

“Kano, blood of Agbahime crying out for justice”: A Socio-cognitive Discourse Study of an Editorial in a Nigerian Newspaper

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Abstract

As a genre of newspaper discourse, editorials have not been much explored most especially from the purview of Socio-cognitive model of CDA. Motivated by the scanty of work of this nature, this study, therefore, explores the Punch editorial on the Agbahime incident using the Socio-cognitive discourse aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Editorial section of the Punch Newspaper published on November 9, 2016 was collected and analysed using socio-cognitive discourse analytical tool. Our findings reveal that the ideologies projected by the editorial are found to have been articulated through the strategies of metaphorisation, discourse participants' identification, nominalisation, context swap and prejudices. These assisted the newspaper and by extension, the editorial writer, the avenue to project to its readers its ideological leaning or posture vis-à-vis religious extremism, terrorism, ethnicity, ethnic bigotry and government's insensitivity to the gruesome murder of the victim(s) in question. This study argues, therefore, that analysing newspaper editorials from the purview of the Socio-cognitive Model aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has potency of enhancing a better understanding of the editorial as a genre of newspaper discourse. It further illuminates the discourse value of socio-cognitive model of CDA and provides additional useful material for the editorial genre in newspaper communication. The study also serves as useful material for media discourse pedagogy and skills.

Keywords: Editorial, Agbahime, socio-cognitive discourse, Punch Newspaper,

Introduction

Every newspaper organisation has ideological position(s) that it wants to project and propagate to its reading public. Editorials, therefore, serve as media genre by which most newspapers advocate their ideological position(s). Their purpose, in most cases, has always been to recommend a particular decision either for or against a

defined course of action. Corroborating this, Sebranek and Kemper (1990) reviewed in Wiredu (2012: 2), note that “editorials build on an argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way as the paper does.” Extant literature on editorial genre as an aspect of newspaper discourse reveal that editorials have benefited from a wide range of scholarly attentions using different linguistic perspectives and paradigms namely; Systemic Functional Linguistics (e.g. Bonyadi, 2011; Jegede, 2015; Liu, 2018; Oladele 2019, etc.); Syntactic/Grammatical (e.g. Wiredu, 2012; Textlinguistics (e.g Bonyadi and Samuel, 2013; Malah, Tan and Sabariah, 2017, etc.); Pragmatics (e.g. Lee, 2009; Olawale 2015, Lawal, 2015, Ewata, 2018, Siddique, Aqeel and Imran, 2019, etc.) and Critical Discourse Analytical (e.g. Adedun (forthcoming)). Available literature reveals that newspaper editorials have been generally studied but scarcely from the purview of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Although Adedun’s work is on critical discourse study of editorials in print media, it is markedly different from the current study in two respects. First, the study specifically focuses on ecolinguistic resonances in the print media genre using CDA as an analytical tool. Second, in terms of data base, Adedun’s work is on environmental issues while the present study focuses on one of the ethno-religious issues in the northern part of Nigeria and how it was projected in a newspaper editorial. This, to the best of our knowledge, creates a vacuum in the literature and it is this that the present study intends to fill. This study, therefore, examines the *Punch* editorial on the Agbahime incident using the socio-cognitive discourse aspect of critical discourse analytical approach.

For data, the editorial section of *The Punch* Newspaper published on November 9, 2016 was collected and analysed using the socio-cognitive discourse analytical tool. We have chosen to analyse this editorial because it focuses on ethno-religious crises which have become a volatile national issue in the recent decades of Nigeria’s socio-political history. This study is essentially significant in a number of ways. First, it is valuable in complementing existing works on editorials as a genre of newspaper discourse in particular and media communication in general. The study equally has potency of adding to the growing literature on socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis. It equally promises a better understanding of editorials in Nigerian print media.

The Genre of Newspaper Editorials

An editorial has been described as an article in a newspaper that expresses the opinion of the newspaper on a topic or news item of public concern (Sinclair, 1995). This position is further accentuated by Buitkiene, (2008: 13) as he points out that in an editorial, the chief editor or a group of famous columnists, comments, i.e. expresses his/her opinion, on current issues of general importance, gets involved in a certain political or ethical discussion. Events are criticised, praised, or denounced. These generic compliant functions of editorials are, among others, performed by the *Punch* Newspaper as it reacted to the ethno-religious unrests in Northern Nigeria in its editorial section of November 9, 2016 using Agbahime’s legal process which took place in Kano as an instance.

Kano is predominantly a Muslim city in Northern Nigeria. The city is known for high commercial activities in Nigeria. This makes it attractive to people from diverse ethno- religious backgrounds. During business transactions, there seems to be incessant misconceptions, misunderstanding and non-recognition of ethno-religious cultures and values which, in some instances, lead to crises. An instance of these crises was the one in which Agbahime, an indigene of Imo State but a Kano based trader, was killed by some religious bigots. Agbahime was alleged of berating some Islamic values and this led to public unrest. The story angle was picked from the effects of the crisis and not from the causes of the crisis. Also in the story line, the editorial uses the actions of some individuals to evaluate Northern Muslims.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, Socio-Cognitive Model (SCM) aspect of CDA is relevant to our analysis.

Teun van Dijk and the SCM

Van Dijk believes that the complex nexus of dominance and discourse is the primary aim of CDA, (van Dijk 1993:252). However, he differs slightly, from his fellow scholars such as: Fairclough, Weiss, Leeuwen and Wodak to mention but a few. Andreassen (2007), believes that van Dijk has elements of neo-marxism, because he posits that most of those who control power also control the discourse dimensions like topics, setting, style, interaction etc. This is parallel to Marx's concept which holds that the individuals who control the production means are also found in the control of the outcome, capital and they also gain the possession of dividends. Based on the research experience of van Dijk on parliamentary debates and mass media, especially on the issues that have to do with xenophobia and racism, he holds the assertion that elites pre-formulate and instigate racism. This dominates most of his studies in these areas (Wodak, 2006:13).

The social as well as the cognitive dimensions observed from discourse, cognition, and society explain the expected context of discourse. Like Andreassen (2007), this work also agrees that these three elements should be given full analysis. Also, van Dijk opines that only through an absorption of these accounts can one reach enough descriptive, explanatory and critical adequacy in the research of social issues (van Dijk, 2001: 98). The important presupposition is to understand the nature of dominance and social power. When this is done, the analysis of social dimension will not be difficult for researchers in the field. This structure of power involves properties of connections between groups, for example privileged access to forms or contexts of discourse and communication. And, van Dijk (1993: 255) claims that "powerful groups always have special access to discourse: they are literally the ones who have most to say." In the real sense, the control over access to discourse is an indication of power and dominance of groups. All the time, the most useful form of dominance is found at a time the dominated minds is captured in a way that these individuals allow and accept the decisions, actions and the interest of the powerful without any force or compulsion.

Power involves control namely; by (members of) one group over (those of) other groups. Such control may pertain to *action* and *cognition*: that is, a powerful group may limit the freedom of others, but also influence their minds ... 'modern' and often more effective power is mostly cognitive, and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one's own interest. It is at this crucial point where discourse and CDA come in: managing the mind of others is essentially a function, of text and talk. van Dijk (1993: 254).

'Modern' power, as van Dijk puts it, has also got a major cognitive dimension. Such mind management, or gaining access to the public mind is conceptualised in terms of social cognition in the meaning of 'socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning' (van Dijk 1993: 257). Even social cognitions are embedded in the minds of individuals, they are social because they are shared and presupposed by members of a group; they monitor social action and interaction, and underlie the social and cultural organisation of society as a whole. Indeed, 'Ideologies are the fundamental social cognitions that reflect the basic aims, interests and values of groups' (van Dijk 1993: 258).

In van Dijk's cognitive model, context plays an important role, but as of yet, he claims, there is no such thing as an explicit theory of context. Van Dijk thus ventures into pastures unknown and sets forth his own thoughts on the matter. He distinguishes between global and local context, where the former is 'defined by the social, political, cultural and historical structures in which a communicative event takes place', and the latter sounds like an echo of the sociolinguistic concept of accommodation theory; 'what we say and how we say it depends on who is speaking to whom, when and where, and with what purpose' (van Dijk 2001: 108).

This leads him to the idea of a context model, a form of mental model that controls many of the properties of discourse production and understanding, which 'allows subjective interpretations of social situations and differences between language users in the same situation, strategically incomplete models, and in general a flexible adaptation of discourse to the social situation' (van Dijk 2001: 108-109).

These models are important because they are the interface between mental information about an event and actual meanings being constructed in discourse. They do not only link discourse and society, but also the personal and the social. Without such models, we are unable to explain and describe how social structures influence and are affected by discourse structures (van Dijk 2001: 110-12).

van Dijk continues by introducing the concept of an event model. As the context model, the event model is also a mental representation. Such a notion is important to better understand the events or situations language users speak or write about - because it is not the facts that define coherence, but rather the ways the facts are

defined and interpreted by the language users in their mental models of these facts. These interpretations are personal, subjective, incomplete or completely imaginary' (van Dijk 2001: 111).

Both of these models are mental representations stored in episodic memory; that is, 'the part of long term memory in which people store their knowledge and opinions about episodes they experience or read/hear about'. To simplify this, one might say that context models control the 'pragmatic' part of discourse and event models control the 'semantic' part. And understanding a discourse basically means being able to construct a model for it (van Dijk, 2001: 110-112). Since CDA deals with power, domination and social inequality, it tends to focus on groups, organisations and institutions, and thus requires an analysis of the social cognition or the social representations shared by these collectivities. Most important, according to van Dijk, are knowledge (personal, group and cultural), attitudes (socially shared opinions) and ideologies (basic social representations of social groups) (van Dijk 2001: 113-14)

However, given that the objects of the present study are mostly ideologically biased discourses, CDA is especially interested in the way these polarise the representation of in-groups (us) and out groups (them). This can be done, often quite consistently, by juxtaposing the positive self- presentation with a negative other-presentation, where our good sides and actions are emphasised and our bad things deemphasised and vice versa. Such 'othering' can be done on many levels:

Speakers or writers may emphasize our good things by topicalizing positive meanings, by using positive lexical items in self-descriptions, by providing many details about good actions, and few details about bad actions, by hyperbole and positive metaphors, by leaving implicit our negative properties, or by de-emphasizing our agency of negative acts through passive sentences or nominalizations ... such formal and meaning aspects of dominant discourse not only express and enact power, but are also geared to the construction of desired mental models and social representations, that is, to influence, manipulate or control of the mind (van Dijk, 2001: 108).

Nevertheless, the most central element in a polarised model is still content, but to make sure that statements that entail positive evaluations of 'us', or negative ones of 'them', are both credible and persuasive, discourse structures like those mentioned above or those summed up underneath are used.

- Argumentation: the negative evaluation follows from the 'facts'.
- Rhetorical figures: hyperbolic enhancement of 'their' negative actions and 'our' positive actions: euphemisms, denials, understatements of 'our' negative actions.
- Lexical style: choice of words that imply negative (or positive) evaluations.

- Storytelling: telling about negative events as personally experienced; giving plausible details about negative features of the events.
- Structural emphasis of ‘their’ negative actions, e.g. in headlines, leads, summaries, or other properties of text schemata (e.g. those of news reports), transitivity structures of sentence syntax (e.g. mentioning negative agents in prominent, topical positions).
- Quoting credible witnesses, sources or experts, e.g. in news report (van Dijk 1993: 264)

According to Meyer (2001: 26), van Dijk puts forth a six step-strategy on how to conduct the actual analysis. van Dijk (2001: 101-108) also presents a practical example of how this analysis is carried out. At any rate, Meyer’s summary is presented below.

1. Analysis of semantic macrostructures: topics and macropropositions.
2. Analysis of local meanings, where the many forms of implicit or indirect meanings, such as: implications, presuppositions, allusions, vagueness, omissions and polarisations are especially interesting.
3. Analysis of ‘subtle’ formal structures: Here most of the linguistic markers mentioned are analysed.
4. Analysis of global and local discourse forms or formats
5. Analysis of specific linguistic realizations, for example, hyperbolas, litotes, metaphorisation etc.
6. Analysis of context (Meyer 2001: 26)

Halliday’s System of Voice

In the system of voice, an effective clause is either active or passive. A clause is active if it contains an agent/subject; it is passive if the clause contains a medium/subject. An effective clause has the feature of “agency” rather than the structure function. A clause with no feature of “agency” is neither active nor passive but middle. A clause with one agency is referred to as a non-middle or effective clause. An effective clause is active if it has the “agent/subject”, and passive, if it has medium/subject.

In addition, Halliday (2004), maintains that an effective clause may be passive in order to get the medium as subject and as an unmarked theme. It may also be passive in order to make the agent either a late news by putting it last, or by making it implicit by leaving it out completely. Again, Malmkjaer (2002,) explains that the clause in English serves to express processes of two kinds; these are transitive and intransitive processes. The process is usually represented by a verb. An action clause, which is concerned with action or event, can be either a middle clause (if it has one inherent participant/agent) or non-middle clause. A clause is non-middle or effective if there are two participants, that is, the actor and goal. Non-middle clauses may be effective either in active or passive voice.

To buttress the significance of Halliday's grammar, Hart and Lukes (2007), rightly observe that due to the influence of critical discourse analysis, the Hallidayan systemic functional grammar which holds that language is as it is, because of its function in the social structure has become synonymous with linguistic approaches to critical discourse. Thus, Halliday's classification of systems of mood, modality, and transitivity is also adopted in this study as it is suitable for critical discourse analysis. As noted earlier on, the goal of this work is therefore to examine the *Punch* editorial on the Agbahime incident using the socio-cognitive discourse aspect of critical discourse analytical approach.

Analysis

Linguistic features of social cognitive model of CDA and Halliday's system of voice that are found to characterise the editorial are discussed in this section. As our findings reveal, the data is characterised by metaphorisation, discourse participants identification, nominalisation, context swap and prejudices which are used to project the ideological leaning of the *Punch* newspaper. These are discussed in relation to the discourse structure of the editorial as follows:

(i) Metaphorisation

Ex. 1:

(1) "Kano, blood of Agbahime crying out for justice"

The editorial creates a place setting - "Kano"- for the metaphor of "blood" which belongs to Agbahime. This metaphor mainly realises its aesthetics through the personification used in the expression, "blood crying out for justice". Here, Agbahime is reduced to blood as a meronymic representation. The metaphoric headline summarises the overall meaning (semantic macrostructure) of the editorial, as represented in the current mental model of the journalist about the crisis in Kano. The editorial picks its story line as point of view from the effects of the crisis (henceforth effect- based) and not from the causes of the crisis (henceforth cause-based).

Like the mental model above, the context models consist of a schematic structure of the setting which is Kano, participants which are Agbahime and the mob, the communicative action specified by the mental model of the reporter is "the killing" of Agbahime by the mob. From the headline of the editorial, the discourse production institutes a parallel discourse structure of the allusive and spiritual essence of "the blood of Jesus" and "the blood of Agbahime". To strictly fit into the on-going communicative situation, the mental models in form of context models appropriate the blood of Jesus as a belief system from the Long Term Memory (LTM) to the Short Term Memory (STM) or Working Memory (WM) in the process. Jesus was retained in the LTM to create context for the on-going discourse structure and, Agbahime stands in place of Jesus as a substitute in the Working Memory. All these are background to the real explanations of how discourse of this nature do create the concept of US and THEM in the religious discourse.

(ii) Discourse Participants' Identification Strategies

Below, the current study exposes how the editorial identifies the victims as the participants in the discourse, using onomasticism, religion, ethnicity, occupation, and region as the surface formations of the noun phrase structures at the goals segment. All these are presented through the implied meanings in identity. This invariably means that the identities of the goals or the victims are implicitly revealed to the readers of the editorial. Extracts below instantiate these:

Ex. 2:

Agbahime, a Christian Igbo trader from Imo was murdered by Islamic fanatics....

Ex. 3:

Gideon Akaluka a Southern Christian...

Ex. 4:

... the horrific killing of **Eunice Olawale**, in Kubwa, Abuja, 38.during early morning **evangelism**.

The goals in the above discourse production are represented in table 1 below.

TABLE 1

	Onomastic	Religion	Ethnicity	Occupation	Region
1. 8	Agbahime	Christian	Igbo	Trader	Imo State
1.33	Gideon Akaluka	Christian	-	-	Southern
1.37-38	Eunice Olawale	(implied) Christian	-	-	-

From the above table, it is observed that the reporter in his/her STM created strong overall patterns for the choice of inclusion of onomastic and religion in the structures and strategies of the discourse. This discourse production only affected the goals. It is also observed that Agbahime is given adequate explanation and representation as reflected in example 2 and table 1 above. In the table, Gideon Akaluka is also given fair and equitable description. The lexical densities that introduced the goals who were the victims of the crises vary. The first two instances given by the editorial have both the ethnic and religious details: 'Agbahime, a Christian Igbo trader from Imo State...' and 'Gideon Akaluka, a Southern Christian...' the types of mental representations here are similar. The two noun phrases state the onomastic, religious, and ethnic identities of the two victims, but Eunice Olawale who was also a victim was not represented adequately as reflected in the table. It is only her onomastic identity that provides the readers with his/her ethnic identity. The international readers (i.e. non-Nigerian readers) of *Punch* newspaper may not have access to such identity in their Long Term Memory (LTM), that Olawale

presupposes Yoruba identity. This type of discourse and social structure are implied in group- US and out group- THEM. It implies that the editorial promotes ethnicity even among the victims.

The social actor uses passivisation and nominalisation to defocus the agent and focus on the goals as it is indicated thus: “Agbahime, a Christian Igbo trader from Imo State was murdered-” (goal). The real agents who are actors, Islamic fanatics are defocused from the readers. This is important because one of the aims of the editorial is to persuasively present its view vis-à-vis its ideological leaning to the readers. This is in line with the claim of Fairclough (2001:41,128), that mass media discourse involves hidden relations of power: text producers in mass communication address an ‘an ideal subject’ constructing their own notion of their ‘ideal reader’ and by this means, may succeed in manipulating audiences to accept their view of a particular event.

In essence, the appraisal structure of this editorial is victim based. Having observed and analysed the structures of the goals above, we consider it necessary to look at the agents contained in the discourse structures thus:

Ex. 5:

Agbahime, a Christian Igbo trader from Imo was murdered by **Islamic fanatics**...

Ex. 6:

Mark Agbahime, a pastor and widower escaped being killed by **the mob**.

One unique thing about these first sets of agents is that the underlying mental models do not represent the agents with personal or proper nouns but with abstract nouns. Also, the descriptive environments of the agents are short and scanty, unlike their corresponding goals which are given adequate and overwhelming descriptive details. The choice of these abstract entities by the discourse producer may imply that those who killed the victims were not known as at the time the editorial was published or there was inadequate information about the agents. With this, the reporter of the editorial introduces vagueness to his/her readers. For instance, Agbahime was murdered by Islamic fanatics; there are no details as to who the Islamic fanatics are. Just below it, the reporter also created another Working Memory thus: “Mark Agbahime, a pastor and widower, narrowly escaped being killed by the mob” The reporter uses contextual model in form of substitution and reference assignment to equate **the mob** with **the Islamic fanatics**. Through the use of the definite reference assignment as epistemic strategy, the editorial equates fanatics to the mob as used in the editorial. The sequence of the events as contained in the editorial are meaningfully related to each other and this makes the appropriate inferences that the mob who killed Agbahime, the trader may likely be the ones that Mark Agbahime, a pastor and widower escaped from. This is what van Leeuwen (1996), calls collectivization. Collectivization is a type of assimilation which represents social actors as groups. This collective identity was later reduced to individualization in the editorial as expressed in the extract below:

Ex. 7:

Now, the precious blood of Aghahime is crying out for justice from
Ganduje
for discontinuing the trial of Dauda Ahmed, Abdulmumeen Mustafa,
Zubairu
Abubakar, Abdullahi Abubakar and Musa Abdullahi...

It may be possible that after some investigations, the five suspects were not part of the mob. This depends on when and where they were arrested for the crime. However, the reporter could not supply information on when and where they were arrested as parts of the communicative models.

(iii) Nominalization and Discourse Structures in the Editorial

Based on their discourse functions, two categories of nominalisation are found to characterise the data. First, nominalisations that are used to incite the readers to have strong feelings for the victims of the crises in the Northern Nigeria, and those nominalisations that hide the causes of the crises. The writer employs nominalization as one of the main lexico-grammatical formations in the data. The reason for this step, as found in the data, is that the reporter creatively uses nominalisation to arrest the feelings of readers, thereby making it difficult for readers to separate the facts from the opinions as exemplified in the lexical items such as these: (judgement 1.4, allegations 1.9, opinion 1.19, leadership 1.53 etc.) that are found in the data. All these are realised when the reporter uses nominalization to simplify the main propositions in the editorial. In relation to this, Fowler (1991:11-12), notes that:

all news is inevitably mediated and no news can be completely “neutral” or “unbiased.” In fact, events only become news when selected for inclusion in news reports and different newspapers will report differently in both content and presentation, showing disaffections and also affiliations in their treatment of particular topics: the world of press is not the real world, but a world “skewed and judged”.

Our data is not an exception to Fowler’s assertion. When we are supposed to realize agent → process → goal structures, the reporter turns to noun phrases, as we have in the phrase **(1.2), ...killing (1s.3,14,30, and 37), feeling (1.47), “support” (1.12)**. The processes are constructed in gerunds as forms of nominalized expressions in lines 3,14,30, and 37. These reconstructions are in their entities, as it appears in line 37 of the editorial. This is presented as example 8 below.

Ex. 8:

“In July, Nigeria witnessed the **horrific killing** of Eunice Olawale.”

The right question is –who killed Eunice Olawale? The agency here could be made clearer if it were attributed to the people who killed Olawale. The choice of *killing* automatically blocks the killer(s) who carried out the process. Baker and Ellece (2011), note that nominalization may be used in order to obscure blame or dehumanize certain groups. Also, Fairclough (1989), agrees that there may be ideological aspects to the ways that agency is presented (or misrepresented). The power exercised in this editorial masks some vital information about the person that

killed Olawale. This is also a form of power to constrain content to favour certain interpretations or events.

Since the reporter is silent on who killed Eunice Olawale, it may be difficult to know what killed her. The reporter makes attempts to force the readers of *Punch* to provide conventional or stereotypic representation of knowledge as an answer to the killer(s) of Eunice Olawale. This interpretation will be inferred from the preceding discourse background. This background knowledge is what Brown and Yule (2007:236), call **default elements**. These elements are assumed to be present, even when not mentioned. Brown and Yule (2007:236), agree that these knowledge representations are organised in a fixed way as a complete unit of stereotypic knowledge in memory. So, based on the discourse structures of the editorial, the reporter forces the readers to believe that the terrorists who have been killing others in the text also killed her, though not explicitly mentioned in the editorial. The effect of the above gerund which appears in form of nominalization is that it creates a long continuous emotional grip in the mental models of the readers about the victims. The second set of the nominalization that hides the causes of the crises will be analysed under religious prejudice below.

This type of application provides contraction of long sentences to a noun phrase, as we have in the above examples. This helps to contrast and compact more information in a clause through the process of nominalization. In the editorial, some information are left unspecified. This is why Halliday and Webster (2009) in Kazemian and Hashemi (2014:1181), make us realize that IGMS typically takes place in syndromes wherein every element has undergone a metaphoric shift. In addition, the editorial uses nominalization in many circumstances where the congruent clauses would impede the smooth flow of information.

(iv) Context Swap

In this editorial, physical contexts in many instances are forced to take the position of social actors. These physical contexts are personified with human actions. This situation warrants them to take both the roles of setting and participants in the editorial. As revealed in the data, words and expressions such as: “Kano”, “Nigeria”, “Kano State Government”, “Federal Government”, “The State”, etc. are now assigned the roles of social actors. These social actors are reconstructed to arrive at some interpretations of the editorial. Examples of these reconstructions are presented below:

Ex. 9:

- (a) ...Nigeria **pretends** to be a secular country... (6)
- (b) ...Kano State is **acting**... (22)
- (c) Kano State Government ... **put** the suspects on trial... (11-12)
- (d) Is the State **supporting** murder... (19) etc.

Presumably, these personified abstract entities represent some human beings in the writer’s mental models. He substitutes these superior social actors for the abstract

entities above. Let it be stressed, that the power of the context in the editorial constrains the interpretation that whenever the editorial refers to Kano State as the source of power, it means Abdullahi Ganduje, the then state governor. This style is arrived at because most of what the editorial used the abstract entities above to achieve are dysphemetic in nature. An instance of this dysphemism is found in the extract below:

Ex. 10:

Allowing fanatics the latitude to kill in the name of religion, as happened during the miss world beauty pageant riots of 2002 in Kaduna, which claimed over 200 lives, is dangerous.

“Allowing” presupposes that the fanatics made an attempt to kill and the concerned authorities did not stop them. But beyond this, once miss world beauty pageant is mentioned in relation to Northern Nigeria, the attendant socio-cultural knowledge of the people is that it will involve violence, mainly because the core 12 states of the Northern Nigeria as mentioned in the editorial may not allow it, as it is strange to the Islamic values which this group shared. This shared socio-cultural knowledge and exposure is a Common Ground which every sensitive Nigerian shared. Systematically appropriateness of the discourse in this situation is reflected by context parameters as relevant properties of the communicative situation of editorial writings, while the discourse structures of the editorial asserted the opinions as listed in the table below.

Table 2

Context parameters	Discourse structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The spatiotemporal dimension of the communicative event - Him-or herself as a journalist of <i>The Punch</i> Newspaper and as a Nigerian (among other identities) - In the role of current editorial writer, writing for leaders of <i>The Punch</i>, - Engaged in the speech act of asserting opinions and as producing an editorial, defined as a newspaper segment or genre as well as other social actions - With the aim of influencing the opinions of the readers and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dateline of the article: November 9, 2016 - Location: Ogun State, Nigeria - Deictic expressions: This, now present tense, since - Opinion expression: - The barely-disguised support for religious fundamentalism - The judgment: - is strange, unjust and provocative - Nigeria pretends to be a secular country...in practice it is not so - ...a country where the law serves little purpose when it comes to religious -the shoddy trial confirms

<p>ethno religious groups against government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presupposing knowledge about recent killing of Agbahime and expressing attitudes and opinions about some sections of the country which are based on socially shared knowledge as well as underlying social and political ideologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kano state government, on Governor Abdullahi Ganduje’s watch...constructs the feeling that it was not in support of religious extremism. - It was only acting out a script to dampen..... - Now, the precious blood of Agbahime is crying out for justice from Ganduje for discontinuing the trial of... Kano State is acting in breach of the constitution...law enforcement agencies watched helplessly - Federal government made some noise - This is unnerving - Allowing fanatics the latitude to kill...in Kaduna - It is certain Nigeria cannot survive a full-blown religious war - Only the state has the monopoly of force - They have relegated their constituents
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(v) Prejudice and Discourse Structures (Opinion)

What we found here is what Baker and Ellece (2011), call prejudice or discrimination against Islam or Muslim. As our data reveal, discursive constructions are found to have been used to mark negative attributions to Islam and Muslims. Examples below substantiate this.

Ex. 11:

Agbahime, a Christian Igbo trader from Imo State, was murdered by Islamic fanatics **on trumped up allegations of blasphemy... (ls 8&9)**

Ex. 12:

Gideon Akaluka, a Southern Christian, was murdered by a mob in Kano in 1994 **on the unfounded allegation of desecrating the Koran (ls 33 to 34)**

In the excerpts above, the products which are nominalizations are no longer expressing actions, they focused on concepts:

Process (action)	Product (nominalization)
Allege	Allegation

Structurally, readers' attention is distracted from the process (verb) that is usually occurring and managed and turned instead to the product of the process. For instance, if the underlying mental models reflect the following as the surface structure: *The mob alleged Agbahime of blasphemy OR Agbahime was alleged of blasphemy*. Then, the mental models of the individual readers might be working towards a reason-based discourse rather than effect-based ones as constructed in the editorial. These mental models might construct an expanded discourse of Why did Agbahime opted for the blasphemous act? In the process, Agbahime might in turn become a terrorist especially when the mental models have space for such discourse representations in the episodic memory as an alternative discourse structures.

Instead of the above alternative discourse structures, the reporter provided a structural framework by fronting the effects of the Northern religious crises. Through nominalization, the editorial back grounded the causes of the crises. Besides, the editorial discursively dissolved the causes of the crises through nominalization and later back grounded them. Woods (2006:73) has rightly said that "when the process is back grounded, the effects will be foregrounded." From the above, it is obvious that the reporter of the editorial uses abstractness and impersonality to reflect religious prejudice in the discourse structure. This is what Hekman (2004), calls public identity. Public identity, as noted by Hekman (op.cit.), is an identification that makes us as members of a social group, sharing certain attributes with other members of our identity category. Other similar lexemes that the editorial uses to qualify Muslims and Islam in the North include the following: Lexical bundles like "religious fundamentalism (1.2), Islamic fanatics (1.9), religious extremism (1.13), religious perverts (46), etc." are referential or nominalisation strategies used as ways of constructing Northern Muslims as representation and construction of out groups in the editorial. This category of lexemes found here are negative to Islam and Muslims. The types of referential strategies found here are used to articulate religious discrimination in discourses about Islam and Muslims in Northern Nigeria. Reisigl and Wodak (2002), identify a number of referential strategies which employ the use of personal reference to represent or construct certain groups of people disparagingly as thus "Islamic extremists", "terrorist" etc. All of these have discriminatory meanings, especially when the ground or the premise which they are attached is vague. One of the strategies the editorial writer advances is to detach himself from the discourse and force expressions of solidarity on it.

The editorial created space for extremism in a way that amounts to what Richardson (2004), would call "Islamophobia". A 1997 report by Runnymede Trust identified a number of perceptions which relate to Islamophobia: Islam is seen as monolithic, barbaric, sexist, violent, supportive of terrorism, a political ideology and separate, such that anti-Muslim hostility is thus natural. Halliday's (1999: 898) submission is critical of the term "Islamophobia", arguing that "the stereotypical enemy is not a faith or a culture but a people" and that term itself produces an unhelpful distortion

that there is one Islam: That there is something out there against which the phobia can be directed.” This analysis follows the steps of Runnymede (1997), Halliday (1999) and Richardson (2004).

Conclusion

The foregoing has explored the *Punch* editorial on Agbahime’s incidence and how it degenerated into ethno-religious crises in Kano using the socio-cognitive discourse aspect of critical discourse analytical approach. As our findings revealed, the ideologies being projected by the editorial are found to have been articulated through the strategies of metaphorisation, discourse participants’ identification, nominalisation, context swap and prejudices. These assist the editorial writer and by extension, the newspaper industry to project to the readers his/her ideological leaning or posture vis-à-vis religious extremism, terrorism, ethnicity and/or ethnic bigotry and government’s insensitivity to the gruesome murder of the victim(s) in question. The study further reveals that editorial as a genre of newspaper discourse serves as a site for expressing the opinion of the newspaper on a topic or news item of public concern (cf. Sinclair 1995). This study argues therefore, that analysing newspaper editorials from the purview of the Socio-cognitive Model aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has potency of enhancing a better understanding of the editorial as a genre of media discourse. It further illuminates the discourse value of socio-cognitive model of CDA and provides additional useful material for the editorial genre in Nigeria. The study also serves as a useful material for media discourse pedagogy and skills.

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Appendix

The Text

1. Title: Kano, blood of Agbahime crying out for justice
2. Exposing the barely-disguised support for religious fundamentalism, a Kano State court has discharged
3. And acquitted five suspects standing trial over the killing of 74-year old Bridget Agbahime.
4. The judgement that set free the accused persons, who were charged with the gruesome murder, in a Kano
5. Market in June, is strange, unjust, and provocative.
6. Constitutionally, Nigeria pretends to be a secular country, one in which the state and religion are
7. Distinctly separate. But, in practice, it is not so. It is a country where the law
8. serves little purpose when it comes to religion. This case exemplifies it: Agbhahime, a Christian Igbo trader from Imo State, was
9. murdered by Islamic fanatics on trumped up allegations of blasphemy at the Kofar Wanbai market.
10. Mark Agbahime, a pastor and widower, narrowly escaped being killed by the mob.
11. But the shoddy trial confirms the fear that the Kano State Government, on Governor Abdullahi
12. Ganduje's watch, put the suspects on trial to construct the feeling that it was not in support of
13. religious extremism. The acquittal however makes it clear that it was only acting out a script to
14. dampen the outrage over the killing at the time. "The legal advice presented to the court, dated June 15.24, states that there is no case to answer as the suspects are all innocent and orders the court to
16. discharge all the suspects."
17. Now, the precious blood of Aghahime is crying out for justice from Ganduje for discontinuing the trial
18. of Dauda Ahmed, Abdulummeen Mustafa, Zubairu Abubakar, Abdullahi Abubakar and Musa
19. Abdullahi. Is the state supporting murder? If, in the opinion of the KNSG, these are not the murderers,
20. where are the culprits? Does it not care about the repercussion on the unity of the country?
21. Nobody has the right to kill, and the constitution guarantees the right to life; we

are worried that 22. Kano State is acting in breach of the constitution and the law, by treating murder with levity.

23. Ganduje has to explain to Nigerians why the state filed a no-case submission to favour murder 24. suspects. What impression is Ganduje creating before the rest of the country, that a Nigerian can be 25. killed in the state for no just cause?

26. Unfortunately, in Kano – much like in other parts of the core 12 states in the North that have 27. declared

28. Sharia in defiance of the Nigerian Constitution- too often, justice has been honoured in the breach 29. for

30. Non-Muslims. Indeed, religious violence and mass killings are standard fare. According to international 31. Non-Governmental organizations, including Human Right Watch and Open Doors, thousands of 32. Christians have been persecuted and... Nigeria. Previous examples bear testimony.

33. In a headline case, was Gideon Akaluka, a Southern Christian murdered by a mob in Kano in 1994 on 34. the unfounded allegation of desecrating the Koran. Summarily, the police had clamped him in 35. detention for this. His accusers stormed the prison cell, beheaded him and paraded his severed head 36. on Kano streets while law enforcement agencies watched helplessly. Alas, none of his killers was 37. brought to justice. In July, Nigeria witnessed the horrific killing of Eunice Olawale, in Kubwa, Abuja, 38. during early morning evangelism. Though the Federal Government made some noise, the killers of 39. the 42-year old woman, who left a husband and seven young children behind, are yet to be brought 40. to justice. This is unnerving.

41. Allowing fanatics the latitude to kill in the name of religion, as happened during the Miss World 42. beauty pageant riots of 2002 in Kaduna, which claimed over 200 lives, is dangerous. It is awful 43. politics; 44. and poses the fear of Nigeria's implosion. Similarly, the unbridled mixture of state and religion, by 45. Northern governors has spawned the Boko Haram terror that has claimed over 20,000 lives since 46. 2009. Emboldened because they are not persecuted, religious perverts continue to kill without let. 47. This may be an invitation to chaos. Feeling aggrieved, other ethnic nationalities might be pushed to 48. respond in kind. It is certain Nigeria cannot survive a full-blown religious war. The current fratricidal 49. conflicts in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya and other parts of the Middle East bear this out.

50. Kano should act decisively to prevent the Agbahime case from causing a further breach of the peace 51. around the country. Already, Ohanaeze... calling for a mass protest against this... perpetrators of this 52. killing must, therefore, be put on trial. Only the state has monopoly of force and should not submit it 53. to hoodlums and non-state actors as Kano is doing. We urge the governor to show leadership by 54. doing justice to this case: it should be re-opened and justice served.

55. But part of the blame also goes to other state governors and political leaders, who are playing politics 56. with the lives of their citizens in the face of religious extremism. They must rise up strongly against 57. the evil. Rochas Okorochoa, the Imo State governor, the home state of the Agbahimes, should take up the 58. case

with his Kano State colleague, Ganduje, and see that justice is done. The silence of the legislators 59.representing Imo in the National Assembly is an indication that they have relegated their 60.constituents to second-class citizens in Nigeria; there is no superior ethnic nationality. They should 61.fight for justice for Agbahime.