

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A.

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

po.makinde@unizik.edu.ng

+234(0)8038337184

Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

lyndiswag@gmail.com

+234(0)8134009961

Abstract

Researches have been carried out on the understanding of sexism in communication. Sexism in communication also known as gender expression is a description of the manner in which languages inherently exclude a particular gender in discourse. This study investigates the nature of gender words in communication in selected Nigerian newspapers. The study adopts a qualitative research design. Data for the study are sourced from *the Guardian*, *the Guardian Life Magazine* and *Daily Trust Newspapers*, and websites - wps.org and katakata.org. The analysis was conducted through the application of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (1996:2006) visual semiotic which was drawn from Halliday's (1978) Systematic Functional Linguistics approach to multimodal discourse analysis. It considers how an expression is composed of different modes in meaning making process. The first effort was to establish the direction of sexism in the Nigerian newspapers, which was observed to be female directed. Findings from the study show that there are still a good number of sexist expressions in Nigerian newspapers. It is also observed that the direction of the sexism is on the female gender.

Keywords: Nigerian newspapers, Discourse analysis, social semiotics, gender expressions, sexism.

Introduction

The concept of gender refers to the cultural and social attributes society ascribes to men and women particularly on the basis of sex. Sexism is the portrayal of one sex as naturally superior to the other. The study of gender inequality has reflected in the use of

language (Newman *et al*, 2008; Ezeifeka and Osakwe 2013). Studies have also shown that gendered words have a bias towards a particular sex or social gender. The issue of gender relation has been a recurrent issue in socio-political, economic, and literal discourse (Oamen, 2019). Paulson (2017:112) describes sexist language or sexism in communication as linguistic expressions that indicate outright solidarity to a particular gender, which tend to underrate, exclude, or reduce the relevance of the opposite gender.

To find out how gender construction occurs on newspapers publications, the study of signs is required. This is usually defined as semiotics (Budiman, 2011). *Academic American Encyclopedia* (1989:17) describes newspapers as “an unbound publication issued at regular intervals that seeks to inform, analyze, influence and entertain through words or images”. An image is one form of human communication medium. Whereas communication can only occur when there is mean of sign, be it visual non-verbal or verbal, as disclosed by Sanders (2015). Subsequently, social semiotics is an approach to communication that seeks to understand how people communicate by a variety of means in a social setting. It is fundamentally important since it can shape social relation and society itself; this also includes the study of how communicators create text (wikipedia.org). Social semiotics, in the words of Sanders and Mann (2019), provides researchers with practical tools for systematically studying visual texts. Social semiotics therefore is a branch of the field of semiotics that aims to explain the making of meaning as a social practice.

Furthermore, social semiotics, an aspect of semiotics that investigates human signifying practices in specific social and cultural circumstances, explains meaning-making as a social practice. This conception of social semiotics is in connection with the interpretation of Discourse Analysis as submitted by Mann (2009) which focuses on analysis of discourse that transcends the discreet components of discourse. This is the concern of discourse analysis: how meanings of certain linguistic concepts are decided in contexts. One can then infer that discourse analysis is an approach to language analysis which focuses on interpreting discourse or language use in context. To that extent, it can be seen that social semiotics and discourse analysis focus on interpretation of meaning in content as derived from social consideration, beyond limited meaning of linguistic expressions.

The implication of the above submissions is that the study of sexism in language use through the prism of social semiotics and discourse analysis enables the researchers to look deeper into how society create meanings around sexist expressions. The approaches will enable the researchers to further the understanding of why some expressions in a society are considered sexist expressions in connection with their socio-cultural connections and contacts. The basic principle for justifying that a word or phrase or sentence is sexist is when such expression apparently excludes any gender both in its conception and usage. As such, when an expression excludes any gender or promotes a single gender in an event that involves both genders, in the report and beyond, the expression is deemed sexist in this research. So, specifically, the principle that accounts for the justification of an expression as sexist is when

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

an expression excludes particular sex or gender in a particular speech event, which ought to have included the two genders for explicit inclusion in communication.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions guide the study:

1. How do images and signs denote gendered expression?
2. In what ways do signs and images usage in Nigerian newspapers create communication in the direction of sexism?
3. What semiotic resources as evident in gendered expressions are found in Nigerian newspapers?

Literature Review

Sexism: A Conceptual Overview

Sexism, according to Harris (2007), is a social behaviour or perceptual value that tends to exclude, belittle, or neglect a particular gender. Okunna (2013: 89) termed it “a biased attitude or reactionary tendencies aimed at alienating, discriminating, or neglecting the presence, importance, or value of a particular gender, particularly the female gender.” In other words, the act of sexism is a social manner of viewing or projecting a particular gender in relation to a particular situation of event.

In a patriarchal society like the African society, according to Marvins (2016), social roles and functions are implicitly divided along the gender lines. To that extent, a particular gender may be excluded in a particular event or situation in which such gender does not enjoy pre-conceptual relevance in the event or situation. From a neutral perspective, *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2016) submits that sexism includes cultural elements, behaviour, or reactionary effects that fan the wings of discrimination based on gender. Citing Maureen (1997), Henrique (2015) posits that sexism is any discriminatory tendency or behavioral exhibition towards any gender which emanates from prejudiced inner perception that a gender is inferior.

From our definitions of sexism, among others in the literature, the view that sexism is a cultural attitude that had no intention to neglect or discriminate any gender was dominant. It is a case that certain events or situations are more likely to be associated with a particular gender. As such, such gender may be excluded, but not discriminated, from the schemes of the situation or events. For instance, certain activities are strictly associated with men, while some are associated with women. Therefore, a particular gender may not be included in such activity. It is this social consideration that has been broadened to mean sexism (Merkel, 2016; Onukawa, 2009; Sydney, 2011; Anyaku and Ilodibe, 2014). In this view, the two genders, the male and the female, are subject to such exclusion.

Gendered Expression in Communication

The concept of gender expression or sexism has been identified in the way people use language. Sexism in communication, which is considered as an aspect of language use in

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

most literature of sociolinguistics, has various names in various fields. For instance, in Fromkin *et al*'s (2011) point of view, it is termed “gendered words”, while to Fowler (2015), it is termed “discourse sexism”, among others who term it “sexist language.”

Irrespective of what it is termed, sexism in communication is said to occur when linguistic expressions exclude, dissociate, or discriminate against any gender. Therefore, the existence of sexist language could be attributed to the way certain people conceptualize certain activities or events. According to Xiolain and Lei (2017), sexist language or the use of gender words is language that expresses bias in favour of one sex and thus treats the other sex in a discriminatory manner. In other words, any linguistic unit or expression that expressly excludes a particular gender in the scheme of the event expressed by the linguistic unit is considered sexist language or gendered expression (Harris, 2007: 109).

The narrative Fromkin *et al.* (2011) take in the explanation of sexism in communication directly unveils the position of the economic or benevolent approach to sexism in communication. The premise of the proposition is that society seems to create certain activities and have particular gender be more prominent or even exclusively dominant in such activity. Due to the patriarchal structure and dominant economic stratifications across societies, certain genders are more prominent in some activities more than the other (Ellermers and Barreto, 2009; Moya and Click, 2017; Dumot and Bollier, 2014). The dominant line of thought for this approach is that economic lives are divided alongside certain gender stratification. Men fully dominate certain domain of activities in the society, and women as well.

Language Use in the Media

In every aspect of human endeavour, language is used as the primary medium of communication. As evident as it is, the primary tool for media functioning, in the submission of Cherry (2017), is language. The media or what Anyaogu (2011) termed ‘mainstream media’ is usually stratified into the print and electronic media. Our concern is the print media. Communication is the primary essence of the functioning of both the print and the electronic media. The print media, as it is widely known is dominated by the newspapers. From the foregoing, the media could be regarded as the ‘linguistic mirrors’ because they reflect current usage and extend it. Journalists are observant reporters who pick up early on new forms and spread them to a wider audience.

One of the unique information about language use in the media, from the literature, is that despite the fact that media communication exhibits its own peculiarities; the language is still the same with the form used in daily communication. Also, the print media practitioners are members of the larger community, who learned certain social norms and attitudes perpetuated through the language. So, despite certain stylistic effects and unique feature in the language of the print media, the communication strategies are largely derived from the

conventional structure of the conceptualization of certain things and activities by the society where the media practitioners belong to.

To that extent, Henry (2009) summarized that language use in the media, especially the print media, is a true reflection of the social standard, norms, agreed perception, and fully accepted manner of projections. In other words, the encoded information in the language of the media embodies the ideological structure of the main society where the media practitioners came from.

Empirical Studies

Research has been carried out on the understanding of sexism in communication. This section presents a review of some of the studies in order to properly situate the exact gap in the literature that this particular study stands to fill. One particular research that is of interest in this study is Nasir's (2015) investigation of the "linguistic sexism in Nigerian print media". The study found out that even in events where women were key 'Actors', they were represented as 'Goals' rather than 'Actors'. It was also shown that the male reporters reproduced the culturally accepted division of public and private spheres, the presupposed role of women and men and the stereotypical characteristics assigned to members of the two genders.

Also, Maduka and Okon (2017) investigated the "Use of sexist expressions in selected conversations of students of University of Calabar". The research reveals that students seem to be more sensitive about the language they use when discussing with each other, but lecturers seem to care less about exclusion of any gender in a discourse. The finding was based on the responses of the lecturers and the students to the research questions presented to them.

Another researcher, Animashaun (2015), examined "Sexist language in Nigerian newspapers". The study revealed that 'generic masculine words' were the most commonly used sexist form in Nigerian newspapers. Furthermore, Inoma (2018) examined "Gender Reporting in Nigerian Newspapers". The results of the study showed that the female gender group is under-reported in the selected newspapers compared to the male gender group.

Oamen (2019) in her study employs social semiotic analytical approach to the analysis of selected political cartoons drawn from some Nigerian newspapers' websites. The paper also revealed that semiotic resources, such as pronominal choices, speech acts, labeling, visual metaphorisation, information value, salience/emphasis and framing, are used by cartoon producers to portray power relations among male and female actors in Nigeria.

From the review, it could be seen that all the studies seem to attribute the exclusion of female gender in a discourse to male dominance and sociocultural inequality. But this study takes a distinct but related approach in accounting for sexism in communication. This is to fill

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

the existing gap in literature on the understanding of sexism in communication. **The main gap is the fact that language is not sexist, neither are the users, irrespective of gender; rather, the manner in which certain socioeconomic and sociocultural activities and life are structured naturally to exclude certain gender. This reflects in the semiotic situation.**

Theoretical Framework

Social semiotics is a branch of semiotics that studies meaning making as a social practice. Social semiotics studies the media of dissemination and the modes of communication that people use to develop their understanding of the world (Anne and Ballaynte, 2018). Citing Kress *et al* (1987), Bezemer and Jewitt (2015), submitted that social semiotics hold that the process of sign-making is subject to the interest of sign-makers, their availability of semiotic resources, and the aptness of those resources to the meaning which they wish to realize. Different versions of social semiotics have emerged since the publication of Michael Halliday's "Language as Social Semiotic" in 1978.

The adopted theory for this study is the social semiotic approach to discourse analysis through the prism of "multimodal discourse analysis" (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). It is important to understand the premises of discourse analysis and social semiotics. The theory of Visual Social Semiotics by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) fits well with the aim and focus of the present study. It considers how text (an added caption or already presented text or text on a sign) is composed of different modes in the meaning making process. It is, in the words of O'Halloran (2011), a 'multimodal semiotics analysis'. Multimodality in this sense does not give preference to language over image but shows how the two rely on each other in meaning making. The multimodal approach works in a way that enables the researchers to analyze the meaning of multiple semiotics modes that are adopted in the news dailies reports of gendered expressions, both in words and image projections.

Methodology

This study directly adopts the qualitative study design. Qualitative research design is one in which analysis is based on textual description and conclusions are reached on the basis of thematic contents of the analysis. In the bid to get the required amount of data for the study, secondary source of data was employed to analyze gendered expression by adopting images from two websites and two different newspapers were selected, which include: www.wps.org, www.katakata.org, *the Guardian* and *Daily Trust Newspapers*. The data are presented purely descriptively, and in connection with the methods of Multimodal discourse analysis. That is, the basis of analysis is sorely within the researchers' observations from the collated data and in line with the MDA methods.

Data Presentation and Discussion

In accordance with the direction of this study, which is the social semiotics approach, the researchers present the use of gender expressions as portrayed by the sign-maker in the selected Nigerian newspapers as semiotic modes in the ongoing representation of sexist

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

ideology. Therefore, in the data presentation, samples of cartoons portraying gender expressions which represent the sign makers are thematically presented and examined to show how cartoons are employed to enact gender expressions in communication.

Semiotic Representation of Women Rights



Figure 1: Women are responsible for housework and childcare

Source: www.wsp.org

Figure 1 above portrays the right of women in Nigeria. The image shows the different ideological views of women's right. First and foremost, the asymmetrical power relation between the man and the woman is strategically emphasized, through the background, number, workload, gaze, and attire as semiotic resources. It could be implied that the background of the female and male participant shows that the right of the woman is domesticated, while the man is dominant in the workplace. The number of participants (five male participants and one female participant) gives a clue towards the dominated female gender. The possessive attributes of baby, water, chicken, mat, broom, mopping stick, rake, clothes, bouquet, luggage's and the trophy serve as semiotic tools that demonstrate their unequal right. The man's control and power over the woman is demonstrated through his downward gaze, muscle and the big smile on his face. The top and bottom visual of the man and woman ideologically portray the contradiction of the rights of women in Nigeria. The woman's facial expression shows the tension and marginalization that exists for female partners in a workplace. Her helpless look stands in opposition to the men's happy disposition. The woman is dressed in a blue skirt and a pink blouse, while the men are foregrounded as high, frontal and influential.

The position of the verbal text strategically shows the text producer's ideological position on women's right. The phrase "it's not just a prize, it's your right", and the woman's

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

response "thanks?" indicate the abuse of women's right and the inferiority of the female gender in the country. The producer uses the visual and verbal resources to show the violation of women's rights in Nigeria.

Women Democratic Rights as a Tool for Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis

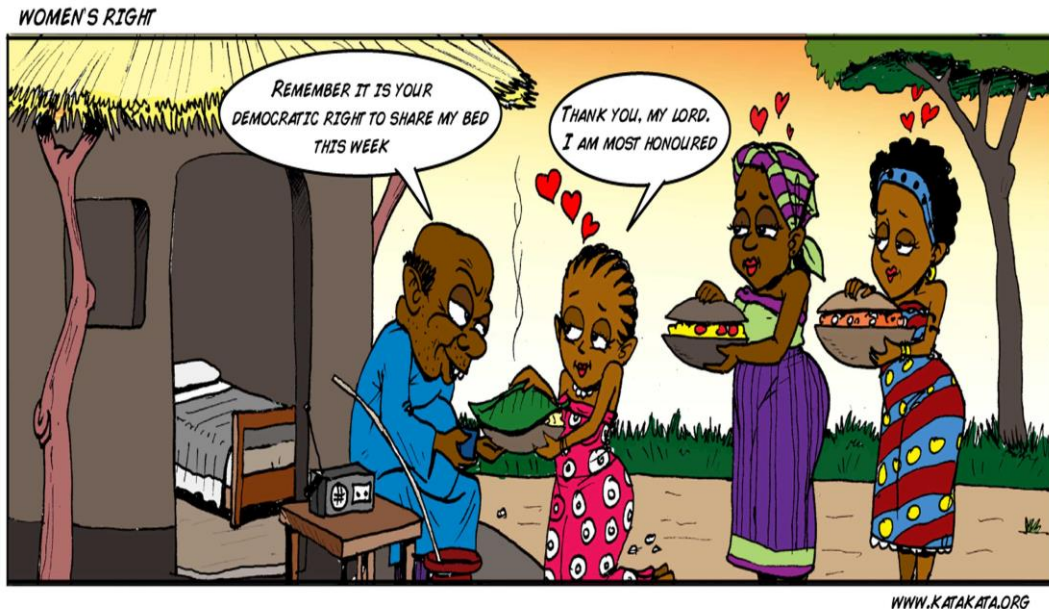


Figure 2: Nigeria's most senior Muslim cleric reject gender equality bill.

Source: News – Kata kata www.katakata.org

Figure 2 above also shows the right of man and woman, particularly in the northern part of Nigeria, which is demonstrated through visual and verbal semiotics resources. The attitude, food and gaze of the female participants are forms of sexual advances towards the male participant. The foreground differences in the physical and psychological maturity of the male and female participants. The man's body features, radio, cane, hut, bed and his style of wooing a lady connotes the age gap between the participants. The attitude of the female participants portrays notion of love as indicated with three love symbols on their heads. The presentation of food and standing in line indirectly reflects traditional society's belief in the idea that the fastest way to a man's heart is through his stomach. The kneeling position, environment and the verbal exchange all indicate signs of submission, which ideologically portrays the right of men. Apparently there is unequal power relation among the participants, as seen in the image above, where the man is sitting and listening to radio in his comfort zone (environment) just outside his hut. While on the other hand, the women's queuing position shows their eagerness to marriage not minding the age differences. The kneeling position and her response to the man signifies an act of concession due to the belief that a woman must be subsumed under a man in order to be relevant in the society. The verbal exchange between the participants strategically limits the rights of the woman to the bedroom. From the facial features of the woman kneeling down, it could be implied that she is the youngest amongst

the female participants. It can also be implied that men from the northern part of Nigeria, prefer young girls therefore reminding her of her democratic right to share his bed. It was rumored that a Nigerian Senator had married a 13-year old girl, which was as a result of the Nigerian constitution which states that, “a girl that is married is matured”. According to Xiolain and Lei (2017), sexist language or the use of gender words is language that expresses bias in favour of one sex and thus treats the other sex in a discriminatory manner.

In this regard, the Sharia Law which is mostly practiced in the northern part of Nigeria, guarantees greater inheritance to men while the woman right is domesticated. A proposed gender equality bill that would give Nigerian women and men an equal rights, was rejected by the Sultan of Sokoto, Mohamed Sa’ad Abubakar Nigeria’s most senior Islamic cleric. Speaking at a Koranic recitation ceremony in the northern Zamfara State, on 28 December 2016, said the proposed bill violates the Islamic Law; as such, Muslims would not accept the bill. As a result of this, women in this part of the country are usually victims of early marriage, illiteracy, poverty as a result of their degenerated status in the society.

Reversed Roles as Semiotic Resources for Meaning Making

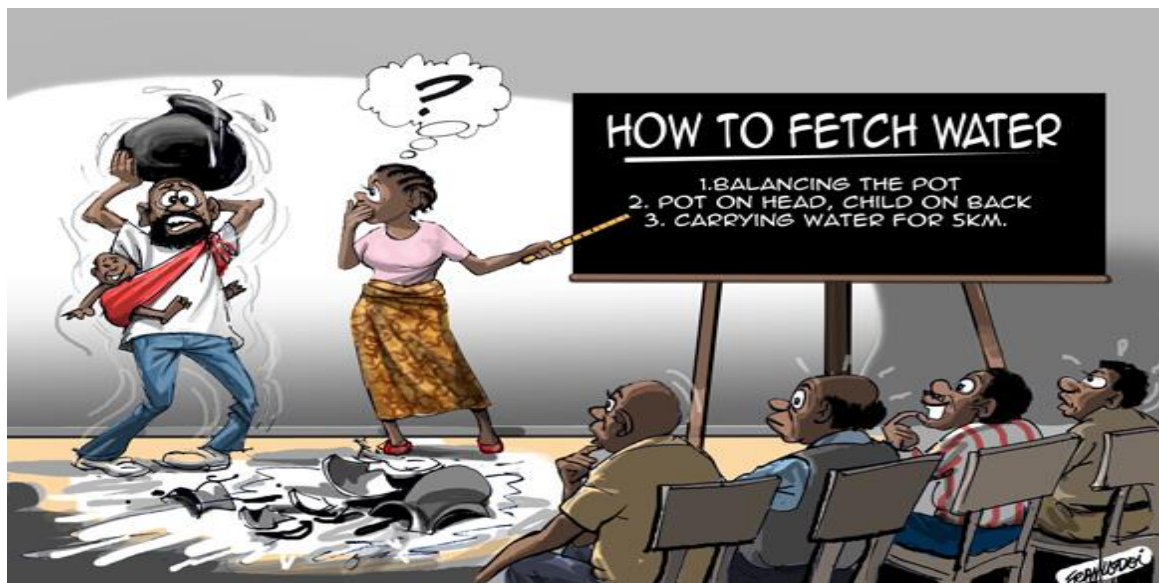


Figure 3: Women carry water than men

Source: 2012 *Cartoon Calendar* www.wsp.org

Figure 3 above generally encodes that the Nigerian women are often associated with domesticated activities and also portrays the different domain of male and female participants. This image depicts that if roles were reversed and men are domesticated, as seen in figure 3 above, where the man is carrying a pot of water and the baby and the same time, trying to maintain his balance which clearly he could not do. The effects of his action result to the broken pots of water. The reaction of the woman could be inferred that what she does effortlessly cannot be done by the man, in spite of her teachings. The reaction of the audience in figure 1 stands in opposition to the audience reaction in figure 3 due to the reversed roles

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

of the male and female. The semiotic representation of the reversed roles above employed the use of both text and images as a reflection of the process of sign-making that is subject to the interest of sign-makers, this is achieved through the use of semiotic resources which reflect the meaning that the sign-maker wishes to realize. The premise of the proposition is that society seems to create certain activities and have a particular gender to be more prominent or even exclusively dominant in such activities.

Women Exclusion as a Semiotic Discourse for Gendered Expression



Figure 4: Women in decision making

Source: www.guardian.com

Figure 4 above shows how women are excluded in an event that practically involves them. This portrays that women are often associated with domesticity by their possessive attributes of bucket and child, while many men are repulse to the idea of women getting involved in decision making. From the image above, it could be implied that the women walk for distance to get water, while the men are sitting under the tree shade discussing the implications of water in the community. According to Harris (2007), any linguistic unit or expression that expressly excludes a particular gender in the scheme of the event expressed by the linguistic unit is considered sexist or gendered expression. Women are the main users of this commodity (water) and they should be included in the discussion so that they (women) can share their thoughts and ideas on improving the standard of water in the community. From the figure above, the image producer used the verbal text “**WOMEN? THEY ARE TOO BUSY TO DISCUSS WATER!**” to portray the role of women in Nigeria and also how they are excluded in an event that includes both gender. “**Women?**” and “**water!**” are linguistically related in that they shared the labio-velar approximant /w/ at the initial positions. Secondly, both texts are in bold, followed by question mark and exclamation mark

respectively. The textual arrangement shows that women are associated with water due to their dominance in domestic activities.

Women in Leadership

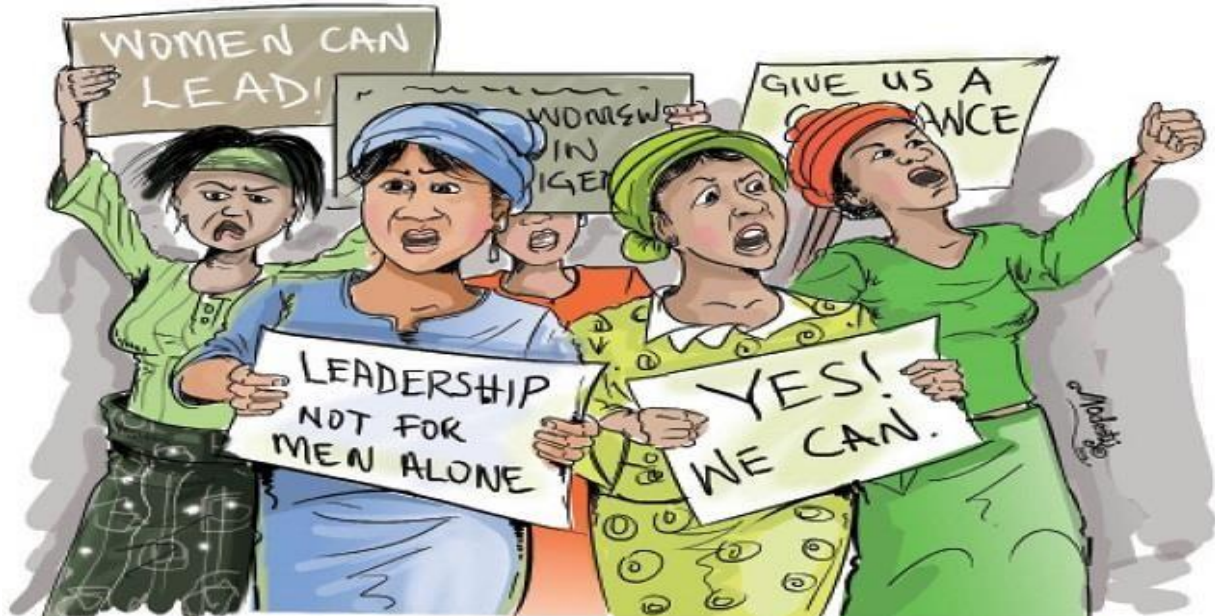


Figure 5: Women in politics

Source: *Voice of Nigeria* - www.guardian.ng

Figure 5 above reflects how women in Nigeria thrive to hold top political position in the country. Women in Nigeria have been denied access to attain any top position in governance since the return of democracy in 1999. The placards portray the government attitude towards Nigerian women and agitation against the oppression of women in participating in the political spheres. The relationship between the writes-up in the placards ideologically signifies a common goal among women across Nigeria, which is the liberation from the long time oppression and suppression in socio-economic and political activities. Their facial expressions signify their protest against women exclusion from leadership positions and their willingness to be given a chance in politics. In May 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari said jokingly that the demand for a female Vice President was a threat to the position of the Nigeria's Vice President, Prof Yemi Osibanjo. The President made this statement when the female members of the House of Assembly across the country asked him to consider a female running mate for 2019 Presidential election. Nigerian women have not been given their rightful place; women political empowerment ranks a lowly 111th position of 145 countries surveyed in the 2015 Gender Gap Reports.

In spite of the militating forces against the increased representation of women in key elective and appointive decision-making positions, it is crucial for women to take participation in politics seriously in order to guard against the erosion of their rights and

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

welfare. Educating the girl child is critical but it may not be achieved if women are not in key decision-making positions. However, it is disheartening that it is mostly men that are legislating and debating on matters regarding the livelihood and development of women and girls.

Social semiotics is portrayed through the visual (image) and verbal (words) semiotic resources express that women should be given a chance in power relation. It could also be inferred that the cartoonist deliberately used the media to draw attention to the public on how women are excluded in leadership positions in Nigeria. The media can tell us a great deal about social meaning and stereotypes projected through language and communication. Due to patriarchal structure and dominance economic stratification across societies, men are more prominent in political activities than women. This is changing because society is changing and people of either sex commonly hold jobs once held primarily by one sex (Fromkin *et al* 2011: 414).

Women Warrior as a Semiotic Resource for Gender Equality

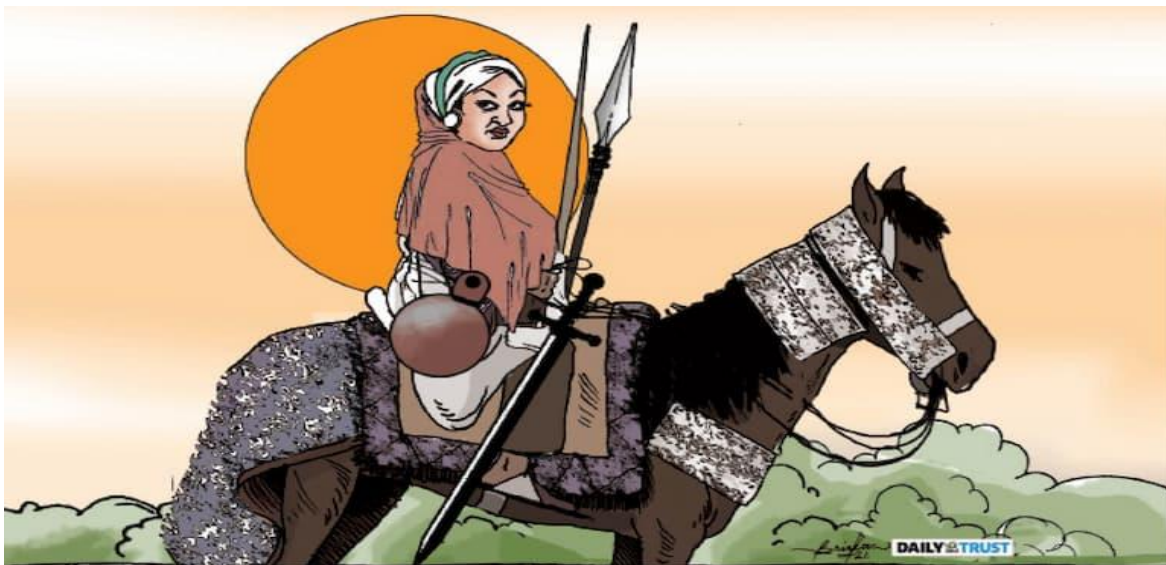


Figure 6: Religion, culture, or patriarchy?

Source: www.dailytrust.com

Figure 6 above, portrays women in Pre-jihad Hausaland. From the attire of the woman it could be inferred that she is a Muslim from the northern part of Nigeria. Visual possessive attributes of sword, water can, spare and her fierce look are attributes of a warrior. The sun signifies high humidity in that part of the country. The woman's sitting position represents modesty highly practiced in northern Nigeria. The horse serves as a means of transportation in that era and they are dressed in a certain way for different events. From the figure above, the attire of the horse represents shield and ready for war. Before Islamic culture became widespread, women were classified as active members of their societies, as the traditional roles did not limit them from pursuing personal goals. History (Hamza, 2021) has shown

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 22:5 May 2022

Peter Oyewole Makinde, M.A. and Lynda Uju Mgbodi, B.A.

A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers

outstanding females who wielded great political and economic powers. They held titled offices, controlled slave and gain economy; women were market administrators and tax collectors. Such outstanding females include Queen Daurama who held a significant position of leadership in Daura. There was Queen Yargoje of Dutsi, a powerful female ruler and Warrior; Queen Amina of Zazzau, daughter to another female ruler, Bakwa of Turunku, a renowned political and military leader.

In Nigeria, social construct earmarked some professions as a sole preserve for men because they were perceived to be too masculine for females to engage in or dominated by a particular gender. As society evolved, the socially accepted norm for each gender began to change. However, some societies have remained unflinching when it comes to accepting some changes. Such is the Northern Nigerian Muslim Society and the profession that is still widely unacceptable for females is the military. The Nigerian Armed Forces conformity with International Human Rights Laws prohibit gender discrimination, ensures gender equality, inclusivity, and social justice, thus promoting greater participation and inclusion of women in the military. However, Nigerian women have not fully utilized this inclusive clause, particularly northern Nigerian Muslim women. There is a patriarchal mindset which views female participation in the military as an aberration, a vocation thought to be the exclusive preserve of men. For instance, in 2017, there was a call from northern elites for the stoppage of admission of female cadets into the Nigerian Defense Academy. With this general perception of women's roles, general society and northern Muslim women themselves are insecure and shy to participate in many activities besides domestic ones (Hamza, 2021).

Conclusion

Following the analysis, it is concluded that sexism in communication is a common aspect of language use in Nigerian media, as reporters still use gendered expressions to communicate. The cases of gendered expressions are not necessarily used to exclude any gender; rather, the dominance of the male gender in the activities makes the female gender to be excluded in the communication scheme of the activities. The main principle that guided the categorization of an expression as gendered is when such expression excludes any gender or uses one gender, mainly the male gender, as the basis for creating the expressions for the female gender. With reference to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) postulation, it is observed here that two modes, texts and images, with different semiotic resources have been employed in the process of meaning making in order to project how gender expressions are explored in each of the analyzed data. In this way, the sign makers, in a bid to realize their intended objectives, have utilized semiotic resources as tools for meaning making.

References

- Academic American Encyclopedia* (1989). Grolier Incorporated: Danbury, Vol. 14.
- Adeniyi, T. (2006). The Agony of Monogamy. *KBJOJO International Consulting*. *KBJOJO katakata.org*.
- Adetunji, A. (2010). Aspects of linguistic violence to Nigerian women. *Language, Society and Culture*. Vol.31:10.
- Agbo, N. (2018). Yay or Nay: Nigeria Female President? *The Guardian Life Magazine*. *guardian.ng*.
- Animashaun, M.A. (2015). Nigeria 2015 presidential election: the votes, the fears and the regime change. *Journal of African Elections*, 14(2), 186-211.
- Anyaku, G. & Ilodibe, R. (2014). *Introduction to Stylistics and Discourse Analysis*. Abakaliki: Wisdom Publishers.
- Bezemer, J. & Jewitt, C. (2011). *Multimodal Analysis: Key Issues*. London: Routledge.
- Budiman, M. (2011). The middle class and morality politics in the envisioning of the nation in post-Suharto Indonesia. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 12(4), 482-499.
- Cherry, Colin (1966): *On Human Communication* (2nd Edn.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Encyclopedia Britannica* (2010). Encyclopedia Britannica Inc.
- Ezeifeka, C.R. & N.N. Osakwe (2013). "Gender Representation in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution: A Critical Discourse Analysis for Socio-Political Equity." *Discourse and Society* 24 (6): 687–700.
- Fowler, D. (2015). *What is stylistics?* An online publication.
- Fromkin, V. & Hyams, N. (2011). *Introduction to Language*. UK: Cengage Learning.
- Green, S. (2012). Crime, victimization, and vulnerability. In Sandra Walklate (ed). *Handbook of Victims and Victimology*. London: Routledge (pp. 91-107).
- Halliday, M. (1978). *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hamza, M. (2021). "Religion, Culture or Patriarchy?" *Daily Trust*. <https://dailytrust.com/religion-culture-or-patriarchy>.
- Harris, R. (2007). Sexism, sexual harassment and sexual assault: Toward conceptual clarity. *Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute. Directorate of Research Report*, (07-01).
- Henrique, D.L. (2015). "Discourse analysis of students' interaction at the Central Region University, Baghdad". In *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 48, PP. 98-132
- Hummel, G. (2019). *Understanding Pragmatics: A Students' Course*. UK: Martins Family Press.
- Inoma, T. (2018). Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Sexism in Nigerian Newspaper Reports. In *Online Journal of Theoretical Studies*.
- Kress, G. (2013). Multimodal discourse analysis. In *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 61-76). London: Routledge.

- Kress, G. and T. Van Leeuwen (1996). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G., R. Leite Garcia, & T. Van Leeuwen (1997). "Discourse Semiotics." In *Discourse as Structure and Process*, edited by A. van Dijk Teun, 257–291. London: Sage.
- Mann, A. (2009). *A Megaproject Matrix: Ideology, Discourse and Regulation in the Delhi Metro Rail* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California).
- Maureen, D. (1997). *Introduction to Language and Communication*. New Delhi: Uxland Printing.
- Newman, M.L., C.J. Groom, L.D. Handelman, and J.W. Pennebaker (2008). "Gender Differences in Language Use: An Analysis of 14,000 Text Samples." *Discourse Processes* 45: 211–236.
- O'Halloran, K.L. (2011). "Multimodal Analysis and Digital Technology". In A. Baldry and E. Montagna (Eds.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Multimodality: Theory and Practice*. Campobasso: Palladino.
- O'Halloran, K.L., Tan, S., Smith, B.A. & Podlasov, A. (2011). "Multimodal Analysis within an Interactive Software Environment: Critical Discourse Perspectives". *Critical Discourse Studies*, 2,109-125.
- Oamen, F. (2019): "A social semiotic analysis of gender power in Nigeria's newspaper political Cartoons", *Social Semiotics*, DOI: 10.1080/10350330.2019.1627749
- Okunna, S. (2013). *Communication and Language Use: A Guide to Students Use*. Awka: Amaka Dreams.
- Olarewaju, O. & T. Babalola (2016). Gendered English Usage in the Nigerian Newspapers. Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK (www.eajournals.org). *British Journal of English Linguistics*. Vol.4, No.1, pp.1-18, February 2016.
- Onukawa, E.N. (2009). Pejorative portrayals of women in some Igbo proverbs: An aspect of hate speech. *Uturu Journal of Languages and Linguistics (UJOLL)*, 1, 2021, pp12-20 (www.ujolls.com).
- Paulson, P.K. (2017). *Rape Culture in Disney Animated Princess Movies*. Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- The Sociological Cinema (2012). Women? They are too busy to discuss water! *Gender: Formal Political Power*. guardian.com.
- Sanders, L. & Mann, J. (2019). *Understanding Discourse in Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Introducing Social Semiotics*. New York: Routledge.
- World Bank (2012). Water and Sanitation Program (WSP). *2012 Cartoon Calendar*. www.wps.org.
- Xiaolan, L. 2006. Sexism in language. *Journal of Language and Linguistics*. Vol. 5.1:87-94.
- Yusuf, K. (1988). "A Critique of the Linguistic Arguments for the Possibility of Desexing Thought by Degendering English". *Ife Studies in English Language*, Vol. 2, No. 1: 87-92.