

Article

# Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Peak Milk and Sterling Bank Nigeria's Advert on Facebook

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## Abstract

*This study is a Multimodal discourse analysis of Peak Milk and Sterling Bank Nigeria's advertisement on Facebook. In this study, twenty pictorial adverts were selected from Peak Milk and Sterling Bank Nigeria's official page on Facebook through a purposive sampling technique. The adverts were analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar design as the theoretical framework. The findings reveal that linguistic elements, colours, participants' gaze, gestures, distance and angles play a crucial role in the persuasive elements. The brands use cultural and religious affiliations to enhance interaction with targeted viewers. Peak Milk utilises more motivational expressions, symbols and colours to achieve compositional meaning while Sterling Bank utilises participants, gestures, gaze and close distance in their adverts to achieve interaction with the viewers. The study further establishes that Peak Milk and Sterling Bank make use of multimodal elements in their advertisement to create strategic advertisements based on the shared values of the target viewers to make the viewers feel loved and involved. These multimodal elements in advertising strategies significantly impact the success of marketing campaigns and effectively persuade the target audience.*

**Keywords:** Multi-modal discourse analysis, visual grammar design, Peak milk, Sterling Bank

## Introduction

Advertising is the medium through which companies create awareness about a particular product. It is the way producers reach out to their targeted customers. Schudson (1993) recounts that advertising shapes consumers' desires and makes them have a yearning for the things they do not need. Advertisements can be done through various media. Hofstede and De Mooij (2010) submit that consumers' interests or familiarities should be considered in order to produce good advertisements to catch their attention. In recent times, online advertisements have become more popular and influential since they can effectively reach the target audience at a relatively low cost as compared to other forms of advertisement like television and print advertisements. Peak Milk and Sterling Bank Nigeria are companies that have utilised the powerful tool of social media in reaching out to customers.

Peak Milk is a popular dairy products brand in Nigeria, renowned for its top quality. It is a brand of evaporated milk that has been produced in Nigeria since 1954. It is owned by Friesland Campina of the Netherlands. Peak milk is a rich source of macro and micronutrients. The success of Peak Milk in the market can be attributed to its creative advertising strategies that effectively appeal to Nigerian families. By incorporating cultural elements in their advertisements, Peak Milk creates an enduring connection with the consumers. This resonates with the concept proposed by Pollay (1983) and Hornikx and O'Keefe (2009) suggesting that advertisers utilise cultural contexts to establish a strong bond between the consumer and the product.



However, it is important to note that despite the creativity and cultural appeal of these adverts, they can sometimes become controversial. For instance, the Easter day advert of Peak Milk that depicted the tomb of Jesus as a tin of milk offended their Christian customers. This controversy highlights the significance of examining the cultural implications of these advertisements.

Similarly, Sterling Bank Nigeria is widely regarded as one of the top banks in Nigeria with an enormous customer base nationwide. The bank has gained a strong reputation for its excellent customer service and online presence. Sterling Bank employs creative advertising strategies that align with the cultural and religious beliefs of the Nigerian populace. It is popularly known that culture plays a defining role in shaping individuals. Thus, Sterling Bank's advertisements that incorporate cultural elements aim to resonate with their target audience. The cultural principles employed through images and texts in advertising communications have been acknowledged by scholars such as Hofstede (2005). Additionally, it is noteworthy that the utilisation of cultural and religious contexts in advertising can lead to controversies. For example, Sterling Bank faced criticism for its Easter day advertisement featuring an image of a loaf of bread with the caption "*like Agege bread, he has risen*". This controversial advertisement prompts the need for a deeper analysis of cultural and religious references in marketing campaigns. Peak Milk and Sterling Bank are brands that have successfully carved a niche for themselves in the Nigerian market and their success can be attributed to their constant online presence; particularly on Facebook.

Facebook is a social networking platform that allows users to connect with friends and family, share updates and photos, and engage with a variety of content. It was launched in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. Facebook's impact on society extends beyond its role as a personal networking platform. It has also become an important space for businesses, organisations, and public figures to reach and engage with their target audiences. The platform provides various advertising tools and analytics that enable businesses to customise their marketing campaigns and measure their effectiveness (Dijck, 2013). This has led to a significant shift in advertising strategies with many companies now prioritising online platforms like Facebook over traditional media outlets. Peak Milk and Sterling Bank Nigeria have consistently used Facebook as a primary platform for their advertising campaigns. Their advertisement strategies are noteworthy for their multi-modal nature of blending visual and textual elements to convey messages.

Furthermore, Multimodal discourse analysis is a framework that combines multiple analytical approaches to examine various modes of communication in a given discourse. It is a field that arose from the need to keep up with the fast-changing globalised world. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) submit that multi-modal analysis involves exploring how different modes of communication, such as verbal language, images, and gestures, together construct meaning and convey messages. Barthes (1977) has argued that visual images in advertisements function as a form of language, conveying meanings and ideologies. Eco (1979) introduced the concept of "encodings" and "decodings", suggesting that messages were constructed and interpreted differently by individuals based on their cultural, social, and historical backgrounds.

This research was motivated by the need to understand and analyse the multi-modal elements employed by Peak Milk and Sterling Bank Nigeria in their Facebook advertisements. By examining the cultural and religious elements incorporated in these advertisements, this study aims to shed light on the strategies used to establish connections with consumers in Nigeria. By conducting this analysis, one can gain insights into the effectiveness and implications of these advertising strategies and contribute to the wider field of marketing and advertising research.

A significant number of scholars have shown growing interest in Multi-modal discourse analysis in recent times. Notably, scholars like Hyellamada (2019), among others have carried out research aimed at finding out how visual and semiotic modes contribute to the persuasive elements of Instagram adverts, although, some of their works are centred on traditional media. Ajepe (2021b) examined the use of multimodal discourse analysis in television advertisements of selected Nigerian banks. However, the study of Multimodal discourse analysis of Peak milk and sterling Bank adverts is largely missing. The current research intends to fill this gap in existing literature. Specifically, the study intends to: identify the interplay between language, visuals and other modes of communication in these adverts; explore how these different modes of communication contribute to the persuasive elements of the adverts, and examine how these visual and semiotic modes used in the advert reflect the cultural beliefs of the targeted audience

### **Studies on Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Online Advertisement**

Hyellamada (2019) shifts the focus from using clauses as representation to using images as representation, drawing from Kress and van Leeuwen's work on Visual Grammar Design. The study analyses MTNng Instagram ads as multimodal resources. He draws data from MTNng's official Instagram page in Nigeria, consisting of 7 images from the Instagram page of MTNng. The analysis utilises Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001, and 2006) Visual Grammar Design. The findings reveal a predominance of narrative and conceptual processes. Conceptual processes trigger consumer behaviour and link images with the audience; suggesting images are independent meaning-making resources not reliant on verbal texts. Hyellamada (2019) and the current research both used the same theoretical framework for the data analysis. Whereas Hyellamada (2019) focused on MTN adverts on Instagram, the present study focuses on Peak Milk and Sterling Bank adverts on Facebook.

Taofeek and Gbenga (2020) identified how advertisers use cultural elements in their advertisements to persuade consumers to make purchases. The researchers analysed ten advertisements from the financial, food, and telecommunications industries, collected from various sources. They used a processing instrument called 'Below the clause' to analyse the advertisements, which involved counting the frequency of different communicative components. The analysis found that nominal groups, verbal groups, and prepositional phrases were commonly used in the advertisements. Minor clauses were also used, although less frequently. Ambiguity was observed in some advertisements from Union Bank and Wema Bank. The study suggests that advertisers should incorporate cultural elements in their campaigns to educate and influence consumers in different geographical regions. Taofeek and Gbenga (2020)

and the present research both explore how culture influences bank adverts but differ in the method of analysis.

Inyang (2020) examined the application of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion in Peak Milk Television commercials to see what elements the advertisers of Peak Milk use to attract potential customers, how the elements are used, and if they are capable of influencing the consumer's buying behaviour. The article employed a semiotic approach in analysing some selected Peak Milk commercials and the horizontal and linear relationships that exist within them that make it probable for potential consumers to choose Peak Milk amid many other brands of milk and dairy products. Peak Generation 2, Peak Kanu (milk at its peak), Peak 456 and Pecadomo were the Television commercials used in the study. The findings disclosed that Peak Milk commercials make use of people, light, sound, graphics, camera, lens movement and aesthetics to woo potential customers with mere peripheral cues. Inyang (2020) and the present research examined Peak Milk adverts but while this reviewed work focused on Television commercials, the current study concentrated on Facebook advertisements.

In a similar research, Yong and Mei (2018) highlighted the use of language and images in advertisements, especially in milk formula ads. The research discussed the communicative goals, structure, and strategies in milk formula ads. It also explored how compositional meaning shapes these ads through multimodal features. This research adopted Kathpalia (1992), along with the analytical tools from Bhatia (1993) and Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to understand the communication goals and features in these ads. In this study, they observed that Advertisers can benefit from these insights to effectively promote milk formula products. Yong and Mei (2018) and the present research explored how compositional meaning shapes milk ads. This reviewed work is different from the present research because Yong and Mei (2018) used Kathpalia (1992) and Bhatia (1993) analytical tools while the present research used Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) analytical tools.

Ajepe (2021a) examined the verbal-visual elements in selected banking industry advertisements in Nigeria. The study adopted the three meta functions of meaning as projected by M. A. K. Halliday, elements of reading images by Kress and van Leeuwen, and a survey to determine the impact of verbal-visual elements on television advertisements of selected banks on the viewers. The data comprised 30 purposively selected bank advertisements from 3 prominent banks in Nigeria: First Bank, Zenith Bank, and Access Bank. The research revealed that there is an interplay between verbal and visual elements used in the adverts which revealed the advertisers' intended messages to the viewers. It revealed the viewers' state of mind on the banks and the effectiveness of the banks' services to the general populace. Ajepe (2021a) and the current research focus on the interplay between verbal and visual elements used in adverts but while the present research centres on social media adverts, this reviewed work focused on television adverts.

The foregoing studies explored how visual and verbal elements work together to convey meaning, persuade, and communicate in different forms of media such as advertisements, TV commercials, social media, and more. The common thread among these studies is the examination of how different modes of communication contribute

to understanding, engagement, and influence. This study, specifically, examined how different modes of communication contribute to the understanding of Peak Milk and Sterling Banks' advert on Facebook.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) **Visual Grammar Design** theory which offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the meaning and construction of images. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen pioneered the field of visual grammar in the late 1990s. Building upon semiotics and the work of theorists like de Saussure, Peirce, and Barthes, they established a framework for analysing visual communication. Their seminal work, "*Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*" (2006), introduced the idea that visuals, like language, follow a system of codes and rules to convey meaning. They emphasised the importance of visual meaning, distinct from verbal language, and its connection to social and cultural contexts.

Kress and Van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Design comprises three key elements: visual elements, visual grammar, and visual meaning. It focuses on how visuals employ perspective and spatial relations to create meaning by offering unique possibilities for communication compared to language. They also explored the interplay between text and images, where both can enhance and expand upon each other's meanings.

One significant aspect that makes visual grammar design relevant to this study is its replicability, consistency with evidence and logical coherence. The success of scholars like Jewitt (2014); Forceville (2014), and Fairclough (1995), among many others, in using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar design successfully in their studies gives this theory relevance.

### **Tenets of Kress and van Leeuwen Visual Grammar Design Theory**

**Visual Grammar Design** framework assigns to images the three metafunctions of representational, interpersonal and compositional meanings.

**Representational meaning:** The representation of images is realised by narrative and conceptual representation (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) explain that there are two participants in every representation: the interactive participants (viewer, reader, image designer) and the represented participants (things depicted in the image). Vectors represent the action process, while eye lines reflect the reactionary process. By using vectors and eye lines, images are represented as narratives, the common feature of verbal texts – the act of doing and happening. The conceptual image, as described by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), does not involve the actions and reactions of the represented participants; it reveals a more generalised, stable, timeless essence in terms of class, structure, and meaning known as the classification AL, analytical and the symbolic processes.

**Interactional meaning:** The interaction as a feature is expressed by visual contact, social distances, perspective, and modality that the represented participants and interactive participants expressed. The designer of the image uses the image to do something to the reader. If the represented image looks at the reader directly, it forms

an image act of demand but if the represented participants address the reader indirectly, this kind of image is an offer. Social distance reveals the level of involvement and power relations between the image and the reader. Perspective means the selection of angles which reveals the subjective attitude towards represented participants while modality relates to colour saturation, colour differentiation, colour modulation, contextualisation, representation, depth, illumination, and brightness that refer to the different “sets of principles which inform how texts are coded by specific social groups or within specific institutional context” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Therefore, the interactive category refers to how the visual elements are used to engage the viewer.

**Compositional meaning:** Compositional features relate to the information value, salience, and frame. Information value means the different placement of elements and their specific information values. For instance, left and right reveal given and new; top and bottom mean ideal and real, and centre and margin stand for importance and subservient. Salience helps the represented participants attract the viewers’ attention, and this is achieved through factors like foreground and background contrast, relative size contrasts in colour or differences in sharpness. Frames create a sense of detachment between the picture and the reader. The stronger the frame of an element, the more it is represented as a separate unit of information. If there is no frame, then the image covers the whole area of the page and a double spread invites the reader into the image (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Visual Grammar Design theory by Kress and van Leeuwen is therefore a valid approach for this study because it provides a systematic and comprehensive framework for analysing the visual elements of advertisements and can help reveal the underlying meanings and messages they are communicating. The advertisements use a variety of visual elements, such as colours, images, and texts, which can be analysed using the theory.

### **Methodology**

The data used in this research consists of 16 photographs obtained from the official Facebook page of Peak Milk <https://www.facebook.com/Peakmilk?mibextid=b06tZ0> and Sterling Bank Nigeria <https://www.facebook.com/SterlingBankNigeria?mibextid=b06tZ0>. Eight pictorial adverts were obtained from Peak Milk’s official Facebook page and eight pictorial adverts were obtained from the official Facebook page of Sterling Bank Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used to select visual texts and their corresponding written texts that are relevant to the research. The sample is selected based on the criteria of representing a wide range of visual genres (e.g., advertisements, photographs, illustrations) and covering different topics (e.g., identity, gender, power) to ensure diversity and representativeness. To ensure the integrity and quality of the data, the selected visual texts were sourced from the official Sterling Bank and Peak Milk page. The sample size was determined through a process of iterative data collection and analysis. As new visual texts were examined, the researcher assessed their possible contributions to the development of new insights and themes.

## Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis for this study was based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual Grammar Design. The three metafunctions of representational, interactive, and compositional meaning served as guidelines. The representational meaning of the images was first examined by identifying and interpreting how the images represent the world. Objects, people, actions, and settings were analysed in terms of their relevance to the advertisements' message. Secondly, the interactive meaning of the images was analysed, focusing on how they establish a relationship between the viewer and the image. Gaze, gesture, and framing were scrutinised to determine the level of viewer engagement and interaction. Lastly, images were analysed, and visual elements such as colour, line, shape, and texture were also analysed. This analysis highlights how these elements contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the advertisement. Throughout this data analysis process, careful attention was also given to any textual element accompanying the visual materials, as the text is examined alongside the images to understand how they interact and enhance or modify the meaning of the advertisement.

## Data Presentation/Analysis

### Analysis of visual data and corresponding quotes of Peak Milk and Sterling Bank adverts on Facebook

#### Analysis of Peak Milk Advertisement



Fig. 1

#### Analysis of Figure 1

In terms of visual semiotics, the participant shown in *Figure 1* is a tin of peak milk with a shawl tied at the top. A shawl is a cloth-like material Nigerian mothers use in carrying babies on their backs. The use of *Quote 1* "Happy Mother's Day" further highlights the message of the visual elements, showing appreciation to mothers. There is no vector and this is what Kress and van Leeuwen call a non-transactional process.

**Representational meaning:** The tin of peak milk tied with a shawl represents mothers and this can be interpreted as the brand taking up the role of a mother, catering for the viewers' needs.

**Interactional meaning:** The represented participant in *Figure 1* is not human but its position can be considered as offering gaze as Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) suggested that the viewers are the subject of look while the participant is the object of the viewers' look. In terms of perspective, the participant is at eye level indicating involvement and equality between the image and the viewer.

**Compositional meaning:** The blue background which is the brand's trademark makes the peak milk salient. The giant tin of peak milk serves as the dominant

element of the image. By making the tin larger than normal. It becomes the focal point and draws the viewers' attention representing the product being advertised. The phrase written in white font creates a contrast with the blue background making it appealing to the eye.

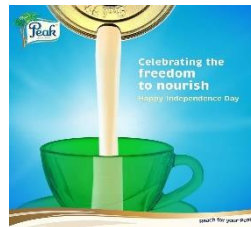


Fig. 2

### Analysis of Figure 2

In Figure 2 Peak milk flows into a green tea cup. *Quote 2:* "Celebrating the freedom to nourish" further exposes the underlying message in the advert. It is an Independence Day advert created to commemorate Nigerian Independence.

**Representational meaning:** In the image, milk flows freely from a tin of Peak Milk which appears to be suspended above, into the centre of a green tea cup. The tin of Peak Milk is the actor while the green tea cup is the goal. While the milk itself flowing into the cup serves as the vector showing the viewers the action. The green cup symbolises Nigeria (independence) as the Nigerian flag is made up of green and white. Peak milk is depicted as a form of a messiah, giving freedom to Nigerians which is the teacup.

**Interactional meaning:** The Peak Milk itself flows freely from a peak milk tin at the upper centre of the ad. This draws the viewers' attention immediately. This peak milk flows into a green transparent teacup leading the viewers' eyes from the centre to the teacup at the bottom. The milky content is shot at an eye-level angle inviting the viewers.

**Compositional meaning:** The visual components consist of peak milk flowing into a green tea cup. The milk flows towards the centre contrasting with the light blue background which makes the peak milk look real. All colours white, green and blue are intensely saturated. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the saturation of a colour can make it look more real.



Fig. 3

Figure 3 above depicts a male participant holding out a tray of breakfast towards a female participant in bed. The female is wearing simple attire showing off her bare shoulders while making eye contact with the man. *Quote 3:* "The perfect way to make memories" reveals more about the context, establishing the participants as lovers.



**Representational meaning:** The man is the actor while the woman is the goal. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) when participants are connected by a vector, they are represented as doing something to or for each other. This advert appeals to lovers as peak milk is depicted as an object needed for making memories.

**Interactional meaning:** The lovers are staring at each other while alienating themselves from the audience. The lady's back is turned against the camera facing the man while the man smiles happily leaning towards his wife creating a kind of romantic atmosphere. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), a depicted person may also be shown as turned away from the viewer, and this conveys the absence of a sense of interaction. The distance is impersonal; it shows the reader the whole situation. This means that the participants do not want the viewers to partake or interrupt them.

**Compositional meaning:** The sunlight coming in through the window establishes the fact that it is morning. The entire room is filled with light colours like white and grey making the peak milk stand out and separating it from every other thing in the room. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 174) posit that pictorial elements can receive stronger or weaker stress than other elements in their vicinity.



Fig. 4

Figure 4 above is a Peak Milk advert showing an unidentified man wearing a blue shirt behind bars, with a handcuff on his wrist. The visual elements appear complex to decipher as a huge question mark replaces the participant's face. Quote 4: "If skipping breakfast is a crime tag your guilty friends" further reveals information about the underlying message in the advert. The visual elements and verbal elements in the advert subtly refer to those who skip breakfasts as criminals.

**Representational meaning:** The unidentified man in the light blue long-sleeve shirt behind bars represents someone who might feel imprisoned or restricted due to the habit of skipping breakfast. The image is used as a light-hearted and attention-grabbing way to promote the idea of not skipping breakfast as Peak Milk is a breakfast-related product

**Interactional meaning:** The unidentified man is gripping the iron bars tightly while facing the audience in a way that could mean seeking help.

**Compositional meaning:** The background is dark and depressing. The question mark on his face adds a humorous twist to the image implying that those who skip breakfast might have a sense of uncertainty about their choices.



Fig. 5

In *Figure 5* above, there are two images placed side by side. On the left side of the image is a Western-style breakfast with bread, tea, and eggs placed at the centre of the table, the right image displays a Nigerian local meal with 'akara' (a kind of flour batter fried in hot oil) and pap. The Visual suggests that a meal-related activity is taking place. Quote 5: 'Cold or hot morning?' further indicates that the advert is about the weather. Peak Milk intends to convince the viewers to purchase the products regardless of the season.

**Representational Meaning:** The left image in *Figure 5* represents a Western-style breakfast with bread, tea, and eggs placed at the centre of the table. The background shows rain, which could be interpreted as a typical weather condition in Western countries. The right image represents a Nigerian local meal with 'akara' and pap. The pap is placed on a white porcelain dish, showcasing its importance. The background is sunny, representing the desirable weather conditions in Nigeria. The presence of the Peak Milk tin on each side represents the product being an essential part of both meals, regardless of cultural differences.

**Interactional Meaning:** The two images are placed side by side to establish a visual comparison between Western and Nigerian meals. The contrast between the rainy background for the Western meal and the sunny background for the Nigerian meal reinforces the idea of cultural differences and the variety of situations in which Peak Milk can be enjoyed. The interaction between the foreground (meals and Peak Milk tins) and the background elements (weather conditions) creates a visual dialogue between the two images, highlighting Peak Milk as a versatile product that can be enjoyed in various cultural and weather contexts.

**Compositional Meaning:** The positioning of the Western meal on the left and the Nigerian meal on the right suggests a left-to-right reading pattern, typical in Western cultures, highlighting the predominant target audience. The central placement of the breakfast items in the Western meal and the prominent display of the pap in the Nigerian meal draw attention to the core food items in each cultural context. The use of contrasting weather conditions in the background helps to emphasise the cultural differences and create visual interest. The presence of the Peak Milk tins on each side creates visual balance and reinforces the idea that Peak Milk is suitable for both cultural contexts.



Fig. 6

**Representational meaning:** Figure 6 above has an image of two hands operating an Android phone. This ad signifies the act of using smartphones. The two tins of Peak Milk flying out of the phone represent the product itself and the idea of acquiring it through a digital platform. The caption 'Your peak nourishment, a click away' represents the convenience of purchasing Peak Milk online.

**Interactional meaning:** The absence of faces or bodies in the image allows viewers to project themselves onto the hands. This makes it easier for a diverse audience to connect with the advertisement, as it does not rely on specific demographics. The hands holding the phone actively engage with the viewer. The act of holding the phone is something most people can relate to, creating a sense of connection. The flying tins of Peak Milk can be seen as reaching out to the viewer, further engaging them. This interaction implies that the product is readily available and responsive to the viewer's needs.

**Compositional meaning:** The choice of a blue background is significant. Blue is often associated with trust and reliability. In this context, it suggests that Peak Milk is a dependable product. Placing the two female hands at the centre of the image makes them the focal point, ensuring that viewers' attention is drawn to the action of holding the phone and the flying tins. The flying tins of Peak Milk are positioned diagonally, creating a dynamic composition. This diagonal arrangement suggests speed and ease, reinforcing the idea that purchasing the product is quick and effortless.



Fig. 7

In Figure 7 above, the image is that of a child standing on a Peak Milk tin. The accompanying quote "Help them reach for their Peak" reveals the brand's intention.

**Representational meaning:** The Peak Milk tin serves as a vector for the participant (the child). Peak milk is depicted in the ad as a form of platform for helping children reach their dreams. The advert does not give a hint on how the brand plans to help children achieve their dreams as Peak Milk is a dairy product brand showing no correlation between the child reaching his goal and the milk-related product.

**Interactional meaning:** There is no gaze in the ad as the participant seems to be focused elsewhere, but what seems to be gazing at the participant is the Peak Milk Tin. The teddy bear maintains a gaze with the viewer trying to arouse childhood memories in the adult viewers. The shot is taken at a close range giving prominence to the peak milk tin and the girl's legs as the viewer is distant from the participant.

**Compositional meaning:** The background colour is soft blue shifting one's focus from the background to the main participants in the advert- the child whose gender is not revealed. This can be interpreted as universality.



Fig. 8

In *Figure 8* above, there is an image of a muslim family all dressed in popular Muslim attire celebrating an important Islamic feast. The accompanying quote “celebrating the moments that bring us together”, depicts Peak Milk as a brand that unifies the family.

**Representational meaning:** Peak milk is represented as an object of unity especially to the Muslim audience.

**Interactional meaning:** The participants are all gazing at the camera establishing a relationship between the viewer and the participant.

**Compositional meaning:** The colours of the attires worn by the participants are all attires associated with the brand- Peak Milk. The colours gold, blue, brown and white are the colours visible in the ad. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 174) posit that pictorial elements can receive stronger or weaker stress than other elements in their vicinity.

### Analysis of Sterling Bank Advertisement

Like Agege Bread, He Rose



Fig. 9

**Representational meaning:** *Figure 9* above depicts a freshly baked loaf of bread divided into two with smoke rising from the middle. On top of this is the quote “Like Agege Bread. He Rose!”. In this advert, the one who is risen is depicted as an Agege bread which is offensive to the Christian viewers.

**Interactional meaning:** The advert is shot at close range inviting the viewers to come have a taste.

**Compositional meaning:** The “Happy Easter” is written in an italicised font making the entire ad fun and playful.



Fig. 10

**Representational meaning:** When images or diagrams have only one participant, this participant is usually an Actor. The resulting structure is called non-transactional by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The image in Fig. 10 above represents the concept of education and achievement. The presence of a man wearing graduation attire and the depiction of an old man graduating symbolise the attainment of education and the celebration of academic accomplishments. This representation suggests that Sterling Bank promotes and supports education as a means of personal growth and success. The accompanying quote, “Learning never stops”, further reinforces the idea that education is a lifelong journey and emphasises the bank’s commitment to continuous learning.

**Interactional Meaning:** The interactional meaning in the advertisement is established through the relationship between the viewer and the image. The portrayal of a happy and laughing individual in graduation attire creates a sense of shared joy and accomplishment. The viewer is invited to connect emotionally with the depicted person and to associate those positive feelings with Sterling Bank. The inclusion of the lapped certificate, thrown up in the air, adds a sense of excitement and dynamism to the interaction, suggesting that Sterling Bank plays a role in enabling individuals to reach their educational goals.

**Compositional Meaning:** The compositional meaning is in the arrangement of visual elements in the advertisement which conveys important messages. The use of colours, such as the red and white logo at the top right of the image, draws attention and reinforces the association with Sterling Bank. The placement of the text at the top of the picture guides the viewers’ reading path and emphasises the importance of continuous learning. The lapped certificate with a red thread, thrown up in the air creates a visually dynamic and celebratory composition. These compositional choices aim to capture attention, evoke positive emotions, and connect education with Sterling Bank.



Fig. 11

**Representational meaning:** Figure 11 above portrays a man holding out his empty pockets to signify a lack of cash. Additionally, there is a written statement accompanying the image that reads “things we tell ourselves to AVOID SPENDING”. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the representational meaning concerns how visual elements represent depicted objects, actions, or people. In this case, the empty pockets of the man along with the caption suggest a state of cashlessness and financial struggle.

**Interactional meaning:** The participant in this advert is made to look towards the frame looking directly at the viewers. This creates a kind of symbolic contact or interaction between the viewer and the image depicted. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), this kind of look is called “demand image”. The viewer is acknowledged and it suggests that the viewer share in the participant’s ordeal.

**Compositional meaning:** “AVOID SPENDING” is written in capital letters to show that it is the theme of the advert. The participant is dressed cooperate to show he is a worker in the bank.



Fig. 12

Figure 12 above is an image of a sad little boy wearing a blue shirt that looks like a uniform. The accompanying quote “12 lashes for unpaid fees?” gives more information on the context as the question serves as an indicator that the boy is a pupil who has been flogged as a result of not paying fees. The advert projects Sterling Bank as a means of financial provision to avoid unpaid fees.

**Representational meaning:** The picture of the boy arouses pity in the viewers. Through this advert, Sterling Bank gives hope to those in need of bank loans to solve their problems such as paying school fees.

**Interactional meaning:** The little boy is given an eye-level angle shot and has his gaze fixed on the viewer creating an imaginary relation with the viewer.

**Compositional meaning:** The white background contrasts with the boy's blue shirt and it helps to give the participant salience. "Unpaid fees" is written in red to show the importance.

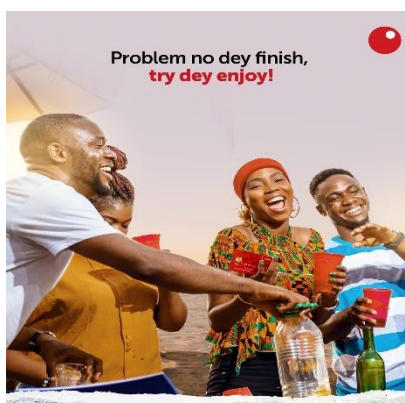


Fig. 13

Figure 13 above showcases a group of people, presumably staff members of Sterling Bank, engaging in the act of drinking. The accompanying quote "Problem no dey finish, try dey enjoy!" ("Problems never end, try to enjoy!"), further reinforces the theme of the advert depicting Sterling Bank as a bank that supports the happiness of both staff and customers.

**Representational meaning:** The advertisement portrays the concept of enjoyment despite life's problems. This representation of people enjoying themselves suggests that Sterling Bank understands the challenges individuals face and encourages them to find moments of joy and relaxation amid those difficulties. The accompanying text, "Problem no dey finish, try dey enjoy!" further reinforces this representational meaning by explicitly stating the bank's message of finding enjoyment despite ongoing challenges.

**Interactional meaning:** The depiction of happy and laughing individuals creates a sense of relatability and emotional connection, as viewers can imagine themselves in a similar state of enjoyment. The inclusion of Sterling Bank staff members in the image suggests a friendly and approachable atmosphere, implying that the bank is not just a financial institution but also a companion in enjoying life. Additionally, the eye contact between the people in the image and the viewers creates a direct and personal interaction, inviting the viewers to participate in the depicted moment of joy.

**Compositional meaning:** The compositional meaning in the advertisement is achieved through the strategic arrangement of visual elements. The use of vibrant and energetic colours, such as the red cups and the red colour scheme associated with Sterling Bank, creates a visually appealing and attention-grabbing composition. The placement of the bank's logo at the top right of the image draws the viewers' gaze and reinforces the association between the depicted enjoyment and the bank itself. The positioning of the quote at the top of the picture guides the viewers' reading path, ensuring that the message of finding enjoyment despite problems is immediately conveyed. Additionally, the inclusion of the bank's red ATM card in the image further reinforces the association with Sterling Bank and its services.



Fig. 14

**Representational meaning:** This particular advert in Fig. 14 above presents Sterling Bank as empathetic with the quote “*Let us help you carry the weight*”. The participant depicts a working-class Nigerian overburdened by financial issues. This advert sympathises with the public.

**Interactional meaning:** The participant in the image does not look at the viewer. There is no contact with the viewer and no demand is made of them. This kind of image is called an ‘offer’ according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). It therefore suggested that the participant is overburdened and troubled about what could be done about the weight of the load on his back.

**Compositional meaning:** The big bag labelled “*urgent needs*” is used to depict financial issues. The background colour is brown showing unfruitfulness.

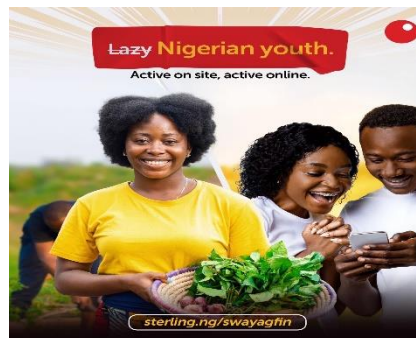


Fig. 15

The presence of young individuals engaged in various activities such as carrying a basket of vegetables, using a phone, and cultivating in Fig. 15 above symbolises the engagement of young people in entrepreneurial ventures, particularly in the agricultural sector. The accompanying quote “*Active on-site, active online*”, further reinforces the idea of youth engagement and highlights the importance of both physical and digital presence in entrepreneurial activities.

**Representational meaning:** The image represents the concept of entrepreneurship, youth empowerment, and agricultural development. This representation suggests that Sterling Bank supports and sponsors youth entrepreneurs and aims to promote agricultural development. The cancellation of the word “*lazy*” in the phrase “*Lazy Nigerian Youth*” challenges negative stereotypes and portrays the depicted individuals in a positive light.

**Interactional meaning:** The interactional meaning in the advertisement is established through the relationship between the viewer and the image. The portrayal of happy and laughing young individuals creates a sense of energy, enthusiasm, and shared joy. The viewer is invited to connect emotionally with the depicted individuals and to



associate those positive emotions with Sterling Bank. The inclusion of the young man cultivating in the background suggests a sense of hard work and dedication, reinforcing the idea of the bank supporting entrepreneurial efforts. The engagement of the individuals in different activities also implies collaboration and a sense of community among youth entrepreneurs.

**Compositional meaning:** Regarding the compositional meaning, the arrangement of visual elements in the advertisement conveys important messages. The use of colours, such as the red and white logos at the top right of the image, draws attention and reinforces the association with Sterling Bank. The positioning of the text at the top and beneath the image guides the viewers' reading path and emphasises the key messages related to youth entrepreneurship and agricultural development. The presence of the website address below the picture provides a clear call to action and directs interested individuals to a specific online platform for more information. These compositional choices aim to capture attention, convey positive emotions, and emphasise the bank's commitment to empowering young entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector.

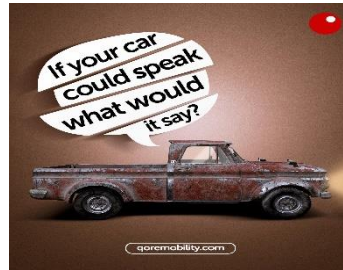


Fig. 16

The main participant in the above image is an old rusty brown pick-up van with the quote "If your car could speak what would it say?" presented in a comic balloon, suggesting that this is a hypothetical question being posed to the viewer. This advert presents Sterling Bank as a means that can aid in changing cars.

**Representational meaning:** This represents a vehicle that has been in use for a significant period and is now worn out. The rusty brown colour of the van further emphasises its aged and worn-out appearance.

**Interactional meaning:** a) Gaze: The van is portrayed in a thoughtful, introspective manner as if it is contemplating the question posed to the viewer. This creates a sense of interaction between the van and the viewer. b) Engagement: By posing a question in the image, the viewer is encouraged to actively think about their own car's perspective, thereby engaging with the advertisement.

**Compositional meaning:** a) Placement: The van is positioned prominently in the centre of the image, taking up a significant portion of the frame. This indicates that it is the main focus of the advertisement. b) Size: The large size of the van emphasises its presence and significance within the image. c) Background: The use of a plain, neutral background allows the viewer to focus solely on the van and the question being asked, without any additional distractions.

## Conclusion

This study has examined Sterling Bank and Peak Milk adverts on Facebook utilising Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Design analytical tools in order to identify how visual and verbal elements interplay in these adverts to persuade the viewers. This has revealed that linguistic elements, colours, participant's gaze, gestures, distance and angles play a crucial role in enhancing the persuasive elements. The use of cultural and significant religious affiliations also enhances the producers' interaction with their targeted audience. Peak Milk advertisements utilise more motivational expressions, symbols and colours which is the compositional meaning while Sterling Bank uses more of participants, gestures, gaze and distance in their adverts which is the interactional meaning.

This Study establishes that Sterling Bank and Peak Milk make use of multimodal elements in their advertisements to create strategic advertisements based on the shared values of the target viewers to make the viewers feel loved and involved. These elements in advertising strategies significantly impact the success of marketing campaigns and effectively persuade the target audience. The findings of this analysis contribute to a deeper understanding of how visuals and writings collaborate to create meaning and convey social relationships in visual communication. The insights gained from this study help to expand and refine Kress and van Leeuwen's theory of Visual Grammar Design and contribute to the broader field of visual social semiotics.

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