

A MULTIMODAL STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ENDSARS PROTEST PLACARDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Article Info

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Abstract

Several studies have been done on the EndSARS protest in Nigeria using different linguistic approaches to analyse and interpret data. However, little attention has been given to the combination of stylistic and multimodal approaches to the study of placards to unravel how textual resources contribute to the style of meaning in texts. The paper therefore examines the meaning and style of semiotic resources in the selected data. Five (5) purposively selected placards from the EndSARS protest were analysed, using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic theory and foregrounding theory as the theoretical framework. It was discovered that placards on EndSARS protests are presented with a combination of several modes, such as text, colour, and images. These modes serve the purpose of creating meaning effectively, and this can be proved in the display of placards selected for analysis. The study concludes that placards have different messages which can be decoded through multimodal and stylistic approaches.

Keywords: Protest, ENDSARS, COVID-19, Multimodal, Stylistics

Introduction

Protest is a powerful way to express dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs. When a government or society fails to meet the needs of its people, protest can be a way to make them listen. Protest is widely defined as "a public expression of objection, disapproval or dissent towards an idea or action, typically a political one". Protest has been used in this way throughout history, from the civil rights movement to anti-war protests. It is an important tool for citizens to voice their grievances and push for change. Protest can take many forms, from peaceful demonstrations and marches to boycotts and strikes. According to Garret (2006), it is often used as a form of civil disobedience when all other avenues have been exhausted. By taking part in a protest, citizens can stand up against bad governments or oppressive societies and demand justice and equality for all people.

Garret (2006) said that protest is a way for citizens to express their dissatisfaction with the status quo and the bad government that rules over them. It can be a powerful tool to bring about social and political change in society. Protesting has been around since ancient times, when people would take to the streets to voice their grievances against oppressive rulers or unjust laws. In modern times, protests have become more organised and more widespread as people have recognised their collective power to make an impact on society. In today's world, protesting is used by citizens all over the world as a form of civil disobedience against oppressive governments and unjust laws. Protest is an act of expressing dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, particularly when it concerns bad governance and a lack of justice. A protest gives voice to the grievances of a society that feels that its concerns and needs are not met by its government or those in power. It can come in various forms such as demonstrations, rallies, strikes, boycotts, sit-ins and more. When protesting bad government or societal issues, people have the chance to come together to raise awareness and demand change from those in power.

After the COVID-19 lockdown in Nigeria, the ENDSARS protest ensued, which was a result of ending the inhuman act by SARS, a unit of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). A protest is essentially a public display of opposition to or disapproval of a political notion or activity. The best form of this protest is when the people take to the streets to publicly voice their complaints to the government. The EndSARS protest seeks to curtail or eradicate police violence and abuse. The ENDSARS protest was a movement against SARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) in Nigeria. SARS is a unit of the police force in Nigeria; this unit has been alleged of tortured, illegally detainment of youths in Nigeria. The ENDSARS is a protest against police brutality in Nigeria. Their aim of this movement is the disbanding of this police unit in the Nigeria Police Force, and the protest achieved its aim. This protest began on Twitter in 2018 with

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the hashtag #ENDSARS. It claims that about 28 million tweets have been accumulated on Twitter. Nigerians on Twitter joined the protest on Twitter using the #ENDSARS as a movement against SARS, according to Wikipedia.

As reported by premiumtimesng.com, the utilisation of social media is one factor that propelled the EndSARS protest into the global spotlight. The influence of social media during the protest must be addressed. The protest originally commenced on social media platforms. The protest successfully captured the attention of the global community owing to the vigorous mobilisation of demonstrators, and as reported by premiumtimesng.com, "the #EndSARS hashtag received a greater volume of tweets than the #BlackLivesMatter movement. As the online trend escalated, the increasing enthusiasm of individuals, coupled with narratives of suffering and motivation, intensified the calls of the activists. Social media platforms, especially Twitter and Instagram, provided Nigerians with a digital platform to narrate their experiences of police violence.

The majority of these protests employ various languages and forms of expression to convey their complaints to the populace. One of the analytical frameworks examining the interpretation of these placards is Multimodal discourse analysis, a facet of discourse studies that evaluates semiotic resources beyond mere language and their interplay with language to communicate meaning. The examination of diverse communication modalities, including gestures, music, visuals, and eye contact, and their interplay with verbal language to generate meaning, has led to the development of multimodal discourse analysis.

Multimodal discourse analysis involves the utilisation of various semiotic resources to express a specific concept or message. It seeks to explore the integration of various semiotic modes or resources within a specific socio-cultural context to generate a semiotic event (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). These semiotic tools or modalities encompass gestures, visuals, eye contact, architectural elements, music, hues, attire, page design, and more. Halliday (1997) defines semiotic resources as "a framework of meaning that forms the essence of cultural reality.

van Leeuwen (2015) explicates the concept of multimodality, stating that "various semiotic modes (such as language and imagery) are amalgamated and synthesised within a specific instance or category of discourse: for example, spoken discourse merges language with intonation, vocal quality, facial expressions, gestures, and posture, alongside elements of self-presentation like attire and hairstyle; written discourse combines language with typographic representation and increasingly incorporates illustrations, layout, and colour. Van Leeuwen delineates the categories of discourse, which encompass both spoken and written forms. Multiple semiotic modalities are amalgamated within this form of discourse, whether oral or written, at a particular moment. O Halloran and Smith (2012) propose that "conveying meaning, concepts, and messages through various semiotic resources poses difficulties for linguists, as each resource possesses unique advantages and limitations. This is influenced by the artist's social circle, cultural background, age, and various sociolinguistic elements. Multimodal discourse analysis typically examines the artist's objectives while elucidating the comprehensive significance of these semiotic modes.

Multimodal stylistics is an academic discipline that examines and interprets visual, verbal, and other nonverbal forms of communication across diverse contexts. It is a multidisciplinary methodology that integrates linguistic, sociolinguistic, and semiotic theories to investigate the utilisation of language in various contexts. This domain seeks to acknowledge the importance of the various facets of meaning construction and its influence on communication. Multimodal stylistics is an evolving discipline that investigates the interplay of language, imagery, and auditory elements in the construction of meaning in daily life. Its significance has escalated owing to the proliferation of digital media and its role in modern culture. Multimodal stylistics is a subdivision of stylistics that examines the utilisation of language across various media. It analyses the interplay and influence of various communication styles, including visual, verbal, and non-verbal, in the construction of meaning. This field of research is significant as it aids in comprehending the various methods of conveying meaning. Examining the application of language through various communication modalities allows us to enhance our comprehension of its role in meaning transmission. This research aims to examine EndSARS placards utilising a multimodal stylistic approach to discourse.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This paper aims to analyze the way in which meaning is communicated in selected placards on the EndSARS protest, with a focus on how these modes generate meaning beyond the explicit level in relation to their stylistic tools. The specific objectives are;

1. Identify different modes of communication used in the selected placards on the End SARS protest.
2. Identify how the stylistic tools are used in making meaning in the selected placards.
3. Examine the selected placards intended meaning through Multimodal and stylistic elements.

Research Questions

This research revolves around and attempts to provide answers to the following research questions.

1. What are the different modes of communication used in the selected placards on the EndSARS protest?
2. What are the stylistic tools used in making meaning in the selected placards?
3. How are Multimodal and stylistic elements used to interpret the selected placards' intended meaning?

Research Methodology

This paper used a qualitative and descriptive approach so that the protesters' goals and messages could be deduced from their placards as a form of communication. The study's data came from online protest posters against ENDSARS. The placards were chosen from social media websites such as Facebook, and samples from these sites were studied to determine the multimodal and stylistic aspects that were present in the placards. A total of five (5) placards were purposively selected from Facebook. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic theory is the linguistic theory used for the study within the multimodal discourse analysis framework, and it is reinforced by various stylistic tools. The relevance of the extracts to the study's subject, as well as the inclusion of social semiotic and aesthetic components, were factors in their selection. The paper selected placards on the EndSARS protest from the internet. In essence, the research type is qualitative because it has no correlation with measurement, and of course, uses a content approach because it uses instructional material as its source of data, which is social media.

Review of Related Concepts

Language as a Social Semiotic System

van Leeuwen (2005) suggests that social semiotics deals with the ways people employ semiotic resources to construct communicative products and events, and to understand them in certain social circumstances and processes. Language, as a social semiotic (Halliday, 1978), shows some kind of connection between the social and cultural environments. Semiotic choices acquire meaning based on the social environment in which they are made. As quoted by Eggins (2004, p. 3), Halliday (1978, p. 2) states that the idea of "language as a social semiotic" involves understanding language in the context of socio-culture, where culture is seen in semiotic terms as an information system.

The idea of 'language as social semiotic' has been commonly accepted as a common concern among systemic linguists irrespective of different areas of study (Eggins, 2004, p.3). According to Lemke (2002), social semiotic use of language may be considered as a semiotic practice that uses the semiotic system of language to represent social meanings. Hence, it could be concluded that the theory of social semiotics has the potential to demonstrate the process of constructing social meanings and relations through the use of semiotic systems other than language. There have been several concepts suggested by social semiotics to analyse visual representation and some of them have been included in multimodality (MDA).

Social semiotics is a theory of communication that seeks to understand the process by which people create meaning using different modes of communication in particular social settings. Modes of communication arise not out of a fixed structure of rules, but rather out of the efficiency of the modes of communication in social contexts. Social inquiry is a means by which people understand their own existence. Kress argues that because of the belief that meaning arises in social settings and through social interaction, different modes of semiotic communication are used in order to "make signs in specific contexts." Social semiotics contradicts the postulates of traditional linguistics and semiotics, and tries to adopt the idea of communication from a context-oriented perspective. Social semiotics is attempting to introduce 'context' not as a dual concept of text and context, but as a conceptual tool, whereby "context needs to be theorized and understood as another set of text" (Hodge & Kress, 1998, p. 8). It is important to reject the idea that language is always dominant and autonomous. Hodge (2009) believes that social meanings should not be limited to any single context, including the dominant context of language.

Hodge and Kress provide analyses of examples in diverse social settings which involve multiple modalities; however, they give preference to modes of writing and imagery in print media (such as posters, billboards, magazines and so forth) over speech, gesture, gaze and other modalities relevant to language-mediated social interaction. At the end of the 1980s, Kress and van Leeuwen started developing the social semiotic approach to language, concentrating mainly on print media, which resulted in their book "Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design" (1996). Kress and van Leeuwen offer the model of image analysis based on all semiotic features of the social semiotic theory by Halliday and incorporating the system network. In his book "The Language of Displayed Visual Art" (1994), O'Toole defines images as the resources for meaning-making, drawing upon film studies, iconography and art history.

The problem of mode or modes has been particularly stressed during the 1990s. The stress has shifted from separate analysis of modes to their relationship, and hence multimodality becomes extremely important. Multimodality serves as an alternative to such terms as "verbal" and "non-verbal," which refer to the former as the default means of meaning making, whereas the latter is considered as marked and supplemental. Social semiotics, in its development, places increasing importance on the influence of the communication context and the producer of the sign on the signs and symbols. Social semiotics has turned into a more elastic concept of grammar, where the stress is placed not on the system of possible resources but on the individuals' choice of these resources according to the context. The importance of semiotic resources is evident in the case of multimodality; however, the importance of these resources differs from one approach to another. Kress and van Leeuwen state that semiotic resource is the relation between the representational resources and how people use them.

Stylistics

According to Kamalu (2018), stylistics involves the way in which meaning is constructed using language in literature. In the past, literature has been the main concern of stylistics; but nowadays, stylistics uses linguistic tools to investigate different discourses. Stylistics involves the way language is used to communicate in literature. Stylisticians use linguistic theories and models in analyzing literary texts to understand how and why a text assumes its particular form and how it incorporates different meanings. Stylisticians use linguistic elements such as lexis, grammar, phonology, graphology, and semantics in analyzing literary texts to answer this question. Simpson (2014) says that stylistics is an approach to textual analysis where the importance of language is placed first.

In the view of Norgaard, Busse, and Montoro (2010), stylistics can be seen as a "linguistic approach to literature". This clearly indicates that there exists an aspect of linguistics that serves as a tool for the literary analysis. Linguistics aspects include phonology, morphology, semantics, and graphology whereas literature includes value, aesthetics and emotions but stylistics always uses linguistic models to analyze literature in order to understand the underlying aspects of the representation of the literature and its ability to convey several aspects of meaning. As noted by Udeze, Udeze, and Orji (2017), in Finch (2000), stylistics is the study of language style using linguistics models.

As Wales (2011) observes, "the main goal of most of stylistic studies is to explain the functioning of the text 'as such', not just to provide a formal description of its linguistic properties, but to demonstrate their significance in understanding the text, or in relation to literary effects or themes which can be explained in terms of linguistic triggers, where relevant". Most of the texts that are studied by stylistics are literary texts, and the approach is text-centered. The analysis of stylistics is not only about the ways words are put into the text but also how these words function, which is useful when trying to interpret the text. It also analyses the significance of a text, which is significant in trying to interpret the text. The belief in the case of stylistics is that every linguistic feature in a text is relevant in interpreting the text.

Stylistics is described as the intersection between literature and linguistics; this is the reason why stylistics is also known as literary stylistics or linguistic stylistics. Linguistics is defined as the study of language; stylistics is therefore the intersection between the features of literature and the features of language. Literature in terms of involving literary works because the analysis of literary works is done in stylistics and recently non-literary texts. Linguistics in terms of involving the use of linguistic theories of analysis; the theories of stylistic analysis are linguistic. Literature and linguistics interact, this is illustrated through the definition of literature by Bateson where he says that "a work of literature is successful linguistically when the best words are in the best order, when appropriate stylistic devices cooperate to unify value judgment" (Kolawole, 2012). For an individual to analyze a literary work, he/she has to first understand the language used by the writer since the student needs to have adequate knowledge of linguistics in order to analyze the literary work with respect to its phonological features like rhymes and metrical stresses.

As cited in Udeze, Udeze & Orji (2017), "Stylistics can be said to be a field which uses linguistic knowledge in one way or the other because it is not possible to define style without the aid of grammar. It is an area that studies the style of literary and verbal languages and what the writer/author wants to convey to his readers/audience; that is to say, it tries to explain why people want to do what they do using language, i.e., socialization and meaning construction (Niazi & Gautman, 2010:3)." Stylistics mainly uses linguistic theories for the analysis of literary and non-literary texts.

Language of Protest

Protest is the most common form of civil disobedience that has been observed throughout history. It has been used to show dissatisfaction and disapproval of the society's norms and government policies. Protest has also been used to influence government policies. It has been used to bring issues within society to the attention of other people. There is a difference in the reasons, methods used, and even language used in protests. Protest is a mode of communication of thoughts and feelings to the world. Protest is a communicative act that is visible and audible to everyone. Protest can be about anything but it is bound to use words and images to communicate its message. Protest brings about change. Protest can be used as a tool to bring to light some of the issues and to make positive changes in society.

Protest can also be used by people to show their support for an issue or cause. Protest is used by people to make their voices heard and also to send out their messages to the community. Protest brings people together to learn more about what is going on around them.

The process of protests entails delivering messages not only to the rest of society but also to those who protest. This serves to let one's grievances out and make his/her intentions clear. There are various kinds of protest forms that may differ in size: from marches and rallies to sit-ins and strikes. Protests can be either violent or peaceful, spontaneous or planned. The list of messages that can be sent through protests includes: support for certain causes; demands for changes; protests against certain regime or establishment; protests against certain decisions; demand for social or political reforms; protests against discrimination; protests against exploitation; freedom calls; protests against violence; human rights demands; environmental justice protest; anti-capitalism protest; anti-poverty protest and anti-war protest.

Protest is described as the type of public demonstration when citizens arrange themselves to make public expressions of their opinions on certain issues in politics. There are different types of protests existing in the world, but the primary function of such actions is changing of public policies. Language of protest is often symbolic. For example, the symbol "hands up, don't shoot" is used in American protests on behalf of people becoming victims of police brutality. Protest influences public policy considerably. The protest conducted in the USA against the war in Iraq in 2003 made some changes in American public policy. Protest is the good means for citizens to voice their opinions about public policy. Protest is a powerful tool of social change. Using the protest, one may draw the attention to a particular issue or simply express an opinion. Protests have the potential to significantly influence how people perceive a situation and assist in causing changes. Different kinds of protests exist, each with their unique goal in mind. For instance, some protests might be nonviolent in nature while others may turn out to be violent in nature. Other forms of protest might be intended for changing the policies of the government whereas some others might be for making a statement or bringing change in the behaviour of people.

Language used in a protest is used for sending a message to others. The message can be sent using speeches, chants, signs, and placards, among other methods. The language is used for sending a message in a protest. The message is meant for the consumption of everyone, including the government and other protesters.

Multimodality in EndSARS Protest Placards

During protests, the primary means of communication used is placards, and whether the protest is peaceful or violent, placards are always used as a means of communication. The definition of placards, according to the dictionary, is a sheet of paper or card printed on one side with some announcement, and intended to be conspicuous in public places. In the field of Multimodal Discourse Analysis, placards constitute semiotic resources for communication.

One of the notable protests that took place in Nigeria in 2020 was EndSARS, and it was not short-lived as well as a general protest. According to nairametrics.com, EndSARS can be traced back to 2017 whereby the Nigerian youths employed the hashtag to recount their cases of torture and abuse by the disbanded Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Nevertheless, the movement gathered momentum at the beginning of October 2020 after videos surfaced showing policemen killing an unarmed youth who was part of the SARS unit. In response to the above incident, the Nigerian youths started gathering in Twitter advocating for police reforms from the Federal Government of Nigeria via the use of such hashtags as #EndSARS and #Endpolicebrutality. Although the aforementioned hashtag trended on Twitter, the Nigerian youths continued to share their grievances through social media platforms. The viral communication online suggested that the personnel of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) had killed a Nigerian youth, confiscated his car, and walked away quickly. Following the viral nature of the video on the social media sites, the campaign #ENDSARS became prominent as many youths were calling for the disbanding of the police force which had been oppressing young Nigerians for years. The Nigerian Police Force, headed by Inspector General of Police, announced that as of 4th October, 2020, all operations of SARS and other tactical squads would be stopped regarding normal patrol and routine tasks such as searching, checkpoints, road blocks and traffic management. On 7th October, 2020, the youths in Lagos State marched for three days demanding the disbanding of Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of Nigeria Police Force in an effort to effect reforms in the police to end their extra-judicial practices. The youths were seen marching to the Force Headquarters at Ikeja with placards carrying different slogans like 'Protect, not Exploit' and 'Nigeria police stop killing us'. This was the start of 14 days of march which led to violence and the hijacking of the protest by hoodlums leading to destruction of public and private property in the country. The placards were utilized during the demonstration in order to convey the purposes of the demonstrators. This form of communication is a part of multimodal communication and it does not involve only verbal communication. The placards became an object of multi-level analysis.

Empirical Literature

In the search for empirical research in the context of Multimodal Stylistic Analysis, the researcher came to the conclusion that there have been lots of researches on the analysis of each of these terms separately. And it is from this

understanding that the researcher understood that there have not been many researches conducted in the context of Multimodal Stylistic Analysis. In Idiagbon's (2014) research, he did a study on "a multimodal approach to examining the discourse of protest". Subsidy removal by President Goodluck Jonathan in 2012 angered many Nigerians, forcing the protestors to express their anger using slogans, songs, speeches, cartoons, placards, pictures, as well as other modes such as Facebook, radio and television. Idiagbon conducted the study using Kress' (2004) fundamentals of image analysis and Hall's (2012) discourse of protest as an essential component of the study. This paper deals with language and image, looking at inter-semiotic and semantic coherence in this complementary multimodal study. Numan (2022) did a research study on "The Multimodal Framing Demands by Protesters' Signs in Social Media: Meaning and Sources of Visual and Textual Messages: The Case of Iraq".

Objective of the Study
This paper seeks to look at the collective demands of the protesters during the popular protests in Iraq in 2019 by using the multimodal framing analysis in analyzing the signs of the protesters during the Iraqi Tishreen Movement. This study seeks to look at the themes in the symbols used by the protesters in Iraq during the October 2019 uprising that were posted on the social media. In his research, Numan collected 2113 posts from the social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) containing digital images of protesters holding protest materials, graphic designs and placard designs. Images of protesters and signs were key pieces of data for this research. Some of the images used included text, pictures, icons and symbols. Four themes and messages emerged when analyzing the speech of the protesters; sacrifice for the country, unity, feminism and demands. The demands were categorized into 14 demands including dissolution of the militias, separating religion and state and rejection of the sectarianism among others.

In their study titled "Linguistic and Visual Strategies in Placards from the Algerian Hirak Movement against the 5th Presidential Term: A Social Semiotic Examination," the authors intended to explore the linguistic and visual strategies in the placards. In this research, the attention will be paid to the connection between the visual and linguistic strategies in the placards from Algerian Hirak against the fifth presidential term. This research will give an insight into the organization of linguistic and visual modal components of the chosen placards to reveal protesters' demands, metaphorical associations, and intertextuality in meaning creation process. The Social Semiotic Multimodal Theory by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006), also known as 'Visual Grammar', and Critical Theory of Intertextuality by Fairclough (2003) will be applied for the analysis of the placards. Results generated by this research imply that visual mode modalities link different social and cultural areas like religion, health care and vehicles. Moreover, it can be seen that due to the intertextuality of linguistic modality, there are various types of external texts used from different social and cultural backgrounds, including the register used in advertisements, technology and films for communication purposes. There is a relationship between the visual and linguistic forms in regard to the three metafunctions.

The present research "A Multimodal Analysis of Selected Placards from the 'Aurat March' 2018 in Pakistan" has been done by Memon (2021). The current research involves the analysis of selected placards employed in the 2018 "Aurat March" in Pakistan. There are two posters analyzed with the image of two knowledgeable women depicted in them. The present research is the exploratory one which has involved the application of the theory of intersemiotic complementarity by Royce. It can be observed that the placards are not merely physical objects with its components but involve several meanings in the signs.

Analysis of Bowcher (2012) regarding usage of anti-war placards in Japan was conducted taking into account multimodal features of these placards. Unlike traditional protest sign, anti-war sign, which is utilized during protests, should be utilized physically by at least one person. Materials from which an anti-war placard is created are physical, however, there are lots of linguistic and semiotic elements which can be employed in order to deliver the message of the placard. The message of the anti-war placard is connected directly to the war or conflict for which the placard is made. There are verbal and non-verbal elements of anti-war poster, where visual and verbal elements are artistically combined.

Theoretical Framework

Kress and van Leeuwen's Social Semiotic Theory (2006)

Social Semiotic Theory was proposed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen in 2006 as a theory of the analysis of semiotic resources like images, cartoons and placards. Principles that guide the analysis of multimodal communications using this theory originate from Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL). SFL is a linguistic theory dealing with the meanings that arise out of specific contexts of communication due to the language choice by users in their systems of language. These meanings are explained by the three metafunctions of language which include ideational, interpersonal and textual. According to O'Halloran (2008), the strength of the SFL theory for the analysis of multimodal discourses (MDA) lies in the metafunction principle of Halliday that explains how the semiotic resources interact in meaning construction. Multimodal analysis based on SFL theory primarily aims at explaining the textual, interpersonal and ideational aspects of visual or multimodal texts. Nevertheless, the three metafunctions are referred to as representational, interactive and compositional by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006).

Representational Metafunction

Action decision and conceptual analysis of the images is done in the representational metafunctions (Heberle & Meurer, 2007; cited by Bashir Jam, 2016). Thus, the representational metafunctions can be explained as how the participants, processes and the context in which the processes occur get realized. As per Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), the representational meaning is first made with the help of the participants which include people, places or objects that could be either abstract or concrete. There are two main types of the representational processes – Narrative processes and Conceptual processes. The vectors which could be represented or abstract, such as an arrow showing the narrative process are the distinctive features of the both "narrative" and "conceptual". In addition, the processes could be transactional (unidirectional or bidirectional) or non-transactional (unidirectional) and would have the actor (to whom the vector is addressed) and goal (in whose direction the vector is pointed to) or only the actor.

Narrative processes include speech, thoughts, reactions, and actions. The story is created by the vectors comprising roads, weapons, and limbs within the actional process (Harrison, 2002). Within the reactionary process, the story is constructed from the perspective of the participant. Narrative transactions may be both transactional and non-transactional. What differentiates the two is whether the observer can differentiate between the actor/goal and reactor/phenomenon.

Conceptual processes, on the other hand, are those wherein the participants who are represented are grouped to present the concept of who or what they represent to the viewers. According to Kress & van Leeuwen, three types of conceptual processes of visuals are classified as classificational processes, analytical processes, and symbolic processes. One such conceptual process is symbolic processes that are responsible for determining the symbolic value of the visuals. This type of process can be symbolic, suggestive, or symbolic attributes (Behshad, 2015).

Interactional Metafunction

The relationship between represented and interactive participants (viewers) is referred to as the interactional metafunction. This metafunction has five subtypes: contact, social distance, gaze, attitude, and modality.

Contact: It can either be an offer or a demand. But then again, the difference between the two can only be determined by the presence of eye contact between the actors involved and the represented. Visual techniques that can help create a link between the viewers and the image depend heavily on how the image interacts with the viewers or what it aims to accomplish. The link between the viewers or readers and the participants represented is created by the vectors like eye line or gestures which serve as an "offer" or "demand."

Social Distance: Social distance is the major determining factor in the process of distance establishment between the interacting and the represented participants. Social distance relates to the social relationships between the interactants and involves whether the people interacting with each other have had longstanding relationships where they would be seen to belong to the category of intimates, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, apprentices, strangers or even aliens (in a cultural aspect) or whether the people interacting have temporary relationship that exists only in the duration of actual communication process. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the use of frame size can be equally employed by the designer to inform the viewer on their social distance from the represented individuals. There are five types of social distance: close personal (close shot), far personal (medium-close shot), medium-long shot, long shot and public distances (Ruppert, 2004).

Gaze: Gaze is unaware of gaze. There are five kinds of gaze, according to Chandler (2002). The types of gazes include: Spectator's gaze; Intra-diegetic gaze; Extra-diegetic gaze; Averted gaze; and Camera gaze. Spectator's gaze is defined as the gaze of the interactive participants towards the represented participants. Intra-diegetic gaze is the gaze of the represented participants towards other represented participants. The gaze of the represented participants towards the interactive participants is called the extra-diegetic gaze, which ranks third in the hierarchy of gazes. Averted gaze is when one of the represented participants turns down the gaze of another represented participant. Finally, the presence of the camera illustrates the gaze of the camera towards its participants.

Attitude: It is also known as the point of view/ perspective of the individual. As noted by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), the (central) perspective system is essential in representing the subjective attitude of the participants in the visuals and its significance in this situation. In the subjective image, there are two fundamental and simultaneous choices involved which include power and involvement/detachment. The relation between the viewers and the participants is created through positioning the participants in the frontal perspective. In cases where the participants have to be separated from the viewers, they are positioned in an oblique point of view. In terms of power, there are three primary choices which include viewer equality, viewer inferiority, and viewer superiority. In situations where the participants in the visuals are presented in a high perspective, the viewers are viewing the participants from a bird's eye view. In instances where the participants represented have a position of power, then they are viewing the viewers from a low perspective (ant's eye view). In the eye level, the viewers and the participants are equal.

Modality (credibility): Modality refers to the level of normalcy of pictures; that is, the degree to which the image of the object is similar or different from its real-life appearance. Modality has two indicators: color and context. Contextualization, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), can be described as a continuum from zero

contextualization up to the most complete and elaborate one (p.165). There are three scales of colors: color saturation, color differentiation, and color modulation. In the case of color saturation, the scale starts from full color to no color (black and white). Color differentiation is a continuum from the largest number of colors to monochromatic colors. Finally, in the case of color modulation, the scale begins from fully modulated color and then progresses to unmodulated color, for example, shades of blue.

Compositional Metafunction

“The integration of representational and interactive components into an overall composition” is referred to as “compositional metafunction” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.176). The compositional taxonomy has three components: information values, framing, and salience.

Information value: Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) have defined two organizational modes of images: polarized mode and center mode. Value of information is determined by the significance of that information within the multimodal discourse in relation to the whole message. This significance is relative to the placement of different pieces with respect to one another. Such placement could be either polarized or centered. In the case of centered mode, nucleus of information would be at the center with ancillaries placed in circular space around it. There are some other arrangements where nucleus of information will be at the center with ancillaries on its right and left. In the case where the information is polarized using top-bottom arrangement, top side would be 'ideal' whereas bottom side would be 'real.' If the structure of the composition is from left to right horizontally, then the 'Given' part will appear on the left side, and this is something the viewer is aware of. The next part is called "New," and this is something the viewer is unaware of, and it creates problems for him/her. There is one more thing that comes in the case of polarized compositions, where there is something central in the form of "Mediator."

Framing Device: This type identifies the degree of association or dissociation between the verbal and the visual components. Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) define framing as the visual difference between the various parts of an image through the use of several framing techniques such as lines and spaces among others. The framing process ensures that the one element is differentiated from the other. The framing technique is a technique that links the interactive and the representational meanings together according to Sotoian (2015). It is argued by the author that such a link can either be made or broken through the use of frames, shape discontinuity, and space between the elements.

Salience: It is one of the aspects of visual design which suggests the level of attractiveness of any of the elements in the composition depending on the size of the element, its position in the foreground, color, tonality, interaction between the element and other elements in the composition, the clarity of focus and other things as mentioned by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006). It is also the emphasis of some particular thing which can be done in many ways including through the use of the font size, color, repetition and positioning and many more. This helps them in judging the relative importance of different elements. The saliency is based upon the size, color contrast, tonality and clarity of focus. The first one of salience indicators is size. Large objects will be more salient compared to smaller objects. Focussing is the second salience indicator. Therefore, objects that are more salient are more focussed compared to others that cannot be easily seen. The third salience indicator is tonal contrast. The white spaces, for instance, are framed in black so as to emphasize the importance of the tonal spaces. The fourth salience indicator is the color contrast. Contrast of bright colors against the softer colors.

Foregrounding

Foregrounding, which is a translation of the concept that was noticed first by Mukařovský (1964) in what he called *aktualisace*, pertains to distinctive features of the text that in one way or another are able to set itself apart from the context in which it occurs (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010). Indeed, in texts there are distinct features or aspects that are distinctively unique from other features or aspects in the text. These are usually sounds, words, phrases or even clauses, as asserted by Jeffries & McIntyre (2010). What is stated in the theory of foregrounding is that there are distinct sounds, words, phrases and/or clauses in texts that are distinct from other elements in the same texts or even linguistic norms and thereby making them stand out. Furthermore, it is pertinent to highlight that the salient features of a text are memorable and intelligible.

Poetic language is marked by a departure from the linguistic standards and a distinct use of the language. The poetic language is used in order to offer an unexpected and vivid understanding of the language that is used to challenge the habitual understanding of things and in order to utilize the language aesthetically (Wales, 2011). According to Wales (2011), the term foregrounding refers to the stressing of the sign of the language against the norms of the ordinary language. This is what foregrounding as a departure from the language standard refers to.

Fore-grounding is explained by Kamalu (2018) as the use of language and medium, which are rare and which stand out in the process of perception. Foregrounding is defined as the use of language that becomes salient in interpretation. According to Simpson (2014), foregrounding is some pattern in the text, which is purposefully used for aesthetic purposes. From this definition, it becomes clear that foregrounding is a stylistic device that is mostly used in literature. Moreover, the formalists state that the purpose of literature is to foreground its medium. Besides, defamiliarization (or

alienation of the familiar) is strongly associated with foregrounding. According to Norgaard, Montoro and Busse (2010), foregrounding is an important tool of defamiliarization. As Kamalu (2108) explains, defamiliarization in textual composition can be reached through fore-grounding and enables seeing the familiar in a new light.

Two forms of foregrounding exist; one of them is linguistic deviation while the other is linguistic parallelism. The characteristics of linguistic deviation are the presence of irregularity in language that is unexpected and makes it foregrounded on account of the fact that such irregularities in the language reader are unexpected (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010). The characteristics of linguistic deviation are the use of language that is not common and which is alien to the reader. Deviation of language, as noted by Kamalu (2018), violates rules and conventions; it is a situation whereby a poet deviates from the conventional use of language to arouse the reader from clichés. Linguistic deviation is a very important concept in foregrounding. According to Simpson (2014), foregrounding is a situation whereby there is stylistic distortion owing to deviation in the text or emphasizing of the text through repetition and/or parallelism. Foregrounding could happen in two forms; the first one is foregrounding through deviation from norms and the second form of foregrounding is foregrounding through the more of the same thing. The primary aspect of foregrounding is deviation. The word deviation is derived from the concept of straying away from the norm; deviation could occur from the linguistic norms. Deviation occurs at lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological and graphological levels. There are two forms of deviation; external deviation and internal deviation. Another type of foregrounding is parallelism that results in the creation of foregrounding effects. Parallelism is characterized by repeating patterns. Parallelism repeats linguistic structures hence creating foregrounding effects in texts. Foregrounding takes place in texts through the repetition of structures. Excessive frequency (Wales, 2011) is an outcome of the breach of the parallelism principle. Parallelism occurs in different levels of language such as lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological and graphological levels. As defined by Fabb (1997), parallelism is “sameness” of two parts of a text in structure or semantics as per Kamalu (2018). In this connection, the structure means the sameness of structures which include syntax, morphology and phonology. Semantics is the sameness in meaning of two words or texts.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Datum 1



The data above is gotten from [pulsenigeria247](#) and it depicts a protester with his message to the government. Using Kress and van Leeuwen metafunction to analyse the data. The image is non-transactional, that is, it involves only one participant even though the image depicts other participants at the background but the focus is on the participant with the placard and this participant can be referred to as the superordinate participant. The process in the image is conceptual process due to the absence of vector, the image is symbolic because the message on the placard is "STOP KILLING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW" the participant in the image is assumed to be a youth and the youth are considered to be leaders of tomorrow. So, the participant pleaded that the killing of youth should stop in the country which is also symbolised as the colour of the Nigerian flag as the background of the placard. The main focus of this analysis is on the placard, so little analysis will be done on the relationship between participants and viewers, the image offers information to the viewer because there is absence of gaze between participants and viewers. From the point of view, the viewer is held superior because it the image is presented from a frontal point of view so that view can read the inscription on the placard clearly, the main focus is the information contained in the placard. Colour is used to symbolise different information in this placard, the first is the use of Green, White and Green which is the colour of the flag of the country, "Stop" is depicted in red, according to Louise Myers red give different information some is rage and danger, from the placard "stop" is depicted in red to pass an information to the government that there is danger if all youth in the country are killed who then will rule the nation and the youths are angry at this killings. Also "killing" is in white but with red edges, white means neutrality. "Leaders" is in green, green means according to Louise Myers fresh and natural that is leaders is depicted in green to communicate an idea to the viewers and "tomorrow" is in black, colour black means power and sophistication. From the background of the image looking at other participants in image, the context of this image is from the protest. The placard is made central in the image which is all attention is on the placard in the image.

Stylistic Elements

Certain elements are foregrounded in the image to signify a certain idea or pass certain information to viewer. The size of the words in the placards are foregrounded which simply tells the style of the placard, the size of the words in the placards is for the purpose of emphasis. The use of colour for each word is foregrounded too, this is for the purpose of emphasis. The letter 'O' in "stop" is foregrounded, a line crossed the letter which can be said to have a significance. Lastly, the use of upper case letters in the placard which has a significance.

Datum 2



The data is gotten from Urbanyooba on Instagram and it boldly depicts a message for the government during the protest, this image is analysed using Social semiotic theory by Kress and van Leeuwen. This data has zero participants and no vector is deduced from the image, therefore, it is a conceptual process, this image presents a concept to the viewer. The concept presented is that youths are not criminal so they should not be treated like one. The image symbolises an idea, the inscription on the placard is "YOUNG NOT CRIMINAL" that is, being a criminal doesn't have to do with a age that even adults and aged people can still involve in crime. The image offers an information to the viewer that young people should not be treated like criminal which is one of the reasons, the youths called for the disbandment of SARS. The image has no participants so it has no gaze. From this point of view, viewers are held superior because the message on the placard is the call for attention. Colour is another element that will be analysed, the message is placed on a white background. "Young" is a mix of colour ranging from red, black and green which all gives different meaning, "not" is in red colour which means danger and "criminal" in black. The message is vivid and depicted in the centre of the image. Attention is drawn to the image with the size of words, background, colour and the value. The image is within a single frame.

Stylistic Elements

The style of the placard is analysed using Foregrounding, certain elements are foregrounded in the placard. "Young" is in quote which is significant or for the purpose of emphasis. The size of the word in the placard is foregrounded which is for the purpose of emphasis.

Datum 3



This datum is extracted from BBC facebook handle and it sends a message to the Nigerian Police and Government. The image contains different participants but the main focus is on the placard depicted in the image. There is absence of vector in the image making the image a conceptual process, the image represents a concept that there won't be a future for the nation if the youth are all dead that is the future of the nation depends on the youths. The image symbolises an idea that the youth are the future of the nation, that is if the youths are dead then the future of the nation is dead.

too. There is absence of eye contact in the image making the image to offer a piece of information to the viewer, from the point of view of the placard, viewers are superior that is the central position of the placard places all the attention on the information embedded in the placard. The information in the placard is placed against a yellow background, the colour of the letters depicts a certain information about the placard. Attention is drawn to the image with the size of words, background, colour and the value of the information.

Stylistic Elements

Certain elements in the placard are foregrounded, the use of upper case letters in the placard is used for the purpose of emphasis. The size of 'Future', 'Nation' and 'Dead' in the placard is used to create a special meaning to the viewer similarly the use of exclamation mark in the placard is used for the purpose of emphasis. Letter 'N' is foregrounded in 'Can't and Nation' this is used to symbolise an idea or for special usage.

Datum 4



This datum is extracted from Arise news and it is used in remembrance of the one those that lost their lives during the protest at Lekki toll gate. Using Kress and van Leeuwen Social Semiotic theory to analyse this image, the image is non transactional because the main focus of this image is the placard held in the datum. There is absence of vector in the image making the image a conceptual process, the image represents a concept that twentieth of October, 2020 was a never forget day for Nigerian youths that protested against SARS this symbolise that the experience on this date is never forgotten. This datum offers an information to the viewers and viewers are held superior because the placard is at the centre of the image. On this day, it was reported that the Nigerian army shot at armless Nigerian youths that protested against SARS at Lekki toll gate resulting to this experience not easy to let go for Nigerians because annually they celebrate the remembrance of lives lost on this date making the information truthful. The image is in a single frame, the placard has a white background and the colour red was used to design 20.10.20 which is used to signify that this day was a bloody day and the size is used to attract the attention of the viewers.

Stylistic Elements

In this placard, different elements are foregrounded for the purpose of emphasis and attracting the attention of the viewers. The size of 20.10.20 is larger than other words in the placard is used to create a special effect on the placard also the use of upper case letters in 'WE NEVER FORGET' is foregrounded for emphasis purpose. The colour of the date is different from other elements in the placard, which is used to signify the event that happened on this day

Datum 5



This image is gotten from Human rights watch and it is used to communicate to the Nigerian government that the police unit called SARS are being inhuman and killing the Nigerian citizens which is why the government should scrap out this police unit. From the representational metafunction, there are several participants but they are not the focus of this study but the placard, therefore there is absence of vector in the image making the image a conceptual process, the image represents a concept that Nigerian citizens are Informing the government that they should bring an end to the police unit called SARS because they are killing the youth. The image symbolises that the youth are tired of the pain and agony caused by SARS, this datum offers this information to the viewers that comes across this image. The placard is the main focus of the image because it is placed in the centre of the image because the information contained in the placard is important. The composition of the placard can be said to simple because it is in black and white format, white background and the words are written in black, which is to make the message bold enough for viewers to read and comprehend, the size of the phrase 'stop killing us!' is to draw the attention of the viewer to the core information in the placard.

Stylistic Elements

Certain elements in this placard are foregrounded, unusual use of upper case letters in 'STOP KILLING US', other words are in lower case but this phrase is all written in upper case which is show the pain of the youths, the case of parallelism in ' #endsars, #endpolice brutality' the same idea is repeated in both sequence, SARS are brutalising the youth, this is used for significance purpose or for emphasis.

Findings

In the analysis, it was discovered that placards on Endsars protest are presented with a combination of several modes such as text, colour, and images. These modes serve the purpose of creating meaning in an effective way, and this can be proved in the display of the placards selected for analysis. In the analysis, the textual information is important in the placards because it informs the audience about certain information, which is the role of placards. Textual information in the placards and this information help in the analysis of the study because the linguistic resource is critically examined in the analysis. For example,

Colour is another non-linguistic resource which is greatly used in the data, and this helps in the analytical study because colour mixture helps in meaning-making, and this could also be seen in linguistic resources. Using datum two, for example, the message is presented using different colours to communicate to the viewers, where "Young" is a mix of colours ranging from red, black, and green, which all give different meanings; "not" is in red colour and "criminal" in black. Also, datum four, where the colour red was used to design which is used to signify a bloody date. In datum three, Colour is used to symbolise different information in this placard; the first is the use of Green, White and Green which is the colour of the flag of the country; the message is presented in red, which symbolises different information.

Stylistic tools play a crucial role in making meaning in selected Endsars placards. One of the most notable tools is the use of Uppercase letters and bold, which is used to convey textual information in a visually striking manner; it is typically designed with bold colours and eye-catching fonts to draw attention to their textual information. Foregrounding refers to the deliberate manipulation of language or imagery to emphasize certain elements within a text, this technique helps highlight key information in the placards. Stylistics tools draws attention to specific words in the placards. Stylistic tools enhance communication by conveying messages effectively. These tools help in capturing attention and making meaning across in selected placards.

Similarly, it was discovered in the analysis that there are intended meaning embedded in the placards and these meanings were revealed through the multimodal and stylistics elements as seen in the analysis. These are tools that help in discourse analysis and this point is deeply proved in the analytical study of this research because without these tools some meaning embedded in the placards cannot be revealed.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that several modes are used in placards for meaning-making, and the role of language in placards cannot be overemphasized. Placards are written or printed words on cardboard or paper informing or educating people. Moreover, this study perceives Multimodal and Stylistics as linguistic fields that reveal hidden meaning in semiotic resources. Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Stylistics in this study are used to capture the meaning and style of placards, which serve as means of information to the people. The paper has been able to show the interpretation attached to each selected placard, especially the non-linguistic resource of each, which has been kept unrevealed to the viewers. As observed in the analysis, each of the placards has a different message to inform the viewers, and all are achieved through a combination of different modes in meaning-making.

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