Marketization and Higher Education Branding at NAU: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Peter Oyewole Makinde

Abstract

This study investigates how Nnamdi Azikiwe University has been involved in the marketization and branding of higher education. The institutionalisation of policies of marketisation of vision, values, and international excellence has transformed the culture of academic life. This process has been shown to turn higher education into a more adaptable and efficient institution by allowing the expansion of the market into lecture halls; providing better value for money and ensuring that the university sector becomes more efficient and more responsive to the needs of students, parents, and society. Given the foregoing, this study investigates how higher institutions, and in this case Nnamdi Azikiwe University, uses visual and verbal semiotics to re-design their identities to distinguish themselves through marketisation and branding from other institutions of higher learning. Using Multimodal Discourse Analysis, the study shows how NAU employs meaning-making resources to achieve its visibility locally and globally. The study employs a qualitative research design. Data on pictures of UNIZIK ID Card lanyards, memorabilia, logo, NAU landscape and website were selected for analysis. Finding shows that NAU has a strong brand identity as a marketing strategy for logos, images, words, and slogans: Project200, as semiotic resources for projecting herself through marketization and branding. Prominent among the branding tools are Projector200's mission/vision, remodelling of the Unizik website

for global visibility. In this way, Nnamdi Azikiwe University has, more than in previous years, achieved more global and local visibility via its use of visual representation and online digitization.

Keywords: Marketization, branding, higher education, semiotic resources, multimodality, NAU

1)   Introduction

As part of the efforts to achieve global and local visibility and meet the target of becoming one of the top best institutions globally, academic institutions now present themselves as desirable institutions via the institutionalization of marketization policies. Higher education, which was initially a government-supported service, has entered the marketplace. It is now being placed on a market scale as a commodity branded and economically driven by market ideology. As Furedi (2011), Brown (2015), Foskett, Saunton and Morrish (2011) note, the institutionalization of policies of marketization of vision, values, and international excellence, which constitute the 'products' sold to students, has transformed the culture of academic life. Advocates of marketization have argued that by expanding the market into the lecture hall, higher education will become a more flexible and efficient institution, providing better value for money, and ensuring that the university sector becomes more efficient and responsive to the needs of society, the economy, students, and parents (Furedi, 2011).

According to Mafofo and Banda (2014), academic institutions in many developing countries are increasingly working hard to position themselves as desirable institutions that are visible globally. This could be accomplished through higher education marketization and branding, an attempt to marketize higher

education by balancing the demand and supply of student education, academic research, and other university activities through the price mechanism (Brown, 2015).

In support of the preceding, Shahnaz and Qadir (2020) assert that being identified by something successful is an innate nature of people because association with a less successful or critical to marketing strategies (Watkins & Gonzenbach, 2013). Thus, for any higher education institution to establish a strong brand identity, more concrete evidence must be provided through images, logos, words, and slogans (Hoang & Rojas-Lizana, 2015). This study examines the marketization and branding strategy adopted by Nnamdi Azikiwe University, the resources employed, and how these resources have helped to improve the students' consumption practices. It provides answers to the questions: 1) What forms of transformation are being put in place by NAU in the institutionalization of the policies of marketization and branding of higher education? 2) In what ways does the University present herself as a desirable institution to be globally visible? 3) What meaning-making resources are NAU employed to achieve her visibility locally and globally? 4) How do the above resources enhance the perception/image of both the staff and students?

2)   Literature Review

Marketization of higher education

A market is a means of social coordination whereby the supply and demand for a good or service are balanced through the price mechanism. In the words of Brown (2015), marketization is an attempt to put the provision of higher education on a market basis,

where the demand and supply of student education, academic research and other university activities are balanced through the price mechanism. In relation to student education, Brown (2015) lists six main features of a 'pure' market as *one that has legally autonomous institutions*; with *little or no regulation of market entry*, *no regulatory limits on the prices charged (fees) or the numbers enrolled*; the *cost of teaching met entirely through fees* which would approximate to average costs; *the cost of fees met from users' (students and their families) own resources*; and *users would decide what, where and how to study based on adequate (valid, reliable and accessible) information about the price, quality and availability of relevant subjects, programmes and providers.* These features play critical roles in recognizing the marketization of higher education as crucial indicators of institutional autonomy and competition.

Furedi (2011), in his discussion on the marketization of higher education and the student as a consumer, posits that "the project of marketization represents the attempt to commodify academic education". *Commodification* here from the lenses of resemiotisation refers to the transformation of academic education in the form of goods, services, ideas, and knowledge into economic values (Maloney, 2015; Wilsterman, 2008; Appadurai, 2005). Furedi (2011) stresses further that marketization is specifically oriented towards the transformation of what is an abstract, intangible, non-material and relational experience into a visible, quantifiable and instrumentally driven process. To Furedi, the various rituals of commodification, such as quality control, auditing and ranking performance, quantifying students' experience and constructing league tables within higher learning institutions, are performative accomplishments. Attempts to endow these rituals

with symbolic significance are promoted through branding and mission statements.

A number of studies on marketing activity in universities (Smith *et al*., 1995; Foskett, 2011) show that although many universities engage in marketing, comparatively few are organized in an intensely professional way, using professionally qualified marketing staff, and operating at the strategic core of the university. In many western countries, the marketization of higher institutions is achieved through numerous approaches. In US, UK, Germany, Canada and China, for instance, there is an introduction of scholarships for national and international students. Several funding opportunities are always available for doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships. For instance, Germany introduced the Excellence Initiative programme organized by the German Research Council and the German Council of Science and Humanities to promote outstanding science and research and raise its visibility in the international scientific community.

The Universities' Grants Committee (UGC) was established in the United Kingdom in 1917. This Committee is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that government funding is provided for universities for teaching and research by students and staff (Foskett, 2011). Researches on higher education choice (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown 2001; Reay *et al*. 2005) indicate how students choose within limited market arenas that are sometimes geographically specific but more often are determined by perceived status and market value. As Brown (2011) notes, some students, for example, will choose from teaching-led institutions offering low entry grades, while others will choose from research-led, high-entry standards universities. However, these groups of choosers are largely confined to their chosen market or 'circuit of universities'.

Elaborating on the marketization of higher education, Scott (1996: 22) has indicated that "in ... higher education there is a diversity of providers . . . [but] the marketplace is highly segmented with the result that effective competition between them is much reduced". The question now is how has Nnamdi Azikiwe University been able to project the institution through marketization; what strategies are employed to achieve this? Borrowing from the lens of Brown (2015); what attempts have been put in place by NAU in the provision of her institution on a market basis, where the demand and supply of student education, academic research and other university activities are balanced; and what kinds of meaning-making resources are employed by NAU to achieve her visibility locally and globally.

3)   **Theoretical Basis for the Study**

Studies have shown that there is a growing body of research in Nigeria that employ systemic functional linguistics, social semiotic, multimodality as well as multisemiotic analysis to investigate corpora of different categories (Nweze, I.M. 2020; Adegbola, Ogunnaike, & Ogbari, 2021; Makinde, 2023a; Edun & Onipede, 2023; Makinde & Odili, 2023; & Makinde, 2024). This by implication shows the importance of theoretical frameworks of these nature as tools for linguistic analysis. Therefore, this study is theoretically framed around "multimodal discourse analysis" by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, 2020). The idea of Visual Social Semiotics by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) fits well with the aim and focus of the present study as it involves how Nnamdi Azikiwe University employed multiple modes in branding and marketing herself for global academic visibility. It consists of how

different modes are employed in the meaning-making process. O'Halloran (2011) sees this as a "multimodal semiotics analysis". Multimodality, in this sense, does not give preference to language over the image but shows how the two rely on each other in meaning-making. The multimodal approach works in a way that enables the analyses of the meaning of multiple semiotics modes adopted in the marketization and branding of NAU as shown in the branded ID Card lanyards, memorabilia as artifacts, logo and NAU's beautiful gate route landscape as well as Unizik website for online visibility on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Website. Multi-semiotic practice, in its analyses of representations recognition to semiotics other than language, links the potential of the different semiotics deployed to how they affect (enable and constrain) interaction and the formation of subjectivity (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996 and 2006).

Social semiotics investigates the meaning-making process to demonstrate how meaning is constructed in social actions and contexts (van Leeuwen, 2006). Social semiotics, therefore, is a social theory about meaning and meaning-making in (inter-) action; it examines the varieties of ways texts can be made. Makinde and Mgbodi (2022) see social semiotics as a branch of linguistics that studies signifying human practices in specific social and cultural contexts and explains meaning-making as a social practice. In social semiotics, texts are seen as multimodal complexes constituted by more than one mode. Modes are the material resources for the production and materialization of signs. Therefore, writing, speech, gesture, music, dance, and layouts are modes or material resources for making meaning evident. Under a social semiotic perspective, meaning is the outcome of a response to the prompt of a social agent (the rhetor) whose meanings are given semiotic articulation by a designer and made material by a producer. The

rhetor/designer/producer orchestrates modes and other nonmaterial semiotic resources to produce texts-as-prompts, motivated by the interest of the rhetor, in a given moment and environment. When making a text, the designer carefully assesses the environment. Most frequently, these three roles/positions are merged in one person. This study is, thus, theorized around a Multi-Semiotic Discourse Analysis by incorporating social semiotics and multimodality. Therefore, through Multi-Semiotic Discourse Analysis (MDA) lenses, the study investigates how NAU employs meaning-making resources to achieve its visibility locally and globally.

4)   Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design. Data on pictures/images of UNIZIK ID Card lanyards, memorabilia as artefacts, logo and NAU landscape as well as Unizik website for online visibility on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Website are purposefully selected for analysis. Data for the study were also drawn from 15 participants. Participants for the study were purposefully selected from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, which constitutes the study site. The study used open-ended interviews and pictures/images from the study site for data collection. The participants, comprised of 5 members of staff and 10 students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, were consulted for their views on how Nnamdi Azikiwe University has been involved in the marketization and branding of higher education. The aim here is to sensor the staff and students' perception on the implication of branding ideologies employed by the university, and how such is received by the university community.

5)   Discussion

Marketization and branding of higher education: NAU as a world class university

In this present era, higher education, which was initially a government-supported service, has entered the marketplace. Higher education service is now being placed on a market scale as a commodity branded and economically driven by market ideology. This has motivated the students to perceive higher education as a means of gaining meaningful employment, professional growth, and social status in life. Given the foregoing, Gupta (2018) posits that higher education systems worldwide are witnessing the growing role of commercial entities in certain aspects of teaching and learning. This implies that university education can only survive, develop and become more efficient if it operates on strictly market principles and adopts a strategic orientation towards the labour market. In the wake of creating awareness about the visibility of higher institutions through marketization and branding, NAU is not left out in developing itself as a brand. This has been achieved through a variety of means. The first step is remodelling the UNIZIK Website for increased online visibility.

Analysis 1: Remodelling of the UNIZIK website for online visibility

Nnamdi Azikiwe University remodelled its website for online visibility and interaction by creating staff and students' sections and places where visitors can navigate through the website to confirm membership of students and staff of the University. The

figures below represent the online visibility of Nnamdi Azikiwe University on various social media platforms.
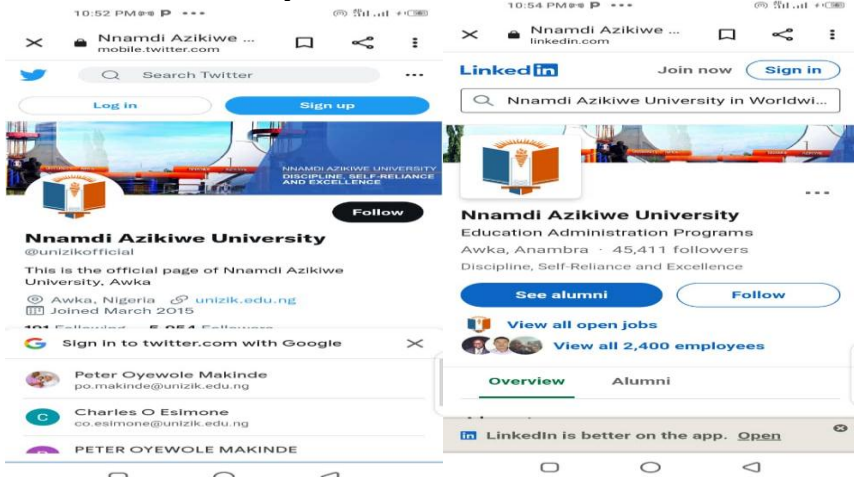
I. NAU online visibility

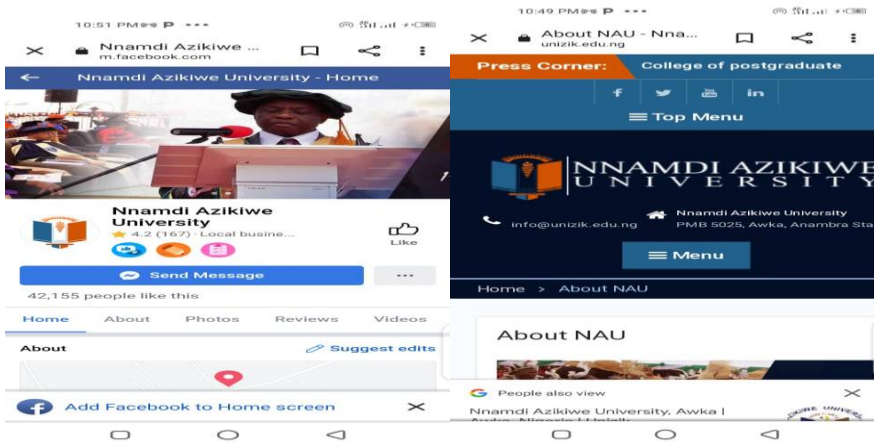**Fig. 1a** Showing NAU on Twitter **Fig. 1b** Showing NAU on LinkedIn

Fig. 1c Showing NAU on Facebook   **Fig. 1d** Showing NAU Website

Remodelling the Unizik website for online visibility on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Website reflecting NAU's availability on all social media platforms, is, in Halliday and Hasan's (1985) view, "woven together at ideational, interpersonal relations and textual levels" via branding. This reflects Halliday and Hasan's (1985) view on meta-function, which is composed of internally organized systems through which meanings are woven together at ideational, interpersonal, and textual levels. In this sense, NAU is presented as a desirable institution in order to be visible globally. Here, the official website is www.unzik.edu.ng, with the PMB 5025 displaying the physical site of the University located at Awka in Anambra State, with Prof. Charles Esimone as the Vice-Chancellor.

Here, visitors can navigate, by way of consumption, through the website to confirm the membership of students and staff of the University. In this way, different modes: text, images and logo are woven together to convey the online and global visibility of the University. It is necessary to point out here that texts in social semiotics are seen as multimodal complexes constituted by more than one mode. Writing, speech, gesture, music, dance, and layout constitute the modes, the material resources for making meaning evident.

Modes are the material resources for the production and materialization of signs. The distinctness of the modes is the effect, jointly, of the (usually) different materiality of modes and the distinctive social shaping of each mode, over often long periods, in constant social (inter-) action. In this sense, upgrading the NAU website, which is now in line with the Webometric ranking criteria, has witnessed a lot of remodelling, repurposing, re-semiotizing, and re-invigoration with a lot of material resources in order to make meaning more evident for the global world's attention.

The visibility of NAU on Twitter and LinkedIn is depicted in Figs. 1a and 1b above. As Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) noted, elements in an image can be organized as "Ideal" and "Real". The "Real" is often positioned at the bottom of the picture, while the "Ideal" is presented at the top. In the Figs. 1a and 1b above, NAU's beautiful gate is showcased as one of the multimodal elements. Therefore, the images are positioned at the top to reflect Kress and van Leeuwen's (2020) view of bottom-top positioning. At the same time, other textual modes, such as "This is the official page of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka" and 'Education Administration Programme", among others, elaborate more on the online visibility. Fig. 1c depicts NAU's visibility on Facebook. The image of the University's Vice-Chancellor is projected here. The Vice-Chancellor is seen addressing the University community at the institution's auditorium. Fig. 1d is a representation of NAU on the institution's website.

Analysis 2: Colour representation of ID card lanyards reflecting Unizik colours – blue, red and white

Figures 2a, 2b and 2c below are a colourful representation of Unizik ID Card Lanyards for staff and students. These are shown in different colours to depict Unizik colours: blue, red and white.

I. NAU ID card lanyards

Figure 2a: NAU ID Card Lanyards (in Ash)

Figure 2b: NAU ID Card Lanyards (in Blue)

Figure 2c: NAU ID Card Lanyards (in Red)

In Fig. 2a-c, we are presented with NAU ID card lanyards with simple but attractive artistic designs, legible font sizes and colours. Here, we have the juxtaposition of the different colours representing NAU's identity. The numbers of colours in the UNIZIK Logo are purposefully and carefully selected and used interchangeably to give the different ID Card Lanyards a colourful beautification in the ongoing branding and marketization of Unizik identity in order to project the global visibility of the institution. Furthermore, the use of white colour in the writes up "Nnamdi Azikiwe University" and its representation as "D GIANT" with the red and blue background of the ID Card Lanyards makes the name clearer and more catching for the viewers. The names "Nnamdi Azikiwe University" and "D GIANT" are unique and synonymously related, depicting NAU as a Giant (Great Institution). This is in reflection of the person whom NAU is named after, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Zik of Africa.

Analysis 3: Memorabilia as artefacts

The data below present the various branded materials that showcase UNIZIK's identity and, by extension, serve as semiotic resources for branding and marketing Nnamdi Azikiwe University to local and global viewers.

Memorabilia are artefacts

Figure 3: **Showing branded T-Shirts and Caps, Ties, PhD award Plaques**

Fig. 4: **Showing NAU ID card lanyards, bags, branded diary and other memorabilia**

Memorabilia are artefacts that reflect Unizik through University Logos and beautification items such as **branded T-Shirts and Caps, Ties, ID Card Lanyards, PhD award Plaques,** and **bags**. These items speak volumes about Unizik's branding and marketization. Linguistically, NAU's Logo and name are being reused, re-purposed, and resemiotized to aid in projecting the institution for global visibility. In this way, linguistic elements via the use of logos, images, text and other artefacts serve as semiotic resources employed to enhance the perception/image of both staff and students as well as for the global visibility of the institution.

Analysis 4: Unizik logo as a semiotic resource for branding

Figs 5a and b below project Nnamdi Azikiwe University's logo and other materiality that serve as meaning-making resources used for analysis in this study. The second data represents the institution's entrance called the "Beautiful Gate".

Fig. 5a: Showing NAU Logo   **Fig. 5b: Showing NAU Beautiful Gate**

Unizik Logo is repurposed at the entrance of the University. The Gate is called "the Beautiful Gate" and is indeed beautiful. It is part of an ongoing digitalization process that projects Unizik as a brand. In the Gate are reflections of different semiotic resources repurposed in different positions depicting that this is an entrance to an institution of higher learning. First and foremost, books of different shapes and sizes with NAU colours: blue, white and red, and the logo are remediated. Also, behind the 'books' Gate is a tower representing ivory tower of knowledge. On the 'Books' Gate is the inscription **NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA**, written in capital letters and with white colour (for that matter), all foregrounding NAU as the Centre of Academic Excellence position at Awka. The linguistic landscape of the University is portrayed in the second image captured above. Reference is also made to Scollon and Scollon's (2003) geosemiotics: place semiotics. Geosemiotics reflects the built environment of the Beautiful Gate with its 'natural' landscape portraying the entrance to the citadel of learning within which the action of a search for discipline, self-reliance and excellence takes place, as shown in Figure 6 below. The beautiful landscape of the University entrance supports the Linguistic Landscape projecting the two entrances to the University community.

Analysis 5: Linguistic landscape of NAU as a university

As part of the ongoing representation of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Fig. 6 below shows the linguistic landscape of the University with its beautiful terrain and environment.

Figure 6: Showing Unizik linguistic landscape

Fig. 6 above presents a semiotic landscape of Nnamdi Azikiwe University with such affordances as "Beautiful Gate", which houses the University logo, name, colours, serene environment with green grass, aesthetic arena with other artefacts such as visuals of books, a giant image of a reading student at the entrance of the gate, and tower. All of these contribute to the semiotic landscape, projecting Nnamdi Azikiwe University as a blessing to the surround communities where the institution is situated.

In the NAU Logo in Fig. 6 above, the name "Nnamdi Azikiwe University" implies that it is a tertiary institution located in

the Eastern part of Nigeria, Awka, Anambra State. It was named after the first President of Nigeria, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe. The two rectangular-shaped items in the institution's logo encode an open book. A torch is seen placed at the edge of the book, in between the pages of the book. The torch's flames are ideologically positioned above the book to shine on the opened book. There is a repurposing/resemiotization of the various modes used in the logo. The book signifies education; the torch signifies the thrive to achieve success, while the flame is the success achieved, all combined to project NAU as a brand.

The institution's motto encodes that one has to be disciplined and self-reliant to achieve excellence. The motto is strategically positioned in different colours to portray Unizik as a brand. The blue cover is *disciplined*, which shows that disciplining oneself is not easy; that is why it is placed on a dark colour; *self-reliance* on a white colour is placed on an opened book. This encodes that self-reliance in academics is a *panacea* to (achieving) academic excellence. *Excellence* in a bright colour encodes that a bright future awaits anyone with academic excellence.

Analysis 6: The most famous slogan "Project200"

Figures 7a and 7b below present data on "Project200". The term is the most famous slogan used by the present Vice-Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, as this constitutes part of his mission statement for the University.

Fig. 7a Showing NAU Project200's Fig. 7b Showing Project200's Handbook
Frame   cover

Fig. 7a-b above represent Unizik Project200's frame and handbook with such affordances as visual representation of Project200, the *ACADA* vision and the image of the Vice-Chancellor. The most famous slogan used by the students and staff of Nnamdi Azikiwe University is titled 'Project200'. The slogan goes viral during the new students' orientation and matriculation ceremonies. The popularity of this project usually pushes one to research to come up with the true meaning. Project200, according to the school authority, is a dream walking towards the reality of making the school rise to the position of being rated amongst the first 200 universities in the world. The university authority is working tirelessly towards the actualization of this dream which

covers the institution's academic, social, religious and infrastructural aspects come 2025. As identified by the current Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University in his blueprint for moving the University forward, one of the Visions of the University is to be "***a world class University that is engaged in the highest standard of excellence in all aspects of teaching, research and service***". This Vision, he says, is yet to be fully realized. Also, a comprehensive review of the University's current *Academic Brief* from 2008/2009 - 2017/2018 and the five-year Strategic Plan of 2008-2013 revealed some gaps that need to be filled if the University's original Vision is to be fulfilled.

The slogan 'Project200' has been repurposed for easy execution by the visionary Vice-Chancellor. In this way, in an attempt to actualize the dream of making the University rise to the position of being rated among the first 200 universities in the world, the slogan has been translated into an image for a virtual purpose. The image and text (Nnamdi Azikiwe University) are foregrounded in the data above, with *Project200* at the centre. Below *Project200* are different modes representing the means of achieving the mission statement. Both texts and images are purposefully used in the five modes under *Project200* to project NAU as a brand to be identified with globally.

Research, as resemiotized in the image above, indicates laboratory experiment which outputs is expected to bring about *innovation*; the "innovation" and the virtual image "bulb" representing lightening/illuminating show the discovery of new things. Here, "innovation" and the virtual image "bulb" are synonymous related. This, in turn, enhances academic excellence representing the production of competitive and marketable graduands. This is further followed by Administrative reform, which

entails the reinvention of entrenched efficiency via the use of technology and training. The result of this is the *community service* which the University, surrounding communities and the nation at large stand to benefit from. In addition, Fig. 7b above is birthed by the Vice-Chancellor's vision and mission statement. This is further elaborated in the analysis of the ACADA mission statement below.

Analysis 7: A - Academic Excellence; C – Community Service;
A – Administrative Reforms; D – Discipline; and
A – Advancements (*ACADA)*

Given the foregoing, the Vice-Chancellor conveyed his plan to bring to birth the full realization of Nnamdi Azikiwe University's original Vision by consciously filling the gaps identified in accomplishing her core mandates. The Vice-Chancellor proposed the "ACADA" Mission/Vision to achieve this. The acronym, *ACADA*, stands for A - Academic Excellence; C – Community Service; A – Administrative Reforms; D – Discipline; and A – Advancements. This is in line with Furedi's (2011) view when he posits that "the project of marketization represents the attempt to commodify academic education". What this entails is that all our academic activities, i.e. research and innovations, need to be transformed into products for University and University community benefits and consumption. This is achievable by transforming academic education into goods, services, ideas, and knowledge into economic values (Appadurai, 2005; Wilsterman, 2008; Maloney, 2015).

From a multimodal perspective, Fig. 7b, representing the cover page of *Project200 Handbook*, is compositionally presented

in a top-down reading direction, framed into three segments with the topmost presenting us with Unizik logo and "NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY" below the logo. These affordances are situated on a mixture of skylike colours which constitutes part of the university's brand identity. The next frame, which is positioned at the nucleus of the handbook cover houses such affordances as visuals of ACADA, artistic design of the title of the book with a white background reflecting the entire affordances which constitute the vision of the Vice-Chancellor. In the last frame is the name and image of the Vice-Chancellor with the image reflecting a vector connector with the frame housing the *ACADA* vision. The image of the VC is strategically positioned at the right-hand side of the frame displaying the man with the vision of making Unizik one of the top two hundred universities globally. Here, the image is presented to offer the viewers information as he is positioned gazing directly at the viewers, inviting them to join in building Unizik to achieve that fit of making the institution one of the top best universities globally. Most of these affordances are also made *salience* via colour, font sizes, visuals and spatial positioning. Of a truth, the University has indeed improved in its global recognition as indicated in universities global ranking.

6) Summary of Findings and Conclusion

The study shows that Nnamdi Azikiwe University is not left out in the institutionalization of policies of marketization of vision, values, and international excellence, which constitute the 'products' sold to students. Both staff and students are at par with the ongoing innovation in research and academic and administrative reforms of the University. For this purpose, a lot of meaning-making

resources have been employed in the current process of projecting the University as one of the best 200 universities in the world. Prominent among the branding tools are Projector200's mission/vision, remodelling of the Unizik website for global visibility, and using various memorabilia as presented under discussion of findings. Nnamdi Azikiwe University has, more than in previous years achieved more global and local visibility via its use of visual representation and online digitization. Findings from the study further show that NAU has a strong brand identity as marketing strategies in terms of logos, images, words and slogans, which serve as semiotic tools for projecting herself through marketization and branding. Therefore, staff and students of NAU, including friends of the University, are all happy to be part of these ongoing branding processes as they are being sought after in grants, collaborations and workshops. Our staff and students are now being reckoned with in the global market both in the academic arena, international collaboration and sports. As shown in the discussion on marketization and branding of higher education, all the semiotic resources elaborated here serve as part of the meaning-making processes that help enhance the perception/image of both staff and students of NAU.

References

Appadurai, Arjun. 2005. Diversity and disciplinarity as cultural artefacts. *Race, identity, and representation in education*, 427-438.

Brown, Roger. (ed.) 2010. *Higher education and the market*. New York and London: Routledge.

Esimone, Charles Okechukwu. 2020. *Project200*. Awka: Amaka Dreams Ltd.

Foskett, Nick H. 2010. 'Global markets, national challenges, local strategies; the strategic challenge of internationalisation', in Felix Maringe and Nick H. Foskett (eds). *Globalisation and Internationalisation in Higher Education: Theoretical, Strategic and Management Perspectives*. London: Continuum Press.

Foskett, Nick (ed.) 1996. "Markets in post-compulsory education" in *Markets in Education: policy and practice* – Volume 2: Southampton: Centre for Research in Education Marketing, University of Southampton.

Foskett, Nick. 2011. "Markets, government, funding and the marketisation of UK higher education" in Molesworth Mike, Richard Scullion and Elizabeth Nixon (Eds.) 2011. *The Marketisation of Higher Education and the Student as Consumer*. New York: Routledge.

Furedi, Frank. 2010. "Introduction to the marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer." *The marketisation of higher education and the student as consumer*. Routledge, 15-22.

Gupta, Tania. 2018. The marketisation of higher education. *International Journal of Recent Research Aspects*, *5*(3), 1-8.

Hoang, Thi Van Yen, and Isolda Rojas-Lizana. 2015. Promotional discourse in the websites of two Australian universities: A discourse analytic approach. *Cogent Education*, *2*(1), 1011488.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo Van Leeuwen. 1996. Reading images: The grammar of visual design. *Language and Literature*, *8*(2), 163-178.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo Van Leeuwen. 2002. Colour as a semiotic mode: notes for a grammar of colour. *Visual communication*, *1*(3), 343-368.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo Van Leeuwen. 2020. *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. Routledge.

Mafofo, Lynn and Banda, Felix. 2014. "Accentuating institutional brands: A multimodal analysis of the homepages of selected South African universities". *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, 32(4), 417 – 432.

Makinde, Peter Oyewole and Lynda Uju Mgbodi. 2022. "A Social Semiotic Discourse Analysis of Gender Expressions in Selected Nigerian Newspapers". *Language in India*, *22*(5), 175-189.

Makinde, Peter Oyewole and Peace Odili. 2023. A social semiotic analysis of selected basic pupils' English textbooks in Awka. *International Journal of Systemic Functional Linguistics,* 6(2), 62-69.

Makinde, Peter Oyewole. 2023. Visual representation of ASUU strikes in Nigeria: A semiotic analysis of cartoons in selected Nigerian newspapers. *Language and Semiotic Studies*, 9(2), 242-262.

Makinde, Peter Oyewole. 2024. A multimodal metaphorical representation of selected political cartoons in Nigeria. In press.

O'Halloran, Kay L. 2008. Systemic functional-multimodal discourse analysis (SF-MDA): Constructing ideational meaning using language and visual imagery. *Visual communication*, *7*(4), 443-475.

O'Halloran, Kay L. 2011. Multimodal discourse analysis. *Continuum companion to discourse analysis*, *120137*.

Reay, Diane, Miriam E. David, and Stephen J. Ball. 2005. *Degrees of choice: Class, race, gender and higher education*. Trentham Books.

Scollon, Ron and Suzanne Wong Scollon, 2003. *Discourse in place: language in the material World.* London: Routledge.

Scott, Peter. 1996. "Markets in post-compulsory education – rhetoric, policy and structure", in Nick. H. Foskett (ed.) *Markets in Education: Policy and Practice* – Volume 2. Southampton: Centre for Research in Education Marketing, University of Southampton.

Scott, Peter. (ed.) 1998. *The Globalisation of Higher Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Shahnaz, Ambreen, and Samina Amin Qadir. 2020. Branding the Higher Education: Identity Construction of Universities through Logos, Mottos and Slogans. *J. Soc. Sci. Res*, *8*, 48-71.

van Leeuwen, Theo. 2006. Towards a semiotics of typography. *Information Design Journal*, *14*(2), 139-155.

van Leeuwen, Theo. 2015. 21 Multimodality. *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 447.

Watkins, Brandi, and William J. Gonzenbach. 2013. Assessing university brand personality of university academic and

athletic logos. In *American Academy of Advertising. Conference. Proceedings (Online)*, 187.

Williams, Gareth. 1995. 'The "marketisation" of higher education: reforms and potential reforms in higher education finance', in Dill, David D., and Barbara Sporn (eds). *Patterns of Social Demand and University Reform: Through a Glass Darkly*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Wilsterman, James M. 2008. The human commodity. *The Harvard Crimson, vol. June*, *4*.

Peter Oyewole Makinde
Department of Linguistics,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.
po.makinde@unizik.edu.ng