

MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER IMAGES ON FUEL SCARCITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Fuel scarcity in Nigeria is a persistent socio-economic challenge that has defied resolution by successive administrations. Beyond its immediate impact on access to petroleum products, it creates ripple effects that disrupt daily life, weaken economic productivity, and erode public trust in governance. The mass media, particularly newspapers, play a central role in shaping public understanding of this recurrent crisis, not only through written reportage but also through the strategic use of images. This study adopts a multimodal discourse analysis framework to investigate the visual representations of fuel scarcity in *Leadership* and *Daily Trust* newspapers. By examining selected images, the research highlights how semiotic resources such as composition, framing, and symbolism are mobilised to construct narratives of frustration, inefficiency, and social disorder. The findings reveal that fuel scarcity is depicted as a menace that perpetuates long queues, loss of man-hours, traffic congestion, corruption, negligence, extended travel times, and illegal economic activities. Ultimately, the study underscores that such visual portrayals reinforce the perception of fuel scarcity as a structural impediment to Nigeria's development, contributing to the broader discourse on governance, accountability, and societal resilience.

Keywords: Multimodal discourse analysis, fuel scarcity, Nigerian newspapers, media representation, visual semiotics, governance, development

Introduction

Multimodal discourse analysis is a branch of language studies that considers multiple modes of information exchange, ranging from texts to colours and images. As a method of discourse analysis, it examines not only how individuals speak but also how they interact to construct semiotic meaning through means other than spoken words. According to Bi (2019), Multimodal Discourse Analysis is an area that analyses the different modes of symbolism within a text. This definition suggests that in analysing a text through multimodal discourse, attention is paid to all the features of the text, including images and context. Multimodal discourse analysis, also known as MDA, is a field of study that explores how texts generate meanings by combining communication modes such as pictures, films, videos, images, sounds, and words. This implies that MDA mediates the various modes through which messages are presented. Ibbi (2022) states that technological advancements have altered how information and communications are

disseminated, hence the emergence of MDA. Ibbi implies that MDA has become inevitable as a result of changing human activities. The study of multimodal discourse, therefore, is useful in describing all human activities in society, including fuel scarcity.

Fuel scarcity is depicted by Ademola (2024) as a pressing issue in Nigeria, accompanied by long queues at petrol stations. Ademola notes that the shortage of fuel disrupts people's daily routines. The description of scarcity highlights some basic social challenges, such as long queues and interference with daily activities. Ajia (2024) attempts to identify the cause of recent shortages. According to Ajia, petroleum product marketers in Nigeria attribute the recent scarcity to supply problems faced by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited. Ajia's (2024) assertion suggests that challenges faced by stakeholders in the production and supply chain can lead to scarcity and prolonged suffering. During fuel shortages, the news media plays a key role in reporting the situation. Consequently,

Nigerians depend on news discourse to understand the severity of the scarcity, its potential causes, affected areas, and impacts. News discourse involves analysing news content, a field developed by Teun van Dijk in 1985. According to van Dijk (1985, p. 70), the aim of news discourse is to investigate both text and context. Xie (2018) considers news discourse an important area of linguistic research often regarded as an objective and formal form of discourse.

Fuel scarcity has been a significant social problem that has greatly affected Nigerian society. To investigate this issue, several scholarly efforts have been made to address fuel scarcity. Some of these include Kidochukwu and Ayegbunam (2022); Akpan and Nnamseh (2014); Odior (2013); and Adeke, Joel, and Edeh (2019), among others. None of these studies, however, have approached fuel scarcity from a multimodal discourse perspective, particularly focusing on how newspaper images could help illuminate the plight of Nigerians amidst fuel shortages. This highlights the gap that the present study aims to fill. Therefore, this study analysed some images of fuel subsidy using the approach of Multimodal Discourse Analysis. To address this gap, attention was given to an in-depth analysis of newspaper images to understand their discourse features and the meanings they convey to viewers, employing the visual grammar theory. The study focused on images from news reports about fuel scarcity in Nigeria as experienced in 2024. Its aim is to explore news discourse on fuel scarcity from a multimodal perspective, employing specific objectives such as analysing discourse elements in media images, assessing the discourse functions of these images concerning fuel scarcity in news reports, and most importantly, drawing lessons from these images for Nigerian society.

Conceptual Review

For the purpose of this study, the following concepts—multimodality, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, fuel scarcity in Nigeria, the importance of newspaper images, images as part of the sign system, as well as an overview of Vanguard, Leadership, and Daily Trust—were examined. Multimodality is the combination of different modes to create meaning. Korhonen (2010) states

that “Multimodality refers to the interplay between different representational modes, for instance, between images and written/spoken words.” This definition indicates that multimodality is the relationship that exists between various forms of expressing meaning through different modes. The modes identified are images and written/spoken words. Pandey and Vishwakarma (2024) define Multimodality as “the analysis of more than one mode of data.” From a linguistic perspective, this includes data that represent various means of information exchange, such as gestures, signs, colours, images, sounds, and texts. To comprehensively review the scope of multimodality, McVee and Tripp (2023, p. 1) cite many scholars in the field and state that:

Researchers who explore multimodality often draw upon social semiotic theories of literacy (e.g., Lemke, 1989, 1998; Kress, 2010; Kress et al., 2001) and may frequently draw from or combine these with systemic functional linguistics (e.g., Jewitt et al., 2016; Unsworth, 2008). Regardless of the theoretical frameworks used, multimodality considers how people draw upon all modes to make meanings (e.g., combining images with print, using a gesture, using a gesture with a word and an image and so on). Body position, colors, movement, and sound are also explored in multimodal studies (Jewitt et al., 2016).

This quote explores branches of linguistics related to multimodality, specifically semiotics and systemic functional linguistics. The modes include body posture, gestures, words, images, colours, sounds, print, and language. It shows that multimodality involves any means used to send and receive messages. Osborne (2023, p. 1) defines multimodality as “the combination of two or more symbolic systems.” Osborne provides an account of the origins of multimodality and its role across various sciences, not just within linguistic science, and states:

Natural language significantly limits the ability to describe continuous variation, shape, and the relationships among structure, form, and function. As Lemke argues, it is often impossible to do so

(Lemke, 1998; Aluya & Iangba, 2025). To overcome this, the sciences rely on a combination of semiotic signs—symbols for elements; quantities and units representing amounts; graphs and charts summarising relationships, frequencies, and patterns; tables presenting numerical data; and mathematics expressing relationships (Kress et al., 2001; Lemke, 1998; O'Halloran, 2011; Aluya & Jashina, 2025). All these components are interconnected, as demonstrated by a quick review of any modern scientific paper. Removing one of these components temporarily makes constructing its meaning much more difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, multimodality involves combining two or more symbolic systems of meaning. The sciences do not communicate about the world using words alone, and in many cases, they simply cannot.

Multimodality, as previously noted, was developed to overcome the limitations of natural language in fully conveying meaning. The field is viewed here as a vital tool that enables the investigation of semiotic signs, numerical data, mathematical expressions, and modern science, without which constructing meaning becomes more challenging. Its use of multiple modes to explore meaning has significantly helped preserve many messages that might have been lost in the sciences, as Osborne (2023) states that the sciences do not merely speak of the world using words, and they cannot do so. Multimodal discourse analysis, also known as MDA, is a field of study that examines how texts generate meanings by combining modes of communication such as pictures, films, videos, images, sounds, and words. According to Hong (2012, p. 320), “the theoretical basis [of] the multimodal discourse analysis theory is systemic functional linguistics developed by Michael Halliday”. This assertion suggests that MDA was developed from systemic functional linguistics, which uses the metafunctions of language to convey meaning. Therefore, the focus of MDA is on investigating the ideational, interpersonal, and textual components of language in communication by exploring various modes that contribute to message production (Aluya & Iangba, 2023). According to Jones (2011), the field of multimodal discourse analysis concentrates on

using multiple modes of communication to express meaning rather than relying solely on language. Jones' explanation of the concept of “mode” in multimodal discourse analysis shows that it differs from the idea of “modality” in grammar (which refers to the expression of possibility and obligation in language), and from the concept of “mode” in Halliday's tripartite model of context, where mode refers to the “channel” of linguistic communication.

Bi (2019) traces the development of multimodal discourse analysis and shows that scholars have realised that the important role played by language in meaning making is just one part of the symbolic system in discourse. Bi suggests, therefore, that it became essential to combine the study of language in discourse linguistics with other fields like vision and hearing, leading to the rise of multimodal discourse analysis. This implies that multimodal discourse analysis started as a response to communication needs that emerge as humans interact. Bi's argument highlights the significance of multimodal discourse analysis in understanding human interaction processes. According to Kress (2010), multimodal discourse analysis is an essential approach for understanding the complexities of modern communication, where multiple modes are often used together. This definition indicates that multimodal discourse analysis is vital for understanding how communication works. Its importance comes from its focus on using several modes within a single message, aiming to enhance clarity. Machin (2007) states that advertisements are multimodal texts that combine language, images, and sound to deliver a specific message and influence audiences. This statement shows that multimodal discourse analysis is fundamental to understanding advertisements.

According to Akpan and Nnamseh (2015), fuel scarcity causes issues such as long queues at petrol stations as people wait for petrol that is unavailable nationwide. Another problem they emphasise is the loss of productive hours and the rising cost of living, which is reflected in higher transport fares and food prices. As a social issue impacting people's livelihoods, scarcity attracts

various forms of media coverage and representation. However, fuel scarcity does not simply happen. Ajia (2024) states that petroleum product marketers in Nigeria believe the recent petrol shortage is due to supply problems faced by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited. Therefore, this study focuses on fuel scarcity and will closely examine the images presented in newspapers that depict or reflect the fuel shortage in Nigeria, as well as the meanings that can be derived from these images.

Images are captured or drawn to depict an event or illustrate an action. According to Oparaugo (2021), images are effective in visualising a story and help users gain a better understanding of the product as a whole. From this, it can be seen that images are presented as representations of real events. As a result, images serve only as symbols that generate mental responses in viewers. To recognise images as only part of the sign system and emphasise their dependence on other sign systems, Dogra (2014) states that photographs act as evidence but carry limited meaning and rely on words to express their full significance. This indicates that images are unlikely to communicate sufficient meaning without the support of other sign systems and often accompany texts in news discourses to effectively convey ideas and events. Images are either captured or drawn to depict an event or suggest an action. According to Oparaugo (2021), images help visualise a story and enable users to gain a clearer understanding of the overall product. From this, it follows that images serve as representations of real events. Therefore, images function solely as symbols that evoke mental states in their viewers.

To establish that images are only one part of the sign system and to emphasise their dependence on other sign systems, Dogra (2014) asserts that photographs serve as evidence but have limited meaning and rely on words for full interpretation. This indicates that images may not carry sufficient meaning on their own and primarily work with texts in news discourses for clear communication of ideas and events. The media landscape in Nigeria includes various forms of communication. The newspaper exists in Nigeria to deliver information directly to its

people. Historically, the Nigerian newspaper industry dates back to the 19th century and has remained influential in shaping public opinion, guiding policy, and holding those in authority accountable. According to Ademola (2013), the first newspaper in Nigeria was established in 1859, and since then, the industry has expanded to become one of the largest in Africa. This account traces the history of newspapers in Nigeria and their current status, which shows significant growth. It also emphasises their ongoing importance in shaping public opinion on social issues.

Ojo (2015) asserts that the rise of digital media has led to a decline in newspaper readership but that newspapers are still widely read in Nigeria, particularly in rural areas where access to digital media may be limited. Ojo's assertion implies that the emergence of various forms of media, especially online media, has caused a decrease in the patronage that print newspapers enjoyed in major Nigerian cities, including Abuja. This suggests that people in major cities now prefer and find it easier to access news content and discussions through electronic media. Akpan (2017) agrees with Ojo's viewpoint, noting that the rise of online newspapers has resulted in a decline in print newspaper circulation; however, online newspapers have also created new opportunities for the industry, such as increased reach and accessibility. This assertion explains why this study chooses to use online news media as its data source.

The media space in Nigeria utilises various existing forms. Newspapers in Nigeria serve to disseminate information directly to Nigerians. Historically, the newspaper industry in Nigeria dates back to the 19th century and has played a crucial role in shaping public opinion, influencing policy, and holding those in power accountable. According to Ademola (2013), the first newspaper in Nigeria was established in 1859, and since then, the industry has grown into one of the largest in Africa. This history highlights the development of newspapers in Nigeria as well as their current prominence, which indicates significant growth. It also underscores their ongoing influence on social issues.

Ojo (2015) asserts that the rise of digital media has led to a decline in newspaper readership, but newspapers are still widely read in Nigeria, especially in rural areas where access to digital media may be limited. Ojo's assertion suggests that the emergence of various media forms, particularly online media, has caused a decrease in the patronage of print newspapers in major Nigerian cities, including Abuja. This implies that people in major cities now prefer and find it easier to access news content and discussions via electronic media. Akpan (2017) supports Ojo's viewpoint by noting that the rise of online newspapers has led to a decline in print circulation, but online newspapers also offer new opportunities for the industry, such as increased reach and accessibility. This rationale explains why this study chooses to use online news media as its data source.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Moerdisuroso's (2014) Visual Grammar Theory, which is based on Kress and Leuwer's (2006) work. The Visual Grammar Theory describes a semiotic resource used by a specific group, encompassing both their explicit and implicit knowledge of these resources and their applications. According to Moerdisuroso (2014), visual elements are referred to as participants. These elements are clearly visible to readers and carry meaning within discourse. Participants ultimately shape the meanings and influence the possible interpretations of the images. Moerdisuroso's (2014) theory is appropriate for this analysis because it offers tools that facilitate a detailed understanding of the news discourses published in newspapers.

The elements of the theory relevant to this study are participants, representation, interaction, and composition.

- i. Participants are the elements visible in an image discourse. Moerdisuroso (2014) views participants as all humans, events, objects, and other forms visible in any image.

- ii. Representation signifies how experiences contribute to the composition of the images.
- iii. Interaction deals with how the image maker speaks to the image representation and readers.
- iv. Composition refers to how all participants are drawn in the image.

The components of the theory outlined above are relevant for understanding the content of images published in the media by newspapers. By identifying participants, how they are represented, and how they are composed, they interact with discourse readers to convey meanings that are important for understanding fuel scarcity and its consequences. Therefore, the images to be analysed will be examined using the theory. Attention will be given to identifying the participants, their representation, interaction, and composition, as well as how these factors influence human interpretation of discourse on fuel scarcity.

Methodology

This study is qualitative research that utilises both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consisted of images depicting fuel scarcity, which were analysed, while the secondary sources included articles, journals, and other relevant works reviewed. The primary data were obtained online from two media outlets: Leadership and Daily Trust. The primary data for analysis comprises images of fuel scarcity in Abuja, as reported and captured by these media outlets. The study adopts a discourse analysis framework and is based on the theory of multimodal discourse. A key focus was the analysis of the drawn images and their features. All images were deliberately selected to align with the study's objectives. They were organised as follows: Leadership (3) and Daily Trust (3). All images originated from news reports published between January and December 2024. Six images in total—three from each media outlet—were purposively chosen to suit the aims of the study.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Image 1: Discourse Representation of Scarcity as a Facilitator of Traffic Violation



Source: <https://leadership.ng>

The image above, published by Leadership newspaper, reflects the scarcity of fuel in Nigeria. The discourse features interesting components of Visual Grammar theory, including participants, representation, interaction, and composition. According to visual grammar theory, the participants in the visual discourse are humans and objects. The human participants are arranged in various parts of the image to create a unique composition that engages viewers. In visual grammar, composition refers to the arrangement of participants within an image. Here, the human participants are scattered across the image and engaged in activities such as loitering and discussing. On the left side of the image, the composition suggests that the humans are gathered in a group. To interact with viewers, this gathering indicates they are talking about the situation and waiting for petrol station sales to commence. At the interaction stage, which, according to visual grammar, involves how viewers interpret visual discourses, the central human participants are

depicted as loitering, implying they are moving without purpose. Visual grammar states that participants interact with viewers and express tiredness from staying in the same spot for hours, stretching to improve blood flow. On the right side of the image, some other human participants are shown engaging with a vehicle. This arrangement suggests they may have waited long in the queue and decided to leave their vehicles at the petrol station to meet other commitments, despite the risks involved.

The non-human participants include vehicles, buildings, the expressway, signboards, and trees. The arrangement of these participants, which Visual Grammar theory refers to as composition, appears disorderly. This is evident because some cars are driven and parked against the usual flow of traffic. Consequently, the composition interacts with discourse readers to convey meaningful messages. Vehicles driving against traffic signal impatience and disorderliness or chaos, which become more pronounced during

petrol shortages. These vehicles also reflect Nigerians' reluctance to follow traffic directions and to wait patiently for their turn, driven by the fear of not being served petrol if they join the queue too late. Their impatience, in turn, increases the risk of vehicle clashes and traffic disruptions, leading to further delays for commuters. Vehicles parked against the traffic also hinder the service to those in actual queues and sometimes prevent them from accessing petrol. Another element in the diagram is the expressway, which, along with the

signboards, interacts with discourse readers. Following the representation model of Visual Grammar, the image that aligns with Nigerians' previous experiences indicates fuel scarcity. It conveys that the scarcity has caused long queues which petrol stations cannot accommodate, leading vehicles to be parked on one side of the road and disrupting the smooth flow of traffic. The signboards indicate that the vehicles are near filling stations, but there is insufficient space within the stations.



Source: <https://leadership.ng>

Image 2, above, published by Leadership newspaper, depicts the scarcity situation in Nigeria and the causes of fuel shortage. According to visual grammar, participants are visible in the image. There are two human participants seen from a distance — one in a pink dress and the other in oxblood — positioned beside their vehicles, suggesting they have alighted and are observing their surroundings. As described by visual grammar, participants include everything visible in the image; thus, there are non-human participants such as vehicles, a petrol station, and an expressway. The composition indicates that the vehicles are parked outside the NNPC fuel station along the expressway. Their orderly arrangement in a single file suggests the arrival times of each

vehicle. The long queue on the road, coupled with visual grammar's interaction, signifies the demand for fuel and the stations' inability to satisfy Nigerians' needs. The petrol station where the vehicles are parked is an NNPC station, highlighting that government agencies responsible for ensuring fuel availability are also powerless during shortages. The image highlights how fuel scarcity exposes Nigerians to accidents, as the struggle for access causes the stations to be overwhelmed with vehicles, forcing some to park on the expressway—thereby increasing the risk of accidents. The visual grammar model enables viewers to understand the presence of fuel scarcity; without it, queues at stations would not be evident. It also helps viewers understand how scarcity

affects NNPC stations, which can become crowded during shortages due to other smaller operators running out of petrol.

Image 3: Discourse Representation of Scarcity as a Facilitator of Illicit Marketing



Source: <https://leadership.ng>

Image 3, published by Leadership newspaper, highlights the hardship that travellers in Nigeria face due to fuel scarcity. The image features participants, which visual grammar theory describes as humans and objects seen in an image. These participants are depicted as both human and non-human. The interaction stage of visual grammar helps viewers understand that the human participants represent illegal petrol vendors, commonly known as black-marketers. Their identity as illicit petrol dealers are clear from the Jerry cans they are holding. Notably, the white Hilux vehicle is being fueled using a Jerry can, instead of the fuel pump, which is the proper method of refuelling. According to visual

grammar, the composition of the participants suggests unlawful activities related to managing petrol scarcity, as illegal vendors have the fuel to sell while petrol stations are out of stock. The participants are positioned just outside a petrol station, which implies that motorists seeking fuel from the illegal vendors are unable to access it at the official station. The representation model of visual grammar, which examines how meaning is derived from images in relation to viewers' experiences, indicates that the image portrays corruption in the country during shortages—specific petrol stations engaging in illicit activities, such as selling fuel solely to black-marketers and restricting public access.

Image 4: Multimodal Representation of Illicit Activities



Source: [http:// www. dailytrust.com](http://www.dailytrust.com)

The Daily Trust newspaper publishes the image above. Using the Visual Grammar theory, the image features participants who have been composed and represented to interact with viewers. There are three human participants, a generator tank, and several gallons. While the representation of the participants draws from experience, a situation of fuel scarcity is implied here. As arranged and composed, the participants are positioned in a way that interacts with viewers

to convey discourse meanings. All participants are focused on the tank, engaged in holding it and paying close attention. The presence of gallons in the image clearly indicates the activity in which the human participants are engaged. As many petrol stations refuse to sell in gallons due to the risk of carrying petrol in jerry cans, black marketers develop ways to buy petrol into their generator tanks before selling it at exorbitant prices to prospective buyers.

Image 5: Discourse Representation of Scarcity as the Cause of Queues at an NNPC Station



Source: [http:// www. dailytrust.com](http://www.dailytrust.com)

The Daily Trust newspaper publishes the image above. In it, various discourse features enable the interpretation of the image. In visual Grammar, the image comprises vehicles, humans, and a fuel station. The human participants are in motion, whereas all vehicle participants are stationary and not engaged in any movement at the time. According to the representational model of visual Grammar, which pertains to the experience of both the viewer and the image maker, the image indicates a case of petrol scarcity and queues. The petrol station where the image is taken is that of NNPC. The various cars are parked, while some persons have already alighted and are probably engaged in a discussion about the situation. The vehicles are also queued on the road, obstructing traffic.

Using the interaction model of the visual Grammar theory, the representation of the participants as they are composed conveys several

meanings to discourse readers. One of these is the presence of the NNPC filling station in the image. This suggests that, due to scarcity—which has forced many stations to shut down or seek higher rates—many vehicle owners, especially commercial drivers, rely on the major distributor for petrol. This partly explains the presence of tricycles at the station and the inability to maintain a single queue, as drivers jostle for petrol. The black cars in the image have their rear lights on, indicating that they are either in motion or have just moved and are trying to stop. This suggests that the situation at the NNPC filling station is somewhat better compared to other stations, where there are often no signs of activity. Such situations are frequently caused by corruption and the compromise of marketing rules, as many attendants engage in illegal acts of selling petrol in Jerry cans after being bribed, neglecting the vehicles.

Image 6: Multimodal Representation of Increased Travel Time



Source: [http:// www. dailytrust.com](http://www.dailytrust.com)

The image above is published by the Daily Trust newspaper. It contains various discourse features that facilitate the interpretation of the image. According to the participants in visual grammar, the image shows vehicles, one of which is fully loaded with baggage, a human, and a petrol station. The human participant is observed from a distance, situated behind the red vehicle. Based on the representational model of visual grammar, which relates to the viewer's and the image maker's experience, the image signals petrol scarcity and queues for fuel. As depicted, the photo is taken at a petrol station. The cars are parked in orderly queues to indicate organisation.

Using the interaction model of the visual Grammar theory, the representation of the participants as they have been composed conveys several meanings to discourse readers. First is the petrol station in the image. The petrol station signifies the presence of petrol and implies that most vehicles only want to fill their tanks. Discipline is also observed, as the vehicles have maintained decorum. The vehicle fully loaded with baggage suggests it is a travelling vehicle. By remaining in the queue with its door open, it

indicates that the vehicle is patiently waiting for its turn to refuel. This implies that the travel time for the travellers is increased because of the minutes or hours they are likely to spend at the station.

Discussion of Findings

The study, through analysis, made the following findings in response to the research questions: Images are used to explain concepts and clarify the points being established. In discussions on fuel scarcity, images help to make the suffering of Nigerians clear and obvious. Therefore, images serve as a conduit for expressing the plight of Nigerians amidst fuel shortages. The discourse on fuel scarcity primarily involves humans, vehicles, gallons, expressways, petrol stations, and security agents. All these elements contribute to conveying the various meanings observed in the visual discourses. Some of these meanings include the frustrations experienced by the population, corruption within the oil distribution system, illicit petrol sales, extended travel times, disruption of normal business activities, exposure to risks such as fuel explosions and roadside accidents, impatience among petrol buyers, and violations of traffic rules by vehicles. Additionally, the study

revealed that the NNPC sometimes acts as a saving grace for many. The visual discourses suggest the risks Nigerians face due to their reliance on petrol. The first finding addresses the first research question, which aims to understand the discourse functions of images in news coverage of fuel scarcity. In discussions about fuel scarcity, images are used to highlight the suffering of Nigerians. Serving as a medium to express their plight, these images clearly reveal the issues Nigerians face during such times. As Oparaugo (2021) suggests, newspaper images strongly engage the public's interest in current events by attracting and maintaining their attention. Therefore, images of fuel scarcity capture readers' focus and hold their interest in the social issues conveyed through news discourse. Additionally, Dogra (2014) asserts that photographs act as evidence. Consequently, the images discussed here depict the ideas conveyed by the news reports from which they are sourced. For example, Image 1 illustrates frustration among vehicle owners, Image 2 shows increased travel times, and Images 3, 4, 5, and 6 depict dependence on Black Marketers. Moreover, Images 3 and 5 depict overcrowding at stations, exposing individuals to a higher risk of explosion, while Image 1 highlights scarcity at major petrol stations. These images assist readers in recognising the social issues affecting Nigerians, particularly with regard to fuel scarcity.

The second finding addresses the second research question, which aims to identify the discourse elements visible in images of fuel scarcity from the news media. As a multimodal study, Jones (2011) describes the field of multimodal discourse analysis as focusing on using various modes of communication to convey meaning, rather than relying solely on language. This highlights some of these discourse elements, such as humans, vehicles, gallons, expressways, petrol stations, and security agents. As Kress (2010) suggests, multiple modes are often used together, and all these identified elements serve as visual resources that contribute to the discourse meanings conveyed in each visual text. Additionally, with the exception of four images, all include vehicles as participants. The frequent appearance of vehicles in most images indicates

that the product is primarily associated with vehicles. Gallons appear in images 3, 4, and 6. The size of the gallons in these images and the frequency with which they appear suggest their importance in Nigeria, given their numerous uses. This further implies that Nigerians often expose themselves to risks without considering the consequences.

The third finding pertains to the third research question, which seeks to identify the discourse meanings in the images depicting fuel scarcity. As Jewitt et al. (2016) indicate in the review section, multimodality involves how people utilise all modes to generate meaning (e.g., combining images with text, using gestures, or combining gestures with words and images), alongside body position, colours, movement, and sound. The study shows that the features within the images work together to express the frustration of the populace (images 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6), the corruption of the oil distribution system in the country (evident from the prevalence of gallons at many petrol stations, as seen in images 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6), illicit petrol sales (images 4 and 6), prolonged travel times (images 1, 2, 3, 1,2,3,5, and 6), exposure to the risk of fuel explosions (images 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6), and exposure to roadside accidents (images 1, 2, and 3).

Conclusion

Fuel scarcity in Nigeria has been observed as an inevitable trend that occurs frequently, with successive governments unable to end it. The media present fuel scarcity and its related challenges from various perspectives to the Nigerian public. Images accompanying news stories significantly influence and shape readers' perceptions of these stories. As the study notes, both Leadership and Daily Trust portray fuel scarcity as a menace, framing it as a major problem for Nigerian society. The challenges associated with it include long queues, loss of valuable hours, traffic congestion, corruption, carelessness, increased travel times, and illegal activities, among others. This study has thus helped us understand that fuel scarcity is progressively hindering Nigeria's growth, leading to a decline in the productivity of its people.

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