

## A SEMIOTIC REPRESENTATION OF SELECTED NAIRA-REDESIGN MEMES ON FACEBOOK

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### Abstract

Social media memes, known for their satirical nature, employ linguistic techniques to humorously comment on or criticise social actors and events. While previous studies on memes have focused on pragmatic nuances and discourse frames, little attention has been given to semiotic studies on the investigation of memes on social media. This study, therefore, investigated these naira-redesigned memes on social media, focusing on linguistic and non-linguistic resources as well as the use of iconic semiotic resources in the selected naira-designing memes, which are beyond the entertainment level but serve as a satirical tool. A total of five (5) memes on naira redesign were purposively selected from social media, specifically, the Facebook platform. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (GVD) was adopted as the theoretical framework. Findings reveal that the combination of linguistic and non-linguistic resources is employed in each meme to create meaning and convey meaning to the readers. The study concludes that visible images and linguistic tools are rich in meaning and can be easily interpreted and understood.

**Keywords:** Semiotics, Memes, GVD, Facebook, CBN

### Introduction

The governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, on October 26, 2022, announced that new Naira notes would be introduced to replace the current 200, 500, and 1,000 Naira notes. Emefiele said the naira redesign would take effect from Thursday, December 15, 2022. The existing notes were scheduled to cease being legal tender on January 31, 2023. The CBN subsequently provided reasons for the redesign of the Naira note. This, among other reasons, is that the Naira note was redesigned to address the issue of individuals who have made currency fraud their main source of income. People who have hidden money they have stolen, for instance, would either find a way to change it by taking the money out or would not need it given the change in the value of the Naira. The currency change also aims to deal a fatal blow to the growing kidnapping and ransom industry. The change in the notes is also said to aid in lowering the rate of inflation, just as it was intended to control the amount of money in circulation. However, many citizens considered

the naira redesign irrelevant since it could not make a difference. Nigerians reacted in various ways, notably through humorous memes (images, videos, GIFs) in making caricatures of CBN and the new naira redesign. During the struggle, many Nigerians take to social media, especially Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, to express their frustration and share their experience using humour and satire. These expressions have taken the form of memes, jokes, and satire.

Memes are a worldwide social phenomenon. They play a very interesting role that makes them go viral, due to how easily they are passed across uniquely. A simple press of a button allows it to be shown to a wide range of people, making them see the other side of the picture, offering a new perspective on a situation and helping them see things from a different angle. This change of perspective makes people change how they see a stressful situation. They do all this efficiently and effectively and serve as a source. Memes are essentially a language that people use on the internet, and being able to

identify and understand the nuances is key to communication between people online, as a language of their own, having this knowledge helps give a fuller understanding of the meaning and insight into the motivation of why something was shared (Omolabi, 2024).

Kien (2019) further opined that memes have become an integral part of social media, shaping the way we communicate and share information. These humorous and relatable images and videos have taken the internet and spread across social media platforms. Shifman (2014) opined that memes are a form of cultural expression; they encapsulate a shared experience or idea, often with a humorous twist, and are easily recognisable by a wide audience. Memes can take various forms, from images with captions to short videos or even hashtags. They are typically created and shared by individuals, but they quickly gain popularity when they resonate with a larger group of people. One of the reasons memes have become so popular is their ability to convey complex ideas or emotions in a concise and accessible manner. The meaning of memes relies on cultural references, current events, or inside jokes, making them relatable to specific communities or subcultures. Memes can serve as a form of commentary on society, politics, or everyday life, allowing people to express their opinions or frustrations in a lighthearted and easily shareable way.

Memes have the power to bring people together because they create a sense of community and shared understanding, as individuals find humour and connection in the same jokes or references. Wiggins (2019) stated that it provides a common language that transcends traditional barriers, allowing people to communicate and relate to one another in ways that were previously unimaginable. However, it is important to note that not all memes are harmless or positive. Like any form of communication, memes can be used to spread misinformation, perpetuate stereotypes, or even promote hate speech. It is crucial to approach memes critically and be aware of their potential impact. Critical semiotics emerged as a relatively new approach in discourse studies, which takes into consideration semiotic resources like memes

other than language alone, and it is combined with language to communicate meaning (Bell, 2012). Lazar (2003) said that semiotics is a field of study that examines the deeper meanings and interpretations behind signs, symbols, and texts. Oyedele and Ogungbe (2022) stated that it combines elements of critical discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis to delve into the social, cultural, and political implications embedded within these communicative forms. By analysing the various layers of meaning conveyed through signs and symbols, critical semiotics aims to uncover hidden ideologies, power dynamics, and social norms that influence our understanding of language and visual representations.

Felicia (2021) opined that semiotics is a field of study that focuses on analysing the meaning-making processes and social power dynamics inherent in signs, symbols, and other communicative elements within various forms of media and communication. Semiotics, as a theoretical framework, explores how meaning is constructed through signs and how these signs shape our understanding of reality. Semiotics, examines how signs are used to convey ideologies, representations, and social norms. It analyses how meanings are produced, circulated, and interpreted within different contexts. By applying critical approaches to semiotics, researchers aim to unveil hidden ideologies embedded within seemingly innocent or neutral messages. Lazar (2003) stated that semiotics helps us understand the complex ways in which power relations are perpetuated or challenged through symbolic communication. Through the use of theoretical frameworks like critical discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis, scholars in this field investigate the intricate layers of meaning behind signs by considering their linguistic properties as well as their visual components. By studying various modes of representation such as language, images, sounds, gestures or spatial arrangements, they unravel how these modes interact with one another to construct narratives or shape social realities. Overall, critical semiotics offers valuable insights into how meanings are constructed and contested within contemporary society. However, a research gap exists in investigating linguistic memes on

social media. While memes have been explored in various contexts like cartoons, adverts and caricatures, memes like this Naira redesign have been scarcely investigated. Investigating these techniques offers insight into memes' construction and conveyance in visual media. Bridging this gap presents an opportunity to understand how language enhances memes and satire's efficacy in memes, merging linguistics, meme studies, and visual communication.

This paper examines the semiotic representations of the selected memes in the Nigeria's Naira redesign. The focus is on how users employ language and semiotic codes to unveil meanings, linguistic and nonlinguistic interpretation of memes as a way of capturing people's mind toward generating meaning.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Language as a Social Semiotics**

Social semiotics is concerned with the way people use semiotic resources to produce communicative artefacts and events to interpret them, in the context of specific social situations and practices. 'Language as a social semiotic' (Halliday, 1978) reveals a connection between the social and cultural context. The meaning of semiotic choices depends on the social context of use. According to Halliday (1978, p.2), cited in Eggins (2004):

The formulation 'language as a social semiotic'... means interpreting language within a socio-cultural context, in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms as an information system (p.3).

Social semiotics is an approach to communication that seeks to understand how people communicate by a variety of means in particular social settings. Modes of communication are what they are, not because of a fixed set of rules and structure, but because of what they can accomplish socially in everyday activities. Social enquiry is a means for humans to make sense of their lives. According to Kress, because of the belief that meaning arises in social environments and through social interaction, a variety of semiotic resources are used to "make signs in concrete situations". In language as a social semiotic, Halliday (1978)

proposes that the semiotic resources of language are shaped by how people use them to make meaning. Social semiotic argues against some of the working hypothesis of traditional linguistics and semiotics, and in favour of a situated perspective on communication social semiotics aims to account for 'context', not base on "a native text-context dichotomy", but rather based on the assumption that "context has to be theorised and understood as another set of text" Hodge and Kress (1998, p.8). Crucially, that involves breaking with the assumption that verbal language is always dominant and autonomous. As Hodge (2009) puts it, social meanings cannot be tracked only in one circle, even in verbal language, as the dominant one. Hodge & Kress discuss examples from a range of social contexts involving a range of different modes, but writing and image in print media (e.g. magazines, billboards, posters, etc) are discussed more than speech, gesture, gaze and other modes operating in the social encounters with which language use is concerned. In the late 1980s, when Kress and van Leeuwen began to develop a social semiotic approach to language, the focus was on print media, culminating in their book *Reading Images: The grammar of visual design* (1996). In reading image, they proposed a framework for the analysis of image, which draws on the broad semiotic aspects of Halliday's social semiotic theory and makes use of the system network. O'Toole (1994) in his book, *The language of displayed art*, accounts for image as a set of meaning-making resources informed by the insights of film studies, iconography and art history.

The issue of mode or multiple modes, perhaps inevitably, was foregrounded in the 1990s. With the focus now on the co-operation of modes rather than the study of modes in isolation, the term multimodality becomes a key term. It provides an alternative to terms such as "verbal" and non- verbal which positions the verbal as the unmarked, dominant resources for meaning making, and the non-verbal meaning making, and the non-verbal as marked, auxiliary resources. As social semiotics evolves, there is a growing emphasis on how the context of communication and the sign maker shape signs and symbols. It

moved towards a more flexible notion of grammar, with a focus on people's situated choice of resources rather than emphasising the system of available resources. Semiotic resources are central to multimodality, although they feature slightly differently within particular approaches. Kress and van Leeuwen suggest that a semiotic resource can be thought of as the connection between representational resources and what people do with them.

### **Language of Social Media**

The importance of language in our everyday lives cannot be undermined. Wen (2014) agrees that language is what human beings rely on to express themselves, communicate with others, and know the world. Its effectual use has been a blessing in helping human beings in meeting different needs at all times through educating, entertaining, informing, rebuking, or passing down social values within the global world, in communicating the intended meaning of language users. Kempson (2003) states that language is what human beings use to do things. Therefore, a language is a form of expression that helps individuals or groups to communicate and express their feelings and ideas. When two people meet, it is a particular language that helps them understand each other's views and thoughts. It also informs them about their feelings and what they are expecting or trying to say to each other. Language interacts with every aspect of human life in society, and it can be understood only if it is considered in society. That is, it has been a boon in building harmony between individuals in a society.

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. In Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein's definition, social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Social Media is the future of communication, a countless array of internet-based tools and platforms that increase and enhance the sharing of information. This new form of media makes the transfer of text, photos,

audio, video, and information in general increasingly fluid among internet users. Social media has relevance not only for regular internet users but for businesses as well. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and WhatsApp have created online communities where people can share as much or as little personal information as they desire with other members. The result is an enormous amount of information that can be easily shared, searched, promoted, disputed, and created. Ejima (2021) posits that "social media is a free-for-all all internet-based platform which enables its users to become publishers by making posts and uploading pictures that are for personal, regional, national, and international internet." Language and social media are deeply intertwined and continue to evolve in response to each other. Language and social media are deeply connected in today's digital age. Social media platforms rely on language as the primary means of communication between users, and as such, language plays a crucial role in shaping our online interactions and experiences. Also, Social media platforms have allowed language to spread more rapidly and widely than ever before, and as a result, new linguistic features and trends can emerge and gain traction quickly. This has led to the creation of new words and phrases, as well as changes in the way we use existing words and expressions.

### **Memes**

Memes are a way in our society to share thoughts, feelings, humour and ideas overall. We find memes so intriguing because they are relatable, and audiences strive for things that they can relate to. Memes are a way of communication in our society, and they will continue to grow and become more popular. Memes have spread widely across internet populations and have become a common practice in many social media platforms across the globe (Kulkami, 2017). Social media platforms seem to be one of the fastest ways to communicate humorously in the world. It is the platform which had an estimated global user base of 180 million of the population with 92.4 million active subscribers. Several active users on social media sites thrive on the creation and circulation of MEMES. These tend to contain (images,

videos, texts and GIFs) projecting cultural symbols or social ideas, which often go viral on social media platforms.

The term “memes” is largely attributed to Richard Dawkins—an evolutionary biologist, in his book, *The Selfish Gene* (1976). But the word “memes” originates from the Greek word “*mimemeia*”. Dawkins defined memes as small cultural units of transmission, similar to genes that spread from person to person by way of imitation. Shifman (2013) posits that internet memes are not single ideas or formulas that spread easily, but rather groups of content items created with awareness of each other and which share common characteristics. Shifman then isolates three possible dimensions that make up memes and which can potentially be imitated: content (referencing both the ideas and the ideologies conveyed), form (the physical format of the message perceived through the senses) and stance (ways in which addressers positions themselves to the text, the reader/viewer and other potential speakers). While Shifman speaks about these dimensions in terms of a memetic YouTube video called “Leave Britney Alone”, it applies well to memes in other formats as well and does a good job of explaining the flexibility in how many ways a meme can be altered without losing the reference to the original.

### Theoretical framework

The paper adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's Grammar of Visual Design (GVD). Kress and van Leeuwen's goal in developing a "grammar of visual design" is to provide a socially-based philosophy of visual representation (1996, pp.1-5). They draw an analogy with language in doing so, noting that previous researchers in visual semiotics have tended to focus on what could be described as the "lexis" of images rather than the "grammar," focusing on the meaning projected by the individuals, scenes, and objects depicted within images rather than the connected meanings (p.1). The term "grammar" implies that they would try to investigate how what is shown in pictures is combined into a coherent, meaningful whole, similar to how discourse analysts investigate how words are combined into clauses, sentences, and entire texts. Like many

functional linguistic models, this is a visual discourse approach that seeks to connect form and meaning by viewing linguistic and visual “grammatical shapes as resources for encoding interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction” (p. 1). Thus, as Kress and van Leeuwen emphasise in citing Halliday's statement, society and ideology play a role in verbal and visual grammar.

Grammar goes beyond formal rules of correctness. It is a means of representing patterns of experience ... It enables human beings to present a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them” (1985, p. 101).

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) also recognise that there are secondary participants in many images, identified as circumstances, which are defined as “participants which could be left out without affecting the basic proposition realised by the narrative pattern, even though their deletion would cause a loss of information”. Following Halliday (1994), Kress and van Leeuwen recognise three forms. These are Locative Circumstances, Circumstances of Accompaniment, and Circumstances of Means. These circumstantial participants are not related to each other by vectors, but via aspects of location (thus the setting becomes a participant), or by simply co-occurring together in the same visual with no obvious relationship other than being with one another in the frame (a relation of Accompaniment), or finally by being used by a participants in some action (a relation of means) where there may be an absence of a vector between the user and the tool, but which may often assists in the formation of vector between the most salient Actor and the Goal.

### Methodology

This paper adopted a qualitative study that explores how selected Naira redesigned memes on social media and can be analysed through Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) Grammar of Visual Design. This provides a distinctive analysis of contextual meaning within all memes on social media on the internet, the text, image

combinations and works together to create humorous meaning. The data were in the form of images, words or phrases, and sentences, generated from the Facebook platform because of the widespread nature and how fast they go viral. With some seconds passing, trending issues are

communicated through memes to create a humorous sense on those platforms. A total of 5 Naira redesigned memes were purposively selected and used for the data analysis of this study.

### Data presentation and Analysis

#### Datum 1: Nigerian struggle amidst cash scarcity



### Compositionality and textual resources

#### Background resources

The background element or shared background knowledge undergirding this datum is the prevalent contemporary issue of the Naira Redesign policy made by the Central Bank of Nigeria. This policy, as explained by the Central Bank of Nigeria in cooperation with the Federal government of Nigeria, is borne out of the fact that there is a large volume of banknote hoarding by the public, which has thus led to a shortage of clean and fit banknotes. According to the CBN, only three of the current eight denominations were redesigned, namely the ₦200, ₦500 and ₦1000 banknotes. The president of the federation, President Muhammadu Buhari, however, launched the new naira banknotes on November 23, 2022 and stated that the current notes would circulate side by side with the redesigned notes till January

31, 2023 when the current notes would be withdrawn from circulation and would cease to be a legal tender. This decision, however, due to the lack of a fundamental modus operandi from the CBN and the Federal government of Nigeria, has escalated into a national brouhaha as the new notes are not fully in circulation, and the old notes have now ceased to be legal tender.

The scarcity of the new notes in the event of a shortage has disrupted business activities in markets, restaurants, banks and major sales outlets in Nigeria. Banks across the country have now become so congested day by day as people want to urgently tender the old notes that they still have in their possession back to CBN, and then to withdraw money straight from the bank because of the lack of cash and the exorbitant price Point of Sale (POS) attendants charge for withdrawals. And

beyond the visual image, the picture explices the struggle that citizens engage in at the bank and the need for instant intervention by the government.

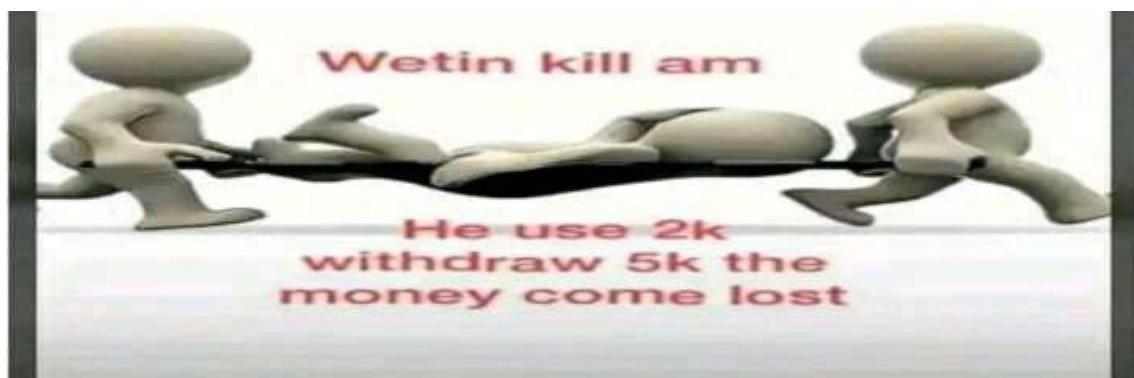
#### Foreground resources

The foreground resources in the visual image are a lady and a man, who, by the conversation "Dad, are you going for a boxing match?", can easily infer that he is the lady's father. The lady in this looks frightened, shocked and more to say confused as she asks her dad who, from the image, is seen dressed up with boxing gloves and with a stance ready for battle. In contrast, the man's response "No! I am going to the bank" gives an insight into the background resource of this datum. This image explains the current situation Nigerians are facing, particularly on the prevalent issue of naira redesign and naira scarcity.

Nigerians all over the country have been faced with the issue of no cash to fund their daily

needs, and POS attendants too, due to the hurdles they face before getting cash, which have also increased the withdrawal charges geometrically. All heads now turned to the bank that has, in turn, turned to a market arena where a lot of people who either want to deposit their old notes as stipulated by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) or withdraw directly from the counter, as the ATMs are not dispensing cash. Due to the situation, there are always a lot of people in the bank striving hard to get into the banking hall and make their transactions. And as it is with Nigerians, patience is always absent where there is a group of people clamouring for something. There are usually fights, pushing and a lot of strength tussles leading to fights and protests. The social vice present in this image is the bad results of the policy enacted by the CBN and the Federal government on naira redesign without a proper modus operandi on how to go about circulating the new notes.

#### Datum 2: The ordeal of an average Nigerian withdrawing cash



#### Background resources

The shared background resource of this datum 2 is the prevalent contemporary issue of the Naira Redesign policy made by the Central Bank of Nigeria. This policy, as explained by the Central Bank of Nigeria in cooperation with the Federal government of Nigeria, is borne out of the fact that there are rolls of banknotes being hoarded by the public, which has thus led to a shortage of clean and fit banknotes. According to the CBN, only three of the current eight denominations will be

redesigned, namely the ₦200, ₦500 and ₦1000 banknotes. The president of the federation, President Muhammadu Buhari, however, launched the new naira banknotes on November 23, 2022 and stated that the current notes would circulate side by side with the redesigned notes till January 31, 2023 when the current notes would be withdrawn from circulation and would cease to be a legal tender. This decision, however, due to the lack of fundamental modus operandi from the CBN and the Federal government of Nigeria, has

escalated into a national brouhaha as the new notes are not fully in circulation and the old notes have now ceased to be legal tender. The scarcity of the notes and the struggle encountered by people to withdraw the notes from the bank are the basis of this image.

#### Foreground resources

The foreground resources of this image are three dolls used to represent men, the citizens of Nigeria. Two of them are seen carrying the other, who happens to be slumped or unconscious. The cause of this can be seen in the dialogue in the image “WETIN DO AM? HE USE 2K WITHDRAW 5K, THE MONEY CON LOST”. The individual being whisked away due to unconsciousness was a result of the prevailing issue of naira scarcity, naira redesign and the exorbitant price charged by Point-of-Sale attendants (POS) to withdraw money. He used two thousand naira to withdraw five thousand naira for his use and in the event of an emergency, after spending so more for a very less money, he eventually misplaced the money, which is the actual cause of the unconsciousness. This image, however, comically explains the hardship faced by

Nigerians due to the issue of naira scarcity, which stemmed from the naira redesigning saga. Now, citizens are forced to “buy money with money”. For every thousand to be withdrawn, some POS charge as high as ₦400, some ₦300 and so on. This is the case now for a charge that was not higher than ₦100 before the policy was established. Now buying money with money and eventually the money got misplaced, the anguish, sadness, pain, misery, and helpless nature of Nigerians is explained vividly in the image above.

The POS claims they also face challenges withdrawing from banks and sometimes even buying money. Since they are a business and profit-oriented, if they also buy money with money, they would also want to get returns, thereby increasing the amount of charges to the final consumer. The social vice present in this image is the consequence of the policy enacted by the CBN and the Federal government on naira redesign without a proper modus operandi on how to go about circulating the new notes without causing anguish and putting the citizens into disarray.

**Datum 3: Nigerians fighting at a GTBank ATM for cash**



#### Background resources

The background element undergirding this datum is the prevailing current problem of the Naira Redesign policy made by the Central Bank of Nigeria. This policy, as explained by the Central

Bank of Nigeria in cooperation with the Federal government, was the consequence of the masses' misuse of banknotes. According to the CBN, only three of the current eight currencies were redesigned, namely the ₦200, ₦500 and ₦1000

banknotes. The president of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari however launched the new naira banknotes on November 23, 2022 and affirmed that the current notes would circulate side by side with the redesigned notes till January 31, 2023 when the current notes would be removed from distribution and would cease to be a legal tender in the country. This decision, however, due to the lack of fundamental technical know-how from the CBN and the Federal government of Nigeria, has escalated into a national melee as the new notes are not fully in circulation and the old notes have now ceased to be legal tender. The scarcity of the new notes in the event of a shortage has disturbed business events in markets, restaurants, banks and major sales outlets in Nigeria.

Banks across the country have now become so congested, clogged, overcrowded and jampacked day by day as people want to urgently tender the old notes that they still have in their ownership back to CBN, and then to withdraw money straight from the bank because of the lack of cash and the exorbitant price Point of Sale (POS) attendants charge for withdrawals. Beyond the awful state of the country shown vividly in the image, it is a clarion call to the government to brace up early enough and proffer working and substantial solutions that would help curb the menace already created, so it doesn't escalate into breeding dregs in the society.

### Foreground resources

The representational meta-function here is several represented participants. As indicated by the image, they are all male. They all appear to be doing something which makes the image transactional. There is the presence of vectors such as eyeline, facial expression, and gestures. The participants in the image are not staring at the viewer; rather, they are staring at themselves and are focused with glaring aggression. The image is taken from a medium long shot, which makes the image visible to the readers from the toes upwards. This is to show a formal relationship of the viewers to the represented participants. The participants in this image are in front of an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) and are all struggling, pulling and pushing one another. They are all struggling to use the ATM to withdraw money all at the same time, which in turn has led to the unusual and unnecessary turtle neck that is in play in the image. This can be traced to the naira scarcity, which is a result of the naira redesign policy yet to be successfully implemented by the CBN. And as it is with Nigerians, patience is always absent where there is a group of people clamouring for something. There are usually fights, pushing and a lot of strength tussles leading to fights and protests. The social vices present in this image are improper planning on the side of the government, a lack of consideration and a need for timely and appropriate intervention.

**Datum 4: Nigerian *Ekuru* hawker accepting transfer**



### Background resources

The backdrop of this datum is the current difficulty that has arisen from the Naira Redesign policy made by the Central Bank of Nigeria. This policy, as described by the Central Bank of Nigeria, is borne out of the fact that there is a large volume of banknotes amassing among the masses, which has led to a shortage of clean and fit banknotes. According to the CBN, only three of the current eight monies will be redesigned - ₦200, ₦500 and ₦1000 banknotes. The president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, however launched the new naira banknotes on November 23, 2022 and affirmed that the current notes would flow side by side with the redesigned notes till January 31, 2023 when the current notes would be removed from distribution and would cease to be a legal tender in the country. This decision, however, due to the lack of fundamental technical know-how from the CBN and the Federal government of Nigeria, has escalated into a national melee as the new notes are not fully in circulation, and the old notes have now ceased to be legal tender. The scarcity of the new notes in the eventuality has affected business events in markets, restaurants, banks and major sales outlets in Nigeria. In the extreme, small day-to-day businesses are also affected adversely by the scarcity of cash. As it's

shown in the image, to purchase the smallest of things, there is no cash, and people have to resort to online transfer of cash rather than waiting for the cash that no one has at the moment. Beyond the comic nature of the image, it is a vivid representation of bad and inadequate consideration of the majority (people) by the minority (government).

### Foreground resources

The representational meta-function here is several items used to represent the business of selling *Ekuru*, which is attributed to Nigerians, particularly the Yoruba people. There is a pot filled with soup, egg and meat, placed inside a bucket. The bucket is also placed inside a big pot, and the big pot is also inside another bucket. Attached to the pot is a paper that has the bank account details of the person selling the item. The image is taken from a medium long shot, which makes the image visible to the readers from the bottom to the top. This is also to show a formal relationship of the viewers to the represented business. However, the picture can be considered comic because it is unusual for a business like this to have the option of collecting transfer as a mode of payment. This is, however, due to the prevailing issue of naira scarcity currently affecting businesses in the country.

Datum 5: Nigerians struggle to beat the deadline



## Background Resources

The above datum is obtained from a pocket cartoon; this image is analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen, social semiotic theory. The image displays only one participant, which makes the datum non-transactional. The represented participant is a cartoon drawing of the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Emefiele. The process in this image is an action process because it depicts the participant announcing with a gong labelled CBN. Due to the absence of eye contact, the image offers information to the viewers that there is new naira and a new date when the new old naira won't be used anymore and informs the people that THE KING won't change his mind on this date anymore. There is no gaze from the represented participant to the viewers.

The textual information in the image is "CBN extends deadline for old naira notes to Feb 10 - news" informs the viewers that different news broadcasting has reported that the CBN has extended the date for old naira notes and thereby displayed the textual information from the represented participant "The king has magnanimously given you knew notes and a new date. Cry, wail, beg, lobby and whine. He won't change his mind" this information tells that the new date is final and no amount of begging, crying, wailing and whining will change the mind of "the king". The context of this image is that CBN redesigned naira and wants it to replace the old naira which has been given an ultimatum so Nigerians should ensure that they do not have old naira notes before the set date because after this date, old naira won't be accepted anywhere in the country as a means for transaction. Colour is used in the presentation of the image, and the image is presented in black and white to create a special effect on the viewers. Attention of viewers is drawn to this meme due to its use of colour, the tonal value and the size.

## Findings

This paper has analysed four memes on the Naira redesigned in Nigeria and has revealed that linguistic and non-linguistic resources are like two Siamese twins that cannot be separated. They co-exist with one another in such a way that linguistic resources, which are the textual

component of the memes, provide the viewer with the ideals through which they can build on for a better understanding of the meaning of other non-linguistic resources captured in the selected memes. Examples of linguistic semiotic resources that help in understanding the entire intended message are seen in Figures 1 and 2, where the textual information is presented at the top of the memes so as to communicate what is embedded in the image. In Figure 1, the linguistic resource is used to communicate the meaning idea in the datum, while the non-linguistic resource is meant to communicate what is embedded in the linguistic resource.

The paper also revealed that semiotic resources are used in the memes to communicate an idea to the viewers through the use of colour, text and image. Colour is used to communicate an idea in datum 3, where a crowd of people at an ATM stand, specifically Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB), are involved in a fistfight. The choice of colour has made us recognise that bank that is known for this type of colour. Also, in Figure 1, black and white is used to align with the form of communication to present the gong in the image. Black and white is termed as an old colour, and Gong is an old form of communication too, so colour is used to match the style employed in the meme.

## Conclusion

This paper has shown that visible images and linguistic tools are rich in meaning and can be easily interpreted and understood. Memes are used as tools to inform, entertain, satirise and educate people. Moreover, this paper perceives Semiotics as a linguistic field that reveals hidden meaning in text; most time, the meanings are powerful. Semiotics in this paper has been used as an approach that captures the modes of communication used in memes, which serve as a form of awareness to people. The paper has also been able to show possible interpretations attached to each selected meme, especially the non-linguistic resource of each, which has been made unrevealed to the viewers, that is, memes are a medium through which important messages are being passed to the people in the society. As observed in the analysis, each of the memes has a

different message to inform the viewers, and all are achieved through a combination of different

modes in meaning making.

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