



REPRESENTATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS IN BIAFRA'S SECESSION DISCOURSE

Felix Aishe AMALE, PhD^{1*}, Saratu Shuaibu ISA, PhD², Larai Azuwo Adamu ATINGA³

¹University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

²Department of Languages, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna State, Nigeria

³Languages Department, CASSS, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna.

***Corresponding Author**
Felix Aishe AMALE

University of Ibadan,
Ibadan, Nigeria.

Article History

Received: 01.03.2024

Accepted: 02.04.2024

Published: 20.04.2024

Abstract: This article analysed international observers as social actors in Nnamdi Kanu's agitation for the secession of Biafra. The main objectives of the study were to determine the social actors involved, identify the discursive strategies deployed and discuss the social actors extensively. Van Leeuwen's representation of social actors' approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) served as the framework. 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 of these broadcasts (three in 2020 and two in 2021) were used because of their subject matter. The broadcasts were downloaded from YouTube. The data were subjected to critical discourse analysis. The international social actors identified in the study are Africa, the United Nation 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 concludes 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. The study concludes that international observers have been represented as social actors who are against the secession of Biafra. Thus, the study recommends that linguistic studies on the use of code-mixing and switching as inclusion strategies by Nnamdi Kanu should be investigated.

Keywords: Nnamdi Kanu, Agitation, Nigeria, Secession, Biafra, Social Actor, International Observers.

Cite this article:

AMALE, F. A., ISA, S. S., & ATINGA, L. A. A., (2024). REPRESENTATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS IN BIAFRA'S SECESSION DISCOURSE. *ISAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(4), 9-17.

1. Introduction

The word secession has its root in the verb "secede" which means to officially leave an organisation of a country or state, etc. and become independent. Ojibara (2016:53) sees secession as the process by which a group of people seek to separate from a state, with the goal of creating their own state. Mavric (2012) asserted that secession deals with the concepts of self-determination and dissolution; however, their contextual usages vary. From the above, there are different reasons why a region seeks secession from the country it belongs to. Like in the case of South Sudan that seceded from Sudan in 2011, the imposition of Arab and Islamic injunction in the government of Sudan sitting in Khartoum on the southern part of the country who felt that the majority of its members are either Christians or traditional worshippers promoted the agitation (Knox, 2012). This gave international organisations and other nations the confidence to support the secession. By the way, before a country can think of secession, there must be strong support from national and international bodies.

In the case of Biafra, there have been many agitations seeking the secession of the region from Nigeria owing to many reasons raised by the Biafrans. Amongst the reasons are the marginalisation of the

region, ethnic violence and the killings of Igbo in northern Nigeria (Ezeani, 2013; Oyeniyi 2021; Henry, Obiora and David, 2020; Ikegbunam and Agudoso, 2021). Moreover, the first agitation for Biafra by Odumegwu Ojukwu led to the Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967-1970 (Ezeani, 2013). And this fight for the emancipation of Biafra is still on-going. The war was tagged as global event owing to its one to three million deaths; its implication of secession; political instability in Africa as a whole; and its roles in crucible of humanitarianism (Hearten and Moses, 2018; Oyeniyi, 2021).

So, this has positioned international observers (within Africa and outside the shore of Africa) to voice their displeasure or support either for or against the movement. As it has been established in the earlier part of this study that the first war for the secession of Biafra was spearheaded Gen. Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, others had different leaders. However, Nnamdi Kanu's dimension of the fight is so different from others. The strategies deployed and the timeframe of his agitation is another thing to be considered. The establishment of the Eastern Security Network (ESN) and the presentation of his agitation to various international organisations like the United Nations Organisation (UNO) and numerous others are some of the strategies used in making his plight known all over

the world. To achieve his goal, his tentacles are extended to even outside the shores of Africa in order to gain support.

It is on this background that this study examines international observers as social actors in the live broadcasts of Nnamdi Kanu on his agitation for the secession of Biafra. The study aims at identifying the social actors and the social practices they are engaged in in the live broadcasts, and how the discourse strategies in van Leeuwen's Representation of Social actors helped in the projection of the various social actors. When this study is carried out, it will present a more comprehensive understanding on Nnamdi Kanu's part of the story. This will help government bodies and international organisations handling the dispute between the aggrieved region and the federal government of Nigeria.

Social actor

Social actor is central to van Leeuwen's approach to CDA. Van Leeuwen (1996) does not categorise social actors to be human characters in discourse alone. He sees social actors as both human and nonhuman actors in discourse. In the terms of impersonalised social actors, van Leeuwen (2003) sees nonhuman entities that can be represented as having engaged in an action which can categorise them as either active or passive agents. In addition, the participants in discourse who perform different social practices are known as social actors (van Leeuwen, 2008). The above implies that social actors mean persons or entities involved in carrying out activities during social interactions. Social actors can also be seen as individuals through individualisation and as a group of people through assimilation (van Leeuwen, 2008).

2. Studies on social actor representation

There is a myriad of studies on social actor representation. On gender-related issues, Sahragard and Davatgarzade (2010) used the CDA approach to find out how males and females are represented respectively in the compositions of Iranian students learning English as a second language. The study purposively selected four series of the textbook from *The Interchange* (third edition) as data. For the theory, the study adopted both Theo van Leeuwen's (1996) framework and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) model of transitivity. The result of the finding shows that females are represented as prominent, independent, expressive, successful and active social actors than the male social actors. The main challenge with the above work is that it lost its focus, as theories adopted were not adequately used in the analysis.

From the angle of religious discourse, Qanitat (2015) investigated the representation of Islam in some selected Western newspapers. The data were sourced from two leading newspapers: *The Guardian Newspaper* and *The New York Times*. The reports used captured issues surrounding Islam in Israel, Cameroon, Nigeria, France, and the US. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. Theo van Leeuwen's Social Actor Representation Theory (2008) was adopted to see how Islam is represented and presented to the world by the two newspapers. The study reveals that there is an imbalance in the way some members of a religion are either excluded or included in actions that are sinister. The researcher affirms social actors can either be represented negatively or positively. The study concluded that the representations of issues surrounding Islam by reporters of international newspapers are not neutral. The richness of the study cannot be denied. However, there are a number of problems observed. The study lacks objectivity as its major concern is to

counteract how a particular religion is represented and not looking at it from the ground of scholarship. Also, the aspect of quantitative analysis has affected the efficiency of the paper. A study like this could have done more of qualitative analysis to see the occurrences of all the grammatical elements that characterised the tenets of the theory used for the analysis, especially how they aid representation.

To investigate how social actors are represented in issues on terrorism, Osisanwo (2016a) carried out a study on Boko Haram terrorists. The data for the study were sourced from four (4) e-newspapers. From the North, *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* newspapers; in the South, *The Punch* and *The Nation* were purposively selected for the study. The combination of van Leeuwen's Representation of Social actors and the transitivity aspect of MAK Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar served as the framework. Osisanwo proves that representational strategies can be used in managing the voice of the social actors; identifying social actors based on their specifications; labelling social actors and differentiating them through the "us" and "them" strategy. Furthermore, Osisanwo affirms that categorisation of social actors can be done through the application of SFG, where paratactic clauses are used. It is observed that relational, verbal and material processes dominated other processes like the attributive, mental and behavioural processes. The emphasis laid on those thirteen tools and three processes makes the work narrow; however, other tools and processes should also be considered in order to make the work more robust.

Another study on representation is by Osisanwo (2016b). He looks at how the Nigerian general elections and the social actors involved are represented. The study affirms that the Nigerian political system is represented as a dirty game and a fraudulent exercise. This is because politicians see it as a do or die affair, thereby deploying criminal and violent activities to ensure that they are being voted in by the electorate. He also buttresses the fact that the emergence of a leader in the Nigerian political affair is done through imposition by the Independent National Electoral Commission. Furthermore, he argues that amidst the enmity portrays by most politicians, they are associates in impoverishing the Nigerian society. He uses *TELL* and *The News* as sources of data. The study was anchored on van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors and Systemic Functional Grammar by Halliday. The study proves that discourse features such functionalisation, lexicalisation, categorisation, activation, backgrounding and suppression, and so on as opined by van Leeuwen's. Furthermore, it was revealed that labeling of social actors can be done through all the system of Halliday's e transitivity system both the discourse strategies and the processes in the two theories adopted helped in labeling the Nigerian political system negatively. The paper concludes that through labeling ideologies are projected. Theoretical framework and the methodology chosen by the researcher were suitable and helped in realising the aim and objectives of the study.

Also from conflict discourse, Mustafa (2019) investigates the representation of ISIS as a social actor by some American newspapers and some underlying ideologies in their articles. The data for the study comprised twenty (20) articles written by *The Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were deployed in the study. Theo van Leeuwen's Social Actor Approach to CDA served as the

theoretical perspective. Mustafa confirms that social actors are either included or excluded by some newspapers. For example, in the study, it was discovered that ISIS was either included or excluded in the news items presented by the New York Times. Furthermore, the research buttresses that social actors that serve as major focus of a news item are always represented as active dynamic agent like in the case of ISIS by *NYT*. In addition to the results of the study discussed above, ISIS is portrayed by the newspaper as a powerful social actor with negative inclination. In summary, he sees representation as the projection of social actors either positively or negatively. The study's inability to extensively show how the exclusive and inclusive strategies are deployed in the analysis, however, a major weakness of the study.

The studies reviewed on this segment indicate that scholarly works have been carried on representation. Although the focus of those works is representations of social actors, this study's focus is only interested in how Nnamdi Kanu represents international observers as social actors in his live broadcasts on his agitation for the secession of Biafrans from Nigeria.

3. Theoretical framework

Theo van Leeuwen's (2008) approach to CDA, representation of social actors, served as the theoretical framework for the analysis. This was done to see how international observers are represented as social actors by Nnamdi Kanu in his live broadcasts on the agitation for the secession of Biafrans from Nigeria. Theo van Leeuwen (2008) states that through representations, social actors are either excluded or included during discourses by speakers, to suit their interests and purposes in regard to whom they are intended (readers). The theory considers how actors are positioned, either in an appropriate position or highly esteemed position. Representation can either be exclusion or inclusion.

Exclusion

The exclusion of characters in discourse can be said to be one of the important features of CDA (van Leeuwen, 2003). There are exclusions that do not have traces of social actors and their activities in a discourse. In such a situation, it is seen as being a radical exclusion, and such is mostly done in a critical comparison for the same practices with the intention of giving different representations. However, it should be noted that such kind of radical exclusion is not done in single texts, and the reason for the exclusion without trace is left for a reason known to the speaker or writer (van Leeuwen, 2003). Social actors are excluded in a discourse, and it can either be suppression or backgrounding.

a. **Suppression:** The social actors and what they do are excluded during discourses. And suppression does not leave traces in the representation (van Leeuwen, 2008). Van Leeuwen tagged suppression as a "radical" form of exclusion. Suppression can be by passive agent deletion. The aim of suppression is to omit or delete the real actor (s).

b. **Backgrounding:** Unlike suppression, social actors are deleted but later represented before the end of a discourse. It leaves traces in the representation, unlike suppression which does not. Backgrounding can be realised through simple ellipses in nonfinite clauses with -ing and -ed participles, in infinitival clauses with "to", and in paratactic clauses (van Leeuwen, 2008).

Inclusion

As earlier observed, exclusion does not allow the social actors to be represented in a discourse, while in the case of inclusion social actors of a particular action are represented within a discourse (van Leeuwen, 2008: 30-31). Sub-categories of inclusion are given below, as explained by Evayani and Rido (2019:45-46).

- a. **Activation:** Social actors can be either represented as active or dynamic forces in an activity. It should be noted that in relationship to the transitivity system in ideational metafunction of Systemic Functional Grammar by Halliday, the active actor in material process activation can also be realised through circumstantialisation, that is, through prepositional circumstantial like with, by or from (van Leeuwen, 2003).
- b. **Passivation:** Social actors are represented as 'undergoing' an activity, or as being 'at the receiving end of a particular activity'. Social actors are either subjected or beneficialised. Social actors subjected are treated as objects, while the beneficialised social actors form a third party.
- c. **Categorisation:** Social actors are represented based on their unique identity and the function they share with others. Categorisation is subdivided into: identification, functionalisation and appraisal. Functionalisation is when social actors are represented in terms of an activity and in terms of something they do, and it can be realised through nouns with the suffixes -er, -ant, -or, -ee, etc. like in the word celebrants, teachers, executioner and so on. Identification is when social actors are represented in terms of what they do, and it is divided into: classification (conditions when social actors are represented by means of age, gender, provenance, class and ethnicity); relational (represents social actors in terms of their personal kinship or work relation to each other); while physical identification refers to terms representing social actors regarding physical characteristics which uniquely identify them in a given context. Appraisal is when social actors are evaluated as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied (van Leeuwen, 2008).
- d. **Nominations:** In terms of their peculiar identity through proper nouns, social actors are represented and nomination is divided into formalisation (only definite names, with or without honorifics), semi formalisation (given a name and a surname), and informalisation (given only names) (van Leeuwen, 2008:41). Nominations may be realised in the form of honorification; the addition of standard titles, ranks, etc., as with "Dr."
- e. **Specification:** Social actors can be realised through individualisation (individual) and assimilation (realised by plurality, by a mass noun or a noun denoting a group of people).
- f. **Role allocation:** According to van Leeuwen (2003:42-43), the roles assumed by different social actors in different practices are important in the works of many critical linguists. He also clarified that there is no difference between what grammatical roles and the role social actors perform in discourse. What representation does make it so different in the relocation of roles; rearrange the roles amongst participants in interaction.

4. Methodology

The data for the study comprise the live broadcast of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu on his movement for the secession of Biafrans from Nigeria.

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 of these broadcasts (three in 2020 and two in 2021) were purposively sampled because of their thematic relevance. The broadcasts were downloaded from YouTube. The analysis of the data is guided through van Leeuwen's Representation of social actor, that is, his approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA). Some discursive tools in theory were deployed to see how they help in representing the international observers as social actors in the broadcasts. The broadcasts Nnamdi Kanu used are Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 20th April, 2020; Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 21st June, 2020; Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 26th August, 2020; Message to Sunday Igboho, 27th January, 2021 and Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 31st May, 2021. The data were subjected to critical discourse analysis in order to see how international observers are represented as social actors in the broadcasts.

5. Analysis

The crux of this analysis is going to be on individuals, African as a continent, countries or organisations outside Africa that are either in support or against the secession of the Biafrans. Most of these social actors are The Great Britain, the Europeans, Africa and United Nation.

Africa

Africa is the second largest continent in the world after Asia. It is home to most of the black people in the world. So in this segment, excerpts that represent Africa in different ways are going to be studied. Also, in this representation of Africa, countries in Africa and how they are connected to the emancipation of Biafra positively or negatively will be considered. Furthermore, the roles play by Biafrans towards the general well-being of Africa as a continent are analysed in excerpts 1-37 below.

Excerpt 1: Biafra was the only country to attempt genuine independence out of Africa, every other country you see in Africa what they have is **flag independence with the exception of South Africa**. They only have flag to signify their independence. The **national** fact in their day-to-day transaction of governance, they're not independent, and that's why they go begging anytime they are face with even the most minimal diseases, they fly to **Europe** and **America** to ask for help, they **can't reason**, they can't **sort out the economy**, what **Gen. Chukwuemeka Ojuku, our general, 53 years** was to gaining freedom into **Africa**. It was so sad and unfortunate that the same Africans conspired **against him** and make sure the way of **Harold Wilson** prevail, that is the will of **British** (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 30th, May, 2020**).

In the above excerpt on the representation of Africa, Nnamdi Kanu represents Africa as a continent that is not free from the oppression of the Western world. Africa is also represented as a continent that lacks wisdom to proffer solutions to the challenges confronting her. It is observed that throughout the excerpt, the name of the social actor that gave the flag of independence to Africa is not suppressed. It is excluded in the broadcast. Also, Nnamdi Kanu disassociated South Africa and Biafra from other nations of Africa who are still under the colonial imperialists. He sees South Africa as the only country with real independence, while he represents

Biafra as the only country in Africa that attempts genuine independence. Still on the aspect of association, America and Europe are connected as continents that Africa run to for support and solutions befalling their continent instead proffering solutions to in the continent. So, it can be said that, through association, South Africa and Biafra are connected in terms of countries that have genuinely gained freedom in the whole of Africa.

Furthermore, Africa, America, Europe, Biafra and South Africa are represented as a group of people through assimilation. Gen. Chukwuemeka Ojukwu has been represented through formalisation using his title, first name and surname. He has also been appraised as a hero who was not only after the independence of Biafra but Africa as a whole. In addition, Nnamdi Kanu represents Ojukwu based on identification. This goes with the assertion that a social actor can be categorised based on age, ethnicity and physical appearance (van Leeuwen 2008). From this assertion, Nnamdi Kanu has represented Ojukwu based on kinship through the possessive adjective "our" and identification based on his age.

Excerpt 2: This is a message I want to send to the **Ghanaian government**. I have a lot of respect for **Ghana** and what they have been able to accomplish but **Biafrans** are in **Ghana** not as **illegal immigrants** but as hard working **businessmen** they own businesses all over the place and I must also refer the good people of **Ghana** and their government to the protocol of **ECOWAS** on free movement, integration and security these are contained in the documents and then the articles signed by the state of **Ghana** to allow people to reside and to trade across **West Africa** the same way they did with the **EU**, because **ECOWAS** modeled along the line of the **EU** was the economic community **EEC** was **European Economic Community**, they formed **ECOWAS**, and because we copied them we copy the **EU** verbatim that's why in **ECOWAS** anybody can reside anywhere and do legitimate business, they cannot be subject to deportation it is impossible unless they have of course breached the rules of the land, that is what the protocols says here, **ECOWAS** protocol, we don't want to go to court in **Ghana** to be able to prove that these people of **Ghana** that we are allowed to do business in **Ghana** oh we are a blessed people, we know we are like the **Jews** being persecuted all over the place it is in our nature because we are blessed we are doing business in **Ghana**, in **Kumasi** we are doing legitimate business in **Ghana** we are contributing to **Ghana's overall GDP** and we are paying taxes in **Ghana** and this cannot continue, it shouldn't continue (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 30th, May, 2020**)

In the excerpt above on the representation of Africa in Nnamdi's broadcasts on the secession of Biafra, it can be seen how some African countries have started to threaten Biafra members for staying and doing businesses within their borders, like in the case of Ghana. So, in the above, Kanu tries to tell some African countries, especially Ghana, that Biafrans are not who many thought they are. In all that is happening between the Ghanaian government and Biafrans in that country, Nnamdi Kanu represents himself as a mediator. He sees himself as an active force that can correct the misunderstanding between them. This is achieved through activation, which is realised through the personal pronoun

“I” and Kanu represents Biafrans, through nomination, as agents that have caused positive change to the economy of Ghana and disassociated them from illegal immigrants and illegal businessmen and women. He also uses appraisal to represent the Ghanaian government and Biafrans positively. Another way he appraises the Ghanaians is through the word “good”. Furthermore, Biafrans are disassociated from those who stay in Ghana illegally. It is a strategy that shows the use of appraisal too. He condemns the negative representation of Biafrans as illegal immigrants in Ghana. Nnamdi Kanu appraises the government of Ghana in maintaining a relationship with organisations like EU, ECOWAS, EEC and other nations that have helped to promote a business ground for Biafrans. This innovation has also helped in boosting the economy of Ghana according to Nnamdi Kanu. Associating Biafrans with the Jews appraises them as a blessed nation, where wherever they go they flourish. Assimilation has helped to represent EU, ECOWAS and EEC as groups of people too.

Excerpt 3: Because in **Biafra**, Africans try to create a genuine democracy, a genuine **land** of the free, a **land** that **black people** will be proud of all over the world. It was the same **black people** that **conspire with the white people** to extinguish **Biafra**. That’s why everybody is poor in the zoo and Africa as a whole, I must add, poverty, ignorance, disease, and pestilence are price you pay for self-betrayal. **Biafra** was betrayed in the **Africa**. Those who work against Biafra thought that somehow, they were advancing **with non-stop interest** not knowing they’re injuring themselves **at the foot** and today has it not happened. **Look** at how **poor** and **wretched** everyone is. You are complaining, burdened by the yoke of terrorism all. You are suppressed by the ignorance that brought you upon yourself as a result of a dilapidated system of education, you have no healthcare, no running water, no simple electricity, something that occurs in nature you do not have. You’re suffering today because you work against Biafra, and because you betrayed your own conscience but we must continue. You are betrayed your own conscience, but we must continue. **We are betrayed, sabotaged, abandoned**, everything that you can think of, but we will **survive** it (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu’s Live Broadcast 30th, May, 2020**).

In the current excerpt, Biafra is seen as the hope of Africa. That is, the freedom of Biafra is the freedom of all the nations of Africa. The same excerpt discusses how Africa betrayed Biafra during the 1967-1970 Nigerian Civil War. So the tools that have been identified in the representation of Africa as relying on Biafra for her freedom and Africa as a betrayer include assimilation, association, activation, backgrounding, suppression, passivation, benecialisation, circumstantialisation, subjection and appraisal.

The first element that can be identified in the excerpt above is assimilation. Africans, Biafra, black people and whites are represented as a group of people. Then, through association, the white and black people are represented as having connection in trying to extinguish Biafra. This has also represented Biafra through benecialisation, as a social actor that receives the action done by the white and black people. In addition, Biafra is represented as a subjected agent in the excerpt, where it is

transformed from an object position to a subject position. This can be seen where it is represented through “we” which have been betrayed, sabotaged and abandoned. Moreover, the social actor that betrays, sabotages and abandones Biafra has also been suppressed. Furthermore, the social actors that made Africa poor, wretched and brought terrorism, and made her be without some social amenities such as pipe-borne water, and has made her endure a dilapidated system of education, poor health care, erratic electricity supply were not mentioned throughout the excerpt. They were excluded through suppression. In conclusion, “with non-stop interest” and “with the white people” are represented as activated agents through circumstantialisation. It can also be deduced that Africa is appraised as a bad continent because of how it conspires with the white and has betrayed Biafrans. In all the excerpts treated on the representation of Africa in the broadcasts of Nnamdi Kanu on the secession of Biafra, Africa has been depicted as not being an independent nation, a betrayer and a continent that can only be free when Biafra is free.

Excerpt 4: The same **slave trade mentality**, you are now a **black man** who **sells** to make a **fellow Black man** **suffers**. It is what they are enjoying most, **black people**, that is the truth! If not, why will you be selling each other? Why did we sell **our people** now want **everybody** to apologize to **Africans**? That’s rubbish! **Africans** were the ones selling their **own people**, **nobody** needs to apologise to us. I’m being honest with you, that is nonsense. It was **black** that sold **black people**. If **anyone** is to apologise, **black people** from **Africa** should apologise to **blacks** in **South America**, that’s how they do it. If you ignore the market, you are not going to buy anything, now that all the **supermarkets are shut**, do you go to buy anything? But if they open it to go there, you will buy something, it was **Africans** that opened the shop to say we have **our wives and children** to sell and the world came to buy them. As long as when they come and there is no one to buy, they take it by force? That’s how this is, just like how we have **looting** everywhere isn’t it? If you go to buy something in a shop and they say oh, we are not selling to you, you need something, you take it, that’s how life is. **Africans** opened up their mouths to say “**I have my uncles to sell**”. **Some** will say, “I want to sell **my mother**.” And without conscience and you want God to love you? You must be **insane**! That is the truth and **Africans** should be apologising to **black Americans** for slave trade. Leave **England** alone! If you have no markets, they will not be coming to buy from you, that is the truth (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu’s Live Broadcast 26th August, 2020**).

Nnamdi Kanu sees Africans as the ones that betray one another. He sees Africans as being the enemies of one another. This is because the negative of the slavery they underwent is now used as a yardstick to exploit their own brothers. The person that the slave trade mentality was learnt from was not mentioned. It was excluded through suppression. Likewise, the person that shut the supermarket is suppressed throughout the broadcast. Our people, my uncle, my mother and wives and children indicate relational identification. Those terms show kinship that Nnamdi Kanu holds with other Africans and black men. To this end, we can say that Nnamdi Kanu has identified himself as a black man and an

African. However, he is dismayed by the way Africans have turned out to be the slave masters who sell their brothers to the Europeans.

In addition, Africa, the blacks and England are identified through assimilation, while black people, Black Americans and Africans indicate the use of collectivisation. Nnamdi Kanu has categorically represented the Africans and the black people in general as the modern slave masters of their brothers. The essence of saying this is to emphasize his point that all Africans betrayed Biafra for not supporting the agitation for the realisation of Biafra in his broadcasts.

The Europeans

In this segment, Nnamdi Kanu did not only represent Britain as a social actor that has a connection to Biafra, Nigeria or Africa. The whole of Europe is also represented as a group of people that enslaved, subjugated, colonised, oppressed and exploited Africa. So, in the excerpt below, how the Europeans enslaved Africa is going to be discussed using various tools in van Leeuwen's (2008) Representation Social Actors. Excerpt 5 typically showed the representation of Europeans thus:

Excerpt 5: I started the history of **slavery** when I was studying the history of **slavery**. I wasn't interested in who took from where? How they were crying? How they were complaining? I was trying to interrogate the reason why we did not fight back that only **5 000 Europeans** can come to **Africa** and take away nearly **20 million**. I was trying to understand it; I was asking **God** did you create them differently? How is it that when we saw these people we were so **frozen** that they had to take **20 million of us** and will become **slaves** for offering free labor for **250 years**? Any day you sit down and **think** about the implications of **slavery** and the role that **fellow black people** played in the **enslavement** of their own time, their **own children**, that day you will begin to reason like **us**! That day you **reason** like us! Ask yourself this question, why was it possible that **only 5 000 Europeans** came to **West Africa**, **emptied West Africa** and not only that, they now turned around to tell us who should be in the same country with us. If that is not owning somebody, I don't know what I will say. In fact, **the creation of states** in **Africa** like **Nigeria** is a confirmation that a **black man** is inferior to a **white man**. Take it anywhere because you cannot go, you can never ever go to **Europe** and do the same thing. You can't! They will **kill** you there. Look at **slavery** and why **slavery** became possible then you look at the suffering of **black people** (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 26th August, 2020**).

The first tool that can be identified in excerpt 5 above is backgrounding. The social actors who engaged in the enslavement of Africans were not mentioned at the beginning of the discourse but were later represented in the excerpt. They were later represented as Europeans. And those who were enslaved were not mentioned as well at the beginning until the latter part of the excerpt. So, Nnamdi Kanu represents Africa as a helpless continent who could be bought at the comfort of the Europeans. Another way Africans and the Europeans are represented as social actors in the broadcasts of Nnamdi Kanu is through aggregation. The number of Europeans who came and enslaved Africans was mentioned. Also,

the numbers of Africans that were captured and taken into slavery were also mentioned. This has helped Nnamdi Kanu to position Africa as a country that was dehumanised, oppressed and subjugated by the Europeans. He went further to say that the evidence of such enslavement of a whole continent shows the racial superiority the whites are holding over the blacks.

Those who created states in Africa were backgrounded but were represented later on. In addition, West Africa is represented as a benecialised agent who has suffered the action of the verb "empty" done by the Europeans. Furthermore, there is the use of association in representing West Africa and Nigeria as social actors that suffered the white man's imperialism, while disassociation is used to show the difference between the black man and the white man. The white man is represented as a being that feels superior to the black. That is, they are not in the same social class. Finally, the black man and the white man are represented as a group through assimilation. The above representation of Europeans in Nnamdi Kanu's live broadcasts for the agitation for the secession of Biafra by Indigenous People of Biafra, has positioned Europeans as social actors that are fighting against the secession of Biafra, and has also shown that Africans really suffered during the slave trades.

The Great Britain

The Great Britain, in this excerpt, stands for Great Britain as a country and its government, especially its policy affecting Biafra and the realisation of the Republic of Biafra.

Excerpt 6: The people that brought us the Bible, **Britain** that gave us **Anglican Church** which incidentally I should say, baptized us wrongly. I would say **Britain** gave us Bible; **gave us a story of Jesus and Mary, and the trinity and the Holy Trinity** in the name of the **Father**, the **Son** and of the **Holy Ghost**. Even dressed us up like occultic leaders; because when you see a **pastor** in a church, he looks like **an occultic man**. He looks like a **foreign defiant**, but they were supporting **Muslims from the North** to come and kill us (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 31st, May, 2021**).

There is connection between the Bible and Great Britain in the excerpt above. At the beginning of the excerpt, the social actor who carried out the action of giving and bringing the Bible and was not mentioned by Nnamdi Kanu until the latter part of the discourse. However, Britain is represented as the agent that gave the Anglican Church Britain is represented as a group of people through assimilation; also, Britain is activated as an agent that does the process "giving" which led to Nigeria having Anglican Church, Jesus, Mary, Trinity and the Bible. Furthermore, the Africans are represented via benecialisation, as participants who are recipients or clients to the material processes "bring," "give" and "baptize". In the same vein, Britain is mentioned as the social actor that baptised and dressed Nigerians or Africans as occult leaders. So, from the above, Nnamdi Kanu represents Britain as being hypocritical through overdetermination, as the same British who are seen as the preachers of Christ are the ones conniving with Muslims to kill Biafrans.

There is also incongruity in the way the pastor is represented. That is, the pastor who is supposed to be seen as a sacred being is represented as a defiant and an occult man. In addition, association has been deployed to show the connection the Britain and Muslims have in carrying out the process "killing". So, from the above, it

can be seen that Britain and pastor are presented through overdetermination. This goes in line with van Leeuwen (2008:61) where he asserts that through overdetermination, social actors are represented to be involved in two opposite practices. All those tools identified in the broadcasts of Nnamdi Kanu on the secession of Biafra in the representation of Britain, especially in the excerpt above, placed Britain as a hypocritical nation which claims to be a preacher of Christ but, at the same time, engages in some social practices like killing the Biafrans.

Excerpt 7: Before **Britain** kills you **with their Fulani slaves** they will first **demonise** you, that's their classic! I read in **Britain**. So I **know** what I'm talking about. I know them very well. They will first **demonise** you. That's what they do: a very clever, a very clever move. They will first **demonise** you. They will use **the media**, they will **demonise** you, they will **demonise** you, they will **demonise** you so that when they come to **kill** you nobody will be asking after you. A very clever plan, and that's what they're doing now. This is how **Britain operates** (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 31st, May, 2021**).

Excerpt 7 deals with the representation of Britain as a hypocritical nation. It was observed that Britain was represented through assimilation. In the excerpt above, too, it is represented through assimilation as a group of people that carry out the actions "kill" and "demonise". It is activated as the agent that carries out the material process "kill". Same on the use of activation, Britain is mentioned as the agent that carries the process "demonise". The same process also appraises Britain as an evil nation due to their attachment with sinister activities that end in killing one who kicks against their policy and what have you.

The use of the verb "know" which is a mental process has represented the participant as a social actor with firsthand information on whom the British are. This is targeted at representing Britain as an evil nation and to give assurance to the supporters of Nnamdi Kanu that what he is saying cannot be gainsaid, but is a reality of whom the British are. In conclusion, circumstantialisation is also a tool that it is used in represented activated social actor through the use of prepositional phrases (van Leeuwen, 2008). In both excerpts above, this is deployed through the prepositional phrases "with their Fulani slaves" and "from the North". Such can also be seen as instruments used by British in carrying out their heinous activities against Biafrans in Nigeria.

Excerpt 8: Now listen carefully. It was the same **Britain** that said no to restructuring because **Britain** was afraid that **with restructured Nigeria**, if you take Nigeria back to the regions, the likes of **Dr Michael Opara** and all over **the rest of them** will continue to grow the economy of the south. Because as at 1964, 1965 and 1966, **Biafra land, the East** had the largest and the fastest growing economy in the whole world. **Dr. Michael Opara**, may your soul rest in the bosom of the most high. **Dr. Michael Opara** had the fastest growing economy in the whole world. He was growing the economy of Biafra at the rate of 40% every blessed year. **Britain** wanted to stop it. Are you listening to me? **Britain** wanted to stop it that was the reason for the war. **Britain** went and convinced a few other people that things are not working

very well in **Nigeria** (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 21st June, 2020**)

Britain, in the excerpt above, is represented as an enemy of the economy of the Biafra. To Nnamdi Kanu, such enmity led to the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War of 1967-1970. The first tool observed in the excerpt 30 is assimilation. Britain is represented as a group of people that perform the verbal process "no to restructuring". And it is also represented through assimilation as a country that is afraid of the restructuring of Nigeria. Considering the phrase "with restructured Nigeria", circumstantialisation is achieved. Through formalisation, a title, surname and first name were used in representing Dr Michael Opara. Opara is also, through functionalisation, represented as an economist. There is also the use of aggregation to represent the level at which Opara was developing the economy of the eastern Nigeria, which made Britain afraid and uncomfortable. Similarly, association is used to represent Dr. Michael Opara and those helped in growing the economy of the East. While, on the other hand, Britain is associated with those who were convinced that things were not working in Nigeria.

Excerpt 9: I've given stands and it will not be rescinded until Biafra is free. **By virtue of what they** did on Sunday, **we** are never ever going to stop until **Biafra** is completely restored **with full sovereignty**. **We** are going to live like free people, be where **we** were before **Britain** came. **Britain** is not **God**, they are not admittedly. **They're** a very progressive conscientious nation. Unfortunately, **they** have evil people within **them**. **They** are the ones **orchestrating** this **Islamisation agenda**; they are the ones driving forward this **Fulanisation**; this **Wahabism**; this very dangerous jihad. This is **them**. **They** are closest **Muslims**. They want to **overrun our land** and we are going to prove to them that **God** in heaven is with us. For everybody we lose, **we'll kill 100** of them. As I've said before they said I shouldn't stand **violent**, I said to **hell with all of you**. They are **killing us** every blessed day; **they** are **killing**; **they** are resting; they are molesting (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 26th August, 2020**).

The "we" in the excerpt above, stands for Biafra and IPOB, while "they and them" stand for Britain. Both of them have been represented as activated agents performing different actions through various processes. Nnamdi Kanu has also used various tools to show the divergence "I", who Britain is, and the social practices it does which are against Biafra. Biafra has been represented as the social actors suffering from the malevolence of Great Britain through benecialisation. Also, Great Britain has been represented as the social actor behind Fulanisation, Islamisation and Wahabism through activation. In addition, Britain is represented as having connection with Muslims through association. This is seen where Britain is mentioned as the agents that want to overrun the land of Biafra, by Nnamdi Kanu. Furthermore, Britain is represented through assimilation as a group of people while Muslims are represented through collectivisation. In conclusion, aggregation is used to represent the number of persons that were killed during the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War. Furthermore, the people of Britain involved with fighting or killing Biafra were suppressed by Nnamdi Kanu. So, the above excerpt

has really presented Biafrans as victims of Britain's fight against the secession of Biafra Republic.

United Nation Organisation

This covers all nation states that are members. However, in this segment, the role of USSR, United Kingdom, Israel and United States of America are represented either in support of the movement or against it by Nnamdi Kanu.

Excerpt 10: The Biafran war was the **Third World War**, unofficial third world war. It was the only time that the **capitalist power** in the **United Kingdom, Britain**, and the **communist power** in **USSR**, came together in order to **kill** and **stifle** the whole aspiration of a very tiny country called Biafra in West Africa, in the history of men till this very day (**Nnamdi Kanu' Live Broadcast, 31st May, 2021**).

In excerpt 10, through association, the United Kingdom, the USA and the USSR are portrayed as having the same goal which is to kill and stifle the aspiration of Biafra. Also, through representing the United Kingdom, the USA and the USSR, there is the use of collectivisation where each country stands for a group of people. The former president of the United States, Donald Trump, and the government of Israel are associated by being in support of IPOB's secession from Nigeria, as the speaker sees them as some of the major supporters of his movement. An example is given below:

Excerpt 11: I thank **Donald Trump** and the **government of Israel** who stood by IPOB in our time of need. I thank Prof. Ben Nwabueze who stood by me. I want to send my solidarity to Gov. Ayo Fayose and assure him that Biafra will stand by him in his hour of need. We will have a special place for him in Biafra. Thanks to all my sureties that stood by me (**Nnamdi Kanu' Live Broadcast, 31st May, 2021**).

Donald Trump is represented as a semi-formal actor in the above excerpt by Nnamdi Kanu. No title or honorific is attached in addressing the social actor. Furthermore, Nnamdi Kanu used assimilation. Donald Trump and the government of Israel are associated as those who are in support of Biafra from outside Nigeria, while Great Britain is portrayed as the major cause of problem in Nigeria. He sees Nigeria as a product of error made by the British government out of its self-centred motives. Another thing that can be observed from the above excerpt is that those who serve as sureties on Nnamdi Kanu's agitation are represented as indetermined social actors, as nothing about them is given.

Excerpt 12: I went to see the **United Nations officers** in **Geneva**; I walked into the meeting room. **Ndozim** was there, **our sister Nnene** was there, **Kanuta** my brother was there and a few other people and I believe Nwoka was there as well. We went into this meeting. Asked all these people we went to this meeting with, the **United Nations** in **Geneva** lined up the various **departments**. They were all seated there. They asked me to present my case; I presented a very compelling case for **Biafra**. **One of them** said to me, he said to all of us not to me. He didn't say it in secret. He said to me: "why is it at any time in **New York** any time **Biafra** is mentioned in any meeting at **UN Headquarters** in **New York** everybody will get up and leave the room?" I asked him what he

said in front of **everyone**. Ask anybody who was with me in Geneva what I'm saying. We were at the **UN office**. At the **UN**, they said to us in broad daylight around 3:30pm in the evening "anytime, we discuss your affair; what they are doing to you people at the **UN office** in **New York**, **everybody** will get up and walk away" (**Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 31st, May, 2021**).

There is no trace of those who walk away whenever the case of Biafra is mentioned in excerpt 8. This is an example of passive agent deletion. Those who will not reply or listen are also suppressed in the excerpt above, as van Leeuwen (2008:40) asserted that social actors can be excluded through nominalisation and process. The processes "listen and response" were done by some social actors whose identities were not revealed in the broadcast. Another prominent exclusion strategy deployed by Nnamdi is the use of the adjective "global" to represent social actors in his broadcast. As van Leeuwen (2008:40) puts it, those processes can be realised through an adjective. He sees the whole world as being against the freedom of Biafra. Furthermore, United Nation officers are also suppressed, as no specific name is mentioned.

Also, Nnamdi Kanu represents the United Nation as one of the social actors that fall under international observers. One of the functions of the UN is maintaining world peace since its creation after the Second World War, on 24th October, 1945. It is the duty of the UN to reconcile warring parties, especially when it comes to regional issues within a country. To Nnamdi Kanu, the way the UN handles the case of Biafra secession is not fair. He believes that the UN is partial in its judgement concerning their agitation. The excerpt above exemplifies instances which Nnamdi Kanu represents the UN as being partial.

In addition, Nnamdi Kanu uses collectivisation to represent all those who are working in the UN, Geneva, where the mental process "see" is carried out. The United Nations officers in Geneva, in the above excerpt, stand as the phenomenon. He also uses that avenue to represent those who were with him through relational classification. He used "our sister" and "my brother" which indicate kinship in his broadcasts, showing the relationship existing between him and them. Those who were with him are also represented through informalisation, where only their given names were mentioned by Nnamdi Kanu. Ndozim, Nnene Kanuta and Nwoka are represented through their given names by Nnamdi Kanu. It could also be a way of showing the asymmetrical relationship between him and them.

To capture the aspect that shows how partial the UN is in terms of its dealings with any case concerning Biafra, Nnamdi Kanu uses the verbal process to represent what was said. The sayer is captured via indetermination as the person is not specifically mentioned by his or her name. Also, the persons who walk out whenever the case of Biafra is mentioned is represented through indetermination through the indefinite pronouns "everyone" and "everybody." The quoted speech portrays the prejudice that is observed in the involvement of the UN in matters concerning Biafra.

Excerpt 13: They have that **woman** at **UN**, trying to lie the world that everything is okay, in **the zoo** called **Nigeria**, but you and I know that the **zoo** is not okay, you and I

know what is happening in the zoo (Message to Sunday Igboho, 27th January, 2021).

The above excerpt has a female official at the United Nations (UN) office, who is believed by Nnamdi Kanu to be giving false information about what is happening in Nigeria, especially on the issue concerning the agitation for the secession of Biafra. Nnamdi represents the UN, through assimilation, as a group of people. The woman who could also be seen as a representative of the UN has been identified through indetermination, as the listeners do not know the exact woman that gives false information about what is happening in Nigeria. The representation of Nigeria as a zoo is an inversion which has directly compared Nigeria to where animals are living rather than humans. All this is done to drive his point home that Biafrans are no longer happy with Nigeria and should be allowed to secede from Nigeria. So the woman in the above excerpt represents not only the UN but the majority of the countries of the world that are fighting against the secession of Biafrans from Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

The article has discussed an analysis that examined the role of international observers as social actors in Nnamdi Kanu's agitation for the secession of Biafra. The analysis was anchored on the application of van Leeuwen's (2008) representation of social actors, with the aim of determining how the social actors and the social practices they engaged in are either included or excluded from his agitation for the secession of Biafra in his live broadcasts. Nnamdi identified three social actors in his live broadcasts on his agitation for the secession of Biafra, namely, United Nation Organisation, the Great Britain and the Europeans. On the aspect of United Nation Organisation, the USSR, Israel and USA are represented as either in support of the secession of Biafra or against it. He represents Israel as the only nation under UNO that is in support of the secession, while USSR, UK and USA are represented as having the same goal, which is fight against the agitation for the secession of Biafra. Furthermore, Nnamdi Kanu represents the Great Britain and the Europeans as separate social actors with similar vision: the destruction of Biafra land, and the war against the secession of Biafra from Nigeria.

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 concludes 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. The study also recommends that research should be conducted on the ideologies and the pragmatic acts that are imbued in the broadcasts.

References

Primary sources

1. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 30th, May, 2020
2. Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 20th April, 2020
3. Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 21st June, 2020
4. Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast, 26th August, 2020
5. Message to Sunday Igboho, 27th January, 2021
6. Nnamdi Kanu's Live Broadcast 31st May, 2021.

Secondary sources

1. Ezeani, E. (2012). *In Biafra Africa died: the diplomatic plot*. Veritas Lumen Publishers.
2. Heerten, L., & Moses, A. D. (2017). The Nigeria-Biafra war: postcolonial conflict and the question of genocide. In *Postcolonial Conflict and the Question of Genocide* (pp. 3-43). Routledge.
3. Henry, J. U., Obiora, N. I., & David, I. C. (2020). The Biafran state & the rise of IPOB: A crack on Nigeria's national integration. *Social Sciences*, 9(1), 40-44.
4. Fabian, A. G. U. D. O. S. Y. (2021). Cultivating Biafran agenda in Nigeria: Evaluation of the influence of radio Biafras rhetoric of ethnic marginalization on rural dwellers in the South-east. *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, 13(1), 23-37.
5. Knox, C. (2012). The secession of South Sudan: a case study in African sovereignty and international recognition.
6. Mavrič, U. (2012). Rethinking the Right to Secession: A Democratic Theory Account. *Budapest: Central European University-Department of Philosophy*. Retrieved February 4, 2022 from www.etd.ceu.hu/2012/mavric_urska.pdf accessed on.
7. Abdulkareem, M. A., & Qassim, A. (2017). The representation of ISIS in the American Newspapers in terms of Van Leeuwen's social actor approach: a critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Basra at University of Basra-College of Arts*, 80.
8. Ojibara, I. I. (2016). Biafra: Why Igbo want to secede. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 4(1), 53-61.
9. Osisanwo, A. (2016). Representation of Nigerian general elections and social actors in selected Nigerian news magazines' reports. *Grammar, applied linguistics and society: A festschrift for Wale Osisanwo*, 248-265.
10. Osisanwo, A. (2016). Discursive representation of Boko Haram terrorism in selected Nigerian newspapers. *Discourse & Communication*, 10(4), 341-362.
11. RAMÍREZ, P. G. (2021). 3.2 BIAFRA WAR NOVELS: MEMORY AND POST-MEMORY. *The Spectre of Defeat in Post-War British and US Literature: Experience, Memory and Post-Memory*, 166.
12. Qanitat, K. (2015). *Social Actor Representation on Islamic Issues in The New York Times and The Guardian Newspapers* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim).
13. Van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford university press.
14. Van Leeuwen, T. (2013). The representation of social actors. In *Texts and practices* (pp. 41-79). Routledge.