

A MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SEMIOTIC RESOURCES AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN THE 2023 APC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY CAMPAIGN POSTERS

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Abstract

This paper examines semiotic resources and political ideologies in the 2023 APC presidential primary campaign posters through a multimodal discourse analysis. The paper investigates how verbal and visual semiotic resources; including colour, typography, imagery, layout, and slogans interact to construct political meanings, project candidate identities, and persuade voters. The paper adopts Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) as its theoretical framework. A qualitative content analysis was conducted on 4 purposively sampled APC presidential primary election campaign posters circulated across online platforms. The findings reveal that the posters strategically deploy national colours (green, white, red) to evoke patriotism and unity, while slogans such as “Renewed Hope” function as emotional and aspirational appeals. Visual hierarchies position the presidential candidate as the decisive leader, with complementary imagery of the running mate reinforcing unity. Contrasting designs, ranging from minimalist, technocratic aesthetics to vibrant grassroots rally posters demonstrate how multimodal choices are tailored to different audiences and political contexts. The study concludes that APC presidential primary campaign posters operate not merely as promotional tools but as ideological constructs that embed socio-political realities, negotiate ethnic and religious diversity, and respond to public desires for economic renewal and competent governance.

Keywords: Semiotic, Politics, Campaign, Posters, Multimodal, Discourse, Analysis.

Introduction

Language is a structured system of symbols that facilitates communication, allowing individuals to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas effectively within cultural contexts. Thus, language remains an essential tool for human interaction and social organisation. Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2014, p. 3) describe language as “a system of communication using sounds or symbols that enable us to express our feelings, thoughts, ideas, and experiences”. As a symbolic system, language makes it possible for people to produce and interpret messages, coordinate social activities, express opinions, and shape realities within society. Beyond everyday interaction, language also plays a significant role in influencing attitudes, beliefs, and public perception in different social and political

contexts.

One important area where language performs this persuasive function is political discourse. Political discourse involves the strategic use of language to influence people, evoke emotions, and shape public opinion through rhetorical devices such as repetition, slogans, and strategic pronouns. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 98), political actors frequently use language to frame ideologies and persuade voters during political activities. Eze and Amoniyan (2022) further assert that language serves both positive and negative purposes in society, depending on how it is used. In political communication, language is often carefully selected to mobilise support, construct ideological positions, and influence voters’ perceptions of candidates and political parties. Through these

rhetorical strategies, political actors attempt to connect with the electorate and gain public acceptance.

Political campaigns provide one of the major platforms through which this persuasive use of language is carried out. During election periods, political parties and candidates communicate their visions, policies, and promises to the electorate in order to gain political support. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (2023) defines political campaigns as public activities organised by political parties to canvass for votes by presenting their programmes, policies, and achievements to the electorate. While political campaigns traditionally relied heavily on spoken and written language, visual forms of communication have become increasingly important in modern political engagement. Among these visual forms, campaign posters have emerged as powerful tools for political communication because they combine words and images to attract attention and persuade voters.

Campaign posters are therefore important components of contemporary political campaigns because they communicate political messages through both visual and verbal elements. According to Omole and Ugoala (2025), campaign posters are consciously designed to persuade the electorate and promote political ideologies through the interaction of textual and visual resources. Beyond merely presenting information about candidates, campaign posters are also used to evoke emotions, construct political identity, and reinforce ideological positions. They often incorporate photographs, colours, symbols, typography, and slogans that work together to create persuasive meanings for the audience.

The combination of verbal and visual resources in campaign posters makes them suitable for multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). Multimodal discourse analysis examines how different communicative modes such as language, images, colours, symbols, and spatial arrangements interact to produce meaning. This approach became particularly relevant during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, where political parties relied heavily on visual campaign

materials to influence public perception. Through MDA, scholars are able to examine how political actors strategically combine visual and textual elements to construct persuasive political messages and ideological meanings in campaign materials.

Among the political parties that extensively employed multimodal strategies during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election was the All Progressives Congress (APC). The APC's presidential primary campaign posters combined symbolic colours, national imagery, slogans, and bold typography to project themes of leadership, unity, and national development. Luca (2020) observes that campaign posters integrate visual and textual modes of communication through elements such as typography, colour, and imagery in order to communicate political ideas effectively. In the APC presidential primary campaign posters, expressions such as "Renewed Hope," together with the use of national symbols and carefully selected colours, were designed to evoke patriotism and connect the party's vision with the aspirations of Nigerians.

The significance of campaign posters became more evident during the highly competitive 2023 Nigerian presidential election, which was largely dominated by the three most visible and electorally influential political parties: the All Progressives Congress (APC), the Labour Party (LP), and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). These parties attracted widespread national attention due to their strong media presence, extensive campaign activities, and significant voter support across different parts of the country. According to Nkwankwo and Eze (2023), campaign materials during the election were strategically designed not only to communicate party manifestoes but also to shape public opinion by presenting candidates in favourable ways. Through carefully constructed posters, the APC attempted to project images of strength, competence, hope, and effective leadership to the electorate. The election therefore provided an important context for examining how visual and linguistic elements were combined to influence political perception and voter behaviour in

Nigeria.

The APC presidential primary campaign posters employed several semiotic resources to communicate political ideologies and appeal to different voter groups. The use of green and white colours symbolised nationalism and unity, while the confident posture and facial expressions of the candidate projected competence and leadership. These visual elements were reinforced by slogans and textual messages centred on hope, renewal, and national progress. Through multimodal discourse analysis, it becomes possible to understand how these visual and textual resources worked together to construct political meanings and influence voter perception during the 2023 presidential election.

Objectives

This study examines how multimodal semiotic resources construct political ideologies in the 2023 APC presidential primary campaign posters. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. analyse the semiotic resources used in the 2023 APC presidential primary campaign posters.
2. investigate the interaction between visual and textual elements in conveying political ideologies.
3. examine how cultural and socio-political contexts are represented in campaign posters.

Literature Review

Political communication has remained an important area of scholarly inquiry because language and visual representation play central roles in shaping political perception, ideology, and voter behaviour. Political actors strategically use discourse to construct identities, frame national issues, and persuade the electorate during election campaigns. Existing studies show that political communication extends beyond spoken language to include visual and symbolic resources that communicate ideological meanings. However, much of the earlier scholarship on political discourse focused largely on speeches, debates, and media interviews, with limited attention paid to multimodal campaign materials such as posters, banners, and digital political advertisements.

In the Nigerian context, political discourse is deeply connected to issues of identity, ethnicity, leadership, power, and national development. Nigerian political campaigns often rely on emotionally charged slogans, symbolic imagery, and persuasive rhetoric to mobilise support and shape public opinion. Studies by Opeibi (2009) and Taiwo (2007) demonstrate that political language in Nigeria is highly ideological and frequently designed to legitimise political actors while discrediting opponents. These studies reveal how politicians strategically deploy language to appeal to ethnic consciousness, collective aspirations, and public emotions during electoral contests. However, although these studies provide important insights into Nigerian political discourse, they focus mainly on verbal rhetoric and pay limited attention to the interaction between visual and textual elements in campaign communication.

Recent Nigerian scholarship has increasingly recognised the importance of visual political communication, particularly campaign posters, in shaping electoral perception. Otabi and Oamen (2025) argue that Nigerian campaign posters are not merely promotional materials but ideological constructs shaped by socio-political realities and electoral competition. Similarly, Chilwa and Odeunmi (2016) observe that Nigerian political campaigns frequently combine images, colours, slogans, and symbols to project candidates as credible leaders and agents of national transformation. These studies demonstrate that campaign posters in Nigeria function as multimodal texts through which political ideologies, identities, and persuasive meanings are communicated.

Despite these contributions, many Nigerian studies on political communication remain largely descriptive in approach. Several studies merely identify persuasive strategies or rhetorical devices without providing deeper multimodal analysis of how verbal and visual semiotic resources interact to construct meaning. Methodologically, many previous studies rely heavily on textual analysis while neglecting visual semiotics, colour symbolism, spatial arrangement,

typography, and candidate imagery. This methodological limitation creates a gap in understanding how political meanings are produced through the interaction of multiple communicative modes in campaign posters.

Theoretical differences also exist within the literature on political communication and multimodality. While discourse-oriented scholars such as Opeibi (2009) primarily examine linguistic persuasion and ideological framing in political language, multimodal scholars like Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006) argue that meaning is constructed through the interaction of different semiotic resources, including images, colours, gestures, and layout. This theoretical distinction is important because political posters are inherently multimodal texts that cannot be fully understood through linguistic analysis alone. The present study therefore adopts Multimodal Discourse Analysis to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how verbal and visual elements jointly construct political meaning in APC campaign posters.

Studies outside Nigeria also provide useful insights into the ideological and symbolic functions of political communication. For instance, Malik (2025) found that campaign posters in rural Pakistan often function as symbols of political dominance and patronage rather than persuasive tools. Similarly, Morgan (2022), in a study of the 2017 United Kingdom General Election, demonstrates that political symbols and campaign imagery operate within broader cultural codes that shape public interpretation and meaning construction. While these studies contribute to understanding the persuasive and symbolic dimensions of political communication, their findings emerge from socio-political environments that differ significantly from the Nigerian context. Consequently, their conclusions cannot be fully generalised to Nigerian electoral communication, which is strongly influenced by ethnicity, regional identity, economic challenges, and postcolonial political realities.

Similarly, studies on political persuasion have shown that emotions and ideological identity strongly influence voter response to political

messages. Kim et al. (2018) argue that persuasive political communication becomes more effective when it aligns with the ideological orientation of the audience, while Wirz and Wirth (2025) maintain that emotionalised political communication significantly shapes public support for political actors and policies. Although these studies provide useful theoretical insights into persuasion, they focus mainly on Western democracies and media environments. They pay limited attention to African electoral systems where visual symbolism, personality politics, and socio-cultural identity often play more dominant roles in political persuasion.

Another major limitation in previous studies is the insufficient focus on the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, particularly the multimodal strategies employed in APC presidential campaign posters. Existing Nigerian studies have concentrated more on speeches, political advertisements, or social media discourse, with relatively little attention given to campaign posters as multimodal political texts. Moreover, few studies have specifically examined how verbal and visual semiotic resources interacted in the APC's 2023 presidential campaign to construct ideological meanings, project leadership identity, and influence voter perception.

Therefore, this study fills an important gap in scholarship by examining the multimodal discourse strategies employed in selected APC presidential primary campaign during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election. Unlike previous studies that focused mainly on verbal political rhetoric or general campaign communication, this study integrates linguistic and visual analysis to show how slogans, colours, typography, candidate imagery, symbols, and spatial arrangements worked together to communicate persuasive political meanings within the Nigerian socio-political environment.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), a theoretical approach that examines how multiple semiotic resources interact to produce meaning in communication.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis emerged from Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which emphasises that language performs ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions within social contexts (Halliday, 1978). Building on Halliday's work, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006) expanded the theory beyond language to include other communicative modes such as images, colour, gesture, typography, layout, and spatial design. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), meaning is not constructed through language alone but through the interaction of multiple semiotic resources working together within a social and cultural context. Multimodal Discourse Analysis therefore provides an effective framework for analysing political campaign posters, which combine visual and verbal elements to communicate ideological meanings and persuasive messages.

One important concept in Multimodal Discourse Analysis is the representational function, which focuses on how people, objects, events, and ideas are represented through different semiotic modes (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). This aspect of MDA examines how images, texts, colours, and layout combine to construct particular meanings and realities. Machin (2013) explains that visual choices in political communication are often ideologically motivated and designed to shape audience perception. In political campaign posters, elements such as candidate images, party symbols, colour schemes, and slogans work together to project leadership qualities, competence, nationalism, and political identity. Thus, the representational function helps explain how political actors construct favourable public images through multimodal resources.

Another important aspect of MDA is the interactional function, which examines the relationship between the producer of a text, the text itself, and the audience (Jewitt, 2009). This function focuses on how semiotic resources are used to engage viewers, establish social relations, and position audiences ideologically. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) argue that elements such as gaze, camera angle, social distance, and facial

expression influence how viewers relate to visual images. For example, candidates portrayed looking directly at the audience may create a sense of connection, trust, and involvement, while close-up images may establish intimacy and emotional engagement. Similarly, the use of inclusive expressions and persuasive slogans in political posters can create solidarity and encourage audience identification with political messages.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis also emphasises the importance of social and cultural context in meaning-making. O'Halloran (2004) notes that multimodal meanings are shaped by cultural conventions, ideological assumptions, and social practices within particular societies. This means that semiotic resources such as colours, clothing, symbols, gestures, and language choices may carry different meanings across political and cultural contexts. In Nigeria, political communication is strongly influenced by issues of ethnicity, nationalism, religion, leadership, and socio-economic conditions. Consequently, the use of national colours, traditional attire, patriotic slogans, and symbolic imagery in campaign posters often reflects broader political ideologies and cultural expectations within Nigerian society.

Applying Multimodal Discourse Analysis to the study, provides a comprehensive framework for examining how verbal and visual semiotic resources interact to construct political meaning. Through the analysis of text, imagery, colour symbolism, typography, spatial arrangement, and candidate representation, the study investigates how the APC campaign posters projected ideological messages, leadership identity, and persuasive political narratives during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election. The theory is therefore suitable for this study because it enables a deeper understanding of how multimodal resources are strategically combined in political communication to influence voter perception and shape public opinion.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design using content analysis within the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to examine selected 2023 All Progressives

Congress (APC) presidential primary campaign posters. The qualitative approach is suitable because the study focuses on interpreting the meanings conveyed through verbal and visual semiotic resources in political campaign materials. The primary data consisted of four purposively selected APC presidential primary campaign posters featuring the presidential candidate, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and his running mate, Kashim Shettima. Posters unrelated to the APC presidential primary campaign were excluded to ensure consistency and corpus validity.

The posters were retrieved between January and February 2025 from official APC media platforms, verified social media campaign pages, online news platforms, and Google image archives. Purposive sampling was adopted because the study specifically targeted posters that prominently combined visual and linguistic elements relevant to political persuasion and ideological representation. The selected posters were chosen based on their circulation, visibility, and relevance during the 2023 presidential primary election campaign. Secondary data were obtained from journal articles, books, unpublished academic works, and other scholarly materials related to political discourse, multimodality, semiotics, and electoral communication.

The data were analysed using the Multimodal Discourse Analysis framework of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2006), which examines how verbal and visual semiotic resources interact to produce meaning. The analysis focused on linguistic features such as slogans, lexical choices, and persuasive expressions, as well as visual elements including colour symbolism, typography, candidate imagery, posture, spatial arrangement, and party symbols. These elements were analysed under three major categories: verbal features, visual semiotic resources, and ideological representations, in order to examine how the posters constructed political meanings and persuasive messages during the 2023 Nigerian APC presidential primary campaign.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents and analyses the

selected 2023 All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential primary campaign posters using the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). The analysis focuses on how verbal and visual semiotic resources interact to construct political meanings, ideological representations, and persuasive messages within the campaign materials. Attention is given to linguistic features such as slogans, lexical choices, and persuasive expressions, as well as visual elements including colour symbolism, typography, candidate imagery, posture, facial expression, and spatial arrangement. Through this analysis, the study examines how the campaign posters project themes of leadership, nationalism, competence, unity, and hope in the context of the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.

Datum 1

Datum 1 discusses the campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu presenting a visual and linguistic element designed to construct a compelling political narrative.



Figure 1: Campaign poster of Bola Ahmed Tinubu

The visual analysis reveals a structured composition that places Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the centre, dressed in traditional Nigerian attire and raising a clenched fist, a gesture that symbolises strength, resilience, and solidarity. His forward-facing position and resolute facial expression present him as the dominant political figure,

projecting confidence and authority. The APC party logo positioned beside the text reinforces institutional legitimacy and party identity. The colour scheme prominently features green and white, directly appropriating the Nigerian flag to symbolise growth, unity, and peace, while the red accent in the APC logo conveys passion and political strength. The bold typography of “TINUBU FOR PRESIDENT 2023” ensures immediate visibility, guiding the viewer’s eye from candidate imagery to textual message in a structured, persuasive layout.

A linguistic analysis of the poster’s text reveals the use of declarative slogan. The textual message “TINUBU FOR PRESIDENT 2023” operates as a declarative slogan, straightforward and unambiguous. This phrasing functions as a direct call to action, foregrounding candidacy and electoral ambition. The use of the candidate’s name in capital letters serves as a rhetorical device of emphasis, reinforcing recognition and authority. The phrase “FOR PRESIDENT” is both literal and symbolic, positioning Tinubu as the rightful contender for national leadership. The interaction between text and image is synergistic: the raised fist visually substantiates the assertive declaration of candidacy, while the national colours root the message in patriotic identity.

Furthermore, a symbolic analysis and examination of cultural and socio-political influences reveals deeper layers of meaning. The raised fist is a powerful semiotic resource, historically associated with resistance, empowerment, and collective struggle. In the Nigerian political context, it symbolises determination to confront socio-economic challenges and unify diverse constituencies. The deliberate use of national colours and party symbols is an act of symbolic intertextuality, linking Tinubu’s campaign to broader narratives of nationalism and unity. The poster’s message responds directly to socio-political realities, widespread public desire for competent governance, economic renewal, and stability. By combining traditional attire with modern political branding, the poster negotiates Nigeria’s ethnic and cultural diversity, presenting Tinubu as both a

custodian of tradition and a leader for national progress.

Datum 2

Datum 2 discusses the campaign poster of Anyim Pius Anyim, which utilises a stark and formal design to construct an image of experienced, progressive leadership.



Figure 2: Campaign poster of Anyim Pius Anyim

A visual analysis shows a composition dominated by the candidate’s formal portrait, positioned centrally to establish him as the unequivocal focal point. His serious, direct gaze and composed expression communicate gravitas and readiness for high office. The colour scheme is a study in contrasts; the candidate is set against a deep, solid black background, which creates a sense of gravity and sophistication, while the text is rendered almost entirely in a brilliant, clean white. This high-contrast visual strategy makes the candidate’s image and the textual message highly salient, cutting through visual noise with clarity and authority. The typography is clean and modern, particularly the bold, capitalized “PROGRESS,” which serves as the poster’s visual and thematic anchor, while the formal presentation of his name and the acronym “GCON” (Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger) reinforces a sense of established status and official recognition.

A linguistic analysis reveals a strategic and economical use of text centred on a single, powerful keyword. The word “PROGRESS” functions as the core rhetorical device; a noun that is both aspirational and action-oriented, promising forward movement and positive development without specifying details, thus allowing voters to project their own hopes onto the candidate. The inclusion of the honorific “GCON” is a critical piece of word choice; it is not merely a title but a symbolic credential that leverages institutional recognition to build credibility and distinguish the candidate as a respected statesman of proven national service. The interaction between visual and textual elements is tightly coordinated; the candidate's formal attire and solemn expression visually substantiate the serious promise of “PROGRESS”, depicting it not as a flashy slogan but as a deliberate, achievable goal backed by experience.

Delving into a symbolic analysis, the poster's minimalist aesthetic and the use of the black background are deeply significant. Black, in this context, symbolises authority, elegance, and substance, positioning Anyim as a serious contender above the fray of typical political spectacle. The prominent display of “GCON” acts as an indexical symbol, pointing directly to his established record and honor within the national system, thereby offering concrete evidence of his capability. Examining the cultural and socio-political influences, the poster's emphasis on “PROGRESS” and official accolades can be interpreted as a direct response to a political climate often characterised by dissatisfaction with the status quo. It appeals to voters seeking not just change, but competent and dignified advancement, leveraging symbols of established governance to promise a steady, reputable path toward national improvement.

Datum 3

Datum 3 discusses the campaign poster of Yahaya Bello and his running mate, Kayode, presenting a strikingly modern and energetic visual identity distinct from its contemporaries.



Figure 3: Campaign Poster of Yahaya Bello and Kayode

A visual analysis immediately highlights the unique and unconventional colour scheme. Departing from the traditional green and white of the Nigerian palette or the solemn black of other posters, this design employs a vibrant gradient of cyan against a dark background. It is the opinion of the researcher that the poster is modern, almost digital aesthetic projects a powerful image of youth, innovation, and a decisive break from political convention, aiming to position the candidates as a fresh, forward-thinking alternative. The image composition is equally distinctive; instead of a formal portrait, the poster features a dynamic, stylized illustration of the candidates. Their determined expressions and the sharp, graphic rendering create a sense of action and contemporary relevance, a significant departure from the more traditional and solemn photographic representations seen in other posters.

A linguistic analysis reveals a minimalist and direct textual approach. The poster forgoes a traditional slogan like “Hope” or “Progress,” instead focusing solely on the candidates' names: “YAHAYA BELLO” and “KAYODE.” This choice places the entire emphasis on the individuals themselves, framing their identity and perceived qualities as the core campaign message. The names are presented in a clean, bold, sans-serif typography that complements the modern visual theme, suggesting clarity and a no-nonsense attitude. The interaction between visual and textual

elements is seamless; the sleek, tech-oriented graphic style visually communicates a message of a "new school" of leadership, which is reinforced by the straightforward, slogan-free presentation of the names.

A deeper symbolic analysis uncovers the poster's core argument. The vibrant cyan blue functions as a powerful semiotic resource, symbolising trust, clarity, and stability while also evoking associations with technology and innovation. Scholars note that cyan consistently triggers perceptions of reliability and openness, and its strong presence in digital and healthcare design contexts reinforces its link to modernity and forward-thinking ideas (NeuroLaunch, 2025; YAOT, 2025; The Color Atlas, 2025). This is a deliberate symbolic shift away from the established colour politics of the nation, attempting to carve out a unique ideological space. The use of illustration over photography is also profoundly symbolic; it moves away from presenting a literal record of the candidates and instead offers an idealised, curated version, a brand of modern efficiency and energy. Considering the cultural and socio-political influences, this design is a clear overture to a younger, more urban, and digitally-native demographic. It responds to a growing desire for political actors who appear disconnected from old systems and embodies a vision of governance that is modern, dynamic, and technologically savvy, using its unique aesthetic to signal a definitive departure from the political past.

Datum 4

Datum 4 presents a campaign poster for Godwin Emefiele, the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, during the 2023 presidential campaign.



Figure 4: Campaign Poster of Godwin Emefiele

The dominant colour is a rain-cloud grey, a stark departure from the vibrant green and white of the Nigerian flag or the colourful palettes typical of Nigerian political campaigns. This choice signifies a desire to be seen as serious, sober, and technocratic. It implicitly frames the candidate not as a flamboyant politician but as a steady, competent manager, perhaps aiming to evoke notions of stability and economic prudence amidst turbulent times.

A linguistic analysis uncovers a complex and somewhat cryptic message. The core slogan, "IT'S TIME TO CONSOLIDATE & EXPAND MR. PRESIDENT LEGACIES," employs a technocratic and conservative rhetorical device, framing the candidate's mission as one of managerial continuation rather than transformative change. The phrasing "MR. PRESIDENT" is a notable word choice, potentially functioning as a grammatical metaphor that deliberately avoids naming the incumbent. This creates an ambiguity, allowing the poster to appeal to loyalists of the sitting president while allowing the candidate, Emefiele, to subtly position himself as the natural successor to the office ("PRESIDENT"). The word "LEGACIES" is crucial, suggesting that the outgoing administration has multiple successful achievements that require careful stewardship.

The candidate's facial expression and posture are central to this narrative. Godwin

Emefiele is depicted with a slight, closed-mouth smile, conveying a sense of quiet confidence and approachability. However, his posture is formal; he is dressed in a traditional senator attire, which signifies cultural affinity and authority. His direct gaze into the camera is intended to establish a connection with the viewer and project honesty and determination. The overall demeanor is one of a calm, reliable, and experienced custodian, perfectly aligning with the textual message of consolidation.

The poster is laden with puzzling phrases like “2023: IT'S TIME...” which creates a sense of urgency and destiny, implying that this election is a critical juncture. The interaction between visual and textual elements is disjointed; the stark, document-like visual presentation frames the cryptic text as something to be studied rather than emotionally absorbed, creating a barrier to immediate persuasion. The overall message the poster entails is one of continuity and experienced management. It seeks to reassure voters that under Emefiele, the nation would be in safe, familiar hands, and the policies of the incumbent would be both protected and expanded.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that APC presidential primary campaign posters strategically deployed multimodal semiotic resources, colour, typography, imagery, and slogans, to construct political ideologies and persuade voters. These findings align with earlier Nigerian scholarship that emphasises the ideological and persuasive functions of political discourse. For instance, Opeibi (2009) and Taiwo (2007) demonstrated that Nigerian political language is highly ideological, often designed to legitimise political actors while appealing to ethnic consciousness and collective aspirations. The present study extends their insights by showing that such ideological framing is not limited to verbal rhetoric but is equally embedded in visual semiotics such as colour symbolism and candidate imagery.

Similarly, Chilwa and Odebunmi (2016) observed that Nigerian campaign posters combine images, colours, and slogans to project candidates

as credible leaders. The APC posters analysed here reinforce this observation: the declarative slogan, TINUBU FOR PRESIDENT 2023, and the use of national colours (green and white) functioned as emotional appeals to patriotism, unity and peace, complemented by strategic red accents in the APC logo that convey passion and political strength. Different APC posters employed both aspirational and declarative slogans to construct persuasive meanings. This demonstrates continuity with Nigerian scholarship that views campaign posters as ideological constructs rather than mere promotional tools (Omole & Ugoala, 2025; Otabi & Oamen, 2025). By foregrounding national symbols and declarative language, the APC posters negotiated Nigeria's ethnic and religious diversity, echoing the broader socio-political realities identified in earlier studies (Nkwankwo & Eze, 2023).

Beyond Nigeria, African and global political discourse scholarship also highlights the symbolic and ideological functions of campaign materials. Malik (2025), in his study of rural Pakistan, argued that posters often serve as symbols of political dominance and patronage. While Nigeria's context differs, the APC posters similarly operated as symbols of authority and competence, positioning the candidate as a decisive leader. Likewise, Morgan (2022) showed that campaign imagery in the UK functions within cultural codes that shape public interpretation. In Nigeria, cultural codes such as nationalism, ethnic identity, and religious diversity shaped how voters interpreted the APC's multimodal strategies. Thus, the findings of this study resonate with broader scholarship that emphasises the cultural embeddedness of political communication.

Importantly, this study addresses the methodological gap noted in Nigerian scholarship, where many analyses focused primarily on verbal rhetoric. By adopting Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006), the present research demonstrates how verbal and visual semiotic resources interact to construct meaning. For example, Tinubu's resolute facial expression visually substantiated the promise of “action,” while the slogan Renewed Hope

provided the textual anchor. This multimodal synergy illustrates Machin's (2013) argument that visual choices in political communication are ideologically motivated and designed to shape audience perception.

It becomes clear that APC campaign posters functioned as ideological texts that embedded socio-political realities, responded to public desires for economic renewal, and projected competence. They extended earlier Nigerian studies by demonstrating that multimodal resources, not just language, are central to constructing political meaning. They also contributed to African political discourse scholarship by showing how campaign posters operate within cultural codes of nationalism, unity, and leadership. Thus, the study confirms that multimodal discourse analysis provides a more comprehensive understanding of political communication in Nigeria, bridging the gap between linguistic and visual approaches.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that the 2023

APC presidential primary campaign posters relied heavily on multimodal resources to construct political meanings and persuade voters. The 2023 APC presidential primary campaign posters strategically employed multimodal resources to shape political identity, construct ideological meanings, and influence voter perception. Through the strategic use of colours, images, slogans, typography, and symbols, the posters projected themes of hope, leadership, patriotism, competence, and national renewal. The study further revealed that visual and textual elements do not function independently; rather, they interact to reinforce ideological messages and shape public perceptions of political candidates. The findings highlight the growing importance of visual political communication in contemporary Nigerian elections and underscore the relevance of Multimodal Discourse Analysis in understanding how political messages are communicated through the interaction of language, imagery, colour, symbolism, and design.

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