

## HATE SPEECH FRAMES AND COGNITION

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### ABSTRACT

*The governing argument of my paper is that hate speech has a bi-directional effect, which obtains in the claim that the targets of hate speech and its offenders are both victims of hate speech. The targets of hate speech are exposed to violence and genocidal acts but hate speech offenders are victims of distorted cognition which does not allow for independent judgement. Data are collected using purposive sampling technique from select reader-response comments on Facebook pages (Farooq Kperogi's page and Legit. ng) in the build-up to the 2019 presidential election in Nigeria. Data are analysed using a combination of insights from Van Dijk's (2006a) framework in his "politics, ideology and discourse" and transitivity – an aspect of Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Grammar. Result shows that the respondents are victims of distorted cognition which has literally robbed them of the powers of independent thought. They can be said to be literally seeing through the prisms of their political parties of choice and cognitively conditioned not to objectively interrogate, but to hastily discard, any point raised against their candidates of choice. The researcher concludes that beyond the targets of hate speech who are exposed to violent acts, its offenders are equally victims of distorted cognition, activated by words and images circulating in broader society to shape perceptions.*

**KEYWORDS:** Hate speech, Frames, Cognition & Pragmatics

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