

MEDIA, POLITICS, AND HATE SPEECH: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The effects of political activities in developing countries and particularly Nigeria have shown that hate speech has become more vivid in the successive democratic dispensation than the previous ones thereby keeping the citizens more divided. Though, on the issue of hate speech the provisions of Nigeria Constitution, Nigeria Electoral Act and Journalism Ethic Code are clear but the question is where to draw the line between political statement, hate speech and the responsibility of the media. Therefore, this research sought to establish through a Critical Discourse Analysis approach the pervading of hate speech in Nigeria particularly in Nigeria's 2015 general election which has become possible helix of violence. Based on the discourse, it is clear that hate speech was the focal point and the instrument of campaign. Therefore, the parade of hate speeches in several newspapers analyzed showed that media was used by politicians to stoke up hatred and stimulate violence among ethnic and political groups during the electioneering periods as well as in the daily life. Hence, it is recommended that media outfits should always examine politicians' messages and evaluate their words, scrutinize their facts and claims, and judge carefully the intention and likely impact on the society to prevent being an accomplice in hate speech.

Keywords: *hate speech; media, discourse analysis; rhetorical strategies; critical race theory; inter-communal tension; political campaign; ethno-religious groups*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In developing countries, the phenomenon of ethnic, religious and political related violence seems to be recurrent. As such, numerous studies have been conducted about the post-election violence but little has been devoted in recent time at analyzing the principal cause of this violence in relation to hate speech as well as the role of media. More so, given the power as well as significance of news journalism to modern society, it should come as no surprise that the discourse of newspapers has been, and continues to be, scrutinized.

Politics and the media have long been intimately involved with each other, with media strongly setting the agenda that politics is very important (Harris, 2008). In particular, print media have long covered political campaigns, and the level of political rhetoric has sometimes been far more venomous most times. That is why across the world, election periods are marked with series of events that increase the tempo of the political environment. However, the situation is obvious in developing countries where electioneering

proceedings are accompanied with the presence of security operatives aimed at calming the atmosphere and preventing violence (Okakwu, 2015).

In Nigeria particularly, the effects of political activities which show hate speech have become more vivid in the successive democratic dispensation than the previous years. The deeds of politicians have only amplified the situation negatively and keeping the citizens more divided now than ever therefore signals a great source of anxiety to Nigerians at home and in the diaspora. With over 170 million populations and over 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria is a very diverse country in terms of ethnic orientations, cultural practices, religious beliefs and linguistics. According to Joel (2013) these variances have been a source of tension since the colonial era under British rule. However, its current indicators are speedily dividing the country into pockets of religious as well as ethnic cleavages and great source of concern. This is worrisome more so that according to Osaghae and Suberu (2005), the remote causes of the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 which claimed millions of lives was attributed to hate speech between Igbo traders and Hausa/Fulani traders in Northern Nigeria.

While the media may contribute to discourse and understanding, they can also be a factor in spawning social tension through stereotyping and promotion of hate speech (Adisa, Mohammed, & Ahmad, 2015). It is evident that the newspaper can disseminate hate speech or remarks based on racial or ethnic discrimination (Odera, 2015). Therefore, Tartius (2015) is of the view that the newspapers need to play a constructive role in their reporting of electioneering activities. The media also need to be strategic in deploying communication skills. This is important in view of the obligation of the media, as contained in Sections 22 and 39 of Nigeria 1999 Constitution, to hold government and individuals accountable for their actions, adding that such freedom and power, however, entailed responsibility.

In most nations of the world, the newspapers strongly set the agenda that politics is a very important concern. Political campaigns, candidates, and issues, especially at the national level, receive heavy coverage. Looking at this coverage more closely, however, reveals that some aspects receive more coverage than others and that politicians have resorted to use media for hate speech campaigns. Though, the challenges of hate speech cut across all countries. For instance, the 2016 Presidential election in the United States was a fertile ground for hate speech and up till this day, long after the election was won and lost, the American society remains divided on account of the unparalleled hate speech that attended the election. Specifically in Nigeria, hate speech is thick in the air (Ugbechie, 2017). First, it was PDP vs APC hate speech campaign of 2015 that birthed the current President Muhammadu Buhari government. Both parties were relentless in their harsh debauches of hate speech campaigns including profiling of candidates and trying to provoke different ethno-religious groups against each party's candidate.

Meanwhile, ethnic-induced hate speeches define the people's daily lives. The Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Kanuri, Ijaw, Efik, Ibibio and the over 250 ethnic nationalities that make up the entity called Nigeria all have hate tags for one another. In spite of this, there has been no official response or policy to ban hate-speech in Nigeria, although there are Laws against slander and perjury (Joel, 2012). Meanwhile, discourse analysis can be applied to any kind of text that has meaning (Parker, 2002), especially ethnic and political induced hate speeches. Therefore, in relation to this study, the analysis is based on generated texts published in Nigerian newspapers. Accordingly, the analysis examines the various ways in which the objects under study, that is hate speeches are constructed in the specific texts selected. In the light of this, the following research questions were explored:

1. How is hate speech used by Nigerian politicians make constructive aspect of language significant or not and in what way?
2. What are the rhetorical strategies used by Nigerian politicians in the 2015 general election activities
3. What are the subject positions (the identities) of the speakers?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Hate Speech Conceptualized

Hate speech is a communication that employs intolerant appellations to insult and denounce others either on the bases of their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or other forms of group membership (Bagdikian, 1997). Consequently, hate speech exemplifies rhetorical strategies which drive some people to a level of hostility in which they openly wish physical harm on others or political leaders, contravening vital norms that enable democratic government to function (Chaiken & Eagly, 1978).

According to Mrabure (2016) hate speech is commonly used to describe any message that disparages a specific person or a group of people. Hate speech can be in the form of speech, gesture, behaviour, writing, or display. On the bases of this, politically motivated hate speech is generally an antecedent to election related provocation and violence in Nigeria. Essentially, such speeches rob others of their dignity. Therefore, United Nation (2016) highlighted that hate speech includes: a) all dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, by whatever means; (b) incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group on grounds of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin; (c) threats or incitement to violence against persons or groups on the grounds in (b) above; (d) expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the grounds in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or discrimination; and (e) participation in organizations and activities which promote and incite racial discrimination.

Furthermore, hate messages lead to lower personal self-esteem and a diminished sense of security. According to Kiai (2007) hate speech leads to short- and long- term consequences which are similar in nature to the effects of other types of traumatic experiences. In view of this, Malik (2015) reiterated that as a way forward, the media have a key role to play, principally with regards to whittling down the effect of hate speech as well as provocative comments, by way of not promoting such. Adopting this policy can be much more effective than the lengthy and sometimes cumbersome process of litigation, especially in Nigeria. After all, the provisions of the code of practice (1998: 10) state thus: "A media organization shall not publish or air political adverts, advertorials and sponsored political news that seek to create hatred or incite violence." Therefore, "A newspaper organization shall reject any material intended for publication or airing by parties, candidates and other interests that contains hateful or inciting words and messages." In addition to that, "A newspaper organization shall refrain from publishing or airing abusive editorial comments or opinions that denigrate individuals or groups on account of disability, race, ethnicity, tribe, gender or belief."

Though, the provision of the code is self-explanatory, the question is where to draw the line between freedom of expression, hate speech and the right not to be discriminated against. Therefore, this research seeks to establish through a discourse analysis the pervading hate speech in Nigeria particularly, during the 2015 general election.

2.2 Hate Speech and Political Debacles in Nigeria

Various analysts and media contributors have noted the role of the newspapers in helping to curtail hate speeches and its many effects. It is in the light of this that the current role played by some newspaper organizations, particularly popular newspaper outfits in the country, in the name of political campaigns become worrisome.

In spite of the Nigeria Electoral Act of 2010 which spells out detailed provisions specifically barring politically inspired hateful speech, still cases of offensive images of major aspirants, in an effort to create

a vivid picture of a bad person flourish and have been described by Nigerians as ‘one step too far’. Specifically, Section 95 of the Act provides that no political campaign or slogan shall be tainted with abusive language directly or indirectly likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional feelings. Similarly, abusive, uncontrolled, slanderous or base language or insinuations or innuendoes designed or likely to provoke violent reaction or emotions shall not be employed or used in political campaigns. Section 102 of the Act further provides: “Any candidate, person or association who engages in campaigning or broadcasting based on religious, tribal, or sectional reason for the purpose of promoting or opposing a particular political party or the election of a particular candidate, is guilty of an offence under this Act and on conviction shall be liable to a maximum fine of N1, 000,000 or imprisonment for twelve months or to both” (Nigeria Constitution, 1999). Similarly, paragraph 10 (c) of the Guidelines for Political Rallies issued by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of Nigeria also prohibits the use of hate speech and discriminatory rhetoric during campaigns.

In view of the aforementioned, newspaper organization, more than any other outfits have more responsibility and need to understand that they have a moral, legal and social obligation to protect the lives of Nigerian, through their actions or inactions.

2.3 Hate Speech and Critical Race Theory Perspective

Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a compelling structure by which media concepts and hate speech can be analyzed and understood. According to Odera (2015), CRT indicates that media use phrases sponsored by politicians that refer to other opposition groups from descriptions that are not merely rhetorical but pedestals on which hate flourishes (Hintjens, 1999). Therefore, theoretically, critical race theory underscores that violent political rhetoric can produce the same psychological dynamics as violent entertainment (Calvert, 1997).

Through critical race theory, framing words on the assumption that a subtle change in the wording of the description of a situation might affect how audience interpret this situation. This portends that media coverage can help influence how we think about objects like candidates, events and other issues. As a result, priming refers to impact of news coverage on the weight assigned to specific issues in making political judgments. This means that the media may draw more attention to some aspects of political life like the elections and the aftermath at the expense of others.

The interpretation of critical race theory is that in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Consequently, readers learn not only about given issues but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In response to that, Critical race theory is used to support a legal-structural response to hate speech. It aims to transform the relationship among race, law, and power. CRT recognizes that the vested interests of the economic-political elite shape racial and ethnic stratification.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as its name suggests is critical device. Although it is not attached to any special theory and philosophy it is a method of analyzing text (Jahedi, Abdullah, & Mukundan, 2014). Discourse analysis approach is an empirical examination of text that are produced (created) and consumed (received and interpreted) and viewed as an important form of social practice which contributes to the constitution of the social world including social identities and social relations (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Consequently, critical discourse analysis as an explanatory critique draws attention to the existence of stereotyped categorizations in daily talk, elite talk and texts.

Therefore, the aim of application of critical discourse analysis in this paper is to shed light on the linguistic discursive dimension of hate speech published in newspapers during the Nigeria's 2015 general elections which have become social and cultural phenomena and possible helix of violence. With discourse analysis, this paper examines language in use along with the emotions, which are traditionally presumed to underlie talk and be revealed through it.

Before beginning to build the sample, there is a need to identify the material that potentially constitutes data for this paper which is referred to population or universe of discourse (Bell, 1991). Meanwhile, because the size of the population, which is the total number of newspaper news and articles about hate speech may be unknown (Bauer & Aarts, 2000) the cyclical process has been recommended. Therefore, the sampling was done by first selecting a small but relevant and consistent hate speech across newspaper online, analyze it and on the basis of the finding select again. According Bauer and Aarts (2000) and Mautner (2008), in cyclical sampling process more material is added up to the point when, following the law of diminishing returns, new data no longer yield up new representations.

The data selected for this study were from online version of Nigerian daily newspapers. These data were selected in two periods before the Nigeria's 2015 general elections and after the election. The periods were selected for the following reasons. Firstly, the period before the election was within the stretch of months that Nigeria experienced an increase in the rate of religious, ethnic and political conflicts across the six geo-political zones. It was the period when the political activities in Nigeria heated up ethnic tension and hate speeches reached the tipping point that placed Nigeria on the edge of crisis. Similarly, the periods were suitable for this study having been confirmed by several scholars (Carment, James & Taydas, 2009; Okoli & Iortyer, 2014) that politics and political campaign periods are likely stimulant of hate speeches especially in a multiethnic society.

3.1 Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

Critical Discourse Analysis is founded majorly on the work of three prominent scholars such as Fairclough's critical approach, Wodak's discourse-historical approach (Wodak & Chilton 2005) and Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach (Jahedi, Abdullah, & Mukundan, 2014). However, the approach adopted by this paper is that of Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach.

Van Dijk's approach like Fairclough's approach attempts to connect the micro-structure of language to the macro-structure of society (Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978). On the other hand, instead of discursive practice, Van Dijk (1993) focuses on social cognition as the intervening part between text and society. Therefore, Van Dijk (1993) describes the social cognitions as "communally shared depictions of societal activities, groups and relations, besides mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning" (p. 257). Specifically, Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978) have distinguished between text's micro-structure and macro-structure. Macro level denotes power, dominance as well as inequality among social groups, while micro level implies language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication (Van Dijk, 2001).

Meanwhile, having applied his approach of discourse analysis to media texts Van Dijk (1991) revealed that one of the study areas where discourse plays an essential role in the (re)construction of inequality is that of race as well as ethnic relations. The major point of his work is that "racism is a complex system of social and political inequality that is also reproduced by discourse" (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 362). In relation to this therefore, this study of discourse triangulates between political statements, Nigeria political and ethnic landscapes.

4.0 THE CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PUBLISHED HATE SPEECHES

Hate speech is the precursor to violence and in every electioneering year and in volatile societies like Nigeria. Therefore, the ability to discern properly and understand the implied language and use of language and management of the interaction of the speakers is imperative. To achieve this, the discourse was based on three levels of analysis namely, the constructive aspect of language, rhetorical strategies and subject positions.

4.1 Level 1 analysis: Constructive aspect of language

A basic assumption underlying discourse analysis relates to the constructive aspect of language, which is the assumption that texts construct the objects to which they refer. That is to say, they create specific versions of the phenomena and processes they set out to describe. Therefore, under this theme, the study examined all instances where hate speech was implied and focused on the constructions. The Nigerian polity has become an enormous hate-dominated and it shows in the numerous abuses, threats, curses in addition to outbursts that dominate the newspapers as identified in the analysis. Consequently, in this study these aspects were subjected to a critical analysis with the view to knowing how much they reflect the use of social power and the ideologies that underlie their construction.

L1.1 Ethno-religious Tension

- (a) “It must be a Northerner or no Nigeria... If Goodluck Jonathan wins the PDP’s endorsement to contest the 2011 presidential election, there would be violence” - *Guardian Newspaper, 2nd November, 2010.*

The analysis

From the quoted text credited to the National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed, it is clearly implied that the speaker, through a hate speech was promoting ethnic and religious tension. This is because, the subject being referred to was a Christian and South- South presidential candidate unlike him and his candidate who were from the Northern part of Nigeria. After establishing the manners of the hate speech’s construction in relation to ethno-religion, the focus is broadened to discover the constructions and intensity of speech within discourse analysis.

- (b) “That short man called Ngige, we gave him power and he joined the Awolowo people; the people that killed Igbos” - *Premium Times, November 13, 2013.*

The analysis

This quoted statement fits into hate speech classification because it evidently revealed the name of whom they accused of betrayal having joined and aligned politically with another ethnic group. Similarly, the construction portrayed someone as betrayal of his ethnic group, a sensitive and inciting statement. Contrary to this however, the guidelines for political parties by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the body constitutionally recognized to conduct elections, permit alliance of ethnic groups in political formations. So the attempt to castigate him for the political alignment with South-West was high level of hate speech and capable of instigating crisis.

L1.2 Inter-Communal Tension

- (a) “Nigeria will disintegrate if Jonathan contests in 2015” - *Daily Independent Friday, March 8th, 2013.*

The analysis

Within this statement, evidence of hate speech is constructed and as such can be inferred as the story is credited to Abu King Shuluwa and published by Daily Independent Friday, March 8th, 2013. The statement is coded inter-communal tension having clearly heightened tension on the future of Nigeria negatively over his support for a Northern kinsman against a person from another geo-political zone.

L1.3 Ethnic Tension/ stereotypes

- (a) “The Yorubas are ungrateful kind of people, who do not appreciate what others have done for them”
- *Sun Newspaper, March 16, 2013.*

The analysis

Construction of hate speech becomes obvious in the quoted statement having categorically made a sweeping attack based on ethnic superiority which implied hatred, on one of the dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria the ‘Yorubas’. The seriousness of this can be understood from the fact that Yoruba constitutes close to 40 million people in total, found largely in Nigeria, where they make up about 21% of its population or roughly 35 million in 2012 (CIA World Factbook, 2013) making them one of the largest ethnic groups of Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.2 Level 2 analysis: Language as functional: Rhetorical strategies

A second level of analysis examined the dynamics of interaction, the ways in which the participants’ use of language and management of the interaction serve interpersonal functions. The study also examined speaker’s utterance in relation to the discursive context that is ‘hate speech’ in which it is produced.

L2.1 Threat of violence/ Hate crime

- (a) God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood - *Vanguard Newspaper on May 15th, 2012.*

The analysis

This statement was credited to the then Presidential candidate of Congress for Progressive Change (APC), Muhammadu Buhari now the incumbent president. . The statement was widely condemned for its hate speech and threats of violence.

- (b) “Unless efforts are made to ensure that the 2015 general election are free and fair, it may turn out to be the last election in the history of the nation” - *Leadership March 29, 2012.*

The analysis

National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed made this venomous statement which sparked tension and uproar across the country. The threat of possible ‘last election’ coming from an elder statesman was unbecoming.

- (a) “You should not be bothered with cockroaches of politics. Cockroaches are only found in the toilet even at homes, If you see cockroach in your house, Crush them” - *Premium Times on 19th November, 2014.*

The analysis

This implied hate speech was made by the then Governor Shema Ibrahim of a Katsina State who reportedly urged his supporters to attack opponents and referred to his political opponents as cockroaches

urging his supporters to kill them as they kill cockroaches. This kind of rhetoric is an incitement of one ethnic group against another.

(d) “Those who want to take power through the back door will die. They will die” - *Punch Newspaper*, 17th July, 2011

The analysis

Former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio was acknowledged as the source of this statement. As a State Governor the statement was a hate speech and clearly directive to his followers. This was condemned as highly capable of stimulating violence.

(e) “We assure those cold blooded murderers that this time, their blood thirsty campaign will not go unreplied” - *Vanguard Newspaper*, 5th December, 2014

The analysis

South East Self Determination Coalition (SESDC?) made this statement which was categorized as copy-cat of the earlier made by Godswill Akpabio. The group responsible for this was known for its hatred for other ethnic groups.

L2.3 Hate crime/death wish

(a) The Ekiti State Governor, Peter Ayodele Fayose in January repeatedly took out front page newspaper advertorials warning voters not to vote for the APC presidential candidate Muhamadu Buhari. These advert, now widely known as “death wish advertorials,” insinuated that the Presidential candidate was likely to die in office if elected, like the late President, Yar adua.

Analysis

In one of the most controversial headlines ever in the campaign history of Nigeria, the governor of Ekiti State, Ayodele Fayose - a PDP loyalist, makes a reference to the holy bible. Life and death is placed side by side and we are asked to choose accordingly. Fayose makes an appeal to history by displaying erstwhile leaders from the North who met their end while on sit as Heads of State. He asks a rhetorical question here: will you allow history to repeat itself again? That is, do you want another Northerner to die in office as the president again? Buhari is likened to death while Jonathan, in his late 50s is seen as life. As bad as the Fayose adverts were, some newspapers still ran them thus making themselves the catalysts for hate speech.

(b) “Major General Mohammadu Buhari has emerged as the APC flag bearer and President Goodluck Jonathan has emerged for the PDP. Now the battle for the soul and future of our nation begins. The forces of light shall surely prevail over the forces of darkness and God’s counsel alone shall stand over Nigeria. I stand with Jonathan. Let’s get it on” - *Dailypost.ng December 12 2014*.

Analysis

Fani-Kayode, commonly called FFK in a frantic effort to discredit the APC and its flag bearer has termed it the “forces of darkness” and his own party the “forces of light”. The darkness symbolizes that no good can come out of Buhari and his party, and therefore the soul and future of Nigeria is at stake if the APC should emerge victorious. So the battle against this is the main focus of the PDP and its acolytes. The representative of the force of darkness is definitely a misfit for a country that has enough darkness already. Therefore, no well-meaning Nigerian will readily vote in the APC with this kind of description and representation.

L2.4 Political Groups Tension or Violence

(a) “It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out” - *Tell*, July 7, 2014.

The analysis

Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, the national leader of APC that would later become the ruling political party went wild against those he claimed are agents of the PDP, the opposition party, alleged to have been sent to disrupt his party’s rally. He said: “If you are an agent of PDP here and you are sent to disrupt this rally, we will roast you”. This is a clear hate speech and a call for violence which is unprecedented of a national figure.

L2.5 Inter-Communal Tension

(a) “There will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta, but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we do not pray for” - *Vanguard*, May 5, 2013.

The analysis

The leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Salvation Force (NDPSF), Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari was known for his hate speech and an attempt to threaten other ethnic groups in Nigeria. On many occasions he bragged to break Nigeria and attack the Northern part of Nigeria. This was one of the many of his tension-ridden utterances.

4.3 Level 3 analysis: Subject Positioning

Another important theme in the analysis is that of subject positions, that is the identities of the speaker and specific ways of talking (Davies & Harré, 1990). The questions raised and being answered at this level of analysis are: Who speaks? Who do they address? Who do they speak for? Already, as noted by Ukwu (2015) one of the key variables for determining the gravity of speech or when speech transforms from offensive to hate speech is the level of a speaker’s influence. Therefore, in answering these questions the table below presented detailed position of the speaker.

Table 1 Identities of speakers and specific hate speech

| S/N | Year | Position of speakers/ Who do they speak for? | Hate speech/ Who do they address? | Source/ Publication |
|-----|------|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2010 | National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed | It must be a Northerner or no Nigeria... If Goodluck Jonathan wins the PDP’s endorsement to contest the 2011 presidential election, there would be violence. | <i>Interview with Guardian r, 2nd November, 2010/ neutral</i> |
| 2 | 2011 | Presidential Candidate of Congress for Progressive Change, General Muhammadu Buhari | God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood | <i>Reported by Lika Binniyat in Vanguard May 15, 2012 /PDP</i> |
| 3 | 2012 | National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed | Unless efforts are made to ensure that the 2015 general election are free and fair, it may turn out to be the last election in the history of the nation | <i>Leadership March 29, 2012 /APC</i> |

| | | | | |
|----|------|--|--|---|
| 4 | 2013 | National Coordinator of the Coalition of Northern Politicians, Dr. Junaidu Mohammed | There will be bloodshed. Those who feel short-changed may take the war path and the country may not be the same again | <i>Reported by Kemy Oguns in Osun Defender, 2nd December, 2013 /APC</i> |
| 5 | 2013 | Abu King Shuluwa | Nigeria will disintegrate if Jonathan contests in 2015 | <i>Daily Independent Friday, March 8th, 2013 /PDP</i> |
| 6 | 2013 | Former Chairman of PDP, Colonel Ahmadu Ali (rtd) | The Yorubas are ungrateful kind of people, who do not appreciate what others have done for them | <i>Daily Sun, March 16, 2013? PDP</i> |
| 7 | 2014 | Publicity Secretary of All Progressive Congress, Alhaji Lai Mohammed | If the 2015 elections are rigged, the party will not recognize the outcome and will go ahead and form a parallel government | <i>Leadership 21st November, 2014; /APC</i> |
| 8 | 2014 | Governor Shema Ibrahim of Katsina State | You should not be bordered (sic) with cockroaches of politics. Cockroaches are only found in the toilet even at homes. If you see cockroach in your house, Crush them | <i>Reported by Premium Times on 19th November, 2014 / APC</i> |
| 9 | 2014 | Northern Elders Forum | Those who vote for Jonathan and the PDP in 2015 will be considered an enemy of the north | <i>Vanguard, 15 October 2014/ PDP</i> |
| 11 | 2013 | The leader of the Niger Delta Peoples Salvation Force (NDPSF), Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari | There will be no peace, not only in the Niger Delta, but everywhere if Goodluck Jonathan is not president by 2015, except God takes his life, which we do not pray for | <i>Vanguard Newspapers, May 5, 2013/ PDP</i> |
| 12 | 2013 | Chief Arthur Eze PDP Chieftain | That short man called Ngige, we gave him power and he joined the Awolowo people; the people that killed Igbos | <i>Premium Times, November 13, 2013/ APC</i> |
| 13 | 2014 | Asiwaju Bola Tinubu | It is going to be rig and roast. We are prepared not to go to court but drive them out | <i>Tell, 7 July 2014./ Neutral</i> |
| 14 | 2014 | Former Governor of Akwa Ibom State, Godswill Akpabio | Those who want to take power through the back door will die. They will die | <i>Punch, 17th July, 201/ Neutral</i> |
| 15 | 2014 | South East Self Determination Coalition (SESDC?) | We assure those cold blooded murderers that this time, their blood thirsty campaign will not go un-replied | <i>Reported by Clifford Ndujihe in Vanguard, 5th December, 2014 / PDP</i> |
| 17 | 2014 | Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi | The challenge of the Nigerian military is not funding but corruption. | <i>This day and The Nation, Tuesday./ PDP</i> |
| 18 | 2015 | Patience Jonathan | Please don't vote for prison. A vote for Buhari is a vote to send people to Prison. | <i>Vanguard news March 25, 2015</i> |

From the discourse so far, it is clear that hate speech was the focal point and became an instrument of campaign in the 2015 general election. Therefore, the presentation of various hate speech in several newspapers showed that media have been used to stoke hatred and stimulate violence among ethnic and political groups during the electioneering periods as well as in the daily life.

Similarly, though prominence is a determinant of news worthiness however, when public figures try to outdo each other through the use of hate speeches, media have to make sure they do not draw undue attention. More so that politicians and other influential people who mostly perpetuate hate speeches do it for selfish interest, it is necessary for journalists to examine speakers and evaluate their words, scrutinize their facts and claims, and judge carefully the intention and likely impact on the society (Cowan & Metrick, 2002). According to the Ethical Journalism Network (2016), though it is not the job of journalists to adopt counter positions, claims and facts should be tested irrespective of whoever is speaking.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main mission of journalism is basically to be a fourth estate for good speech and to serve the public interest by reporting the truth, with positive language, in total independence and with a sense of responsibility, without any form of hate speech. However, based on the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that media, particularly newspaper was used by politicians to achieve their selfish interest. Similarly, it can be inferred that most of the newspapers did not take into consideration the wider context in which politicians express themselves. Therefore, newspaper organizations are required to focus not just on what politicians say, but what they intend.

In view of this, the paper recommends that the media as the watchdog of society should take up the responsibility by bringing to the forefront the fiercely devastating effect of hate speech. Also, politicians should be told in clear, unambiguous terms that hate speech does not win election; good governance, good manifesto do.

Following the divergent views about what constitute hate speech, there is an urgent need to develop, in conjunction with media unions and practitioners, categorization of what constitutes hate speech. Media houses, through their unions should incorporate these as part of good journalism practice and impose sanctions on erring members who publish or broadcast hate speech laden materials. The National Orientation Agency, in collaboration with civil society groups, political parties and community leaders, should also moderate their speeches as well as embark on a campaign against the use of hate speech.

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