Title of Article: Media Construction of Socio-Political Crises in Nigeria.

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Outlet: Journal of Language and Politics (John Benjamins, Amsterdam)(a)
Vol.: 10 No.1
Date: 2011

Abstract: This paper attempts to show how social and political crises are constructed, represented and mediated in the Nigerian print media news headlines. Nigeria’s leading newsmagazines and newspapers namely The News, Newswatch, Tell, The Guardian and The Punch are selected for the study. From a corpus of thirty-two news headlines being the publications of the above news media between 2000 and 2006, fifteen headlines and their overlines covering the years that marked the end of military rule and the consolidation of democratic government in Nigeria are purposively selected and analyzed within the framework of the systemic model and critical linguistics. The study shows that socio-political crises have been frequent in Nigeria and that the much anticipated recovery associated with democracy has so far eluded the country. In fact the country has witnessed more social crises, national disasters and ethnic violence in the seven years of civil government than at other times. The study also shows that news headlines - an integral part of media discourse, is an instrument for molding social actions, attitudes and perceptions and are also used as an ideological tool for social criticism. Some of the headlines however, exaggerated the crises and indeed misinformed the general public about the identities and activities of certain people as well as the state of security in Nigeria.