

A Systemic Functional-Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Some Cartoons Connected with Nigeria's 2015 General Elections

Amore, Kehinde Pedro

Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode
&

Atoloye, Lekan

Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijebu-Ode

Abstract

This paper analyses some cartoons connected with Nigeria's 2015 General Elections with a view to identifying the way verbal and non-verbal meaning is communicated through them. Data for the study comprises fifteen purposively selected online cartoons. The cartoons essentially focus on the key actors in the elections – Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and its Chairman; the two prominent political parties (All Progressive Party and People's Democratic Party) and their candidates. The data collected were analysed with the use of Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Social Semiotics Theory, a model of MDA within the purview of Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics, to uncover the ideology behind choosing various verbal

and non-verbal resources in political discourse. A systemic functional approach to multimodal discourse analysis allows for analysis of “meaning arising from the use of multiple semiotic resources in discourses which range from written, printed and electronic texts to material lived-in reality.” Expansion of meaning which occurs as result of a combination of linguistic and visual forms is captured through an inter-semiotic mechanism and system. The analysis shows that social semiotic reference is pivotal in the relationship between political discourse and ideology. It confirms O'Halloran's (2008) position that metaphorical constructions of meaning take place across linguistic and visual elements.

Keywords: Linguistics, Semiotics, Discourse analysis, Election, Cartoons