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A MULTIMODAL STUDY OF SELECTED CAMPAIGN POSTERS OF ALL PROGRESSIVES CONGRESS'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IN NIGERIA 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study is a multimodal analysis of selected political campaign posters of Bola Ahmed Tinubu — one of the presidential candidates for the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria, of the All progressives congress (APC) political party in Nigeria. The data for the study were campaign posters that were downloaded from online sources. The data were descriptively analysed using Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic theory of multimodal discourse analysis. Results show that the political campaign posters were consciously used by the APC presidential candidate to promote his political agenda and solicit votes from the electorate. Through these campaign posters, he is able to disseminate information of varied intents, and project his political ideology on the minds of the electorate via visual and non-visual messages inserted in the campaign posters. The visuals and written texts on the campaign posters often reflect the socio-cultural aspects of human relationship, their political inclinations and the reality of the Nigerian nation. It further revealed that semiotic-cultural and social factors have bearings on political campaign posters in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study concludes that campaign posters are veritable tools which have the propensity to encode socio-cultural happenings, the mindset, and intention of politicians.

Keywords: All Progressives Congress (APC), Campaign posters, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Electorate, Nigeria 2023 elections.

INTRODUCTION

This study is a multimodal analysis of selected political campaign posters of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the presidential flag bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and one of the candidates for the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria. Campaign posters are used in various ways to communicate ideas to the audience. Ojekwe (2016:14) argues that ''voters are most likely to trust candidates whose political ad campaigns offer to satisfy their basic needs, as opposed to those who dwell on their personal achievements''. This means that campaign posters are very important advertorial tools for politicians. Ugoala (2017) avers that the essence of any semiotic resources like posters is to communicate some form of meaning to the audience. Political campaign posters are tools designed in different dimensions with multifarious messages to attract the attention of the electorate. They contain both textual and

graphic elements which are technically crafted to be eye-captivating. Jay-ar (2022: 46) states that posters are considered among the leading and most effective non-verbal means of communication in the society. In Nigeria, campaign posters have become ubiquitous and increasingly popular among politicians during the period of elections as they often represent political office seekers in places where the candidates are unable to present themselves physically to the electorate.

Campaign posters are also tools used to communicate messages of diverse intents to the electorate who then determine the fate of politicians in elections. They help to persuade, motivate and entice voters. Hence, politicians make use of expressions that are full of assurances or hope for a better future. They explore the usefulness of campaign posters and invade political landscape with assorted campaign materials laden with promises and messages that can project their ambition or sway the opinion of the electorate. This is a unique way politicians hold their audience spell bound.

It is commonplace for politicians to present political campaign posters of varied inscriptions and photographs in every accessible platform including the print, the broadcast and the telecast media to sell themselves, their political ambitions or to disseminate information about their parties and their manifestoes. Some of these posters with assorted inscriptions and photographs also appear on social media such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Their graphical and textual features aim either at evoking feelings of enthusiasm, collaboration, hope and joy or have contrary intent geared towards attacking opponents and dissuading the electorate from voting for them.

The People's Democratic Party, the All Progressives Congress and the Labour Party are three major players in political campaigns for the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria. These parties place their campaign posters on social media and on billboards located strategically in villages, towns and cities. They also engage in political rallies, speeches and discussions in many fora including media houses such as the television and radio stations. The purpose of these political advertisements is to pass appropriate information across to the electorate. Of course, the information is intended to solicit votes or to persuade the electorate to accept specific candidates and parties for elections. Alternatively, the information can be intended to dissuade the electorate from voting unpopular candidates and parties into power.

Political campaign posters and other similar advertorial messages are produced and disseminated by campaign media teams and loyalists of different political parties in places where candidates in most cases are required to speak to the electorate. Therefore, posters are conspicuously displayed in public places, advertised on television, radio and other platforms, where the electorate can easily access information about candidates and their parties. It is significant to observe that while some of these political posters highlight candidates' capabilities and achievements, others are intended to demean the personalities of their opponents. These latter posters are intended to dissuade the electorate from choosing particular candidates as their leaders as against the preferred ones.

In this paper, the researchers decide to select campaign posters of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, (APC Presidential candidate) in 2023 General Elections in Nigeria, for analysis. The selection of these campaign posters is based on their accessibility and availability in social media platforms. In

other words, the posters have been selected on convenience, and not based on APC ideology because the study is purely an academic exercise. The specific objectives of this research are to: explain how the posters portray the APC candidate; and show how the posters encoded symbolic meanings about the Nigerian society. In like manner, the research questions are: How do the posters portray the APC candidate? How do the posters bear and convey encoded symbolic meanings about the Nigeria society? This research paper differs from other studies considering the fact that the framework of social semiotic theory of multimodal discourse analysis is used. Moreover, it has brought some fresh and different perspectives into multimodal analysis of political campaign posters. The study has put to rest any controversy on the use and relevance of political posters in disseminating appropriate information to the Nigerian electorate. It will further help future researchers in investigating and proffering solutions to research problems that are associated with political advertisement and campaign posters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Conceptual Clarification

Several scholars have different views about multimodality. According to Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) multimodality as a field of study, focuses on common properties of semiotic modes, and highlights the ways in which they are integrated in multimodal texts and communicative events. In other words, multimodality indicates the various semiotic modes (visual and non-visual elements) which are combined and integrated in a given instance of discourse. Paltridge (2012:14) opines that multimodality "brings a new whole meaning to discourse", and the meaning "is not just communicated through language but also through other semiotic signs". Lirola (2016) asserts that the society is influenced by the presence of new texts which are clearly characterized by increasing dominance of visual resource. According to van Leeuwen (2005), multimodality portrays common properties of semiotic modes; it also focuses on ways in which these modes are integrated in multimodal texts and communicative events. This view is echoed by Ugoala (2022) who opines that texts encode different semiotic elements which jointly portray the meaning an author wishes to express.

Iedema and Stenglin (2001) posit that a multimodal text is "one in which a number of different modes are integrated to form a composite whole". They go further to explain that the mode in spoken discourse "integrates language with intonation, voice quality, facial expression, gesture and posture", while the mode in written discourse "integrates language with topographic expression, illustration, layout and colour". Kress's (2012:16) focus is on "how the modes of image and writing appear together, how they are designed to appear together, and how they are to be read together".

It is therefore necessary to assert that the primary focus of multimodality is to project the role of mode and its relationship with text to give the intended meaning. Meaning, according to Hodge and Kress (1988) is in other semiotic resources other than words. Jewitt, Bezemer & O'Halloran (2016:30) assert that "meaning is made in all modes separately", and it is "an effect of all the modes acting jointly". Therefore, multimodal texts are liable to different interpretations depending on content and context. van Leeuwen (2008:136) explains this further by saying that "words provide the facts, the explanations, the things that need to be said in so many words; images provide interpretations, ideologically coloured angles, and they do so not explicitly, but by suggestion, by connotation, by appealing to barely conscious,

half-forgotten knowledge". He contends that social actors and their actions can be visually represented, and the "language of images" will enable the producer depict entities from a particular angle and the viewer to make explicit what is concealed in the images.

These scholarly views seem to suggest that multimodal texts integrate language with other resources of semiotic nature to make varieties of meanings. This assertion is relevant to this study where a holistic analysis of multimodal features of the campaign posters, is undertaken to reveal encoded meanings in them.

Halliday (1985, 2009) identifies three levels of meanings conceivable in context by language users, and he refers to them as: ''Ideational'', ''Interpersonal'' and ''Textual meanings''. For Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), they are representational, interpersonal, and compositional meanings, while Lemke (1998) refers to them as representational, orientational, and organizational meanings. Despite these different labels advanced for these concepts by the above scholars among others in multimodal discourse, there are no significant differences in their meanings. Paltridge (2012) explains that the social meanings are concerned with how visuals are perceived by the viewer, either as they present literal meaning, relational meaning or componential meaning. Benderbal (2018) further explains that the three social meanings must be considered simultaneously in order to realise embedded visual meanings.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that multimodal resources are meaning generating cues, and as such, the more modes presented, the more meanings are approachable. Thus, social meanings have contextual applications embedded in campaign posters. Lirola (2016) suggests multimodal features in political campaign posters should comprise text, colours, images, symbols, postures and other objects working together to express the encoded message. In Kress's view (2010:61), multimodality is "how the modes of image and writing appear together, how they are designed to appear together, and how they are to be read together".

b. Related Studies

Some scholars have undertaken different researches on the importance and usefulness of political campaign posters in Nigeria and other places. Morkat & Ghouati's (2019) research revealed how verbal and nonverbal resources interact with one another to convey meaning to the Algerian electorate in their general elections of 2019. Also, there are ample studies carried out by different researchers on multimodal analysis of campaign posters, and these studies have shown how the combination of several semiotic elements can aid encoding and decoding of meanings. Ademilokun (2015) analysed some visual images that were used for political communication in a political rally context, in southwestern Nigeria. Systemic functional multimodal discourse analytical framework and Barthes' conception of interaction of signs highlighted in the concepts of "anchorage" and "relay" in data analysis were used. The findings showed that semiotic artifacts such as "Ankara", vests and head gears helped to communicate with the electorate in order to gain their acceptance in a socio-cultural environment.

Sharndama and Mohammed (2013) explored selected campaign posters in Yola Metropolis, Adamawa State of Nigeria. They used Crystal and Davy's (1985) Linguistic stylistic model to analyse their data, and their findings showed that campaign posters were beautifully designed in different shapes to attract the attention of the electorate or passers-by. Their

findings highlighted the use of graphics in campaign posters, and which of course, form the basis for an investigation into the relevance of campaign posters used for the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria.

Benderbal (2018) worked on political cartoons, and how linguistic and non-linguistic resources coexist with one another in portraying political activities in Nigeria. The study revealed the impact of political cartoons on the society considering how social factors were observed in the cartoons and their implications on the readers. Omolabi & Zakariyah (2019) had a similar study. Their findings revealed that political campaign posters are predominantly used by cartoonists to inform the public of topical issues around their vicinity. The researchers focused their attention on similar political campaign strategy of using political cartoons, and their studies therefore differ from the focus of this paper.

El-Falaky (2019) explained that political cartoons have unveiled the political, social and cultural milieu in Egypt. The study portrayed that political and ideological positions of Al-Ahram are presented to the audience through multimodal texts. Mulyadi & Sudana (2021) carried out a multimodal analysis of posters on humanitarian issues. The study adopted social semiotics with a multimodal perspective on campaign posters which were used in spreading principles of humanity to reduce the prolonged humanitarian crisis in the world. Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) reading images theory rooted in Halliday's (1985, 2009) systemic functional linguistics was used in the study. Connotation of names and terms of address proposed by Allan (1991); and Bezemer & Kress's (2016) social semiotics were also applied. The findings showed a relation between verbal-visual texts through logico-semantic framework as proposed by Martinec & Salway (2005). It further revealed that campaign posters can be considered comprehensively through multimodality as part of efforts to improve the awareness of freedom, equality and values.

There are several other works on the analysis of political campaign posters where different theories have been used in analyzing their data. Most of these researches do not include ideologies that are buried in visual images in a socio-cultural context, and the present study intends to fill these gaps. This study will explore local context consideration in the interpretation of social meanings in the Nigerian socio-cultural context where both images and words play complimentary roles in the construction and interpretation of posters.

c. Modality of Discourse

In this paper, the researcher has identified all the modes presented in the selected posters, decipher them piece by piece and then relate them to the Nigerian socio-cultural context. This is in line with the research undertaken by Ademilokun & Olateju (2015) which revealed that effective communication relies on semiotic resources for the projection of meaning in a social or cultural context. This study has also taken cognizance of Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) view that meaning derived from images of multimodality can only be approached from representational, interactive and compositional perspectives. The researcher further acknowledges that image and text placement in political campaign posters can affect meaning realization or meaning interpretation. Thus, both words and images play complimentary roles in the construction and interpretation of social experiences as succinctly opined by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is based on Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic theory of multimodal discourse analysis, which asserts that social and cultural contexts are important in the construction and interpretation of social meaning. In other words, meanings are determined in social and cultural contexts. Jewitt & Oyama (2001) opine that the process of social semiotics involves "the description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted" (p.136). However, to understand how people appear as visuals along with their interpersonal relationships, van Leeuwen (2008) asserts that it is essential to observe the social distance, social relation and social interaction of these representative participants. Machin & Mayr (2012) also posit that the analytical framework should focus on images, photographs, diagrams and graphics which can create meaning.

The data for this study were downloaded from social media platforms: Facebook and WhatsApp between December 13th, 2022 and January 15th, 2023. A total of six relevant political campaign posters of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the presidential candidate of All Progressives Congress (APC), were selected and classified for analysis. The choice of APC was informed by the popularity of candidate as well as his political party affiliation among the electorate and supporters across Nigeria. One important criterion for poster selection in this study is the presence of local meaning making resources which the Nigerian electorate can recognize and exploit.

This researcher has decided to use the data because political campaign posters combine more than one mode of communicative styles (the written texts and the images) to disseminate information to the electorate. Everything in the campaign posters including images, colour differentiation, fonts, their positions, size of fonts, vocabulary and so on, tends to have some impact on the viewers, as they contribute to the meaning making process. Data analysis in this study was carried out using social semiotic theory proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Ideas synthesized from this theory were applied to the posters to reveal the encoded meanings. The colours, the position of the represented participants, and the linguistic items are taken into consideration in the analysis.

This research is based on Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic theory of multimodal discourse analysis, which asserts that social and cultural contexts are important in the construction and interpretation of social meaning. The theory recognizes that an image performs simultaneously three kinds of meta-semiotic tasks to create meaning, and recommends that semiotic modes need to be studied in social and cultural contexts because "almost everything we do or make can be done in different ways and therefore allows, at least, in principle, the articulation of different social and cultural meanings" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

The analysis takes into account the following features of campaign posters: the "information value", that is, the way in which the contents of the posters are organized (centre/margin, top/bottom or left/right); "salience", that is, the elements in the posters that catch the viewers' attention (size, colour, sharpness, background or foreground of the objects); and "framing", that is, the connection of the various elements of the posters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analyzed in this research comprise six posters of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the APC presidential candidate in the 2023 General Elections. The posters were chosen because they combine more than one mode of communication (the written texts and the images) and can express various pictorial themes required in this study. The posters are classified and analyzed as follows:

a. Poster with Symbolic Images

The poster considered in this classificification contain symbolic images that have no visual or conceptual connection to objects or persons in the posters. Their meanings are deduced through convention or what has been learnt about them. These are mainly symbols of national identity, tribal identity and other symbolic colourations.

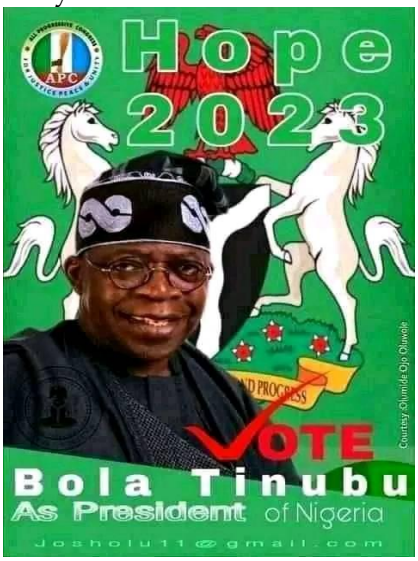


Figure 1: Campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu with Symbolic Images
Source: Facebook, 2022

Figure1 contains the photograph of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the APC presidential flag bearer. The photograph is placed on the central left region, and foregrounded on the Nigerian coat of arms where the two horses and the symbolic River Niger and River Benue appear in white. The eagle at the top is red, and the background of the photograph is green.

Information value of the poster tends to portray Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the most salient participant. The left region where the photograph of the candidate appears is described as Given (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006); this position is very important in campaign poster explication. The poster further shows that the APC logo is at the extreme top left of the poster, signifying the candidate's party affiliation.

In terms of distance, the represented participant is portrayed at a close person distance. He has friendly smile; an expression which functions as a kind of "visual invitation" to interact with viewer and to create sense of "imaginary" relationship between the candidate and the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006).

The social actor is then presented as the hope of the nation. This is expressed linguistically with the expression ''HOPE 2023'', placed over the Eagle and extending to the head of one of

the white horses. There is also a request in the poster for the viewer to ''VOTE BOLA TINUBU AS PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA''. "VOTE" is highlighted in red while "BOLA TINUBU AS PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA" is in white. RED implies strength, courage or power, and in this case, the social actor tends to acknowledge that power lies with the electorate. WHITE is one of the two colours of the Nigerian flag and at the same time, it is a symbol of purity. The white colour of the linguistic item therefore suggests that Bola Ahmed Tinubu is of impeccable character, and the right candidate to be voted into power as president of Nigeria in the 2023 General Elections.

b. Poster with Indexical Images

Indexical images are recognisable, not because of their similarities to objects or persons, but because we understand the relations between them and the concepts that they stand for. They are usually accompanied with texts to avoid being confused for some other types of images or signs.



Figure 2: Campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu with Lexical Images
Source: Facebook, 2022

This figure has the photograph of Bola Ahmed Tinubu covering the entire poster. As social actor, he is the most salient participant in the poster. His posture shows that he backs the left region and faces the right region, but with his face propped towards the viewer. This enables the candidate have a direct contact with the viewer, and thereby establishing a relationship through his gaze. His eye to eye contact is a "demand (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). It further suggests that Bola Ahmed Tinubu is trying to invite the viewer to interact with him. His mouth is agape and this suggests that he has much to say to the electorate.

Apparently, he is the most salient participant in the poster. He is made even more prominent by his style of Yoruba cultural dressing. The sky blue colour of his clothes is in harmony with the background of the written text that has been framed "disconnectedly" in a rectangle and square. The rectangle contains "VOTE ASIWAJU BOLA TINUBU" written primarily in white. The square contains "Nigeria President 2023" written in dark blue. Aside from physical disconnection, there is colour disparity in the linguistic items. The white and blue linguistic items convey peace and harmony.

The colour of the candidate's name is red, portraying strength and courage, and the colour of the other text is green indicating freshness and abundance of natural resources. This gives the candidate confidence that he has all it takes in harnessing the natural resources of the country in the interest of the masses. The white background of the linguistic item further conveys peace and unity in the country despite cultural diversity.

No doubt, this poster depicted in graphic elements, leads the eye of the viewer from one element to another, beginning with the photograph of Bola Ahmed Tinubu. It is apparent therefore that the image of Bola Ahmed Tinubu serves the function of "connectedness" in the poster (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

c. Poster with Iconic Images

Iconic images bear similarity or semblance to what people already know or what we conceive about an object or person. Iconic images usually include maps, photographs and paintings.



Figure 3: Campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu with Iconic Images
Source: Facebook, 2022

This poster contains three visual images that require analysis. First is the photograph of Bola Ahmed Tinubu which appears on the right region. The position of this photograph is what Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) describe as New. This APC flag bearer is wearing native clothes of the Yoruba tribe, and he is discussing an important issue with the viewer using his left fist and fore finger in emphasizing the point he is making while his mouth is agape. It is apparent that the point he is making is a demand since he has an eye to eye contact with the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). His Yoruba cultural attire is indicative of his root and his appeal to his kinsmen for support through their votes.

There is an object which appears to be a ballot box, and the APC logo is attached to it. This object is on the left or the given region of the poster. The object, no doubt, is an iconic image of democracy and it signifies the era of election. There is also a masculine right arm descending from the top middle region of the poster and trying to drop a white paper with the inscription, 'VOTE', into the box. This process is indicative of the need for the electorate to exercise their franchise in the 2023 General Elections. The attachment of APC logo to the box is a call for the electorate to vote for the All Progressives Congress. The arm which wears white and black sleeves and placed on the white portion of the green-white-green colours of the Nigerian flag is a call for sanctity in the 2023 General Elections.

The objects as well as the bright colours used in the poster tend to signify the need for credible election that will give mandate to the APC candidate in the 2023 General Elections.
The written text is white on red background, and it is located at the bottom of the poster. This linguistic item begins with a pledge to vote Bola Ahmed Tinubu as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. "I PLEDGE TO VOTE" has a green background while the other linguistic items in the poster have red background. The use of white, green and red in the written texts

is compatible and it conveys the message of credibility which is required in the 2023 General Elections.

d. Poster with Images of Metaphor

These are images that can be interpreted based on their social relations in terms of their actions and other social experiences. Kövecses (2010), citing Lakoff and Johnson (1980), states that metaphorical insights can be used to interpret visual semiotics since social actors, their actions and other social experiences can be framed metaphorically.



Figure 4: Campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu with Images of Metaphor
Source: Facebook, 2022

The multimodal features of this poster combine an enlarged text with the image of Bola Ahmed Tinubu in an intimate distance. This posture makes this poster unique. Similarly, its information value is different from previous posters in this study. This is because the information value is to be interpreted from bottom to top. This is in line with Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) model.

This figure shows the photograph of Bola Ahmed Tinubu lifting his hands and holding a broom on his right hand. His photograph further shows his head propping up and facing the viewer at the bottom of the poster. This requires the viewer to start reading the image from bottom.

At the top of the poster is the metaphoric phrase: "THE LION KING OF POLITICS" written in block letters. This is followed by the candidate's metaphoric name, "JAGABAN", written in bold capital letters with the year "2023" right below the name. The logo of his party appears at the top right region of the poster. These multimodal features are of utmost value in this analysis.

The photograph of Bola Ahmed Tinubu is the most salient element of the composition because of the way it appears and the message it conveys in the poster. The background is multi-colour, and different from the colours of some previous posters in this classification.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu is the social actor and this contributes to highlighting the candidate as a salient participant. He looks directly at the viewer, an indication that he is interacting with the electorate and requesting an action in form of vote cast in response. Therefore, this photograph is a demand image (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Bola Ahmed Tinubu looks serious in this campaign poster as he raises his hands above his head while holding a broom, the main symbol of his party. This action affirms his choice of APC as his preferred party. Moreover, the direction or posture of his hands suggests that he is confident in winning the election as well as portraying his willingness to sanitize Nigeria of corrupt practices.

e. Poster with Images of Colour Connotations

Images of connotation usually contain implicit messages of values and thoughts. Their interpretations are dependent on socio-cultural background of the viewer. However, the poster in this group contains visuals and written texts highlighted with colours of different shades and connotations.

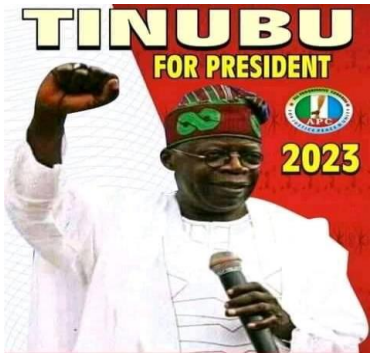


Figure 5: Campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu with Images of Colour Connotations
Source: Facebook, 2022

This poster is the photograph of Bola Ahmed Tinubu. As APC presidential flag bearer, he is the social actor and the most salient participant in the poster. He also occupies almost the entire poster or what Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) call the maximum region.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu is presented at a close distance, raising his right hand and fist while holding a microphone on his left hand, indicating that he is making a public address and trying to emphasize the point he is making through demonstration and an amplifier. No one knows the subject of his address but it is clear that he is canvassing for votes that will enable him become president of Nigeria in 2023 through the All Progressives Congress.

The represented participant is dressed flamboyantly and looking away, thereby making an offer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). He is wearing white clothes, which gives off the impression of formality. This picture has high modality, as the white clothes depict the candidate as the most salient participant in the poster. Moreover, white is a symbol of purity, efficiency and anti-corruption; the kind of leadership he hopes to run if elected president of Nigeria. The background of his photograph is white and red. Red is a symbol of strength, valour and love. The combination of these background colours has shown positive effect on the overall multimodal perspective of the poster.

The written text: "Tinubu for president 2023" at the top region of the poster highlights the political quest or ambition of the candidate. In terms of framing, the poster is disconnected vertically with white colour on the left and red colour on the right.

f. Poster with Images of Cultural Identity

Images of cultural identity indicate people's way of life. The poster under consideration highlights identities of the three main tribes in Nigeria namely Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. These cultural identities are reflected on the three hats worn by the APC candidate in the poster.



Figure 6: Campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu with Cultural Identity
Source: Facebook, 2022

In this Figure, viewer's attention is drawn conspicuously to three images enclosed in the map of Nigeria. These images especially the three different photographs of Bola Ahmed Tinubu adorned on cultural attires of Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo tribes are the most salient participants of the poster. The photograph in the middle is positioned in such a way that the face is rested on the right fist of the participant, thereby giving him absolute confidence in his political adventure. This photograph is flanked by two other photographs, one on each side, and both giving him support.

The three photographs adorned in WAZOBIA attires are symbolic of cross-cultural diversities of the Nigerian nation. These cultural adornments and positions taken by each photograph apparently seem to highlight the candidate's "demand" and "offer" for acceptance among Nigerians. The "demand" comes from the two photographs which have eye-to-eye contacts with the viewer while the "offer" is expressed in the photograph on the left which seems to look elsewhere.

The three photographs wear smiling faces, indicative of the candidate's confidence in his demand for votes and offer of quality governance. The appearance of each photograph also seems to boost the assurance in the intending support from the Hausa/Fulani and the Ibo tribes for the Yoruba born candidate. It might also suggest that the candidate has the desire to unify the country in spite of cultural diversities. The photographs further give an indication that viewers should "imaginarily come as close to public figures as if they were…friends" (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006). Hence, the photographs are presented at "close personal distance".

The colours of this figure are also important since they are visual means of communicating social meaning. The three photographs are framed in "disconnection" and enclosed in the map of Nigeria drawn in green line with a white background. "Green" signifies the Nigerian vegetation and unharnessed agricultural resources that abound all over the country. The white background is indicative of peaceful coexistence among Nigerians, and the emerging need to work towards the sustenance of unity in the country.

There is also the expression: "OUR CHOICE 2023" inserted in the map just above the photographs in a location which Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) consider "ideal". The location of this expression makes linguistic item superior in this poster. In fact, it is the slogan of the poster as it offers a variety of potential meanings especially when it is interpreted along with the photographs in the poster. Thus, "OUR CHOICE 2023" might be interpreted as the candidate's way of "thinking about everyone in Nigeria irrespective of tribe" or it might mean that Bola Ahmed Tinubu is presented as a candidate who will "take care of everyone in Nigeria irrespective of their socio-cultural background". The linguistic item may also imply an appeal to the electorate to accept the candidate as their preferred choice of presidential candidate in the 2023 General Elections in Nigeria.

The poster further contains the Nigerian Coat of Arms located on the left (given), and the APC logo placed on the right (new) just below the Nigerian map. The candidate's full name and his desire to be the president of Nigeria are linguistically expressed and inserted in-between the Nigerian Coat of Arms and APC logo upon which the national flag is lifted with a right arm.

The name of the salient participant has two letterings with TINUBU highlighted boldly. He is then presented for acceptance as the next president of Nigeria. The logo on the right where the Nigerian flag is lifted above the APC appears to suggest the supremacy or superiority of Nigeria above the party of the candidate.

The framing of the various multimodal elements in the poster indicates clear "disconnection". The lower region is absolutely disconnected from the top region the Nigerian map encloses other multimodal resources in the poster. The findings of this study revealed that politicians are usually presented positively in campaign posters with the intention of persuading the electorate to vote for the candidate. With respect to objective one, the study revealed that political campaign posters were consciously used by the APC presidential candidate to promote his political agenda and solicit votes from the electorate. Through these campaign posters, he is able to disseminate information of varied intents, and project his political ideology on the minds of the electorate via visual and non-visual messages inserted in the campaign posters.

The study showed that visuals and written texts on campaign posters often reflect the socio-cultural aspects of human relationship, their political inclinations and the reality of the Nigerian nation. It further revealed that semiotic-cultural and social factors have bearings on political campaign posters in Nigeria. Moreover, it became clear that visual images and written texts interacted significantly for the projection of meanings. Thus, visual resources and written messages in the posters potently communicate intended meanings to the electorate without undermining cultural and social factors on the Nigerian environment. The study further demonstrated that appropriation of images and linguistic items in the posters helped to communicate, manipulate, mislead or persuade the electorate to vote for him and his party (APC) in the 2023 General Election in Nigeria.

In respect to objective two, the presidential candidate is portrayed in posters as most suitable for the post of the president. The posters portrayed Bola Ahmed Tinubu through socio-cultural meanings, affiliation with the masses, and readiness to rescue the nation from

hardship and corruption. The study confirmed the relevance of semiotic resources in creating meanings and sustaining the interests of the electorate on the choice of APC as the most preferred party in the 2023 General Election in Nigeria.

This study revealed that multimodality is an important aspect of political expression both in Nigeria and elsewhere, considering the fact that visuals and written texts used in campaign posters help to communicate significant messages about politicians, political office seekers and their political parties to the electorate. Thus, visual images should be given as much attention as linguistic items in multimodal study of campaign posters used during elections.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that campaign posters are veritable tools which have the propensity to encode socio-cultural happenings, the mindset, and intention of politicians.

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