Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.3 No.4 December, 2020; p.g. 17 – 33; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

MOVERS AND GLADIATORS OF VIOLENCE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF HATE SPEECH ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

AWE ENE NORAH
Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Federal University Oye-Ekiti.
Email: awenorah5@gmail.com
Tel: +2348069642617

&

AJIBOYE BABATOPE MATTHEW
Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Federal University Oye-Ekiti.
Email: babatope.ajiboye@fuoye.edu.ng
Tel: +2348068893287

&

GBADEYAN OLAWALE JAMES
Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Federal University Oye-Ekiti.
Email: gbadeyan2@gmail.com
Tel: +2347035971808

Abstract

Hate speech is a public speech that encourages violence. It has been identified in the utterances of human rights activists and political agitators around the world since the advent of democracy, thus, making it a big threat to the unity, stability and continued existence of many nations. As a matter of fact, it is a tickling bomb waiting to disrupt the peace of the country and also lead to violence and death of innocent citizens if not curbed in due time. The objective of the study is to examine the impacts of hate speech on peace and security in Nigeria. Secondary sources of data were used, and were collected from social media content of three renowned opinion movers. Data was imported into the content analysis software (Senti Strength and Atlasti) and sorted accordingly. Purposive sampling procedure was employed in selecting the subjects recruited for this study. Tweets were collected from Twitter handles of notable people like Nnamdi Kanu (@MaziNnamdiKanu), Omoyele Sowore (@YeleSowore) and Atiku Abubakar (@Atiku) within the period of January and August 2019. The major findings of this study indicated that sizable number of the respondents knew what constituted hate speeches. They also understood that promoting hate speech through whatever means moral consequences have in the society and threaten the national security of the nation.

The study concluded that, hate speech generally violates the free speech principle of constitutive democracy and political campaign by destroying the value of an individual or group thereby building a false consciousness which induces political violence.

Keywords: Gladiators, Violence, Hate Speech, Peace and Security, Nigeria.

Introduction

The discourse of hate speech and abuse of freedom of speech has manifested many times in the expression of human rights activists, stakeholders and political agitators around the world since the advent of democracy. The interest of global community in the conversation is further heightened by the manner in which political oppositions now use hate speech as tool of discord and attack to achieve their selfish interests. This dastard act often result in the rights of the common man on the street being trampled upon on several occasions while the perpetrators smile home with the fulfillment of achieving their aims on a platter of gold (Ezeibe, 2015).

Similar developments and ensuing agitations from civil right groups gave birth to the first ever Bill of Rights, implemented as several amendments to the Constitution of the United States where democracy has its deepest root. The First Amendment ratified December 15, 1791, states that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. "Although this section was considered only to apply to the federal congress (i.e. the legislative branch), the 14th Amendment, ratified on July 9, 1868, clarifies that this prohibition applies to laws of the States as well. Some limits on expression were contemplated by the framers and have been read into the Constitution by the Supreme Court"(Scheffler, 2015).

Every citizen of a country enjoys some inalienable rights which are given legal backing through its enactment in a codified document. For instance, Section 39(1), 1999 Constitution, confers on an individual the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold opinions, impart ideas and information without interference (1999 Constitution, FRN, Cap.23, and No.24). Freedom of expression is one of the essential ingredients of a democratic society which does not only facilitate its progress but also gives its citizens self – fulfillment. In other words, freedom of expression is an indicator of a healthy democracy. It is not limited to inoffensive statements or articles alone but also words that offend shock or disturb (Savage, 2008).

Hate speech, on the other hand, is a public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. (Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary). Furthermore, in law, hate speech is described as a speech, gesture or conduct, written or displayed which is forbidden because it incites violence or prejudicial action against a protected group or individual on the basis of their membership of the Hate speech is a big threat to the peace, unity and stability of any nation around the globe. It is a ticking bomb that can distort the peace of a country if not curbed in due time and it can lead to violence and death of innocent citizens. Countries like Denmark, Canada, India, South Africa, Germany and United States have enacted speech or hate crime laws because the consequences of hate speech, be it political, social or economic, are too obvious for any self-preserving country to ignore. Odubela consciously asserted that hate speech is often a gateway to discrimination, harassment and violence as well as a catalyst to serious harmful criminal acts; it is doubtful if there will be hate -motivated violent attacks on any group without hate speech and the hatred it exhumes (Odubela, 2015).

In recent times, Nigeria has experienced a high rise in the use of hate speeches under the guise of the right to freedom of speech. The new media such as the internet face book twitter, instagram, YouTube *et cetera*. This has given rise to offensive statements and words that threaten national unity and peaceful co-existence amongst Nigerian citizens. Some people hide under the cloak of freedom of speech to make hate speeches either as a form of defense against those they cannot physically challenge, either due to the immunity that covers their offices, or as payback to their opponents. The federal government of Nigeria says any speech, broadcast or publication that denigrates a person, a group or people on the basis of sex, religion, political belief or origin is hate speech .according to Nigeria's information and culture minister Alhaji Lai Mohammed explained on the news agency of Nigeria [NAN] at the Abuja headquarters that any broadcast or publication that tends to erode social cohesion that is attach on our inclusion and common values is hate speech. They know that they are doing what they must be made to pay for, the minister said this while justifying the increase of hate speech fine from 500,000 NGN to 5 million NGN in the amended national broadcasting code. The minister said the fine was raised for national security and serve as deterrent to those bent on destabilizing the country through using fake news and hate speech.

Taking cognizance of activities in the south-eastern zone of the country, a separatist group known as Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), led by Nnamdi Kanu constantly railed against Nigerians from the North] and South West, threatening to destroy Nigeria and create a new entity known as Republic of Biafra (Audu, 2017). Kanu also directed his followers to boycott elections. In reaction to the threats, some youths from the North known as Arewa (Northern) Youth group made a declaration where the Igbos in the North were given an ultimatum to leave the North by 1st October, 2017 in preparation for breakup of the country (Audu,2017). Also, General Muhammadu Buhari, the then presidential candidate of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), was reported to have made a statement, during a visit by his supporters in Kaduna shortly after he lost the 2011 general elections to President Goodluck Jonathan that 'if what happened in 2011 (alleged rigging) should happen again in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and baboon would all be soaked in blood (Binniyat, 2012).

The Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, in his capacity as the acting President, at a National Security Conference in Aso-Villa, Abuja said hate speech would no longer be tolerated in Nigeria as it was tantamount to act of terrorism. It was opined that the development should have been cheery news in this time when all manners of venomous speeches against groups and individuals are flying around in Nigeria media spaces like newspaper, television stations, radio stations, social media etcetera as some people have used the medium as the place to empty the content of their small souls (Adelakun, 2017). Yunus (2018) identified some of the causes of hate speeches as follows: lack of transparency in governance, perception of marginalization, poverty, inability of government to address previous conflicts and bring them to closure, religious based crisis, ethnic based crisis, lamentable economy, high-handedness and opacity in governance, injustice, political vendetta, wrong approach of government to resolve crisis and also communal crisis such as herdsmen/ farmers *et cetera.*

More so, he identified the driver of hate speech in Nigeria as social media, print media, broadcasting media, and religious spaces such as mosques, churches and shrines as well as other secular spaces like markets, schools and community halls (Yunus, 2018). With the increased diffusion and use of the social media among people, it is common these days to find

hateful messages that attack a person or a group because of their nationality, race, religion or gender on the internet (Uzochukwu & Okafor, 2019). This is because the social media profoundly allows for free flow and exchange of all kinds of information

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the implications of hate speech on peace and security in Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:

i. investigate the communication patterns of hate speech on peace and security;
ii. determine how much hate content is conveyed by the communication pattern of the subjects;
iii. examine the extent to which such hate content reflect on national security.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

i. What are the implications of hate speech on peace and security in Nigeria?
ii. What are the communication patterns of hate speech on peace and security?
iii. How much hate content is perceived to be conveyed by the communication pattern of the subjects?
iv. To what extent does such hate content reflect national security concerns?

Literature review

Hate speech is an elusive concept with no universally acknowledged definition. It covers abusive, denigrating, harassing speech targeting a group's or individual's national, racial, religious or ethnic identity (Steiner & Alston, 2000). Different scholars and researchers around the world have proposed varying illustrations depicting what could be described as hate speech in inter personal communication among people in the society. Human Rights Watch defines hate speech as "any form of expression regarded as offensive to racial, ethnic and religious groups and other discrete minorities, and to women"(Walker, 1995). Some scholars define it as a "generic term that has come to embrace the use of speech attacks based on race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation or preference"(Rodney, 1993). Hate speech is viewed in some quarters as any form of inflammatory language or utterance by citizens expressing hatred and at times inciting violence - against individuals or groups, notably based on their ethnicity or perceived beliefs, acts or political views.(UNMISS, 2018).

The lack of universal agreement as to what constitutes hate speech has created a thin line between the vice and regular conversation making the act seemingly difficult to prosecute under law. Indeed, some speech might be so offensive that it may foster a climate of prejudice or discrimination against minority groups; yet it might not constitute hate speech (Kitrosser, 2017). Similarly, the media may include disparaging news about minorities or religious groups(Powell, Hills, & Nash, 2010), or may portray members of religious or ethnic minority groups through cliché and stereotyped images, which might be offensive, but not hate speech (ECHR, 2019). In this regard, a wide definition of hate speech would include group libel, or an attack on the dignity or reputation of a given group or individual. This would cover speech that is considered offensive regardless of whether it would lead to harmful results or not.

A narrower definition of hate speech, however, would limit it to speech "that is intended to incite hatred or violence" against certain groups or individuals (NSRP, 2018). The difficulty of having no universally acknowledged criteria for the determination of hate speech might be remedied by the further development of case law at the national and international level. United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNMISS, 2018) noted that hate speech basically comprises of the following elements:

a. all dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, by whatever means;
b. incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group on grounds of their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin;
c. threats or incitement to violence against persons or groups on the grounds in (b) above;
d. expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination on the grounds in (b) above, when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or discrimination;
e. participation in organizations and activities which promote and incite racial discrimination.

According to Neisser (1994), hate speech refers to "all communications (whether verbal, written, symbolic) that insults a racial, ethnic and political group, whether by suggesting that they are inferior in some respect or by indicating that they are despised or not welcome for any other reasons". Besides the fact that hate speech carries extreme dehumanizing potentials which goes a long way in harming the victim's psychological well being, it resultantly arouses violent reaction and chaos if unchecked(Howie, 2018; Mendel, 2018). This is the reason why some authors consider hate speech a war waged on others by means of words (Kayambazinthu & Moyo, 2002; Neisser, 1994).

Theoretical Frame Work

This study premised on two theories related to the discussion of hate speech and national security in relative terms. These theories under review included truth theory, autonomy theory, self-fulfillment theory and democracy theory. Out of the four theories reviewed, truth theory formed the bedrock on which the variable relationship of this study was anchored. The justification for this is premised not only on the popularity of the theory with the discourse of hate speech but also on the accuracy of its applicability.

Truth Theory

Truth theory as a justification for the freedom of expression is associated with John Stuart Mill. Mill (1998) makes his classical liberal defense of free speech in chapter two of his book, On Liberty titled "Of the liberty of thought and Discussion". This section of Mill's book posits that the protection of expression of opinion is necessary so as to assure humanity of "the discovery of the truth and elimination of error". The assumption here is that the search for truth is a constant individual and societal endeavour that leads to social good (Cate, 2010). Mill argues that freedom of expression must be defended first, because it creates an environment in which people can discover the truth. The discovery of the truth, the theory goes, is possible in an environment in which all ideas, including unpopular ones have a chance to compete for acceptance.

Also, Mill defends even false opinions because they may contain some truth. The argument holds that it is difficult, if not impossible; to suppress false opinion without suppressing what is true (Emerson, 1963). Thus for the sake of the truth, both deserve protection. Mill accepts that opinion that is perceived to be false may later turn out to be true, and vice versa. Therefore, it is illegitimate to suppress an opinion in the belief that it is an error since nobody is infallible. Mill is of the opinion that giving audience to all opinions, including the unpopular ones helps to clarify the truth. Mill's theory offers a very strong defense of individual liberty, of which freedom of expression or, the liberty of thought and discussion, as he calls it, is part. In his defense of liberty, Mill is concerned with what he refers to as the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual.

Democracy Theory

Proponents of democracy as a justification for freedom of expression include Meiklejohn (1948), Post (2011) and Blasi (1977). Democracy is intimately connected with freedom of expression. Freedom of expression relates with democracy in at least two ways: first, it is an integral part of a democratic system, independent of the value it contributes (Meiklejohn, 1948). This implies that a political system that does not guarantee the freedom of expression in some way cannot be said to be genuinely democratic. Second, aside from being a component of democracy, freedom of expression is the 'lifeblood of democracy'. That is, it is a necessary condition for the functioning of a democratic political system. This underlying assumption makes democracy a justification for the protection of freedom of expression.

At the centre of a democratic political system, at least in theory, are the people. This is the idea in the famous Lincoln's definition of democracy as 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.' If follows that democracy imports a number of basic components: sovereignty of the people or popular sovereignty, self-government in Lockean understanding of state-citizen relationship, collective and participatory decision making, and accountability of government. Democracy theory diverges to arguments of democratic self-government and democratic participation. The versions of the theory advance different roles that freedom of expression play in supporting democracy. For example some accounts value freedom of expression for its role in supporting democratic processes such as voting; others for enabling citizens' to hold governments accountable and check power abuse, or for the mere reason that a democratic system should accommodate freedom of expression as an integral component.

According to Meiklejohn (1948), free speech is protected first because it forms the basis for democratic decision making. Also, it is vital to protect freedom of expression so that citizens may have access to necessary information so as to make wise decisions and participate in political processes such as voting. This suggests an importance attached not only to the citizens' right to speak but also to listen to available views on public issues. It follows therefore, that citizens must have access to necessary information. This makes the right to receive information an important element of the right to freedom of expression just as the right to impart or disseminate information is. This conception of democracy as justification for free speech focuses on the right of the audience who ultimately are the political decision makers in a democracy.

Sources of Data Collection

Secondary sources were used to collect data from social media content of renowned opinion movers and political juggernauts from different geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Data was imported into the content analysis software (SentiStrength and Atlas.ti) and sorted accordingly. The social media contents imported from the subjects were scrutinized for implied or express conveyance of hate speech, abuse of freedom of speech and national security issues. Gathered data were presented in both document and graphics files for content assessment.

Data was thoroughly sifted to exclude files and contents earlier than the period targeted for review of this research. Also, content outside the scope of the study, as determined by the keywords, were neglected during gathering process. The data collected was subjected to thematic content analysis using Atlas.ti 8, (Archive for Technology, the Life World and Everyday Language, the extension "ti" stands for "text interpretation."), computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS).

After collecting a layer of data, which is the tweets, Atlas.ti 8 was used for facilitating the analysis. Using the complete array of coding functions available in Atlas.ti 8 the first layer of data was coded. Using the linking and related functions, nodes were imported to create categories of concepts for eventually looking at a logical pattern that could explain the nature of the various tweets and related contents.

Sample Size

Purposive sampling procedure was employed in selecting the subjects recruited for this study. The same procedure was employed in selecting Twitter among all available hosted social media applications because of its popularity, flexibility and diversity in add-on media content that were of value to the study objectives. Media contents were scrutinized during the search process and relevant ones were selected for the purpose of analysis. The population of the study comprises of the Tweets and retweets of three notable opinion movers, activists and political bigwigs from different regions who have active Twitter accounts operational before the 2019 general elections till date.

Tweets were collected from Twitter handles of notable people like Nnamdi Kanu (@MaziNnamdiKanu), Omoyele Sowore (@YeleSowore) and Atiku Abubakar (@Atiku) within the period of January and August 2019. The justification for targeting tweets as contents for inferential analysis was because Twitter remains most popular among social media platforms used for activism and political agitations which often carry some elements of hate speech (Thelwall *et al*., 2011). The periods before and after the 2019 general election in Nigeria was focused because of the tension surrounding the elections and the agitations that have followed suit. The intention is to establish whether there exists any link between social media utterances and national security during this period.

Data Analysis, Presentation, Interpretation and Discussion

This chapter presents findings and results from inferential and descriptive statistics conducted on drawn data for the study. The section bears the characteristics of the study data and the steps employed in analyzing the complex body of text into simplified module for discussion purpose. The chapter was organized under the following thematic areas:

Questionnaire response rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, knowledge of hate speech and freedom of expression, meaning of hate speech, whether freedom of speech is an absolute right, root causes of hate speech, effect of hate speech on national security and legal consequences of hate speech and abuse of freedom of speech in Nigeria. The sections present the study findings in accordance to the study objectives that have been presented in chapter one and interpretation of the findings.

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

The analysis procedure began with ascertaining that the statuses of the twitter account of the subjects (audience) are active. The target Twitter accounts indicates the following information:

(a) Nnamdi Kanu's account @MaziNnamdiKanu - Leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).
(b) Omoyele Sowore's account @YeleSowore– Nil
(c) Atiku Abubakar's verified account @Atiku – Tweets from Atiku are signed -AA

Other details of the targeted accounts as may be useful for the purpose of this study was presented in the following table:

Twitter account details of research subjects

S/N	Status	Nnamdi Kanu's account (@MaziNnamdiKanu)	Omoyele Sowore's account (@YeleSowore)	Atiku Abubakar's verified account (@Atiku)
1	Account created	October 2018	January 2013	August 2010
2	Tweets	197	37.6k	5573
3	Following	77	2932	76
4	Followers	57.3k	116k	2.2M
5	Likes	8	27	683
6	Media	112	240	676

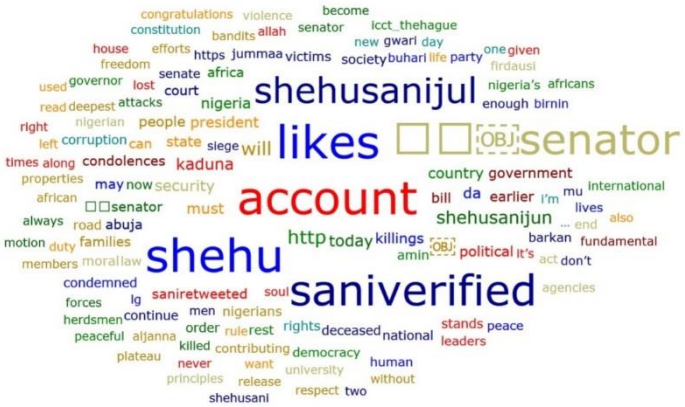
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2019

Content Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What are the communication patterns of the subjects of this study?

To answer the research question, the study first determined the most highlighted word by obtaining the frequencies of words through a word cloud using the Atlasti.8. The word cloud of Nnamdi Kanu's tweets was presented in the table above showing most popular keywords from his tweets. From the word cloud, the tweeting pattern of Nnamdi Kanu was observed to center on the following words: Security, Governance, Politics, Youth Employment, Judiciary, Fundamental Human Rights, Environment, Democracy, Legislative Issues, Economy, Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts, IDPs, Accountability, Civil Society, Religion, Culture and Foreign Policy *et cetera.*

Word Cloud of Nnamdi Kanu

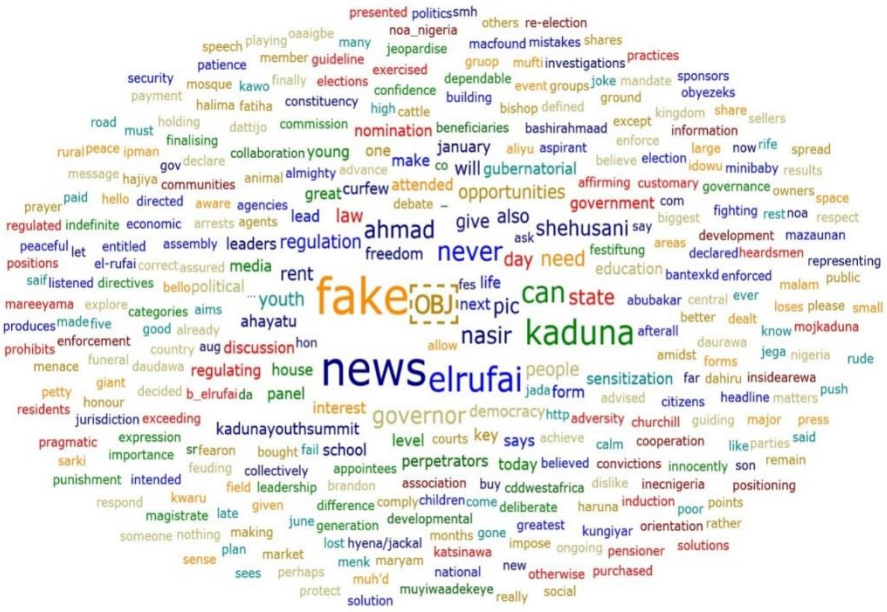


Source: Atlas ti. 8

The same procedure was employed to determine the most highlighted words by obtaining the frequencies of words through a word cloud using the Atlasti.8 to analyze tweets from Omoyele Sowore. The word cloud of Sowore's tweets was presented in Figure 2 below.

From the word cloud, the tweet pattern of Omoyele Sowore mostly surrounds discourse on the following headings: Revolution, Politics, Security, Governance, Youth Employment, Judiciary, Fundamental Human Rights, Education, Environment, Democracy, Labour Issues, Economy, Herdsmen and Farmers Conflicts, Politicians, and Rule of Law *etcetera.*

Word Cloud of Omoyele Sowore



Source: Atlas. Ti 8

Analysis of tweets from Atiku Abubakar was also in turn run through Atlasti.8 software to generate word cloud for the subject's tweet pattern by highlighting most frequent words on the cloud to reflect pattern of interest. The word cloud of Atiku Abubakar's tweets was presented in Figure 4.3.

From the word cloud as well, the tweet pattern of Atiku Abubakar was observed to mostly revolve around discourse bothering on the following keywords: Politics, Security, Governance, Youth Employment, Power and energy, Education, Environment, Democracy, Labour Issues, Economy, Terrorism, Politicians, Rule of Law, and Foreign Policy *etcetera*.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis, Presentation, Interpretation and Discussion

Findings and results from inferential and descriptive statistics conducted on drawn data for the study. The section bears the characteristics of the study data and the steps employed in analyzing the complex body of text into simplified module for discussion purpose. Questionnaire response rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, knowledge of hate speech and freedom of expression, meaning of hate speech, whether freedom of speech is an absolute right, root causes of hate speech, effect of hate speech on national security and legal consequences of hate speech and abuse of freedom of speech in Nigeria. The sections present the study findings in accordance to the study objectives that have been presented in chapter one and interpretation of the findings.

Descriptive Statistics of Respondents

The analysis procedure began with ascertaining that the statuses of the twitter account of the subjects (audience) are active. The target Twitter accounts indicates the following information:

(a) Nnamdi Kanu's account @MaziNnamdiKanu - Leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).
(b) Omoyele Sowore's account @YeleSowore– Nil
(c) Atiku Abubakar's verified account @Atiku – Tweets from Atiku are signed -AA

Other details of the targeted accounts as may be useful for the purpose of this study was presented in the Table

Twitter account details of research subjects

S/N	Status	NnamdiKanu's account (@MaziNnamdiKanu)	OmoyeleSowore's account (@YeleSowore)	AtikuAbubakar's verified account (@Atiku)
1	Account created	October 2018	January 2013	August 2010
2	Tweets	197	37.6k	5573
3	Following	77	2932	76
4	Followers	57.3k	116k	2.2M
5	Likes	8	27	683
6	Media	112	240	676

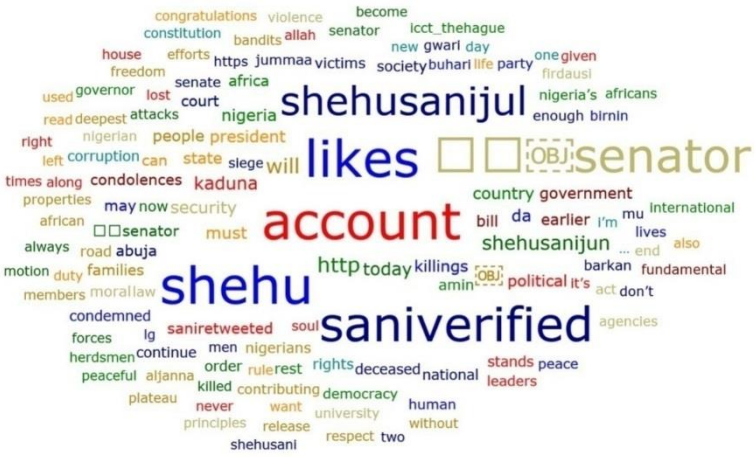
Source: Researcher's Computation, 2019

Content Analysis of Data

Research Question 1: What are the communication patterns of the subjects of this study?

To answer the research question, the study first determined the most highlighted word by obtaining the frequencies of words through a word cloud using the Atlasti.8. The word cloud of Nnamdi Kanu's tweets was presented in Figure 1 showing most popular keywords from his tweets. From the word cloud, the tweeting pattern of Nnamdi Kanu was observed to center on the following words: Security, Governance, Politics, Youth Employment, Judiciary, Fundamental Human Rights, Environment, Democracy, Legislative Issues, Economy, Herdsmen & Farmers Conflicts, IDPs, Accountability, Civil society, Religion, Culture, Foreign Policy etc.

Word Cloud of Nnamdi Kanu



Source: Atlasti. 8

The same procedure was employed to determine the most highlighted words by obtaining the frequencies of words through a word cloud using the Atlasti.8 to analyze tweets from Omoyele Sowore. The word cloud of Sowore's tweets was presented in Figure 2 below.

From the word cloud, the tweet pattern of Omoyele Sowore mostly surrounds discourse on the following headings: Revolution, Politics, Security, Governance, Youth Employment, Judiciary, Fundamental Human Rights, Education, Environment, Democracy, Labour Issues, Economy, Herdsmen & Farmers Conflicts, Politicians, and Rule of Law etc.

Word Cloud of Omoyele Sowore



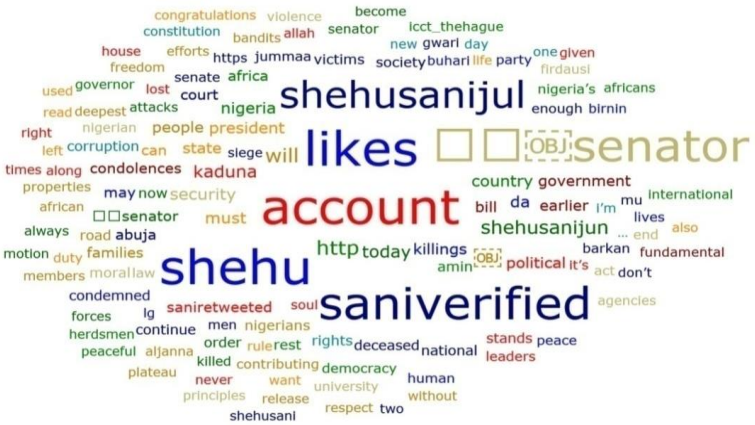
Source: AtlasTi 8

Analysis of tweets from Atiku Abubakar was also in turn run through Atlasti.8 software to generate word cloud for the subject's tweet pattern by highlighting most frequent words on the cloud to reflect pattern of interest.

Word Cloud of Atiku Abubakar's tweet

From the word cloud as well, the tweet pattern of Atiku Abubakar was observed to mostly revolve around discourse bothering on the following keywords: Politics, Security, Governance, Youth Employment, Power and energy, Education, Environment, Democracy, Labour Issues, Economy, Terrorism, Politicians, Rule of Law, and Foreign Policy *etcetera.*

Figure 3:
Word Cloud of Atiku Abubakar



Source: Atlas. Ti 8

Sentiment Analysis of Data

Hate Content in Communication

Research Question 2*:* How much hate content is perceived to be conveyed by the communication pattern of the subjects?

Sentiment analysis of tweets using SentiStrength was conducted on content from each subject's tweets. This analysis deals with polarity measurement, sentiment and emotional classification of body of text. Procedure involved clustering the entire corpus and employing the lexicon based sentiment classification to measure polarity. The sentiment scoring function was used to get the overall sentiment scores of the corpus and to determine the difference between the numbers of positively and negatively assigned word. A random review of polarity score as obtained from the software was graphically presented in Figure 4 for relative visualization.

A tweet has an overall positive sentiment if score > 0,
A tweet has an overall negative sentiment if score is < 0
The total score for the corpus is visualized and evaluated with simple descriptive statistics as can be seen below Figure 4.4

Sample of Emotion Rationale of Nnamdi Kanu

S/N	Positive	Negative	Tweets
1	1	-5	IPOB will continue the International diplomatic onslaught
2	2	-4	Nigeria is NOT safe for anyone
3	2	-4	The brutalization of our people in Ebonyi will surely be AVENGED
4	1	-5	they will account for every injury, torture, and death of every Biafran
5	3	-1	IPOB will resist the evil plan by Fulani caliphate to keep the people of Biafra in perpetual bondage
6	2	-1	There is a need to examine the unfolding events in SA
7	1	-4	IPOB will continue to appear openly in places Jubril/Buhari and his handlers were too terrified to thread
8	2	-5	The international community is fully aware of the plight of Biafrans the hands of the terrorist Nigerian government
9	3	-1	I condemn in totality the xenophobic attacks in South Africa
10	1	-5	Whoever sent them will be exposed and held accountable

Source: SentiStrength Output, 2019

Sample of Emotion Rationale of Omoyele Sowore

S/N	Positive	Negative	Tweets
1	2	-4	All that is needed for a #Revolution is for the oppressed to choose a date they desire for liberty
2	1	-5	not subjected to the approval of the oppressor.
3	3	-1	If you still have the illusion that the @MBuhari regime can protect you, well, Goodluck!
4	1	-5	This is what they do even during campaigns, they buy crowds

5	2	-4	Until the youths will rise up and take power to save Nigeria
6	2	-1	Poverty and illiteracy are enemies of humans' development.
7	1	-4	That is the cowardice nature of a failed and clueless govt
8	1	-4	So this is what this useless government can give us
9	2	-4	True freedom don't come to those who can't stand up and fight for it
10	3	-1	Catholic Priest was killed in Enugu

Source: SentiStrength Output, 20 Sample of Emotion Rationale of Atiku Abubakar

S/N	Positive	Negative	Tweets
1	1	-5	I personally thank you for your support for our shared common goal
2	3	-1	Reported attacks against Nigerians in South Africa is unacceptable and stands condemned
3	1	-5	My heart and my prayers are with all of those affected by the flooding in parts of Adamawa

Discussion and Findings

Gauging the hate speech in this study, it could be clearly seen that the political gladiators have some form of pre-existing influence or authority over the twitter space. Two were presidential aspirants in the concluded general election while the other is a leader of the largest secessionist group in the country. It shows the number of following and followers together with their likes for some tweets indicate both of them have a large audience within the twitter space as has been seen in **Table 1.** These large audiences are definitely vulnerable to incitement based on the tweets of their principals especially considering the diverse areas, social and historic context they tweet on. This is in spite of the fact that the social and historical context of the tweet together with its nature of dissemination also determines how portent a tweet is either as a hate speech or otherwise.

In the analysis, we found a clear pattern which shows the tweets of the subjects are similar with little variation. This could be related to the distinct offices occupied by the politicians as the role and responsibility of their offices determine to a large extent their tweeting habits. From **Tables 2-5** together with **Figure 4** shows clearly that both Omoyele Sowore and Nnamdi Kanu created tweets which contain elements of hate speech which are both negative and positive in nature. The findings indicate that some of the tweets of the subjects are more than just elements of free speech as there are elements of hate speeches as such within the twitter space though the difference between the two in terms of both negative and positive sentiment.

In spite of the fact that their tweets contain hate speech, when looked at within the diverse areas, social and historical context of the tweets as seen in **Table 5** its implication on the aftermath of 2019 election in Nigeria may be unlimited. The tweets of these two opinion movers can highly reshape the security status of the nation as contained in their tweets. On the other hand, Tables 4 and 5 with Figure 4 revealed that the tweets from Atiku Abubakar contained less hate speech compared to other two subjects.

Conclusion

Hate speech generally violates the free speech principle of constitutive democracy and political campaign by destroying the value of an individual or a group, thereby building a false consciousness which induces political violence. When the above occurs, it therefore creates a poor political ambience for any deepening democracy like Nigeria. Though the above was not clearly established in this study based on the analysis of the various tweets but the engagement of hate speech is seen within the twitter space. Arriving at what exactly constitutes hate speech remains a challenge to all societies living in Nigeria and the world over.

Based on the findings of the study, it can be adduced that the control of hate speech is a fairly new phenomena and there is a strong need for its sensitization and a continuous training and creation of awareness to all across every strata of society. More research needs to be done to investigate into the prohibition of hate speech and hate crimes within State laws. The proof hate speech in the criminal justice does not only need evidence and burden of proof but most importantly the political good will and advancement in the study of modern technology. Nigeria's Constitution should be amended to contain a provision, which clearly and fully protects the preservation of the unity and existence of the nation and guide against any obstacle that may threaten it.

Finally, it cannot be over emphasized that hate speech is not a right under the provision of freedom of expression and should in fact be regulated; freedom of expression, however, must be protected to the highest standards through all attempts at the regulation of online and offline hate speech. The free flow of information and freedom of expression and speech will inevitably surface in future debate on the regulation and freedom of the internet. In regulating online hate speech, the words of Abraham Foxman and Christopher Wolf resound: "The internet community can address the problem without compromising our vital historic commitment to freedom of expression" (Foxman & Wolf, 2013).

Recommendations

Following the findings, the study gave the following recommendations:

1. People should think very deeply before venting their anger through speeches that incites and seek legal advice before publishing on social media sensitive topics likely to breach the law.
2. Creation of monitoring means should involve all the stake holders.
3. The circumstances and laws under which individuals are charged over their speeches need to be clarified. There should be a National Cohesion and Integration Act to properly take action against individuals accused of propagating hate speech.
4. There should be clear definitions of what constitutes hate speech and 'causing annoyance' as grounds for taking legal action against individuals.
5. Conversations on what constitutes free speech and the distinction between blind control and respect for freedom of expression both online and offline should be fostered and should draw in civil society, the non-governmental organizations, religious organizations and government departments.
6. Create awareness among the people and human rights defenders on speech freedoms and encourage development of a network of advocates and educators against abuse of freedom of speech.

7. The police and other security organs should make public all results of their surveillance of citizens' communications, as well as investigations and prosecutions of hate speech and other offences and crimes committed via digital technologies.
8. It also recommends that the various specialized government agencies for censorship created under the Cybercrime Act begin to collaborate with internet providers and managers of social media platforms to censor content relating to hate speech, and considered inimical to national security in Nigeria.

References

Blasi, V. (1977). The checking value in first amendment theory. American Bar Foundation Research Journal, 2, 122.

Cate, I. T. (2010). Speech, truth, and freedom: An examination of John Stuart Mill's and Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes's free speech defenses. Yale Journal of Law and Humanities, 35, 1–39.

ECHR. (2019). Factsheet - Hate speech. France.

Emerson, T. (1963). Toward a general theory of the first amendment. Yale Law Journal, 34(2), 887–882.

Ezeibe, C. (2015). Hate speech and electoral violence in Nigeria. In ihe 2015 general elections in Nigeria: The real issues (pp. 1–35). Central Business District, Abuja: Independent National Electoral Commission.

Foxman, A., & Wolf, C. (2013). Viral hate: containing its spread on the internet (2nd ed.). NewYork: Palgrave and McMillan.s

Howie, E. (2018). Protecting the human right to freedom of expression in international law. International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 20(1), 12–15. http://doi.org/10.1080/17549507.2018.1392612

Kayambazinthu, E., & Moyo, F. (2002). Hate speech in the new Malawi (2nd ed.). Stockholm: Elanders Gotab Press.

Kitrosser, H. (2017). Free speech and national security bootstraps. Fordham Law Review, 86(2), 509–533.

Meiklejohn, A. (1948). Free speech and its relation to self-government. New York: Harper Bros.

Mendel, T. (2018). Freedom of expression for parliaments and their members : Importance and scope of protection. (R. Huizenga, G. Laroque, & B. Lamharzi, Eds.). Sweden: Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Neisser, E. (1994). Hate speech in the new South Africa: Constitutional consideration for a land recovering from decades of rational repression and violence. South African Journal of Human Rights, 10, 33–356.

NSRP. (2018). Mitigating dangerous speech: Politicians Monitoring and countering dangerous speech to reduce violence.

Post, R. (2011). Participatory democracy and free speech. Virginia Law Review, 97, 477–482.

Rodney, A. S. (1993). Free speech in an open society (2nd ed.). NewYork: Vintage Press.

Scheffler, A. (2015). The inherent danger of hate speech legislation: A case study from Rwanda and Kenya on the failure of a preventative measure. (M. Le Pelley, Ed.). Namibia: fesmedia Africa, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Steiner, H., & Alston, P. (2000). International human rights in the context of law, politics and morals (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Thelwall, M., Buckley, K., & Paltoglou, G. (2011). Sentiment in twitter events. Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 62(2), 406–418.

UNMISS. (2018). Report on the right to freedom of opinion and expression in south sudan since the july 2016 crisis. South Sudan.

Uzochukwu, C. E., & Okafor, E. G. (2019). Social media, hate speech and conflict: Interplay of influences. International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews, 9(1), 144–158.

Walker, S. (1995). Hate speech: The history of an American controversy (3rd ed.). California: University of California Press.

Yunus, Z. (2018) Text of press conference addressed at the end of the one day hate speech project evaluation .Drector, center for information technology and development (CITAD).Retrieved from htpp://www.citad.org// posted by Abdulazzez Y.Z., January 29, 2018.