

REPRESENTATIONS OF NIGERIA AND ITS LOCAL COLLABORATORS AS ENEMIES OF BIAFRA'S SECESSION IN NNAMDI KANU'S AGITATION

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Abstract

Nnamdi Kanu's speeches are full of representations of those for and against Biafra's secession. Studies on Biafra's secession concentrated on the representation of Nnamdi Kanu, Biafrans, international observers with little attention paid to how he uses language to represent Nigeria and those he perceived as its local collaborators as social actors. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate the representation of Nigeria and local collaborators as social actors in his live broadcasts. Theo van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors, served as the framework while the descriptive design was adopted. Nnamdi Kanu's broadcasts in 2020-2021, a period marked by consistent and increased agitation for Biafra's secession were purposively selected. Five broadcasts were downloaded and transcribed verbatim into English text and were subjected to discourse analysis. Six social actors were identified namely: Nigeria, the Nigerian Government, the Yoruba nation, some governors within Igbo land, Fulani and Niger Delta which he tagged as local collaborators. The social actors and their social practices were excluded through suppression and backgrounding; or included via nomination, activation, collectivisation, association and disassociation. The study concludes that Nnamdi Kanu represents social actors fighting against Biafra's secession negatively.

Keywords: Nigeria, Nigerian government, Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu, Social Actors, Secession

Introduction

Nigeria is a product of different empires, kingdoms and city-states that were merged together by the British colonialists after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 (Ezeani, 2013). Those kingdoms, empires and city-states were forcefully married out of the self-interest motives of the British colonialists (Aladekamo, 2021). And this has led to many inter-communal and ethno-religious crises as a result of the divergences in interests and views of these mismatched ethnic nationalities. As a result of this divergence, some regions such as Biafra, Middle Belt and Odudu'a are agitating for confederation (Alumona, Azom and Iloh, 2017). The crux of this study is Biafra. Many groups such as Biafran Zionist Movement (BZM), Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)

have been clamouring for the emancipation of Biafrans from Nigeria (Henry, Obiora and David, 2020; Ezeani, 2013; Henry, Obiora and David, 2020 and Ekpo and Agorye, 2019). The emphasis here is on Nnamdi Kanu and IPOB.

Nnamdi Kenny Okwu Kanu, popularly known as Nnamdi Kanu, born on 25th, 1967, is a British- Nigerian national who founded the IPOB in the early 2010s (Festus, 2020; Arnell and Iloka, 2021). Nnamdi Kanu hails from Abia State. He attended the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and London Metropolitan University. The group became popular through social media and Radio Biafra. The motivation behind the use of Nnamdi Kanu's live broadcasts is the uniqueness of his movement toward the circumstances surrounding Nigeria, especially in terms of history and political development, and the marginalisation of his people, Igbo (Festus, 2020). Currently, he is in prison since his arrest on 30th June, 2021 in Kenya and subsequent extradition to Nigeria. Furthermore, he has undergone several trials but still charged with treason by the government of Nigeria.

Studies have been conducted on Biafra's from both linguistic and non-linguistic perspectives. These include Oloyede (2009), Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2017), Ekpo and Agorye (2019), Chiluwa (2012), Chiluwa (2018), Alabi and Kazeem (2019), Chiluwa, Taiwo and Ajiboye (2020), Osisanwo and Iyoha (2020), Aboh and Odeh (2021). Although these studies are lucid and informative; however, little attention has been paid to the representations of Nigeria and its local collaborators as social actors against Biafra's secession. This is the gap the current study planned to fill. The study will also enable the researcher to see how discursive strategies are used in the identification of Nigeria and other local social actors against the Biafra's secession.

Literature Review

Alumona, Azom and Iloh (2017) did a sociological investigation of the Nigerian state and the resurgence of separatist agitation by Biafrans. The findings revealed some policies, inactions and actions enacted by the government of Nigeria targeting the Igbo, made the Igbo have the feelings of victimisation, thereby reinforcing their quest for confederation of the Republic of Biafra. Chiluwa (2012) examined "verbal war"

to show resistance. The study used MASSOB as a population. The study observed that protesters use *fronting* to show the victimisation of their members and used ‘Nigerian cowards’ to represent Nigeria negatively, while ‘brave Biafrans’ project Biafrans positively. The study is different from the current one, as the latter is linguistic in nature, where discursive strategies in the live broadcast of Nnamdi Kanu are investigated in order to see how local collaborators are projected against his agitation for Biafra’s secession.

Osisanwo and Iyoha (2020) examined the discourse strategies and the ideological inclinations of 2015 and 2016 reports on Biafra protests in Nigeria. The study sourced its data from four newspapers, namely *The Punch*, *The Sun*, *The Vanguard* and *The Nation*. Biafran protesters were represented as freedom fighters, economic saboteurs and law abiders. In the same vein, Osisanwo and Iyoha (2021) investigated the tracking ideology in Nigerian newspaper representation of 2015 and 2016 Biafra protests. The study affirmed that ideologies are projected through lexical choices, rhetorical questions, positive representation of us and the negative representation of others. Also, the study showed that naming and reference are dominant elements for the representation of ideologies by individuals and corporate bodies. Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that protest discourses are characterised by some underpinned ideologies such as liberationist, separatist, pacifist, dissidentist, schist and repressionist.

Amale (2023) examined representation of social actors, ideologies and stances in Nnamdi Kanu’s discourses on Biafra. Ken Hyland’s Stance and Engagement Theory, complemented by Theo van Leeuwen’s Representation of Social Actors and Teun van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis, served as the framework. The methodology deployed is qualitative analysis. The main objective of the study is to see how different social actors and the ideologies they stand for and that of Nnamdi Kanu and that of IPOB members are projected with the possible stances. Twelve social actors were represented, namely Nnamdi Kanu, IPOB, international observers, Nigerian government, Niger Delta, Biafrans, the Fulani, governors in Biafran land, Nigeria, the Great Britain, Africa and Europeans. The stances taken by Nnamdi Kanu on the social actors are in three main categories. These were IPOB and its sympathisers are fighters and family builders, not lawless individuals; Nigerian government and

international actors are supporters of the injustice meted out to Biafrans by Nigeria. Six ideologies underpinned the broadcasts: ethnocentricist, repressionist, separatist, nationalist, liberationist and dissidentist. The findings revealed that Nnamdi Kanu's representations and stances on the secession of Biafra are imbued with ideologies that condemn opponents of his agitation and extol the virtues of Indigenous People of Biafra.

Lastly on discourse analysis, Amale, Isah and Atinga (2024) analysed international observers as social actors in Nnamdi Kanu's discourses on Biafra. Van Leeuwen's representation of social actors' approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) served as the framework. Like Amale (2023), it is qualitative in nature. The major objective the study was to see how international observers play their roles in support or against the agitation for Biafra's secession. The international social actors identified were Africa, the United Nations Organisation, the Great Britain and the Europeans. The social actors and their social practices were excluded through suppression and backgrounding; or included via nomination, activation, collectivisation, association and disassociation. The study concluded that Nnamdi Kanu's agitation for the secession of Biafra is characterised with the representation of international observers as social actors who are either in support or against his goal.

While from pragmatic perspective, Alabi and Kazeem (2019) analysed Kanu's speeches. The study aimed at determining how hate speech leads to insecurity in Nigeria's socio-political setting. Twenty (20) expressions were selected from Kanu's speeches for analyses. The findings showed that commissives, assertives, verdictives, directives and declaratives were highly used. The study showed that utterances of freedom fighters, like Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, depend solely on context, and there is a relationship between actions and utterances of speakers. They further proved that speeches of protesters are full of inflammatory rhetoric. The study concluded that speeches of freedom fighters or protesters are not devoid of elements of hate, which serve as a catalyst to violence.

Also from the same view point, Amale, Atinga, and Gwuene (2024) investigated (im) politeness in the speeches of Nnamdi Kanu on his agitation for the secession of Biafra. Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory served as the framework. The study showed that (im) politeness strategies such as bald on record, off record, positive and negative faces, FTAs, social distant, naming, greetings, sarcasm and others were used to: indicate politeness as persuasive strategy; deconstruction of enemies of Biafra and for identity and culture. Thus, the study recommended that, linguistic studies on pragmatic acts, and the use of code-mixing and switching as inclusion strategies by Nnamdi Kanu should be investigated. Like on the case of the use of hate speech on those against Biafra's secession, Nnamdi Kanu's live broadcasts on his agitation also showed that his speeches are full of impolite use of language.

The views reviewed above show the relevance on the need to examine the representation of Nigeria and other groups within its borders fighting against the secession of Biafra. Giving the current study chance would enable it see the different tools used to present and position them by Nnamdi Kanu in his quest. In addition, the current study contends that that the live broadcasts of Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB, are crucial in examining how Nigeria and its local collaborators are represented.

Theoretical Framework

Theo van Leeuwen's (2008) Representation of Social Actors, an approach to CDA, was adopted as the framework for this study. Social actors are either excluded or included during discourses by speakers. Exclusion can be done in two ways: suppression or backgrounding. Suppression on the other hand is when social actors and what they do are excluded in discourses and it may and may not leave traces. When there is no trace, it is tagged "radical" (van Leeuwen, 2008). While backgrounding is when social actors are deleted but later represented before the end of a discourse. Inclusion is when social actors are represented within a discourse (van Leeuwen, 2008). Activation is when social actors active or dynamic forces in an activity, while passivation is when social actors are represented as being 'at the receiving end of a particular

activity'. Social actors subjected are treated as objects, while the beneficialised social actors form a third party.

Categorization, on the other hand, is when social actors are represented based on their unique identity and the functions they share with others. Categorization is subdivided into: identification, functionalization, and appraisalment. In nominations, social actors are explained in terms of their peculiar identity through proper nouns. Social actors are represented, and nomination is divided into formalization (only definite names, with or without honorifics), semiformalization (given a name and a surname), and informalization (given only names) (van Leeuwen, 2008:41). Nominations may be realized in the form of honorification, which is the addition of standard titles, ranks, etc., as with "Dr." Finally, specification enables a writer/speaker to represent social actors through individualization and assimilation, while role allocation assigns roles to social actors in discourse (Leeuwen, 2003:42-43). To this end, the application of van Leeuwen's (2008) Representation of Social Actors, through the various exclusion and inclusion strategies as highlighted in the theory and briefly discussed above, enabled the study to investigate how Nigeria and its local collaborators are represented by Nnamdi Kanu.

Data and Analytical Procedure

A descriptive qualitative research design was adopted. This aims to provide a detailed account of how language is used to capture Nnamdi Kanu's perspective on Biafra's secession and how others are viewed by him. His broadcasts from 2020-2021, a period marked by consistent and increased agitation for Biafra's secession, were purposively selected. Ten of these broadcasts were purposively sampled (through a snowball method). This is because the broadcasts were selected based on their subject of discussion, the secession of Biafra. The broadcasts were downloaded from YouTube. Five of these broadcasts are those of 20th April 2020, 21st June 2020, 30th May 2021, 31st May 2021, and 1st June 2021. The data were subjected to critical discourse analysis.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The focus of this segment is the analysis. Words, phrases and clauses in excerpts extracted for the analysis serving as pointers to discursive strategies (exclusion and inclusion) are emboldened.

Nigeria

Nnamdi Kanu, through the application of various social actor representation strategies, represented Nigeria as enemy of Biafra's secession. This is typically exemplified in excerpts 1-5 below:

Excerpt 1: And as **I told the keepers of the zoo, as I told them in Aso rock, I am coming for Aso rock.** I am not interested in the surrounding vicinity; I am not interested in what happens in the towns and in the villages, I have gone for the centre. We have gone for the destruction of the seat of Satan and it has fallen. I told them that **God said that I will destroy the zoo,** I will not fire one single shot but with the truth, we shall be spoken without fear nor fable that the **zoo** will fall and the **zoo** has fallen. I did not want to waste my time blabbering through the bushes in a Gorilla war (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 18th April, 2020**).

Through appraisal, Nigeria is represented as a bad place meant only for animals. This is seen through the renaming of Nigeria as a zoo. This is also a form of inversion. It should also be noted that the representation of Nigeria as a zoo and leaders as zoo keepers is a form of deviation. The structure "I told the keepers of the zoo, as I told them in Aso Rock," deviates from the norms of addressing a nation. This is done, according to van Leeuwen (2008:65), for the purpose of legitimization. There is a transgression of the rule on how those tending a zoo and those in Aso Rock (the presidential villa of Nigeria) are addressed. However, Nnamdi Kanu represents it as a zoo to paint it as an uninhabitable country, just to drive home his agitation. From the above, those represented as the keepers of the zoo, those in Aso Rock, and the social practices they engage in are excluded from the discourse. Another excerpt representing Nigeria as a social actor in Nnamdi Kanu's broadcasts on Biafra's secession is provided below:

Excerpt 2: They believe in one **Nigeria** because of the money they can steal. **Only an idiot will believe in one Nigeria,** only a criminal does, without common sense, **Lai Mohammed,** minister, **200 billion stolen,** every day they do probe. You **know** they do probe and **they** go behind they share the money **they** have stolen and the probe dies down. **Monkeys probing other monkeys for stealing bananas,** is that possible? **Can you see monkeys now gathering and probing other monkeys stealing bananas when all of them love bananas.** It is not possible of course, it is not! They

have stolen the money; they have stolen the money. **N19 billion, N11billion.** This is **our nation, this is our country, our nation, our forefathers** gaveto us in 1960 you are older than **Nigeria** the person talking about **his father** giving **Nigeria** is older than **Nigeria**. **Nigeria** was formed in 1960! The **idiot** talking about his forefathers giving him **Nigeria**: he's nearly 70 years old. I don't know how people reason! **Black**, but I don't know how! I have no idea! **Your forefathers** gave; you're older than **Nigeria**. **Your father gave Nigeria** to you. You fought and **your forefathers**, I have no idea what is wrong with **black people**. I have no clue only God can save their stupidity. It is astonishing and as always, you know those complaining about my broadcast is because **you** know when I touch **them their friends** are listening you know **their friends** listen so when they go out they wantto pose **their friends** will call them. **Monkey from zoo** come and they get upset instead of them to get upset at their own stupidity they get upset at Nnamdi Kanu and IPOB (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 26th August, 2020**).

Nigeria is represented as a group of people with the same ideology through assimilation. This is followed by the use of individualization, where Lai Muhammad is represented as an individual; it is also seen as semiformalization, as only the first name and surname of Lai Muhammad were given. The structure "200 billion" stands as a statistical representation of money stolen. In the same vein, the social actors who stole the N200 billion, those being probed for corrupt practices, and those who formed Nigeria are all suppressed, as they are not mentioned. Still, on the deployment of suppression, the person who being addressed as having the claim that Nigeria was given to him or her was never mentioned. "Their friends" is also used to represent the relationship existing between those who are against Nnamdi's broadcast and their supporters, while "our" is used to show the relationship that he and others have with Nigeria. He refers to Nigeria as "our nation". The reason for addressing Nigeria as azoo and those staying there as animals (monkeys) is just a way to represent the country negatively in order to win the admiration and psychological positions of his supporters on the emancipation of Biafra. Even the way he addresses who probe others and the people being probed signifies an element of deviation. The way he compares money siphoned by public officers in Nigeria as bananas indicates deviation as there is no connection between money and banana.

Assimilation is employed via the use of nation and country. Nigeria and its citizenry are represented as a group, while Lai Muhammad is represented through association to indicate his connection with the corrupt

government of Nigeria. Also, those believed to have an affinity with those opposing Biafra's secession are represented through association. "They" and "them" portray those who engage in corrupt practices and supporters of those against Nnamdi Kanu's broadcasts on Biafra's secession. Apparently, he disassociates himself from them. The representations of Nigeria in the above excerpt create consciousness amongst fellow agitators that nothing good comes from Nigeria, thereby making the emergence of Biafra a goal that must be achieved.

Excerpt 3: Yet **some people** are **idiotically saying they are from Nigeria** and feel sorry for them because they are **black people**: they are **ignorant**, they are very **foolish**, they **cannot reason very well**. **Your grandfathers** were ere or **your ancestors** were there and they white man and a white woman all the way from England, came to **Nigeria** and said from today your name is **Nigeria**. And all of you are jumping up and down **like monkeys saying**: "I'm a **Nigerian**. I'm a **Nigerian**. I'm a **Nigerian**" Thereby, any time you say you're a Nigerian you are reinforcing your **idiocy** and your **ignorance**. That's all I can say. You are reinforcing your **stupidity**. That means that you are a **stupid creature**. I'm telling you the truth: that is why we preach this gospel of heaven (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast on IPOB from Jerusalem, 19th March, 2021**).

Nnamdi Kanu uses "some", a form of aggregation, to show the number of persons he appraises as being idiotic for identifying themselves with Nigeria. He uses the adjectives idiotic, foolish, and ignorant, as well as nominal items such as stupidity, idiocy, ignorance, and stupid creature to represent Biafrans who claim to be Nigerians.

Excerpt 4: Tell me the country in the world aspiring to be a member in the UN Security Council while you move cattle from place to place. And are you people **well at all**? You so-called **Nigerians**, are you **normal** in the brain? I'm asking you a simple question! Show me a country that aspires to be in the 21st Century moving cattle from place to place. You are telling me that they are grazing. Which country is that please? Tell me! All of you don't have any **shame**. When you have people and entire **presidency** coming out to defend a very primitive archaic agricultural practice, then, you **know** you embrace unseriousness: you are in a one mighty trouble. I'm telling you, you people are in a **mess**. The Holland that you get your Peak Milk from, do they move cattle from **Rotterdam** to **Amsterdam**? I'm asking you a simple question. But they produce the Peak Milk you are producing every blessed day. Why can't Fulani produce Peak Milk in **Sokoto**? Why can't they produce canned milk in Kano? They have the cattle. Before the white man came, did you see

any Fulani in your forest? All these people talking about the movement of cattle are ignorant (**Message to Sunday Igboho, 27th January, 2021**).

Nnamdi Kanu continues to represent Nigeria negatively as a country that is not organised. This is seen in his comparison of Holland and Nigeria. Both countries are into dairy production; however, in Holland, cows are not seen roaming about like in Nigeria. He appraises Nigerians badly for promoting what is not obtainable in developed countries that keep cattle for milk production. This is seen through the structures "Are you people well at all, and are you normal in the brain?" The questions are rhetorical, however, insulting, appraising Nigerians as being foolish or insane.

Excerpt 5: All these idiots in Nigeria, writing rubbish every day, you can't kill people's children and expect their brothers not to react. It is stupidity! It is called vengeance. There will be vengeance of course. So, you are wearing army uniform, killing people and you think, you are safe, as long as you kill people with an army uniform, you are putting every army officer at risk. Same goes for the police, all those years you people, are going about slaughtering, was there any reaction, you people are the cause (Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 18th April, 2020).

The people whom Nnamdi Kanu has represented as idiots in Nigeria, who are writing rubbish, are mentioned as indetermined social actors. They are not specified by the broadcaster. This also leads to the use of appraisal by Nnamdi Kanu, where he appraised them negatively as "idiots". There is a connection between victims of the material process "kill" and their loved ones through association. This also indicates a relational identification through the nominal structure "their brother". Moreover, those who will avenge the death of those loved ones are suppressed throughout the broadcast. What the listeners know is the reaction of their relatives, but not avenging their death. So, from the excerpt, the representation captured the Nigerian media, whom Nnamdi believes are far from being perfect as expected of their profession. In the same vein, those who wear army uniforms and kill people are being suppressed by Nnamdi Kanu. To this extent, we can say the structure "with an army uniform" is a circumstantialisation, as it goes with van Leeuwen's assertion that activated agents can be represented through prepositional phrases introduced by "with", "against", and so on. Furthermore, the agents that suffer from the process are never mentioned; even those expected to react to the act of slaughtering are not represented, either. What this says of Nigeria in

the above excerpt is that Nigeria does not have strong laws guiding its national security, as anyone who is unfit can wear uniforms designated for security personnel to carry out heinous activities.

The Nigerian Government

The Nigerian government includes president, ministers, governors, special advisers and other officials in Nigeria. Or it can be said to be anyone who is at the helm of affairs and is protecting the interest of the government, be it at all levels.

Excerpt 6: **Asaba** is in total lockdown. They said Igweocha is not complying; **Nnewi** is in total lockdown. Igweocha is not complying because that **little witch**, that **devil** from Kaduna land went there (**Nnamdi Kanu’ live Broadcast, 31st May, 2021**).

This statement was made in line with Nasiru El-Rufai visit to Rivers State, Port Harcourt to be precise during one of the sit-at-home orders by IPOB. This was because he went there on behalf of the Nigerian government in order to dissuade the people there from supporting IPOB’s agitation. The identity of the social actor who is representing the Nigerian government’s interest in dissuading the people of Igweocha (Port Harcourt) from complying and what he did were suppressed. The only thing we know is that Igweocha did not comply with the order of sit-at-home because someone whose identity was not mentioned went there, and what he did was not mentioned, too. The speaker also shows how resolute he is to whatever those suppressed social actors in all the excerpts are doing to stop him from achieving his goals. However, the suppressed social actor is appraised as being evil.

The above excerpt shows power the asymmetric power relationship between the Nigerian government and IPOB. This is demonstrated through the compliance of people of Port Harcourt. They were persuaded by El-Rufai in order to be in the side of the government. Moreover, the imbalanced power relationship has the tendency to correct the perception of people of Igweocha, and that is what Nnamdi Kanu is trying to fight against by representing the intervention of the Nigerian government through the visitation of El-Rufai as evil.

Excerpt 7: Their **so-called** presidency, which **Garba** and **El-Rufai** are the ones running it now. I am going to lay curse on them before I lay curse on **Garba Shehu**. Nobody

hears about **Vice President Yemi Osibanjo (Nnamdi Kanu' Live Broadcast, 31st May, 2021).**

Garba Shehu and El-Rufai are seen as associates. He uses association to show that they are related in all the evil happenings in the presidency. The case of association can also be seen amongst Osinbajo, Garba Shehu and Nasiru El-Rufai in terms of leadership. However, Osinbajo is dissociated from them in terms of character. Shehu Garba and El-Rufai are seen as autocratic and troublesome leaders, unlike Osinbajo who is never heard of misusing power. Similarly, the phrase "so-called presidency" is used to represent Nigerian government negatively. It also disassociates Nnamdi Kanu from everything that has to do with Nigeria. Another element used by Nnamdi Kanu to represent the Nigerian government is appraisal. The compound adjective "so-called" appraises Nigeria with government that is as substandard, bad and even lacking credibility. Nnamdi Kanu projects the Nigerian government as one that does not know what it is meant to do especially in piloting a nation. He sees it as a government that is full of mediocre leaders, who lack what it takes to lead.

The Yoruba nation

Nnamdi Kanu represents the Yoruba on the negative, by depicting them as enemies of Biafra

secession. This is typically exemplified in excerpt 8 below:

Excerpt 8: Yoruba newspapers, why have you failed to publish the video of **Ahmed Gulak**, where he was accusing **Mungonu** of corruption and he was praying in **Arabic**, saying that, he is not afraid of any man, that they can do anything they like to him? So **Yoruba journalists**, you people are **part and parcel of the plan to eliminate and wipe away the Igbo race from the face of the earth**. All of you are part of this very plan that was the reason why, without any investigation you rushed to conclude that **IPOB** and **ESN** killed him. How many people have we killed before? **You people are part and parcel of this very plan, Yoruba journalist, to kill Igbo people**. And you wonder why **Yorubas** are in **Benin Republic's** refugee camps? Where I come from is called **Akansiebaonu**. The hand with which you have fed poison to other people, you will inadvertently put in **your mouth**, and you become **poisoned**, as you are busy writing junk, about **IPOB**, and **ESN**. **Fulani**, Al-shabab from Somalia, are in your land, taking over your territory, by the time you wake up from your stupidity, it will be too late (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 1st June, 2021**)

Nnamdi Kanu counteracts the news earlier published that Ahmed Gulak was murdered by the IPOB. The first element that can be identified in the above excerpt is assimilation. The Yoruba newspapers are represented as a group of newspapers that are managed by the Yoruba people. This has also helped Nnamdi Kanu to disassociate himself and members of IPOB from the killing of Ahmed Gulak. It helps him to also appraise the Yoruba media as being bad. This structure “So, Yoruba journalists, you people are part and parcel of the plan to eliminate and wipe away the Igbo race from the face of the earth” has represented the Yoruba as enemies of Biafra. Those who the Yoruba associated with in eliminating the Igbo race were suppressed throughout the excerpt. Furthermore, the IPOB, the ESN, Fulani and Al-shabaab are represented through assimilation. Nnamdi Kanu presented the Yoruba as enemies of Biafra because of the news on Gulak’s death. He sees them as instruments that are being used to paint the Igbo black and eliminate them. He warns them to take caution; else, the problem that would befall them would be beyond control.

Excerpt 9: All these years of **writing junks** and **supporting evil**, where has it gotten the **Yoruba race**? Are you people benefitting? Are you having fun in Nigeria? **Yoruba journalist**, tomorrow now, you write **ESN** is a suspect arrest them (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu’s Live Broadcast, 1st June, 2021**).

Nnamdi Kanu sees the Yoruba race, especially their journalists, as being evil for writing against Biafra. He sees them as being enemies of Biafra for writing what they do not have concrete information about. He mocks them that amidst their write-ups to please the Nigerian government, they cannot pin down any benefits derived from writing against Biafrans.

Some governors within Igbo land

According to Nnamdi Kanu, most of the governors in Biafra land have never shown support for the secession of Biafra, but allegiance to the Nigerian government. This is because they are trying to protect their seats in governance. In excerpts 10 and 11 below exemplified this.

Excerpt 10: I commend all of you. You were exceptional yesterday and I must say and the governors as well. When I say the governors, I know those I’m talking about, **Ifeanyi Okowa**. I’m talking about **Ifeanyi Okowa** of Delta State I’m talking about Obiano that led the way by building a Cenotaph, commendable! In fact, I wouldn’t expect anything less because he is from the tap root of Biafra of Igbo land itself, which is, he is the **son**, a direct descendant of **Nri**.

So, I'm sure he did the right thing... if he makes one wrong move, I shred him. But when you do something right, of course, I **commend** you. We are very objective here. I want to also remember the speech that the interview that **Ikpeazu** gave to Channels Television; very **commendable**, I must say. And also, the vibes we were getting from the governor of Enugu state, highly **commendable**. And the surprising, surprise, surprise of all is, **Dave Umahi** he behaved like a man eventually. **He behaved like a man** and I must commend him as well. They did very well. And may they continue along that line. May they... I didn't mention **the Fulani of Imo State** because he's not a governor. He is **an administrator for Fulani people**. I cannot mention him. He came out to challenge us openly to say this lock down will not hold in Imo state (**Nnamdi Kanu' Live Broadcast, 1st June, 2021**).

The first strategy used in the above excerpt is backgrounding which is a subtle exclusion. The social actors and what they did were not mentioned at the beginning of the excerpt, but were later presented. In the case of the last social actor represented in the above excerpt, the social actor has been suppressed. It is left for the listeners to understand that the social actor Nnamdi Kanu is talking about is Governor Hope Ozodimma of Imo State. Most of the social actors were appraised in the broadcast. Ifeanyi Okowa, the governor of Delta State; Willie Obiano, the governor of Anambra State; Okezie Ikpeazu, the governor of Abia State; and Dave Nweze Umahi, the governor of Ebonyi State were all appraised positively for supporting the movement, while Hope Ozodimma of Imo State was backlashed for not supporting the IPOB movement on the secession of the Republic of Biafra and was appraised as being bad. Through functionalisation, the profession of the social actors in the above excerpt has been given as governors and the activity is leadership or the act of governance.

Dave Umahi, Ikpeazu, Ifeanyi Okowa and Obiano are associated as they collaborate with IPOB members in declaring their supports for the secession of Biafra, while Hope Ozodimma is dissociated from them as he is represented as a saboteur because he refuses to support the movement. The representation of Obiano as a son of Nri indicates relationship in the excerpt above. It indicates that Willie Obiano, the Governor of Anambra State is not just an ordinary social actor in the broadcast but one who, by birth and activity, shows how one who is related to the Igbo culture is expected to behave. It can also be said that Nnamdi Kanu uses "son" for Willie Obiano because Anambra people are believed to be the true sons and daughters of the Igbo

race, from where all Igbo people come. Those who are agitating for the emancipation of Biafra are represented by the relationship they have with one another. The representation of Hope Ozodimma of Imo State as the administrator of the Fulani people by Nnamdi Kanu is a form of inversion. Governor Hope Ozodimma does not have an affinity with the Fulani people, and the Fulani people do not have any relationship with people from Imo State. However, to represent Hope Ozodimma as a saboteur, he describes him as a Fulani man, and owing to the fact that Governor Hope Ozodimma is against Biafra's secession.

Excerpt 11: Even those in *Igweocha* running their mouth like a woman that just had miscarriage like Wike. People talking rubbish all the time. *Igweocha* was on lockdown! The banks did not open; the markets did not open. Rather, **very sadly and idiotically**, channels TV ran to the fool Mrs. Tambuwal and was interviewing. He was ranting his usual rubbish. You know when you take too much Hennessy and cocaine. ... A fellow man climbs you with your face, pushing your head inside the pillow. You lose every sense of reasoning and perspective. That is what is happening to **Wike**. *Nwokeibegikpuogiihuna pillow, jide your backside n'alaginiyi* you lose every sense as a man. Wike, I want to ask you a question, was *Obigbo* on lockdown yesterday? Yes or no?....Everybody listens to radio Biafra. Of course you do. I want to ask you a question, Wike was *Obigbo* on lockdown yesterday or not? And where is *Obigbo*? It's in Rivers State is that not correct? Is your village *Obio-akpor* on lockdown or not? **Wike** your village on lockdown yesterday?....The idiot came on television. He can't even sit properly like a man because he cannot sit properly his bottom cannot sit properly, he sits like a woman; watch him. Mrs. Tambuwal, you're talking rubbish on channels to let your husband know "oh darling I'm here and I'm still fighting the cause, I'm not Igbo." You want to please Fulani *aturu!* Rivers State was on lockdown yesterday, when the media of the zoo were reporting it, they never mentioned the facts (**Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 1st June, 2021**).

Kanu addresses one Wike with his first name through informalisation. There is also inversion where the attitude of a pregnant woman is transferred to Wike. He sees Wike as a saboteur who, out of political ambition, is fighting against Biafra by denying the fact that Rivers State is not in Biafra land. He also uses Mrs Tambuwal, which is an example of formalisation, to satirise Wike for going with the verdicts of the Hausa people on the war against the secession of Biafra. He sees that as being spurred out of Wike's ambition in deputizing Governor Tambuwal in 2023 Presidential Election. It is also a kind of inversion, as a man cannot be addressed as "Mrs". All those who made the lockdown possible were suppressed in the above excerpt. All those who are believed to be speaking ill of the order given by IPOB were appraised as rubbish! They are portrayed as bad people. Wike was also appraised as being hated or despised throughout

the excerpt as being against Biafra's secession. More on strategies used to represent social actors in the excerpt above, Kanu uses individualisation to represent Wike as an individual. Through role allocation, the process, talking is allocated to the agent "people". TV Channels are represented as an instrument by which Wike speaks against the movement of IPOB. In the excerpt above, there is the introduction of the verbal process. Wike is seen as the sayer while, "oh darling I'm here and I'm still fighting the cause, I'm not Igbo" is the quoted. Dave Umahi of Ebonyi State is represented as a changed saboteur who has now become a collaborator of the movement, after the commendation given to him by Kanu for the cenotaph constructed in honour of Biafra fallen heroes.

Fulani as local collaborators to the suppression of Biafrans by the Nigeria

Nnamdi Kanu has represented Fulani people as one of the mercenaries deployed by the Nigerian government to inflict pains on other tribes. This is typically discussed in excerpt 12-14 below:

Excerpt 12: Everything I do, I do with facts and reasons. During the referendum, I want people to decide where they belong. Do **you** want to be part of Biafra or part of Nigeria? Because if you choose **Nigeria**, I can assure **you** that **Ilorin's** case is child's play. **You** will be like **Hausa** people. Is anyone talking about the Hausa people today? No one talks about them **because Hausa is gone and taken over by the Fulani** Janjaweed! (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 31st May, 2021**).

Through the use of suppression, the pronoun "everything" is used to represent what Nnamdi Kanu is doing, agitation for Biafra republic. Hausa and Ilorin are presented as victims of Fulani's suppression through passivation. They are presented as groups of people through collectivisation. The use of question in the above excerpt 12 serves two purposes: persuasive and inclusion strategies. Question is used to persuade the Igbo people and others to join him in fighting Biafra's secession. This is in order to avoid what happened to Hausa and Ilorin from happening to them. Another strategy deployed to paint the Fulani people negatively is name-calling. The Fulani people being called *Janjaweed* by Nnamdi Kanu portrays them as evil people. The name Janjaweed is derived from Arab militia group in Dafur, Sudan. Similarly, it is an inversion as Fulani are directly given a name which is not peculiar to them, although there is similarity

in terms of activities like killing and raping of women between them and Janjaweed as portrayed by Nnamdi Kanu.

Excerpt 13: I want to ask the Fulani presidency of Nigeria. My dear Fulani Janjaweed, who brought insecurity into Nigeria? Simple question! Which people own the fourth most deadly terrorist groups in the world? Is it not **your** so-called herdsmen, Myetti Allah? **Fulani, who started the bombing of churches in Nigeria?** Is it not you people? **You** are now turning around with the help of the **chameleonic Yoruba media** to twist the narrative.... Fulani, let **me** ask **you**: who brought insecurity into Nigeria? **Fulani?** Who were the first people to bear arms openly in Nigeria; as civilians, is it not **you** people? Claiming you're Fulani cattle herdsman with AK47. Please, somebody **should** go and get me that video **I** shot at Amasian very very many years ago. **I think** it was 2014 or so. Go and get it and show them. You people were the first to carry AK 47. So, Fulani can carry AK47, but not the Eastern Security Network protecting the people?.... **Who brought insecurity into Nigeria? The same people that brought insecurity into Nigeria are today lecturing us about insecurity. Aso Rock,** what has been happening in the North over these years? Is there anybody left in Zamfara, Yobe, and Borno? **You** abandoned all these hotspots of Fulani terrorism, and you interested in the East (**Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 21 June, 2020**).

Through, activation, Fulani people are represented as objects that carry out heinous activities in Nigeria such as bringing in insecurity into the country. Nnamdi Kanu deploys association to indicate that Fulani is the only tribe that sees itself capable in the act of governance, while other tribes are disassociated with the leadership of the country, especially the number one seat. The person being addressed by Nnamdi Kanu in the above excerpt is represented as an indetermined social actor. Also, Fulani people are associated as mercenaries that are ruling the country and carrying out sinister activities such as terrorism, insecurity and the use of AK 47. In addition, the two contrasting sentences "the same people that brought insecurity into Nigeria are today lecturing us about insecurity" depict the use of overdetermination, as the two conflicting roles are attributed to the same personalities, Fulani. Another contrasting representation of the social actor, Fulani, through overdetermination is the use of AK47. Fulani were known to be using their shepherd rod but the reverse has become the case. From the above, the attitude projected towards the Fulani people is negative. Also, Yoruba and Fulani are represented as accomplices on the evil done to Biafra by Nigeria through association. Yoruba is seen as a nation who joins hand through publishing of misconstrued news in order to assassinate the character of Biafrans through falsely allegation that Biafrans are the brains behind insecurity in Nigeria. Nnamdi Kanu uses association too to show how the Fulani and the federal government

are working collaboratively in order to annihilate the Igbo people and other nationalities from Nigeria, and to thwart the agitation for the emancipation of Biafrans from Nigeria.

Excerpt 14: Fulani herdsmen are in Nimbo **killing** people and **you** were calling DG DSS Enugu. **Did he answer the phone?** I want anybody to come out to say that during the attack on Nimbo that DSS was reachable the other day contacted the commissioner of police in Enugu. They are all Fulani, **none** of them was reachable! Ngwayi called Buhari back in 2016, Buhari didn't receive the phone. **These were calls going to the army, the police and the DSS and the presidency nobody answered the call until the Fulani finish killing people (Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 26th August, 2020).**

Fulani are projected as killers through activation, although the people being killed are represented as indetermined social actors. That is, Biafrans who are killed are suppressed through the concept, but it could be identified through inference that there they are the recipient of the process *killing*. The representation of those called on the day there was an attack in Nimbo is done through association. That is, Buhari, presidency, police, army and DSS are represented as having similar vision, the killing of Biafrans.

Niger Delta

Niger Delta is the oil producing region in Nigeria based on the Niger Delta Development Commission Act of 2000. According to the Biafran map, most of these states with the exception of Ondo State are within map of Biafra. Excerpts 15 and 16 typically exemplified this representation:

Excerpt 15: I want to let you understand the reason why Niger Delta is in darkness, more than any other place. Nigeria is **darkness** itself. Then inside that darkness there is a place that some people ignorantly refer to as Niger Delta. I want you to **know** the reason why **they** are even **suffering** more than every other person in the zoo called Nigeria. **(Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 21st June, 2020).**

In Nnamdi Kanu's broadcasts on the agitation for the secession of Biafra, the south-south states that are also the core Niger Deltan states, are referred to as a stubborn region doomed for destruction as a result of their refusal to be identified as Biafrans in spite of the map stating so, especially ethnic nationalities such as Ikwere, Ijaw, Itsekiri, Urhobo and Isoko. The agent that causes darkness in the Niger Delta and Nigeria as a whole was suppressed in the above excerpt. Kanu presents Niger Delta as a region that is characterised

by constant darkness for refusing to join the Biafrans in fighting for secession from Nigeria. The down ranking of the process “suffering” indicates that exclusion has occurred in the above excerpt. The agent that causes the suffering of the Niger Deltans has been excluded from the broadcasts of Nnamdi Kanu. In addition to the case of radical exclusion, the use of the third person pronoun “they” have been deployed by Nnamdi Kanu to marginalise and represent the people of Niger Delta as the party who receives the impact of the process "suffering" in his broadcast. Kanu uses the mental process “know” to represent what his listeners are expecting of Niger Deltans. The listeners are represented as the “sensors”, while the clause “the reason why they are suffering” serves as the phenomenon.

Conclusion

The article examined how Nnamdi Kanu represented Nigeria and its some of its citizens as local collaborators as social actors fighting against Biafra’s secession. Six social actors have been, namely, Nigeria, the Nigerian Government, the Yoruba nation, some governors within Igbo land as local collaborators, Fulani and Niger Delta. Also, the study revealed that the social actors and their social practices were excluded through suppression and backgrounding; or included via nomination, activation, collectivisation, association and disassociation. The study concluded that Nnamdi Kanu’s speeches are imbued with negative representations of Nigeria and those within Nigeria fighting against Biafra’s secession.

Recommendations

The study recommends that further linguistic studies should be done to see how code-mixing and code-switching serve as ethnolinguistic elements in portraying culture and identity in his broadcasts, where the virtues of Biafran are uplifted while that of others are looked down upon. Also, pragmatic acts that portray injustice meted on Biafrans by both local and international collaborators should be investigated. Lastly, this study can also be extended to discourses on the agitations for the emancipations of other regions such as Middle Belt, Niger Delta and Yoruba nation.

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