

## Discourse, Media, and Conflict

Bringing together contributions from a team of international scholars, this pioneering book applies theories and approaches from linguistics, such as discourse analysis and pragmatics, to analyze the media and online political discourses of both conflict and peace processes. By analyzing case studies as globally diverse as Germany, the USA, Nigeria, Iraq, Korea, and Libya, and across a range of genres such as TV news channels, online reporting, and traditional newspapers, the chapters collectively show how news discourse can be powerful in mobilizing public support for war or violence, or for conflict resolution, through the linguistic representation of certain groups. It explores the consequences of this “framing” effect, and shows how peace journalism can be achieved through a non-violent approach to reporting conflict. It will therefore serve as an essential resource for students, scholars, and experts in media and communication studies, conflict and peace studies, international relations, linguistics, and political science.

INNOCENT CHILUWA is Professor of English Linguistics (Discourse Analysis) and Media/Digital Communications in the Department of Languages & General Studies, Covenant University, Ota (Nigeria). His recent publications include *Discourse and Conflict* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), and *Activism, Campaigning and Political Discourse on Twitter* (Nova Science, 2019).

# Discourse, Media, and Conflict

*Examining War and Resolution in the News*

---

*Edited by*

Innocent Chiluwa

*Covenant University, Nigeria*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment  
978-1-009-07368-4 — Discourse, Media, and Conflict  
Innocent Chiluwa  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India  
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781009073684](http://www.cambridge.org/9781009073684)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781009064057

© Innocent Chiluwa 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2022  
First paperback edition 2025

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-1-316-51340-8 Hardback  
ISBN 978-1-009-07368-4 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>About the Authors</i>	x
<i>Foreword</i>	xv
OLIVER RAMSBOTHAM	
Introduction: Media, Conflict, and Peace-Building	1
INNOCENT CHILUWA	
<b>Part I Conflict Discourse in Newspaper Reporting</b>	17
1 Elián González in the <i>New York Times</i> : Media Roles in the Trajectories of International Conflict	19
MARK FINNEY AND SARAH FISHER	
2 The Construction of Threat of “Islamist Terrorism” in German Newspapers	47
ENIS BICER, LINA BRINK, AND ALEJANDRA NIEVES CAMACHO	
3 “Herdsmen Are Terrorists”: Analyzing News Headlines on the Herder–Farmer Conflict in the Nigerian Press	69
INNOCENT CHILUWA, ISIOMA M. CHILUWA, AND ANGIE O. IGBINOBA	
4 Covering the War on Iraq: The Pragmatics of Framing and Visual Rhetoric	93
AHMED SAHLANE	
<b>Part II Electronic Media and Online Discourses of Conflict</b>	117
5 Making a Case for War: CNN and the Representations of Humanitarianism, Gadhafi, and NATO in the 2011 Bombing of Libya	119
ADA PETER AND INNOCENT CHILUWA	
	v

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
6	“The Situation on the Korean Peninsula”: <i>Voice of America</i> and <i>China Radio International</i> on China and the USA about the North Korean Conflict VALERIE A. COOPER	140
7	Against a Hard-Earned Peace: (De)legitimation Discourses of Political Violence in Online Press Statements of Dissident Republicans in Post-Conflict Northern Ireland STEPHEN GOULDING	162
8	Ideological Exclusion: Defining the (Dis)believer in Extremist Muslim Periodicals – <i>Dabiq</i> and <i>Inspire</i> TROY E. SPIER	194
9	Violence for Social Change: An Analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement in South Africa FIONA CHAWANA AND UFUOMA AKPOJIVI	213
	<b>Part III Media Discourse and Conflict Resolution</b>	233
10	The Language of Peace in Conflict Transformation: A Critical Analysis of the <i>New York Times</i> ’ Coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian Peace Agreement and Its Role in the Discursive Context of the Oslo Negotiations GIULIANA TIRIPELLI	235
11	The Historical Context in Media Narratives in Search of Peaceful Resolution to the Israel–Palestine Conflict: A Comparative Study of BBC and Al Jazeera JELENA TIMOTIJEVIC	257
12	From Peace Talks to Military Operation: Pakistani Newspapers’ Representation of the TTP Conflict LUBNA SHAHEEN AND MUHAMMAD TARIQUE	278
13	From Collision to Diplomatic Compromise: “We are very sorry” – One Official Utterance, Different Interpretations in the Chinese and US Mainstream News Coverage of the 2001 Mid-Air Collision LUTGARD LAMS	300

Contents	vii
14 Constructing Identities in Crisis Situations: A Study of the “Volunteer” in the Spanish and English Press MARÍA DEL MAR SÁNCHEZ RAMOS	324
Conclusion INNOCENT CHILUWA	339
<i>Index</i>	344

Figures

---

1.1	Favorability towards Castro’s control of Cuban politics	<i>page</i> 30
1.2	Favorability towards Castro’s control of the Cuban people	30
1.3	Favorability towards Castro’s control of the Cuban economy	31
1.4	Favorability towards Castro’s control of Cuban culture	31
1.5	Favorability towards Cuba’s economic system	32
1.6	Favorability towards Cuba’s political system	32
1.7	Favorability towards Cuba’s rights	33
1.8	Favorability towards military intervention	34
1.9	Favorability towards economic intervention	34
1.10	Favorability towards diplomatic intervention	35
1.11	Favorability towards keeping González in the US	35
1.12	Favorability towards sending González back to Cuba	36
3.1	Concordance of “Fulani herdsmen” in the headlines corpus	79
3.2	Concordance of “farmers” in the headlines corpus	82
5.1	Libya 2011: The semantics of CNN headlines on the civil war	126
5.2	CNN news frequency of key narratives	131
5.3	Categorization of key pragmatic actors and analysis	134
7.1a	(Anti-)state actors and (alleged) operational links	168
7.1b	Timeline of events and statements	169
7.2	Matrices of legitimation (adapted from Van Leeuwen 2008)	177

Tables

1.1	Cooperation	page 29
2.1	Distribution of topic assignments to articles	54
3.1	Newspapers and the number of words in the headlines	75
3.2	Wordlist from the corpus of headlines showing the most frequent lexical words	77
3.3	Killings and attacks attributed to the Fulani herdsmen by the <i>Daily Post</i> newspaper	81
3.4	Distribution of actions attributed to the actors in the conflict in the headlines	84
4.1	Iraq War media frames	109
5.1	Monitoring the trends and mentions of key actors	126
5.2	Pragmatic acts	133
5.3	The rate at which each actor performed each act	134
6.1a	Country mentions in CRI	148
6.1b	Country mentions in VOA	148
7.1	Discourse historical approach strategies (adapted from Reisigl and Wodak 2016)	178
7.2	Legitimation strategies	178
7.3	Discourse topic coding results	179
7.4	Statement AS2 legitimation diagram	181
8.1	Derived lexemes of √SLM	197
8.2	Corpora of <i>Da’esh</i> and <i>al-Qaida</i> extremist periodicals	200
8.3	Derived lexemes and statistics	201
13.1	Units of analysis	302
14.1	VOLUNTEER-COR: A comparable corpus of volunteering in crisis situations	331
14.2	Most frequent collocates for the lemma “volunteer” (The Guardian_EN)	333
14.3	Most frequent collocates for the lemma “volunteer” (ElPais_ES)	334



## About the Authors

---

**Ufuoma Akpojivi** is Associate Professor at the Department of Media Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. He holds a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Leeds, United Kingdom and Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education from the University of the Witwatersrand. His research interests include citizenship and activism, new media, media policy and democratization, and language politics. He is Fellow of the African Humanities Programme and a recipient of the Vice-Chancellor and Faculty of Humanities individual teaching and learning award (2017), and the Friedel Sellschop Research Award (2021).

**Enis Bicer** is a postdoctoral researcher at the Akkon University of Applied Sciences, Berlin, Germany. His research interests are in racism and discrimination, immigration societies, media and discourse research, intergroup conflict and social networks. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Bremen, exploring intergroup boundaries in school class social networks. Since 2018 he has been working on the funded research project “The Threat Scenario of ‘Islamist Terrorism’ from the Perspectives of Politics, Media and Muslim Communities.”

**Lina Brink** is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Augsburg, Germany. She wrote her Ph.D. on media representations of protests in Egypt 2011–2014 at Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen, as a member of the junior research group (transcultural public spheres and solidarity). Her research fields are discourse research, critical media studies, social movement studies, cultural studies, gender studies, and postcolonial studies.

**Fiona Chawana** holds a Master’s degree in Media Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. She is an aspiring academic who is passionate about researching social justice issues,

social movements, and digital activism. She is currently working at The Global Data Barometer as a Communications Intern.

**Innocent Chiluwa** is Professor of English Linguistics (Discourse Analysis) and Media/Digital Communications in the Department of Languages & General Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria. He is a Humboldt scholar and visiting professor in the Department of English, University of Freiburg, Germany. His research interests include discourse studies and pragmatics; discourse and conflict and peace studies; social movement studies; social media and society; deception, fake news and disinformation, cyber civic engagement, online activism, terrorism and political violence. He is on the Editorial Boards of *Discourse & Society* (SAGE), *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* (Routledge) and the *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* (Taylor & Francis).

**Isioma M. Chiluwa** is Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Languages & General Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria. Her research interests are multimodal discourse analysis, online/social media communications, and deception studies.

**Valerie A. Cooper** is Lecturer in Media and Communication at Victoria University of Wellington | Te Herenga Waka in New Zealand. Her research includes global power dynamics in communication, especially in the areas of communication for development, public diplomacy, and media representations. She has previously lectured in Mozambique, Hong Kong, and China.

**Mark Finney** is Associate Professor of Mass Communications at Emory & Henry College in Virginia, USA. His research strives to combine the insights and methodologies of conflict theory and mass communication theories into a broad approach for understanding international conflict and the relationship between conflict and media.

**Sarah Fisher** is Assistant Professor of Politics at Emory & Henry College in Virginia, USA. She teaches a range of courses from Statistics for the Social Sciences to Women and Politics to National and International Security. Her research focuses on conflict broadly defined and college pedagogy. Her most recent published work is on a survey in Belize and research methods pedagogy.

**Stephen Goulding** is a final-year Ph.D. Researcher at the Centre for Media Research at Ulster University, Northern Ireland, where he is also a teaching assistant in the School of Communication and

Media. Goulding's research focuses on the discursive construction of Irish republicanism through mainstream, alternative, and social media, with a specific focus on the movement's discursive modernization and mainstreaming from a grassroots perspective. His research has appeared in *Critical Discourse Studies*.

**Angie O. Igbinoba** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Mass Communication, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria. Her research interests include risk communication, public health education, development studies, media studies, science communication, management, and leadership studies.

**Lutgard Lams** is Professor of Pragmatics, Media Discourse Analysis and Intercultural Communication at the Faculty of Arts at the KU Leuven Campus, Brussels, Belgium. Her research interests relate to authoritarian discourses, political communication in China/Taiwan, media framing practices, European media narratives about the Chinese region, Othering in the Chinese official media, ideology in the Taiwanese media, and memes on Chinese social media. Recent publications include "Ideological patterns in Chinese state media narratives concerning issues of security and sovereignty," in C. Shei (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Chinese Discourse Analysis* (2019) and "Examining strategic narratives in Chinese official discourse under Xi Jinping," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* (2018).

**Alejandra Nieves Camacho** is an M.A. student in International Relations at Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the University of Potsdam, Germany. She researches on migration and gender studies and is a staff member at the German Center for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) in the Migration Department.

**Ada Peter** is Assistant Professor, Digital Media, and International Security, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria. She explores the processes of cyber weaponization, terrorism, and conflict to help governments make informed decisions about warfare in the fifth domain. She has received several regional and international awards for her research. The most recent was from the US Department of State, recognizing Dr. Peter as SUSI Scholar on US National Security and Policymaking. Her current research focuses on how US national cyber strategies undermine critical infrastructures' protection against previous and potential cyber weapons.

**Ahmed Sahlane** is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (the English Language Institute, Jeddah). He has published extensively in the area of mediated political argumentation and critical linguistics, with particular reference to the coverage of the 2003 Iraq War in Western opinion-editorial press. Dr. Sahlane's current research is concerned with the role played by media in bearing witness to the Iraqi conflict.

**María del Mar Sánchez Ramos** is Associate Professor in the Department of Modern Philology at the University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain, where she teaches localization and specialized translation. She holds a Ph.D. in Translation and Interpreting Studies from the Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, Spain. Her research is focused on translation and technology, corpus linguistics, and discourse analysis. She is also an active member of different research projects related to the specific (technological) needs of non-governmental organizations in multilingual settings, and the European Parliament's representation of the refugee crisis.

**Lubna Shaheen**, Assistant Professor in the Higher Education Department of the Government of Punjab, Pakistan, completed her Ph.D. in Communication Studies. She was awarded a merit scholarship to do postdoctoral research on media and conflict studies at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She has served as a postdoctoral fellow and faculty at the Institute of Media and Cultural Inquiry (ICON), Utrecht. Currently, Dr. Shaheen is engaged in a project on "the presentation of conflicts in films." She has authored several publications.

**Troy E. Spier** is a full-time professor of English and Linguistics at Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador. He earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in Linguistics at Tulane University, his B.S.Ed. in English/Secondary Education at Kutztown University, and his A.A. in General Studies at Reading Area Community College. His research interests include language documentation and description, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, and linguistic landscapes.

**Muhammad Tarique** is Postdoctoral Researcher and faculty at the Institute of Media and Cultural Inquiry (ICON), Utrecht University, the Netherlands. He previously served as Assistant Professor at the Bahau din Zakaria University Lahore, Pakistan. He is currently working on his postdoctoral project: *Digital Media as Conflicts*

*(De)escalation Platform*. He is also involved in a project entitled “Introduction of Peace Paths in Computational Journalism.”

**Jelena Timotijevic** is Principal Lecturer at the University of Brighton, UK. Her research centers around the discourse of political protest, nationalism, conflict; migration and marginalities. She situates analyses of discourse within a historical materialist tradition, following Marx and Voloshinov, as well as applying Vygotskian concepts in the context of language teacher education. Dr. Timotijevic is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Language & Communication* and *International Journal of English and Cultural Studies*. Her monograph entitled *Protest on Trial: A Critical Communication Analysis of the Attempted Criminalisation of the UK Student Demonstrations* is in preparation with Rowman & Littlefield.

**Giuliana Tiripelli** is Senior Lecturer in Digital Journalism and Media Discourse at De Montfort University, UK. Her research focuses on the role of mediated information in sociopolitical processes of change, and normative media approaches for the promotion of fair and peaceful societies. She was Lecturer in Digital Media and Methods (Sociological Studies) and Research Associate on Digital Communication in Crisis Situations (Information School), at the University of Sheffield, UK. She has a Ph.D. in Media Studies (Sociology) from the Glasgow University Media Group, University of Glasgow, 2013.

## Foreword

---

*Oliver Ramsbotham, University of Bradford*

This book addresses a critical issue in the contemporary world. How does the communications revolution affect conflict and conflict resolution? And what is the role of the mass media in this? What needs to happen for “media and online political discourses” to contribute to peacemaking, peace-building and reconciliation rather than to the opposite? The chapters that follow apply discourse analytic approaches in order to explore these questions.

The extraordinary rapidity and scale of the spread of information and communications technology (ICT) in recent years, together with all the attendant forms of digital connectivity (Internet, social media, cell phones), have profoundly affected both the manifestation of conflict at all levels, and the way it is analysed/reported/framed and responded to worldwide. This has had a major impact on the way conflicts are instigated and conducted, on how conflict is understood (data, interpretation), and on efforts to prevent, mitigate, end and ensure a non-recurrence of its worst aspects. In all of this the media play a crucial role.

We know that the impact of communications technology on conflict in general is not as new as is sometimes made out. On the widest historical scale, we can think of the advent of writing itself at the time of the first states and empires; printing by moveable type at the time of the reformation and the wars of religion in Europe; the creation of the mass media and the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century; the invention of the telephone, radio, film and TV in relation to the world wars and subsequent cold war and decolonisation wars of the twentieth century. In the worst genocide of the late twentieth century in Rwanda in April–July 1994, the most potent media role in instigating the massacre was played by a private radio station, Radio Television Mille Collines (RTMC), broadcasting to a largely illiterate audience between 8 July 1993 and 31 July 1994. And the main weapons used in the massacre were machetes. Nevertheless, it seems hard to overestimate the significance of the onset of the digital age – young though it still is – so far in the twenty-first century.

For one thing, the field of conflict analysis and conflict resolution has been radically affected by the impact of ICT in such a way that traditional

distinctions between international, national and local levels of human conflict are being eroded. And – in line with what I understand to be the theme and hopes of this book – perhaps the basis for a future global partnership for peace is being constructed.

But the analysis in these chapters emphasises the deep ambivalence of the role of the media and online political discourse in all this. On the one hand, in relation to the cyberworld, both Norbert Wiener (creator of cybernetics) and Tim Berners-Lee (creator of the World Wide Web) in their different ways hoped that the new capacity would be a powerful instrument for peace – in Berners-Lee's words “to empower humanity by launching transformative programs that build local capacity to leverage the Web as a medium for positive change”. This accords with the aspiration of the *World Summit on the Information Society* in 2003 in its “Tunis Commitment” that the new technology would be used to promote “a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented Information Society” premised on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN, international law, multilateralism, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

These hopes and aspirations remain vibrant and inspire many of the younger generation all over the world. But we hardly need to be reminded of the close relationship that has existed historically between technology and militarism, or the manifest danger of the opposite happening as underlying and mounting global problems impact on young, urbanised and increasingly informed populations outside the former monopolists of power, as well as on those “left behind” within them. A new digitalised worldwide field of contestation is opened up where mass media are co-opted and exploited by unscrupulous populist commercial and political forces, including the leaderships of the most powerful countries currently engaged in geopolitical struggles in what has recently become a multi-polar world.

Mass communications and the role of the media have always been a two-edged sword. They can inform, educate, empower, emancipate, and enable forms of cooperation. But they can also manipulate, polarise, escalate, exacerbate division, and enhance hegemonic control. The militarisation of new technology is an old story – in recent years connected to the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). The Internet itself was born as the ARPANET funded through a US Department of Defense project in 1969. And we still hear more about cyber war, cyber warriors, cyber-attacks etc. than about the possibilities for cyber peace. Something comparable occurs in relation to commercialisation. The jury is out on whether the new digitalised mass media overall increases democratisation or its Orwellian opposite; whether it opens communication or results in the creation of isolated “information bubbles”; whether it promotes more mutual understanding through mutual exposure (the contact hypothesis) or leads to a break-up of the mass media itself into ghettoised “echo

chambers” where those inside only hear what they want to hear and divergent messages from outside are dismissed as “fake news”.

These are portentous issues in which the role of the media is central. Behind them lies the question: how can standards of “ethical or accountable journalism” or “responsible reporting” be redefined in the digital age? Attempts have been made in recent years to set out applicable criteria (Lynch and Galtung 2010; Hoffmann and Hawkins 2015; Lynch 2015) as also to warn against an overly “top down” imposition of interpretation (Sutherlin 2013). There has been advocacy for a concerted international effort at the “pacification of cyberspace” (Woodhouse 2014), and an attempt to grapple with the very idea of “neutral”, “impartial” or “disinterested” reporting in areas of intense linguistic intractability and “radical disagreement” (Ramsbotham 2010, 2017).

These are some of the larger themes explored in this book. The authors’ contributions offer analysis of this complex field across different sectors, in relation to different topics, at different levels, and with reference to case studies from many different parts of the world. Discourse analysis techniques are applied. The result is a study that contributes valuable information about the interplay between mass media/online political discourse and human conflict, and thereby casts light on what needs to happen if future development is to be in the direction that the authors hope to see.

### References

- Hoffmann, Julia and Virgil Hawkins, eds. 2015. *Communication and Peace: Mapping an Emerging Field*. London: Routledge.
- Lynch, Jake. 2015. “Media in Peace and Conflict Resolution.” In Hoffmann and Hawkins, 16–33.
- Lynch, Jake and Johan Galtung. 2010. *Reporting Conflict: New Directions in Peace Research Journalism*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press.
- Ramsbotham, Oliver. 2010. *Transforming Violent Conflict: Radical Disagreement, Dialogue and Survival*. London: Routledge.
- Ramsbotham, Oliver. 2017. *When Conflict Resolution Fails: Engaging Radical Disagreement*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Sutherlin, Gwyneth. 2013. “A Voice in the Crowd: Broader Implications for Crowdsourcing Translation During Crisis.” *Journal of Information Science* 29 (3), 397–409.
- Woodhouse, Tom. 2014. “Pacifying Cyberspace in the Age of the Zettabyte.” *Journal of Conflictology* 29(3), 23–30.