

Language and National Security: A Semiotic Analysis of Logos of Selected Nigerian Military and Security Agencies

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Abstract

The defense units of Nigeria form the bedrock of the nation's security, and a concrete understanding of their symbols necessitates linguistic interpretation for clarity and cultural appreciation. This paper conducts a semiotic analysis of selected logos of Nigerian military and security agencies with the aim of revealing the implied meanings and representations embedded within these symbols. Deploying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Social Semiotics as the theoretical framework and the descriptive qualitative method of analysis, the study analyses ten (10) logos of Nigerian military and security agencies, which are purposively selected from their official websites. The analysis seeks to espouse the significance of the graphics, writing, colour, lettering and symbol of the selected logos. The study reveals that the logos of Nigerian military and security agencies often incorporate symbols representing qualities like strength, hope, defense, and loyalty. This suggests that these agencies aim to convey a sense of power, optimism, protection, and commitment through their visual identities. The paper concludes that the utilisation of semiotic inputs holds a significant and ongoing relevance within the context of contemporary security concerns. As a result of its findings, the research recommends the integration of semiotic analyses as an integral component in addressing and managing security issues within the country's security apparatus.

Keywords: Language; logos; security; semiotics; visual identities

Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in fostering national security. It is essential for effective communication within the intelligence and defense agencies, diplomacy, and international relations. Oladipo (2020) asserts that "language is a powerful tool in human communication... [it] is a tool for communication and it is powerful in every human society" (p. 94). Okata (2016) defines language as "the vehicle that transports feelings, emotions, ideas, thought processes etc. from one entity to another. This could be sign language, written language, body language and other paralinguistic means of communication which must be acceptable by members of a community for the purpose of communication." (p. 171). Language can further be described as the means by which members of a speech community use voluntarily placed signs and symbols to communicate or relay information from a speaker to a listener or from a writer to a reader. The study of signs and symbols is referred to as semiotics.

Sadia (2018, p. 1) asserts that semiotics as a field of language study examines how people use signs and symbols as a means of presenting ideas and generating meaning in communication. Semiotics is an area of sociolinguistics which is concerned with explicating the meaning of a symbol, image or gesture. According to Danesi (2010), "semiotics is ultimately the form of inquiry into how humans shape raw sensory information into knowledge-

based categories through the use of forms that stand for categories...” (p. 10). This simply means that users of a particular language can conventionally shape a sensitive message around a unique symbol such that members of the speech community have a unified understanding when such form or symbol is visually presented to them. In essence, the aim of a semiotic analysis is to investigate the creation and communication of meaning. According to Erton (2018), “studies in modern linguistic theory to determine the scope and vision of human communication have shifted their attention to semiotics, in which actions speak louder than words as some say.” (p. 267). In clear terms, semiotics is basically concerned with the unspoken messages or unvoiced information inherent in an image or symbol which could be a logo, picture, statue, among others.

Logos are powerful symbols that often convey hidden meanings and representations beyond their surface design. In the context of military and security agencies in Nigeria, these logos serve as crucial visual elements that communicate not only the agency’s identity but also its values, missions, and societal roles. Thus, the logos of Nigerian military and security agencies play a significant role in shaping public perception and understanding of these agencies. However, the semiotic dimensions of these logos remain largely unexplored. This study therefore embarks on a semiotic analysis of selected logos of Nigerian military and security agencies with the intention to delve beneath the visual aesthetics and uncover the implied meanings and representations embedded within these symbols. The study’s research problem seeks to address the following questions:

- i. What are the underlying semiotic codes and symbols within the logos of selected Nigerian military and security agencies?
- ii. How do these semiotic elements convey meaning and representations related to the agencies’ identity and missions?
- iii. Are there common semiotic patterns or themes across the logos of different Nigerian military and security agencies?

National Security

National security is a fundamental obligation of any government in power. In this paper, the concept of national security is the protection, safety and freedom of the citizens of Nigeria irrespective of the ethnicity, traditions, status and national dichotomies. It is simply the ability of a country’s government to protect its citizens, economy and other institutions. Momoh and Obara (2022, p. 17) opine that “national security has been a challenging and disturbing issue in Nigeria.” They further note that “several efforts have been made by national security agencies to provide effective and endearing security mechanism, yet the problem of national security has continued to rear its ugly head” (p. 17). Many Nigerian government dispensations have employed several security strategies to end security crisis but some of these efforts have proved abortive as a result of ineffective communication and inappropriate use of language. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to expose how proper use of certain linguistic resources which are the selected military and security agencies’ logos can reduce or possibly impound illegal acts like abduction, raping, pedophilia, internet fraudulence, scamming, squandermania, assassination, embezzlement, killings and many others.

Language remains a major tool in the Nigerian security system. In fact, without language, many security activities like rescue, apprehension, fraud detection, investigation, scam alert, and danger relief cannot be carried out. In Nigeria and other parts of the world, language is the major instrument of security. One can largely assert that English language is the language of the armed forces as well as the military. Therefore the crux of this study is to analyse the semiotic features of selected logos of Nigerian military and security agencies with the aim of uncovering the implied meanings and representations embedded within these symbols.

Literature Review

Numerous scholarly investigations have explored the realm of multimodality and social semiotics in diverse channels of communication. Their objective has been to fathom how meaning is formulated and transmitted across various means of expression such as linguistic texts, images, gestures, and other non-verbal components. For instance, Yang (2016), taking the school badge of Xi'an Jiaotong University as a case study, employed the social semiotic approach to analyse the representational, interactive, and compositional meaning of the badge. The article showed that the school badge of Xi'an Jiaotong University constitutes linguistic text and image, and the combination of these social semiotic features vividly convey the rich meaning of the badge, which embodies the school's spirit and encourages its members. Similarly, using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic theory, Onipede (2018) examined the linguistic and sign aspects of church logos to see how visual semiotic signs have been used to preach the gospel and identify with the people. The analysis of the logos revealed that the logo designers used appropriate symbols and signs, that is, visual semiotic signs to communicate their intended messages, which centred on Jesus Christ.

Edefejirhaye and Ajilore (2019) undertook a semiotic analysis of coca cola's "share a coke" advertising campaign in order to deduce an understanding that explains its phenomenon success across the globe. Deploying individual differences theory and De Saussure's semiotic model, the study revealed that the campaign recorded a huge success in Nigeria due to the personalised nature of the product's advert (consumers' names printed on the bottles of drink), as well as the use of the social media to drive the campaign vigorously. Omolabi and Abiodun (2020) however deployed social semiotic theory of Kress and Van Leeuwen in analysing political cartoons in Nigerian newspapers. The authors explored the use of language in political cartoons in order to bring to the fore the covert meanings concealed in the cartoons, and to correct the societal ills in witty and humorous ways. The study revealed that cartoons enable readers to understand the difference between the linguistic and non-linguistic resources and how they are used together to create meaning.

Drawing upon the theoretical framework of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Social Semiotics, Akinmusuyi (2023) sought to unveil the underlying ideologies and socio-political messages conveyed through the strategic use of semiotic resources in cartoons related to #EndSARS movement in Nigeria. Akinmusuyi affirmed that the strategic use of visual metaphors, iconic representations, facial expressions, body language, colour, and verbal resources allows cartoonists to communicate the urgency for justice, challenge authority, call for social change, and mobilise support for the #EndSARS social movement. Itanghi, Cheo,

and Julius (2023) employed De Saussure and Barthes' theory of myth to highlight the meaning which educational billboards communicate through persuasion and symbolism to lure potential clients to patronise the schools. Their findings revealed that educational billboards have eye catching elements projected through textual description, plastic arts, iconic elements, linguistic features, and context. From a socio-semiotic perspective, Filani and Melefa (2014) explored nicknaming as a signification tool for identity reinvention among university undergraduates in University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and discovered that the use of irony in nicknames is a common tool for reinventing the identity of others.

Given the scarcity of research in this specific domain – linguistic analysis of logos of Nigerian security agencies, this study fills a crucial gap in the literature by deploying Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Social Semiotics to the logos of Nigerian military and security agencies. In an era where symbols and images hold immense power in shaping perceptions, a semiotic analysis of these logos becomes imperative. This study holds potential implications for diverse fields, including visual communication, semiotics, and even security studies. By unraveling the implied meanings and representations, it sheds light on how these agencies construct their public image, convey their values, and establish credibility. Furthermore, the findings contribute to a broader understanding of the socio-cultural and political contexts in which these logos operate.

Theoretical Underpinning

For this study, the theoretical framework is the Social Semiotic approach to multimodality developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006). This framework is rooted in the Systemic Functional Linguistics proposed by Michael Halliday (1978). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) expanded upon Halliday's work by introducing the concept of meaning as choice, which formed the basis for their social semiotic approach to the visual and their understanding of the visual as a mode. This development, according to Omolabi and Abiodun (2020), paved the way for the exploration of multimodality, enabling a discussion of important concepts like composition, modality, and framing (p. 154). Akinmusuyi (2023) notes that “[social semiotics] has subsequently evolved into a theory of creating multimodal signs through the contributions of Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen” (p. 4). The Social Semiotic theory is employed in this study since the theory is connected to symbolic interactionism. Hodge and Kress (1988) maintain that “meaning can be located within the field of semiotics or the process of context bound and conflict laden interpersonal interaction” (p. 20). The assertion explains that members of a speech community purposefully create semiotic resources that represent the values, ideas, beliefs and norms. Hodge and Kress provide various examples from diverse social contexts involving different modes of communication with a primary focus in writing and visual elements in print media like magazines and billboards (Akinmusuyi, 2023, p. 5). This present study is equally in line with Akinmusuyi's (2023) position of semiotics being a framework that thrives fully well on the print media in terms of images, motion pictures and many others.

In addition, Onipede (2018) submits that “a semiotic mode must be able to represent objects and their relations in a worldwide outside representational system” (p. 16). This simply implies that any image, sign, colour, graphics, or symbol on a security agency's logo must be

able to convey the message of peace and security to the Nigerian citizens generally. Therefore, the thrust of this paper is to examine and analyse selected logos of Nigerian military and security agencies. It investigates the intended meaning of the selected logos, the systematic composition of the logos and the patterns of representation adopted by each of the selected military and security agencies.

Methodology

The descriptive qualitative method of analysis is employed in this study in order to foreground the hidden messages of the selected logos of the Nigerian military and security agencies. This is in consonance with the works of Creswell (1998) and Moleong (2005) on descriptive qualitative method of research. The data for analysis were downloaded and retrieved from the official websites of the selected Nigerian military and security agencies. To enrich the diversity of perspectives in the analysis, ten (10) logos were selected from different military and security agencies in Nigeria using the purposive random sampling technique. These selected logos were labelled as Figures 1-10. The choice of ten security agencies' logos was precipitated by the desire to carry out a detailed analysis. Below is a list of the Nigerian military and security agencies whose logos are included in the analysis:

1. Nigeria Police Force
2. Department of State Security Service
3. Independent Corrupt Practice Commission
4. Economic Financial Crimes Commission
5. The National Intelligence Agency
6. Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
7. The Nigerian Army
8. The Nigerian Air Force
9. The Nigerian Navy
10. The Nigeria Immigration Service

Data Presentation and Analysis

The table below provides information on the semiotic composition of selected logos of Nigerian military and security agencies. It includes details about each agency's visual elements, such as symbols and colour schemes, used in their logos.

S/N	SECURITY AGENCY	IMAGE/SYMBOL	COLOUR
i.	Nigeria Police Force	Eagle, Elephant, Grass, Rod	Green, Blue, Red, Ash
ii.	Department of State Security Service	Horses, Circles, Eagle, Owl, Shield, Branch of a Tree	Green, Grey, Red, White, Yellow
iii.	Independent Corrupt Practice Commission	Eagle, Horses, Grass, Shield, Circle	White, Black, Red

iv.	Economic Financial Crime Commission	Eagle, Horses, Shield, Grass	Red, White, black
v.	National Intelligence Agency	Horses, Fishes, Globe, Shield, Eagle	White, Red, Brown
vi.	Nigeria Security & Civil Defence Corps	Eagle, Eye, Shovel, Axe, Grass	Black, white, Red, Green
vii.	The Nigerian Army	Eagle, Wheat Leaves, Cloud, Nigerian Flag, Horses, Shield	Red, Black, Yellow, White
viii.	The Nigerian Air Force	Cloud, Horses, Eagles, Grass	Cream,
ix.	The Nigerian Navy	Eagle, Anchor, Rope	Red, Blue, White, Yellow
x.	The Nigeria Immigration Service	Eagle, Book, Grass	Red, White, Yellow

Table 1: Semiotic Composition of Selected Nigerian Military and Security Agencies' Logos

Figure 1: Nigeria Police Force



Theme: The theme of this logo is security.

Symbol: This logo features an eagle perched atop a crest, an elephant standing on green grass, and right behind the elephant are two rods, which symbolise the power and authority of the Nigerian Police Force.

Interpretation: Generally, an elephant is the largest or biggest land animal. Terrestrially, it is found in Africa and it is no doubt the biggest land animal. Based on their massiveness, it is known for removal of obstacles and obstructions on its way. An elephant is intelligent, brave, courageous, strong and conscious of its surroundings. Just as we have these features, one can

fully assert that the elephant in the logo of the Nigerian Police Force symbolises the strength, bravery and loyalty of the force. Looking at the size of the elephant, the Nigerian Police Force is the largest security agency in Nigeria. The eagle in this logo represents truth, wisdom, strength, freedom and loyalty. It is a large and independent bird of prey. It does not fly in flocks and it has a perfect vision. In this logo, the red eagle stands on a crest which means that the Nigeria Police Force has a keen surveillance power because it monitors the activities of all citizens. The Police force is known to have a high sense of consciousness and alertness. The eagle here is also given a red colour just to foreground the sanctions that awaits anyone who disobeys the law. The green grasses represent Nigeria in all diversities and ethnicities.

Figure 2: Department Of State Security Service



Theme: The theme of this logo is security.

Symbols: The centre of the logo is occupied by an owl perched on a branch, which is surrounded by four circles of varying colours. The top part of the logo features the coat of arms of Nigeria. The coat of arms represents Nigeria as a whole. In a typical Nigerian society, an owl is a symbol of transformation, intuition and wisdom. Mythical sources especially the Yorubas believe that an owl has some form of spiritual undertones.

Interpretation: The Nigerian coat of arms is displayed at the upper part of the logo to demonstrate that the State Security Service is under the control of the Nigerian government, with the eagle standing for Nigeria's beauty and truth and the horses for the country's strength. The owl in this logo represents the deepest sense of intellectual prowess of the State Security Service. The presence of many colours suggests that the agency's mission and responsibilities are multifaceted and involve a wide range of activities and tasks. It symbolises their dynamic and active role in protecting and serving the nation. This security outfit is known for

investigating serious matters within any of the thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria with a high sense of intelligence and alacrity.

Figure 3: Independent Corrupt Practice Commission



Theme: The theme of this logo is security.

Symbol: The Nigerian coat of arms is inscribed in a circle. In this circle, we have the white horses symbolising purity, dignity and strength in the duties of Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC). The red eagle represents the strength and the sharp sense of reasoning as well as the determinative power of an eagle. The wavy white pall represents the meeting of the Niger and Benue Rivers at Lokoja, Kogi State of Nigeria, while the black shield represents the fertile soil of Nigeria. The name of this security agency is written boldly as an acronym under the Nigerian coat of arms.

Interpretation: The logo of the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) is a symbolic representation of the agency's mission and values. The use of the Nigerian coat of arms, with its various elements, conveys a powerful message about the agency's stance against corruption and its commitment to transparency and accountability. The inclusion of white horses in the logo (symbolising purity, dignity, and strength) suggests that the ICPC is dedicated to upholding the highest standards of integrity and ethics in its mission to combat corrupt practices. Eagles are known for their keen vision and ability to swiftly discern their targets. This element of the logo signifies the agency's determination and vigilance in pursuing and addressing corruption. The prominent display of the agency's acronym under the Nigerian

coat of arms indicates that ICPC operates under the authority and control of the Nigerian government. This reinforces the agency's status as a government entity entrusted with the responsibility of combating corruption at the national level.

Figure 4: Economic Financial Crime Commission



Theme: The theme of this logo is security.

Symbol: The major symbol in this logo is the face of an eagle which represents sensitivity and close monitoring. Eagles are renowned for having acute vision and being able to quickly identify their prey. The eagle is placed on a red background to show that there is an impending danger. Also, the Nigerian coat of arms is positioned above the eagle's head.

Interpretation: The face of the eagle, especially the eye, in this logo creates a sense of monitoring against economic fraud in all forms. The eagle eye is two-sided as it hovers round the economic activities of Nigeria in every sector. The eagle here depicts the close monitoring and keen surveillance EFCC gives to suspected fraudsters, scammers or thieves. Just as we have in Figures 1, 2, and 3, the Nigerian coat of arms in this logo shows that the Nigerian government bestowed authority on the commission. The white feathers indicate accountability and transparency of the commission. The red background shows danger or wrath looms over

apprehended culprits. Keen surveillance and extremely clear vision of an eagle can be likened to the commitment of this agency when handling economic or fraud related matters.

Figure 5: National Intelligence Agency



Theme: The theme of this figure is security.

Symbol: In this logo, the two fishes represent change. The coat of arms represents Nigeria as the mother that birthed the security agency (NIA). The globe represents Nigeria as a nation in Africa and in the world at large while the brown shade is a symbol of intelligence.

Interpretation: The presence of the coat of arms in the logo is significant as it symbolises Nigeria itself. Its positioning above the globe indicates the prominence of Nigeria within the global context. The logo conveys a strong sense of being rooted in a Nigerian speech community. This suggests that the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) is an institution deeply connected to and representative of Nigeria's identity and values. The globe in the logo symbolises Nigeria's presence and influence not only in Africa but also on the global stage. It signifies Nigeria's importance and role in international security matters. The brown colour used in the logo is interpreted as a symbol of intelligence. It represents qualities such as wisdom, dependability, and stability. This choice of colour underscores the agency's commitment to these traits in its operations. NIA's logo portrays the security outfit as an institution deeply tied to Nigeria's heritage and values, with a commitment to intelligence and adaptability in a rapidly changing world. It also highlights Nigeria's global significance and its role in maintaining security both nationally and internationally.

Figure 6: The Nigerian Army



Theme: The theme of this logo is security

Symbol: The eagle on the logo symbolises the strength, elegance and power of the Nigerian army. The eagle represents the surveillance power of the army. The triangle-like-six-pointed stars represent the unity of Nigeria as a country. The six edges of the star represent the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The red colour symbolises the wrath awaiting anyone who threatens the peace and security of Nigeria. The Arabic inscription below the logo is translated as “Nasrunminallah”.

Interpretation: The eagle, as also portrayed in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, is known for maximum consciousness and keen surveillance which is a fundamental obligation of the Nigerian army. This military agency is popularly known for their keen surveillance and maximum protection of lives and properties as well as defense against external attacks. Looking at the logo closely, the eagle is positioned on the six-edged star which means their surveillance and defense is over the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Therefore the Nigerian army is saddled with responsibility of defending Nigerians against security threats like kidnapping, war, insurgency, among other vices. The Arabic inscription below the logo is translated as “Nasrunminallah” which means “victory comes from God alone.” This assertion conveys the belief or understanding that success and triumph are ultimately attributed to a higher divine power or providence. It suggests that one’s achievements are not solely the result of personal efforts, but rather, they are influenced or determined by a spiritual force or the will of a deity. The Nigerian Army uses this

statement to express humility, gratitude, and reliance on faith in the face of success or favourable outcomes. The red colour signifies the looming danger, bloodshed or brutality that lingers over anyone that poses a threat to the peace and security of the country.

Figure 7: Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps



Theme: The theme of this logo is security/protection.

Symbol: The eagle here, just like it is represented in the previous logos analysed, represents the strength, determination and surveillance power of the security agency. The eye below the crest represents the cryptic or hidden monitoring power of the defence corps. The wavy white pall represents the confluence of Niger and Benue rivers at Lokoja, Kogi State. The shovel-like symbol on the left side depicts the ability of the corps to dig into the past secrets while the axe symbolises battle and work. A circle with the colours black, white, and red encloses the logo.

Interpretation: This logo embodies a multifaceted representation of the security agency's core values and capabilities. It conveys a message of strength, vigilance, discretion, commitment to action, and a unified approach to safeguarding the nation and its citizens. The eagle, a powerful and majestic bird of prey, is a widely recognised symbol of strength and vigilance. In this context, it signifies the agency's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the security of the nation. Its representation in the logo suggests that the agency is always watchful and ready to defend against threats. The hidden eye beneath the crest represents the agency's covert surveillance capabilities. It implies that the agency can discreetly monitor and investigate security threats without drawing attention to their activities. The shovel-like symbol on the left side of the logo signifies the agency's ability to dig into the past and uncover hidden or buried secrets. This suggests that the agency is not only concerned with current threats but is also

dedicated to uncovering historical information to ensure the defense of the nation. The axe symbolises both the readiness for battle and the willingness to work tirelessly. It conveys the agency's determination to defend citizens and take necessary action against threats. The circular enclosure around the logo reinforces a sense of unity and strength within the agency. The black, white, and red colours within the circle have specific meanings as well. Black often represents power and authority, white signifies purity and integrity, while red symbolises courage and sacrifice. Together, these colours suggest that the agency operates with authority, integrity, and courage in its mission to protect the nation. The phrase "defending the defenceless" summarises the mission and values of the security agency. This phrase suggests that the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) is committed to safeguarding and supporting individuals or groups who are vulnerable, powerless, or unable to defend themselves, ensuring their safety and well-being.

Figure 8: The Nigerian Air Force



Theme: The symbol of this datum is security/protection.

Symbols: The coat of arms is a symbol that embodies the essence of the entire nation of Nigeria. It is a unifying emblem that represents the collective identity and values of the country. The presence of the national coat of arms in the design signifies that the Nigerian Air Force was established by Nigeria itself, emphasising the agency's indigenous roots and connection to the nation. The national coat of arms is placed above an eagle in flight holding the national flag over wheat leaves, all in yellow. Beneath the wheat leaves is a scroll with the inscription "NIGERIAN AIR FORCE". The eagle here represents the flight power and keen surveillance

of the agency. The cloudy background is predominantly symbolic as it spells out the duty of the agency in terms of maintaining and securing the airspace of Nigeria.

Interpretation: This logo depicts that the primary responsibility of the air force is protection and security of the Nigerian airspace from external attacks, contraband, illegal use of abrasives or missiles that can threaten the peace and security of citizens living in the country. The eagle in flight is a powerful symbol of freedom, strength, and vigilance. In this context, it represents the capability of the Nigerian Air Force to operate in the skies, ensuring the security and defense of the nation. Naturally, an eagle flies in the air with an ability to soar high as a result of its strength. During the flight of an eagle, its vision is neither myopic nor blur as it still maintains a deep sense of surveillance on any form of external attacks. Just as the eagle is self-awakened, so also this security has a deep sense of responsibility. The eagle holding the national flag reinforces the agency's role in defending the sovereignty of Nigeria. Wheat leaves are often associated with abundance and prosperity. In this logo, the presence of the wheat leaves symbolises the agency's mission to protect and preserve the wellbeing of the nation. The scroll with the words "NIGERIAN AIR FORCE" prominently displayed beneath the wheat leaves serves to clearly identify the agency and its purpose. The cloudy background is a symbolic representation of the agency's duty to maintain and secure Nigeria's airspace. Clouds are often associated with the sky and the atmosphere, and by extension, with the airspace. The presence of clouds suggests the need for vigilance and readiness to protect against potential threats from above. The use of yellow throughout the design is interpreted as a symbol of optimism, hope, and enlightenment.

Figure 9: The Nigerian Navy



Theme: The theme of this symbol is security.

Symbol: The red eagle symbolises keen security and surveillance. It further reflects that danger awaits anyone that trespasses or threatens the security of Nigeria. The blue background symbolises trust and loyalty. The rope-like object below the red eagle represents protection. The anchor symbolises the force’s instrument of investigation and its commitment to the protection of the maritime area of the country against all forms of marine attacks.

Interpretation: Just like we have in every other logo analysed so far, the red eagle represents the fierceness, strength, keen surveillance, and strong determination of the naval officers. The blue background indicates the loyalty and commitment of the force to maintaining security within the maritime area. In addition, the sea colour is generally blue. The anchor sinking deep into the sea symbolises the unwavering commitment of the Nigerian Navy to its fundamental duty, which is to protect Nigeria’s maritime interests and maintain security in its territorial waters. The anchor represents the vital instrument used by the Nigerian Navy in its efforts to maintain maritime security. It serves as a powerful tool for impounding illegal goods and preventing unauthorised vessels from passing through Nigerian waters. The circular enclosure around the logo reinforces a sense of unity and strength within the agency. The phrase “NIGERIAN NAVY ONWARD TOGETHER” is inscribed within the circle. This phrase further reinforces the idea of unity and progress, and emphasises that the Nigerian Navy is moving forward as a unified force. The combination of the circular enclosure and the inscribed message creates a visual and symbolic representation of cohesion and strength within the agency.

Figure 10: The Nigeria Immigration Service



Theme: The theme of this logo is equally security

Symbol: The red eagle symbolises keen security and protection. The book centered within the wavy blue pall represents the national and international passports.

Interpretation: Looking at this logo, the red eagle is equally positioned on a crest as it is visibly seen above. It simply implies that this force oversees all international travels especially by air. An eagle flies by air and its sharp sense of sight and incredible strength makes it a highly unique bird. Just as the features of an eagle, the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) oversees or controls the movement of Nigerians in and out of the country. Initially, it would be recalled that the Nigerian coat of arms features a white wavy pall which symbolises the meeting point of River Niger and River Benue at Lokoja, Kogi State of Nigeria, but the colour of the wavy pall in the NIS logo is blue and a book is positioned at the centre. The blue colour of the wavy pall is symbolic as it gives an assurance of loyalty, commitment and trust to Nigerian citizens that the agency is committed to serving them and their service is devoid of tribalism, ethnicity and favouritism. The book positioned at the centre of the logo symbolises a passport used for international travels. In fact, to a large extent, no international travel can be done without this passport. Therefore, it is the duty of this security agency (NIS) to detect any case of passport forgery and apprehend any citizen who forges a passport or travels illegally.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the semiotic resources embedded in selected logos of Nigerian military and security agencies using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Social Semiotic approach to multimodality. The study showed that the logos of Nigerian military and security agencies often incorporate symbols representing qualities like strength, hope, defense, and loyalty. This suggests that these agencies aim to convey a sense of power, optimism, protection, and commitment through their visual identities. The analysis of the selected logos clearly revealed the occurrence of certain components to foreground the message being communicated to the general public about security. For instance, all the figures have a reoccurring semiotic resource, which is the eagle. The preponderant use of an eagle as a security symbol shows that many Nigerian security agencies are often committed to keen surveillance, maximum strength and dignity in discharging their duties. In addition, another semiotic resource linked to military and security agencies is the use of horse as we have in figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, which is a symbol of strength, power and relentless effort. From the analysis, it is clear that the selected military and security agencies made use of similar and vivid semiotic resources related to security to foreground their commitments, loyalty, dedication and activeness to the mandate they have been given by the Nigerian government.

Symbols or images like horse, eagle, owl, fish, coat of arms, globe, wavy pall, six-edged star, book and crest are used by each of the military and security agencies to help to foreground and propagate their mandates or commitments. These semiotic resources on the logos of military and security agencies serves as a warning against criminal activities like abduction, scamming, fraud, killing, raping, blackmail, exploitation, assassination, illegal migration, among other vices. The study further revealed that the presentation of the logos with their strategic deployment of semiotic resources serves as a continuous source of reassurance and safety for citizens and help to alleviate their distress during difficult times. While these logos of

Nigerian military and security agencies reflect their intended values and ideologies, such as strength, defense and loyalty, and convey a sense of protection and commitment, the actual state of security in the country tells a different story. The survey conducted by Mbaegbu and Duntoye (2023) highlights that 77% of Nigerian citizens feel profoundly unsafe in their country, primarily due to the perceived threats of theft, robbery, and kidnapping. This sentiment is reinforced by the 2023 Global Peace Index produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace, which ranked Nigeria 144th out of 163 independent nations and territories in terms of its level of peacefulness. These contrasting realities between the symbolism in military and security agencies' logos and the citizens' actual experiences highlight a significant disparity in the perception and the actual state of security in Nigeria. Hence, as revealed in the semiotic analysis of selected logos of Nigerian military and security agencies, the utilisation of semiotic inputs holds a significant and ongoing relevance within the context of contemporary security concerns. As a result of its findings, this research recommends the integration of semiotic analyses as an integral component in addressing and managing security issues within the country's security apparatus.

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