

The Generic Structure Potential of Printed Advertisements: A Multi-Semiotic Analysis of Selected Nollywood Film Advertisement Posters

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Abstract

As complex forms of visual communication primarily employed to create awareness about movies, posters consist of highly interpretative systems of modes of multimodal communication aimed at encouraging patronage. This study, therefore, investigates how these multimodal elements are embedded in film posters and how they communicate with the audience. Yuen's (2004) Generic Structure Potential and Royce's (1998) Ideational Intersemiotic Complementarity frameworks serve to unearth the visual and linguistic semiotic resources and their interaction in film advertisement posters. The data comprises five selected Nollywood film advertisement posters accessed through online platforms. Findings reveal that visual modes are more prominent and frequently employed in the advertisement posters than the linguistic modes. However, the combination of the visual and the linguistic modes offers a complementary relationship in communicating and persuading viewers to patronage. The study concludes that the semiotic resources deployed in the posters about the shared knowledge of the image producers and prospective viewers, as well as the Nigerian socio-cultural context, all work concurrently to positively affect the sales and marketing of the films.

Keywords: *nollywood; advertisement; ideational intersemiosis; generic structure*

Introduction

The Nigerian film industry has provided an opportunity for the world to view and appreciate the socio-cultural values and experiences of Nigerians. Nigerian films are veritable means for socialising, informing, educating and also empowering the human resources of Nigeria. Nigerian film producers express their didactic and informative intentions via Nigerian indigenous languages, Nigerian Pidgin and Nigerian English.

The popularity of the Nigerian film industry, or Nollywood, can be traced to the new cinema culture in the country, which is a paradigm shift from the traditional cinema that features live presentation to the production of recorded films in a new theatre. Nollywood films are broadcast in cinemas nationwide and are available online for download by prospective subscribers. A prominent station that serves as a platform to showcase Nollywood films internationally is African Magic DSTV/GOTV, where there are several channels tagged under different names such as African Magic Yoruba, Showcase, Epic, Igbo, Hausa and many more to reach out to different audiences, particularly in terms of religion and ethnicity. In addition

to YouTube, a new online platform called NETFLIX has emerged, which features Nollywood for the consumption of local and international subscribers.

A major tool used by film producers to increase the patronage of their films is film publicity, which plays a central role in the movie production process. Essentially, Nollywood films are produced from time to time. Hence, to sustain themselves in the rather flooded and competitive market, Nollywood film producers and marketers use different publicity techniques. One of these publicity techniques employed in achieving their desired objectives is film posters. Anyawu (2015, p.130) expresses that “Nollywood film posters, which are subsumed under the print media, are the strongest outlets of movie publicity in Nigeria. They are considered highly effective because they usually get their message across to the target audience.”

Nollywood film poster designers employ a plethora of semiotic resources on film posters, which often reflect the Nigerian socio-cultural context. There is a need to interpret these highly context-based semiotic modes employed in getting the attention of the viewers. Thus, this study aims to uncover how these semiotic resources reveal the intention of the film producers and how they communicate with the audience. This research is a different from other previous studies on film posters such as Sahid, Bokil, and Dharmalingam’s (2015) Title design in Bollywood film posters: a semiotic analysis, Ihekwoaba and Ihekwoaba’s (2024), Nollywood and Hollywood Posters: A comparative analysis of design principles, and Anurudu, Igboanugo, & Onu’s (2023) multimodal discourse analysis of selected Nollywood posters. These existing studies focus only on the visual resources of film posters or their aesthetic design. This current study investigates how various modalities and semiotic tools are organised and presented concurrently to create meaning in Nollywood film posters. In other words, it creates another perspective for the interpretation of texts by examining semiotic resources that cater for the overall meanings in Nollywood film advertisement posters, how the meanings from the posters can be derived, the intention of the advertisers, the structure of the posters, and how they aid meaning recovery.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Relevant scholarly works have been undertaken on the Generic structure and multimodal discourse analysis of various genres, including films, film posters and Nollywood film poster advertisements in linguistic scholarship. Some of these previous studies are hereby examined:

Nugroho’s (2009) research titled ‘Generic structure potential of print advertisement of Elizabeth Arden’s Intervene: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis’, utilised the systemic

functional linguistic and multimodal discourse analysis approaches to analyse text and images in print media advertisement. The study adopted Yuen's (2004) model of the generic structure of print advertisement. The study revealed that visual and linguistic items in the advertisement are coherently placed and they complement and support one another to project a positive image to attract the viewers to patronise the advertised product. The study fails to properly account for meaning derivation from textual resources using systemic functional linguistics.

Dwelling on 'Narrative Music, Visuals and Meaning in Film', Wingstedt and Jan Berg (2010) revealed the intermodal relationships of music and image in short scenes of two films. Using Halliday's (1978) metafunctions of communication, the study brought to light the fact that visual expressions unite to form multimodal statements where the whole is different from the sum of the parts.

Another earlier study related to this current one is Febrianti's (2013) work on 'Multimodal discourse analysis in Indonesian print advertisements'. The essence of the work was to examine how the multimodality of semiotic resources in several Indonesian print advertisements expresses meanings and how the verbal elements strengthen the meaning of the visual elements and vice versa. The work observed that print advertisements consist of a synergic collaboration of verbal texts and visual images that carry with them the manifestation of culture. The focus of the study was on the interaction between linguistic and visual semiotic resources. The limitation of this work is that adequate attention is not given to the visual and linguistic multimodes in their independent forms before explaining the interaction of the two resources.

'A multimodal discourse analysis of movie posters' by Chen (2013) is another previous study. In this study, the researcher expressed that the theory of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), which, to a considerable extent, is theoretically based on Systemic-Functional Linguistics, solves the problem of comprehensively accounting for the integrative meaning generated by the interaction of different modes in movie poster discourse. To this end, the study attempted to set up a model for MDA of movie posters based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996/2006) grammar of visual design for the analysis of visual and linguistic modes in movie posters. Though this previous study explored multimodal discourse analysis of movie posters, its tenet is different from the current study. The profundity of this current study and the theoretical model adapted make the difference from the previous study. In essence, the scope of the current study is not limited to film titles, images and tag lines but also on other paramount linguistic features of film posters, such as the cast and call-and-visit information. The analytical

framework of this current study surpasses the sole reliance on Yuen's generic structure of printed advertisements. It also considers intersemiotic relations between visual and textual semiotic modes.

The exploration of film posters in the context of Nollywood is contained in Anurudu, Igboanugo, & Onu's (2023) research titled 'multimodal discourse analysis of selected Nollywood posters'. This study investigated the application of multimodal features to construct meaning in movie posters using Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of visual grammar. The study revealed that modality arrangement is deliberately used by movie producers to achieve visual impressions that promote semantics of visual design.

'A Study of Multimodal Communicative Acts in Selected Nollywood Film Advertisement Posters' was a study conducted by Nurudeen (2004). The study reflected on the pragmatic functions of Nollywood film posters' advertising language (text and image) as a form of language in action and intention in the situational context of users. The findings from the analysis of the data revealed that communicative acts of informing, stating, expressing, describing and asserting are frequently demonstrated via visual and verbal modes. These multimodal communicative acts demonstrate the persuasive illocutionary and communicative intentions of Nollywood film advertisers, which are primarily aimed at influencing viewers to patronise the films. In contrast to this existing study, this current study extends scholarship on multimodal analysis of film posters as it investigates not only the pragmatic functions of the data via the intention of the advertisers and social context, but also the structure of the posters in terms of the visual and linguistic semiotic resources and how they interact and aid meaning recovery.

Conceptual and Theoretical Thrusts

Multimodality/ Multimodal Discourse Analysis: A Purview

Multimodality accounts for multiple meanings conveyed via different modes in discourses. Norris (2002) notes that most of the studies on discourse analysis problematically allot primacy to language over other modes of communication, especially in identity construction and that such an approach may result in individual identity being analysed in an obscured way. The viability of all modes for communication of meaning in discourses is that all modes of communication are "of equal significance in representation and communication as all modes have potential for meaning" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 104).

Baldry (2000, p. ix) observes that humans live in a multimodal world; thus, they experience multimodality and, in turn, make meaning of their experiences multimodally. Also, Machin (2007), cited in Liu (2013, p.1), opines that multimodality explains the grammar of visual communication that is used by image producers. It is an analysis of the rules and principles that allow viewers to understand the meaning potential of relative placement of elements, framing, salience, proximity, colour saturations, styles of typeface, etc. Thus, from the purview, the concept of multimodality is indeed a useful benchmark to assess the varied ways of meaning-making in discourse. The application of a multimodal approach for this study, therefore, is informed by the nature of the data studied, as the posters are examples of the complex linguistic advertisement media that use multimodal features which are reflectors of both international and national worldviews.

Social Semiotic Approach to Multimodal Discourse Analysis

The theoretical foundation of the social semiotic approach to multimodal discourse analysis is derived from the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) view of language as a social semiotic or social phenomenon (Halliday 1978, 1985). Halliday (1978) states, “that semiotics is a process of making meanings by selecting from the total set of options that constitute what can be meant.” Therefore, O’Halloran (2008, p. 444) postulates that “the systemic functional approach or social semiotic to multimodal discourse analysis is concerned with the theory and practice of analysing meaning arising from the use of multiple semiotic resources from discourses which range from written, printed and electronic texts to material lived-in reality.” O’Toole (1994) and Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) laid the foundation for MDA from the systemic functional perspective. More scholars have since used the theoretical principles of SF theory in the analysis of other semiotic systems other than language and or their interrelationship, to name a few, are: Royce (1998), Yuen (2004), Martinec (1996), Lim (2004), van Leeuwen (1999) among others.

The Generic Structure Potential of Printed Advertisements

The Generic structure potential accounts for the multi-semiotic interaction between visual images and linguistic text in print advertisements. The theory hinges on Hasan’s (1996) insufficiency in the generic structure for an advertisement. Yuen (2004, p.176) argues that “Hasan (1996) establishes 'Capture^Focus^Justification' as the generic structure for advertisements, but my research has produced a GSP which differs in terms of the degree of detail and the ability to capture the complexity of intersemiosis in advertisements”. The GSP is classified into two components: the visual and the linguistic (semiotic resources working

together in projecting meaning). The visual components consist of the Lead, the Display and the Emblem, while the linguistic entail Announcement Enhancer, Emblem, Tag and Call-and-visit information. With this system, print advertisement is considered as a single united commodity that is analysed by deconstructing its elements.

The Lead is the most salient image because it is the main focus of attention that attracts the viewers to the advertisement. It consists of lesser elements termed as the Locus of Attention (LoA), which is the most salient item or items in the Lead; and the Complementary Locus of Attention (Comp.LoA), that is, the background or other visuals, which are less salient than the LoA but complement the LoA. The second element, the Display, demonstrates the characteristics of the Lead, which may be Explicit/Implicit and Congruent /Incongruent. An explicit lead explains if the picture is about a tangible object, while an implicit lead details if the intangible product or service is given tangible form through another medium. In addition, the Lead is called Congruent if the product is not realised through symbolism and incongruent if the product is realised through symbolism. The third element in the visual image component is the Emblem, which is usually the company's logo.

The second aspect of GSP is the linguistic aspect, which is interpreted by several elements such as: Emblem, Announcement, Enhancer, Tag, and Call-and-Visit Information. Emblem in the linguistic component comprises the linguistic slogan, which may accompany the visual Emblem (the company's logo). Announcement is the most salient linguistic text in the advertisement, and based on the level of salience, Announcement consists of both the primary and Secondary Announcements, which are deployed to capture the readers' attention to the advertised product. Furthermore, the Enhancer is the part of the advertisement that explains further the Announcement, and it is usually in smaller fonts and the form of a paragraph. A tag is an additional phrase or clause to further complement the visual. Lastly, Call-and-Visit Information is usually evident and depicted in small prints that are non-salient and contain contact information as to where, how and when the products and services are available to consumers. This representation is thus captured by Yuen (2004, p.163) as:

Lead^ (Display) ^Emblem^ (Announcement)^ (Enhancer)^ (Tag)^ (Call-and-Visit Information)

Yuen (2004) adopts Halliday and Hasan's (1989) notations for generic structure in texts by making use of the symbols above to express the total range of obligatory and optional elements, where the caret sign “^” means “followed by” and the round brackets () means that the elements

inside them are optional. She maintains that the obligatory elements that always occur in print advertisement are the lead and the emblem, while others are optional.

Ideational Intersemiotic Complementarity

The centrality of Intersemiotic Complementarity is how visual and verbal modes co-occur in multimodal texts to complement each other semantically to produce a single textual phenomenon, which can be realised through ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (Royce 1998, p. 26). The ideational intersemiotic meaning is the focus for this study, and it is actualised when both linguistic and visual modes are related lexico-semantically through intersemiotic sense relations: repetition- identical experiential meaning, synonymy- same or similar experiential meaning, antonymy- opposite experiential meaning, hyponymy- the relationship between a general class of something and its sub class, Meronymy -the relationship between part and whole, and collocation- expectancy or high probability to co-occur in a field or subject area.

The study employs Yuen's (2004) generic structure of printed advertisements and Royce's (1998) intersemiotic complementarity as theoretical underpinnings for the analysis of the data because of their ability to unravel the meanings communicated via the visual and linguistic semiotic resources embedded in the advertisement posters and their interrelationship. The graphological features that characterise the linguistic modes are also identified.

Methodology

The data for the study is qualitative in nature as it accounts for the description and interpretation of data according to use in context. Five randomly selected Nollywood movie posters are employed in the study. The posters were retrieved online and they comprise English-speaking medium Nollywood film advertisement posters produced between 2016 and 2024.

While the film posters examined in this study were accessed through online platforms, they were originally conceptualised and designed for dissemination in print formats, such as posters, billboards, flyers, DVD sleeves and promotional materials displayed in physical spaces. As such, they conform to the communicative conventions and multimodal features characteristics of printed advertisements. The decision to retrieve the posters digitally was driven by considerations of accessibility and archival availability; however, the mode of access does not compromise their classification as print media. Accordingly, the analysis remains consistent with Yuen's (2004) Generic structure potential framework, which is specifically concerned

with the structural and semiotic organisation of advertisements intended for print-based communication.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Generic Structure Potential of the Advertisement Posters

Datum 1

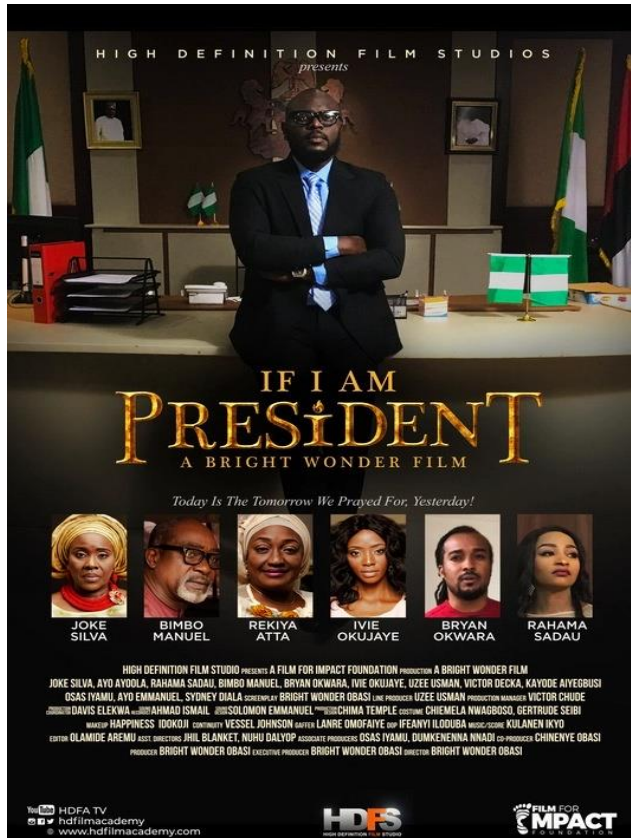


Figure 1: *If I am President* Film Poster

The poster above is an advertisement for a drama movie produced in 2018 by Bright Wonder Abasi, Don Omope, Zulu Oyibo and Ijeoma Agukoronye.

The poster delves into the political terrain of Nigeria. The LoA is a man who has a political ambition to be the president of a country. The target country is easily recognised through the visually projected flags/ Com. LoA is embedded in the rich and natural background. His young look contrasts with what is familiar or predominant in Nigerian politics in terms of filling important political positions, especially the seat of president. The subordinate clause / SA / title 'if I am president' is a device aimed at making viewers seek the complete part of the sentence. It also cohabits with the visualised Lead to bring about a change of age restriction and

corruption concerning Nigerian governance. Hence, the lead is a young adult who represents the word 'today' in the SA. He also wears a stern and determined look and his arms are folded across his chest. The facial expression communicates to change in the face of polity or a strong reaction to the perceived undesirable situation. Also, his cooperate attire implies the modernised sense of aura and change he aspires to bring to the presidential seat.

The eyelines of the male lead are connected with viewers to seek their validation to take up the change he is promising and experience positivity from his intended governance, as against their previous experiences. The Comp. LoA pictured in small frames occupy the bottom position and are also placed frontally, except the secondary lead on the left side of the poster, who is slightly positioned obliquely. Their frontal positioning seeks to reinforce the need for viewers' engagement projected by the prominent lead and contributes to the storyline.

Poster 2



Figure 2: *Omo Ghetto: The Saga* film poster

'Omo Ghetto' is a comedy/action film produced in 2020 by Funke Akindele and JJC Skillz.

The visual interpretation of the image is that of a woman who seems to be replicated in two different forms. The resemblance is uncanny, which leaves viewers to speculate whether the leads are twins or just a person with a dual identity living in two distinct worlds/ playing two contrasting roles. The mystery will be solved when viewers see the film. The gaze of the leads in both the left and right positions is fixated on an unknown phenomenon. They appear to be lost in their worlds. Thus, their emotional state is unknown to viewers. The distinct appearance

of the leads is intriguing, as they appear as people from different social classes. On the left axis, the lead appears as a rogue, looking unkempt while puffing marijuana. In contrast, the right position depicts a sophisticated and classy woman. The PA 'Omo Ghetto' lends credence to the visual representation of the lead on the left axis as the term 'Omo ghetto' in Yoruba depicts a street trouble maker from the slum. The left image can thus be said to be explicitly congruent because she is foregrounded in a slum setting, also the textual SA/ tagline 'two worlds', different lives' connotes with the split image of two people with different lifestyles. These semiotic resources all work concurrently to explain the theme of the movie.

In essence, the leads are visualised as the ideal, where they form the nucleus of the poster, which implies that the movie focuses on them and emphasises their centrality in the meaning-making process. The leads are also accentuated through their size and sharpness as they are projected sharply against the admixture of backgrounds. The real facts about them are centralised as well as incorporated below the image. These real facts encapsulate the textual information consisting of the title, tagline, and enhancer in upper case lettering and vibrant mixed colours to promote cohesion. The combination of the ideal and real information in Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) terms is to amplify the message the image producer intends to communicate to the audience.

Poster 3



Figure 3: *Tiwa's Baggage* film poster

Figure 2 above is a drama movie produced in 2017 by Biodun Stephen. The leads in the poster are the image of a female's hands and the tattered baggage held in her hands. The image of the baggage is made salient to create a strong visual effect on the viewers. The legs of the lead are also made salient to enhance visual meaning, and they are the confluence of attention. The central idea or linguistic equivalence is embedded in the PA. These semiotic resources cohere ideationally to convey an intended message to the audience. Essentially, the lead is “figuratively an effervescence of meaning” (Yuen 2004, p.178). The meaning communicated through them could be interpreted in two ways or have two meaning potentials. In other words, the meaning could be physical denotative meaning of the semantic scope of the film plot, about a lady’s (Tiwa) baggage or it could convey metaphorical sense, that is, the old and tattered baggage held by the visual lead, might be a visual metaphor implying that there are negative experiences from her past that endanger her present and probably her future. The salience of the image of the baggage may imply the abundance or weight of these negative experiences. The intended meaning of the visual composition will be made available to viewers when they see the movie.

Furthermore, the linguistic element of the secondary announcement supports the PA in informing the audience that the film is owned by the popular Biodun Stephen. The information is reiterated and explained further in the enhancement at the bottom of the poster that the movie was produced, directed and written by her. The tags constitute the cast at the top of the poster, while the linguistic emblem encapsulating ‘shutter speed project/ Rok studios’ further bestows the identity of the film advertisement and validates it.

The analysis of colour in the poster reveals that yellow is generously employed in the poster, especially in the textual elements. It also illuminates the greenery of the background in which the leads are foregrounded. Yellow is associated with freshness and happiness. It brings optimism to the negativity or pitiable experiences the baggage carrier may undergo, thereby informing the viewers that the film will have a happy ending. Also, the purple colour of Tiwa’s skirt or gown symbolises mystery. Due to the partial representation of her on the poster, viewers are unable to observe every detail about her. Purple also signifies mystery to the thematic focus of the film, which is derived from the different interpretations arising from it.

Poster 4



Figure 4: *Battle on Buka Street* film Poster

'Battle on Buka Street' is a comedy movie produced in 2022 by Funke Akindele and Network and Film One Studios.

The poster displays seven leads who are the nucleus of attention. Six of the leads are dualised. The parties appear confrontational towards each other. Their facial expressions are of rage, anger and disdain towards their opponents, which suggests conflict between the two parties. Thus, their eyelids are connected, where the viewers are mere observers wanting to learn from their storyline and unravel the mystery behind the conflict. Centralised in the poster frame and positioned before the audience is an elderly male lead dressed in traditional Igbo attire. His central and frontal placements indicate that his character is significant in the film narrative as he serves as a balance that holds off the sides from all-out war, or serves as an intermediary between the two parties. His eyes are also directed at viewers outside of the picture frame to engage and demand that they immerse themselves in the storyline and assist him in solving the dispute.

There is a predominant use of red hue to indicate the intensity of the conflict. The cap of the elderly male lead is red, and the attire of the female lead in the foreground is also red. Similarly, the PA, 'Battle On Buka Street' reiterated in the background, as well as the red pots immersed on both ends of the PA. Red can also be discerned on the visible pair of earrings on the second female lead in the foreground.

The fire emanating beneath the pots on either side of the title is symbolic of anger, danger and aggression, which buttresses the thematic focus of the film. The textual information 'Battle On 'Buka Street' supports the pictorial cues and explains the activities of the leads about the film setting.

The image is also implicitly congruent as the words 'battle' and 'gbas gbas' are symbolic of the emotional states of the leads. The image of the Comp. LoA/ image of the pots is also symbolic as they relate to the word 'buka.' 'Buka' is a Nigerian term for roadside restaurants selling cooked foods at affordable prices. This congruent image explains that the film may be built on food or a theme that deals with cooking. The colour of the pots also implies that the food or the act of cooking may cause mayhem.

Poster 5



Figure 5: *Japa!* film poster

'Japa!' is a comedy film produced in 2024 by Inkblot.

The leads in the poster above are foregrounded against the decontextualised background as important semiotic cues. This Comp.LoA/near-empty and blurry background serve to create mystery in the curious minds of the audience. The leads are five numbers where the male lead clad in a blue shirt, black trousers and tie achieves more salience than the rest of the participants because of his central position and the projection of his entire figure except for one of his legs drawn backwards. His facial expression is one of awe and excitement towards achieving a

certain goal, which is in contrast with those of the other leads. Hence, the level of salience in correlation with his distinct facial gesture emphasises him as a more prominent character in the movie than other characters. It also indicates the extent of roles the leads play or their importance in the movie narrative.

The leads are also positioned frontally and their gaze is directed at the audience. These two visual semiotic cues enforce a connection between them and the viewers by directly addressing the viewers to actively engage with them and the advertisement.

The PA/ 'Japa!' highlights the thematic focus of the film. It is more prominent than other linguistic modes because of the thematic function it performs, as well as attracting viewers to the locution being made. The graphological function of the exclamation mark is to further accentuate the thematic essence and seriousness of the title about the storyline and characters. The title has semantic significance. The term '*japa*' is a Nigerian slang derived from the Yoruba language. it means 'run', 'escape' or 'flee'. The term has become synonymous with the increased rate of Nigerians seeking greener pastures outside the Nigerian shores due to the perpetual economic crisis. Thus, the film resonates with the contemporary issue of mass migration in Nigeria.

The display of the leads is congruent because the visual action of the leads echoes the movie title / PA. 'Japa.' Similarly, the almost empty background embellished with wavy designs in yellow and green indicates people in the act of running to correlate with the film's subject. A visual/verbal complementary relationship is thus enacted in the visual composition.

The green colour selected energises the poster in communicating with the Nigerian populace, thereby giving the viewers a sense of belonging and identity as well as projecting the significance of the film theme and, by extension, Nollywood movies.

Visual-Verbal Ideational Intersemiotic Relations in the Advertisement Posters.

The visual modes coordinate and complement the verbal semiotic resources to express the integration of the meaning-bearing potentials of the film advertisement posters. Repetition is used in the advertisement posters to emphasise the significance of the ideas conveyed in the advertisements. In Fig. 1: *If I am President*, and Fig. 5, *Japa!*, for example, the tags representing the names of each of the cast have a semantic proposition to the image of the leads. The essence of name tagging below and above the leads in the posters is to further reveal, emphasise, or place meanings to their identity. In Fig. 3, *Tiwa's Baggage*, visual-verbal

reiteration is realised through the word baggage/ PA and the visual image of the baggage. Also, the word 'Tiwa's' in the PA is repeated in a partly shown or subjective representation of the carrier of the baggage as being her possession, which connotes a burden or negativity experienced by her.

Synonymous relationships are employed in the advertisement posters to communicate effectively the themes of the advertisements. The related semantic proposition is reflected in Fig. 1, *if I am president*, where the image of the lead in the title is synonymous with the word 'president' in the title. It is also observed in Fig. 2, *Omo Ghetto*, where the image of the lead on the left relates to the title. The tagline / PA also have a synonymous relationship with the combined visual image in the poster. In Fig. 4, *Battle on Buka Street*, the terms 'battle' and 'gbas gbos' (a Nigerian slang for dispute or heated verbal exchange between individuals) are synonymous with the facial expression of the leads.

Metonymy relation is evident in Fig. 4, *Battle on Buka Street*, pots are one of the vital utensils found in 'bukas' used for cooking. Thus, the image of the pots about the linguistic 'buka' offers a visual verbal complementary relationship.

The tool of collocation is employed by the producers of the image to support the centrality of the poster. Collocation can also be identified in Fig. 1, *if I am president*, where the visualised flags/ Comp. LoA and the PA/ 'if I am president' are collocates. National Flags are important emblems displayed in official settings, especially in political offices such as the office of the president.

The Use of Graphological Features in the Advertisement Posters

Graphology is a purely linguistic term and one of the levels of linguistic analysis. However, efforts have been made by scholars such as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), van Leeuwen (2005), and van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001) to incorporate graphological features in the study of multimodality as verbal semiotic resources are one of the different modes important in visual communication. Graphological features are based on lexical properties such as spelling, punctuation, typography, etc. When these graphological forms are violated, implied meanings are generated. In visual communication, image producers manipulate these grammatical features to communicate their intended meanings to the target audience or viewers. The graphological features characterising the primary announcement or centrality of the movie posters are considered for analysis.

The use of upper-case lettering is predominantly employed in the advertisement posters to lay emphasis on the semantics of the word and bring to the fore for the viewers, the locution of the image. For instance, in Fig. 2, the PA / *Omo ghetto*, imprinted in graphological combinations of bold letters and unusual fonts, which is a different graphological strategy to catch attention. The words are also accompanied by what looks like a thunder strike. This stylistic effect is not only for aesthetic purposes but to emphasise the movie title. Similarly, in Fig. 5, *Japa!*, the verbal anchorage is boldly written with an exclamation mark beneath the image of the leads to help focus viewers' attention to that particular section since it is not centralised. Also, the exclamation mark is used to depict the seriousness of the film's theme about the characters. Likewise, in Fig. 3, *Tiwa's baggage*, the lettering 'Tiwa's baggage' infused in yellow colour is similar in design to the image of the baggage to reiterate the significance of the idea.

In Fig. 1, *If I am President*, Fig. 4, *Battle on Buka street*, and Fig. 6, *The CEO*, the primary announcements are imprinted in upper case and bolded in white and yellow colours to emphasise that the poster advertisements centre on the various themes, thereby increasing the films' recall.

Findings

Yuen (2004) admits that Lead and Emblem are the only obligatory elements in printed advertisements; the analysis of the advertisement posters reveals that the announcement/film title is also an obligatory element. The linguistic texts/announcements in the posters are the verbal anchorages that signal the themes of the film advertised and draw viewers to the locution and other meaning-making parameters communicated in the posters. Also, the displays of most of the images in the posters are congruent, as they also represent the thematic focus of the film advertised. This is employed to further strengthen the visual-verbal relationship in the conveyance of meaning.

The study unravelled the significance of the semiotic resource of call-and-visit information in Nollywood advertisement posters in information retrieval for prospective film viewers. Nollywood image producers sometimes employ a multi-layered advertising strategy by tactically inscribing social media handles on film posters to direct prospective audiences to the source for more information through some available social networks. For instance, *If I am the president* contain YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and provide official web addresses of the movie/ production company to inform viewers that, available information is provided in the listed social media handles and websites. These social media icons also serve to further enhance the information provided by their linguistic counterparts. Other aspects of call and visit

information mostly occupy the bottom position of the poster advertisements and they contain information on the date and the venues where the films advertised will be available for viewing by prospective viewers

There is the presence of irregular patterning of the multimodal structure of the advertisement posters. This finding is supported by Yuen's (2004, pp. 174-176) submission that there are challenges in describing print media advertisements due to the regular alteration in advertisement design or disparity in design principles. The multimodes do not follow a uniform pattern, which is due to the intended requirements of the image designers or producers. For instance, the linguistic and visual emblems do not follow a uniform pattern. In some of the advertisement posters, they are independent communicative elements or units of information, while in others, they are subsumed in other semiotic elements, basically, the enhancer. For instance, in datum 1, *If I am president*, the linguistic emblem is further reiterated in the enhancer after being employed as an independent unit of communication.

The study reveals that visual semiotic resources are preponderant in the posters over the linguistic modes and the potency of the visual modes overwhelms their linguistic counterparts. For instance, some of the advertisement posters do not contain taglines or secondary announcements. Hence, less information is given by the verbal resources while more information is provided by the visual modes to arouse viewers' curiosity to see the movie advertised. This finding supports the heavy reliance on visual resources by the image producers in the encoding of messages in visual communication. However, the co-deployment of both the visual and linguistic resources, such as gaze, lettering, posture, colour, angle, icons, etc., is significant in communicating the intended intersemiotic meanings of the advertisers to the perception of the viewers and in turn convince them to patronise the movie advertised.

Kress (2010, p.79) maintains that a semiotic mode is a socially and culturally shaped resource for meaning making. In consonance, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.35) posit that semiotic modes are shaped by both the intrinsic characteristics and potentialities of the medium and by the requirements, histories and values of societies and their cultures. This is true of most of the poster advertisements. In communicating persuasive meanings, the semiotic resources draw attention to peculiar cultural, political, economic, and social issues in the Nigerian environment.

The findings from the study reiterate in the existing literature the significance of colour in visual communication. Colour has not only been used for aesthetic purposes to appeal to the

emotions of the viewers, but it has been employed ideationally in the advertisements to symbolise people, places, things and ideas. The meanings communicated are sometimes specific and paramount to the Nigerian socio-cultural milieu. This finding is canonical with Afolabi's (2011, p. 52) submission that “colours are the building blocks of visual communication because they have symbolic meanings associated with them which could depend on the culture and daily experience of the target audience.” Also, colour performs textual roles in advertisement posters to create coherence and framing between and among various multimodes elements embedded in the advertisements.

Conclusion

The findings from the study have revealed that visual modes are predominant and primary in the meaning-making process of Nollywood advertisement posters. Due to the tendency of visual modes to be easily read than linguistic modes, Nollywood image producers preponderantly employ them as major persuasive and communicative strategies to captivate the attention of the audience. The combination of both linguistic and visual modes of signification results in the expansion of meaning in the film advertisement posters. Furthermore, the immediate context of the prospective viewers is also an important tool used by the image producers in persuading the audience to achieve their intended goals. Thus, the semiotic resources deployed in the posters about the shared knowledge of the image producers and prospective viewers, as well as the Nigerian socio-cultural context, all work concurrently to positively affect the sales and marketing of the films.

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