

Nigerian Presidential Campaign Posters: A Social Semiotic Analysis

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Abstract

Previous studies on political discourse in Nigeria have focused on the general stylistic, pragmatics and semiotic features but have not significantly explored the combination of socio-semiotic and ideological construct resources in meaning negotiation. This study examines interpersonal function, discursive image and ideological resources used in the **Nigerian presidential campaign** posters to establish their joint roles in the negotiation of meaning. The study adopted aspects of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1987) and Gunter Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) Grammar of Visual Design. Twelve Nigerian presidential campaign posters were purposively selected for their richness in the use of multimodal resources to communicate political sensitive meaning. The data were subjected to socio-semiotic analysis. Interpersonal metafunctions are present in the verbal semiotic mode of the posters. The interpersonal indicates the representation of the politicians' social relation, evoking political-sensitive feelings, attitude and judgments by means of mood and modality. This mood manifests interrogative mood, imperative mood and declarative mood. Modality is revealed with the use of auxiliary verb. The visual language of the posters manifests different semiotic resources such as: size and sharp focus, information value, salience and framing in constructing representational, interactive and compositional meaning. Two political ideological constructs, connected to images, characterize the posters: continuity ideology and identity ideology. The Verbal and visual socio-semiotic modes deployed in the selected Presidential posters are powerful resources for accounting for meaning in political posters.

Keywords: Social semiotic, Campaign posters, Nigeria, Political ideology

Introduction

A political campaign is an organised effort which seeks to influence the decision-making progress within a specific group. The campaign message contains the ideas that the candidate wants to share with voters. It is targeted at those who agree with their ideas to support them when running for a political position. The message often consists of several talking points about policy issues and summarise the main ideas of the campaign which are repeated frequently in order to create a lasting impression with the voters. Most campaigns prefer to keep the message broad in order to attract the most potential voters (Boundless, 2016).

A poster, which includes both textual and graphic elements, is a temporary promotion of an idea, product, or event put up in a public space for mass consumption. Although posters may be either wholly graphical or textual, they are designed to be both eye-catching and informative. They are frequent tools of advertisers (particularly of events, musicians, and films), propagandists, protesters, and other groups trying to communicate a message.

The campaign poster is created and designed in various colours, materials, shapes, sizes and styles used to promote or support a specific type of campaign. Campaign posters are used by politicians, organizations, charities, business, etc., to campaign for a specific cause, reason or goal. It is used by politicians to work

on the emotions of the electorates. Creators of the campaign posters make sure the candidate's photograph is attractive and the words are appealing and emotive (Sharndama & Mohammed, 2013).

In politics, campaign advertising is the use of paid media (newspapers, radio, television, posters, etc.) to influence the decision made for and by groups. These are designed by political consultants and the campaign staff. The campaign poster is the use of an advertising campaign through the media to influence a political debate, and ultimately voters. In Nigeria, competing posters of different sizes and shapes on walls, billboards and at strategic locations in cities, towns and villages announce that election campaign is going on. The world over, it is a tradition in politics during election campaigns for politicians to use campaign posters to persuade the electorates to accept their political ideologies, thereby winning their votes. In addition to the beautifully designed photographs of the candidates, there are inscriptions such as the candidate's name and the position they are campaigning for on the posters. The posters communicate to the electorates about political candidates and their political missions and their ideologies.

Statement of the Research Problem

Previous studies on political discourse in Nigeria have focused on general stylistic, pragmatic and semiotic features. For instance, Sharndama & Mohammed (2013) examined the linguistic role in political campaign posters and slogans in Yola Metropolis of Adamawa state of Nigeria, using Crystal and Davy's (1985) Linguistic stylistic model. Lirola (2015) analysed the key political posters made for the campaigns of Irish political party, using Critical discourse approach and Van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor theory. Ajayi and Ajayi (2014) attempt a pragmatic analysis of political texts in political posters and Jingle(s) of gubernatorial candidates for 2015 General Elections in Oyo State, in Nigeria within the purview of Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory. However, none of these studies has significantly explored the combination of interpersonal function, discursive mode and ideological resources used in the posters. However, the current study will adopt the aspects of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1978) and Gunter Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Grammar of Visual Design in analysing presidential political posters of 2015 and 2019 election campaigns in Nigeria.

Methodology of the Study

The study employed the descriptive survey approach which accounts for qualitative findings. This qualitative method enhanced the content analysis of the data for interpretation, description and presentation of the multimodal meaning of the images in the posters. The approach feeds on two models of social semiotic theories: Halliday (1978) systemic functional linguistic approach for verbal language and Kress & Leeuwen (2006) Grammar of visual image to provide systematic description of the influence of social semiotic resources in the construction of multimodal meanings in the data for this study. The study used the purposive sampling technique as the data were drawn from Google search engine. Eight (8) political posters by the two major contending political parties, the PDP and APC are selected for this study because of their accessibility and richness in the use of multimodal resources to communicate election campaign political-sensitive meaning. The eight (8) posters will be subjected to socio-semiotic analysis. For ease of reference, the posters are numbered 1-to-8. Each poster will be presented and given analytic attention based on its exemplification of the features of interpersonal function, discursive modes and political ideological constructs of semiotic modes.

Empirical Studies on Political Posters

Sharndama & Mohammed (2013) examine the linguistic role in political campaign posters and slogans in Yola Metropolis of Adamawa state of Nigeria, using Crystal and Davy's (1985) Linguistic stylistic model. Lirola (2015) analysed the key political posters made for the campaigns of Irish political party, using

Critical discourse approach and Van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor theory. Ajayi & Ajayi (2014) attempts a pragmatic analysis of political texts in political posters and Jingle(s) of gubernatorial candidates for 2015 General Elections in Oyo State, in Nigeria within the purview of Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts theory. The present study differs from this study because we are looking at the visual aspect of the posters, not only the linguistic aspect.

Lirola (2015) worked on the topic, Semiotic analysis of a sample of political posters in Ireland during and after the Celtic Tiger. He analysed the key political posters made for the campaigns of Irish political party Fianna Fail framed in the Celtic Tiger (1997-2008). He focused on the four posters of the candidate in elections that took place in 1997, 2002, 2007 and 2011 with the intention of observing first how the leaders is represented, and later on pinpointing the similarities and possible differences between each. He also looked at the linguistic and visual strategies used to persuade the audience to vote that party and to highlight the power of the politician. He uses critical discourse analysis approach, i.e, Van Leeuwen's (2003) social actor theory and Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual grammar (2006). His study reveals that politicians are represented in a consistently positive way, with status and formal appearance so that people are persuaded to vote for the party they represented because they trust them as political leaders. He concludes that the poster is a powerful tool used in election campaigns to highlight the power of political parties. Using both qualitative and quantitative method, the current study intends to analyse presidential posters.

Mehidyeva (2016) analysed how aesthetic elements constructed in political advertising posters influence the voter and the degree it influences his or her decisions-making process. He analysed the posters produced during U.S 2016. There are 65 pages in this work. He concludes that politicians are able to manipulate voters' emotions by a systematic positioning of aesthetic elements and usage of specific symbols. Using Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of semiotic, his study reveals that visual elements incorporated within the political poster specifically contributes to overall campaign agenda. The present study differs from this because this study is being carried out in Nigeria not U.S.

Benderbal (2017) worked on multimodal discourse analysis of local Election posters in Algeria, using Kress and Van multimodal discourse approach. The study analyses Algerian electoral posters during local campaigns, in November 23, 2017. The researcher focuses on four poster of the candidate in the elections, exploring the technicalities that are used for presenting the candidate appropriately. The study depends on the leaders of the parties in election. In the study, the researcher pinpoints the similarity and difference between each leader. The study also examines the main linguistic and visual strategies used to convince the citizen to vote for each party. The result of the study shows that the electoral posters appealed to, and persuaded the voters, depending on the constituent element on the pictures. Though the current study analyses Nigerian presidential campaign, it differs remarkably, from Benderbal's work.

Semiotics

Chandler (2000) defines semiotics as a discipline for studying all aspects of the production and interpretation of signs. The discipline basically studies how meanings are made and reality is represented through signs and significations. Hence, the subject of meaning-production cannot be over-emphasised in semiotic analysis. In practical terms, semiotics can be more effectively captured as a sub-field of semantics that deals with meanings in the context of human activities and interaction (Godwin, 2015). Today, semiotics has established itself within the field of media, film, advertising, theatre practice, architecture, music, law, criminology, psychology, fine arts, fashion designs, anthropology and the natural sciences.

Although, various theories have been propounded by different scholars to explicate the position of meaning in language, particularly in literary circles, the place of semiotics, most especially in terms of its conflation of visual and verbal signs, is significant in the interpretation of meaning. In the view of Akinwande (2018), this fact underscores the crucial role of semiotics in language and meaning-making. He sees semiotics as a type of scientific inquiry that studies virtually everything we do, use to represent the world around us and to make messages about something. The principal proponents of semiotics, who inspired other semioticians such as Charles Morris, Thomas Sebeok, Umberto Eco, and Roland Barthes, are Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). Saussure's Semiology and Peirce's Semiotics are the two most recognized theories of the many semiotic theories (Akinwande, 2018).

According to Saussure, sign relation is dyadic, consisting only of a form of sign (the signifier) and its meaning (the signified). Saussure saw the relation as being essentially arbitrary. He defines sign as a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life. To him, semiotics is “a science that studies the life of signs within society” (Ferdinand de Saussure, 1857). Peirce's (1958) definition of semiotics has, however, been considered as the most widely used. He conceives of semiotics as the “doctrine” of signs, which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. Peirce's understanding of and classification of signs is quite different from Saussure's. In the first instance, the relationship between a sign and what it stands for is not arbitrary in Peirce's opinion. Also, Peirce develops a schema which recognises three kinds of signs: icons, indexes and symbols. Icons signify resemblance; indexes signify causal connections while symbols signify convention (Berger, 2010, p.10).

Peirce (1958) explains vividly that an icon is a sign that is made to resemble, simulate, or reproduce its referent in some way. He asserts that photographs may be an icon because they can be seen to reproduce their referents in a visual way. With regard to index, Peirce claims that “it is a sign that refers to something or someone in terms of its existence and location in time or space, or in relation to something or someone” (228). He cites the example of smoke as an index of fire. In respect of symbol, Peirce says a symbol is a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary, conventional way. He spells out further that most semioticians agree that symbolicity is what sets human representation apart from that of all other species, allowing the human species to reflect upon the world separately from stimulus-response situation (228). He cites the example of a cross as a symbol of Christianity. Chandler (2007, p.2) further submits that semiotics involves the study, not only of what we refer to as 'signs' in everyday speech, but of anything which 'stands for' something else. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects.

Scholars recognised different models of semiotics that can provide insights into the nature and functions of signs, focusing on language as the main system of signs. The different semiotic models are therefore fundamental to understanding signs and significations in diverse socio-cultural contexts. The modes include socio-semiotics, cultural semiotics, literary semiotics, multi semiotics, cognitive semiotics, structural semiotics and critical social semiotics.

Pierce' Theory of Signs (Semiotics)

According to Peirce (1992), trichotomy is the act of making three-fold divisions. His trichotomy ideas include:

- i. Icons: according to him icon signifies resemblance. Icon is a sign that is made to resemble, simulate or reproduce its referent in some ways. Photograph may be an icon because it can be seen to reproduce its reference in a visual way.

- ii. Indexes: this signifies casual connection. It refers to something or someone in terms of its existence and location in time or space, or relation to something or someone.
- iii. Symbols: this signifies convention. Symbol is a sign that stands for its referent in an arbitrary and conventional way. Symbolicity is what set human representation apart from other species, and allowing human species to reflect upon the world separately from stimulus response situation.

Saussure's Theory of Signs (Semiology)

According to Saussure, sign relation is dyadic, consisting only of a form of sign (the signifier) and its meaning (the signified). Saussure saw the relation as being essentially arbitrary. That is, they are purely psychological; they were formed rather than substance. The signifier refers to the sound or image while the signified refers to the concept represented.

Multisemiotic is a recent development within Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and the expansion of the SLF theory from traditional linguistic and discourse issues to consideration of the meaning-making semiotics as a combination of and negotiation between different modal realizations (O'Halloran 2015). A text may be defined as multisemiotics or multimodal when it combines two or more semiotics systems.

There are five semiotic systems:

- i. Linguistics: comprising aspects such as vocabulary, structure, grammar of oral/written language.
- ii. Visual: comprising aspect such as colour, vectors and viewpoint in still and moving images.
- iii. Audio: comprising aspects such as volume, pitch and rhythm of music and sound effects.
- iv. Gestural: comprising aspects such as movement, facial expression and body language.
- v. Spatial: comprising aspects such as proximity, direction, position of layout, organization of objects in space.

Social semiotics

The semiotic perspective adopted in this paper draws on the concept of social semiotics derives from the works of Halliday (1978). Social-semiotic theory is interested in meaning making, in all its forms. Meaning arises in social environments and in social interactions. That makes the social into the source, the origin and the generator of meaning. In the theory, the social is generative of meaning, of semiotic processes and forms; hence the theory is a social-semiotic one. The core unit of semiotic is the sign, a fusion of form and meaning. The genesis of signs lies in actions. In semiosis, the active making of signs in social (inter) actions- signs are made rather than used. The focus on sign making rather than sign use is one of several features which distinguishes social-semiotics theory from other forms of semiotics. In a social semiotic account of meaning, individuals with their social histories, socially shaped located in social environments using socially made, culturally resources are genitive and generative in signs-making and communication (O'Halloran, 2015).

Halliday's social semiotics theory provides a framework from moving beyond “running commentaries” about multimodal phenomena (Bateman, 2008) to empirical validation of claims because the theory is concerned with the underlying design (“or grammar”) of semiotic resources and their relations with each other. It is specified as inter-related semantic systems which are seen to fulfil four functions:

- i. Experiential meaning: to construe our experience of the world.
- ii. Logical meaning: to create logical relations between experiential meaning.
- iii. Interpersonal meaning: to enact social relations.

- iv. Textual meaning: to organize meanings into coherent messages in text.

Theoretical Framework: Social Semiotics theory

Halliday (1978) holds that language is a semiotic mode and any semiotic mode has to represent three communicative broad metafunctions, namely the ideational metafunction, the interpersonal metafunction and the textual metafunction, which has a decisive influence on Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework of visual communication grammar. In Kress and Van Leeuwen's opinion, the three meta functions of linguistics can be extended to visual communication. In reading images, they see image as a resource for representation and thus will display culturally produced regularities. The meanings expressed by people are the first and foremost social meanings, so Halliday's three metafunctions for language can also be used as a starting point for their account of images because they assume the three metafunctions model works well as a source for thinking about all modes of representation (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Kress & van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) assume that image, colour, music, typography and other visual modes are similar to language and can simultaneously fulfil and realise the three broad communicative metafunctions as language does. In their view, image and other visual modes can represent objects and their relations in a world outside the representational system, so there are many ideational choices available for visual sign-making in visual communication. They also think that image and other visual modes have the capacity to form texts, complexes of signs which internally cohere with each other and externally with the context in and for which they were produced. Besides, image and other visual modes are able to represent a particular social relation between the producer, the viewer and the object represented. And all semiotic systems are social semiotic systems which allow us to negotiate social and power relationships. They see images of whatever kinds as means for the articulation of ideological position (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). That is why in their Reading images, they draw examples from many domains, such as text books, websites, advertisements, magazine articles and so on to express their meaning making in their social practices. The key notion in any semiotics is the— sign?, or —sign making, so Kress and van Leeuwen discuss forms (signifier) such as vector, modality, gaze, composition, perspective, line and colour, as well as the way in which these forms are used to realize meanings (signified) in the making of signs.

Based on Halliday's theory, Kress and van Leeuwen use a slightly different terminology in discussing the meaning of image in visual communication: representational instead of ideational; interactive instead of interpersonal; and compositional instead of textual. As for the representational meaning, they distinguished two kinds of image in the light of the different characteristics of image: one is narrative images which involve four processes: action process, relational process, speech and mental process, and conversation process. The other is conceptual images which include three kinds: classification process, analytical process and symbolic process. Kress and van Leeuwen suggested three ways to examine the interactive meaning of images from three aspects: contact (demand or offer), social distance (intimate, social, or impersonal), and attitude (involvement, detachment, viewer power, equality, representation power, etc.). The compositional meaning of images is realized through three interrelated systems: information value (given or new, ideal or real, important or less), salience (achieved through size, colour, tone, focus, perspective, overlap, repetition, etc.), and framing. From their visual grammar, we can see

that images are made up of elements that can be decomposed when we analysed the meaning of them. Just as language, images have meanings only when they are integrated together. That is, the meaning of visual images comes from the arrangement of different visual elements. The three metafunctions put forth by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) are not direct relationships between semiotic resources and meaning. The concepts such as power, interaction, detachment and involvement and so on, are not meanings hidden in the images; rather, they are meaning potentials. That is, they are the possible meanings which will be activated by the producers and viewers of images (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001).

Taking the Hallidayan social semiotic approach to language as a model, reading images offers a model of three accounts for images; ideational, interpersonal, textual. Kress and van Leeuwen consider the model of three accounts works well not only for language but also for thinking about all modes of representation, hence images (p. 20). These accounts help break down images into a more accessible, interpretable object to analysis.

Data Analysis

Interpersonal Metafunction

Interpersonal meaning in the posters relates to the text's aspect of tenor (social relations) which is concerned with political resources for analysing interaction in relation to attitude and judgments by means of mood and modality. It indicates the representation of the participants' social relation, evoking political campaign-sensitive feelings. Mood shows the roles (inform of attitude) that the participant in the posters has selected for him and for his readers, such as imperative mood, interrogative mood and declarative mood. Modality which is marked by modal auxiliary verbs in the selected posters is seen as the participants' judgment towards opinion about the truth of proposition expressed by Nigerian politicians. The following posters make the point clear:

Poster 1: Who will be Nigerians Next President?



Source: www.thetrentonline.com

The poster above has a multimodal content of verbal code+colour+picture. The poster text is a 'Wh'-question which inquired people to give an answer to the question themselves. The question seems to be asking as whether Alh. Atiku Abubakar or Mohamadu Buhari will be the next Nigerian president. The text, "who will be Nigeria's next president?", depicts interrogative mood in the authors relation with the readers so as to bring out participants' political and emotional state of mind as regards interpersonal relationship between the author and the readers, interrogative moods thus used to demand response about their relationship with the candidate in the posters from the reader.

Poster 2: Let's get Nigeria Working Again.

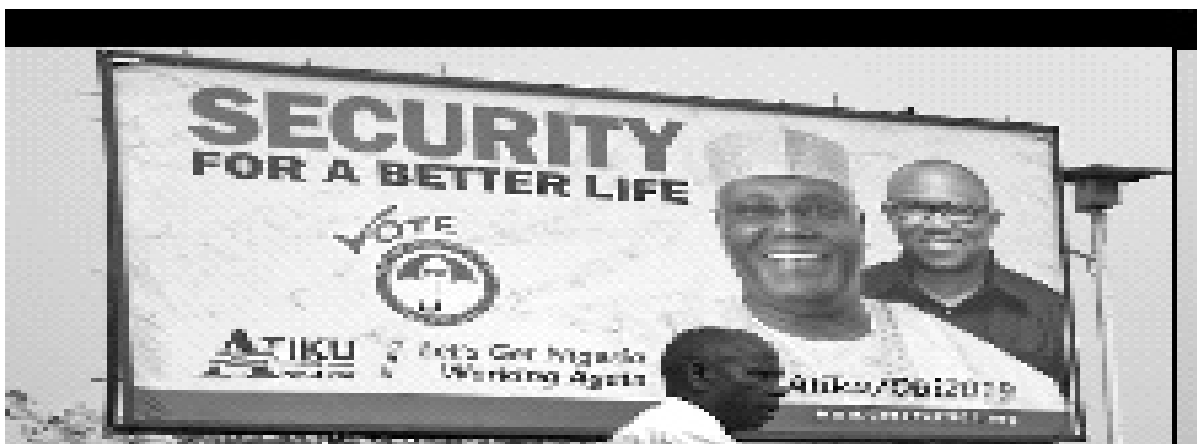


Source: www.gettyimages.dk and *The Guardian*, Jan. 4, 2019.

The poster above has a multimodal content of verbal code+colour+picture. The expression “let's get”, used in the poster is an act of giving order. The poster text is a command coming from the participants in the poster. The participants in the poster show interpersonal relationship with the readers by addressing them with the use of imperative verb 'let's get' in order to establish and maintain cordial relationship with the readers, and this shows a polite manner of campaigning so as to gain their interest in voting for them. This verbal language of the posters depicts imperative mood. The text also implies that Nigeria is not working before but with these participants in the text, Nigeria will start working well.

Poster 3: Alh. Abubakar will create security for a better li

fe



Source: theglobalobservatory.org

Poster 3 gives information on safety issue. The poster has multimodal content of verbal code+colour+picture. The verbal expression is communicated, using a verbless clause with the subject in mind, Alh. Atiku Abubakar and the verbal element, "will create", ellipsed, with the assumption that they would be easily supplied by the readers. The verbal expression "security for a better life" is capable of being fully realised as "Alh. Atiku Abubakar will create security for a better life". The text is a declarative expression. The use of the modal auxiliary verb "will" "with high value modality shows the participant's political-motivate positive judgement as regards protection since the president is saddled with the responsibility to provide safety of the people in the country. The candidate is using this as a strategy of campaigning to people so as to vote for him. This also implies that there may not be security in the country before now but this contestant is saying, he is ready to provide the security which is lacking in the country. There are two participants in the above poster. Their genial smile and direct gaze directed at the reader are inviting and demonstrate a desire to connect with the reader. The dominant white background of the poster and the slight green are also strategically employed to serve as a reminder of the nationhood of Nigeria and to stir up a sense of nationalism in the reader. When a presidential candidate is strategically represented this way, he is portrayed as affable and willing to enter into relationship of social affinity with the reader.

Based on this, we can say that Nigerian politicians are found of using imperative, interrogative and declarative mood to show social relationship between them and the readers.

Discursive image

Discursive image is a means of communication that can evoke interaction between the image producer and the audience.

Poster 4: I promise to protect Nigeria



Source: Adelove.com

The narrative in the poster involves both interactive and represented participants. The interactive participants (IP) in the poster are the poster producer as well as viewers/analyst. The relevant represented participant in this poster is President Buhari. The above picture in the poster which is the close up shot of Buhari is placed at the bottom of the poster to depict him as an amiable candidate. In terms of attitude, there is no direct connection between him and the reader and this shows the detachment of the viewer.

Poster 5: 1 meal a day



Source: www.thetrentonline.com

Above is the APC attempt at negating the idea of government's failure to provide good life for Nigerian children especially those in primary school. It contains two pictures which are separated by a frame. The bigger picture is that of a group of participants which includes primary school pupils. The second is the picture of Buhari and Osinbajo. The close shot of the picture enacts an inclusive discourse of closeness between the represented participants and the reader. From the poster, it would be seen that some of the participants are pictured frontally others are represented obliquely, although they all look directly to the front. These students dressed in conventional school uniform and having plate of rice in their hand which implies that the educational system promised by the APC candidate is all embracing albeit of modern standard. In this way, Buhari and Osinbajo are shown as warm, affectionate and caring and by extension, committed to realizing the promise of better education and life for Nigerian children. Buhari, in the cover above, is the superordinate while other represented participants are subordinate.

Political Ideology

Political ideology is a set of ethical ideals, principles, doctrines, myths or symbols of a social movement, institution, class or large group that explains how the society should work and offers some political and cultural blueprint for a certain social order. The political ideologies, connected to images, characterise the visual images in the posters are identity ideology, positivism ideology, continuity ideology, loyalty ideology and fighting ideology indicating the socio-political sensitivity of the posters that reveals the way by which politicians mould people's thinking so as to vote for them. How some of these ideologies are brought about in the images in the posters are analysed below:

Poster 6: Broom Logo



Source: infotrusting.com

Identity ideology includes the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and /or expressions that make a person (self-identity) or group (particular social category or social group) that makes them differ from others. Buhari belongs to APC party, this political logo is the broom as seen in the poster. The purpose for raising the broom is to let people know the essence of unity and it is through how group of people are united with him that can make him win the election. The logo means let's embrace unity. The colour of the party logo is green white blue. The identity ideology here is connected to image.

Poster 7: Umbrella logo



Source: akahine.org

In the above poster, the logo of umbrella which is meant for PDP is placed at the chest of the three participants in the poster. Umbrella connotatively means protection. Umbrella is used as a semiotic mode here to communicate safety and protection for the people in the society if they can vote for PDP candidate at presidential level. The ideology in the poster is that PDP government will provides protection for their members, masses and the party leadership. The above poster shows that identity ideology is connected to image in a significant way.

Continuity Ideology

Continuity Ideology in the study implies continuous existence, operation or action of something overtime

Poster 8: Forward ever, backward never



Source: www.gettyimages.no & *The Guardian Newspaper*, February 16, 2019

The above example shows that continuity ideology is connected to images to aid the semiotic construction of meaning in the poster. The participants on the machine represent Buhari and Osinbajo and the machine is on the motion, which means continuation of their journey to be President and vice president. This ideology, as portrayed in the above poster, can only be used by people already in government. It also depicts that Buhari and Osinbajo are not ready to leave their seat as president and vice president of Nigeria but wish to continue. This continuity ideology is connected to images to show the semiotic value of visual semiotic resources and a complement to the verbal language in the communication of multimodal meanings in the political posters.

Summary of Findings

This study has investigated the interpersonal metafunction, images and ideological resources used in the posters to establish their joint roles in the negotiation of multimodal meanings. Interpersonal metafunctions are present in the verbal semiotic mode of the posters. The interpersonal indicates the representation of the politician's social relation, evoking political-sensitive feelings, attitude and judgments by means of mood and modality. This mood manifests interrogative, imperative and declarative mood. Modality is revealed with the use of auxiliary verb. This is in line with Ruijuan (2006:3) which submits that, interpersonal metafunctions of political speech represents the way the addresser and audience interact with the use of language to establish and maintain relations through mood, modality and pronoun.

The visual language of the posters manifests different semiotic resources such as: size and sharp focus, information value, salience and framing in constructing representational, interactive and compositional meaning. This is also in line with Liu (2013) who submits that visual grammar provides readers with various perspectives for attending to and interpreting visual images. For example, when they interact and coordinate with other elements relative to the objects and participants in the image, is the viewer positioned very close or far away?

Two political ideological constructs, connected to images are: Continuity ideology and identity ideology characterize the posters. This is related to Hawkes (1996) opinion on ideology. According to him ideology is a way of accounting for how we produce ideas in our minds on the basis of external objects and to explaining false consciousness in some theoretical perspectives.

Conclusion

With insights from the social semiotics theories of Halliday (1978) and Kress and Leeuwen's (2006), the study reveals that verbal and visual modes in the selected Nigerian presidential campaign posters do not only play a complementary role, the visual adds to and reinforces the meaning of the verbal mode. Also, the distinctive features such as demand, offer, actor, vector, goals, close shot, longshot, salience, framing, and different political ideologies found in the posters facilitate the understanding of the meaning constructed in the posters. The study also shows that political campaign posters are important visual communication means that the political candidates use in canvassing for votes. The findings in this paper are relevant through the channels and means they use to convey different messages, and of the interaction between political actors at during campaign.

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