
Critical Discourse Analysis of Unity in Ethiopia as found on social media

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Abstract

It is the objective of this study to critically analyze the discourses of unity on Social Media in Ethiopia. Multimodal semiotic public discourses were chosen to conduct the study. CDA was the method of analysis employed in this study. The research framework adapted in this research was eclectic by amalgamating Wodak's (1997) and Fairclough's (1989) CDA models. The data were collected categorized thematically based on the objective of the study. The result of the study was critically analyzed using selected models of the aforementioned scholars. The results of the study show that the discourse of unity reveals itself in the public media in various semiotic multimodal signs. From the semiotic multimodal signs perspective, the discourse of unity was transmitted by the discourse community. The findings of the study show that humanity, unity, and cooperation are the major emerging themes of the public discourse on the social media in Ethiopia. Unity or togetherness is being advocated by many Ethiopians. The ideological sponsoring thought behind the backup is the apprehension that extreme ethnocentrism, as opposed to nationalism, could disintegrate the country, if not checked in advance.

Key words: public discourse, semiotic, unity/togetherness, CDA

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1. Introduction

Discourse is at the heart of everything. Behind every action is a thought, the source and the result of which is discourse. The current situation of Ethiopia is the result of the discourse prevailing in the country and the situation will improve by reversing the discourse. The recurring themes in the contemporary public discourse are ethnicity and religious identity. The discourse mainly reveals itself either promoting unity or promoting separation. The research at hand was conducted on the purposely selected discourses of unity/togetherness. Many themes are emerging in the public space that revolves around unity. However, only the most recurring discourses were discussed in this study. Based on the objective of the study, the researchers collected huge public discourses.

Diversity is the norm in Ethiopia. Lots of ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity of different kind have co-existed for generations. There are many languages spoken in the country. Discourse carries the history, the culture, the tradition and the very life of the people with the linguistic diversity. The people and their discourses are inseparable. To know one means to know the other. Studying the linguistic and cultural features help to understand what underlies in the belief and value systems of people. Studying the discourse of a particular society gives the whole picture as to who they are, and how and why they use their language.

2. Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to critically analyze the discourse of *unity* on Social Media in Ethiopia.

Specifically, this study aims at:

1. Critically analyzing the recurring hegemonic semiotic social practices on the public space.
2. Identifying the ideological sponsoring thoughts behind the discourses of Unity

3. Research Methodology

The study followed a qualitative approach, which is exploratory in nature. The study is attached to the meanings of ideology, culture and the social structures behind the visual and linguistic data. Under the umbrella of qualitative approach, a hybrid model of critical discourse analysis was employed to meet the objective the study.

Scholars such as Leeuwen (2006) as cited in Wodak and Meyre (2009) assert that critical discourse analysis has moved beyond language considering discourses are often multimodal realized not only through text and talk, but also through other semiotic devices as images which Ferdinand de Saussure in his term called Semiology, the science of signs. He defines a sign as any entity representing another entity (Herrmann-Kaliner, 2009). Semiotics is concerned with the analysis of both linguistic and non-linguistic signs as communicative devices (Cobley, 2001:260). In semiotics, signs serve a communicative purpose. Any sign could be subject to semiotic inquiry.

Those who are in favor of the discourses of Unity were taken as the target group or discourse community of this study. According to Romaine (2000:23), “A speech community is a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of language. The boundaries between speech communities are essentially social rather than linguistic.”

3.1. Sources of data

Altheide (1996) based his approach on the notion that media discourse (be it social media or main stream media is done by making connections between document data and social life. His focus is on showing the context of the document or text which helps define the situation to clarify meaning for the audience member. Accordingly, his approach is used to be able to tackle media discourse for exploring its salient meaning in a broader social

context. In practical terms, Altheide's research process involves five stages as presented below.

Five stages:

- (a) Documents, (finding and gaining access to the documents)
- (b) Protocol development and data collection,
- (c) Data organization,
- (d) Data analysis, and
- (e) Report.

In this research, documents refer to any text used as data for the research. Its meaning refers to the symbolic representation that can be recorded or retrieved for analysis. In this particular research context, any symbolic representation which can be recorded or retrieved for analysis is a document. In other words, all research materials are potentially documents within framework of the study; materials ranging from TV, video, books and manuscripts, files and notes, and photographs and other visual records (Altheide, 1996).

Hence, the pieces of images collected for this study, along with their texts, can be called documents which are the core components in this research. The discourse communities, the target group of this study are those who are in favor of the discourse of Unity.

In this research Altheid's criteria to select the documents sought are followed. Thus, the data are randomly selected and those that best suit to answer the research questions of the study were purposely chosen. The basic questions asked based on Altheide (1996)'s criteria are:

- I. What kinds of documents are likely to provide the possible property of unity ideology and power relation?
- II. How are the Unity ideological meanings and power relations expressed in the documents?
- III. Have the *unity* ideological properties and the kind of power relation implied some variation in the documents?
- IV. Where are the documents found?

First, a corpus of 200 semiotic social practices meaning images, signs and scripts from a cumbersome of public spaces were randomly accessed for six months. Among these texts, which are loaded with Unity ideological values to establish power relation with target audiences were purposely chosen. Secondly, images and language with varied forms of Unity ideological elements were purposely selected.

4. Discussions and Analysis

The data were coded and categorized thematically based on the objective of the study. The results of the study were critically analyzed using Fairclough (1989) and Wodak (1997) Model of CDA.

Both visual analysis and verbal analysis were conducted to meet the goal of the research. In the first dimension, social media under investigation send their messages to viewers using verbal and visual elements. In the verbal discourse analysis, the textual dimension that deals with the forms of language including vocabulary, clause and grammar with reference to Halliday's systemic-functional grammar is addressed. In the second dimension, the major analytical work moved from the bottom of the vocabulary, clause and grammar to the top of the discourse structure and intertextuality. The analysis is said to reveal the ideological function and value of media discourse as found in the data through interpretation in a broader social perspective. Further, in the third dimension the analysis of the social practice involves the discursive context such as the social factors behind the verbal and visual data which also include ideology, hegemony and power between parties indexed in the data.

5. Research Frame work

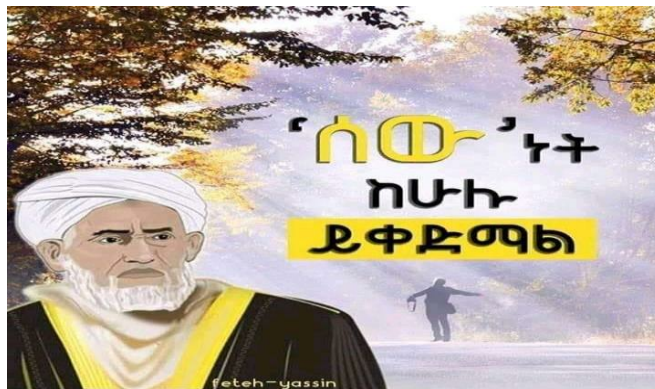
Critical Discourse Analysis employs different techniques to study language use, and the selection of the approaches may vary depending on the focus of a particular study in question. I fact, CDA is said to have no single best model or method of conducting a particular research except the concept of being Critical in analyzing any discourse revealed semiotically. Many

experts in the field of CDA agree that researchers can employ any particular research framework or a hybrid one based on their research objectives. In this study, the researchers to use an eclectic research model by adapting from the two pioneers in the field of CDA, i.e. Fairclough (1989) and Fairclough and Wodak (1997). Fairclough (1992: 63) proclaimed that “language use in society is a form of social practice rather than an individual activity”. Hence, the discourses on the public space are social practices of those who share it. According to Fairclough, ideology is behind any social practice. Hence, we borrow the concept of ideology behind all community owned discourses. The analysis of the data follows the steps used by Fairclough (1989): description, explanation and interpretation.

From Wodak, intertextuality which focuses on how texts are connected to other texts or discourse significantly to one another in the past, present and future is considered. Besides, we consider from Wodak the issue of contextizing and historicizing to understand a given semiotic/discourse.

6. Discussions and Major Findings of the Study

The following text and image are taken from a facebook page circulating in 2020. It is about humanity and how humanity comes before anything else. The text reads ‘ሰውነት ከሁሉ ይቀድማ’ *‘Being human precedes/overrides everything.’*



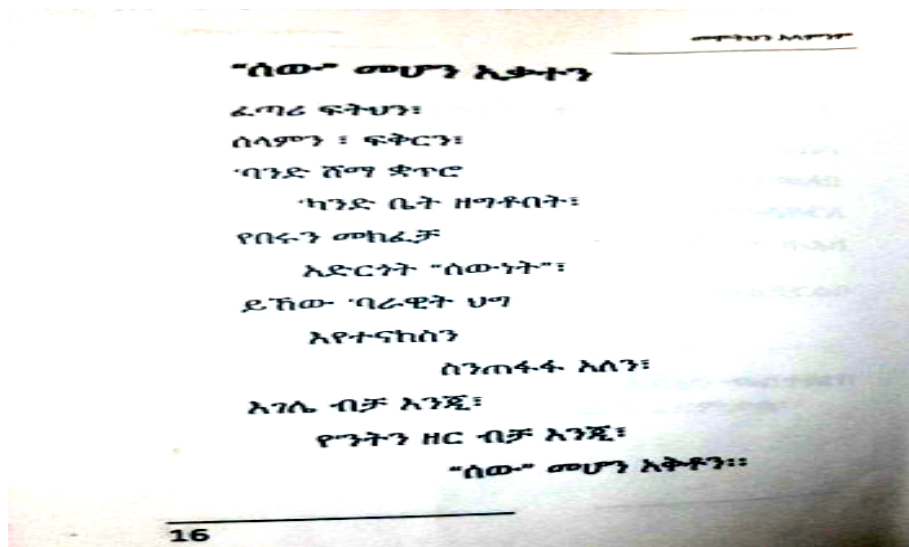
Taken from a Hunegnaw's facebook page, May 2020

As can be seen from the image, the word Human ‘ሰው’ stands out bigger than the other words, symbolizing that humanity is above anything else, including religion, race, color, etc. The word is also written in gold color, probably signifying the luminous nature of humans. The word መቅደም in ‘ይቀድሞል’ precedes, notes that there are other attributes that follow being human. We presume that the attribute that follow person hood are religion, race, culture, ethnicity, color and so on. The Muslim religious leader, in his clerical dress, who performs important religious roles, represents all Muslims.

From experience, we know that religious leaders in Islam, in the Ethiopian context at least, serve as exemplars, teachers, and leaders, providing religious rules and regulations, and fatherly advice. It seems that the message provided from this honorable religious leader is telling every Muslim and non-Muslim that our human nature preceded our religion, race, ethnicity and other labels, thereby heralding the fact that we need to attach the highest value to our humanity.

Recently, there have been ethnic and religious atrocities in Ethiopia and many people were killed and many others were evicted from their places solely on the ground that they were from different ethnic groups or adhered to different faiths. The ‘Being human precedes everything’ message is probably echoing all the divisive attributes attached to human beings and calling upon everyone to give prominence to a cohesive attribute which is being human.

The other text considered for this study is a poem taken from a poetry book titled መሞትክን አላምንም *I don't believe you are dead*. This poem was also circulating on Facebook and we got the poem from there.



Amharic	English
ሰው መሆን አቃተን	We failed to be human
ፈጣሪ ፍትህን፣ ፍቅርን ባንድ ሸማ ቋጥሮ	God having tied justice, peace and love in one garment
ካንድ ቤት ዘግቶበት	and locked them all in one house
የበሩን መክፈቻ አድርጎት ሰውነት	Making the key of the door ‘humanity’
ይኼው ባራዊት ህግ እየተናከሰን	Behold, through the law of beast we are biting each other
ሰንጠፋፋ አለን	We are killing each other
አገሌ ብቻ እንጂ	(what we are able to do) is attaching ourselves to someone
የንተን ዘር ብቻ እንጂ	Attaching ourselves to a so and so ethnic group.
ሰው መሆን አቃተን	We failed to be "human"

Context:

In CDA, “all discourses are historical and can, therefore, only be understood with reference to their context” (Titscher, *et al*, 2000: 166). Our discourse production, consumption and interpretation are determined by our background knowledge, which Fairclough (1989) calls members’ resources. Accordingly, the analysis of the above poem merits some contextual background.

Ethiopia, a country where there are many ethnic groups, has recently been top of the list of countries with a lot of internally displaced people. As an ethnically entrenched country, it has also been a fertile soil for extremism and ethnic driven activists. Due to the rising ethnic conflicts, many people have been killed, injured and displaced.

As the country follows a policy of Ethnic Federalism, there are nine ethnic regions and two federally administered cities. Following the ethnic based federalism and regional boundaries, citizens started labelling themselves as *them* and *us*, which caused ethnic competition and violence. Consequently, the national unity has been weakened and humanity and values attributed to it have been compromised. It seems, therefore, against this context that the above poem was composed. The author of the texts entitles his poem 'we failed to be human'. By using the morpheme-*ን* in አቃተን, he shows that he is using inclusive first person pronoun 'we', assigning an inclusive agency for the failure.

The poem presupposes that to be human was an expectation to be achieved. The author is disappointed because his expectations are not met. Contrary to his expectations, he is battling with feeling of weird occurrences: individualism and ethnic centered thoughts. He is disappointed in everyone, including himself because he feels disconnected from the essence of humanity.

The author mentions three Divine given attributes namely justice, peace and love all to be found wrapped in a garment and locked in one room, the key to access these being humanity. It follows from this that justice, peace, and love will remain locked if there is no humanity as humanity is what can open the locked room. He uses the word key as a metaphor symbolizing power, security and freedom. The key to the gate where justice, peace and love are locked by God is found only when we "are being human." Hence, humanity is celebrated above any label as a unifying code. The main theme is the idea of unity; the macrostructure or the universal theme is humanity as a unifying force and the discourse community in question has abundant

data from the history and the current context that pushes us to own this discourse in favor of other competing ideas.

In the absence of humanity, the text laments that there is the law of the beast which metaphorically symbolizes a dangerous animal or a cruel person. Unlike the law of humanity, the law of the beast is described as dangerous, leading to biting and killing to one other. It seems that energy was unnecessarily spent on thinking about individuality and ethnic groups, not about humanity.

The third excerpt selected for analysis is taken from Abush Zeleke’s 2019 music album. This music, too, was taken from social media. Abush is one of the currently significant singers in Ethiopia. The song is titled “ታመናል”, *We are sick*.

Amharic	English version
ታመናል	<i>We are sick</i>
1. ታመናል ታመናል ታመናል በጣሙን	<i>We're seriously sick.</i>
2. ሀያ ሰላሳ ዓመት ፊደል ቆጥረን አውቀን	<i>Having been literate and studied for twenty three years</i>
3. የተሻለ ኃሳብ እንዴት ማምጣት አቃተን	How have we failed to make a better idea?
4. ዛሬም የዘር ሀረግ ገመድ የሚጠልፈን።	And even today, our ethnicity is a trap and makes us fall.
5. ሁሉም የየራሱን ገንብቶ ካጠረ	If everyone builds and makes a fence of his own,
6. ሁሉም የየራሱን ዘር ከመለመለ	If everyone selects his own ethnic group,
7. ያብሮጥቱን ካባ ማን ያልብሰን መልሶ	Who will dress us the kaba of togetherness again?
8. ለሩብ ክፍለ ዘመን የበረደን መቼ አንሶ	When in fact we have been cold for quarter a century.
9. መቼ ነው የሚለቀን እናስተውል ላንዳፍታ	Let's think a while and see when it will leave us
10. ይራቀን እንራቀው ይህን ክፉ በሽታ	Let it keep ourselves away and let's keep this disease away from it.
11. የማን ዘር ነው ከሳት ከሙብረቅ የተሰራው	Whose race is made of fire or lightening

12. የማን ዘር ነው ከጭድ ከሰበዝ የተሰራው	Whose race is made of straw or grass
13. አንዱን አያሳነስክ አንዱን አታግዝፈው	Do not belittle one ethnic group and aggrandize the other
14. ሆድ አምላኩ አቸሁን ፍቅር ስበክ አንተ ሰው።	Do not be gluttonous, preach love.

The singer starts his music by a non-modalized assertion (Fairclough’s term, 2003) saying *ታመናል* ‘we are sick’. By using the first person plural pronoun (we), he attributes the sickness to everyone, probably every Ethiopian, leaving no room for anyone to be healthy. He expresses the severity of the illness by using the adverb *በጣሙን* ‘seriously’ (line 1). He repeats the sentence *ታመናል* (*we are sick*) and emphasizes the sternness of the illness. He questions how one can be devoid of better ideas despite the thirty years of education. He metaphorically expresses ethnicity/ethnocentrism as a trap trip that causes falling (Line 4). By using the adverb *ዛሬም* ‘even today’ (Line 4), he hints that ethnocentrism has been a problem for which no better idea has been made yet (Line 3). He uses the word *fence* (line 5) and symbolizes the ethnic based regional boundaries set in Ethiopia. He makes this clear in line 6 where he says ‘If everyone selects his own ethnic group’. One can sense that this kind of feeling actually deters the notion of nationalism.

The singer describes ethnocentrism as a fence, a boundary preventing free movement, an obstacle for togetherness or unity. In the existence of this fence, the singer questions who might dress the people with *kabba* (a kind of cloth much loved and worn by highly dignified people) of togetherness again. Through his wording and collocation, we can see how the singer is structuring unity/togetherness. *Kabba* collocates with togetherness and togetherness is described as a cloth to be worn. We note here that ethnocentrism is categorized with a fence and unity with *kabbaa*, which is a metaphorical highlighting (Kovecses, 2010). By using a metaphor, the singer shows that constituent elements of togetherness/unity correspond to constituent elements of *kabba*. One may ask, then, what the constituent elements of *kabba* are. The constituent elements of *kabba* are covering our

bodies thereby giving us protection from cold, making us look more graceful and elegant, telling about our norms and culture (religion, ethnicity etc.) and telling about our status.

The singer uses the adverb መልሶ ‘again’ (line 7), and recounts that togetherness/unity was once experienced by the people. In line 8, he stresses that Ethiopians, including himself, have been without *kabba* and felt the coldness, thereby labelling ethnocentrism as nakedness exposing people to cold. He mentions quarter a century of nakedness, probably alluding to the almost half a century old Ethiopian ethnic based federalism policy which has created regional boundaries or fences among ethnicities. As discussed above, there have been numerous ethnic based conflicts in Ethiopia widening disparities among ethnic groups, causing killings, displacement and injuries. This might be what the singer describes as cold or nakedness.

Ethnocentrism is also designated as a disease (line 10), and the singer questions when this illness leaves us alone (line 9). The singer criticizes the notion of ethnocentrism (line 11-12) and questions if there are differences on the essence of ethnicity. He further asks if there is any ethnicity made of fire or lightening or straw. The fire here seems symbolizing bravery and energy with superior quality. The straw, on the other hand, symbolizes something less important. Without being explicit about who the pronoun you masculine he refers to in his text, the singer urges the addressee to refrain from aggrandizing one ethnic group and belittling the other thereby presupposing that there have been ethnic aggrandizing and ethnic belittling before- what he has explicitly said is against the background of what is left unsaid (Fairclough, 2003). By urging people not to think of ethnic groups as inferior and superior, he indirectly asserts that the issue has been there before. It is to be recalled that Meles Zenawi, the late Ethiopian Prime Minister, once boasted of his ethnicity characterizing his ethnic group as Gold.

The singer is worried about ethnocentrism and ethnic discrimination which could impede the nation’s unity. His fear is backed up by Eagleton (1991) who argued that discrimination in any form can severely hamper a country’s

unity, ultimately deteriorating the social, political and economic advance of the country. In the last line of his poem, the singer tells the addressee (expressed as you male) to stop being gluttonous, thereby signaling that being ethnocentrism is being insatiable beyond the point of requirement in life. He categorizes ethnocentrism and ravenous together, where the former is practiced to gain undeservedly personal benefit. In line 2, the singer mentions the notion of being literate and studying for twenty thirty years perhaps to refer to the activists who often create havoc in the country by initiating ethnic conflicts. The singer also categorizes togetherness/unity and love, thereby describing unity as love (line 14). Through intertextuality and special wording, the singer calls for a social change, a change from ethnocentrism to nationalism that strengthens togetherness and unity at large.

Though the singer is an Afan Oromoo native speaker and many of his works are in Afan Oromoo, he preferred to sing in Amharic language to get his messages across perhaps because he wants to reach the majority as Amharic is a language spoken by many virtually in every federal and regional government in Ethiopia. We note here that music is not used just as an entertainment, but it is also used as a vehicle to convey a message dearly necessary in the country.

The forth selected text for analysis that criticizes ethnocentrism was written by Tagel Seyfu, a famous writer and poet. Like the preceding data, this poem was also collected from social media as it was circulating on facebook.

Amharic	English
1. ሰው በጀግንነቱ... ሃገሩን ከባእዳን ወረራ ሲታደግ በፈፀመው ጀብዳ ወይም በትጋቱ ባስመዘገበው ጉልህ ውጤት አሊያም በልዩ ችሎታው በፈጠረው አዲስ ነገር ኩራት ቢሰማው ቅር አይለኝም።	I would not be offended if a man is proud of his courage, of his heroism while he was fighting with foreign invaders or of a huge success he achieved through his efforts or of the new invention he created through his unique talent.
2. ነገር ግን ለፍቶ ባላገኘውና መርጦ ባልተቀበለው ብሄሩ ልኩራ ማለት ግን አስቂኝ ነው። አስቂኝነው አልኩ እንጂ ታዲያ ያስቂኝነቱን ያክል ስቄ አላውቅም።	But it is funny when one intends to be proud of an ethnicity which he has not chosen. I said it is funny, but I never laughed to the extent it could produce laughter. I said it was funny, but I never laughed at it.
3. ሁሌም እንደተሰማቀቀኩ... ሁሌም እንደተሸማቀቅኩ ነው።	I am always panicky, always embarrassed.

The author of the text lists what one may be proud of: courage, heroism, success achieved through efforts and new inventions. The author is alluding to the Ethiopian historic narrative when he uses the words and phrases like heroism, protecting a nation from foreign invaders. As history recounts, Ethiopians defeated and disgraced the most refined Italian army, a foreign invader in 1896. The Italian army, as historians tells, outnumbered and was armed to the teeth. Through courage and heroism, Ethiopians defeated the Italians, to which the author of the above text is most likely creating intertextuality. The text “... if a man is proud of his courage, of his heroism while he was fighting with foreign invaders...” line 1 above is an allusion to the victory of Adwa.

To be proud of an ethnicity is something ridiculous, as the singer puts it. It is ridiculous, the text producer reasons out, because no effort is exerted to get it and it is not obtained through one’s choice. Though being proud of one’s ethnic group is funny, the text producer does not laugh. Rather, he finds it embarrassing, foreshadowing that ethnocentrism is humiliating. If

the author is against ethnocentrism, it follows that he is likely for unity/togetherness. Like the text produced by the singer discussed above, this writer, extends his criticism to everyone who boasts of his/her ethnicity, disprivileging ethnocentrism. Since the author is a famous writer and known by many, it seems that he has representations of voices from other Ethiopians. As a known author who may have representations of voice, he is challenging ethnocentrism directly using unmitigated statements (Line 2). By using simple present tense in line 4, he expresses high degree of certainty thereby sending a message to readers that being ethnocentric is certainly embarrassing.



Figure I (With Amharic gloss)

I couldn't see the difference....!			
Amhara	Oromo	Tigre	Somali
Muslim	Christian	Black	White

Figure I (With English gloss)



Figure II (With Amharic gloss)

Calm down brother! Nothing is going to happen to us as long as there is no hole on our side! The hole is on their side! It's up to them!

English gloss for figure II

The producers of the texts in the two figures envisage people should unite and live in harmony. This is because there are little differences among them and also because they need one another's support to survive disasters and sustain lives.

As can be seen in the first figure, the heading reads 'I couldn't see the difference' /'ልዩነቱ አልታይህ አለኝ'. The images in the figure refer to four ethnic groups in Ethiopia. In the first row the Amhara, the Oromo, the Tigre and the Somali ethnic groups are represented by the same human skeleton. Similarly, in the second row, people in the country and beyond are represented by the skeleton bearing Muslim and Christian identities, respectively. . In the same row too, almost all people of the world are represented by the skeleton bearing black and white identities. The producers are attempting to bring people with different and contrasting identities to come together and emphasize on their similarities and oneness than their differences. The aim appears to heal the wounds caused by the differences people have in many aspects.

In the second figure as well, the producers emphasize the need for people to cooperate for survival. In the figure, four people are aboard a canoe that appears to be in the middle of a sea and a life threatening storm. Unless, all come together and fight it, the storm appears to be too strong to sink the canoe which eventually could lead to the death of all aboard. It is seen that the two seated on the rear of the canoe are very reluctant to take action to save the canoe from sinking. Even one of them teases the others as he says to his companion "Calm down brother! Nothing is going to happen to us as long as there is no hole on our side! The hole is on their side! It's up to them!" On the other hand, the other two on the opposite side are doing their best to dispense the water out of the canoe to save it from sinking. The first two are relaxed and seem to be careless of what is to happen to all, while the other two are putting considerable efforts to save the canoe from sinking: they are sweating while they dispense the water out.

Communicators of ideologies in the social media manipulate various texts to get their messages to target addressees. Likewise, the producers of the texts used human images to get their messages of togetherness/Unity to their audiences. For instance, elements of human image used in the data under analysis include appearance, and relevant props and settings. Dyer (1993) writes analysis of these features allows us to explore ideological values which are implicitly or explicitly placed in texts such as those found in the figures under analysis.

In both figures above, male human images are portrayed to communicate the ideology of /Unity to target addressees. For instance, in the first figure the human skeleton is gender neutral and that women are not signified by the skeleton directly. Rather, viewers of the figures seem to be reminded of more of men than women. In the second figure as well, all aboard the canoe are said to be males, with no female person aboard. Here it appears that the figures reflect stereotypical social roles of men and women in Ethiopia in many parts of the world, where females stay at home and males go outside to do different kinds of activities, mainly to make a living.. It can be said that the producers of the figures pick similar contexts which exist in society

and combine them with their own claims with an intention of convincing viewers into buying their ideologies, such as Unity (Fairclough, 1996).

It appears that the producers chose to utilize stereotypical roles of men and women commonly observed in Ethiopian societies where men are seen in outdoor activities, such as having leisure time as the case is in figure II. This kind of portrayal of men and women in the media seems to be a theme stereotypical in Ethiopian societies at large. In the same figure, women are not portrayed at all. It is also the male images that are engaged in physical activity of dispensing water out of the canoe to save it from sinking, which is stereotypical to men than women. Thus, it can be said that the producers picked the stereotypical roles of majority of Ethiopians to send the ideology of Unity to viewers. Weitz (2010) explains showing men as independent, at work or enjoying a holiday has implications to viewers, in that viewers are likely to find the notion of unity as familiar as the case is with the these stereotypes. Further, the image in figure I sends the message that equality among all people is natural irrespective of gender and race, which can be implicated from the same skeleton appearance in figure-I.

The human images in the figures can also be analyzed under the category of manner which has three sub categories namely, that of facial expression, eye contact and pose (Fowles, 1996). Facial expression according to Fowles (1996) is the focal area of media image that can raise the viewer's attention at first sight. It serves to create a distinct impression and to attract the viewer to media messages such as those signified in the Unity notion. The producers of the human images in figure II for instance, show facial expressions that are smiling and poker faced where the former appear to mock the later who were striving to save the canoe from sinking through their smiles. Weitz (2010) says these human images are given such expressions to meet the purpose of the producers. The protagonists are represented by the men who were putting efforts to save the canoe, whereas, the antagonists, are represented by those with smiling expressions.

Yet, these facial expressions are artificially created by the producers of the text to show that rivals in Ethiopia are existent in which one does not care about the country while the other strives to save. The holes, on the boat which the two irresponsible men, refer to stand for the gaps/problems the country suffers from. On the other hand, measures taken by the other two men to save the canoe from sinking stands for solutions. The facial expressions of the men aboard towards these challenges indexes how people are different in the way they respond to shared problems: Some are responsible and others are negligent and foolish. Since these two rivals lack unity, they are about to destroy their canoe which is representation of a country, for instance Ethiopia. So the notion of unity can be strengthened by the use of such human images in the document analyzed above.

The producers of the figures have also utilized settings to enhance the discourse of Unity. Settings in media texts serve as background for the message. In figure II for instance, the stormy sea or water body can represent a setting for a harsh situation that stands for a life threatening environment, which signifies the context of Ethiopia where there are political, economic and social instabilities. Dyer (1993) says settings are carriers of meaning and are rarely value free in which they act as a context for qualifying the foreground. Thus, the producers of the texts suggest us that such challenges can be best treated by the notion of Unity.

The vocabularies found in the texts are also open for further analysis to understand how the ideology of Unity is enhanced. Vocabulary is known for holding several values of which experiential, relational and expressive values are the dominant ones (Fairclough 1996). Fairclough (1996) holds experiential value refers to knowledge and beliefs. Words are taken as codes to represent the world of reality including ideologies which give something or someone a symbolic value or image (Vestergaard and Schroder 1985). The names of four ethnic groups in Ethiopia are listed in figure I horizontally to show their equal status, implying equality among them. Secondly, they are dignified as well indexing that they are treated with honor.

The producers of the texts use words of relational values to reflect the social relationship between target viewers with regard to the discourse of Unity. In this regard, Fairclough (1996) asserts that words of relational values create relationships of coexistence between participants or maintain and enhance relationships. One device for establishing relations in media texts is the personal pronouns such as “you” (“your”), “we” (“our”), “I”, “she”, “he” as identified by Cook (2001:157) who says personal pronouns have different relational values. The author adds media texts use all three persons, but in peculiar ways. Accordingly, “We” is the producer of the text; “I” is the relater of experiences and motives leading to embracing of the notion communicated; the “he/she” is very often the person who did not embrace the notion, distanced by this pronoun, and observed conspiratorially by “you” and “I”.

If one takes the statement by one of the antagonists in the second figure which reads "*Calm down brother! Nothing is going to happen to **us** as long as there is no hole on **our** side! The hole is on their side! It's up to **them!***", the producer shows solidarity with his partner by the use of the pronouns 'us' and 'our'. On the other hand, the pronoun 'them' found in the same source is used to show distancing. Selfishness and foolishness are indexed by the use of the 'us' and 'our', the first person plural object and the possessive adjective pronouns respectively, along with 'the hole' which signifies danger or challenge that requires solution which is also undesirable. Anyone else against these antagonists (The foolish and the selfish), in this case the protagonists, are signified by the pronoun 'them' as they stand against the former. The third person plural object pronoun 'them' represents the people with good deeds and especially those who do their best to save the country from destruction of any kind. So the use of the pronouns in distinct categories is utilized to show antagonism between/among people who intend to unite to save the country and those who stand against it.

The theme of the two texts focuses on the lack of unity in Ethiopia which has put in a risk of destruction. Though the EPRDF regime has put a system

in place that promotes multi-party system since 1991, many say it was not long lived. As implied in the two figures the issue of ethnicity and anarchy has put the country in a risk of disintegration and failure in many aspects.

Political scientists in Ethiopia and beyond assert that the country has been in political and social turmoil despite the regime's efforts to establish a democratic system. They say right after the transition period, the front began to violate the human and democratic rights of citizens, even to the extent that it left opposition party leaders behind bars (Yosef, 2016). In addition, the EPRDF regime has been accused of using political rhetoric of divide and rule to maintain its power which has created distrust among people of different ethnic groups in the country (Keller, 2003). In addition, though it claims to follow federalism to secure the democratic rights of nations and nationalities in the country, authors such as Bach (2013) assert that EPRDF violated the peoples' rights by controlling the federal system centrally. The aforementioned author adds ethnic groups in the country have little trust among themselves due to the political rhetoric that the late EPRDF regime has installed.

It can be said that the people of Ethiopia have suffered a lot from the consequences of the past political rhetoric. They are made to be hostile to one another, especially by focusing on only the bad deeds of one on the other. Thus, the texts under investigation have been produced to offer a solution to this problem, which is prescription of the rhetoric of unity to Ethiopians and even all humans on the planet.

7. Conclusion

Social media have been used as a platform where people expressed their concerns on ethnocentrism. Likewise, poets, celebrity singers, religious leaders got involved in the unity/togetherness discourse production. Through a variety of genres such as poems, music songs, signs and anecdotes, Ethiopians expressed their allegiance with the notion of nationalism, as opposed to ethnocentrism. Through special wording,

metaphor and intertextuality, nationalism is labeled as a graceful clothe to be worn. Humanity is given special prominence over other attributes such as ethnicity, religion and race.

The attitude that one's own ethnicity is superior to others has been denounced. It is also described as an illness. Against ecnocentrism, humanity, unity, and cooperation are the major emerging themes of the public discourse on the social media in Ethiopia. Unity or togetherness is being advocated by many Ethiopians. The ideological sponsoring thought behind the backup is the apprehension that extreme ethnocentrism, as opposed to nationalism, could disintegrate the country, if not checked in advance.

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