

Visual Representations as Tools for Communicating Emotions in the Reportage of ‘End SARS’ Protests in Some Nigerian Newspapers

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Abstract

This paper is an analysis of visual representations in the reportage of some Nigerian newspaper on the October 2020 ‘End SARS’ protests. The aim of the paper is to examine the communicative import of the visuals and the extent to which the use of visual representations to communicate the emotions of the protesters is achieved in the discourse. The paper adopts a descriptive research design by using the multimodal discourse analysis approach based on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) and Van Leeuwen’s Visual Representations. The data comprises twenty purposively selected visual representations. The Findings of the paper reveals that the use of placards, banners, inscribed shirts, road mappings are all visual resources employed by the protesters to drive home their points and they are signifiers that express or portray deep messages, strong agitations and demands, all of which are significant tools employed by protesters. The paper concludes that visual representations in the newspaper reportage of the ‘End SARS’ protests are viable tools employed by the protesters to communicate their emotions and press home their demands. This invariably contributes immensely to meaning making and enhances the messages, ideology, demands and agenda of the protest. The paper further suggests that newspaper editors should censor the visual elements in their reportage to reduce conflicts and minimize the breakdown of law and order.

1. Introduction

Mass demonstrations occurred throughout some major cities of Nigeria, accompanied by vociferous outrage on social media platforms as a protest against police brutality. This protests later metamorphosed into a movement called the ‘End SARS’ Protest. The slogan, ENDSARS calls for the disbanding of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a notorious unit of the Nigerian Police with a record of abuse on Nigerian citizens (<https://Punchng.com/endsars>). The protest takes its name from the slogan which started in 2017 as a Twitter campaign using the hash tag #EndSARS to demand the disbanding of the unit by the Nigerian government (*Aisha Salaudeen, 2017*).

After experiencing revitalization in October 2020 following more revelations of the abuses of the unit, about 28 million tweets bearing the hash tags have been accumulated on Twitter alone (<https://www.thecable.ng/October-20-the-end-sarsmemorial>). The protests witnessed a solidarity protests and demonstrations by Nigerians in Diaspora and sympathizers which occurred in many major cities of the world. The protests were notable because of their patronage by a demography that is made of entirely young Nigerians. Most media outlets captured the activities of the protests in real time situations and reported same in their newspapers and other news media.

Usman and Oghuvubu (2021, p. 4) asserted that ‘Media reports in recent years have widely covered protests across the world’. They played a major role in reporting the actions

and inactions of different groups. The 'End SARS' protests were no exception having been covered, visually and verbally by different media outlets. Extant studies on protests in Nigeria have gained attention from scholars from other non-linguistic fields. Hence, sufficient attention has not been paid to the visual aspects by linguists. Some of the linguistic studies that have examined the coverage of these 'End SARS' protests actions and inactions have emphasized the verbal representations, neglecting the visual representations of the reports. This study, therefore, examines and classifies the dominant visual representations in the selected newspapers in reporting the 'End SARS' protests.

In the pre-colonial Nigeria, during the days of empires and kingdoms, witnessed uprisings or "protests" according to Adelegan (21). For instance, the old Oyo empire under the Alaafin of Oyo, which controlled vast regions of today's Southwestern Nigeria, was a powerful monarchy. However, the system of government rested on the 'Ogboni' to avoid excesses by the Alaafin. In the same vein, on November 29, 1947, a protest was led by Madame Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti to demand the abolition of the tax on women in Abeokuta, amongst other welfare issues. The protest led to the abolishing of such tax law and even Alake of Egbaland abdicated the throne on January 3, 1949. This has been tagged as the 'Egba Women's revolt'; it motivated others to demand more and inspired other protests that followed at this period.

Post-independence Nigeria has witnessed and is still witnessing protests and demonstrations by citizens, labour unions, workers, secessionists, and opposition parties. Such activities ask for better welfare, or a change of policies or action against an oppressive regime or government institutions. These include the "SAP Riots" of 1989 and the "Ali Must Go" crisis that rocked the country in 1978. During the "June 12" protests against the military regime of General Sanni Abacha, scores of people were killed, including students.

By the 20th century, protests and demonstrations took another dimension, mostly the masses who were disgruntled over certain government policies manifested as demonstrations in the streets, marketplaces, or even government houses or institution buildings. This approach was more active, and involved the use of flyers, placards, and different dress attire to show their disgruntlement. Examples include the women of the Eastern colonial Nigeria's protest against the high tax levy imposed by the then colonial administration (1925-1930) (known as the "Aba women's riot").

In the twenty-first century, social media has changed the face of Nigerian protest. Some research draws its definition of social media from the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC): "Broadly, social media connotes a web-based enabled application platform that enables users to create or share contents interactively and responsively too... The common denominator is characterised by the fact that the conversations or contents are essentially user created and managed" (NCC 2019, cited in Usman & Oghuvubu, 2021, p. 5).

As demonstrated above, protests are not new in Nigerian or world history. Yet the year 2020 witnessed huge protests despite the pandemic and restrictions that came with the public health challenge, a viral threat that led to a repressive environment. The pandemic in fact created new protests as it triggered public health measures that were repressive; such measures drew political contestation, whether anger over lockdowns, government mismanagement of the public health crisis and funds, economic displacements, job loss, etc. People were cooped up, angry at government interference into their lives, stressed about health and economic factors,

and in general, sitting at home on social media and news sites. In this way, the rise in protests was exacerbated by the pandemic.

Within a few days of protests, on 11 October 2020, the Nigerian Police Force announced that it was dissolving the unit with immediate effect. The move was widely received as a triumph of the demonstrations. However, it was noted in many quarters that similar announcements had been made in recent years to pacify the public without the unit actually being disbanded, and that the government had merely planned to reassign and review SARS officers to medical centres rather than disband the unit entirely. (Ademoroti, 2020).

This paper is an application of the multimodal approach based on Halliday's and O'Halloran (1985, 1999)' Systemic Functional Linguistics and Van Leeuwen's (1999,2006) (visual representations) and David Machin's (2007). The study identified and classified the dominant visual characteristics of the visual representations in the selected newspaper reportage of the 'End SARS' protests. The basis of this analysis was that the study was hinged on a social semiotic approach that allowed us to examine language and visual data and how these basic components have been put together to form a unified whole for meaning making.

2. Literature Review

This reviews relevant literature on relevant concepts, relevant semiotic and multimodal theories, and some related earlier studies on earlier studies. This study revolves around certain concepts. The understanding of these concepts will make readers comprehend this study well. O'Guin, Allen and Semenik in Olateju and Oyeboode (21) assert that communication is fundamental to life itself. Communication has, gone beyond written and spoken means of language (communication). Diverse means like the use of colour, images, paints, gestures, pictures etc. have also come to be accepted as part of language for communication

This reinforces communication is multimodal in nature. It has gone beyond the ability to read and write alone, it encompasses every aspect of human interaction to print, physical gestures, art work, signs etc. Visual semiotics is a branch of semiotics that focuses on visual imagery or signs to convey different kinds of messages. Danesi (65) sees visual signs "as signs that are constructed with a visual signifier that is, with a signifier that can be seen (rather than heard, touched, tasted, or smelled). Visual signs/images range from colour, artefacts, pictures, cartoons, animations, drawings, graphics, etc. these are used to produce meaning and messages in communication.

The theory of visual language covers a wide range of topics, just like the study of spoken or signed languages Neil, (18). A visual language is a system of communication using visual elements. And the term 'language' in relation to vision is an extension of its use to describe the perception, comprehension and production of visible signs. An image that dramatizes and communicates an idea presupposes the use of a visual language. Just the way people can 'verbalise' their thinking, belief, ideology etc., so also an image, a map, painting among others are all examples of uses of visual language.

According to Gbenga in Ademilokun (28), meaning is said to be quiet elusive as it cannot be pinned down to a precise definition. The word 'meaning' is what a word means. He opines that words are actually polysemic, which means that they individually carry different meanings, thus denotative meaning of a word is the core, central or referential meaning of the

word found in the dictionary. This is a relation between a linguistic expression and what it refers to. The connotative meaning is the meaning that people associate with in a particular expression; it is personal or cultural meaning. It is indeterminate. Denotation is a translation of a sign to its meaning precisely to its literal meaning, more or less like dictionaries to define.

The ability to perceive colour in various forms is the basis of many sign-making and sign-using activities across the world.. But the naming process is hardly free of personal and cultural factors Danesi (69). The colour terms we use in English predisposes us to see “differential categories” of hue. Experts estimate that we can distinguish perhaps as many as 10 million colours. Obviously, then, our limited number of colour terms is far too inexact to describe accurately all the colours we are potentially capable of seeing. It is important to know the meaning of a given colour in a certain situation. To many people, colours are important sources of information, they influence us, and we make decision based on what we see and how we interpret them.

In every imaginative public space, visuals are presented for viewer’s consumption. On almost every public space available, images confront viewers. Yule (128) posits that “our interpretation of the meaning of the signs is not based solely on the words, but on what we think the writer intends to communicate. Olateju and Oyebode et.al (10) asserts that, “communication today has gone beyond language alone”. Several things (non-linguistics) now contributes to meaning, some of these are pictures, colour, fonts, shapes e.t.c., these non-linguistic elements can be referred to as visual resources or representation as it invokes a mental image. They are representations because they are signs that we can use to represent whatever we deem appropriate.

The term, ‘meta functions’ originates in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and is considered to be a property of all languages. SFL is functional and semantic rather than formal and syntactic in its orientation Ayodele(35). As a functional linguistic theory, it claims that grammar should be explained in terms of the function that language evolved to serve. Halliday (56), posits that, though languages vary in how and what they do, what humans do with them is the contexts of human cultural practice which are shaped and organized for specific purposes. These languages are organized in relation to three functions or meta functions. Michael Halliday (the founder of SFL) calls these three functions; the Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual. The ideational function is further divided into the experiential and logic.

The three meta functions are working together into the same linguistic unit, and they are of equal status and they operate simultaneously. Halliday (2004) reaffirms this assertion by saying that, any utterance is a harmony of choices across the three functions. The ideational function is the ideal behind every utterance as argued by Halliday (1976), the textual first is distinct from both the experiential and interpersonal because its object is language itself, language creates a semiotic world of its own, a parallel universal virtual reality in modern terms Halliday (2003) notes that Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) have extended the idea of Halliday’s meta functions to images, using a slightly different terminology. In justifying their claim on the functionalist of visual social semiotics, Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) state that:

Any image... not only represents the world (whether in abstract or concrete ways), but also plays a part in some interaction and,

with or without accompanying text, constitutes a recognizable kind of text (a painting, a political poster, a magazine advertisement, etc.).

Suffice it to say that just as language constructs reality, maintain human interaction and achieves cohesion in texts, images and other visual elements have inherent properties which also perform these functions. For instance, the picture of a cake sent to a birthday celebrant on a social media platform serves the function of felicitation and thus espouses interaction between the sender and the celebrant.

These three functional levels will be briefly examined. Representational meaning is “first of all conveyed by the (abstract or concrete) ‘participants’ (people, places or things) depicted”. Jewitt and Oyama (20). This has to do with what the participants (semiotic elements) signify or embody based on their visual semantic components. This level emphasizes the syntax of images (the ordering and meaning relationship among semiotic elements) in spatial relationship, for instance; that is, the arrangement of semiotic elements and their connectedness (if any). Furthermore, the interactive meaning relates with the potential of images in creating particular relations between viewers and the image. Here, the image proposes (or in some cases assumes) “the attitude viewers should take towards what is being represented”, (Jewitt and Oyama, (21). What this level of meaning does may be equated with what happens to us when we encounter a certain image. The reality the image represents may reinforce or conflict with our version of reality and as such we take standpoints to either reject or accept these representations. To achieve this potential, Jewitt and Oyama (21) opine that distance, contact, and point of view are three factors that play a major role.

The multimodal semiotic theory can also be called multimedia semiotics and social semiotics. It takes care of meta-function of language, that is, the function of language such as images, signs e.tc. This theory can be used to analyze non-linguistic form of language e.g. visual construction and it will assist in the interpretation of different modes of language such as signs, symbols, colours etc. that will further enhance or boost communication between the encoder and the decoder of a message.

Marcel Danesi worked on advertising discourse and he affirmed the fact that to create a personality for a product, one must construct a signification system for it. Furthermore Danesi discuss extensively on Iconic brand names and how effective they are, because they are memorable for example a name such as Ritz Crackers, for instance, assigns a sonority to the product that is simulative of sounds that crackers make as they are being eaten, as well as associating the product with the extremely expensive Ritz Hotel in London.

Bulut and Yuardaisik in Oyebode(79), carried out a semiotic analysis of visuals in advertising and how they generate meaning and convey messages in communication through viewers’ responses to identifying patterns of meaning construction. A focus group FG) study was carried out on forty five (45) University students at Cag University to draw insights on how their commercials will be interpreted. They investigate how the visual and linguistic signs in television commercials are used in creating meaning as produced by a group of viewers. Bulut and Yurdaisik’s semiotic study on advertisement on the Coca-Cola light commercial revealed that the elements of imagery (cola can, the woman, the man, the shirt, the mannequin,

the night dress, the shop, environmental structure, action and sound) in the commercial are tools that draw the viewers' attention to the product.

The result showed that semiotic analysis of visuals can be tested with viewers' responses to identify patterns of meaning thus attaching much importance to the viewers. It was also discovered that the visual and linguistic signs in television commercials contribute to the creation of meanings and interpretation of messages in advertising. The study further concludes that visual and non-verbal systems of communication do not require formal training for the viewers to understand the content of the message unlike the verbal form of communication.

Ayodele (2017) carried out a multimodal semiotic study of selected tertiary institutions' logos and mottos in Southwest, Nigeria. Her study revealed that logos and mottos of tertiary institutions are representations designed to promote the 'sales' of these institutions to prospective students through persuasion and propaganda aimed at influencing people to accept their ideological orientations, beliefs, tenets and identities. This public acceptance and identification will subsequently spur the target audience to enrol in the institution, their ideological orientations, aspirations and identities of these tertiary institutions are passed down from generation to generation through their graduands.

Chukwudi Usman and Ejiroghene Augustine Oghuvbu (2020) in the department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Arts, Delta State University carried out a research on the impact of the media on the 'End SARS' protests in Nigeria. The study discovered that while social media cannot be dismissed to have been utilized at some point in mobilizing the protesters and creating international awareness as to the state of the nation, the (social media platforms) created more panic in the society and tended to be more divisive and destructive due to fake, unverified and amateur presentation of information and over exaggeration of situations. The study therefore concludes that Nigerian youths could have been sponsored by ambitious politicians and that is why the Nigerian government needs to address the issues of concern, it also behoves on it to enforce strictly, the extant rules and regulations guiding what goes into the air. This is because Nigeria cannot be locked out of the age of digital technology in the 21st century.

Osisanwo (342) carried out a study on the visual representations of newspaper reportage of book haram terrorism in Nigeria. The mediated pictorial representations on Boko Haram escapades implicate the government as not sufficiently capable to confront the problem alone. Meanwhile, two tools – individualization and collectivization have been identified. Some of the social actors were individualized using different expressions that portray their identity, whittle others were collectivized, using postures that portray the similarity in their goals. On the other hand, the images were examined for other techniques such as setting, colour and arrangement. The temporal and spatial settings in the pictorial representations underscore the authenticity and reality in the atrocious acts. The study submits that the reporters and the newspapers generally give a negative perception of the Boko Haram terrorism.

The negative portrayal of the members of the group as terrorists, alongside other identity constructions, as identified in the visual images, implicate the group as a deadly group, bringing to the fore the need for immediate solution to the menace of the group in Nigeria. The study indicated an upsurge in the rate at which insecurity do break out across Nigerian cities especially in northern part is worrisome. It has put the unity and harmonious co-existence

among the various ethnic and religious groups under serious threat.. The study then concludes, that contrary to the widely held view that Nigerian Media indulge in unethical conduct in its reportage of national insecurity, and that ownership pattern do influence to some extent media content the Media, still do strive to ensure ethical reporting, and they also practice responsible journalism.

In sum, several of these studies were carried on different areas of visual representations on brands, communication and others worked on newspaper reportage of insecurities in Nigeria. Few scholars who worked on mass protests in Nigeria concentrated on the influence of social media on the broadcast. The ‘End SARS’ protests have also gained attention from scholars from other non-linguistic fields. However, sufficient attention has not been paid to the multimodal aspects by linguists. Some of the linguistic studies that have examined the coverage of these END SARS protests’ actions and inactions and have emphasized only the verbal representations, neglecting the visual representations of the reports. This present study, therefore, will enable us understand the visual representations and linguistic characteristics in the selected newspapers in reporting the ‘End SARS’ protests and how they communicate messages intended and how it relates to the Nigeria Socio-political realities.

3. Theoretical Framework

The importance and essentiality of theory in any academic study cannot be overemphasized; hence, Halliday’s (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics will be applied for understanding the various semiotic dimensions through which brands such as newspaper communicate intended and unintended meanings in their reportage. and how Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (visual)representations of social actors complements with other other relevant multimodal models to influence readers’ experiences in relation to activities of the ‘End SARS’ protesters.

Systemic Functional Linguistics is also “functional” because it considers language to have evolved under the pressure of the particular functions that the language system has to serve. Functions are therefore taken to have left their mark on the structure and organization of language at all levels, which is said to be achieved via metafunctions. The term metafunction is particular to Systemic Functional Linguistics. This deals with the theory and practice of analyzing meaning arising from the use of multiple semiotic resources in discourses which range from written, printed and electronic texts to material lived-in-reality, (O’Halloran, 8). It also explores the semantic expansion arising from the use of language and visual imagery in printed texts. As O’Halloran (9) notes, its major thrust is “Halliday’s (16) metafunctional principle which provides an integrating platform for theorizing how semiotic resources interact to create meaning.”

This Halliday’s metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) into multimodal analysis which according to O’Halloran (446) involves the “investigation of linguistic and visual forms of semiosis, and formulation of cross-function systems such as colour... and intersemiotic mechanisms and systems (content and expression strata) are developed to capture the expansion of meaning which occurs when linguistic and visual forms combine.” This study examines how the visual representations in the Newspaper Reportage of the ‘End SARS’ adequately convey the messages intended. The images will be analysed by examining the

subjects of the image, the setting of the image, the elements of the images and the colours in the image.

Different theories have been advanced on visual representations and analysis. The choice of Halliday's SFL and Kress and Van Leeuwen's image representation is that it is believed that the linguistic tenets in the representation of social actors allow us to think about the way classification is realized both linguistically and visually. and how van Leeuwen's (visual) representations of social actors complements with other relevant multimodal models to influence readers' experiences in relation to activities of the 'End SARS' Protests. The visual data will be classified according to the messages significant for meaning. The pictures in our data represent how the police brutality is portrayed by the 'End SARS' protesters. For most Nigerians who could not join the protests but share similar sentiments that SARS must end, the newspaper reportage give pictorial evidences of realities pertaining to the protests and its effects on all social actors including governments and civilians' reactions. The visual representations also show Nigerians' actual effects of these protests. There are instances of solidarity, suffering, death, prison, war, looting, combat, etc.

4. Methodology

The paper is the product of qualitative research. The study is descriptive because the data of contains mostly visual elements. The method of data collection was a secondary source of data collection. The size of the data for this study consists of 80(eighty) purposively selected visual representations in the newspaper reportage of 'End SARS' protests. The data were directly sourced from the internet. Much of the data was readily available on the web page of the selected newspapers, which made the collection relatively easy. Pictures and images of the protests across the country were downloaded from the newspapers. The data collected were carefully categorized and classified according to the messages portrayed in them. The visual characteristics were subjected to analysis.

The communicative import and the extent to which the intended meanings in the messages actualized the purpose and mission of the protesters were analysed. Some of these representation depicted are categorized to indicate which of the dailies were sympathetic towards the protests or against them and how are the participants pictorially represented on the front pages of the newspapers. This affords a broad range of samples reflecting perspectives on newspaper reportage of the 'End SARS' protest. The images and other visual representations were analysed.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

For accurate presentation and data analysis, the researcher uses descriptive and qualitative method in order to describe the collected data. The approach to the analysis is eclectic and multi-systemic. First, we Identify, classify and describe the images and characters in the visual representations in the selected newspaper reportage of the 'End SARS' protests, Also, Analyse the visual representations in the selected newspaper reportage of the 'End SARS' protests, the researcher investigates the visual categories of the reportage by structuring the visual elements such as images, shapes, fonts, colours, objects and natural images and symbols by discussing the meaning implications in them, especially as they inscribe and instantiate the messages of

the 'End SARS' protests. The researcher also investigates these visual representations *viz-a-viz* their symbolic, cultural and social implications. The texts in the images were analysed using Halliday's metafunction of language and Kress and Van Leeuwen's visual representation in accounting for the functionality of the language use in encoding messages. This research identifies, categorize and analyse all dominant visual resources or representations in the newspaper reportage of the 'End SARS' protests with the aim of analysing whether the papers effectively communicate or convey the agenda and the mission of the 'End SARS' protesters and the messages intended.

Datum A



In this Datum A, *The Punch* Newspaper reportage of the 'End SARS' protest was analysed. The *Punch* which was rated as the most widely read newspaper between 1998 and 1999 by the independent survey of the research and marketing services (RMS) Lagos. The paper was founded by James Aboderin in 1976. *The punch* has a history of taking a stance against government especially if it seems not sympathetic towards the masses. History has it that the

paper took a political slant most against the Shehu Shagari (the first democratically elected president of Nigeria) regime. It was noted that shortly before the regime's fall in the 1983 Nigerian Coup de tat, a few punch editors were aware of a coup approaching and injected strong anti-government tones in their reporting. The punch is widely read across Nigeria but has its headquarters in Lagos in Southwestern Nigeria. From the report of the 'End SARS' protest, the punch's report clearly shown the paper is in favour of the 'End SARS' protests as it also reports the protesters as being victims of harassment. IT must be noted that our approach is eclectic. The images used in the front page collaborates the fact that the protesters are being harassed by agents of government. The use of words such as attack, and grounded and the image of a man in black shirt being dragged by two men that looks like law enforcement agents. The 'End SARS' protesters wears black to mourn the death of young Nigerians that were falsely accused and brutally murdered by the policemen. This image can be categorized into The In-Group. Newspapers' reportage that belongs to this category are sympathetic towards the protests and they do not publish to favour government but the 'End SARS' protest.

Datum B



The nation is a daily newspaper published in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt, Nigeria. According to a 2009 survey, it was the most second most read newspaper in Nigeria and this result was repeated in a 2011 report by The Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVANS), Hollingsworth (164), The paper became the first of its kind to gain nationwide circulation across the 36 states of Nigeria within two years of operation. The image of the 'End SARS' protest here used by *The Nation* is of several buildings on fire. The building is being burnt, yet there is no image to actually indicate the perpetrators. The streets looks deserted. This visual representation implies arson, violence, chaos, and crisis. It must be noted that by not stating the perpetrators clearly indicates their style of being diplomatic and not taking sides. We can therefore categorise this report as a mediator, and being unbiased in their report.

Datum C



The Daily Sun is a Nigerian daily newspaper that operates from Lagos with a daily print run of 130,000 copies and 135,000 for weekend titles. This made *The Sun* the highest selling newspaper in Nigeria (www.wikipedis.org/sun). The only image of the report on the 'End SARS' protests is that of the president, whose bold face and unsmiling eyes is an indication of a determined president ready to deal with the protesters. The newspaper's choice of 'hooligans' to refer to the 'End SARS' protesters and that they were trying to overrun Nigeria is a serious allegation and offence within the law. It must be noted that the chairman of the publishing house is Neya Kalu who in May 2022 succeeded her father, Dr Orji Uzor Kalu, the former governor of Abia State and former Chief Whip of the Nigerian Senate. This clearly shows that the paper is owned by someone in government and since the police brutality is an indictment on government, the paper can be said to be doing a hatchet man's job by downplaying the protests. This was why government is being portrayed as the victim. This report can be categorized as the out-group. The visual representation can also be categorized as anti-protests dialogues under coding.

Datum D



The Guardian is a Nigerian independent daily newspaper established in 1983. During the administration of General Muhammadu Buhari, reporters Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor were both sentenced to jail terms in 1984 for running afoul of Decree No.4 of 1984, which suppressed journalistic freedom (Stanley Mokaogwu, 19). On 26th August, 1989, *The Guardian* published a long letter by Dr Bekolari Ransome-Kuti, a human-rights activist, entitled “Open Letter to President Babangida” which he criticized what it saw as increasing suppression of free expression by the Nigerian government. *The Guardian* is owned by a member of an ethnic minority, but it has a national outlook in terms of reach and content. It claims to be independent of any ethnic group, religious community, political party or other interests group. The paper is read by the most educated section of the Nigerian elite class. The image of the reportage of the ‘End SARS’ protest is a group of many people who sat down on the road with a bold inscription of ‘End SARS’. This image of over a hundred people from different tribes and tongues shows the resolve of the protesters to end what they have started.

The sitting on the floor is their determination to ensure government is forced to disband SARS. This data can be categorized into the collectivization Group. This is realized by plurality or representations of images of groups of protesters. The coding is social critique as it reflects the presence of the social movement's/protesters' viewpoints and demands.

Datum E



The visual representation here is of a young lady holding a sound amplifier and a banner to demand an end to SARS. The choice of this image to show that certain individuals (the female gender) are adequately represented in the protests and that their voice can also be heard loud and clear. This can be categorized into the individualized group. This is a report with focus on social actors involved in the protests that are individuals and are prominent and significant. These are actors that are pictorially individualized in the media reportage. The following were findings of the research.

Visual Resources as Signifiers

Visual representations are vital tools in communicating emotions by protesters. The use of placards, banners, inscribed shirts, road mappings are all visual resources employed by these protesters to drive home their points. They are signifiers that tend to express or portray deep messages, strong agitations and demands of certain individual or demography they belong to as it also serves as an important source of pride and self-esteem to them. Having interacted with

the data, it was observed that some of the protesters share similar demands and aspirations; these similarities are also evident in the placards displayed in the newspaper reportage. Newspaper reportage that share similar messages were classified under the same categories. These categories are what the visual resources in the protests signify. The data were classified under the following five divisions.

(a) Visual Representation Categorization 1 (VRC)

S/N	Visual Representation Categorization (VRC)	Source of Visual Representations
1	The In Group-pro or apologists of the end sars protests (these newspapers reportage are sympathetic to the protesters)	DATA A
2	The Out Group-anti ‘End SARS’ protests (these newspapers reportage are sympathetic to the government)	DATA C
3	The mediators- neither pro or anti, (unbiased) newspapers that are balanced in their report of the ‘End SARS’ protests.	DATA B
4	Individualized Group-Report of social actors involved in the protests that are individuals and are prominent and significant. These are actors pictorially individualized.	DATA E
5	Collectivization Group-this is realized by plurality or representations of images of groups of protesters.	Data D

(b) Visual Representation Coding and Categorization 2

The visual representations will be analyzed and categorized into the following subdivisions. The data that corresponded to each of the division above will be carefully selected and labelled appropriately for analysis.

(c) Category A: Visual Resources that are Signifiers of Riot and Violence

This focuses on the violence of protesters on rioting and looting. This newspaper reportage describes the destructions and chaos that protesters create by destroying properties, setting fires on different items while the protests lasted. Displaying behaviours that significantly and negatively disrupts the daily function of citizens.

Variable	Description	Examples
A. Riot	The focus is on the violence of protesters, on rioting, looting, description of the destructions, and chaos that protesters create in society	Destroying public property, setting fires, behaviours that significantly and negatively disrupt the daily function of citizens
B. Confrontation	The focus on police versus protesters	Arrests of protesters, conflicts with police, employment of police for enforcing protests
C. Anti-protests dialogue	The emphasis of protest as a trivial show or circus	Descriptions of protests as dramatic; emphasizing the size of protests; sensationalizing protesters by emphasizing odd aspects like attire (e.g., hats, clothing)
D. Social critique	The focus is on dialogue and social critique of messages that substantially discuss agendas	Presence of the social movement's/protesters' viewpoints and demands
E. Sourcing	Protester sources include demonstrators and demonstration leaders, affiliated leaders Official sources include any elected official (national, state or local), official administrators of issue being challenged, police and police administrators	Protester only or protester privileged sourcing Equal number of protesters and officials sourced Official only or official privileged sourcing Neither protester or officials were directly sourced <i>Number of direct quotes were used to assess balance</i>

Text 1



“Killings, Arsons, Violence Trail End SARS Protests”

The nation is a daily newspaper published in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt, Nigeria. According to a 2009 survey, it was the most second most read newspaper in Nigeria and this result was repeated in a 2011 report by The Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVANS), Hollingsworth (164), The paper became the first of its kind to gain nationwide circulation across the 36 states of Nigeria within two years of operation. The image of the ‘End SARS’ protest here used by *The Nation* is of several buildings on fire. The building is being burnt, yet there is no image to actually indicate the perpetrators. The streets look deserted. This visual representation implies arson, violence, chaos, crisis. These are not just mere demonstration but also violent by the buildings being burnt at different locations.

(d) Visual Resources as Signifiers of Confrontation

This focuses on the police versus protesters. This news reportage describes the arrests of protesters, conflicts with police or other uniform men and employment of police for enforcing peace and order. Confrontation here means clashing in a face to face meeting that can result into violent argument and in extreme cases, physical fights. There were reports of clashes between protesters and men of the police force who were probably sent to enforce law and order or to prevent break down of law and order.

Text 2

s



“police disrupt rallies; disperse protesters ,journalists arrested”

Pictures showing protesters in this reportage. The news also captioned that Police disrupt the ‘End SARS’ gathering and got journalist arrested. The visual representation in this reportage indicates confrontation and clashes between protesters and policemen.

(e) Visual Resources as Signifiers of Anti-protests Dialogue

This lays emphasis on protest as a trivial show or circus, news reportage in this case describes protests as being dramatic; emphasizing the size of protests; sensationalizing protestors by emphasizing odd aspects like attire (e.g., hats, nose mask, sun glasses, clothing)

TEXT 3



“ENDPOLICEBRUTALITY.”

This image was taken in a popular location with electronic sign board, the image carries a crowd gathered on a course that was shown boldly on the media outage ENDPOLICEBRUTALITY. . It also shows that is an agitation that is been done by both male and female young Nigerians as we can see this young female Nigerian sitting on the roof of a car in support of the agitation. Obviously, a guy was seen raising his hands with a mean face. Observation also show that this protest happens in a popular strategic place in Lagos Nigeria which has to obstruct movement of vehicle to give the ongoing agitation a wide spread across the nation and beyond.

(f) Visual Resources as Signifiers of Social Critique

This focuses on dialogue and social critique of messages that substantially discuss agendas such as presence of the social movement's/protesters' viewpoints and demands.

Text 4



“SorosokeEndsars ‘End SARS’ Now”

This image according to our research is also part of the protest in another location in Nigeria and it shows that the ENDSARS protest was a Nation-wide protest by young Nigerians. In this image we can see a young guy holding a card of ‘End SARS’ NOW is written on and is stained with blood. This shows that the SARS had been killing young Nigerians which they were meant to be protecting and the youth want the Nigeria Government to put an end to the department in Police Force with Immediate effect.

The second card was raised by a young female Nigerian which shows that the protest is not for only young male Nigerians. On the card with a Nigeria flag colour and the text at the top is SOROSOKE ENDSARS which is a popular slogan of the youth during the protest. The slogan according to our report means ‘‘Speak Louder and let people hear our voice as a youth that we are tired of this SARS’’.

(g) Visual Resources as Signifiers of Sourcing

In this case, newspaper reportage captures the protester sources which could include demonstrators and demonstration leaders, affiliated leaders. Official sources include any elected official (national, state or local), official administrators of issue being challenged,

police and police administrators. Protester only or protester privileged sourcing. Equal number of protesters and officials sourced. Official only or official privileged sourcing neither protester or officials were directly sourced.

Text 5



This image captures different groups of people ranging from the protesters to the security operatives in uniform to media personnel. Significantly, a lady who was later addressed as the leader of the ‘End SARS’ protests, Aishat Yusuf was seen holding a megaphone to address the masses. Her facial expressions shows she was agitating. This is a testament to the fact that the protest is irrespective of Religion, region or race.

7. Conclusion

From the foregoing therefore, it was discovered that the visual representations in the newspaper reportage of the ‘End SARS’ protests are visual signifiers and are vital tools in communicating emotions by protesters. The use of placards, banners, inscribed shirts, road mappings are all visual resources employed by these protesters to drive home their points. They are signifiers that tend to express or portray deep messages, strong agitations and demands of certain individual or demography they belong as it also serves as an important source of pride and self-esteem to them. The researcher observed that some of these protesters share similar demands and aspirations, these similarities are also evident in the placards displayed in these newspaper reportage, these data were classified under the same categories and submissions These categories are what the visual resources in the protests signify. The images expresses deep intentions of the protesters. These signifiers indicates Social identity which is described as a

sense of “we-ness” or attachment to a group that one is a member thus, it is a culture or collective identity one is in that determines more of their core self / global self than other cultures they inhabit. There are visual cues exhibited in each of the newspaper reportage of the ‘End SARS’ protests these that shows the type of message being communicated.

There is an ideological process and representation inherent in each discourse, behind every utterance is an idea, each of these images provides resources that creates ideation. The research concludes that visual resources or representations in the newspaper reportage of the ‘End SARS’ protests contributes immensely to meaning making and enhances the messages, ideology, demands and agenda of the protests in the contest of the setting and space it occurred. This goes to show that the uses of visuals resources deployed by the ‘End SARS’ protesters amplifies the protests as a viable tool to communicate emotions and effect social change. The paper concludes that visual representations in the newspaper reportage of the ‘End SARS’ protests are viable tools employed by the ‘End SARS’ protesters to communicate their emotions and press home their demands. This invariably contributes immensely to meaning making and enhances the messages, ideology, demands and agenda of the protest. The paper further suggest that newspaper editors should censor the visual elements in their reportage to reduce conflicts and minimize break down of law and order.

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