

Abstract

Media representation of conflict is largely dependent on journalistic interventions that manipulate discursive strategies deployed in framing events. Media critics have alleged that the media framing of the events leading to the Nigerian civil war escalated the tension into a full-scale war. This is problematic in light of the resurgence of agitations by pro-Biafra activists and their coverage by the Nigerian media. The current study identified salient discursive strategies deployed by social actors in Nigerian newspapers' representation of the pre-civil war events and Biafra agitations in Nigeria. A total number of 144 newspaper articles constituted the sample drawn from six Nigerian newspapers published between January - December, 1966 for the pre-civil war events and January - December, 2016 for current Biafra agitations. Incorporating insights from Carvalho's approach to critical media discourse analysis, findings revealed that discursive strategies employed include negative labelling, victimisation, number game, evidentiality, legitimisation and depersonalisation. These findings have no doubt contributed to critical understanding and discourse analysis of indigenous media's coverage of national conflicts.

Keywords: Framing, Biafra agitations, Discursive strategies, Nigeria civil war