the protesters demanded for the immediate release of their detained leader. In fact, the grammatical modality “should” pragmatically implies that the federal government is to grant the immediate release of Nnamdi Kanu. This is necessary for peace to reign in the zones. This also shows that the government is obliged to obey the voice of the protesters as it is the only condition for peace to reign in the zone. It further opines that it is ironical for freedom to reign in the zone. In the second excerpt, MASSOB demanded for the release of Kanu and when Kanu is released, the protest will then stop’. It is clear that protesters implicitly give the condition for the release of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu. The modality shows the decisive ideological struggles of the protesters. The ideological orientation of the protesters is centre on freedom, peace and justice. The protesters through grammatical modality would and should suggest that peace and justice would soon disappear if the necessary actions are put in place. The illegal detention of Kanu should not be allowed to continue because detention is tantamount to infringement of fundamental human rights.

In conclusion, the use of “should” falls within the degree that is high while would is median value. These modalities are recurrently used to show the necessity on the need to immediate release, the detained leader of IPOB.

#### 4.7 Pronominalisation

Pronominalisation is deployed as a strategy for constructing “weness” and “otherness” in the discourse of the protest. Pronominalisation is employed to disassociate and associate oneself from discursive issues. Excerpts of pronominals in the protest are exemplified below:

##### **Excerpt 121:**

When the late Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu declared war against Nigeria, what **we** wanted was a separate country called Republic of Biafra. **We** have not shifted from that goal. **We** are not looking for a Nigeria to exist alongside, but another country from what **we** have now. **We** want to go, **we** want to remain on **our own**, because of the injustices that have been so entrenched that the Igbo man no longer has future in Nigeria.

*Vanguard, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

The recurrent use of the exclusive pronominal “we” implicitly suggests that there are social opposition. The “weness” as against “themness” means that pro-Biafra protesters are in one pole while Nigeria with security operatives are in the other pole. The repetition of “we” suggests not only the emphasis on the grammatical item “we” but also the social cohesion that exist among the protesters and their inordinate ambition to actualise Biafra after the first failed attempt. Also, the use of “we” includes the indigenous People of Biafra, Movement for the Emancipation of Biafra and Biafra Zionist Movement and “excludes” Nigeria with its security operatives.

The first “we” in the first excerpt reveals the thematic concern of the easterner, which is to be freed and secede from Nigeria. The protesters want to actualise the dream of Biafra as a Republic. The second “we” is used to show that the protesters are determined. They will not shift from the goal of actualising Biafra. The other “we” focuses on the need to secede from Nigeria because Biafra is ripe. Protesters are tired of being part of Nigeria. They want to be independent on their own.

It must also be noted that pronominalisation is explicated by variants of “we”. The variants are “us”, and “our”. These are exemplified in the excerpts below:

**Excerpt 122:**

**Our referendum is on the way –Uwazurike**  
***Vanguard, Thurs., Dec. 17, 2015. Pg 44***

The use of “our” in the excerpt above shows collective destiny. “Our” reveals that Uwazurike is referring to the pro-Biafra protesters at home and abroad. The reason for the referendum is not farfetched. This is because many notable Nigerians have condemned the violent activities of the group.

In conclusion, pronominalisation is a grammatical element that shows the inordinate ambition of the protesters to actualise Biafra. The tactical emphasis on “we” foregrounds the collective will of the protesters. It shows unity and social cohesion. Meanwhile, the “them” was not only backgrounded but also suppressed. This is with the aim of relinquishing others as unimportant.

**4.8 Substitution**

Substitution is the process of using a lexical item to replace another in order to avoid redundancy and unnecessary repetition. Substitution is achieved through the use of some grammatical properties of language. It is an in-text linguistic device. Substitution is divided into three namely: nominal, verbal, and clausal. First, nominal substitution focuses on noun. It is replaceable with “ones” and other grammatical properties. Secondly, verbal substitution is replaceable with these verbs-“do”, “does” and “did”. Finally, clausal substitution deals with the replacement of the whole clause in order to avoid repetition. It is replaced with “so” and “not”. Examples of substitution in the discourse of 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protest include the following.

**4.9 Clause complex**

The clause is the focal attention in Hallidayan grammar. It is the centre of grammatical resource for investigating language. In the Hallidayan approach, the clause performs three functions which are otherwise known as metafunctions. These functions are ideational, interpersonal and textual. The clause complex is the unit above and beyond the clause.

Clause complexes are made up of (un)equal clauses. The clause are coordinated or subordinated to one another. They are concerned with the relationship that exists among clauses. The relationship occurs at the lexico-semantic levels. The relationship deals with the degree of interdependency among clauses. The degree of interdependency is technically referred to as taxis-relation. Equal taxis is called parataxis, while unequal taxis is called hypotaxis.

#### **4.9.1 Hypotactic clause complex**

Hypotactic clause complexes bind clauses that are of unequal status. They contain one dominant clause while the others are dependent. The dependent clause relies on the independent clause for meaning realization. Instances of hypotaxis sentence relation in the discourse of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests are exemplified below.

#### **Excerpt 123:**

Although both MASSOB and IPOB appeared to have split into two factions each, just as BZM leadership is currently in detention and at the same time facing charges of conspiracy and treasonable felony, they still believe their dream of actualising Biafra must surely come to pass.

**Vanguard Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35**

This excerpt is made up of two dependent clauses and one independent clause. The dependent clauses are used to hypothetically concede the fact that both MASSOB and IPOB are not in good terms. It is believed that the dream of Biafra Republic is achievable with individuals working on its own. Though the leaders of the two factional groups are in detention, their followers still blow the trumpet of freedom in the nook and cranny of the nation. The dependent clauses are introduced by “although” to imply a setback, the use of “still” in the main clause suggests that the dream of Biafra is achievable.

The excerpt below is concerned with the (il)legality of the secession of the Republic of Biafra.



**Excerpt 124:**

I specifically asked if it was unlawful for any part of the country to say it wants to be independent, and he said the law does not permit secession.

*The Sun, Dec. 19, 2015*

It can be observed that there are two independent clauses and one dependent clause. The last independent clause answers the question raised in the first clause. The dependent clause is concerned with legality of the dream of secession of easterners.

**Excerpt 125:**

The three week-long pro-Biafra protests turned bloody, yesterday, as Joint Military Task Force (JTF) killed nine of the protesters and injured 18 in Onitsha, the commercial city of Anambra State.

*Vanguard. Thurs. Dec. 3, 2015. Pg 1*

There are two clauses; one dependent and one independent respectively. The clauses relay how the peaceful protest turns bloody. The killing of nine protesters was attributed to the Joint Task Force. This aims to condemn the activities of the Force as callous, wicked and cruel. The killing of nine people and injury suffered by 18 people were attributed to the evil works of the Force.

In conclusion, hypotactic structure helps to unravel discourse issues in the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protests

#### **4.9.2 Paratactic clause complex**

Parataxis links clauses that are of equal status (Halliday, 2014). It shows symmetrical relationships among clauses. The clauses are independent. It initiates and continues ideas. It is logically cohered by “and”, “or”, “but”, and so on. Examples of paratactic clause complex in the discourse of the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protests include the following:

**Excerpt 126:**

This is even as the protest in Onitsha, Anambra State, turned bloody, four people were shot and 15 were injured by policemen.

*The Sun, Wed, Oct 21, 2015*

Excerpt 126 is made up of three independent clauses. The events in the excerpts climax from being bloody to shooting and people sustaining varying degrees of injuries. The use of independent clauses without embedding aids comprehension.

**Excerpt 127:**

The Joint Military Task Force could not disperse the protesters on Tuesday, and they went to regroup and invaded our members who were observing our three-day peaceful protest at the Niger Bridge at about 1.30 am Wednesday morning.

*Vanguard. Thurs. Dec. 3, 2015. Pg 1*

In excerpt 127 is the determination and the proper coordination of the protesters displayed. The news reporter said there had never been any coordinated protest like this. The use of relativisation really shows the protesters were law-abiding citizens and they were able to coordinate themselves.

**Excerpt 128:**

In a statement, Madu condemned the shooting and killing of jubilating members of IPOB and MASSOB and called for investigation into the matter.

*The Sun, Dec. 19, 2015. pg 48*

Excerpt 128 has two main clauses. The first clause laments the killing and shooting of IPOB and MASSOB members while the second tactically called for the investigation in the shooting and killing.

**4.10 Inter-textuality**

Intertextuality was propounded by Julia Kristeva. It is a theory that focuses on the meaning of a text which is dependent on the previous or concurrent texts. This

suggests that the meaning of a text depends on socio-cultural, political, religious and economic happenings and realities in a particular environment. Intertextuality is both text and context dependent (Adjei, 2013). Intertextuality provides insight into the understanding of a written or spoken text by a critical examination of prior texts, traditions, and conventions in relation to a specific occurrence in a particular environment. It can manifest at phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantic and pragmatic levels (Hatim, 1997). It pays attention to surface and deep meaning in a text. It can be horizontal (explicit/manifest) or vertical (implicit/constitutive). Horizontal intertextuality is a response to other texts explicated in citations and quotations, while vertical is opaque and traceable to other texts. Some scholars have considered intertextuality as an intrusion. It is when a text intruded into the meaning of another texts. This is carried out through citation, quotes, reference, attribution, facts and history (Bloor and Bloor, 2007). Alba-Juez (2009:7) surmised the focus of intertextuality as thus: “a text is always related to some preceding or simultaneous discourse and texts are always linked and grouped in particular text varieties or genre by formal criteria”. In this study, attention is focussed on the intertextuality in the discourse of the 2015 – 2016 pro-Biafra protest. This is exemplified below:

**Excerpt 129:**

**Biafra is a dead issue**

***Punch* Thursday, Nov. 12, 2015. Pg 15**

**Excerpt 130:           Buhari resurrects the spirit of Biafra**

**Excerpt 131:           Buhari has resurrected the ghost of Biafra**  
***The Sun*, Thursday, Nov. 5, 2015. Pg 15**

Excerpts 129, 130 and 131 above use constitutive (manifest and vertical) intertextuality. The excerpts refer to Biafra, spirit of Biafra and ghost of Biafra. The three excerpts above makes reference to the ‘death’ of Biafra forty-five years ago. The issue was buried because the former warlord, Ojukwu, himself confessed that Biafra was a dead issue in Nigeria. Nigeria should be united and build their nation rather than fanning the embers of tribalism. In excerpt 25, the material process is deployed.

The actor is President Buhari while the goal is the spirit and ghost of Biafra. The implication of this is that Biafra is a dead issue.

**Excerpt 132:**

**Biafra** started, because of the injustices and marginalisation of Ndigbo in Nigeria. These injustices triggered **the Civil War of 1967 to 1970**. Those of us, who went to that war, were very much convinced that we were fighting to liberate our people and we were prepared to give it our all.

*Vanguard, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

**Excerpt 133:**

We want to go, we want to remain on our own, because of the injustices that have been so entrenched that the Igbo man no longer has future in Nigeria. What was happening then was child's play compared with what Ndigbo are going through now. If **Ojukwu** were alive, I know he would have declared another war, which perhaps, would have been the departing point in Nigeria. I am not afraid to die, I am passionate about **Biafra** and I want to die fighting its cause.

*Vanguard, Nov 15, 2015. Pg 20*

The two excerpts above make reference to Biafra, Ndigbo, Nigerian Civil War, and Ojukwu. Although Ojukwu is a name and wherever the name is mentioned in Nigeria, attention is drawn to Biafra and the Nigerian Civil War. The name has gained local and international currency. The declaration of Biafra as republic in the eastern region by Ojukwu signalled the beginning of the Nigerian civil war. The war, which lasted for thirty months, was referred as the dark days in the history and historiography of Nigeria. It was one of the deadliest in the history of the nation not only because of the lives that were lost but also resources that were wasted during the war. Yakubu Gowon, the then Military Head of State, was committed to seeing the end of the war. Biafra soldiers hijacked his humanitarian service to the children. This led to the demise of millions of children in the eastern region. When Ojukwu finally surrendered, Gowon declared that there was "no victor no vanquish" in the war. The aftermath was the three Rs namely: Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reintegration.

#### 4.11 Chapter Summary

This section has examined the discourse issues in the news reports on the pro-Biafra protesters. Also treated are the grammatical choices tactically deployed in the discursive representation of social actors and actions in the discourse of 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest. The way social actors and actions are represented shows the ideological underpinnings of the news media which they want to project to the news consumers. While the pro-Biafra protesters are represented as violent, unruly, and nuisance, the protesters construe themselves as law-abiding citizens. While the Nigeria police construct the protesters as terrorists and a major threat to the economic growth of Nigeria, the protesters construe themselves as freedom fighters that must be protected. The media representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest is negative, though the media at the beginning of the protest aligns with the protesters' beliefs. The media representation of the 2015 and 2016 Biafra protest is negatively portrayed in a way that projects the activities of protesters as inimical to the growth and development of the nation's economy.

It has also examined the ideological inclinations underpinning the discourse of the protest. The section has shown that the discourse of the pro-Biafra protest is enmeshed with ideologies that justify the actions of the protesters and condemn government's activities. The underlying ideologies: separatist, pacifist, liberationist, dissidentist, schist and repressionist were projected in the representation of the protests. The use of the positive 'self' and negative 'other' construct, naming and reference characterise the ideologies. While the separatist (which bifurcates into subtle and radical) and the liberationist advocate for a radical approach to self governance, the pacifists proffer the milder approach of negotiation and dialogue, the dissidentist jettisons the idea of self governance and the schist has an indifferent stance.

This chapter has also examined both lexicalisation and grammaticalisation in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest in selected newspapers. While lexicalisation revealed that synonymy and collocation are used to unmask social issues in the discourse, grammaticalisation explicated through pronominalisation polarized the nation into Nigeria versus Biafra, security operatives versus protesters and Buhari versus Kanu.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.0 Overview

The study has examined the discourse and ideological representation of Nigerian news media construction of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. This section takes a cursory look at what this thesis is about. It begins with the summary of the findings, and proceeds to the conclusion and recommendation for further studies. The study examines the use of language in the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra Protest in selected Nigerian newspapers. The study identifies the discourse issues in the representation of the pro-Biafra protest; examines the discursive strategies deployed in the representation of social actors and actions in the pro-Biafra protest; identifies and explores the ideologies constructed in the representation of the pro-Biafra protest; and discusses the lexical and grammatical choices employed in the construction of the pro-Biafra protest in selected Nigerian newspapers.

Ruth Wodak's Discourse Historical approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors and M.A.K Halliday's Transitivity model of Systemic Functional Linguistics serve as the theoretical framework of the study. Data for the study were purposively drawn from four widely circulated Nigerian national dailies, *The Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Sun* and *Vanguard*, which allocate sufficient space to the coverage of the protests. The period covered was between 2015 and 2016, a period where the protests were most intense in the country. The data were subjected to critical discourse analysis.

## 5.1 Summary of findings

The findings in this study are summarized under the following sub-headings:

### a. The discourse issues in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest

Discourse issues are key issues and thematic preoccupations embedded in discursive events. They usually form the background of discursive events. The identification of discourse issues in texts helps to espouse the representation and projected ideologies concealed in them. Six discourse issues were discovered to have espoused the representation and projected ideologies. They include marginalisation of the Igbo, worsening economic situation, human rights abuse, injustice, corruption and unemployment. The identification of these discourse issues further lays credence to Wodak's (2001) claim that discourse issues are at the root of discursive events and identifying these discourse issues can help to clearly map out ideologies as well as other discourse areas.

### b. The representational strategies in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest

In the construction of the protest, three representational strategies were deployed, including *protesters are freedom fighters*, *protesters are economic saboteurs*, and *protesters are law-abiding citizens*. These representations are explicated by transitivity processes and discursive strategies. The transitivity processes identified in the study include material, verbal, relational and behavioural. The following discursive strategies are tactically deployed in the representation of social actors and actions as well as the ideological inclinations in selected Nigerian newspapers. The discursive strategies include: aggregation, functionalisation, differentiation, determination, genericisation, association, categorisation and collectivisation. The way social actors and actions are represented shows the ideological underpinnings of the news media which they want to project to the news consumers. While the pro-Biafra protesters are represented as violent, unruly, and nuisance, the protesters construe themselves as law-abiding citizens. While the Nigeria police construct the protesters as terrorists and a major threat to the economic growth of Nigeria, the protesters construe themselves as freedom fighters that must be

protected. The media representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest is sometimes negative in a way that portrays the activities of the protesters as inimical to the growth and development of the nation's economy. The protesters are sometimes also constructed as terrorists and a major threat to the economic growth of Nigeria, whereas the protesters construe themselves as freedom fighters. From the data selected and analysed, it was discovered that reports in *The Nation* and *The Punch* newspapers tend to surreptitiously project the protesters as economic saboteurs, while *The Sun* and *Vanguard* subtly depicted them as law-abiding citizens and freedom fighters. This study, therefore, corroborates existing studies that media representation of social actors and actions is not neutral. This representation of the PBP therefore, underscores the contextual relationship between language and social practices as well as the perpetuation of these practices in newspapers. The representational strategies identified here are similar to those identified in Osisanwo's (2016) study of the Boko Haram insurgents. The current study also further corroborates van Leeuwen's (2008) study about the capacity for social actors to be assigned roles and how these roles can be triangulated in text and talk.

### **c. The ideological inclinations in the reports on the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests**

Five ideologies underlie the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests. These ideologies include: separatist, pacifist, liberationist, dissentist and indifferentist. Several selections from the transitivity system indexed the ideologies. There was also the use of polarity, the positive 'self' and negative 'other' construct. Naming and reference were also strategically used to track the ideologies. The separatist ideology (which bifurcates into subtle and radical) and the liberationist ideology advocate for a radical approach to self governance, while the pacifists proffer the milder approach of negotiation and dialogue, the dissentist jettisons the idea of self governance and the indifferentist has an indifferent stance. These findings corroborate van Dijk's (1998) study on how opinions and ideologies expressed in the press can be observed. The study also differs from Chilwa (2015) and Egbunike (2015) as it identifies how ideologies are tracked and integrated in discourse.



#### **d. Lexicalisation and grammaticalisation in the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests**

The lexicalisation and grammaticalisation that indexed the news reports on the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests were also examined in this study. The data analysed featured modal words used to show the speaker's attitude, feelings and sentiments. These modal words include modal nouns, modal verbs, modal adjectives and modal adverbs. There was also the use of overlexicalisation and relexicalisation which help to point out the thematic and ideological preoccupation in the news reports. Grammaticalisation bifurcates into transitivity choices such as the material, mental, relational, existential and verbal process. There was also the use of grammatical modalities in the discourse of the protest. These grammatical modalities include epistemic modality and deontic modality. Other features of grammaticalisation include pronominalisation, substitution and clause complex. While lexicalisation revealed that synonymy and collocation are used to unmask social issues in the discourse, grammaticalisation explicated through pronominalisation polarised the social actors in the discourse.

Unlike Ajayi and Bamgbose (2019) that examines how linguistic tools are employed to construct identities in conflicts, the current study uses linguistic tools to track and triangulate ideologies in the reportage of the protest. It also uses these tools to investigate how social actors and their actions are represented in the reportage of the protests.

#### **5.2. Conclusion**

The recent pro-Biafra protests across Nigeria have become an important topic which the print news media have constructed differently. The media construction of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protests was examined in this study with a view to identifying the representational strategies and ideologies embedded in the news reports.

The examination of the representation of social actors and the ideologies espoused in the pro-Biafra protests has identified how the print news media manage the voice of the social actors and actions in the protests and shape reader's opinion about it. This representation of the pro-Biafra protests, therefore, underscores the intrinsic

relationship between language and social practices as well as the perpetuation of these practices in the print news media.

Studying the representation of the 2015 and 2016 pro-Biafra protest, especially the social actors, could help to give more insight into the cause of the protest and procure an end to the trend in order to avert possible future upheavals.

### **5.3 Recommendation for further studies**

The investigation of the representation of social actors and the ideologies espoused in protest has contributed to the linguistic description of the discourse of protest in the news media. It is necessary to further investigate stance and identity negotiation in the discourse of the pro-Biafra protest.

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## APPENDIX

Vanguard Wed, Oct 7, 2015pg 34

**Aftermath of bloody clash with Navy, Police: IPOB draws battle line**

**Biafra must rise again – MASSOB, IPOB, BZM**

**We won't condone unlawful assembly – Police**

**Allegation of Shooting IPOB members is false – Navy**

It would appear that the dust raised by last August 30 bloody clash between members of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB and teams of Naval and Police personnel, which resulted in the death of two IPOB members and injuring about ten others, including a Naval personnel is yet to settle. **This is because members of IPOB are insisting that the attack on their members and their death would not deter them from agitating for the realisation of Biafra.**

Reacting to the development, Anambra State Coordinator of the group, Ikechukwu Okoye said their main goal is to restore Biafra as a republic, adding that they are still waiting for further directives from their Directorate to determine their next line of action.

...

On whether they intend to launch a counter-attack against the Navy and the Police, he said they were still waiting for directives from the IPOB Directorate on their next line of action.

Vanguard Wed, Oct 7, 2015 pg 35

MASSOB, IPOB, others devise new tactics to actualise Biafra

MASSOB, the IPOB and the Biafra Zionist Movement, BZM have expressed optimism that the much desired Biafra Republic would soon be restored or actualised.

Although both MASSOB and IPOB appeared to have split into two factions each, just as BZM leadership is currently in detention and at the same time facing charges of conspiracy and treasonable felony, they still believe their dream of actualising Biafra must surely come to pass.

‘You don't shoot at people who have no fire arms but only have placards on them; this is an act of man's inhumanity to man

DAILYSUN Wed, Oct 7, 2015. Pg 12

#### AIG spits fire against MASSOB, IPOB

Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police Usman Gwary, in charge of zone 9, has declared categorically that the police are ready to battle the Movement for Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB)

Gwari, who spoke in Awka during his familiarisation tour of Anambra State Police Command, condemned the activities of the two organisations, which he said, were inimical to the peace of the people and warned that the police would not fold their arms and watch the peace enjoyed by the people to be derailed.

DAILY SUN Wed, Oct 21, 2015

#### Radio Biafra: Protest turns bloody

...4 shot, 15 injured in Onitsha as agitators storm Port Harcourt, Asaba

Port Harcourt, the Rivers State Capital, was literally shut down for several hours yesterday by members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), who now preferred to be known as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Members of the group defied the early morning rain to protest the arrest, detention and trial of the Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

This is even as the protest in Onitsha, Anambra State, turned bloody, four people were shot and 15 were injured by policemen.

Kanu was arrested in Lagos last Wednesday by the Department of the State Security (DSS), arraigned in Abuja and granted bail.

The protesters, drawn from different parts of Rivers State, assembled as early as 7am before they took over the major streets of Port Harcourt, causing heavy vehicular and human traffic in Aba, Azikiwe, Ikwerre, Rumuola roads, among others.

...

The protesters, who were non-violent, alleged that the Federal Government was determined to relegate Igbos to the background, **vowing that no amount of intimidation and harassment could dampen their spirits.**

In Asaba, chanting songs of solidarity, the placard-bearing protesters described Kanu's arrest as uncalled for and totally unacceptable, insisting that they were no longer comfortable with the Nigerian government.

Secretary to the group, Nnennanwaoha said, “we have suffered enough in the hands of the Nigerian government and we are no more comfortable with it.

“We want our freedom, that is why we are here. We are not comfortable with the Nigerian government, the intimidation, killing and all that; that is why we want our freedom. We feel very bad about his detention and it is affecting each and every one of us. We are not comfortable; we want to go,” he said.

Wed, 21 Nov, 2015 pg 44

Biafra protesters shut down Port Harcourt

Vanguard, Wed, Oct 21, 2015 pg 14

Protesters in Rivers, Delta, Anambra demand unconditional release of Biafra boss.

Supporters of the Radio Biafra boss, under the umbrella of the indigenous people of Biafra, IPOB, resident in Rivers, Delta, and Anambra states have taken to the streets demanding the unconditional release of their leader and presenter, Mr Nnamdi Kanu.

...

Many of the protesters were, however, arrested by the Police. The protesters in Rivers State, who stormed the Port Harcourt, were split into seven groups appeared peaceful, although, chanting war songs also called for the creation of the sovereign state of Biafra.

The agitators, mainly business men and women of Igbo extraction, said it was an act of impunity for the federal government to apprehend a man who is championing the cause of his people.

The IPOB supporters claimed that they were not part of the Movements for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, adding that the IPOB is fighting a true cause for the emancipation of the Biafrans.

...

Dream

They expressed grievance with the alleged unfair treatment of the Igbo by the Nigerian State, stressing that Biafra of their dream was a reality.

Speaking, one of the coordinators of IPOB, Mr Chidiebere Aguodi said, “the main reason for the protest is that our able chairman, the father and founder of IPOB worldwide has been held by President Muhamadu Buhari. We need him to be released to us unconditionally. The protest for now is peaceful, but we need freedom. We are

armless, we have not harmed anybody and we owe nobody any apology for what we are doing. As Biafrans, we stand for peace and justice will reign.

....

“I advise the country to allow Biafrans to go because the marriage has lasted for 101 years and there was no understanding. The battle lasted for 40 years and we have won three times. All we want now is freedom because we are tired of the marriage. Let Nigerians be Nigerians and Biafrans be Biafrans.”

...

### Songs of grievance

Chanting songs of grievance and displaying placards, which bore various inscriptions such as “Freedom for Biafra, free Nnamdi Kanu”, “We are not terrorists, we are freedom fighters”, “We are tired of intimidation and harassment by Nigeria Government”, “Biafra on the move” amongst others, the protesters said they were no longer comfortable with the Nigeria government.

Speaking during the protest, secretary of IPOB, Delta State chapter, Nnenna Nwaoha, said: “The reason for the protest is for Nnamdi Kanu to be released, we have suffered enough in the hands of the Nigerian government and we are no more comfortable with it.

“We want our freedom. That is why we are here. We are not comfortable with the Nigerian government, the intimidation, killing and all that: that is why we want our freedom. We feel very bad about his detention and it is affecting each and every one of us.

“The federal government should release our Director, Dr Nnamdi Kanu and we also want our freedom. As a nation that is due for freedom, we want to go; we are tired.

...

### Breach of Peace

Anambra Commissioner of Police, Mr Hosea Karma, confirmed the arrest of the protesters, saying it was because they were parading along the Enugu-Onitsha expressway thereby causing breach of peace.

According to the CP, “there is nothing like Indigenous People of Biafra. Those people constituted nuisance on the high way and that was why they were picked.

DAILYSUN Thur. Dec. 10 pg 12

Biafra: North, South leaders recommend FG – protesters’ talks

We've right to self-determination – Igbo elders

Barely 24 hours after members of the indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign state for Biafra (MASSOB) announced the suspension of protests, leaders of thought from the North, South South and South East have recommended dialogue between the Federal Government and protesters.

Also, they resolved to set up a committee to meet with Igbo elders with the view to resolving their grievances, while urging the Federal Government to respect the federal character principle in appointments.

....

In a communiqué released by Alhaji Maitama Sule (chairman), Senator Godswill Akpabio (coordinator) and Dr Dozielkedife, after a meeting in Abuja yesterday, which had 40 leaders from three zones in attendance, the meeting said that protests and agitations should be “conducted under guided and peaceful atmosphere, are part of democratic expressions,” adding: “Therefore, it is necessary for the youths who conduct themselves within the ambit of the law to engage government and its agencies in dialogue, with a view to addressing the root causes of the protests.”

...

Looking at the state of affairs in the country, the meeting noted some lingering issues associated with “national question, which precipitate anger, acrimony and animosity in our body-politic.”

Also, it noted policy of exclusion in governance, which has caused “strong feelings of alienation, frustration and antagonism.”

DAILYSUN Mon. Sep. 7, 2015. Pg 10

Police storm Uwazurike's house, arrest 50 MASSOB members

...Group threatens fire for fire over arrest

DAILYSUN Wed. Sep. 16, 2015 Pg 10

Buhari can't stop Biafra –MASSOB

-Police, Army, DSS barricade Ojukwu Library

-Abort group's meeting in Imo

Members of Movement for the actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, (MASSOB) in Onitsha, Anambra State have said that the clampdown on its members by President Muhamadu Buhari would not silence the movement until the Biafra State is actualised.

MASSOB Deputy Director of Information, Mazi Chris Mocha, stated this yesterday in Onitsha while speaking with journalists. His words, “Buhari cannot stop us from actualisation of a sovereign state of Biafra even if he sends the entire security operatives in the country to the South East and South South geo-political zones.”

...

“Tell me a country where non-violent freedom agitators are chased around the way MASSOB is. It is not done anywhere. But that cannot deter us.”

Quoting Uwazuruike, the MASSOB spokesman called on the international community including America to come to the rescue of MASSOB.

DAILYSUN, Mon, Sep. 21, 2016 pg 10

MASSOB writes Pope over safety of detained members

...Faction accuses Uwazuruike of insensitivity

Movement for the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB) has appealed to the Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis to visit Nigeria and prevail on President Muhamadu Buhari and the security agencies to let its members alone.

The MASSOB Director of Information, Awka South region, Paul Obi-Okoye, disclosed this yesterday, in Onitsha, while lamenting the frustrations they were passing through over the safety of their members being hounded by security agents.

The Punch, Nov. 16, 2015 pg 6

Biafra agitators storm Imo, demand Kanu’s release

Members of the Movement of the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra and the Indigenous People of Biafra on Friday stormed Owerri, the Imo State capital calling for the unconditional release of the detained Director of the *Radio Biafra*, Mr Nnamdi Kanu.

The agitators who were over 5000 youths also demanded the establishment of the State of Biafra.

They marched across the major roads as security operatives comprising soldiers, police and other relevant agencies followed them.

Daily Sun. Friday Sep. 4, 2015. Pg 10

Pro-Biafra group/Navy clash: Ohanaeze gives FG 14-day ultimatum

Following the recent clash between members of the Pro-Biafran Group and Nigeria Navy Personnel in Onitsha, Anambra State where scores were wounded and two feared dead, the Pan Igbo group, OhanezeNdigbo, youth wing, yesterday give the Federal Government 14 day's ultimatum to fish out and prosecute the perpetrators of the crime.

OhanaezeNdigbo, in a two paged press statement signed by the state deputy youth leader and director of operations of the group, IfeanyichukwuChigbo and issued to journalists in Onitsha recalled that two members of MASSOB were last week killed in Ugwuta road Onitsha before the Sunday clash, which according to him, claimed seven lives and left scores injured.

The Nation, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2015. Pg19 (Commentary: Editorials)

Biafra, who hath bewitched thee?

Sir: I plead that the so called Biafrans count the cost of secession which I consider as far more expensive than the cost of integration or re-integration as the case may be. Let them count the cost of war for it is far more expensive than the cost of peace.

My people should not forget so soon, how the jaws of starvation pierced into their marrow, it became a case of survival of the fittest between mother and child.

One thing I am very sure of is that we are not ready for self-governance; disunity and selfishness will not permit that, or how does a nation stand when every individual wants to be governor of the governed.

Besides, do not be deceived; know who your kinsmen are: the South-south that comprises of Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-Rivers, Delta, Edo and Rivers states are not joining the Biafra bandwagon. If you hope to rely on crude oil as a pillow, be warned, there is no fool in Fulham.

The Igbo nation due to her industrious nature are known to be widely dispersed, so be it known that you endanger the lives of your kinsmen in Diaspora. Do not be deceived, Nnamdi Kanu who you call your hero and who is igniting discord among you is a citizen of the United Kingdom and his family is well tucked in the bosom of a well-developed country. When the going gets tough, your warlord and hero will



abandon the cause and fly to safety, but you the misguided ones will be left to bury your dead and reap the negative spoils of war.

...

So whose cause are you fighting? Is it that of a man who does not have the support of his political and traditional leaders in any form or context in the entire Igbo nation, in fact not a single worthy Igbo man has come out to show solidarity?

Here are a few posers: If the Biafra struggle becomes a reality (which I doubt), where would the capital be? Which state would produce the first president? What verifiable resources would sustain the new country? In a section of the country where individualism hold sway, conceding positions and benefits to others (including fellow Igbos) is not a character we are known for; “every man for himself, God for all of us” so the mantra goes.

My fellow kinsmen, do not be deceived, you have lost the battle before it started, so stop chanting incantations of war.

The Nation, Thurs. Nov. 19, 2015. Pg 16 (Editor’s Mail bag)

Is Biafra the Panacea for misgovernance?

Sir: The clamour for the actualisation of the sovereign state of Biafra by Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) made up of majorly youths who only heard about the entity called Biafra has increased in recent times in proportion to the level of impoverishment and disillusionment of the South-eastern Nigerian masses. These youths in the past were usually engaged in various forms of entrepreneurship apprenticeship after primary education for upwards of 6-8 years before their masters set them up in the same business. Majority of the primary and secondary school leavers in recent times no longer have the patience and endurance to undergo this entrepreneurship apprenticeship that the typical Igbo youth was known for because of avariciousness and the get-rich-quick syndrome that has pervaded their psyche.

...

Majority of these foot soldiers of the new Biafra movement who have been bamboozled by their leaders have hardly left the confines of eastern Nigeria to either the north or the West and so are not in proper position to claim that Igbos are not wanted in Nigeria. The truth remains that the Igbos in their true characteristics are spread in all nooks and crannies of this great country pursuing their legitimate livelihoods without hindrance. One wonders then how these agitators who have never left the confines of their comfort zone got to know except from their wildest imagination that their people are being marginalised.

Governance failure at all levels has exacerbated the plight of these youths and supposed elders who have also lost their means of livelihood due to the precarious economic situation of the country. Lack of good governance had grossly accounted for the impoverishment of these jobless and unemployable youths and elders who ordinarily would have found succour as factory hands if we had attained significant industrial growth and development, even the unemployment rate among tertiary institution graduates has worsened the already bad situation.

...

Just as Boko Haram initiators enjoyed great patronage of multitude of uneducated unemployed hapless followers, those who established and fund the new Biafra enterprise had been inundated with many willing followership who are being brainwashed into believing of an utopian Biafra where milk and honey will be in super-abundance even for those uneducated and untrained in any trade!

The Nation, Thursday, Nov. 19, 2015Pg 17 (Comments)

The Pro-Biafra jokers

Biafra is not a new phenomenon. It was the idea of the late Ikemba Nnewi Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, who felt that he had no choice than to pull his people out of Nigeria in 1967 because of perceived injustice, marginalisation and unfair treatment.

...unfortunately, some funny characters who knew nothing about the origin of Biafra are today making noise all over the place, claiming that they want to resuscitate Biafra.

...to resuscitate Biafra for what? With who? It cannot be with Nigeria because the country has gone past that stage of fighting itself. The truth is if these Biafran agitators do not retrace their steps, they would be treated like the Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram insurgents – that is as common criminals.

The crack

Vanguard, Thurs. Nov. 19, 2015. Pg 15

Biafra: Protesters chant “Biafra or death” at Aba separatist rally

- Protesters tears Nigerian flag
- Court orders DSS to produce Nnamdi Kanu, Nov 23
- Fr Mbaka urged to apologise
- MASSOB is selfish – TIC

Thousands of protesters took to the streets in Aba, the Abia State capital, yesterday, to demand the release of Mr. Nnamdi Kanu, who operated a radio station calling for a separate state of Biafra.

In Aba, the commercial hub of Abia State, some 2000 people carried placards with slogans such as “Biafra or death” and waved the Biafran flag – a golden rising sun on red, black and green.

Others wore T-shirts and caps with the image of Nnamdi Kanu... A reporter reportedly tore a Nigerian flag.

Daily Sun. Tues, Sep. 1, 2015Pg 10

3 killed as naval officers, pro-Biafran group clash in Onitsha

3 killed, scores injured as Navy Biafran group clash in Onitsha

No fewer than three persons were reportedly killed following a clash between Navy personnel and members of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in Onitsha, Anambra State.

It was gathered that some members of Biafra were allegedly killed on Sunday afternoon during a clash with men of the Nigerian Navy at Onitsha.

Though there were conflicting reports as regard the casualty figure following the clash with IPOB members...

Some sources said as many as 10 persons were shot dead while other sources said between three and five persons were allegedly killed when the Naval officers from the Odekpe Naval Post but drafted to Uga junction for on the spot check allegedly had misunderstanding that led to the bloody clash near Premier Breweries Onitsha along the expressway.

DIALYSUN Wed. Nov. 18, 2015Pg 27

Buhari fuelling Biafra agitation – Ezeife

- Urges Igbo to seek God’s face

Chief Chukwuemeka Ezeife, former governor of Anambra State and Political Adviser to former President, Olusegun Obasanjo, is a clear voice for the Igbo. He spoke with Abuje Metro on the row over EzeNdigbo in the South West states, the arrest of Biafra agitator, Nnamdi Kanu and President Muhammadu Buhari’s ministerial list. Excerpts:

...

Igbo agitation for Biafra has not died down. Recently, Nnamdi Kanu with his Radio Biafra has come under pressure from the security agencies, including his arrest. How do you see this agitation?

I see it the way any fair-minded person should see it. Our president, Muhammadu Buhari, is promoting the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)...

MASSOB people wanted to do anniversary, a peaceful protest; no gun, no machete, a non-violent one for that matter; they were descended upon and 12 of them were mowed down and many injured. Now one of them went under the Freedom of Information Act, freedom of expression and he is caught, detained, tortured and eventually bailed. Then, people are protesting his detention, and I was told the protest turned bloody. Not that the protesters attacked anybody, but that those who are supposed to protect them turned the weapons against them. That is not the kind of Nigeria we want.

Vanguard, Wed. Nov 18, 2015. Pg 5

Biafra: Count us out, S-South tells agitators

UYO – The ethnic nationalities of the South-South geo-political zone, Tuesday, denounced demands for Biafra by Igbo in the South-East zone and called for an immediate cessation of pro-Biafra protests on their soil.

This came as the South East Governors Forum, SEGF, summoned an emergency meeting of Igbo leaders to discuss the persisting protests by members of the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, which has paralysed economic activities in the old region.

The Nation, Wed. Nov. 18, 2015 Pg 42

Biafra agitation shows Nigeria is fragile, says Oyegun

The National Chairman of the All Progressive Congress (APC), Chief John Odike-Oyegun, said yesterday that the re-emergence of the struggle for the Sovereign State of Biafra is a sign the country is fragile.

Oyegun spoke while receiving a faction of the Peoples Democratic party (PDP) in Anambra State, led by the governorship candidate of the party in the April 11 electio

...

Embrace peace, Southeast governors urge agitators

Southeast governors have advised the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Independent Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) to embrace peace.

They added that only through the attainment of peace can the Southeast witness development.

The governors rose from a meeting in Enugu State yesterday with a decision to resolve the crisis. They said they would consult with “OhanaezeNdigbo traditional rulers...

...

### **Ohanaeze youths warn against state of emergency**

The Ohanaeze Youth Council (OYC) has urged President Muhammadu Buhari not to impose a state of emergency in the Southeast because of agitations for the state of Biafra.

...

It accused some northern elements of inciting President Buhari against Ndigbo.

The statement said those recommending military intervention were misleading the president and encouraging disunity.

### **Southsouth ethnic nationalities reject Biafra**

The Conference of Ethnic Nationalities of the Southsouth (NENS) has rejected the call for Biafra saying it will resist any takeover of lands in the Southsouth.

In a 10-point communique after its meeting in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital, NENS said it was shocked that the Igbo, who returned to Nigeria after the surrender of Biafra on January 15, 1970, with tales of horror, could still talk about Biafra.

...

NENS said the Igbo, more than any group in Nigeria, should protect the unity of Nigeria as they have more investments outside their homeland.

It called on well-meaning Igbo to call their wards to order to prevent an avoidable crisis.

Wed. Nov 18, 2015. Pg 6

Again, army warns pro-Biafra protesters

...the Acting General Officer Commanding (GOC) 82 Division of Nigerian Army, Enugu, Brig-General Ibrahim Attahiru yesterday re-emphasised the warning against insecurity which the Division issued on Monday to pro-Biafra protesters. "Agitators should know that there is a certain borderline they should not cross," he said... the GOC stressed that as a reminder, the Nigerian Army would like to send an unequivocal

THE NATION, Wed. Nov. 11, 2015Pg 44

Pro-Biafra protesters cripple activities in Port Harcourt

Hundreds of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) members calling for the creation the sovereign state of Biafra yesterday protested in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

The presence of over 200 men of the Joint Task Force (JTF), deployed in the Aba/Port Harcourt Expressway did not deter them.

The protesters, who gathered at the Oyigbo junction as early as 6:30am, crippled commercial and other activities in major parts of the city.

The agitators were said to have arrived in the Garden City from Aba, Abia State, through the Aba Expressway.

...

Some of them later converged on a spot in the area, accusing the police of shooting live ammunitions at the protesters.

PUNCH, Wed. Nov. 11, 2015Pg 21

Rivers: Two feared killed in pro-Biafra Protest

Two pro-Biafra protesters were on Tuesday feared killed by purported stray bullets from the police after thousands of youths trekked about 40 kilometres from Aba to Port Harcourt in protest against the continued detention of the Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

Apart from the two feared dead, three persons, who sustained gunshot injuries, were said to have been rushed to an undisclosed hospital located in Oyigbo Local Government Area of Rivers State.

In the wake of the fresh protest, Governor Nyesom Wike announced a ban on street protest with immediate effect.

...

The protesters went violent after they learnt that some of their colleagues, who were intercepted by a group of riot policemen at the Eleme axis of Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway, were attacked.

It was gathered that the protesters had defied the teargas canisters shot by the policemen at Oyigbo and moved up to Artillery Bus stop on the Aba-Port Harcourt Expressway where the police refused to allow them to proceed further.

The protesters, who later became violent, pulled down Nigerian flags wherever they were seen, while motorists, who failed to chant the Biafra song got their vehicles smashed by the irate youths.

Chanting war songs, some of the youths stamped their feet on the ground as they surged along the road even as the police tried to stop them around Oyigbo Local Government Area.

It was gathered that the protesting youths, who also called for the secession of some South-East states from the country, vowed not to relent until their objectives were achieved.

Daily Sun. Mon. Nov. 23, 2015Pg 11

Biafra: Igbo elders to meet Buhari

- South-east govts, IPOB, MASSOB, Ohanaeze, others in crucial meetings

Igbo leaders, made up of governors, top politicians and traditional rulers have resolved to send a delegation of elders to meet with President Muhammadu Buhari on the protests by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and also the state of infrastructure in South-East, among others.

...

IPOB and MASSOB have locked down the South-East and South-South for the release of the Director of Radio Biafra and IPOB Leader, Nnamdi Kanu, who the court had ordered the Department of State Services (DSS) to be brought to court today.

PUNCH, Mon. 23 Nov. 2015Pg 12

Biafra: Igbo govts, leaders to parley with agitators, FG

Political and opinion leaders in the South-East, including state governors, on Sunday agreed to set up a committee to parley with pro-Biafran activists and Federal Government over the ongoing agitation for Biafra.

...

MASSOB and IPOB are championing the ongoing agitation, which had led to massive protests in major cities of the South-East and South-South.

The agitation was triggered by the detention of the leader of IPOB and Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

...the meeting resolved to send a delegation South-East Elders to meet President Muhammadu Buhari over the “marginalisation” of the zone, as well as other outstanding socio-economic issues that hinder development in the region.

“the elders also examined other issues including poor state of infrastructural facilities in the South-East, marginalisation in federal appointments and other socio-economic issues that impact on the economic development of South-East and resolved to support the decision of the South-East Governors to set up an Economic Council and urged them to interface with the Federal Government on remedial Measures.

Vanguard, Mon. Nov. 23, 2015Pg 16

Biafra: Igbo leaders to meet Buhari on Igbo marginalisation

- Eluomunoh’s statement on Biafra personal – Ohanaeze Youth Council PG
- You’re saboteurs, MASSOB tells Ohanaeze

Enugu – The meeting of Igbo leaders summoned yesterday by the South East Governors’ Forum, SEGF, to discuss the security implications of the agitations by members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, and the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, ended in Enugu with the leaders resolving to set up a delegation of Igbo leaders to meet President Muhammadu Buhari on the marginalisation of Igbo in the country.

They also agreed to dialogue with members of the MASSOB and IPOB groups with a view to ending the protests now rocking the old Eastern region.

DAILYSUN Wed. Nov. 11, 2015 Pg 10

Biafra: Buhari pushing Igbo to secede – Ezeife

Former governor of Anambra State, ChukwuemekaEzeife, has said president Muhammadu Buhari is pushing the South-East zone to contemplate seceding from Nigeria.

Ezeife observed that the current uprising in the South-East championed by the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and the Movement for the Actualisation of the



Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) was caused by President Buhari's body language.

The former governor made the remarks yesterday in a telephone interview with the Daily Sun.

He said Buhari's body language smacks of so much hatred for people of the South East, insisting that current activities by youths in the region is simply a reaction to the president's indifference to the plight of people of the zone.

His words: "Any time you beat somebody, the person is likely to cry. The South-East feels neglected and ignored. There are six principal political offices in the country as there are six geo-political zones. Each political zone should get one of those offices. They include the president, Senate president, chief justice, speaker and Secretary to the Government of the federation (SGF) and the least of them is the SGF.

"Among the zones in Nigeria, the South-East has been denied even the least of the offices. In addition, out of about 39 other appointments earlier made by Buhari, not even one came from the South-East.

DAILYSUN. Wed. NOV. 11, 2015, Pg 12

Again, Biafra agitators shut down Port Harcourt

- 3 injured, gov bans unauthorised protests

Rivers state capital, Port Harcourt, was yesterday, grounded when thousands of supporters of the Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) staged a protest.

At the 2 Brigade, Nigeria Army, Bori Camp, Armed Personnel Carriers (APC) were rolled out with armed soldiers positioned at strategic places.

The protesters, who gathered around Eleme junction yesterday morning resisted armed security men detailed to contain them.

The protest caused traffic gridlock in the city and stalled economic activities.

PUNCH Thursday, Nov. 12, 2015. Pg 19

Check pro-Biafra groups, ACF tells FG

A northern socio-political organisation, Arewa Consultative Forum, has asked the Federal Government to check the activities of pro-Biafra groups in the South-East of the country.

The group said the nation could not afford to engage in another civil war 43 years after the Biafra ended.

DAILYSUN

Buhari has resurrected the ghost of Biafra

Vanguard, Thursday, Nov. 5, 2015. Pg 15

MASSOB threatens to shut down Anambra over arrest of members

Nnewi – the Movement for Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, has given the military in Anambra State 48 hours within which to release five of its members allegedly arrested yesterday in various locations in the state.

DAILYSUN Fri. Nov, 6, 2015. Pg 37

Britain toys with another woe of Biafra

Following the arrest of some Nigerians demonstrating for the resuscitation of sovereign state of Biafra, Britain is back at its pastime of trying to steal the show with its claim of what it called its civil war time record of preserving the sanctity of Nigeria's national borders. Certainly with its latest action, Britain is still exhibiting the mentality of the 1885 Berlin Conference of land grabbers in Africa. Unfortunately, Britain's civil war time record of purportedly preserving Nigeria's national border was discredited at that time and even now.

The Nation. Sun. Nov. 8, 2015 Pg 34

'How FG can stop Biafran agitation'

Federal Government's recent stance against the activities of the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has brought the activities of the group to public inquiry once again. In this brief chat with Sam Egburonu, the Deputy Secretary of Professor Ben Nwabueze-led Igbo Leaders of Thought (ILT) and Founder/Leader of Igbo Youth Movement (IYM), Evangelist Elliot Uko, explains what must be done to stop the agitation.

Why is the Biafra breeze blowing across the South-East many years after the civil war?

It has always been there. Young people all over the world all through history have always been adventurous and daring. The idea of re-enacting Biafra Republic has always been in the hearts and minds of young people, especially those who seem not to believe that Ndigbo will ever get justice in Nigeria. Igbo youths find Biafra a very attractive option. It is new, it has always been there. I grew up in Enugu in the 70s...

DAILYSUN. Wed. Sep. 9, 2015

MASSOB spits fire

- Cooperate with Uwazuruike or else ...
- IGP orders crack down on pro-Biafra groups

The Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), has urged the Federal Government to cooperate with its leader, Chief Ralph Uwazuruike, for peace to reign in the South East and the entire country.

Also, MASSOB warned the police in Aba, Abia State against disruption of its thanksgiving service slated for the city on Sunday.

SUNDAYSUN. Nov. 8, 2015. Pg 6

Biafra protest rages in South East

- Group marches in Aba, vows to shut down city Monday

Members of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) on yesterday protested round the major streets of Aba, the commercial hub of Abia State over the continued detention of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu of the Radio Biafra fame with a vow to shot down the city on Monday. This was in defiance of the warning of the Inspector General of Police, Solomon Arase for the group to discontinue its violent protests across the South East.

The IGP had in a statement issued through the Spokesperson of the force, OlabisiKolawole warned that the group should stop its protest as information suggested that members of IPOB were planning to use dangerous weapons during its protest in some of the southeast states of the country.

...

**Protest escalates in Anambra**

- CLO, Human Rights groups condemn killings

Members and supporters of the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) continued their public protest yesterday in Anambra over the detention of their leader, Nnamdi Kanu and demand for the sovereign state of Biafra.

Thousands of the protesters mostly dressed like refugees marched along the Bridge Head area of Onitsha before proceeding towards Awka old road causing serious traffic gridlock in the process.

Though the protesters were orderly and peaceful in their conduct, travellers coming from Awka were trapped along Abagana-Ogidi road for several hours as the large number of the IPOB members blocked the major road.

...

### **We can do without Britain – Ikedife**

Recent comments attributed to British High Commission in Nigeria that Britain did not support agitation for Biafra, at the weekend, attracted the ire of the Deputy Chairman of Supreme Council of Elders of the Indigenous People of Biafra, Dr Dozielkedife, who said that Britain pretended not to know the plight of people being marginalised in Nigeria.

“Indigenous People of Biafra should ignore the said British comments. Whether they support us or not, we will achieve Biafra even if the whole world says no, there is no going back no matter the odds; so long as there is marginalisation, so long as there is inequity in infrastructural development, and so long we are relegated to second or third class citizens in this country, we will never stop the quest for Biafra until there is equity and justice,” Ikedife said.

DIALYSUN, Tues. Nov. 17, 2015 (Front page)

Biafra: Army set for crackdown

- Warns protesters, ready to invoke rule of enforcement
- Detained Radio Biafra director’s mum, sister join protest in Umuahia – 5&11

Pg 5

Army set to clamp down on Biafra agitators

- GOCs issue warnings

Hard time awaits members of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and other pro-Biafran groups, as the Nigerian Army has decided to stop protests that could lead to breakdown of law and order as well as threaten the nation’s sovereignty.

Daily Sun gathered that the military will soon begin a crackdown on the pro-Biafran protesters, as part of effort to end activities of IPOB and other groups. Towards this end, the Army authorities have directed General Officers Commanding (GOCs) of all

its division across the country to issue a subtle warning to the agitators on the consequences of their actions and the likely penalty for such.

Pg 11

Biafra: Kanu's mum, sister lead protest

- As IPOB members march on Umuahia

The 'release-Nnamdi-Kanu' protest sweeping across the South-East and South-South took a new dimension, with the mother and sister of the detained Radio Biafra director joining a protest organised by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), yesterday in Umuahia, the capital of Abia State.

...

In a related development, the General Officer Commanding (GOC), 82 Division of the Nigerian Army, Enugu, Brigadier General Ibrahim Attahiru yesterday warned pro-Biafra activists in the South-East and South-South of its powers to suppress insurrection whenever the need arises.

Addressing newsmen in Enugu, yesterday, the GOC said: "These activities include protest marches, demonstrations and some reported cases of outright lawlessness and threat to lives and property.

...

I'll actualise Biafra – Uwazuruike

- Says ACF jittery about MASSOB

Leader of Movement for the Actulisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Ralph Uwazuruike yesterday charged members to remain steadfast and focused in the revolutionary struggle, saying the group's non-violent method has become a source of worry to Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) and the Nigerian Military.

The MASSOB leader, who was represented at the special meeting of Enugu West Senatorial District in Nachi, in Udi Local Government Area of Enugu State by the Deputy National Director for information, Mazi Chris Mocha, lamented that since Nigeria became independent, the lives and property of Ndigbo have never been guaranteed, leaving him with no option but to seek Biafra.

PUNCH

Police order clampdown on MASSOB, arrest 22 members

The police have arrested 22 members of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra and those of the Indigenous People of Biafra in some parts of the country.

The police said four suspects were apprehended in Anambra, six in Imo, 11 in Delta and one in Abia States.

A statement from the Force Public Relations Officer, Olabisi Kolawole, on Tuesday, in Abuja, said the arrests were sequel to the order by the Inspector General of Police, Solomon Arase, who issued a clampdown on persons or group of persons inciting violence and social disorder across the country.

PUNCH. Tue. Nov. 17, 2015

Army warns against pro-Biafra protests in Lagos

The Nigerian Army 81 Division has warned residents of Lagos State against joining the agitation for the creation of Biafra, adding that the military is prepared to quash any violent protest.

The General Officer Commanding, 81 Division, Maj. Gen. Isidore Edet, gave the warning while speaking with journalists in Lagos on Monday.

He also assured residents of security against Boko Haram and any other terrorist group.

The Nation, Tue., Nov. 17, 2015. Pg 10

Pro-Biafra protests shut Umuahia

The pro-Biafra protest train arrived Umuahia, the Abia State Capital yesterday, moving through major streets under the watch of security agents.

The pro-Biafra demonstration were fulfilling their vow to take the protest to all states of the Southeast before heading to Abuja, if the leader of the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) and Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu, was not released. Although economic activities were not disrupted, about 500 protesters marched through Isi Court in Umuahia South, Aba and Umuwaya roads as well as Bende and Enugu Roads peacefully.

They were accompanied by security agencies, apparently to forestall a breakdown of law and order.

Roads leading to the Government House was blocked with Police vans.

The protesters who carried Kanu's portrait and the Biafran flag, chanted songs of freedom and asked the Federal Government to order Kanu's release.

The Nation, Tue. Nov. 17, 2015 Pg 21

Why Biafra agitators must be stopped, by lawyers

Biafra died 45 years ago, following the end of the civil war. But a group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), is not giving up on the fanciful dream. In the past one week, it has marched through some Southeast and Southsouth states, whipping up the Biafran sentiment. The group is believed to have taken certain steps toward the actualisation of its dream. A new beer – Hero – with the rising sun as its logo has been launched in the Southeast. The rising sun was the symbol on the Biafra flag.

...

To some, the demonstrators are wasting time. But others believe they should not be treated with kid gloves.

Former president Olusegun Obasanjo called it a fake agitation, saying those behind it only want to draw attention to themselves to make money.

...

### **Igbo divided**

The renewed agitation for Biafra has split the Igbo. Some believe there is no justification for it.

A pro-Igbo group, the Igbo Information Network, led by ChuksIbegu, argued that the agitations may not be unconnected with hidden selfish interests.

It sees trend as an attempt by those who want to capitalise on the past and railroad the region into another "avoidable civil war".

Those agitating for Biafra argued that the Southeast and Southsouth have suffered too much marginalisation, that successive government has refused to restructure Nigeria into true federalism; and that there is still oppression against the people 45 years after the civil war.

## **The law and secession**

The 1999 Constitution and the Criminal Code view any act of aggression or any act to levy war on the state as treason.

...

## **What the law says**

Section 31 of the Criminal Code: “Any person who levies war against the state, in order to intimidate or overawe the president or the governor of a state is guilty of treason and is liable to the punishment of death.

“Any person conspiring with any person, either within or without Nigeria, to levy war against the state with the intent to cause such levying of war as would be treason if committed by a citizen of Nigeria, is guilty of treason and is liable to punishment of death.”

Vanguard, Tues. Nov. 17, 2015

Biafra: Nigeria remains one nation, says Buhari

Vanguard, Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2015. Pg 16

Pro-Biafra group protests in Umaahia, Nnamdi Kanu’s home-town

- Army vows to resist Pro-Biafra insurrection in S/South, S/East
- Monarchs from Nnamdi Kanu’s clan call for his release
- I’ll be alive to actualise Biafra – Uwazuruike

Umuahia– Pro Biafra protesters yesterday, carried their release-Nnamdi-Kanu protest to Umuahia, the Abia State capital and the home-town of Nnamdi Kanu, marching through the major streets of the city, but under the watch of security agencies.

Recall that the group last week crippled economic activities in the commercial city of Aba.

Vanguard, Friday, Nov. 13, 2015

## **Police arraign 7 over pro-Biafra protest**

- Markets, schools shut in Owerri
- Proposed meeting of S’Eastgvs, Ohanaeze postponed



- Rivers elders say indigenes not Biafrans
- Buhari's disposition encourages pro-Biafra agitation
- Army warns officers against lukewarm attitude
- Markets, schools shut as MASSOB, IPOB protest

Seven persons have been arraigned by the Police before a Chief Magistrate court in Port Harcourt for their alleged role in the Tuesday pro-Biafra protest in the state.

This is coming as markets, schools were shut in Owerri, Imo state capital as MASSOB, IPOB, protest again.

It will be recalled that forty four persons were arraigned by the Police at the magistrate court over similar protest recently in Port Harcourt.

...

### **Markets, schools shut in Owerri**

Schools and markets in Owerri, the Imo State capital, were shut yesterday, as scores of loyalists of Movement for the Emancipation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, and the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, again processed through the major streets of Owerri.

THE NATION Fri. Nov 13, 2015

### **Biafra agitation as big business**

Only a few Nigerians are aware that the whole noisy affair about agitation for Biafra is just big business. Starting from Ohanaeze's dim-witted campaign about Igbo marginalisation to MASSOB's hysteria and IPOB's war cry about self-determination for the Igbo, the agitation for Biafra is about the personal aggrandisement of the leaders of these groups that has nothing to do with Igbo interest.

As a matter of fact, the struggle of Eastern Nigerians (Igbo, Ibibio, Efik, etc) for self-determination concretely ended when Ojukwu (Ikemba Nnewi) contested the Onitsha Senatorial seat of the old Anambra State (Anambra, Enugu and parts of Ebonyi States), participated in the Sani Abacha national constitutional conference of 1995 as deputy leader of Ndi-Igbo delegates, and also contested the presidency of Nigeria in 2003 and 2007 under the platform of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) founded by Chief ChekwasOkorie.

The Nation, Fri. Nov. 13, 2015. Pg 21

### **Aba's losses amid Biafra agitations**

One of the protesters warned Aba residents to stock up food because the protest would cripple activities for a week. For three days, members of the Indigenous People of

Biafra (IPOB) very nearly crippled the commercial city. For about eight hours on each day, shops and other business facilities were shut as the protesters took over the streets.

...

Commuter had quite an ordeal. The buses and taxis were shut out and people had to trek over long distances. Shop owners, especially those at Ariaria Market, dared not open up for business, fearing they might be attacked by IPOB members.

DAILYSUN. Tue. Sep. 15,2015. Pg 10

MASSOB blows hot

- We will fight with the last drop of our blood
- Gives 24-hour ultimatum for release of arrested members

16th anniversary: MASSOB gives Abia CP 48 hours to release arrested members

...How we escaped police clamp down in AbiaNorth - Zonal leader

Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has given the commissioner of police in Abia State, Mr HAbillaJoshak, 48 hours to release 12 of its members allegedly abducted from their office in Umuahia or face the wrath of members.

The group's Information coordinator, Mr AnsalemOgbonna, issued the ultimatum, while decrying alleged harassment, brutality and incarceration of their members by the police.

DAILYSUN. Thur. Dec. 24, 2015 Pg 11

Onitsha killings: IPOB drags FG to court, demands N8.5bn compensation

- Takes COAS, IGP to ICC for human rights violation

Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has slammed an N8.9 billion suit against the Federal Government for alleged killing of their members at separate incidences in Onitsha, Anambra State.

Also, the group has signalled intent to drag the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and IGP to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of crimes against humanity.

...

**Biafra: Nigeria in danger – Ohanaeze youths**

A group, Ohanaeze Youth Council (OYC) Worldwide has raised the alarm that Nigeria is in a dangerous slide following clampdown on Biafra agitators.

...

The OYC said Biafra agitators have long warned about the plot by government agents to infiltrate their ranks and foment trouble thereby misrepresenting non-violent Biafra agitators as terrorists.

Vanguard. Thurs. Dec. 24, 2015. Pg 49

**Biafra: Judge hands-off Kanu's Trial**

- Kanu alleges bias, declines to answer to fresh charges
- Release Kanu now, engage agitators in dialogue, negotiation, CD tells FG
- Umeh berates S'East NASS members over silence
- 150 pro-Biafra protesters drag FG to court

Justice Ahmed Mohammed of a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja, yesterday, withdrew from the trial of the detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu.

This was even as Kanu, who has been in detention since October 17, yesterday, declined to enter his plea to the fresh six-count charge that was preferred against him by the Federal Government.

...

The IPOB leader said he had no confidence that the court would grant him fair trial, saying he would rather remain in detention than to be subjected to the rigours of trial that would eventually amount to nothing.

Kanu insisted that the department of State Services, DSS, had since his trial commenced, shown that it had a knack for disrespecting valid court orders.

...

**Release Kanu now, dialogue with agitators**

Meanwhile, authorities of Campaign for Democracy, CD, Anambra State chapter have restated their call on the Federal Government to release the leader of Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu to pave the way for dialogue and negotiations between the Biafran agitators and government.

...

### **Protesters drag FG to court**

Similarly, 150 pro-Biafra agitators, yesterday, dragged the Federal Government to court.

...

Equally cited as an applicant in the matter was an International non-governmental organisation, Kingdom Human Right Foundation International.

The plaintiffs filed the suit for themselves and on behalf of people that were killed and those injured during recent pro-Biafra rallies in the South East and South South parts of the country.

Vanguard, Thurs., Dec. 17, 2015. Pg 44

**BIAFRA: Court strikes out charge against Kanu**

...as protesters move to Lagos, ground Alaba (Lagos), Aba

- Our referendum on the way – Uwazurike - BIM, MASSOB at war

Abuja – An Abuja Chief Magistrate Court, yesterday, struck out the one-count criminal charge the Federal Government preferred against the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra, Mr. Nnamdi Kanu.

...

**Protesters move to Lagos**

Meanwhile, the train of the IPOB protesters has finally landed in Alaba International market, Ojo, Lagos, as thousands of youths carrying Biafran flag and wearing its T-shirts stormed the market yesterday afternoon.

It was learned that the protesters demanded that traders should shut down the market today and join them in the protest.

...

**Protesters ground Alaba (Lagos), Aba**

It is, however, a different story in Lagos as protesters, yesterday, grounded vehicular and commercial activities at the Alaba International Market, Ojo Local Government Area, Lagos, in a mega rally to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Radio Biafra Director and leader of IPOB, Nnamdi Kanu.

Thousands of protesters blocked roads and caused traffic jam on the ever busy routes to Alaba international market shouting solidarity songs and bearing placards in support of the detained Radio Biafra boss, Nnamdi Kanu.

...

### **Our referendum is on the way - Uwazurike**

Meanwhile, leader of Biafra Independent Movement, BIM, Chief Ralph Uwazurike, yesterday, disclosed that the much desired referendum for the actualisation of Biafra is very much on its way, even as it requires a lot of lobby within the United Nations, UN circle to make it happen.

This is coming on the heels of the appointment of three key officers of the youth wing of BIM, which he said was still known as MASSOB.

...

### **Youths slam presidency**

Still baffled by continued detention of Kanu, Igbo youths under the aegis of Ohanaeze Youth Council, OYC, Worldwide have blasted the Federal Government over the arrest and detention of pro-Biafra agitators, describing it as inhuman and anti-peace.

DAILYSUN. Thursday, Dec. 17, 2015. Pg 10

### **Pro-Biafran protest in Lagos**

...Traders suspend march over Kanu's rumoured release

Biafran loyalists, who were mostly traders yesterday, staged a peaceful protest at the Alaba International Market in Ojo Local Area of Lagos, shutting down shops and restricting vehicular movements in the Area.

The Biafran supporters demanded the unconditional dismissal of the case against Director of Radio Biafra, Mr Nnamdi Kanu.

DAILYSUN. Thurs. Dec. 17, 2015. Pg 11

Biafra: Court discharges Kanu

- DSS takes charges to High Court

A Chief Magistrate's court, Wuse Zone II, Abuja presided over by Shuaibu Usman yesterday discharged Nnamdi Kanu director of Radio Biafra and leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

...

### **BIM accuses MASSOB of N500m bribe to stall Kanu's release**

... We'll soon hold referendum on Biafra – Uwazuruike

Chief Ralph Uwazuruike's Biafra Independent Movement (BIM) has accused new leader of Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Uchenna Madu of collecting N500 million from the Federal Government to stop the release-Nnamdi Kanu protest.

In a swift reaction, MASSOB dismissed the allegation as baseless, saying it reflects the thinking of "a drowning group looking for where to cling," and described the allegation as "paid blackmail."

PUNCH. Thurs. Dec 17, 2015. Pg 4

Pro-Biafran agitators shut market, block roads in Lagos

Pro-Biafran traders and members of the Indigenous People of Biafra on Wednesday stormed the Alaba Market Road in the Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State to protest the continued detention of the Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

PUNCH Metro learnt that the protesters, who marched out from around 8.00am, sang solidarity songs and disturbed vehicular movements in the Alaba Market area and on the Lagos-Badagry Expressway.

The protest came a day after the Lagos State of the All Progressive Congress said the state would not allow hoodlums disguising as Biafran sympathisers to plunge the state into crises.

Our correspondent learnt that the Biafra supporters, who wore Biafran T-shirts and displayed its flag, were monitored by policemen from Ojo and trade Fair divisions, and the Area E Command to prevent violence.

SATURDAY SUN. Dec. 12, 2015. Pg 47

### **The War Within**

No doubt, there is a war raging in the South Eastern part of the country. For most of the youths and locals in the zone, they are emotionally and sentimentally attached to the struggle. They see it as a battle for their true identity, freedom and liberation from

perceived subjugation in a bigger entity called Nigeria. That explains why they are risking their lives to challenge the powers that be during street protests and other demonstrations.

Yet, there are some others who define the ongoing agitation for an independent Biafra republic as a façade. They reason beyond the spoken words of the leaders of the struggle to read between the lines. They simply conclude that the movement is about the battle for the soul of Ndigbo by opportunists, who are only out to lead a campaign that touches the nerves of the people enable them to line their own pockets at the expense of the masses.

...

As it stands, the struggle to dominate and lead the agitation for an Igbo republic may have created another war within Biafra itself. For now, the situation is like the case of a bird perching on a tiny rope, there is no peace for the bird and no for the rope.

Pg. 48

Charlatans hijacked MASSOB from me – Uwazurike

Chief Ralph Uwazurike, founder of Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has given reasons he renamed the organisation, Biafra Independent Movement (BIM).

According to him, charlatans were hijacking MASSOB and deviating from the non-violent approach to the struggle. He accused Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), and director of Radio Biafra London of defrauding him in the radio project.

Pg 49

Uwazurike is enriching himself with Biafra struggle – Madu, new MASSOB leader

The new leader of Movement for the Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Uchenna Madu, has said that former leader of the organisation, Chief Ralph Uwazurike was suspended because he deviated from the mission and vision of the Biafra struggle, and started personal aggrandizement using the organisation as front.

### **Uwazurike not fit to lead Biafra- Princess, Nnamdi Kanu's sister**

Princess Chinkwe Kanu, Nnamdi Kanu's younger sister in this interview took the leader of Biafra Interview took the leader of Biafra Independent Movement (BIM) formerly Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASOB), Chief Ralph Uwazurike to the cleaners on issues relating to Biafra.

She also spoke of why Uwazurike fell apart with her elder brother, Nnamdi Kanu and why the BIM leader will not lead Biafra to freedom...

THE NATION. Dec. 13, 2015. Pg 7

### **Dialogue with Kanu, MASSOB, Kukah urges Buhari**

**...Group condemns agitation**  
The Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, Most Rev. Matthew Kukah, has urged President Muhammadu Buhari to dialogue with the detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

The renowned clergy also maintained that the ongoing agitation for Biafra by the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) is legitimate.

Vanguard. Wed. Dec 2, 2015

### **40,000 IPOB members shut down S'East for detained Radio Biafra boss.**

- **Protesters ground Onitsha, Aba, Owerri, other places** - **Crowd defies military threat**
- **Kanu's trial stalled** - **Jewish community makes case for one Nigeria**

Vehement in their resolve to get the detained Radio Biafra boss Nnamdi Kanu released and to actualise their agitation for the Sovereign State of Biafra, no fewer than 40,000 members and sympathisers of Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, yesterday, shut down commercial and business activities in the South East states as they took to the streets to vent their spleen.

This was even as hundreds of agitators thronged the court located at Wuse Zone 2, Abuja, yesterday, to show solidarity to Kanu who has been in detention for the past two months.

DAILYSUN. Tue. Dec. 22, 2015. Pg 37



Nnamdi Kanu: Counsel blows hot over continued detention.

Mr Vincent EgechukwuObetta, counsel to the detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mr Nnamdi Kanu , has flayed the continued detention of the director of Radio Biafra by the federal government despite court orders granting him bail and the bail conditions met.

Obetta in an exclusive interview accused the federal authorities of rigmaroling from one flimsy reason to another in a desperate bid to nail his client who he said was only exercising his fundamental right of freedom of speech and association.

The Nation. Tue. Dec. 22, 2015. Pg 29

### **What are pro- Biafra agitators up to?**

Forty five years after the end of the civil war, some Southeast elements are invoking the spirit of the ill-fated Biafra Republic as they threaten secession, thereby undermining national sovereignty and unity.

For two months, pro-Biafra protesters have been on the prowl in the Southeast and Southsouth. They chant war slogans as they agitate for the Biafra Republic, which was dead and buried in 1970. These protests, according to the government, were inspired by a self-acclaimed activist, Nnamdi Kanu, who was standing trial for terrorism. His followers are agitating under the banner of a new group, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Thus, government is facing heat on two fronts – Biafra and Boko haram.

Forty five years later, new radicals bubbling with idealist yearnings are venturing into a terrain where Col. Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu (rtd), the secessionist leader, failed. In their view, history should repeat itself. But, to analysts, the new rebellion underscores the fragility of federalism. They argue that threats of secession may not be the appropriate answer to the non-resolution of the national question.

According to the protesters, the demonstrations are legitimate. They believe that the Southeast region has not fared better in a united Nigeria since Ojukwu's rebellion was crushed. Although many stakeholders have decried the protests, the demonstrators have not relented in disrupting commercial and social activities in some cities in the Southeast and Southsouth. However, the protests have been peaceful.

Since the protesters are predominantly Igbo, many observers have described it as the carryover of the region's hostility to President Muhammadu Buhari's bid for the Presidency. But, prominently Igbo leaders, who had witnessed the horror of civil war, have disowned the adventurists, stressing that their tirades were not products of widespread consultations and collective agreement. In their opinion, the protests are defeatist and product of blood cuddling political scam ever visited on Ndigbo...

### **Memory of the civil war**

Igbo leaders, who have decried the protest, said it was motivated by selfish interest. “It is about bread and butter,” said Monday Ubani, a lawyer. “The demonstration is being sponsored by bad losers of election. What is peculiar about the demonstrators is that majority of them neither saw nor experienced the 1967-1970 civil war. The intrigues, mistakes, connivance, betrayals, wisdom and foolishness of that war cannot be as real to them as to those who witnessed it.

### **Handshake across Niger**

Many believe that the youths have not learned from the lessons of history. The civil war period was the worst period in national history.

The cost to the nation was huge. The eyes of the world was on Nigeria for 30 months for the wrong reasons. Fears were rife that the most populous African country was about to disintegrate. Neighbouring West African countries were livid because they would not be able to cope with mass exodus from Nigeria. After the war, it was difficult to rebuild Igboland. Many people were missing. The rehabilitation of displaced people was cumbersome. The military regime also had to grapple with the problem of abandoned property.

### **Igbo in a united Nigeria**

Also, a group, Igbo Conscience, has warned of the consequences of demonstration by pro-Biafra agitators, saying that they are exposing the lives and business interests of Ndigbo to danger in other parts of the country. The group lamented that the “rootless and uncoordinated agitation” has renewed anti-Igbo sentiments in the southsouth and rekindled the old rivalry capable of affecting Igbo interests in the foreseeable future.

“We unequivocally distance the generality of Ndigbo from the present political clamour for secession from Nigeria. It is dubious. It is fraudulent. It is selfish and does not command the support of most Igbo. It is a non-event, inconsequential, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Ndigbo are better off and will do better in a united and prosperous Nigeria.

### **Danger of rebellion**

To Comrade Joe Igbokwe, the Lagos State All Progressive Congress (APC) Publicity Secretary, those chanting war slogans may put the Ndigbo in danger, if the peaceful demonstrations are hijacked and it turns violent, adding that the outcome may be perceived negatively by other zones...

### **Distorting history**

Igbokwe decried an attempt to distort history by causing the late Chief Emeka OdumegwuOjukwu in the image of a poster child for Nigeria’s unity, recalling that the ex-Biafra warlord had proposed a handshake across the Niger. Ubani also berated

prominent Igbo, who have participated in governance in the last 16 years for the backward position of the region, stressing that, while any Southwesterner can serve in any capacity in Lagos, former governors of Aba and Enugu have sacked Igbo who are not from the state from the civil service.

Igbokwe said the agitation was misguided, saying it is curious that some Igbo are now protesting marginalisation, despite the fact that prominent Igbo occupied prime position in the Jonathan Administration in the last six years.

SATURDAYSUN. Dec. 19, 2015. PG 48

### **Biafra battle not over – MASSOB, IPOB, others**

- Say release of Kanu triumph of justice, beginning of struggle
- Condemn Onitsha killing

There were wild jubiliations across the southeast states following the release of leader of Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB), Mr Nnamdi Kanu from detention. Abuja High Court had on Wednesday ordered the Department of State Security (DSS) to release, Kanu, who is also the director of Radio Biafra, London.

Reacting to this development, the leader of Movement for Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) Comrade UchennaMadu yesterday, said that the release of Kanu by the court in Abuja was a triumph of justice for the agitators of Biafra.

In statement, Madu condemned the shooting and killing of jubilating members of IPOB and MASSOB and called for investigation into the matter.

THE NATION. Tue., Dec. 22, 2015

Don't use MASSOB to make money, Uwazuruike warns

Founder of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Ralph Uwazuruike has warned expelled members to desist from using MASSOB to collect money from politicians.

Vanguard, Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2015. Pg 15

### **Biafra: Stop duping politicians, Uwazuruike tells ex-MASSOB members**

...as Ohanaeze youths slam presidency over arrest, detention of agitators

- Buhari toying with Igbo Unity – WIC

- Igbo safe in Nigeria – Bishop Ezeokafor

ABA—Founder of the Movement of the Sovereign State of Biafra , MASSOB, Chief Ralph Uwazuruike has warned expelled members of the organisation to stop using MASSOB to collect money from politicians.

DIALYSUN Tues. Dec. 22, 2015. Pg 5

Biafra: FG charges Kanu, 2 others with treasonable felony

- Brother raises alarm over safety of Radio Biafra founder

As members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) jubilated last week over the news of the release of their leader, Mr Nnamdi Kanu, by the Federal High Court in Abuja, the Federal Government has slammed a fresh charge of treasonable felony on the Radio Biafra Founder, who had been detained since three months ago.

Vanguard, Sat. Dec. 19, 2015. Pg 38

Biafra: Igbo leaders want end to street protests

- Lament politics of exclusion
- Demand true federalism

No fewer than 60 prominent Igbo leaders met yesterday in Lagos where they called for an end to the ongoing pro-Biafra street protests in Nigeria.

The eminent persons, who met under the auspices of Concerned Igbo Elders, Traditional Rulers and Stakeholders cautioned against exporting protests.

...

The leaders noted that the alleged exclusion of the zone in the sharing of key political offices, informed the protests.

DAILY SUN Tue. Dec. 22, 2015. Pg 28

### **Martyred for Biafra**

- Students canonise colleague killed on her way from school

Miss Ikeanyiwu Nkiruka Anthonia, 20, a 200 level student of Educational Management and Policy Department, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State never knew that her dying day was near. In fact, she had set her heart on celebrating Christmas with friends and family, but a vicious bullet left

her stone dead during the recent clash between security agents and members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Onitsha, Anambra State.

THE NATION. Mon. Jan. 18, 2015

Enugu warns against pro-Biafra protests

Enugu State government has distanced itself from today's proposed project by the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

In a statement last Friday, MASSOB said it would resume its protests to press for the release of IPOB leader Nnamdi Kanu. It said the project would not be limited to the Southeast, but would be worldwide.

...

**“Biafra struggle a blackmail against Igbo”**

President of Igbo Question Movement, Ben Onyechere, has described the agitation for an independent Biafra State as a blackmail against the Igbo.

Onyechere described it as “unacceptable the endangering of the lives of young Igbo boys in the guise of Biafra.”

The former Special Adviser to former Vice President Alex Ekwueme in a statement yesterday said:

“The struggle for Biafra is a deliberate blackmail and insult against the Igbo and those behind it should desist from smearing the image of the Igbo.

“Endangering the lives of young Igbos in the guise that they are Biafra is not acceptable because we cannot watch while our children are deceived and misled by a few selfish ones.

THE NATION. Tue. Dec. 1, 2015

MASSOB's faction expels Uwazuruike

A faction of the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) has expelled Chief Ralph Uwazuruike, who leads another faction of the group.

...

IPOB disowns errant members

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) has disowned members that attended the OhanaezeNdigbo peace meeting on Sunday in Enugu, describing them as “imposters”.

A statement by its spokesman, Emma Powerful, cautioned Ohanaeze to be careful in dealing with them.

IPOB members intentionally boycotted the meeting until our leader is released unconditionally,” the statement said.

...

### **Pro-Biafra protest disrupts activities in Nnewi**

Activities in Nnewi, Anambra State, was disrupted yesterday by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), which was protesting the detention of its leader and Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu.

The protesters mobilised from Onitsha, Asaba, Awka, Ekwulobia, Awka-Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi and Abia States and converged on Nnewi to salute the late Ikemba of Nnewi, Dim ChukwuemekaOdumegwuOjukwu.

Vanguard, Tue., Dec. 1, 2015

BIAFRA: IPOB, MASSOB shut down markets in Nnewi, Aba for Nnamdi Kanu

- Visit Late OdumegwuOjukwu’s house to seek his blessing
- Uwazuruike expelled, Madu takes over as MASSOB leader
- Forget Biafra, secession – Nwabueze

Over seven thousand members of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, yesterday, shut down markets and all commercial activities in Nnewi, Anambra State in solidarity for the release of the Director of Radio Biafra, Mr Nnamdi Kanu, who has been incarcerated by the Directorate of State Services, DSS, for over one month.

VANGUARD. Mon. Jan. 18, 2016. Pg 4

BIAFRA: Ban on protests still on, Police warn MASSOB, IPOB

- ...IPOB orders markets, banks, schools to shut down
- ...as Ateke denies issuing Buhari 14-day ultimatum
- ...arrest any pro-Biafra protesters, Wike orders Police

Enugu – Following indications, weekend, that the Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, and the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, will, from today, lock down the entire South-East and parts of South-South geopolitical zone over the continued detention Radio Biafra Director, Nnamdi Kanu, and secession for Biafra,

Enugu Police Command has warned the pro-Biafra groups that the ban on protests, demonstrations and civil disobedience was still in place.

### **Biafra: IPOB, family members disown Kanu's wife on change of lawyer**

...Orders closure of businesses in Abia for Kanu

As the detained Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) leader, Nnamdi Kanu is due to appear in court today, his group and family members have distanced themselves from his wife's plan, Mrs UchechiOkwu-Kanu, to change his lawyer, Mr. Vincent Obeta.

DAILYSUN. Tue. Dec. 1, 2015. Pg 11

### **IPOB shuts down Nnewi for Kanu**

- Says Ohanaeze leaders are Saboteurs

Thousands of members of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), yesterday, shut down Nnewi, Anambra State in a solidarity protest for the release of Director of Radio Biafra, Mr. Nnamdi Kanu. He has been in the custody of the Department of State Services (DSS) since November.

Members of IPOB mobilised from Onitsha, Asaba, Awka, Ekwulobia, Awka-Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Ebonyi and Abia States and converged on Nnewi for the protest.

One of the commanders, Emeka Onwane said the protest was a warning signal to the Federal Government to make sure that Kanu, who is scheduled to appear in court today, is released without further delay.

PUNCH. Thurs. Dec. 3, 2015. Pg 2

### **Bloody pro-Biafra protests in Onitsha**

A soldier was killed on Wednesday in a clash between security agencies and pro-Biafran protesters, the Indigenous People of Biafra, who equally alleged that four of their members were killed in Onitsha, the Anambra State capital.

The Onitsha Central Mosque was also razed by suspected protesters while several vehicles were either vandalised or set on fire during the mayhem.

Unconfirmed reports said the IPOB members were killed around 1. 30am on Wednesday at the Niger Bridge head area of Onitsha, where the agitators used as a rallying point to prepare for the day's protests in various parts of Onitsha.

PUNCH, Mon. Dec. 14, 2015. Pg 8

Forget Biafra, ACF tells IPOB, MASSOB

The pan-northern socio-political organisation, Arewa Consultative Forum, on Sunday asked the Indigenous People of Biafra and the Movement for the Actualisation for the Sovereign State of Biafra to jettison their current agitation for the Republic of Biafra.

The forum cautioned the agitators against dragging the country into another “bout of Civil War.”

VANGUARD. Fri. Dec. 11, 2015. Pg 15

**BIAFRA: No Nnamdi Kanu, no dialogue with FG – MASSOB, IPOB**

- **We won't be part of negotiations to strengthen Nigeria's unity – BIM**
- **Kanu must not die in detention like Yusuf – Rights groups**

Enugu – The ceasefire declared by the movement for the actualisation for the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, and the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, to give room for a dialogue with the Federal Government appears headed for the rocks.

The groups are peeved by reports that former governor of Akwa-Ibom State, Senator Godswill Akpabio led a delegation accompanied by some northern elites on behalf of MASSOB to Federal Government to broker a truce.

Consequently, they said the only way they would be part of the dialogue is if detained IPOB leader and Director Radio Biafra, Mr Nnamdi Kanu is part of it.

...

**On Biafra we stand – BIM**

The BIM, a former faction of MASSOB, yesterday, gave reasons it would not be part of any negotiation intended to strengthen Nigeria's national unity and stability, but rather the one that will ensure the actualisation of Biafra.

BIM said it had equally distanced self from the Outcome of an emergency meeting in Asaba, Delta State and the one earlier held by the Supreme Elders Council of IPOB at Sheraton Hotels and Towers, Abuja, Wednesday, December 9, 2015, where they agreed that the recent demonstrations in the Southeast and parts of SouthSouth were agitations for the right to “call ourselves Biafrans within the Nigerian equation.”

VANGUARD, Fri. Dec. 11, 2015. Pg 19



The real change Ndigbo and Biafra need

Many Nigerian elites are of the opinion that Biafra agitators should be crushed. From newspaper reports, this opinion is predominant among our retired Generals, and some serving top military and para-military personnel. Unfortunately, this is the most misguided of the views on how to resolve the question of Biafra, and held by people who still see Nigeria as their conquered territory. While a few of them remain calm and disposed to peaceful resolution of sensitive issues in Nigeria, the majority of them that we read about in the print media and watch on prime news television exude pride, ego and body language of emperors addressing their largely uninformed subjects. They don't care about the welfare of the common man, or the Igbo who they conquered and reduced to second class citizens in the country. To them in principle, any Southerner who is not a Yoruba man is treated and regarded as an Igbo man, hence the hatred for former President, Goodluck Jonathan.

THE NATION. Thurs. Dec. 3, 2015. Pg 6

### **Two policemen, nine others die in pro-Biafra protest in Onitsha**

Onitsha – the southeast's commercial engine room, was boiling yesterday as pro-Biafra protest turned bloody.

It was the second day of the planned three-day blockage of the Onitsha Head bridge – the gateway to the East from the Western part of the country.

The protests have been raging in Southeast capitals and Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, in the last few weeks. The call has been for the release of detained leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) who is also the coordinator of underground Biafra Radio.

...

### **IG orders maximum force**

Inspector General of Police Solomon Arase yesterday ordered the use of maximum force to enforce peace.

In a statement on the activities of MASSOB and IPOB released yesterday by Force Public Relations Officer OlabisiKolawole, the IG said:

“The Inspector-General of Police, IGP Solomon Arase has issued a stern warning to MASSOB and IPOB activists to stop threatening public peace or face the wrath of the law. The warning followed the observation by the Nigeria Police Force leadership of the increasing resort to acts of brigandage by sets of misguided individuals who apparently are hiding under the cloak of Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) to

threaten national security and public peace in parts of South East geopolitical zone and some other conterminous States.

DAILYSUN. Fri. Dec. 11, 2015

Biafra: MASSOB disowns Ikedife, others

...Says they don't have the mandate to represent MASSOB, IPOB

Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), yesterday disowned Southeast and Southsouth leaders involved in a reported dialogue over pro-Biafra protest.

In a joint press conference held in Enugu by Edeson Samuel, director of information, and UgwuokeIbemUgwuoke, secretary general, they insisted that nobody had the mandate of either the MASSOB or the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) to dialogue with the Federal Government.

MASSOB insisted that detained IPOB leader, Nnamdi Kanu, must lead any fruitful dialogue.

THE NATION. Thurs. Dec. 3, 2015

Biafra: Sultan sends delegation to Southeast monarchs

The Northern Council of Traditional Rulers and their Southeast counterparts have met in Owerri, the Imo state capital, to deliberate on the renewed pro-Biafra agitations.

DAILYSUN. Thurs. Dec. 3, 2015. Pg 11

Protest turns tragic: Many killed at Onitsha

- Stand still as agitators block Niger Bridge

Days of protests calling for the release of Director of Radio Biafra, Nnamdi kanu, turned tragic yesterday in Onitsha as many people were reported killed.

...

Enough is enough, IGP tells MASSOB, IPOB

... Orders massive deployment of mobile police personnel to SouthEast states others

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Solomon Arase, yesterday warned members of Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and

Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), not to provoke the will of the police and other security agencies with continuous threat to public peace.

Arase said the warning became necessary following alleged increasing acts of brigandage by MASSOB and IPOB, which threatens national security and public peace in the South-East and conterminous states.

Vanguard, Mon. Dec. 14, 2015. Pg 7

Biafra agitators should be given fair hearing – Christian elders

...say judiciary has been garrisoned by one religious, ethnic group

- Uwazuruike cautions IPOB against allowing factional MASSOB
- Says he has no hand in Nnamdi Kanu's travail
- Iwuanyanwu blasts protesters, Ndigbo
- Eze Igbo in Bauchi warns Igbo community against agitation

Abuja – National Christian Elders Forum, NCEF, yesterday, called on the Federal Government to critically examine the current agitation for the republic of Biafra and give the agitators a fair hearing.

The forum also observed with contempt the impression that only one section of the country with same religion faith was qualified to be the Chief Justice of the Federation.

...

### **Iwuanyanwu blasts protesters, Ndigbo**

Meanwhile, Champion Newspapers Publishers, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, had expressed serious reservation on the way some people have been going about their demand for sovereign state of Biafra.

VANGUARD. Thurs. Dec. 3, 2015. Pg 1

9 killed as pro-Biafra protests turn bloody

- 18 others injured as JTF fires at protesters
- We didn't attack pro-Biafra agitators – Police
- North, S-East monarchs meet in Owerri
- We didn't set Onitsha Central Mosque ablaze - Protesters

Abuja – The three week-long pro-Biafra protests turned bloody, yesterday, as Joint Military Task Force (JTF) killed nine of the protesters and injured 18 in Onitsha, the commercial city of Anambra State.

Irked by the stubborn disposition of the pro-Biafra agitators, who blocked the Niger Bridge Head and refused to give way to motorists, the JTF comprising Army, Navy, Police and Civil Defence troops, yesterday afternoon, opened fire at protesting members of indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, and Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB, killing nine people and injuring 18. Five people were killed at Obodoukwu Road...

### **Despite losing two men, we didn't attack protesters – Police**

The Anambra Police Command said, yesterday, that despite losing two of its men during the pro-Biafra protests in Onitsha, the command never retaliated.

...

### **How protests turned bloody**

The protesting IPOB members had blocked the Niger Bridge early Tuesday morning, thereby grounding vehicular movements in and out of Onitsha. From Asaba, Delta State, many boarded speed boats provided by the Marine Police to get in and out of Onitsha.

The protest was, however, aggravated by shooting to death of five IPOB members who were observing their peaceful procession at the Niger Bridge Head against the continued detention of their leader, Mr Nnamdi Kanu at about 1.30am.

...

### **Military should not push us into violence – IPOB**

Speaking with newsmen, National coordinator of IPOB, Mr Chidiebere Onwudiwe, alleged that five of their members were killed while 18 people sustained injuries, adding that he learned that more people were killed in the sporadic shooting by the JTF at Upper Iweka.

“The Joint Military Task Force could not disperse the protesters on Tuesday, and they went to regroup and invaded our members who were observing our three-day peaceful protest at the Niger Bridge at about 1.30 am Wednesday morning. We warned that they should not push us to be violent because we have people that can match their violence.” He said.

...

### **IG reads riot act, begins prosecution of protesters**

However, the Inspector General of police, IGP Solomon Arase, has disclosed that no fewer than 137 protesters have been arrested and currently undergoing prosecution. The police boss spoke yesterday, when he visited the Ministry of Interior.

According to him, the suspects are all members of MASSOB and IPOB.

VANGUARD. Fri. Dec.4, 2015, Pg 15

Biafra: Markets, schools, banks remain shut in Onitsha

- Soldiers, mobile policemen take over streets, conduct stop-and-search on motorists
- IPOB blames APC for death of 9, names victims
- MASSOB dissociates self, factions trade blames

Onitsha – Following the three-week long protests embarked upon by members of the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB, over continued incarceration of their leader Nnamdi Kanu which led to the alleged killing of its members by members of Joint Military Task Force, markets, banks and schools in Onitsha and its environs remained closed, yesterday, in apparent solidarity with the protesters.

PUNCH. Fri. Dec. 4, 2015 Pg 12

Onitsha: Pro-Biafran protesters' action, self-serving, says Ohanaeze

The socio-cultural organisation of the Igbo, the OhanaezeNdigbo, has condemned Wednesday's pro-Biafra agitator's violent protest that led to the death...