

**A Semiotic Analysis of the 2015 Governorship Election Campaign Posters and Billboards of
Akinwunmi Ambode and Jimi Agbaje in Lagos State**

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Abstract

The Nigerian 2015 general elections have come and gone. This study seeks to find out the part played by communication strategies in winning or losing the elections. The investigation focuses on the Lagos State gubernatorial election, with special interest in the engagement of the semiotic instruments of pictorial campaign and its impact on the electoral outcome. The thrust of the study is to uncover the part played by the pictorial representation of the two major contenders – Akinwunmi Ambode and Jimi Agbaje. The extent to which their self-representations gained ascendancy, and the semiotic implications of these for the electoral outcome, were explored. Data were collected from pictorial representations of the candidates in posters and billboards in major parts of Lagos State. Using pictorial semiotics, with the specific application of kinesics, proxemics and clothing material as the foci of investigation, the social semiotic interpretation of these self-representations reveals Ambode as more mobile and amiable, seemingly making all efforts to gain the confidence of the electorates while Jimi Agbaje appeared more laid back and assuming the support of the electorates. Their choice of clothing items used in the posters also show Ambode as being more conscious of the need to reach out to people in their comfort zones while Agbaje assumed a more neutral outlook. The paper concludes that the electorates seemed quite confused about who to choose between the two candidates as the result of the gubernatorial elections in Lagos State revealed a very tight race.

Keywords: Nigerian 2015 elections, Akinwunmi Ambode, Jimi Agbaje, pictorial self-representations, semiotic interpretations, the Lagos electorates

Introduction

Electioneering is an important part of the political process in any democracy. The Nigerian democracy is no exception. The 2015 general elections took place in most States in Nigeria. Lagos was one of such states.

Two major parties were in contention in the State. These are the All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). This does not mean that there were no other parties. It is a fact though that these two parties overshadowed the others in the contest for electoral offices in the State. This paper seeks to ascertain the place of pictorial campaign and its impact on the electioneering process in Lagos State. This is of interest for the simple reason that, taken at face value, the avalanche of the campaign posters of Mr. Ambode appeared more like a show of un-seriousness as indicated by the many comments of Lagosians during the pre-voting period. Many comments online and offline depicted him as if he was just there to show his face and not a serious contender for the votes. Some others assumed that the only serious matter about him was the support of the powers that be in Lagos State – Bola Tinubu, former governor of Lagos State and a national leader of the APC and the Oba of Lagos.

On the other hand, Mr. Agbaje seemed to be the favoured candidate by the ordinary Lagos residents. A colleague told this researcher that she would vote for Buhari in the presidential elections but vote for Agbaje in the governorship elections. An attempt was made to find out from her why she would vote a party at the national level and vote against it at the state level. Her surprising answer was that Agbaje is a serious person that would lead Lagos State well. The fact is that he had previously contested before but lost in his bid to become a governorship candidate of his party. He was nonetheless seen as a very serious candidate that should be supported. What is not clear is whether this is due to his serious mien as shown by his few poster pictures placed in some parts of Lagos.

It is also interesting that at the initial stage of the campaign, Agbaje did not have many of his posters on the streets of Lagos. It was therefore quite difficult getting them as part of the data. One would not know if it was a deliberate choice on the part of his Campaign as a strategic move or simply because he had challenges having his posters on the streets of Lagos; probably because the party in power in Lagos was not his. This is noted for the simple fact that even when he eventually stepped up his pictorial releases, he chose the roads that belonged to the Federal Government, where his party called the shots. The posters nonetheless suffered mutilation on the Third Mainland Bridge (the major bridge that connects Lagos Island to the Mainland, with a lot of daily vehicular traffic on it), where they were placed on the embankment in the middle of the dual carriage way of the Bridge. Who did this could only be left to the imagination?

It was noticed that after some time, the posters started appearing in some other parts of Lagos. So, this could have been due to his new understanding of the stakes getting higher with his opponent's avalanche of posters all over Lagos or simply because he thought his chances were brighter, going by the sort of disposition from the Lagos electorates identified above?

The Lagos governorship elections have been lost and won. Nonetheless, it is necessary to identify the dynamics that were operational in the process of winning or losing the elections. The part played by the contestants' semiotic self-representation in helping the Lagos electorates to make their choice of their leader is important in determining future elections and how they could be prepared for. The guiding psychology of the candidates and the electorates as exposed in their self-projection as well as in determining who to vote for are a major point of interest in this study. Essentially, the fact that

picture talks (Daniel, 2011; Kitch, 1998) and what it was sent to say and what the electorates seemed to hear in relation to the result of the 2015 Lagos State governorship elections is the focus of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The paper set out to find out if the posters of the candidates in the 2015 Lagos State governorship elections have any significant impact on the outcome of the elections. It seeks to determine the message content of the posters and how self-representation of the candidates impacted the outcome of the election result.

Research Questions

What is effect of the posters of candidates in the Lagos State governorship elections on the outcome of the elections?

In what significant way are messages passed to the electorates through the posters used by the candidates?

Is there any significant impact of the posters on the outcome of the election results?

The next section discusses some related literature and the theory of analysis.

Moving from Nigeria's Do or Die Politics to Lagos Finesse

Politics in Nigeria has usually been seen as a 'do or die' affair (Daniel, 2015). This has usually bred politics of bitterness among the political class. It has been suggested that the travails of the Nigerian erstwhile Senate President, Dr Bukola Saraki, may not be unconnected to his apparent backstabbing of his party's leadership in terms of who it had promised the Senate leadership to. The view of many Nigerians on the war on corruption seemed to also be that it has not only been token but quite selective.

What all these suggest is that politics of bitterness tend to rule the Nigerian political landscape (cf. Daniel, 2015; Ezeibe, 2015). This is what the Americans refer to as divisive politics as seen in the very polarised presidential elections of 2016 and 2020 in the USA as observed from many of their news channel discussions, especially, the CNN.

History has usually been blamed for the kind of politics played in Nigeria. It has been asserted that colonialism played a major role in creating this sort of political landscape in Nigeria. The high tension that has continued to attend to Nigeria's political class might not be unconnected with this tension that continued to dog Nigeria's elections (Bamgbose, 2012; Campbell, 2010).

However, the Lagos governorship elections of 2015 moved from the level of mere political thuggery to a kind of finesse. The use of posters as a major campaign strategy rather than engaging thugs to cause unnecessary disruptions of civil life has become instructive to many politicians. As this researcher noted about the 2016 Edo elections, posters played a significant role in bringing to the consciousness of the Edo people the candidate of the APC in Benin City, the State capital. It is however necessary to mention that the APC government in Edo State at the time was accused of disallowing the PDP candidate to place his own posters in Benin City. As much as one could not

actually, verify this accusation, the important message it passes to us that has relevance in this paper is the fact that, if this were true, it is a confirmation of the suggestion that pictures are powerful meaning conveyors.

Even when the then APC candidate of Edo State cross carpeted to become the PDP Edo State governorship candidate in 2020, Governor Godwin Obaseki powerfully used this poster strategy again. His most compelling being where he hugs a crying woman, apparently telling her he cares. That is a study for another paper! The point being made is that politicians have come to understand the power in using pictures to get the electorates to their side. No wonder, Edo people stood solidly by him, and he won again in 2020, even if it was apparently more as a protest against his erstwhile godfather, Adams Oshiomole (Edo State former Governor) now turned an enemy as confirmed through personal communication with many of the electorates.

Pictorial Semiotics as Signification

Semiotics is the science of the symbolic order. Leech and Thomas (1990) describe it as –the study of signs and sign systems^{ll} (pp. 173-174). They claim pragmatics, semantics and syntax can be regarded as subdivisions of semiotics in that they depict signs in relation to users (pragmatics), the signs in relation to what they designate (semantics), and syntax as the delineation of signs in relation to one another. They further point out that semiotics may justifiably be –applied to the study of...artificial signs such as traffic lights, or of signs used in animal communication, as to human language^{ll} (p. 174). The impression then is that, as represented by the subdivisions above, semiotics is usually applied to the human language, except in the case of traffic lights, which may be referred to as visual image. Levinson (1983: 2) identifies this language-focused semiotics as –*linguistic* semiotics^{ll} (original emphasis), as opposed to the whole gamut of semiotics, affirming Leech and Thomas' (1990) claim.

Seidel's Picture Theory of Meaning (PTM) is only pictorial to the extent of there being a link between what is being described and the entity representing it. He affirms:

As can be gathered from the list of features, the notion of a one-to-one correspondence between individual symbol and basic entity is built into the PTM. It is this correspondence that justifies the adjectival use of the term picture'. But this is as far as it goes. (1977: 100)

He therefore declares that the “The language that will be developed under the PTM is a descriptive language”.

Conversely, Scollon and Scollon (2003) observe that the visual component of text is usually independently organised and has a grammatical structure of its own. They therefore aver that one of their interests in visual semiotics is how placement of visual symbols affects their interpretation^{ll} (p. 18). It appears that the way a signified is represented pictorially has a message; and, consequently, affects the interpretation of the message. How a candidate appears to want to be perceived in their self-representation is thus important to identifying the message intended in their posters.

Nonetheless, Scollon and Scollon's (2003) description of pictures as –the visual component of text^{ll} (p. 18) is unacceptable. A picture can be taken and sent through any means of conveyance, email and

social media platforms inclusive. The picture in such a case is not manifesting text visually but projecting its own particular kind of meaning. In such a situation, it does not seem quite right to ascribe to it the nomenclature, component' of text. The pictures in the data appear to have particular messages to pass across, the prominent one being that I am available to be your governor.'

Semiotics is a study of signs to portray social meanings regarding the symbolic order as pictorial in the sense of sign. We therefore agree with Kitch's (1998) notion that pictures could be read (cf. Chandler, 1994). The premise is based on the fact that, as signs, they are signifiers, pointing to particular entities. These entities are represented, not by lexical items but visual images. Their referents are those images in the pictures. This makes it very relevant to the present study.

Pictorial semiotics originated from the work of Roland Barthes. Sonesson (2004) claims that Barthes' work, *La rhétorique de l'image* (1964), is the pioneering attempt in this field. Pictorial semiotics is chiefly concerned with the study of pictures as particular vehicles of signification. Photography is regarded as a branch of pictorial semiotics.

Two views of the photograph have been propounded (Sonesson, 2004). One view is that of photograph as icon, that is, representative of a particular element in the real world. Another view of the photograph is that of indexicality. As an index, it is believed to be referring to another element. To Sonesson (2004), the photograph is more realistically an icon. This is because, she argues, one does not need its indexicality to grasp its meaning. Photographs appear to have a bit of the two views in that they represent a particular entity or scene and make reference to these in the real world (in the sense of Scollon and Scollon's (2003) geosemiotics referencing).

The pictures looked at are therefore viewed as representing the messages the political gladiators wished to pass across. The focus in this research work is to ascertain the level to which the messages the pictures of the Lagos State governorship candidates of APC and PDP impacted their eventual performance at the polls during the 2015 elections.

The stunning win of America's Donald Trump in the 2016 elections appears to be a fluke to many observers. Especially, when viewed from the perpetual protests that seemed to dog his government. However, it is necessary to look beyond the surface to determine what appeals to electorates when they are going to vote, at least, in places where their votes count. This could be seen in his being voted out in 2020 (despite his insistence on having been robbed of victory, without any proof of election fraud till date). It could thus be said that the 2015 general elections appear, to a very large extent, to have been free and fair. After all, how would one account for the fact that an incumbent was defeated under his watch in Nigeria where elections are apparently usually a do or die' affair. The only possible way to account for it is that the elections were free and fair. Going by the evidence' before us, we will join those who hold this view and claim it is so.

Scollon and Scollon (2003) rightly note –...semiotic systems index the sociocultural and sociopolitical structures of power around us (p. 7). These systems operate as systems of social positioning and power relationships –at the level of struggles for hegemony among social groups in any society precisely because they are systems of choices and no choices are neutral in the social world (p. 7). The ways the candidates are represented in the pictures are apparently particular choices they made as a sign of their view of the basic message(s) they want to pass across to the electorates whose votes they were vying for within the Nigerian political structure. In the true semiotic sense, the pictures are meaning-making (Chandler, 1994). Lang (1994), moreover, regards semioticians' work as including the investigation of the –*sign processes* (par. 21) original emphasis] in the production of signs. He regards this as a means of considering the psychological basis for the choices made by the sign creator. These choices are known to have communicative intentions.

The main issues to be considered in the analysis of the pictures in the present data include the kinesics, proxemics, and the clothing items. The semiotic posturing here follows Makinde and Odeneye (2007). It is believed that the posters are indicative of a propositional content. The posters thus serve as messages the politicians are giving to their constituents and how the information resonates is the focus of the analysis. Thus, it should be seen that the pictures are the information (comparable to Mathiassen & Andersen's (1986) 'informatics') supplied by their owners. Moreover, these messages have intentions embedded in them. These intentions are what we intend to unearth during the analysis, looking at the way kinesics, proxemics and the clothing items chosen by them convey the information intended to be passed on. The concepts are further discussed under each section of the analysis.

Justification for the Framework of Analysis

It is a known fact in academic research that the data has influence on your theoretical underpinnings. In addition, the data pattern can also lead to the evolution of a new theory. The posters harvested show a pattern and thus require the elements of the type of emerging semiotic analysis applied in this study.

Makinde and Odeneye (2007) applied kinesics, proxemics, and haptics in their analysis of some Glo adverts in their study. Their findings showed that all these elements have communicative implications. Daniel (2008) also applied these concepts to the study of the Page 3 Girl in *The Sun* newspaper and came up with some remarkably interesting and rich findings. It is thus found that these concepts are very much appropriate for the pictorial analysis undertaken here.

This study is however limiting its analysis to the kinesics and proxemics of the candidates in the pictures as appropriate to the collected data. The concept of clothing materials as analytical focus is borrowed from Daniel (2008). She found in her study that clothing items are very communicative in terms of their form and the way they are worn.

Methodology

The data used in this study were collected from the posters of the candidates that were planted in every nook and cranny of Lagos. The data collection involved physically going to the field to collect the pictures. Considering that many of the posters were already in the public domain, it was easy for the researcher to collect them. The researcher went around Lagos to physically photograph the pictures with her Windows phone. Even though many of the pictures were available online at the different websites of the contestants, the author found that the poignancy of the message(s) of the pictorial postures appear to be geographically relevant. As such, there appeared to be postures counted as being apparently relevant to some particular places. This was of interest to the interpretation of the pictures and the possible impact they have on the election results.

These collected pictures were then stored in the cloud account of the researcher for analytical consideration. The analytical procedure involves the application of the semiotic instruments for the analysis. The analysis was thus done at different levels, which have to do with the kinesics, proxemics and the clothing items.

The major focus in analysing the data is the kinesics of the postures. This is of major interest as it appears to convey important information about how the candidates wish to be perceived. No need to dwell so much on the proxemics for the simple fact that the postures of the candidates do not suggest a desire to create or close distance between them and the electorates. This was much achieved through the words used by the two of them. For example, some of the posters have the captions that suggest gender sensitivity. This appears to suggest an attempt by the candidate(s) to woo the womenfolk through promising them mouth-watering offers on being elected. Another feature of the proxemics could also be seen in the fact that one of the candidate's pictures show him as looking at his wristwatch. This could be interpreted as showing him as being time conscious, or simply bored with the electorates as wasting his precious time. So, it is to find out what the electorates think through their eventual ballot result.

The analysis of the candidates' clothing items is mainly of interest in that one notes their struggles to identify with particular cultural mores through the use of their clothing items. This is seen in the attempt to build bridges through using clothing materials by the candidates.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis follows the essential semiotic direction of kinesics, proxemics and clothing items. These are analysed as semantic projections in terms of the kind of messages the politicians wish to convey to the public, especially, the Lagos State voters.

Kinesics

Kinesics has to do with movement. In this analysis, it is used in terms of how body movement is used to convey particular messages to the voters. The importance of this is that the sort of movement made have different messages conveyed.

In reality, the most mobile of the two candidates is Akinwunmi Ambode. It is observed that many of his posters convey some sort of movement of either the whole body or some part of it. There are various gyrations of either the whole body or parts of the body, especially, the front limbs, noticed. This is not much seen in the posters of Jimi Agbaje.

Examples of these are seen below:



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

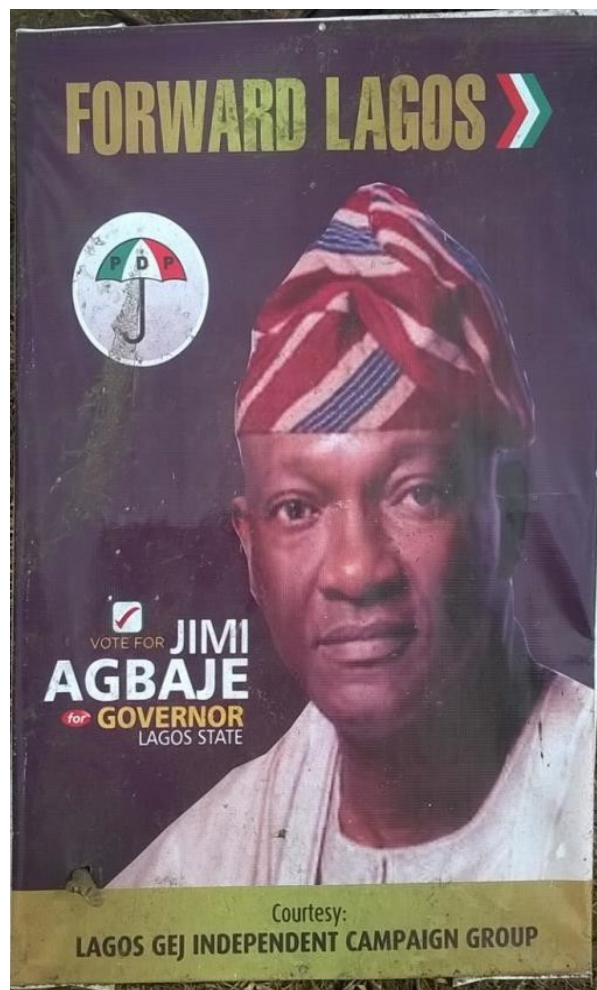


Figure 7

An analysis of the proxemics of the pictures above show that Akinwunmi Ambode has many parts of his body communicating at the same time through their movements. His smiles are infectious. His hands are doing one thing or the other at the same time. Even his legs and feet are participants in the whole process. Whether this is a deliberate effort on his part or just a consequence of who he is, it is not quite obvious. Nonetheless, that his posturing in his posters are quite fluid and in total contrast to his opponent's cannot be denied. As observed by this researcher, it appears that it is on his being advised that he is too serious looking that Agbaje's later posters show him making an effort to smile as shown in Figure 5. Whether his initial over-serious demeanour is to project an image of a very serious candidate is also open to speculation. As one of the captions on his poster says: Leading Lagos is serious business', thereby implying that his opponent's many model-like posters dotting every nook and cranny of Lagos is a sign of non-seriousness, probably.

Jimi Agbaje's posters were initially mostly burst-type, with him looking very serious, and business-like(?) However, it is noticed in the picture above, which was downloaded from his campaign website, that this is one of the very few pictures where he appeared to be a bit relaxed and moving any part of his body. Even then, it is noted that the smile on his face is more like a smack while his legs were crossed above each other, with the hands holding them, more like a defence. Nonetheless, this could also be interpreted to suggest a gentlemanly or self-confident posture.

Proxemics

Proxemics is about space around us. As noted above, not much of the proxemics could be considered significant. This is because the only obvious proxemics is that of the smile by the candidates. While Akinwunmi Ambode seems to have a lot of this to offer, Jimi Agbaje seems to have to be persuaded to offer even a little of that. The pictures above exemplify this a lot as one can see. We show a few more examples of this below.

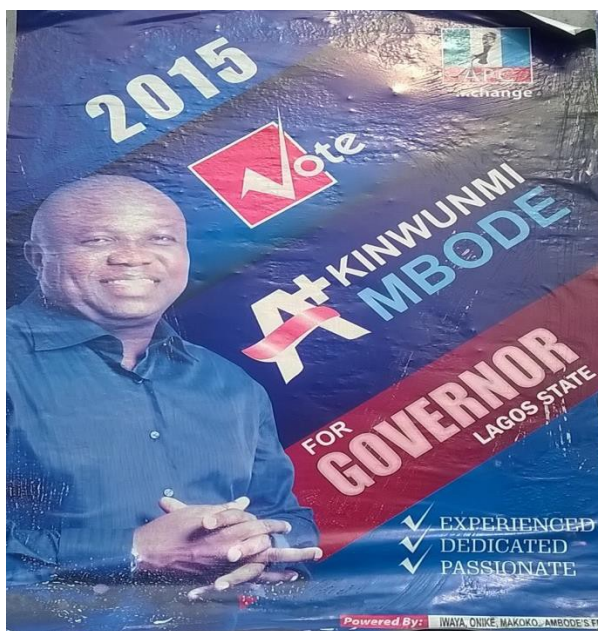


Figure 8



Figure 9

Here, we see the APC candidate all smiles as seen in the other posters above (Figures 8 and 9). This gives the impression of his wanting to close the distance between him and the electorates. His smile is so contagious that it could draw your own smile out. In contrast, the PDP candidate seems to consider smiling an anathema. It is only in the later posters his attempt to smile could be noticed. Nonetheless, it could be said that his eyes were a bit smiley. However, this smile is not that obvious. One could only assume that his later posters having a bit more obvious attempt at smiling could be that his non-smiling face had been overwhelmed by his opponent's apparently ever smiling face in different contexts. Some of his pictures in this mode are displayed below in Figures 10 and 11.



Figure 10

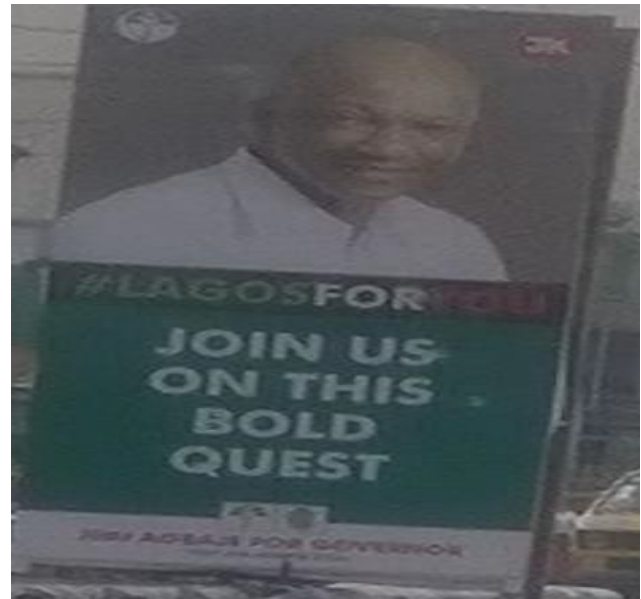


Figure 11

The first one (Figure 10) shows his usual face while the second one (Figure 11) is one of the pictures that came later in the campaign. The smile is on his face but his teeth could still not be opened for the world to see. However, it is clear that everyone has their own personality and a way of expressing it. Maybe each of them is expressing their personalities in their own peculiar ways. The third consideration in this analysis is the clothing items of the candidates in the posters. This is analysed and discussed next.

Clothing Items

The clothes of the candidates also have semantic content. It is however more obvious in the varied representations of Akinwunmi Ambode. One striking thing about his dressing is the attempt to represent all and sundry. He tried to connect to the youths, the young at heart, the professional (Figure 12) as well as the culturally different from his own Yoruba background (Figures 9 & 14) such as the Igbo folks (Figures 3 & 13). These varied postures are represented in many of the posters.

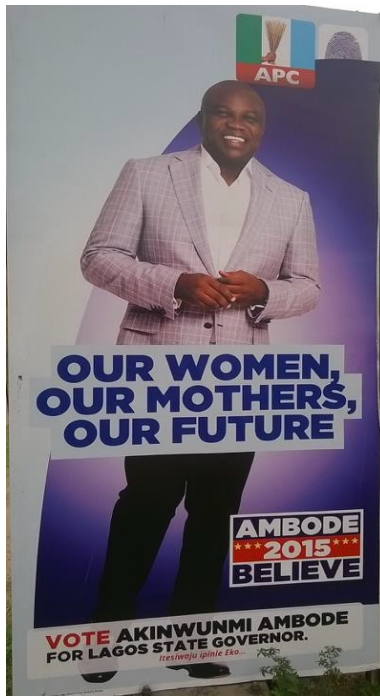


Figure 12

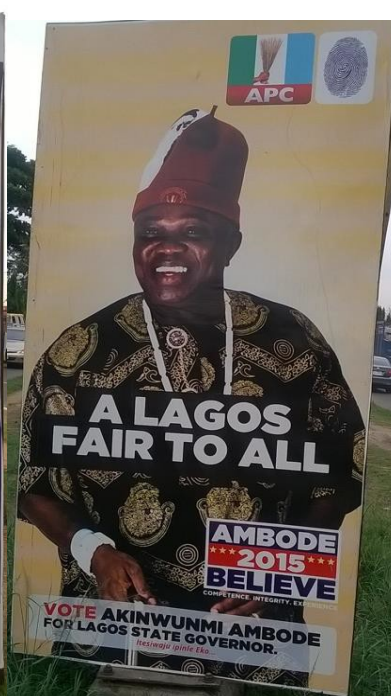


Figure 13



Figure 14

Contrarily, Jimi Agbaje seems to show a more restrained sort of dressing. Apart from the traditional Yoruba wear that he spotted in the initial posters (Figure 7) spread around, he concentrated more on the English wear. Formal suits were very common in his posters (cf. Figure 15). In the later posters, he tried to sort of let down his hair' by spotting a snow-white long sleeves shirt in which he appeared more relaxed and informal (Figures 5 and 11).



Figure 15

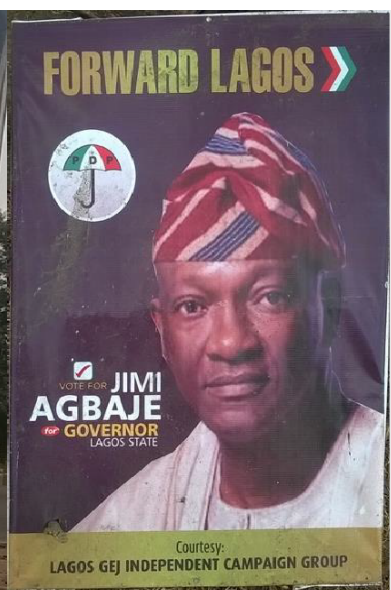


Figure 7



Figure 5

Generally, one could see that the different kinds of clothing the candidates chose to wear have some form of information given about them. These have been shown above. The important issue here is that an attempt is made by them to relate to different sets of people in the community through their dress sense. In some instances, it appears as if the dress code tries to go with those targeted as seen in the poster with T-shirt by Ambode (Figure 4) where he was addressing the youths and their future in the caption on the poster. The captions require an entire study to interpret their communicative intent and effectiveness. One could however see an attempt by Agbaje in trying to be neutral in terms of his dressing to a very large extent. The caption A Lagos for all? JK can' has him dressed in suit (Figure 6), which appears to be an attempt to avoid a cultural loyalty.

His opponent in using a caption that looks like it in saying A Lagos fair to all instead dresses up in Igbo traditional wear. This would seem like an attempt to mitigate the controversy surrounding the Oba of Lagos purported cursing of Igbos and asking them to leave Lagos if they did not vote for Ambode. It would then seem he is passing the message that Lagos belongs to the Igbos too. Why the need for this specific inclusive message is left for all to decide. Scollon and Scollon (2003) assertion that semiotics purpose is the indexing of sociocultural and socio-political power are thus affirmed here.

Time Waits for no One

One interesting aspect of the movement of the body that has not been discussed above is the poster in which Ambode is seen looking at his wristwatch as shown below.



Figure 14

In this poster, he appears to be seriously contemplating the importance of time and the urgency of the assignment before him. Or is it that he thinks that the electorates are wasting his time and should have known what to do; thus, he is wondering why it is taking them so long to make up their minds? One would never know.

In all, the messages of the candidates could be interpreted at any of the levels identified above.

What do all These Mean?

Clearly, the result of the elections could not have gone without being impacted by the campaign strategies of the two major contenders for the Lagos State seat of power. Nonetheless, the result (811,994 – Ambode; 659,788 – Agbaje = dffc – 152,206 from a total of 1,471,782) indicates a kind of confusion on who to take by the electorates; the results polled by each candidate were quite close, the difference is just 152,206. The reason for saying this may not be far-fetched. As noted above, Agbaje appears a more favoured candidate by the generality of the people in the State. In the same vein, the powers that be seemed to prefer Ambode. This would have created a clash of will within the electioneering process obviously. One should then not be surprised that Ambode appeared to have gone overboard in trying to convince different sections of the Lagos populace that he is the candidate they should vote for.

In contrast, Agbaje appeared to have taken for granted the good will of the people, especially, considering that the loss of the elections by his principal (Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the former President) at the national level was a hitherto unimaginable phenomenon in Nigeria. Moreover, the Lagos power play was such that the then incumbent in Lagos State House was not the principal of Ambode. By the time he seemed to realise that Ambode had taken over the whole campaign space with his posters, Agbaje was sort of looking like the slow candidate in the Lagos State contest.

Conclusion

The paper sought to establish the way semiotic representation of political posters of the Lagos governorship candidates in the 2015 elections impacted on the outcome of the result. It analysed the collected data at three major levels of kinesics, proxemics and the clothing items of the candidates following Makinde and Odeneye (2007). It was found that while Ambode engaged a lot of kinetic operations with his forelimbs to connect beyond himself, Agbaje rarely did. In terms of proxemics, Ambode was found to engage a very smiley face as a way of reaching out to the electorates while Agbaje sparingly smiled. It was also found that Agbaje was more neutral in his clothing whereas Ambode went out of his way to identify with those electorates his specific posters tried to address. All these were thought to have impacted on the result of the elections; even though it would seem to indicate indecisiveness on the part of the electorates as the votes garnered by each candidate were quite close. It would then appear that even though the PDP candidate seemed to have a general favourableness among the Lagos electorates, the APC candidate could make himself heard loud and clear through his effective use of posters to win the Lagos State governorship election. This confirms the assertion that pictures are informatics (Mathiassen & Andersen, 1986) and they effectively conveyed the candidates' messages to their target audience, the Lagos State electorates.

It was humorously suggested on many social media spaces that Candidate Ambode, during the campaign, was the next best model. This appellation was not surprising for the simple fact that he had many pictures with many postures presented. He also tried to represent the different cultural groups that he was reaching out to. One could thus see him as the business executive, the Igbo cultural icon as well as the young at heart. One obvious fact in the pictures gathered is that the PDP candidate was rather struggling to keep up with this pictorial invasion. If it is looked at from this angle, one should not be surprised at the eventual outcome of the elections. This agrees with Daniel (2011) assertion that pictures have possible cognition underlying postural choices.

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Postscript

Politics of Bitterness or Political Rascality?

Some observations while gathering the data is that it was found that many of the posters of opponents tend to get mutilated. This may seem a better course compared to a total ban of the opponent's posters as claimed in the pre-election stage of the Edo State governorship elections in 2016. Whichever way one looks at it, this is bad for democracy. Just the way the Lagos monarch was accused of trying to intimidate Igbos in Lagos to vote for Ambode, it is wrong to try to decide for the electorates who they should vote for by mutilating the posters of the opponent. No party could be said to be guiltless of this practice as found by this researcher. Posters of the then candidate Buhari were found to be mutilated in the Egbeda area while those of Agbaje had black paints poured on them on the Third Mainland Bridge and those of former President Goodluck Jonathan were torn in the Yaba area of Lagos.

All these are indicative of immaturity in the political arena. One could compare this to Donald Trump's insistence that he would only accept the presidential elections in America if he won them, and when he eventually won the presidential elections through the Electoral College but losing the popular vote, he decided that there was fraud in the popular vote; surprisingly, by the margin of votes with which he lost the popular votes to Hillary Clinton. This has come home to roost for America in the 2020 presidential elections when Trump finally lost the White House. He continued to falsely claim that Mr. Joseph Biden did not win but that there was fraud; mind you, only in the states where he lost to Biden! The result was the 6 January, 2021 uprising that has left the world stunned till date (CNN, 2021; MSNBC, 2021). Assuredly, the rich also cry.

It appears to us that the Nigerian politicians need to move from their selfish interest to the interest of the country in contesting elections and in governance. Politics of bitterness should give way to that of compromise.

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