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ILLOCUTIONARY GOALS AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN ABUBAKAR SHEKAU'S ONLINE BOKO HARAM VIDEOS

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Abstract

This paper investigated the communication strategies embedded in visual semiotic properties used by Abubakar Shekau who represented Boko Haram in the sampled videos using a multimodal analysis approach. This was aimed at predicting the goals of the sect. Ten online videos of about three minutes each were purposely selected out of the fifteen video clips where Shekau spoke to attack the Nigerian government and the entire Christians worldwide. These clips contained verbal and visual attacks on the Nigerian government and Christianity and were downloaded from Agence France-Presse (AFP) and Sahara Reporters. The clips covered the violent period of Boko Haram activities between March 2012 and January 2015. The data were analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal theory of communication (1996, 2006), which accounted for visual-verbal analysis and complemented by Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (2004) which accounted for the functional aspect of language. These strategies projected interpersonal and representational meanings in the clips. Visual elements were strategically balanced with corresponding verbal reactions while interpersonal choices were used with the speaker engaging locus of attention to show certain visual elements such as Ak47 automatic rifles and rocket launchers stocked in sophisticated arsenal which suggested an attempt to intimidate the Nigerian government. The visual-verbal techniques in the videos suggested that Abubakar Shekau employed language and semiotic patterns in the videos to create fear in the minds of his targets, force them to drop Westernization and institute Boko Haram's caliphate in Nigeria.

Keywords: Visual-Verbal Communication, Boko Haram, Terrorism, Visual Semiotics, Multimodal Analysis

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Introduction

Terrorism has become an intractable problem globally in the recent time, going by the recent cases of insecurity rocking the global world. With the capture of Osama bin Laden and the winding down of the wars of 9/11 in the United States, the field of terrorism is facing an important new inflection point. Although the number of terrorism attacks against industrialized countries has decreased over the past ten years, the number of attacks and related casualties have increased in the developing world (especially in Nigeria), indicating that the frontlines of the war on terrorism have shifted. An increasing reliance on technology and drones to carry out counterterrorism operations continues to trouble relationships between the United States and Europe and their allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The new methods of terrorism communication have shifted to the internet, in which intentions are passed using certain communication codes which are semiotic in nature. Speakers goals, in most times are veiled but they expect perlocutionary effects on the parts of the hearer, these effects, which are illocutionary goals, are referred to as Perlocutionary Intention in Barch and Harnish (1979) and Illocutionary intention by Keith (1998). It is a term that describes speaker's goals to cause a perlocutionary effect on Hearer by having such a Hearer recognize the intention in Speaker's utterance (Keith, 1998). In other words, before communication can be successful, the encoder (sender), the code (message), and the encoder (receiver) will have to form a complete circle. First, the speaker sends a message and while doing that, has a particular aim in mind. He encodes it via some means (verbal or non-verbal) and transmits it to the receiver who analyses it and decodes what the message is all about before sending the feedback. This process at times may be altered as the receiver might not get the message properly and this is when communication is said to be unsuccessful. The new terrorism in Nigeria has taken a different dimension of using the internet to fight a cold war. It issues threats and shows videos of murdered individuals and uses visual-verbal codes in its communication to achieve certain goals. These goals are communication, semiotic and multimodal in nature and are embedded with masked meanings. This study therefore sets out to find out the illocutionary goals of Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the terrorist group called *Boko Haram*, for releasing online videos each time the terrorists strike any target in Nigeria. To achieve this aim, the study identifies how Abubakar Shekau uses verbal and visual modes complimentarily to suggest intended goals, discusses the ways visual movements in the form of images are used to negotiate meaning and the relevance of visual and verbal interrelatedness in suggesting Shekau's goals in the videos. The study admits there is an urgent situation that needs scholarly attention with a view to finding possible solutions to the menace by tracking speaker's meanings in the communication codes used.

Literature Review

Many authors have used textual analysis in the field of terrorism but as language is dynamic and functional, the study of visual-verbal components becomes imperative. Chiluwa (2013) explores the pragmatic acts in the discourse of tweeters and online feedback comments on the activities of Boko Haram which is considered a terrorist group in Nigeria. The tweets and comments illustrate acts used to express revolutionary feelings and reflect what people say and imply in times of crisis. Tweets about Boko Haram are speech and pragmatic acts that denounce the Nigerian government, reject Western education, and call for support. Tweets and reactions from non-Muslims and non-radical Muslims condemn terrorism and denounce the terrorist group. While some tweets simply offer suggestions on how to curtail the Boko Haram insurgency, others seek the breakup of Nigeria, granting political and religious independence to the north and the southeast of the country. The study concludes that many efforts would be needed to unite the country; otherwise, the set goals of achieving integration in Nigeria might be difficult. The study however fails to remember that tweets and commentaries on social media networks are driven by sentimentalism, ethnicity and religion bigotry at times just like Syed (2015) has observed that:

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> Sentiment analysis technique is an effective means of discovering public opinions. Various companies often use online or paper-based surveys to collect customer comments. Due to the emergence of social networking sites and applications, people tend to comment on their Facebook or tweet profile. Only a very small customer base can be reached and there is no guarantee that their answers in the survey are honest or not.

Ogungbemi (2014) is a diversion from Chiluwa's perspective because it investigates the linguistic representation of ideology in selected Boko Haram discourse in the Nigerian print media between 2009 and 2014. The study shows that discourse participants on the Boko Haram crisis engage one another on the pages of newspapers using material process options to gain political advantages over one another. He further juxtaposed the actions of the Joint Task Force (JTF) and the heinous activities of the dreaded Islamic sect, Boko Haram, through the eyes of the media in Nigeria. Besides, how various newspapers both from the Southern and Northern parts of the country portray the activities of the sect was also investigated and how journalists have played conflicting roles in the miscalculation efforts from both parties. How the media manipulates the public opinions, thereby, influencing their judgments in relation to the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria is equally explored via the use of linguistic methods like Passivisation and Transitivity, and so on, through which the context of domination and resistance were evident via grammatical choices; Nominalisation, Direct and Indirect reporting, Labeling, Material process and the use of Metaphor. The study concludes that the activities of the media in the crisis call for objectivity and not to heat up the polity in order to maintain a balance and to establish fairness in news reporting. This is without recusing to semiotic messages.

Social media and security perspectives to multimodality

Konye (2013) dives towards the exploration of the use of text messages from Boko Haram to express the group's values, sway belief, and justify violence. The rhetorical journey in the study further exposes the move by the sect to protect the interests of Muslims and avenge perceived injustice against Muslims. This is being x-rayed in their language use via videos and text messages. The text with close observation was incomplete as nothing visual was analysed despite that the objectives promised to look at are later left unattended. Brummet (1980) however said, people are often mysterious to each other because of racial, sexual, national, or economic differences. In the face of fear, hatred or threat, participants in the social order take responsibility to unite their group against the other- usually with victimage rhetoric. Away from that perspective, Barthes (1964) in an attempt to address the question of the contextual relationship between images and verbal text envisages a need for the meaning of images to be always related to, or in some way, dependent on verbal texts. Images without verbal support are seen as being too open to a variety of meanings, having an inherent indefiniteness which necessitates a reliance on verbal language to provide a more substantive interpretation. There is a point of convergence here between militancy and brainwashing or rather, indoctrination. This is a bit in agreement with what Bockstette (2008) posits that terrorists are now looking for means to project these ideologies of supremacy via every means, including adopting communication strategies to achieve their aims. This is what Amosu (2014) admits to have fostered various atrocities in Nigeria via the group's excesses. According to him:

> Since the escalation of the Boko Haram terrorist insurgency, the nation has been overshadowed by extreme insecurity, armed attacks, Kidnappings as well as intermittent suicide and car bombings have become commonplace, thus creating an atmosphere of continuous apprehension. Economically, the costs resulting from damage to property and infrastructure occasioned by the numerous attacks by the Boko Haram terrorists have been astronomical.Amosu (2014:6)

All these studies have tried to explore various sides to the analysis of the sect and interestingly, most of

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them are more textual than visual. There is more emphasis on the written texts than the pictorial narration of the carrier in the videos. Even Konje (2013) who set out to analyse both verbal and videos diverted from the visual analysis along the line. Furthermore, few such as Alo and Ogungbe (2013), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), Orimoloye (2014), O' Halloran (2008) and O' Toole (1998) are willing to juxtapose visual and verbal complement. This could have helped in bringing out a better understanding of the intention of the sect. This study investigates more of the communication codes to predict the speaker's meanings.

Theoretical framework

The study adopts the multimodal theory from the perspective of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as used by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006). Multimodality is a theory which looks at how people communicate and interact with each other, not just through writing (which is one mode) but also through speaking, gesture, gaze, and visual forms (which are many modes). It also looks at the many different modes that people use to communicate with each other and to express themselves. This theory is relevant as an increase in technology tools, and associated access to multimedia compositional software have led to people being able to easily use many modes in art, writing, music, and dance and every-day while interacting with one another. A mode is generally defined as a communication channel that a culture recognizes. Examples of modes are writing, gesture, posture, gaze, font choice and color, images, video, and even the interactions between them. While many of these modes have always existed, they have not always been recognized as a legitimate or culturally accepted form of communication or expression. Learning theorists who advocate for multimodality emphasize that people communicate in a variety of ways and that in order to completely understand someone; the many modes they use to communicate must be observed and recognized. The theory of multimodality can be found in writings and discussions related to communication theory, linguistics, media literacy, visual literacy, anthropological studies, and design studies. The theory is an attempt to have a clear understanding of how various communication modes, including visual and verbal, co- occur in a text in order to project meaning in an explicit manner.

The theory marries linguistics as presented by Halliday (1985, 2004) with the contemporary verbal modes described in Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to bring out meanings, believing that texts alone are not independent to drive home points. Language here is seen beyond ordinary texts but that it is socially oriented. Halliday's SFL theory considers language as a factor that drives meaning in a social semiotic perspective. Halliday (1985:8) sees communication essentially as a process, not as a disembodied set of meanings or texts. Meaning is produced and reproduced under specific social conditions, through specific material forms and agencies. It exists in relation to concrete subjects and objects, and is inexplicable except in terms of this set of relationships. In discussing language as used in the social factor, society is typically constituted by structures and relations of power, exercised or resisted; it is characterised by conflict as well as cohesion, so that the structures of meaning at all levels, from dominant ideological forms to local acts of meaning will show traces of contradiction, ambiguity, polysemy in various proportions, by various means. As stated by Eggins (2004), language is functional; that is, people use language for a reason or for a purpose. There is no one who uses language in isolation. Besides that, language is described as being semantic, that is, the purpose is to make meaning out of what is happening and it is socially interactive. Language is also contextual, that is, social interaction influences and is influenced by the context in which it is used. On the final note, language is semiotic, which means it decodes meaning via various codes and signs. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004)'s meta-function principle provides an important platform via which we can say semiotic codes relate in order to produce meanings. Systemic Functional Linguistics further establishes that semiotic codes perform ideational metafunction (that is, experiential meaning and logical relations) and interpersonal metafunction for showcasing social

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relations. These meta-functions, as observed by O'Halloran (2008:2) are enabled via the organisation of the discourse, which is textual meta-function of semiotics. In other words, the ideational metafunction explains the interrelatedness that exists among various semiotic codes. The interpersonal meta-function expresses the relationship that exists between the speaker and the hearer (or the encoder and the decoder) in a multimodal discourse while the textual meta-function explains the various cohesive tendencies of various semiotic codes in order to produce meaning in a multimodal setting or text. Scholars such as Lemke (1998), Royce (1998), O'Halloran (1999, 2008) have extensively examined the intertextual semiotic relations in a bid to achieve a more systematic study of relations between images and texts in multimodal texts. They have extended SFL to non-verbal semiotic resources and visual design (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). It is pertinent to say that the three concepts in Kress and van Leeuwen's idea, that is, interactive and represented participants and the coherent structural element are an adaptation of Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual elements. The theory, in a bid to bring out meaning during the marriage of both visual and verbal systems, mentions ideational, interpersonal and textual language and images. The Hallidayan SFL model can be utilised not only for the sociolinguistic analysis of natural language, but can also "offer a powerful and flexible model for the study of other semiotic codes", O'Toole (1995:159).

Methodology

The data for this study were derived from Boko Haram's messages released on the net via Agence France-Presse (AFP), a global news agency delivering fast, in-depth coverage of the events shaping the world from wars and conflicts to politics, sports, entertainment and the latest breakthroughs in health, science and technology. The texts have been translated to English by AFP since the videos were released in Hausa. We equally rely on the interpretations from some Nigerian newspapers, especially Sahara Reporters. Several videos have been uploaded on the internet by Shekau starting from the year 2012 till date but the study will only limit itself to ten of them, ranging between 2012 and January, 2015 based on motives, character display, goals and the use of visual-verbal codes to pass a message to the Nigerian government. The reason being that, in 2012, the sect began its campaigns against western education and its position, mission and resolve, were clearly stated and established in 2012, especially the message sent to President Jonathan and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). If the study must trace the agitations of the sect, messages released in 2012 will be useful. Besides, the period also marks a particularly evident level of friction and tension in the Boko Haram uprising among several Nigerians in particular and the northern parts of Nigeria in general. Furthermore, this becomes imperative so as to know the beginning of the agitation for Islamic state as one of their cravings. In the second video, Shekau picks on Jonathan for supporting democracy and the abduction of the 274 school girls at Chibok in Borno State which has generated a lot of global controversy. This is examined in order to see how the sect has been battling the government of Nigeria to see reasons in acceding to the demands of the sect in the recent time. In addition to that, the study examines the disclaiming message of the sect after the federal government publicly announced that it has initiated a move to dialogue with the sect in order to facilitate the release of the Chibok girls who were kidnapped in 2014. After the abduction of the Chibok girls in Borno State of Nigeria, the government of President Goodluck Jonathan initiated a negotiation move in order to arrange the release of the girls. The video clip released by Abubakar Shekau countering such a move is part of the segmented videos considered in the study. This video clip and the subsequent images are significant to the analysis of this study. The study adopts a selective measure based on the inception principle, that is, the beginning of Boko Haram's campaign in the North East and the ones where Shekau has established his messages to the government of Nigeria on what his goals are. It is of note here that it is not in all the videos that Shekau speaks. However, there are other visual-verbal codes which are explicit in

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meaning transfer. The method also includes scooping information from some aspects of the video clips where the actions are segmented. The segmented scenes in the videos are logically connected by the speaker and the main participants in the clips. The speaker sometimes uses these segmented scenes but the study ensures the scenes and the processes are linked together in order to create a synergy between the texts and the analysis. Also, it is of note that the video clips are taken and presented as images and screen grabs and the analysis is done based on the verbal and non-verbal codes associated with the visuals in the texts.

Results

In this section, the study analyzes some visual-verbal codes used as semiotic properties in the discourse. We juxtapose these properties to suggest the goals of the sect which are tilted towards crippling the confidence of the government and forcing Nigeria to create an Islamic caliphate for the sect. the communication strategies are logically arranged to explain the organized way they are used by the discourse participant.

Colour, locus of attention, vectors and verbal complements in blameshifting/mockery

Images speak volumes (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). Even in communication, non-linguistic properties are used to enlarge meanings in interactions. These methods are logically used by Abubakar Shekau in the sampled videos to generate meanings. The movements in the screen grabs of the main participants express negotiations.



Plate 1: Abubakar Shekau in a video session on January 12, 2012

The screen grabs in this clip are reflection of the Boko Haram terrorist group at the beginning of agitation for freedom of religion and the prosecution of some officers of the law who supposedly invaded Borno villages and murdered innocent members of the sect in 2009 in Borno State. The discourse participant appears in costumes that speak volumes and other vectors which are used in the scenes and sub-scenes are juxtaposed with the linguistic and para-linguistic revelation captured in the actions of the speaker. The message addresses the former president of Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan and the entire government of Nigeria. The grievance in the sub-scenes has more of a subtle start while the speaker uses communication strategies to sound a note of warning before the full-blown activities. In the video, the speaker appears alone. The nonlinguistic strategy adopts certain visual modalities to attract the attention of viewers in the clip. Locus of Attention (LOA) is a point of attraction to any viewer in any visual image projection whether the image is displayed explicitly or implicitly. The LOA here is logically tied to some other salient features that are used by the speaker to project his messages. The green background used in this screen grab is a very catchy colour which any viewer will see at first while watching the video. One of the attractive strategies in the clip is the colour separation used in the background. The interpersonal meaning here tilts towards the flag of Nigeria which is designed with green- white- green but a close observation here shows that the speaker uses green-mint-green which suggests that the speaker disagrees with the country called Nigeria by inventing his own Nigerian flag colour. This is an indication that

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Shekau does not recognize the entity called Nigeria and a close look at the background reveals an object in the form of a wooden bar which is referred to as Vector. It is a bar placed across the background representing the Nigeria flag. This bar crossing the Nigerian colour suggests the sect condemns Nigeria as an entity since, at first it has changed the colour of the country's flag and secondly, placing a bar across the colour. While the speaker is using some of these nonlinguistic methods, certain linguistic features are used to support his claims. Here, the study observes that in the initial adventure of the sect, as much as they disagree with Nigeria as an entity, they use language in form of signage, to blame their hatred on President Jonathan and all Christians in the country.

Pointing of index finger in blameshifting/mockery

There are other indexical semiotic properties which the discourse participant has engaged to drive home his points. One of these communication strategies is the use of the index finger to pinpoint who he is addressing.

Plate 2: Shekau, after the abduction of Chibok girls on May 19, 2014



In a bid to get the attention of his viewers, Shekau makes use of his body movements to communicate to them. One of the movements is the use of the index finger to pinpoint who he is addressing. Instances of where Shekau does this abound in the screen grabs but an example is shown in the plate 2 above where he lambastes the government of Nigeria for making efforts to rescue the kidnapped Chibok girls in 2014.

The blaming strategy here suggests Shekau's hatred for any other religion apart from Islam. There is a recurrent use of the pronominal word "You" in his speeches and he buttresses this by pointing his fingers to make sure that the people who are watching the videos are aware truly he is referring to them, especially President Jonathan and Christians in the country. The use of the collective pronoun "You" further encompasses the president and the whole of Nigerians practicing Christianity. Before the battle for the release of the Chibok girls, Shekau has made mention of similar blame, using similar gestures during his speech. Take for instance, he says:

Excerpt 1

You think we will not worship Allah? Allah said his land is vast and only he will be worshiped. Go and form your own land, we are in Allah's land, I don't know Nigeria.

Shekau (2014a)

As much as he addresses his targets, he points at them to connect them linguistically using some non-verbal items. The use of the collective pronoun "You" further encompasses the president and the whole of Nigerians practicing Christianity. He goes further to lecture them on the personality of Jesus Christ by saying that he is just a prophet and not the son of God as Christians claim. He blames Christians

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for saying that Jesus Christ is the son of God and he points at the unseen discourse partners. This, according to him, is against what Allah has commanded. The affirmative statements he makes in his speeches and the way he points accusing fingers at the perceived opponents confirm his reservation for Christians in Nigeria.

The use of symbolism in signage communication

The study observes the use of systematic threat by Abubakar Shekau. In the sampled screen grab in plate 3, AK-47 automatic rifles are displayed behind the speaker and he is flaunted by masked men. This action transfers meaning in a way as it indicates fearlessness, daring attitude and metaphorically a sign of violence. This sight gears towards manipulating the viewers to see the strength of the sect.

Plate 3: Shekau's message to Jonathan on April 13, 2012



The use of colour, vectors, scenes and sub-scenes together with the verbal correspondences in the text of Shekau in this clip further confirms what Halliday(1985:8) submits that meaning at all levels is hinged on the semiotic traces in the characters and underlying meaning in a text. These codes are used to support the meaning shifts in his clips. In Plate 3 above, Shekau surrounds himself with masked men who hold guns. The idea here is similar to the ones in Plate1 where the speaker uses Ak47 as objects of hatred and blame. Shekau uses these objects here to suggest that he does not fear his targets as he speaks confidently in the clip.

Semiotic Metaphor in the image is a way of presenting a new dimension to the scene. Before this time, the sect showcases members of the group holding or wielding dangerous weapons to get a result. However, the paradigm or the system has now shifted to showcasing open weapons. This is a method of displaying power shift and power increase against the military strength in the country because the image introduces a new dimension to communication style. And the aim here suggests intimidation using weapon display as semiotic property. To further buttress the use of open weapon display, the sect consistently uses ammunition at the background throughout the sampled clips. For example, during the time Shekau conquers Baga village, the sect shows battle readiness and that they are not ready to back down on their demand except the other party is ready to shift ground either by joining the group or be ready to face violence.

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Plate 4: Shekau showcasing weapons seized from the Nigerian Army in Gwosa on August 24, 2014



The speaker displays the arsenal in the images to show power and reiterate his victory stories through the visual, after the sect drove out the Nigerian army in Gwosa. There is no linguistic activity observed in the clip, just that the camera was moving to show the wealth of weapons Boko Haram has acquired, especially the ones seized from the Nigerian army. And the message here is beyond the literal explanation. Though there is no one speaking in the clip, the scene explains the magnitude of victory the sect has recorded against the country's military powers which balances the multimodal extra-linguistic display in communication and it is experiential. By experiential, multimodal theory refers to how a text can be used to represent a thought. It can represent danger, violence or peace. Here, the experiential meaning represents war and violence as the sect displays a cache of weapons. These are top grade weapons stored and seized from the Nigerian military.

With the display of power in the para-linguistic scene, the semiotic properties used in the scene are co-referent with what Shekau says while debunking negotiating with the federal government of Nigeria;

Excerpt 2

> … Thank Allah. I started with a knife and today I have seized more than 20 of our armour vehicles, they are in my possession. I'm only making this speech for those people who want to convert to Islam. I don't care whatever you say. What is my business with you? Allah is my focus. I left my parents' home. I left my mother and my father; I left my relations and joined those who want to practice Islam (quoting from the Koran). And you are trying to deceive people with negotiation.Shekau (2014d).

In the speech above, there is cohesion between the claims and the picture where only seized weapons are displayed. This suggests a message of fear as the weapons displayed here are instruments of mass destruction. This is a way of using symbolism to express his points using non-verbal communication mode. The picture also shows the flag of the sect at the right corner of the sampled images in all the Plates to show the authenticity of the information being communicated by the sect. All these codes are used while he fuses them with visual codes to express meanings. This is a term which explains that there are times when certain visuals don't have main participants but the symbolic nature of such suggests an action which can be identified by a vector or it is left for the viewer to infer. The interplay between various visual elements which act as clues to let the viewers know what is important and what is more important than others. The weapons are displayed, if observed, in an open place where everyone can see it and the illumination is well pronounced. This is a way of showcasing power or rather power play where a particular group of people is challenging the military powers of a country. These weapons are symbolic to reveal the extent to which the sect can wreak havoc. These guns are mass destroyers, automatic rifles with enough cache of bullets well positioned for the viewers to see. All these are strategically used to lodge fear in the minds of those watching the clips. And merely looking at the missiles, they are enough to scare

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anyone especially when the other opponents do not have weapons as sophisticated as what is being showcased here. This facilitates the needed extra-grammatical analysis as expressed by the central stratum campaigns of the multimodal theorists.

Geometrical symbolism in other human and material representations

The use of semiotic properties in meaning transfer is further displayed in the notion of analytical process which shows symbolic representation of main participants who are present in a text (structured) or who are not present in a text but project an image which interprets their message based on what the viewers can deduce (unstructured). This explains the abstract of Geometrical Symbolism. The message in plate 4 is not showing Shekau but a cross-section of the kidnapped Chibok girls in 2014. In the image sampled, the girls are seen reciting the Quran and no other action is performed. Boko Haram shows these unstructured images to pass certain messages.

Plate 5: Abducted girls on May 12, 2014



The recitation of Quran within the short period of time they were abducted and the time the video is released shows aggressive 'evangelism' of the sect (the reason being that, the girls, before they were kidnapped, were all mainly Christians). If within a short period of time they all speak Arabic in the video, then the invisible participant (Shekau) is passing a metaphorical message to Christians that Islam is the right religion and the sect will do anything to convert all unbelievers(Christians) even if it involves kidnapping them and teaching them the tenets of Islam.

The colour variation in the Hijabs put on by the girls is symbolic but foggy in this study but can be researched into by future researchers. What is striking is that some are in black, some are in ash. Three of the girls are made to recite Quran and explain that they are fine with the sect and this suggests a way of projecting an image of a comfortable set of people. The three girls are putting on black Hijab cloths, a ceremony welcoming them into a 'religion of Allah' and the colour also suggests worthlessness looking at the look of the poorly sown clothes. To buttress the suggestive the "worthless" observation in the study, Shekau affirms:

Excerpt 3

Any infidel is a sheep to be sold, Jonathan, if I catch you, I will sell you, Obama, Bush I will sell you for peanuts. Infidels don't have value…

Shekau (2014c)

In the previous analysis, black is symbolic to the 'unrefined' true way of Allah's injunctions which explains the reasons some of the girls are putting on such a colour. To support the analytical process, the

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speaker uses LOA to catch the attention of the targets while the sub-scene reveals two of the girls holding Boko Haram flags. What this means is transactional. The multimodality system here transfers one meaning to another because as attention shifts from the girls who are the participants, viewers notice the 'standing' Boko Haram flag at the back. The flag colour is in white and black. Black covers objects and to identify objects where there is darkness is always difficult. This suggests that the sect prefers to retain a no-westernization policy as such exposes people to various anti-Allah ideas. These ideas are against Allah's ways of life. However, the sect's flag bears some Arabic words in white, which indicates that even in the no-westernisation campaign, there is purity and sanity in Islam since the inscription says THERE IS NO OTHER GOD EXCEPT ALLAH. There is fear of Allah and rightness in what the sect believes as it reflects in the white colour used to inscribe some Arabic words at the centre of the black colour. The symbols used by Shekau in negotiating meaning extend to both human and material being presented as communication properties.

Semiotic cohesion

Semiotic cohesion explains the system choices function so as to make the text (visual, verbal or written) cohesive. The images in the clips are filled with actions which are performed by Shekau and these actions are seen to have carried several messages despite that those messages are silent in the clips. The images below in Plate 5 explain the concept of semiotic cohesion where the movements reveal heavily armed men which cohere with readiness for battle. It coheres with disagreement with the move by the government to form a truce with the opponents. All other visual discourse indicators such as Scene, Episode, Figure, Parts, Sub-scene, Salience, Framing and Components are relevant to achieve certain meanings in images cohesion while discussing semiotic cohesion in images. The sub-scene expresses heavy display of battle readiness which means the images cohere with meaning in a way.

Plate 6: Semiotic cohesion during Shekau's barrack attack in Borno



The armour tanks in the sub-scene also coheres with battle and killing thereby asking the opponents to back down or face more attacks from the sect. The semiotic cohesion also reveals the belief of the sect in religious extremism. It is a message to the opponents to accept Islam or get killed. System choices function to make the visual images cohesive, especially, where armed men in the text cohere with readiness to fight and die. This is evident in the way they are masked using black veils. Apart from hiding identities, they portray readiness for death and militancy. These are ways the players display non-verbal means to drive home a message of intimidation and a host of people ready to die for the course in which they believe. These determinations in the images are even part of the methods to drive home their points. Another semiotic cohesion methodology is seen in the sophisticated and expensive cars shown at the background which correspond to speed and quickness in Boko Haram's quest. Such cars are built for ruggedness and speed. The sect still buttresses the fact that it has all it takes to get to wherever it wants and whatever it

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wants and at any time it wants it. This is what the theory refers to as semiotic cohesion as various items are used to trade meaning and suggest the goals of the speaker in the images.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated communication strategies in visual and verbal discourse, using a prominent discourse participant, Abubakar Shekau, to suggest the speaker's goals for performing certain actions in the texts. The study observed that the speaker used communication strategies to instill fear in the mind of his opponents in order to have his desires attended to, using semiotic properties in the widely broadcast internet-projected video clips. It is observed in this study that verbal and visual codes, when combined, help in meaning realisation and negotiation. Abubakar Shekau has used many semiotic codes in the images considered in order to lay blame at the feet of the government. This is done to justify his violent actions against Nigeria. Various semiotic interpretations are seen in the two AK-47 automatic rifles the speaker has used which are meant to send a message of blame and mockery to the government of President Goodluck Jonathan believing he is a Christian and he has led a force of 'Christians' to attack the sect in Borno State in 2009 which led to the death of the founder of the sect. The way these communication codes are used suggests a threatening action against the government. This projection of semantic interpretations suggests intimidation that is logically expressed through religious extremism. The sect intends to intimidate the opponents to back down on westernization and create an Islamic state in Nigeria. The primary target of a sign or image is that the existence is germane to meaning-making attempts which help in comprehension of certain things.

These verbal and non-verbal communication methods also explain the ways images can represent human feelings. Through the use of primary announcement and sub-scene mechanism, it is possible to facilitate meaning and interpret goals in diverse ways. The study admits that body postures, body movements, sequence of actions, tone, colour, gaze, framing and cropping can interact to represent or present meaning in a context. So, it is a good way of scooping meaning in textual analysis and understanding communication in a unique way. The implication here is that multimodality is a significant aspect of video analysis and that the speaker's actions can be pointers to his desires even when he has not come out openly as to what he wants precisely.

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