A Semiotic Analysis of Lecturers Labour Protest Discourses in Kenya

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Abstract:  
Protesting or dissent has been a common phenomenon globally for many years and most countries worldwide have experienced at least one type of protest. Kenya has not been left out and was badly hit in 2017 where there were numerous political and labour protests. This paper looks at the semiotic resources that were used in public university lecturers' strikes in the genres of protest and their underlying meaning. Critical Discourse Analysis theoretical framework was used to analyse data using Fairclough’s three-dimension approach and Kress and Van Leeuwen’s approach to Multimodal Discourse Analysis. Four genres of protest namely: slogans, placards, press conferences and banners were studied. Data was collected by downloading information from Kenya’s Daily Nation, the Standard’s news print media websites, Youtube, National Television and Citizen TV stations. 84 texts were purposively sampled and analysed descriptively. The findings of the study revealed that genres of protest are created using both linguistic and semiotic resources. Protestors made use of semiotic resources mainly framing, salience and information value to communicate to relevant stakeholders in the protest. Semiotic resources helped to enhance the linguistic resources hence making lecturers’ communication powerful.

Keywords: Genres, slogans, placards, banners discourse analysis

1. Introduction  
Protesting is also referred to as dissent. Globally, protests have been seen to be the trend of many countries. Carothers & Young (2015) in a study found out that between the 1980s and 1990s the number of strikes worldwide dropped significantly however from the year 2000, the number of strikes went up again. So bad was it that in 2010 there were 180,000 strikes in China alone. Africa was not spared either as in 2011 the Middle East and North Africa had a swell of strikes that led to revolutions in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia. The year 2011 has often been referred to as a year of revolution in the Middle East and North Africa. On May 15 2011, thousands of protestors occupied space in La Puerta Del Sol in Madrid City in Spain. This protest is known as 15-M movement where 15 refers to the date and M refers to the month when the march took place. Participants of this protest got to be nicknamed by the media as Indignados which means the ‘outraged’. This was because it was believed that the protestors were emotional rather than representing national issues. The movement raised issues on high levels of unemployment, increased numbers of foreclosures, large reduction on money spent on education, research and health. The indignados targeted three main groups who were politicians, bankers and international investors who were accused of mishandling public funds which was believed to have led to unemployment, cuts of public services (Castaneda, 2014).

The trend of protests growing alarmingly is also shown in Fredrich Eibert Foundation report by Carother and Young (2015) where between the first half of 2013 and 2016, the number of strikes doubled. In 2018 in France, there arose the Yellow Vest protest movement. This was a protest against gas prices and high taxation in France. They demanded freezing of the planned gas tax, called for the president to resign and for parliament to be dissolved. This Yellow Vest movement spread to other countries of the world such as Belgium, Lebanon, Canada, Israel, Netherlands and Taiwan. The Government of Kenya too was not spared either following the number of protests in the country. In 2017, the government of Kenya was faced with both political and economic strikes in form of labour strikes. There was a major political unrest in the country when presidential elections were nullified but this was towards the end of the year. There were numerous labour protests throughout the year protestors taking to the streets to demonstrate became the order of the day. This study was concerned with labour protests in Kenya in 2017. Some of the strikes that took place in 2017 include: The doctors’ strike which took place from December 5th 2016 and spilled over to 14th March 2017, the nurse's
A strike that took place from June 2017 to November 2017 which took five straight months (Odongo, 2017). Clinical officers' strike in September 2017 (Nona, 2017) the tea workers strike in October 2017 (Tanu, 2017). Kenya Airways Industrial strike in November 2017 was by engineers and technical assistants (Reutters, 2017). The public university lecturers went on strike three times in 2017. The first time was in January 2017 from 19th January to 9th March which was 54 days (Muchiri, 2017). The second strike was in July 2017 from 3rd July to 18th July which was two weeks long (Majenga, 2017). The third strike was from 1st November 2017 to 9th December 2017 (Oduor, 2017) which was 38 days long. For designated employees, striking became the rule rather than the norm (Dahir, 2017) as these protests took place throughout the year.

Learning in public universities almost came to a standstill in Kenya in 2017. The Public University lecturers are registered under the trade union University Academic Staff Union. The non-teaching staff such as the technical staff are registered under the Kenya University Staff Union (KUSU) while the subordinate staff such as security staff and cleaners are registered under the Kenya Union of Domestic Hotels Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied workers (KUDEIHA). All university staff are registered under a union depending on their roles at the university. The trade unions on behalf of the workers sign a collective bargaining agreement every five years. The government who is the employer of Public University staff enters into an agreement through a collective bargaining agreement. In this study the 2013-2017 CBA that was agreed on between the unions and the government in 2012 had not been implemented by the year 2017 and was about to expire in July of the same year 2017. This meant that the public university lectures by the year 2017 were still earning salaries based on 2008-2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement. The other members of staff under KUSU and KUDEIHA joined the lecturers in the protests. This led to all university services getting paralyzed as the government had refused to get into any negotiation with the trade unions.

Whatever kind of strike protesters are engaged in they use different ways to communicate. These are often referred to as of resistance art or protest art and takes different types of forms such as: signs, posters, placards, demonstrations, wall paintings, graffiti and murals (Baker, 2015). Street art allows protestors to express their views when all other channels of communication fail. Street art is viewed as universal. Protest street art is not limited to particular users but is open to anyone who disagrees or is discontent with a regime or a particular course (Chafe, 1993). Street art gives an opportunity to protestors to vent their feelings, make their demands and in some instances even give solutions to the problems raised (Bowler, 2012).

Linguists have been keen to study the language used in protests whereby some have moved to investigate how protests are represented by the media with major focus being on civilian protests and political protests. Little attention however has been paid to the actual language used by the protestors themselves as well as the visual context and it is this gap that this study sets out to fill. The study sought to analyze the language that protestors use in protests often expressed in different protest genres.

This study set out to evaluate the semiotic resources in the lecturers’ labour protests and their underlying meanings in Kenya 2017.

Literature reviewed showed that strikes can be grouped into different categories such as Mongare and Marube (2012) have categorized strikes into four groups. These are: general strikes, stay-in/sit down/tool down/pen down, go-slow and others. Each of these categories has got its own characteristics as discussed. For general strikes, employees stay away from work during protest. No work is done and through staying away from work, the employees hope to push the employer to give in to their demands. These kinds of strikes are usually organized by trade unions and as such the workers do not fear victimization because such strikes are legal. A second type of strikes as outlined by Mongare and Marube (2012) are the stay-in also referred to as sit down, tool down or pen down strikes. In this type of strikes, the employees report to work as usual, sit down at their desks and do not do any work at all. Mongare and Marube (2012) identify a third type of strike where employees report to work but do not give maximum output as required. The effects are of cause that companies will make losses yet the workers have to be paid salaries/wages because they are physically present at work. Other forms of strikes are classified under number four which include hunger strikes, work to rule and sympathetic strikes. In hunger strikes, employees usually hang around their work place and refuse to eat until their employer meets their demands. In work to rule strikes, employees strictly stick to rules and regulations without flexibility. For example, if working hours are eight to five o’clock workers will not serve clients who have been on the queue for hours after five o’clock. Finally, there is the sympathetic strike where those who are not taking part in a strike support the strikers without necessarily actively taking part in the strike for example through funding the protestors (Mongare & Marube, 2012). This paper focused on lecturers’ strikes which fall under general strikes as defined by Mongare and Marube (2012) where the striking employees all kept away from work and were in full support of their trade union UASU. According to the Kenyan labour laws, the university academic staff was justified to protest as they were registered under UASU. The union had issued a seven-day strike notice as required by the law within which the government had time to respond to their grievances.

This paper was specifically concerned with the evaluation of semiotic resources in the lecturers’ labour protests and their underlying meanings. De Saussure (1966:57-58) defines semiotics as a ‘science that studies signs. A sign is anything that communicates meaning and is said to be made up of a signifier and the signified. Signifier refers to the physical representation of an item, theory or code. We can also say that the signifier is the form. The signified is the mental concept of the signifier which is also called the meaning. For example, in a picture of an orange, the orange is the sign made of the signifier which is the physical existence of the orange as this is what can be seen and the signified is what the orange represents that is, it is a fruit which is the mental concept. What we observe and what an object means both form the sign.
According to Halliday (1978), language fulfills three main functions namely: the ideation function, the interpersonal function and the textual meaning. Every sign says something about the world (ideation function), people's relation to each other (Interpersonal function) and it produces a stretched text (textual meaning). Borrowing from this, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) talks of visual grammar based on Halliday’s (1978) three main functions. Semiotics moves further from signs to the way that semiotic resources are produced and used. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), social semiotic resources are signifiers, observable actions and objects that have been drawn into the social domain of social communication. It is important to note that semiotic resources are not just restricted to speech, writing and picture making but also activities that can be carried out to mean different things. In visual grammar, the ideation function is referred to as the representational meaning; the interpersonal function is referred to as the interactive meaning while the textual function is referred to as the compositional meaning. This paper was interested in the interactive and representational meaning.

In the study, the semiotic resources that were studied were some genres of protests which were banners and slogans. The banners and slogans were of the written mode. Both the linguistic and nonlinguistic features were analysed. The textual representation was used to analyse the banners and slogans. Semiotic resources were analysed using multimodal discourse analysis by Van Leeuwen (2005). The study dealt with written resources that were language as a resource, image, typography, writing and layout and colour.

Some studies have been conducted on the use of semiotic resources in protests (Agbedo, 2012; Baker, 2015; Al Maseed, 2013 and Pereira, 2017). Agbedo (2012) studied the use of placards in protests in Nigeria against the withdrawal of the oil subsidy that the government had initially given to the people. Protestors went on the street to protest and they made use of placards to vent out their feelings and make their demands collectively. By using placards, they were able to challenge their government on poor leadership. Baker (2015) examined the rhetoric of street protest banners and slogans drawn from four different geographical regions and found that the slogans were in English purposely to address certain global issues such as election fraud. By using English, these slogans were likely to receive international viewing and support. In a similar study by Al Maseed (2013), the Egyptian revolution of 2011 was studied. Protestors made use of multilingual slogans to communicate to the rest of the world so as to solicit international support. Language is used as semiotic resource in these two studies. Pereira (2017) studied protesting genres in Brazilian protests of 2015 by looking at banners, body parts, placards, signs and digital texts. The study found protestes made use of semiotic resources such as colour, typogaphy, images and costumes to communicate their views. Few studies have been carried out on use of semiotic resources in labour discourse and it is this gap that this study set out to fill.

The study made use of two theories namely: Critical Discourse Analysis by Fairclough (1992), and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Van Leeuwen, 2005). Fairclough’s (1989, 1992 and 1995) approach to CDA makes use of a three-tier dimension of discourse known as the Three-Dimension Model of Discourse. Janks (1997) points out the three dimensions are: the text, the discursive practice and the social practice. The text is the object of analysis which can be verbal, written or both verbal and written. Discursive is the process by which the object is produced and received which can take either the writing/speaking/designing or reading/listening/viewing. The social practices are the socio-historical conditions that govern these processes. These dimensions require different types of analysis though they are interrelated. The second theory by Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2005) looks at the different modes that people use to communicate. Vorivilas, Karalis and Ravalis (2010) say that Multimodal Discourse Analysis looks at how multiple semiotic recourses are combined to produce or create particular kinds of meanings. It focuses on both theory and semiotic recourses and semantic expansion as semiotic choices combine in multimodal phenomenon (O’Halloran & Smith, 2010). People often combine elements from the language/s known to them to be understood. Protestors through the use of different genres of protest (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). Chaffe (1993) for example says that colour can be used to manipulate emotions. Colours parallel image and passion. Messages can further be intensified by shape, design and placement. Van Leeuwen (2004) adds that other types of visual communication include: colour, texture, movement, typography where letter forms and fonts are taken into consideration, boundaries and handwriting as well. This study was interested on how salience, framing and information value were presented by protestors.

2. Methodology

The study made use of qualitative descriptive research design. The design was chosen because the data collected was analyzed using words and no statistical tests were done. This study focused only on the University Academic Staff Union strikes carried out in 2017. The strikes were nationwide and these affected a total of 31 Public Universities. Included in the population is UASU at national level. This is because all the university chapters took instruction from the national level. The study had a target population of 768 texts of which 480 were placards (5 from each Chapter times 3 for the three different strikes), 96 were press conferences, 96 were banners and 96 were slogans (one from each group times 3 for the three strikes for each of the mentioned genres). Data was collected from three important dates which were the first day when each of the protests commenced which were 14/01/2017, 03/07/2017 and 31/10/2017. The study chose the three dates because these are the dates when the strikes started and the UASU leadership gave press conferences both nationally and at University Chapter levels.

The study concentrated on the industrial action of the University Academic Staff. The first one took place between 19th January and 3rd March 2017; the second one took place from July 3rd to 18th July 2017 while the third one took place from 31st October to 9th December 2017. The reason for choosing the lecturers strike was because the lecturers went on strike three times in one year and so raising alarm in the education sector and in the country at large. This study made use of several sampling techniques. Multilevel sampling (Oroduh, 2008; Kothari & Garg 2019) was used to select the...
universities that were used in the study. Out of the 31 public Universities that took place in the three strikes, a sample of eight universities which was 25% was used. The reason why multilevel sampling was chosen to enable the whole country could be represented.

The study made use of two genres namely: banners and slogans that were used in the protests. The two genres were chosen because they were used in complementary in the strike to give the protests more force and identity. Genres were selected through purposive sampling and in particular homogenous sampling (Kombo & Tromp, 2006) Asample size of 84 texts was studied.

Since this paper was interested in evaluating semiotic resources and the underlying meaning as used in the genres of protest, the messages were identified from the banners and the slogans. The semiotic features that were identified include: background colours used for the banners and slogans, the colour of writing used/type of writing that is handwritten or printed and type of framing. Frequency counts were done and tabulated. Interpretation was done based on information value, salience and framing as outlined by Van Leeuwen (2005) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). Since Critical Discourse Analysis is interested in the hidden meanings found in messages, this paper sought to find out whether there were any hidden meanings in the semiotic resources used that could not be understood by the ordinary viewer and sought to explain.

3. Findings and Discussion

This section analyses the Semiotic resources that were used by the protestors on Banners and slogans. The analysis of banners is done first and then followed by that of slogans used on the banners. Below are the banners that were used by different University Chapters. A total of 14 banners were found but only nine were analysed because some were repeatedly used in more than one strike. Table 1 below is a summary of features used on banners.

| University Chapter | font size | colour of background | colour used for writing | capitalization | other features | writing |
|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------|
| Kenyatta University B1, B2, B3 | Different font size used | White | Red, black, blue | All words capitalized | UASU Logo at the top centered | Neatly printed out with even letters |
| MOI University B1, B2 | Different fonts used | White, green | Red, white, black | All words capitalized | Use of 3 exclamation marks at the end, University logo centered on left margin |
| MOI University B3 | Different font sizes | white | Red, black, white | All words capitalized | Use of a KUSU logo | Words neatly printed out |
| UON B1 | Different font sizes | White and different shades of blue | Black red | All words are capitalized | Logo of UASU printed out left top end size | Writing neatly printed out except for the word KUDHEIHA that is handwritten // varsity |
| UON B2 | Different font sizes | White and blue background | Black and red | All words are capitalized | UASU logo comes first on the banner | Neatly printed out |
| Pwani University B3 | Different font size | ¾ White and shades of red and blue. | Red, blue, black | Some words are capitalized while others are in small letters, one hand written artistically written | UASU logo on the | Slogan solidarity forever is handwritten but done artistically |
| UASU, B1, B2 | Different font sizes | White | Red, blue, green black | All capitalized | Hospitals and Allied Workers | Neatly printed UASU logo on both sides. |
| UASU B3 | Different font size | White | Blue, black, red | All capitalised | The needs listed | Neatly printed out No logo at all |
| Masinde Muliro | Different font size | blue | Black Red blue | All capitalised | MMUST Logo | Neatly printed out |

Table 1: A Summary of Prominent Features on Banners
Source: Author's Analysis (2019)

The study found out that for topography different size fonts were used in writing out the messages on the banners. The messages on the banners were all printed out in capital letters except for Pwani University banner where
some writings were handwritten. The font size of this writing varied with some words having a larger font size compared to others and the study found out that words with the largest font size either had UASU written on them or had the main messages on the banners. The study found out that Pwani and Masinde Muliro University Chapters and UASU had their banners with the words UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF UNION written in the largest fonts. The two university chapters identified themselves with the University Union by recognizing the union before putting across their central message. For four banners writing was at the top of the banner. The rest of the university chapters had the main message on the banners written in the largest font size and these were: Wahadhiri Wamechoka, No Cba, No Learning, Strike, Silence Never Wins Right, Uasu National Strike On – Going. Quality Education For A Better Kenya. University Academic Staff Union. The words with the largest font were the most prominent words on the banners and this made them stand out to catch the viewers’ attention on what the protestors were demanding for. The use of large font size made the message on banners to be most salient. An important finding too was that the prominent words on the banners were also written in intense red colour except for two where the green colour was used and it was also intense. Machin (2007) states that the most salient features are often accomplished by the use of big size, intense and rich colour, tone (brightness), focus (background and foreground) or overlapping of visual elements.

Table 2 below gives a summary of the colours that were used in the background of banners.

| University Chapter | White (Frequency Counts) | Shades of Blue (Frequency Counts) | Shades of Green (Frequency Counts) | Shades of Red (Frequency Counts) |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| KU B1              | 1                        | 0                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| KU B2              | 1                        | 0                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| KU B3              | 1                        | 0                               | 9                               | 0                               |
| MOI B1             | 1                        | 0                               | 1                               | 0                               |
| MOI B2             | 1                        | 0                               | 1                               | 0                               |
| MOI B3             | 1                        | 0                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| UASU B1            | 1                        | 0                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| UASU B2            | 1                        | 0                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| UASU B2            | 1                        | 0                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| UON 1              | 1                        | 1                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| UON 2              | 1                        | 1                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| UON 3              | 1                        | 1                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| Pwani B1           | 1                        | 1                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| Garissa            | 0                        | 0                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| Masinde Muliro     | 0                        | 1                               | 0                               | 0                               |
| TOTAL              | 14                       | 4                               | 2                               | 1                               |
| %                  | 66.67%                   | 19.05%                          | 9.52%                           | 4.76%                           |

Table 2: Background Colours Used on Banners

Source: Author’s Analysis (2019)

A total of 14 banners were collected for the three strikes that took place. Regarding the use of background colours, the dominant colour that was used on banners was white (66.67%) with some slight variation where three University Chapters added shades of blue (19.05%), green (9.52%) and red (4.76%). Moi University Chapter B1, B2 used white background as well as shades of green, Nairobi B1, B2 used white as well as shades of blue while Pwani University Chapter made use of white and shades of red and blue. For each of these respective University Chapters, additional shades to white colours were used on respective logos of these universities. These helped to create harmony between the banner and its University Chapter. The dominant use of colour white on the banners symbolically stood for a peaceful strike communicating that the protestors would not become violent. White colour is also associated with power (Chaffe 1993). The power was in their hands and not in the hands of the employer.

The following was noted on the use of background colours that were used on the banners. University of Nairobi University Chapter, Moi University Chapter and Pwani University Chapter made use of colours associated with their respective university logos. This was a sign of identity with their University Chapters to be used. Blue and green colours also featured in several backgrounds and were actually calm/cool colours. These also were symbolic of a calm as well as peaceful protest. Chaffee (1993) says that colour can be used to manipulate feelings for example blue and green indicate calmness, reassurance and measurement. Following is a discussion on the use of colour demonstrating salience. Table 3 below gives a summary of the colours that were used in writing on banners.
Writing of words was done in different colours across all the banners. Prominent colours that were used in writing were black (50%) followed by red (25%) and blue (12.5%). Black was most frequently used and it appeared in each single banner except for one banner that was written in red. Red colour was used mostly for the main message on the banner. Writing across the banners was done using contrasting colours which made each single element on the banners to stand out. Van Leeuwen (2005) says that contrast of colours helps to create emphasis. The contrast in colour in writing was to help viewers pay attention to each of the items on the banners. The protestors’ message was that they belonged to UASU, followed by identifying the particular University Chapter as well as the main message intended to be seen by respective stakeholders as well as members of the public.

According to Chaffe (1993), red and black colours portray emotions of revolution, death and violence. Protestors wanted this protest to be revolutionary in that change was necessary in the remuneration structure of employees in Kenya if employees were to get satisfaction at work. At the time of protest, lecturers had power in their hands which showed that power had now shifted from the hands of the employer to that of the employee. With solidarity amongst the protestors, they hoped to get their rights. Through the unity of the protestors, their demands were likely to be met. Red colour also stands for danger and so it acted as a warning. The protestors were actually warning the government that Public University Educational sector was on its knees.

Two University Chapters made use of Kiswahili which is both a national language as well as the official language in Kenya in their messages on some banners such as WAHADHIRI WAMECHOKA (LECTURERS ARE TIRED) and 2013-2017 CBA NI HAKI YETU (2013-2017 CBA IS OUR RIGHT) respectively. Use of Kenya’s local language was a sign of being associated with the nation of Kenya and seeking support from the public. This finding is similar to that of Al Maseed’s (2013) study where protestors made use of slogans that were multilingual with the aim of communicating to the government of Egypt and the world at large for international support.

Informational value refers to where a text is studied from depending on where the most prominent information has been placed on a text. A text can therefore be studied from the center to the margins, top to bottom or from left to right (VanLeeuwen, 2005). Another structure of a text is referred to as Given/New information whereby Given information is placed on the left side of the text while New information is placed on the right side of a text (Van Leeuwen, 2005). Given information refers to what is already known by the reader/viewer/listener while New information refers to the unknown. Below is an analysis of how information was organized on the banners.

- B1 by UASU had the message University Academic Staff Union and the next line was U.A.S.U.,
- B2 by U.A.S.U 2013 – 2017 CBA
- B3, 43 & B5 all by Nairobi University Chapter had the message UASU – UON Chapter
- B6 by Kenyatta University had the message UASU, Kenyatta University Chapter
- B7 by MOI University had the University Logo come first in the middle left side of the banner,
- B8 by Moi University had Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU)
- B9 by Pwani University Chapter had University for Academic Staff Union followed by Pwani University
- B11 by Masinde Muliro had University Academic Staff Union followed by MMUST

The given messages on all the banners was UASU followed by the University Chapter that the banner belonged to which became the New information. ForMoi University, for both banners B7 and B8, given information was the University Logo for the first one while the second one was the ‘Kenya University Staff Union’. Given information is what is already known by the reader. It was assumed that viewers already knew what Union was on strike through the identification made on the banner. By the University Chapters identifying themselves with U.A.S.U or K.U.S.U unions involved in the strike, it was a sign of Unity. New information was followed by the universities identifying themselves in terms of the University Chapter. In Al Maseed’s (2013) study, protestors used their national flag during protests as a sign of unity. In this study public university lecturers were united under their Unions (U.A.S. U and K.U.S. U). The following is a discussion on the use of font and where prominent messages were located on the banners.

| University Chapter | Black | Red | Green | Blue | White | No Of Colours Used |
|--------------------|-------|-----|-------|------|-------|---------------------|
| UASU B1, B2        | 2     | 1   | 1     | 1    | 0     | 4                   |
| UASU B3            | 1     | 1   | 0     | 1    | 0     | 3                   |
| UON B1             | 3     | 1   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 2                   |
| UON B2             | 3     | 1   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 2                   |
| UON B3             | 3     | 1   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 2                   |
| Kenyatta B1, B2, B3| 2     | 1   | 0     | 2    | 0     | 3                   |
| MOI B1, B2        | 0     | 0   | 1     | 0    | 2     | 2                   |
| MOI B3             | 2     | 2   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 2                   |
| GARISSA           | 0     | 0   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 0                   |
| CHUKA              | 0     | 0   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 0                   |
| MASENIO          | 0     | 0   | 0     | 0    | 0     | 0                   |
| TOTAL              | 16    | 8   | 2     | 4    | 2     | 32                  |
| %                  | 50    | 25  | 6.25  | 12.5 | 6.2   | 100                 |

Table 3: Summary of Colours of Writing on the Banners
Source: Author’s Analysis (2019)
The following Table 4 shows font size and position of prominent messages on banners.

| University Chapter | Message                                      | Font size | Location on the banner |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| UASU B1, B2        | 2013-2017 CBA NI HAKI YETU                   | largest   | Bottom                 |
| UASU B3            | Quality education for a better Kenya         | Largest font | 2nd line from the top |
| UON B1             | Wahadhiri wamechoka                          | largest   | Middle                 |
| UON                | Silence never wins right                     | largest   | Middle                 |
| UON B2             | NO CBA, NO WORK                              | largest   | Middle                 |
| UON B3             | SILENCE NEVER WINS RIGHT                     | largest   | Middle                 |
| Kenyatta B1, B2, B3| UASU NATIONAL STRIKE ON-GOING                | normal    | Middle                 |
| Moi B1             | STRIKE                                       | largest   | Middle                 |
| Moi B2             | STRIKE                                       | largest   | Near bottom            |
| Pwani              | When Dialogue Fails                          | normal    | Middle                 |
| Masinde Muliro     | Brains at WORK                               | Normal    | 2nd line from bottom   |

Table 4: Use of Font Size on and Location of Prominent Messages on the Banners
Source: Author’s Analysis (2019)

Regarding positioning of the main message on banners, most of the main message on the banners (7 counts) were found at the center of the banner, followed by bottom or near bottom (3 counts) and lastly near top (1 count). What were considered as prominent messages were dominantly placed at the central part of the text. This finding is in agreement with Van Leeuwen (2005) and Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) who say that prominent information on a surface is placed in the center of the surface while all the other elements are placed around it. The most prominent information was written in the largest font size making the information to stand out and catch viewers’ attention. This again made this the most salient feature as Machin (2007) states that, the most salient features are often accomplished by the use of big size, intense and rich colour, tone (brightness), focus (elementary background) and foregrounding or overlapping of visual elements. Another finding was that because writing of prominent messages (7 counts) was written in the middle of the banners, then the messages were read from the center to the margins.

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) information can be framed in different ways such as the presence or absence of frames. This can be done by segregation, overlap or integration and rhyme. This is illustrated by the use of one banner (B3) below.

For the above banner (B3), each message is written on its own line. The spacing between the lines separates each message from each other. This is to highlight each single item on the banners. Space is one of the features of framing that enabled protestors to distinguish each of the items talked about. This type of framing is known as segregation where different elements are separated in different parts and order through the use of space (Machin, 2007). All the banners made use of segregation for framing.

Another common feature on the banners was the use of logos. Three main logos used were UASU, KUSU and the University Chapters’. The findings were that all the University Chapters made use of UASU logos on their banners except for Moi University Chapter B1, B2 and MMUST that made use of their own University logos respectively. One UASU banner did not have any logo on it. UASU logo was dominantly used which served as a sign of identification with the union and also a sign of unity by lecturers under the union. It also symbolically stood for the solidarity that protestors exhibited in the protest. It was also a sign of recognizing UASU as a power organ that was accepted and recognized by all UASU University Chapters. One line in the press conference read; *Go and read all the International books on Labour Movement. Labour is the only thing that we have as workers that we can refuse to provide. In unity protestors stood strong. In Al
The study also looked at slogans that were used during these protests. Some of slogans were written on banners while others were chanted during press conferences by either UASU or their different university chapters. Semiotic resources of these slogans are captured in Table 5 below.

| University Chapter | Slogan                                 | Colour of writing | Font size       |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Kenyatta B1, B2    | Solidarity forever!!!                  | black             | normal         |
| Pwani              | Solidarity forever                     |                   |                |
| UASU B1, B2        | Solidarity forever                     | green             | Normal font    |
| UASU B3            | Quality education for a better Kenya   | red               | Largest font   |
| Maseno             | Comrade Power!                          |                   |                |
| Masinde Muliro     |                                        |                   |                |
| Moi B1, B2         | NO MONEY, NO WORK                       | White and red     |                |
| UON B1             | Wahadhiri wamechoka                    | red               | largest        |
| UON                | Silence never wins right                | red               | largest        |
| UON B2             | NO CBA, NO WORK                         | red               | largest        |
| Chuka              | Solidarity forever                      |                   |                |
| Garissa            | NONE                                   |                   |                |

Table 5: Slogans Used on Banners
Source: Author’s Analysis (2019)

Slogans used by protestors were mainly displayed on the banners though some may have been used at press conferences or were chanted along as protestors marched. The slogan Solidarity Forever appeared on the banner for Kenyatta, Nairobi and Pwani University Chapters. The most dominant slogan was SOLIDARITY FOREVER (4counts). In the lecturers’ protests, this slogan was repeated over and over in the three strikes. The slogan solidarity forever is a slogan that has been in existence for over 100 years. It was composed by Ralph Chaplin in 1915. He wrote this as a song for the working class. For workers to win, the only tool that they have when dialogue fails are to recognize their solidarity which in essence does not narrow in their own war but it is about the entire workforce in the world. Public university lecturers who were protesting, called for unity amongst themselves in order for them to succeed in making their demands heard and addressed by their employer. UASU was demanding for the lecturers 2013-2017 CBA to be implemented; six months to the expiry date. They had run short of patience as expressed by one of the University Chapter’s banner WAHADHIRI WAMECHOKA (LECTURERS ARE TIRED). Lecturers demanded for dialogue but this failed to take place. This is further emphasized in SILENCE NEVER WINS RIGHT. The government’s silence would not solve the issues that lecturers were demanding. Protestors were simply asking for dialogue.

Another slogan that was used by the protestors is NO MONEY NO WORK. The protestors were only to go back to work if their 2013 - 2017 CBA was honoured. Their salaries had to be paid according to what was agreed in the contentious CBA. Protestors withdrew their labour making this a demand slogan. Another slogan was NO CBA NO LEARNING. The University lecturers’ co business is to teach not withstanding other duties. The protestors were demanding this slogan showed that protesting was not just about signing of the 2013-2017 CBA but that there were other underlying issues that needed to be addressed. This study is very similar to Agbedo (2012) where...
protestors moved away from talking about fuel subsidy which was why they were striking to other themes such as corruption and poor governance.

Slogans are very powerful ways of passing information and play a crucial role in steering a protest to move on to the next level. In the ‘OCCUPY’ movements such as ‘Occupy wall street’ in New York, there was one common slogan that was used which was ‘WE ARE THE 99%’. This was used when it dawned on majority of the Americans that they were marginalized economically the wealthy class.

The dominant colour that was used to write messages on the slogans was red (3 counts) black (one count) green (one count), white and red (one count). In three of the slogans, the font used to highlight the slogan was the largest on the banner mainly meant to emphasize on the demands of the protestors. Red colour is often used as warning and as such and protestors were sending a warning to the government that it was not going to be business as usual. Salient features are usually the center of focus for viewers and through use of colour and large font size, the message that protestors want passed across was passed well. Machin (2007) states that one of the ways of achieving salience is through the use of colour and font size.

4. Conclusion

Genres of protests cannot be given proper interpretation without looking at the semiotic resources used. Protestors did not just use words for the sake of using but rather they chose words that showed their attitude towards their employer as well as other stakeholders. Use of salience, information value and framing the messages on the genres made it possible for the reader to comprehend some underlying information that may not have been revealed directly.

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