A Semio-Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Memes on Nigerian Inflation

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Abstract

This study examined how the selected memes depict the state of the Nigerian economy using multimodal critical discourse analysis. The acquired data were examined using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse analysis and Van Dijk's (2015) critical discourse analysis. The analysis revealed that the attitudes and policies of the government affect the economy. The visual images are presented mainly in narrative, demand, offer images, and informational values. At the representational level, the study revealed that the citizens are mostly affected by Nigeria's economic status. They have negative reactions to the Nigerian inflation's state and share their thoughts using satirical and ironic elements via memes to show their grievances. The interactive level revealed how the relationship between the government and the people affects the economy. Leaders' formal and high social status makes it difficult to associate with the lower class. The compositional level revealed colours to have connotative meanings.

Key Words: Multimodal critical discourse analysis, corruption, government, memes, economy, Inflation

1. **Introduction**

An Economy is a complex system of interrelated production, consumption, and exchange activities that ultimately determines how resources are allocated among the people of a country. Kenton (2023) sees it as a collection of interdependent elements, such as production (the act of creating goods and services), consumption (the act of acquiring and using those goods and services), and exchange (the act of exchanging those goods and services for money or other things and services). These decisions ultimately determine how an economy's resources, including labour, capital, and natural resources, are distributed among all the individuals and enterprises that comprise the economy.

The Nigerian economy experienced a sharp downturn after the COVID-19 pandemic, and in recent times, it has worsened daily. Nigerians have reacted to this economic decline in diverse ways, including the incumbent President, who said, “Let’s the poor breath”. In the present world, social media serves as a medium for communicating opinions on underlying concerns in economic situations. Memes are frequently used on the internet to express displeasure, anger, praise and criticism in Nigeria. These themes highlight Nigerians' difficulties due to the unstable economy, with many protesting high petrol prices. Memes incorporate pictures and short write-ups as a means of self-expression. Memes depict societal changes occurring over time, including numerous issues and unfavourable economic developments, which have a way of jolting the country. The meme concept has garnered attention from various scholars, resulting in many definitions and research (Burgess, 2008; Johnson, 2007; Jones & Schieffelin, 2009; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007). Shifman (2014) contributes to the definition of memes, describing them as imagery or video content that encapsulates a particular audience's prevailing thoughts and sentiments. He elaborates on memes as collections of digital elements, content, form, or underlying messages that are disseminated, imitated, and undergo transformations across the internet by many users. Adding a sociological perspective, Davison (2012) posits that memes are not solely digital artefacts but social constructs shaped byheader cultural, religious, and

educational influences, which ultimately play a significant role in how these digital phenomena are created and interpreted. They are online multimedia components that bring people together and provide entertainment. The current Nigerian economy has given rise to a huge number of memes used on the internet by the citizens. A meme is a semiotic resource under the framework of multimodal discourse analysis. Multimodal analysis aims to investigate how semiotic tools can be used to analyse discourse beyond what is visible. It unearths deeper meaning with the help of language, visuals, gestures, body language, and other non-verbal clues it examines (O'Halloran, 2018).

Researchers have focused on memes to represent the society; Adebomi (2020) conducted multimodal analysis of memes on Nigerian government's COVID-19 response; Majdzińska-Koczorowicz and Ostanina-Olszewska (2021) showed memes reframe reality in crises like online learning; Irabor and Ojo (2023) examined memes in Nigerian youth protests against critical events. However, attention has not been paid to how memes represent the Nigerian economic situation, particularly inflation. This study uses multimodal critical discourse analysis to examine how online memes depict Nigerian inflation.

2. The State of Nigerian Inflation

The state of inflation in Nigeria is a key factor influencing household welfare and the overall economy. Nigeria, being one of Africa's most populous countries, has a large economy, yet it has struggled with recurring inflation over the years (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020; National Bureau of Statistics, 2025). Inflation has varied, sometimes moderate and sometimes extremely high, reflecting both domestic and external economic pressures (Ashakah, Mgbomene, Metieh, & Opara, 2025). Between 2010 and 2014, inflation was relatively controlled, supported by steady economic growth, improved monetary policies, and increasing activity in non-oil sectors (Joseph, Eziekiel, & Etim, 2026). However, from 2015 onwards, inflation began to rise due to multiple economic shocks and policy challenges affecting both households and businesses (Ekpo & Onyemailu, 2025; Oladejo, Onakoya, Oseni, Ajibola, & Akintoye, 2025).

Nigeria's reliance on oil revenues has made it particularly vulnerable to external shocks. While high oil prices in previous years contributed to growth and stability, declines in global oil prices reduced government revenue, limiting its ability to subsidize essential goods and invest in infrastructure (Odionye, Ukeje, & Odo, 2019; Bawa, Abdullahi, Tukur, Barda, & Adams, 2020). Rising production costs, particularly in energy and food, have driven inflation, highlighting structural weaknesses in the economy such as underdeveloped industries and poor supply chains (Effiong, Okijie, & Udofia, 2025).

Inflation in Nigeria is typically measured using indices like the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Producer Price Index (PPI), which track changes in prices over time (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020; National Bureau of Statistics, 2025). Recent years have seen sharp increases in both monthly and annual inflation, with food prices and housing costs contributing significantly (Obode & Gini, 2025). While moderate inflation can signal healthy consumer demand and economic activity, excessive inflation erodes savings, reduces purchasing power, and destabilizes the economy (Ashakah et al., 2025; Joseph, Eziekiel, & Etim, 2026).

Monetary policy interventions by the Central Bank of Nigeria aim to mitigate these inflationary pressures. The Central Bank uses tools such as interest rate adjustments and inflation forecasting based on big data to anticipate price trends and manage expectations (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2024a; Central Bank of Nigeria, 2024b). Despite these efforts, persistent supply-side constraints, dependency on imports, and exchange rate volatility continue to amplify inflationary pressures (Bawa et al., 2020; Effiong et al., 2025).

Oil price shocks and their interaction with exchange rate fluctuations have consistently influenced inflation in Nigeria (Odionye et al., 2019; Effiong et al., 2025). Structural challenges such as weak domestic production capacity and limited industrial competitiveness further exacerbate price increases (Oladejo et al., 2025; Asogu, 1991). Effective management of inflation requires coordinated policies that combine monetary measures with structural reforms, including investment in infrastructure, food production, and diversification away from oil dependence.

In conclusion, Nigeria's inflation situation is the result of a complex interplay of demand-pull and cost-push factors, external shocks, and structural weaknesses in the economy (Ashakah et al., 2025; Odionye et al., 2019; Bawa et al., 2020). While monetary policies and forecasting tools help mitigate short-term effects, sustainable control of inflation depends on reducing reliance on oil revenues, strengthening domestic production, improving supply chains, and enhancing the efficiency of fiscal and monetary institutions (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2024a; Central Bank of Nigeria, 2024b; National Bureau of Statistics, 2020, 2025; Joseph, Eziekiel, & Etim, 2026; Ekpo & Onyemailu, 2025; Oladejo et al., 2025; Obode & Gini, 2025; Effiong et al., 2025; Asogu, 1991).

3. Internet Memes as a Form of Digital Communication

Internet memes have become an essential aspect of online communication in the digital era. They function as units of cultural transmission, allowing ideas, humor, and social commentary to spread quickly across networks. Memes combine visual and textual elements to convey messages in ways that are immediately understandable to diverse audiences. They are not merely entertainment but also tools for expressing opinions, attitudes, and emotions in online communities (Shifman, 2014; Arrobo Agila, Gonzales Córdova & Barrazueta Molina, 2025). Their ability to transmit meaning through a combination of text, images, and symbols makes them a unique form of communication that goes beyond traditional language.

The multimodal nature of memes enhances their effectiveness and reach. By combining images, captions, and cultural references, memes create layered meanings that engage viewers on multiple levels (Koickakudy & Karakunnel, 2023; Journal of Second Language Writing, 2022). This multimodality allows memes to transcend linguistic barriers and foster shared understanding among individuals from different cultural and social backgrounds. Moreover, memes serve as semiotic systems where signs and symbols interact to produce culturally significant messages (Arrobo Agila, Gonzales Córdova & Barrazueta Molina, 2025; Kostadinovska Stojchevska & Shalevska, 2018). The structured yet flexible format of memes allows participants to personalize content while maintaining recognizability, creating communities of shared meaning.

Memes also function as participatory and interactive tools that reflect social norms and influence communication patterns. Users engage with memes through sharing, commenting, and remixing, which transforms them into collaborative forms of expression (F., Setiawan & Lestari, 2021; Shifman & Burgess, 2008). Meme templates provide a framework that facilitates both creativity and consistency, enabling audiences to communicate collectively while contributing individual interpretations (Nissenbaum, 2018). Additionally, memes act as instruments for humor, critique, and social commentary, often highlighting societal contradictions and encouraging reflection (Sigaeva & Stepanova, 2025). This participatory nature reinforces the role of memes in shaping cultural discourse and creating a sense of online community.

Beyond cultural and social expression, memes have practical implications for education and psychological engagement. In academic settings, memes have been used as tools to promote learning, multimodal composition, and cultural literacy (Journal of Second Language Writing, 2022). They also influence identity formation and emotional expression, particularly among younger generations such as Generation Z (Acta Psychologica, 2025). Memes provide a shared communicative resource that connects individuals, facilitates social cohesion, and allows for nuanced expression of feelings and ideas. Their widespread use and influence in digital spaces underscore the importance of studying memes as an integral component of contemporary communication (Shifman, 2014; Shifman & Burgess, 2008).

4. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) focuses on "understanding and describing semiotic resources and principles of the systems of meaning in order to understand how people use these resources in social contexts for specific purposes" (Jewitt, 2009). Multimodal discourse analysis deals with the analysis of discourse that looks into how meaning is derived from various means of communication. The major aspect MDA focuses on is visual representations. Semiotic resources are the gestures, colours, signs, symbols, and bodies used to examine an image. Semiotic resources are considered while examining the represented meaning of these images or visual representations. Also, with the help of semiotic resources, the images are examined beyond their surface meaning. Using images to disseminate information has become a popular

and faster means of communication. Several scholars have looked into MDA in different works, like Kress, van Leeuwen, Jewitt, Gee, Halliday, and many more.

The meanings derived from an image can be based on modes, which are the cultural or societal environment and beliefs of a community, as well as the knowledge and experiences of an individual. MDA examines the semiotic resources stated and the texts written in the visual representations in deriving meaning. They both work hand in hand to give a clear interpretation. One major mode that MDA examines is the theory of Kress (2001) and Van Leeuwen (2006) on multimodal discourse analysis. MDA examines the three metafunctions of Haliday, which align with Kress and Van Leeuwen's idea of MDA, which includes representational, interpersonal and compositional metafunctions.

The representation metafunction, also known as ideational metafunction, according to Halliday, examines the concept or idea trying to depict. Represented participants, known as RPs, are used to show what is going on in the image, and they could be human or non-human RPs. An image can either be narrative or conceptual under the representational meaning. Narrative images allow the audience to come up with their own story in relation to the vectors of motion shown in the image. These vectors of motion include limbs, bodies and tools in the image. With these, an action is being performed, and there is a receiver. The narrative image now falls under one of the following processes: action, reactional, speech and mental process, and conversion process. For a conceptual image, the RPs are not performing any action, and the image is classified under the classificatory, symbolic or analytical process.

The meaning derived at the interactive metafunction deals with the relationship between the RPs and how they are viewed by the audience. This means that the viewers can understand the image with the help of some things shown or done by the RPs. Images here are then analysed based on contact, social distance and attitude. Contact deals with the use of the gaze of the RPs to the viewers. This contract is divided into demand and offer. Demand deals with the RPs looking directly at the viewers, while the offer looks at other RPs in the text. Demand is also divided into two. It can be that the RPs are trying to seek the viewers to go into a world of imagination to understand the meaning of the image or directly address the viewers. Social distance deals with

how close RPs appear to the viewers, showing their intimacy or social distance. Intimacy could also mean how the image is related to the real happenings in the viewer's world and the viewer's ability to relate to that happening. The RPs can now be examined in the following ways: intimate distance, close personal distance, far personal distance, close social distance, far social distance, and public distance.

Attitude/Perspective deals with the angles in which the RPs are placed. This could be vertical or horizontal. The horizontal angle examines how the RP faces the viewer, which could be done obliquely or frontally. The vertical angle examines the relationship between the RP and the viewer and that of the RPs within the text. The image is examined in terms of its linguistic texts at the compositional level. This combines the first two metafunction levels in deriving an image's meaning. Therefore, the image is divided into information value, salience, and framing to examine the meaning. Informational value looks into the image, uses lexical words that tell the happenings, and gives other information. The informational level is then divided into the given, the new, ideal, real, and central information. Salience deals with how the image painted by the RPs attracts the attention of the viewer's once seen. It examines the size of the RPs, the major RP being focused on (for instance, human RPs milking a cow; the cow is an animal RP that would necessarily be bigger than the human RPs in the image. It is the major focus.), tonal contrast, colour contrast, and the foregrounded element and things in the background of the image.

5. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a critical theory of language that examines how language is spoken and written based on one's social context (Luo, 2023). Different scholars like Roger Fowler, Norman Fairclough, and many more worked on CDA. It is vital for examining the complex relationships between language, power, and ideology. As regards this, KhosraviNik (2020) says that "Social media platforms have become key sites for the reproduction and challenge of dominant discourses, and CDA can help us understand how language is used to shape and contest political and social identities online". CDA can then be said to highlight the understanding of how language shapes and is shaped by different contexts, especially the social

and political contexts. Due to the relationship between language and society, society has a way of influencing discourses, i.e. meanings can be derived from a discourse based on the social context in which it is used. For instance, there are some linguistic elements that are specific to a social community, and one has to understand them before being able to infer the meaning of the words used.

CDA goes further to examine words used in a multimodal element. It examines how an idea is portrayed in an image using language and the power or strong force it carries to make an effect. This is further expressed with Fairclough's (1995) processes of analysing discourse and Van Dijk's (2014) Socio-Cognitive Approach. The processes deal with the description, interpretation and explanation of the discourse. At the same time, the socio-cognitive approach examines the influence of social things on one's perspective of the world, which can be seen from their dialogues. The cognitive process of creating and interpreting discourse is known as mental models.

6. Methodology

This research employed a qualitative approach to investigate the representation of the Nigerian economy in internet memes. A total of six memes were collected from diverse social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other internet sites. The selection of memes was guided by purposive sampling, which ensured that only memes directly addressing the state of the Nigerian economy, inflation, or currency devaluation were included. Additionally, convenience sampling was applied to capture memes that were readily accessible and widely circulated at the time of data collection. This combination allowed the study to focus on relevant, impactful, and timely content while ensuring diversity in representation.

The study adopted Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal discourse analysis framework and Van Dijk's (2015) critical discourse analysis to examine the selected memes. The multimodal discourse framework enabled the researchers to analyze how visual, textual, and spatial elements combine to convey meaning, considering representational, interactive, and compositional

metafunctions. At the representational level, the study identified the participants, their actions, gestures, and expressions, and how these elements contribute to storytelling or narrative construction. The interactive metafunction was used to examine how memes engage audiences through gaze, social distance, and perspective. The compositional metafunction considered the layout, colour, framing, salience, and balance of elements to understand how meaning is structured visually and textually.

In addition to multimodal analysis, the study applied Halliday's three metafunctions, focusing on ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions to explore how memes convey ideas, attitudes, and societal norms. Memes were analyzed in relation to human ideologies**,** particularly how economic perceptions and socio-political beliefs are reflected in humor, satire, and symbolic representations. The socio-cognitive approach**,** including mental models, was applied to interpret how memes shape, reinforce, or challenge viewers' understanding of economic issues such as inflation, devaluation, and corruption. This allowed the researchers to link visual and textual semiotics with audience interpretation and social cognition.

7. Data Analysis

Nigerian Inflation

Figure 1. Naira plunges to 1,025/$

https://images.app.goo.gl/pzXewcFtzW782DXn8.

Figure 1 presents five Representational Participants (RPs). The first RP is a man wearing glasses, green overalls, blue trousers, and a face mask. The second RP is a woman who appears to be crying, dressed in yellow and pink attire. The third RP is a man wearing an orange shirt, purple trousers, and a white mask. The fourth RP is a man dressed in corporate blue and red attire, carrying a black suitcase containing dollar notes. The fifth RP is a man assumed to be sick, wrapped in a white cloth and lying on a stretcher. This image narrates the devaluation of the Nigerian currency (naira) in relation to the US dollar.

At the level of representational metafunction, Figure 1 is a narrative image. The motion vectors, such as limbs and bodies, contribute to this classification. The RPs engage in a speech process, using balloon-shaped speech bubbles to convey their thoughts or dialogue, visible above their heads. The reactional process is evident in the eye lines of the RPs, expressing their mood and understanding of the situation. Their expressions reveal contrasting emotions: one RP is happy about the naira's devaluation, while the female RP is sad, representing the suffering Nigerian citizens. The female RP represents the citizens of Nigeria who are suffering and tired because the increase in exchange rates makes things difficult.

Figure 1 is an offer image with public social distance at the levels of interactive and compositional metafunctions. The image presents two divisions of informational value: the given information ("Naira Plunges to 1,025/$") on the left side and the ideal information in the balloon-shaped speech bubbles. The RPs have equal salience, with balanced tonal and colour contrast. The colours represent various aspects of Nigeria, such as hope (green) and fraudulent currency exchange (dollar racketeer). The image features pictorial framing, connecting all elements within. Under the context model, the language used is English, and the words convey the critical condition of the naira. The words used in the image show the critical condition of the naira, with phrases like "dollar racketeer" explaining those involved in fraudulent currency exchange.

Semiotic Resources

Visual Elements and Colour: Figure 1 utilises a minimalistic design with a significant focus on spatial arrangement and colour contrast. The central figure, which is prominently placed, uses

high-contrast colours (such as red against a black or white background), drawing the viewer's attention immediately. The simplicity of the design, combined with bold colours, suggests a sense of urgency or importance, likely intended to evoke a strong emotional response from the audience.

Textual Integration: The text is integrated into the design in a way that it does not overpower the visual elements but rather complements them. The choice of typeface, size, and colour of the text ensures that it remains legible while reinforcing the message conveyed by the visual. The alignment and positioning of the text in relation to the central figure create a balanced composition, guiding the viewer's eye through the image smoothly.

This figure demonstrates how visual elements and textual integration work together in a multimodal discourse to create a powerful and cohesive message. The use of colour and spatial arrangement plays a crucial role in shaping the viewer's interpretation, making the figure effective in conveying its intended message. Future research could explore how different colour schemes and spatial arrangements affect audience perception and emotional response in similar multimodal contexts.

Figure 2. #Tomato price keep running

https://x.com/RoshanVars79963/sta-tus/1673692415558057986?s=20.

The visual image 2 depicts four human Representational Participants (RPs) dressed in numbered sportswear, representing different categories of items affected by inflation. They are shown on a running track, with the RP labelled "tomato" leading, indicating the highest price increase. According to Figure 2, the prices of tomatoes, petrol, footwear, and diesel have risen, negatively impacting the Nigerian economy and leading to high inflation. This image simply pictures the rise in the price of goods, with the RP labelled "tomato" leading, followed by petrol, footwear, and then diesel.

At the level of representational metafunction, Figure 2 is a narrative image featuring motion vectors and processes that enable viewers to create a story. The action process is evident in the RPs' postures, while the reactional process is shown through their eyes and emotions. The conversion process links the RPs through their shared experience of price increases. The interactive metafunction reveals a demand and offer image, with the first RP addressing the viewer directly while the others represent an offer image. This image also represents a "Far social distance" as the RPs' whole body and surroundings are visible to the viewers. Concerning the image's perspective, it is presented obliquely and has a medium eye level with the viewers.

At the compositional metafunction level, the image presents three types of information value: given, new, and ideal. The given information shows a race between tomato, diesel, petrol, and shoes, explaining the rise in the price of goods in Nigeria. The new information is that if the price of things continues to increase, it will become extremely difficult for the citizens of Nigeria to cater to their needs, leading to a poor economy. The ideal information is 'Tomato Price Keep Running' at the top of the image, explaining that edibles are the fastest things that can increase in price. The image has a balanced colour contrast, with colours representing various aspects of Nigeria, such as faith, stability, wealth, and power. The colours used in the memes give further representations, including black for wealth and power, green and blue for faith and stability, and yellow for unripe tomatoes. The visual image also has a pictorial frame that helps link all elements embedded in the image. Considering the context model of the above image, the meme makers and the audience have a shared knowledge of the language used in the image, which is the English language.

Semiotic Resources

The use of Iconography and Symbolism: Figure 2 employs specific icons or symbols that are likely culturally significant or contextually relevant to the audience. These icons are strategically placed within the image to convey a specific message or evoke particular associations. The symbolism here is subtle but effective, relying on the viewer's prior knowledge and cultural context to fully grasp the meaning.

Interaction Between Text and Image: The textual elements in Figure 2 are carefully placed to interact with the icons, creating a dialogic relationship between the two modes. The text may provide clarification or additional context to the icons, ensuring the intended message is clear. The choice of language, font, and colour in the text aligns with the visual tone of the icons, creating a harmonious multimodal ensemble. The analysis of this figure highlights the importance of iconography and symbolism in multimodal discourse.

Figure 3

Figure 3 depicts a single Representational Participant (RP) expressing sadness and despair due to the devaluation of the naira, making the Ten naira note nearly worthless. The image represents

Nigerian citizens' feelings towards the naira's value and how things were better in the past. At the level of representational metafunction, Figure 3 is a narrative image, identified through the RP's limbs and gestures, involving a reactional process that explains the RP's feelings and thoughts. The RP has greater salience to his environment, capturing the viewers' attention easily. The image's balanced tonal and colour contrast contributes to its effectiveness. The tonal contrast is evident in the different shades of brown, while the colour contrast is seen in the mixture of dark and light colours (grey, brown, red, and black).

The interactive metafunction of Figure 3 is a demand image, using gestures to create an image in the viewers' minds. The RP appears to be shedding tears while deep in thought, with his hand slightly covering his face, creating an intimate distance from the viewers. The image presents the sorrow of citizens regarding the rise in prices and naira devaluation. At the compositional metafunction level, the image has one aspect of informational value: the ideal information, revealing the RP's distressed thoughts due to the loss of purchasing power. The colours used in the image represent various aspects of Nigerian society, such as power (black), which refers to the value of money. The entire image has a frame connecting all elements together.

The context model reveals a shared knowledge of the Pidgin language used to convey the intended message. The meme user employs Pidgin, understood by all classes in society, to express the thoughts and feelings of Nigerian citizens. The image refers to a period when the naira had value and things were cheaper, unlike the present, highlighting the people's sadness and hope for government intervention. The image effectively conveys the emotions and thoughts of Nigerian citizens regarding the devaluation of the naira and inflation. Using a single RP, gestures, and expressions creates a powerful narrative, making the image relatable and engaging. The image's message is a true scenario prevalent in West Africa, where uncles are considered good from children's perspectives whenever they are given gifts, especially biscuits.

Semiotic Resources

Visual Metaphor and Layout: In Figure 3, a visual metaphor is employed to convey a complex idea in a simplified manner. The layout of the figure is designed to draw the viewer’s attention to

the metaphorical elements first before guiding them to the supporting textual information. The arrangement of these elements is crucial, as it ensures that the viewer understands the metaphor before interpreting the rest of the figure.

Textual Emphasis and Typography: The text in Figure 3 is designed to complement the visual metaphor, providing essential context or interpretation. The typography is chosen to align with the theme of the metaphor—whether through style, size, or colour ensuring that it reinforces the visual message. The emphasis on certain words or phrases through bolding or colouring helps to draw attention to key aspects of the message.

This figure's analysis illustrates the role of visual metaphor in multimodal discourse, particularly how it can simplify complex ideas and make them more accessible to the audience. The figure creates a cohesive multimodal message by integrating textual elements that support the metaphor.

The Corruption of the Government

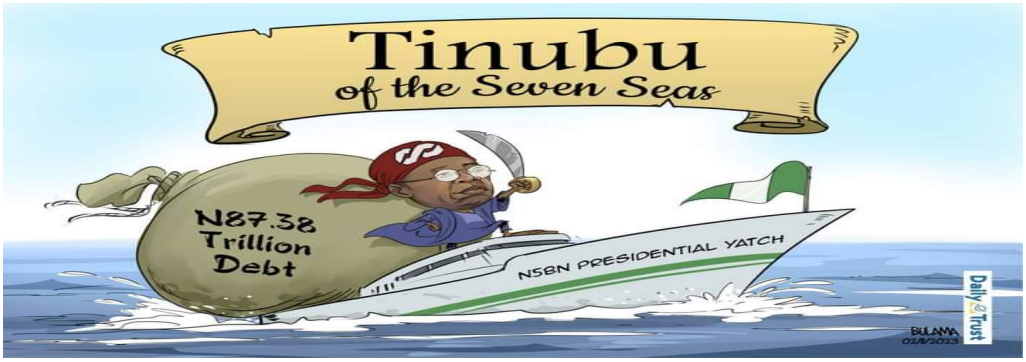

Figure 4. Tinubu of the seven seas

https://www.facebook.com/100046946863735/posts/868916194683268/?mibextid=EVDHJDB9vBtcBeCT.

Figure 4 features two non-human Representational Participants (RPs) and one human RP. The human RP is Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the President of Nigeria, dressed in blue native attire and a red cap, holding a pirate knife. The non-human RPs are a grey and green yacht representing Nigeria

and a large bag symbolising Nigeria's debt. It is a narrative image involving an action process that connects the RPs through motion vectors like limbs and bodies at the level of representational metafunction. The image depicts the President's actions, which could lead to Nigeria's downfall amidst the country's instability due to debt, inflation, poverty, and poor governance.

Under the interactive metafunction, Figure 4 is an offer image, as the human RP's gaze is directed at the other in-text elements, not the viewers. The social distance between the RPs and viewers is far, with a formal and impersonal relationship. The RPs are positioned obliquely to the viewers. At the compositional metafunction level, there are three areas of informational value: given (N87.38 trillion debt), new (N5BN Presidential Yacht), and ideal (Tinubu of the Seven Seas). The image features balanced tonal and colour contrast, with colours representing various aspects, such as power, serenity, danger, innocence, hope, and Nigeria's wealth.

The context model uses unique words, with the statement "Tinubu of the Seven Seas" derived from the movie "Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas." The image's message contrasts the movie's story, showing Bola Ahmed Tinubu navigating Nigeria's heavy debt burden. The colours represent warmth, power, mystery, serenity, danger, innocence, and hope, with additional meanings for green (Nigeria's wealth) and white and green (Nigeria). The image effectively conveys the President's actions and impact on Nigeria's stability, highlighting the country's struggles with debt, inflation, poverty, and poor governance.

Semiotic Resources

Colour and Contrast: Figure 4 uses a bold colour palette to create contrast and draw attention to key elements of the image. The use of contrasting colours highlights specific parts of the figure and creates a visual hierarchy, guiding the viewer's eye through the composition deliberately. This visual hierarchy is essential in ensuring the viewer processes the information in the intended order.

Spatial Arrangement and Framing: The spatial arrangement of elements in Figure 4 is carefully designed to create a balanced composition. The framing of certain elements within the image

adds emphasis and helps to isolate important information from the rest of the visual content. This use of framing and spatial arrangement contributes to the overall readability and clarity of the figure, making it easier for the viewer to understand the message.

The analysis of this figure underscores the significance of colour contrast and spatial arrangement in multimodal discourse. These semiotic resources are critical in shaping how the audience perceives and interprets the information presented.

Figure 5. Nigerian hospitalised in a foreign land

https://images.app.goo.gl/XiD2LMJXujopx9iE9.

Figure 5 features three Representational Participants (RPs): two men recognised as Nigerian leaders, Mohammad Buhari and Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and a bus. The leaders are dressed in distinct attire, lying on a hospital bed while taking a drip, symbolising their actions in using Nigeria's financial resources for personal medical treatment abroad instead of providing adequate medical services in the country. At the level of representational metafunction, the image is a narrative involving vectors of motion, action, reactional, and speech processes, conveying the government's actions on the nation's finances and the consequences of their decisions.

Under the interactive metafunction, Figure 5 offers an image examining the RPs' gaze and public relationship distance with the viewers. The image presents a national issue, with more than three RPs, and is obliquely presented to the viewers. At the compositional metafunction level, the

image involves two types of informational value: ideal and real. The ideal information states 'Nigeria is hospitalised', while the real information reads 'In foreign land', conveying how Nigeria's resources are taken to other countries. The two human RPs have greater salience, attracting attention as significant figures in the Nigerian government.

The image features balanced colour and tonal contrast, with colours representing various aspects, such as energy, hope, survival, danger, and the sinking economy. The context model reveals a shared knowledge of English and Pidgin languages between the meme user and the audience. The image conveys a message, urging the government to search for the "Book of Peace" to restore the country to a glorious state, highlighting the need for change in Nigeria's leadership and governance.

Semiotic Resources

Layering and Depth: Figure 5 employs layering to create depth within the image, adding a three-dimensional quality to the visual content. This use of layering allows for a more complex narrative to be conveyed, as different layers can represent different aspects of the message. The interplay between these layers creates a dynamic composition that engages the viewer and encourages them to explore the image in more detail.

Textual Integration and Symbolism: The text in Figure 5 is integrated into the layered composition, often placed in a way that interacts with the visual elements to enhance the overall message. The use of symbolism within the text—whether through specific word choices or references—adds additional layers of meaning to the figure, making it more engaging and thought-provoking.

This analysis highlights the role of layering and symbolism in creating complex multimodal messages. By exploring how these semiotic resources interact within a layered composition, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how multimodal discourse can convey nuanced and multifaceted messages.

Figure 6. Taxes

https://images.app.goo.gl/bieEs1aHor8i5wfQ8.

Figure 6 features two Representational Participants (RPs): Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the President of Nigeria, and a citizen representing the Nigerian people. The President is seated in the office of power, dressed in blue attire with a white and orange cap, while the citizen is being squeezed, symbolising the burden of taxation. The President's protruding tummy represents politicians enjoying the citizens' hard labour, while the citizen's skinny appearance shows the effects of taxation.

At the level of representational metafunction, the image is a narrative involving vectors of motion, action, and reactional processes. The President's gesture of squeezing the citizens results in an increase in goods and services, highlighting the rise in prices and concerns of goods and services operators. Under the interactive metafunction, Figure 6 is an offer image with a far social distance and oblique presentation to the viewers. The image shows politicians taxing citizens at an extreme rate, metaphorically using their blood to pay for it.

At the compositional metafunction level, the image has three informational values: given (Nigerian Coat of Arms logo), new (potential consequences of continued taxation), and real (Taxes). The image features balanced tonal and colour contrast, with colours representing hope, wealth, and poverty. Green represents the hope and wealth of the people being drained by the government, while other colours have additional meanings. The context model reveals a shared

knowledge of the language, with the image conveying a plea to reduce taxation and promote economic growth.

Semiotic Resources

Typography and Colour Interaction: Figure 6 relies heavily on the interaction between typography and colour to convey its message. The bold, assertive typography and striking colours create a strong visual impact that immediately captures the viewer's attention. The colour of the text is carefully chosen to contrast with the background, ensuring readability while reinforcing the overall tone of the message.

Visual Focus and Emphasis: The figure uses visual focus techniques, such as central placement and size differentiation, to emphasise key parts of the text. This emphasis helps guide the viewer's eye to the most important information first, creating a clear and direct communication of the message. The strategic use of colour and typography ensures that the figure is visually appealing and effectively conveys its intended meaning. The analysis of Figure 6 demonstrates the importance of typography and colour in multimodal discourse. These semiotic resources create a visually compelling and easily interpretable message.

Conclusion and observation

This study employed Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine memes representing Nigerians' attitudes towards the country's economy. At the representational level, the analysis revealed two aspects of Nigerians' attitudes: the government's lack of concern for the economy and citizens' displeasure with the situation. The corruption and looting of funds by government officials were depicted in memes, highlighting the root cause of Nigeria's economic instability. At the interactive level, the analysis showed that most memes were presented obliquely, with some capturing the audience's attention more than others. The relationship between the represented participants (RPs) was formal and impersonal, reflecting the social and economic divide between the rich (leaders) and the poor (citizens). The compositional level revealed that colours used in the memes embodied deeper meanings, such as red symbolising danger and green representing wealth. The analysis also revealed that meme

producers and audiences shared a common language and context. The use of unique words, nicknames, and visual images allowed for a deeper understanding of the issues and experiences shared by both parties. The study demonstrated how memes communicate people's thoughts on societal issues, reflecting their attitudes, experiences, and knowledge acquired over time. The analysis showed the government's apathy towards economic issues, citizens' discontent, and the pervasive corruption that underpins Nigeria's economic instability.

Future research could also compare memes with other forms of political expression, examine how contextual factors like culture and socioeconomic status shape attitudes, and investigate how memes can inform policy-making and contribute to more effective governance. Analysing how memes can foster social cohesion or exacerbate divisions, particularly in contexts of economic inequality, could also provide valuable insights. Finally, refining multimodal and critical discourse analysis methods could better capture the complexities of meme communication and attitudes towards economic issues.

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