



Childhood Memories as Revelation of Nigerian Social Realities: A Socio-Semiotic Analysis of Selected Zikoko Blog Messages

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Abstract: Childhood memories are often seen as personal experiences that are special to different individuals. Also, they provide valuable insights into societal and cultural realities of a specific time and place. This paper looks at the role of childhood memories in revealing Nigerian present social realities, through a socio-semiotic analysis of selected Zikoko blog meme messages. Zikoko is a popular online platform that produces articles about Nigerian culture, lifestyle, and society with a section devoted to childhood memories/issues. The study examines the semiotics of memes in selected Zikoko online blog content to bring to limelight the meaning-making resources utilized in the visuals representing of childhood experience relayed through childhood memories in Nigeria. It identifies how the popular blogger uses symbols, signs, images and other semiotic resources to convey specific meanings through visual and textual representation. Common themes and patterns in the childhood memories shared by the authors are explored to highlight how these memories reflect broader social issues including family relationships, children upbringing pattern, societal

values, culture and economic conditions. The paper argues that childhood memories can serve as a powerful tool for understanding and interpreting Nigerian social realities, and highlights the importance of incorporating such memories into broader discussions and analyses of Nigerian society, especially to past and present child upbringing pattern that bother on child abuse.

Keywords: *Socio-Semiotics, Zikoko Blog, Childhood Memories, Nigerian Social Realities*

1. Introduction

Childhood memories are often viewed as deeply personal experiences that are unique to each individual. They can also provide valid insights into the social and cultural realities of a particular time and place. In Nigeria, childhood memories are particularly important as they often reflect the nature of Nigerian society with its diverse culture, religions and beliefs. This paper examines the role of childhood memories in revealing Nigerian social realities, through a socio-semiotic analysis of selected messages from the Zikoko blog.

Zikoko is a popular online platform that produces articles about Nigerian society. It features a wide range of contents including personal stories, interviews, quizzes, and articles. Many of these online articles focus on childhood memories, thus revealing relevant materials for studying Nigerian social realities. This study, therefore, identifies common themes in the childhood memories through memes shared by two selected authors.

The term meme was first used by Dawkins (1976) when he wanted to obtain a word to describe the concept of the transmission of idea. He initially chose the Greek word *mimeme* meaning “imitation” but went for a short English word that gestured to the English gene, and chose the word “meme” and it simply means “an idea”. A meme is an image, video, piece of text etc, typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variation (Oxford English Dictionary). Furthermore, Stojchevka and Shalevska (2018, p. 159) defined memes as “part of the online culture; ...that are presented through mediums such as image +text or GIF +text combinations or just plain text that are spread visually on all internet-based platforms, changing along the way”. These definitions indicate that memes are dynamic, online based, can go viral and they entail images.

Bauckhage (2011) stated that memes are formed with information to be relayed to just a few people that will naturally understand them. However, since memes always feature images, and a particular image can be subjected to diverse interpretations because such an image can have several captions in different context,



a particular image can be used to create multiple memes with different meanings (Ugah, 2022). Messages in memes are based on the context. Memes are dynamic; they manifest the versatility of humans thereby changing over time. Most often than not, the original one is modified by different meme creators and users to suit their purpose. Hence, they are constantly creatively edited and replicated to fit into current societal issues (Shofman, 2013 & Dynel, 2016).

Grundlingh (2017) stated that examination of these elements can reveal social messages relayed by them and how they may be interpreted. Linguistically, memes contain several interesting features. They use “vernacular English, phrases from specific English dialects, puns and punning riddles, jargon, slang, shortenings and neologism as well as patterned way of incorrect spellings and multiple, intentional or unintentional grammar and syntax mistakes” (Stojchevka and Shalevska, 2018, p.159). Also, memes can be analysed in terms of their textual and visual characteristics like color, composition, types, in addition to the images and languages used in conveying them.

Almost anything can be made a meme -images of celebrities, commoners, animals, birds and indeed any specific item(s). They may also comprise short phrases, sentences, words, punctuation marks, abbreviations, coinages etc. depending on what the creator intends to achieve textually.

In today’s online world, memes are ubiquitous and they convey societal messages, ideas, beliefs and attitude in a succinct manner and often humorously. Consequently, memes can be utilized to identify and analyse social and cultural practices. Moreso, they provide a dynamic representation of cultural beliefs that may lead to changes in such practices.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Semiotics Meaning

The term semiotics has been defined by several scholars. Jakobsen (1971) defined semiotics as the study of signs and symbols and how they communicate meaning. Danesi (2002) averred that semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign, and with the processes involved in the production and reception of signs. In line with these definitions, Petrilli (1996) described semiotics as the science of signs and the ways in which they convey meaning. From these definitions, it can be deduced that semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and how they are used to convey meaning. Since memes are a type of sign or symbols, this field of study can therefore be used to decipher messages from memes which are a type of sign or symbols. This is in agreement with Deacon’s (1999) and Kull’s



(2000) position that developments in semiotics show that memes can be considered as signs.

Thus, semiotic analysis of memes should be able to reveal their role in shared cultural meaning and thereby assist in understanding societal realities and ideals better. As they are products of language or elements of communication, memes are interesting data for research, especially in linguistics.

2.2. *Linguistics Studies of Memes*

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in conducting linguistic analysis of memes as a result of their uniqueness as a creative form of communication that reflect cultural trends and beliefs extensively utilised in political and social commentary.

Kostandinovska-Stojchevska and Shalevska (2018) focused on memes as one of the internet communication phenomena and their specific sociolinguistic features that make them vastly interesting to linguists and sociologists. The study concluded among others, that memes in Macedonian for the most part share the linguistic and sociological skills as those originally created in English, however they comprise other features of language characteristic for the Macedonian language alone. Boiko, Stakhniun and Vladyka (2024) in their study centred on the structure and nuances of internet memes as exemplars of verbal communication indicated that the structure of internet memes is fragmented but adequate in forming a comprehensive array of meanings that are shaped through linguistic mechanisms. In another study, Wang et al. (2024) did an exploratory investigation of the transmission of memes of language using the meme concept. The study utilised sixty two Chinese language memes which mined the emotions of netizens' posts on Weibo, a Chinese social platform and demonstrated language memes' ability for eliciting both positive and negative emotions. Specifically, it was discovered that the positive emotion 'good' and the negative one, 'disgust' are the most obvious emotions elicited by language meme. This and other studies have demonstrated the value of linguistic analysis in understanding the cultural and social significance of memes across diverse contexts.

2.3. *Studies of Memes in Nigeria*

In the Nigerian context quite a number of studies have been done on memes. Jimoh (2019), in the work entitled "Virtual Activism: Internet Memes and Political Discourse in Nigeria", examined internet memes as a unique form of narratives on politics in Nigeria. The paper used semiotic theory to examine 200 pictorial internet



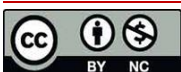
names on Nigerian politics between 2015 and 2018. He argues in the paper that internet memes about politics though similar to political cartoons in context and form, but differ mainly because memes require less artistic prowess and figurative expression in rendition. Ajetunmobi & Imam (2022) examined the communicative and rhetorical strategies in seven political memes created by the All Progressives Congress (APC). The study focused on how the memes marketed and de-marketed specific political candidates.

In another study, Adetayo (2020) explored the comic effects of memes in trending issues on Twitter (now X). Ground Theory of Presupposition was used to examine six memes related to politics, entertainment, sports and bomboclaat trends. The study concluded among others that memes are shared among tweeps with the use of captions that convey the message of the writer and the shared knowledge that exists among internet users to achieve comic effect.

Furthermore, Alfred (2019) in the study entitled "Analysing Verbal and Visual Indexes in Internet Memes on the APC-Led Administration and 'Change' Slogan in Nigeria" explored the complementarity relation of some verbal signifier in internet memes about the 'Change' slogan of the APC-led administration in Nigeria. The study used a qualitative approach to analyze nine purposively selected memes posted on Facebook, Nairaland, and Twitter (now X). The author revealed all that memes were subversive in nature and used to reflect negative dispositions of producers to the said leadership style revealing displeasure over socio-economic realities in Nigeria and dissuade viewers from voting for APC in subsequent elections.

Unuabonah and Oyeboode (2021) in a paper, used a multimodal critical discourse analysis to study Covid-19 related internet memes and discovered that memes are used to protest against corruption, hunger, insecurity, inadequate social health facilities, perceived government deceit and other social amenities. These were done to project and resist an anti-welfarist ideology and emphasize the negative representation of the government. Ugah's (2022) paper tagged "Internet memes as deconstructions of myths: a pragma – semiotic approach" states that memes may lead to social and political reformation as they express dissent against societal ills. Using Mey's (2001) pragmatic acts, Ugah (2022) study explored thirty internet memes and discovered that internet memes represent a new kind of comment culture and play a significant role in contemporary societal reformation and restructuring.

Overall, these studies demonstrate the growing interest in memes in Nigerian society and the potential for memes to shape social and political discourse



in the country. However, after conducting a thorough search, the researchers were unable to find any published literature specifically on the linguistic analysis of memes of childhood memories in Nigerian context. It is possible that such studies exist but have not been published in academic journals or indexed in academic databases. Since some of these memes often evoke nostalgia among those who grew up during a certain period or in a certain cultural context, it is expected that this present work will fill this missing gap by providing different perspectives on the topic of Nigerian childhood memories and may be useful in understanding the ways in which childhood experiences are represented in Nigerian culture.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study is Semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and how they are used to convey meaning. It provides tools for analyzing the ways in which meaning is created, communicated, and interpreted. In the context of childhood memes, semiotics can help us understand how the images, words, and symbols used in these memes convey meaning related to childhood experiences. By analyzing the signs and symbols used in childhood memes on the Zikoko Blog, we can provide insight into the cultural and social factors that shape our understanding of childhood.

Scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure (1959), Charles Sanders Peirce (1931), and Roland Barthes (1957) have explored the field of Semiotics extensively. For example, Saussure's (1959) and Barthes' (1957) exemplified the concept of sign and the dyadic relationship that exists between the signifier and the signified. In Saussure's consideration, it is the sign that brings the signifier and the signified together but when it did not do this, it cannot be taken as a sign but an ordinary object. This approach may not be sufficient for our own study as a sign may have diverse signification aside the sign and the signified based on situational context.

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2005) visual social semiotic viewpoint which is hinged on Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistic (SFL) approach averred that meaning is context-dependent. Ken and Van Leeuwen's visual semiotics is a theoretical framework that aims to analyze the meaning of visual communication and its impact on the audience. According to them, visual communication is a system of signs that conveys meaning through the use of various elements such as colours, shape, size, texture, and composition. They argued that every visual element has a specific meaning, and the combination of these elements creates a message that the audience interprets.



For this study, Ken and Van Leeuwen's visual semiotics is used to analyze the visual elements used in the blog messages to convey meaning and the impact of these messages on the audience. For instance, the use of colours, shapes, and composition in the blog messages can be analyzed to determine their meaning and the intended effect on the audience. Additionally, the interaction between the blog messages and the audience can be analyzed to determine how the messages shape the audience's perception of Nigerian social realities. Thus, the socio-semiotics analysis provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing the meaning of childhood memes in the Zikoko Blog. It helps to identify and explain the underlying cultural and social factors that shape generic understanding of childhood experiences.

4. Methodology

The data for this study is drawn from two documents titled “11 Experiences from every Nigerian’s Childhood that Made no Sense”, last updated on May 5, 2020 and written by Daniel Orubo A.K.A. Efiko, a prolific writer for the blog who has had a great exploit on Zikoko and “8 Kinds of People we all Hated as Kids”, written by Osaretin Tunde Oni with last update on 26th October 2016.

The study then employs a qualitative content analysis approach to examine the selected Zikoko blog meme messages. The sample includes two articles which were purposely selected based on their relevance to the research topic. Many of the articles on Zikoko blog focus on childhood memories, providing a rich source of materials for studying Nigerian social realities. The study selected memes created in diverse forms using plain text video, animated GIFs, or a mixture of a fixed image and text. Our data comprised memes with still images with appended text. The articles were analyzed thematically by identifying recurring themes and patterns in the childhood memories shared by the authors. The themes and patterns were then organized into broader categories based on their relevance to Nigerian social realities. The analysis is structured in a text-by-text analysis so as to effectively expound and adequately captured contextual issues of each data set. The memes were studied and the linguistic elements in each identified. They are tagged Memes 1-19 for ease of reference with each memes numbered.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

As stated earlier, the different messages and memes are analysed and discussed thematically. They are discussed under the following topics:



○ *Use of Corporal Punishment*

Meme 1:

The Nigerian system of education has yet to eradicate corporal punishment, for example caning, as a form of disciplinary measures completely. Presently, with the existence of the Child Right's Act (2006) which has been adopted by many states, there are sanctions against disciplinary measures with consequences that include bodily injury resulting from torture. Also, the Nigerian constitution, 1979, section 31 (1), explains that everyone is entitled to dignity of their persons and that no one should be subjected to torture, inhumane or degrading stature. In real practice though, according to Ogunbe (2017) some parents/guardians still administer corporal punishment. Consequently, most school authorities still consider caning the children an appropriate means of correcting learners in instances of instilling morals like punctuality in school. However here in Meme 1, while going through the memories of what obtained at school when being beaten for coming late to school, the author feels such should not have been the case as he never partook in logistics for school attendance by saying "Hian, am I the one in charge of logistics?" Here, the image is that of an individual that is puzzled, surprised that he was a child, dependent on others to facilitate his itinerary and if such were the case, why should he have been a culprit? 'Hian' is a Nigerian way of expressing displeasure. The meme attached here shows a facial expression of surprise and to further corroborate this, there are question marks repeated six different times, thereby laying emphasis on the degree of puzzlement or surprise.

1. When you got beaten for coming to school late.



Hian. Am I the one in charge of logistics?

Meme 2:

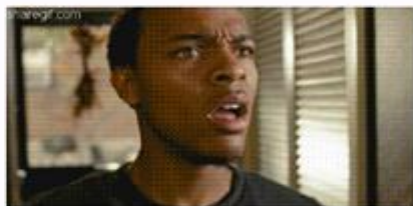


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Closely associated with the first message above is the memory of being punished because school fees were not paid on time as depicted by Meme 2. Social realities in Nigeria show the existence of public and private schools. While private schools are fee paying ones, the public schools are mostly free. The child here, in retrospect, feels “shouldn’t you be punishing my parents?”, a question that reveals deep seated anger in the heart of the individual. This again is because the child could not have footed the bill in the first place and he was not the one that asked to attend a fee-paying institution. It needs be mentioned that even in public schools, children are also caned when they do not meet some financial obligations including bringing of needed items like writing materials and textbooks. The meme here again shows surprise and anger depicted by a young man with mouth agape, tongue rolling up and showing annoyance and anger. This is also a video unlike the others that entail still image.

2. When you got punished because school fees was not paid on time.



Shouldn't you be punishing my parents?

Meme 3:

Meme 3 (tagged image 11) is the picture of a young Nigerian child with an angry or sad look and red eyes resulting from obvious abuse that could have been caused by corporal punishment meted on him in form of beating. This specifically depicts a child’s reaction to his/her mother’s scream in an attempt to help the child with his/her homework. This is typical of most Nigerian parents whose style is often harsh and negatively constructed in ways that often create fear and sadness for children. The mother’s scream therefore resulted in the child regretting his/her call for help; thus, the question, “why did I ask for your help?” Just like the other questions or retorts, the child dares not ask such questions directly as this will further degenerate to more disciplinary actions. It must be stated that homework given in most schools in Nigeria are often many and pupils stand much hours after



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a long period in schools followed by after school lesson to work on them.

11. When your mother screams at you in the name of helping with your homework.



Why did I even ask for your help?

Meme 4:

Meme 4 (tagged image 5) also depicts a sad weeping child who felt highly disappointed for being beaten by his parents after getting injured because he feels he is unjustly punished despite having suffered an injury. Hence, the child retorted “have I not suffered enough?” From many childhood experiences, Nigerian parents do discipline at such times because of the belief that this will serve as a deterrent for the child to be more careful while playing at another time.

5. When your parents beat you for injuring your self.



Have I not suffered enough?

Meme 5:

Meme 5 (tagged image 12) is the image of the woman that bring cane from



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the market for one's mother. As already established corporal punishment is rife in Nigeria and canes are often the main instrument. It is not surprising therefore that the woman that brings such materials tagged "instruments of sorrow" are hated and suspected to be a witch. The meme of famous Nollywood actor, Patience Ozokwor, as an icon or symbol of wickedness and mean behaviour especially towards fellow women culturally depicts the character. The use of language "how else will a person be selling instruments of sorrow?" is humorous and also deeply conveys the feelings of young ones towards this form of punishment. The image here depicts that of an individual who appears to feel happy at another's sorrow or sadistic character. The term "witch" in the Nigerian context is used to depict a wicked individual. The text underneath is constructed in form of a question.

**12The woman that brings cane from the market
for your mother**



How else will a person be selling instruments of sorrow?

1. Use of Anger to Reprimand

Meme 6 (tagged image 3) depicts a puzzled angry lady with an outwardly stretched right arm and a questioning disposition seeking to get an answer to the issue at stake. Here, the child appears traumatized as a result of the fact that her mother is infuriated that the child accepted edible food items from the mother's personal friend. The innocent child feels bewildered and wondered aloud with a rhetorical question, "you don't trust your own friend again?" This feeling of bewilderment ensued because the child felt friendship presupposes trust and her mother's friend should be considered a trusted person. However, the mother's reaction suggested she does not trust her friend. Such lack of trust among seemingly close friends reveals a social reality about Nigeria which borders on the fear of the unknown that emanated from negative experiences in people's past – such as food



poisoning, bewitchment etc.

3. When your mother got mad at you for accepting food from her friend.



You don't trust your own friend again?

Meme 7:

Meme 7 (tagged image 6) is a video that shows a male adult with a look of anger and surprise. This time around, it talks of a mother that got angry because the child reveals his travels plans. This reveals the social reality of feelings of insecurity and that there exists some malicious spirit that may hinder such plans from coming to fruition or cause accidents. Of recent, this is even more glaring with the “Japa” syndrome (travel out) where one would have been together with another over the weekend without a knowledge of the travel plans only to read on the person’s WhatsApp status, say on Monday (after the weekend), of the individual’s relocation outside the country.

6. When your mother got mad at you for revealing your travel plans.



Meme 8:

Meme 8 (tagged image 7) depicts a three-year-old child pouting in annoyance with eyes looking dazed as a result of a distant relatives who got upset



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that he couldn't remember them despite the fact that he was barely three months old as at the last that he saw them. This situation again reveals the social reality of extended family system in Nigeria whereby distant relatives feel so much entitled that they need be regarded and recognized. It also shows that a lot of pressure is put on youngsters without a thought of their innocence. For how on earth will a child ordinarily remember an individual or people that he saw last at such an early age of three-month-old?

7. When distant relatives got upset that you didn't remember them.



I was 3 months old the last time I saw you.

Meme 9:

Meme 9 depicts the picture of a young girl of about six years looking sad and puzzled with her palm under her cheek (a typical way of showing sadness and bewilderment). Here, the child in her innocence wonders why the need for the parents to 'inspect' party packs like food, drink etc. before permitting the child to eat from it. The child (as seen by the meme) appears to be watching patiently in annoyance and inwardly asks the question "are you done, FBI?" FBI, refers to Federal Bureau of Investigation, an arm of the United State Government which, amongst other things, investigates issues aggressively.



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9. When they always had to inspect the party packs before you ate from it.



Are you done, FBI ?

2. Poverty

Meme 10:

Meme 10 (tagged image 8) shows a child in an oversized attire in addition to outrageously big neck chain and headphone. The child looks surprised and the question he appears to be asking is “don’t I need clothes now?” as a protest against the size of what was worn for him by his parents. The child’s reaction presupposes that the parents wore the oversized dress for him deliberately because of the societal belief among Nigerian parents that it is not the best decision to buy a right size fitting clothes/wears for their children as it is considered better to let their children “grow into bigger wears”. Why the situation in this way is unknown, this practice emanates from two angles poverty, which may prevent parents from changing their children’s wardrobe often or regularly and also the belief that children grow rapidly and so, to ensure such wears are not quickly discarded, a bigger sized one must be bought as the child is expected to grow speedily to fit the wear. This albeit humorous, depicts the Nigeria social reality.



8. When your parents bought you oversized clothes to “grow into”.



Don't I need clothes now?

Meme 11:

Meme 11 (tagged image 10) reveals a popular Nollywood actress, Eniola Badmus often depicted as an icon of a voracious eater eating a Nigerian delicacy which is called “swallow”, bolus of starchy fiber taken without chewing. It is humorous to see big bowls for dishing the food items and the large chunk of bolus to be taken at a single sitting. This picture reveals the social reality of dislike or distaste for wastage which often emanates from poverty and the societal belief in total disregard for wastage. The child’s reply is “Kill me oh”, a retort to the situation showing fear and annoyance. “Kill me oh” is a typical Nigerian saying used to reveal annoyance at a situation. It is a direct transliteration of a Yoruba saying “Pa mi o” meaning “kill me” and indirectly implying that asking the child to finish such humongous amount of food in a single sitting is equal to killing the child.



10. When they force you to finish your food even when you're clearly full.



Kill me oh.

3. Deception

Meme 12:

Meme 12 (tagged image 4) shows a young boy who felt disappointed and sad. He's seated on a wooden staircase with his palm under his cheek with a sad, sullen angry mood. What obtained here is the typical way often used by Nigerian parents to deceive their children who request that they be taken along when going out and especially when such request cannot be granted. However, the fear of the child's cries and yells often makes parents to ask the child to get ready and this is done in this context as the father tells the child to go wear his shoes while the father disappears before the child's return. In hindsight, the child feels it would have been ideal if the father had simply said "no" to his request rather than deceive him.



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4. When your father told you to go wear your shoes and then just left.



Why didn't you just say "no"?

4. Traumatic Style of Learning

Meme 13:

Home coaching or lesson is very common among the middle class in Nigeria. With deep belief in formal education as instrument of progress in the society, educated parents do engage teachers, tagged “lesson teacher”, on part time basis. It must be highlighted that home lessons do occur even after the young children must have spent hours in school. The young students that desire rest after a long school day are, not surprisingly, dreadful of home teachers who usually “only comes when you are playing games or sleeping. He knows when you are enjoying because that’s the only time he shows”. Although this statement is humorous, it reveals deep heartfelt hurtful feelings. Meme 13, using Odunade Adekola, another Nollywood actor in English wear smiling mischievously, portrays the proper formal image of such a home teacher. The use of contracted items here is action like while conveying the feelings to the child. They are interesting as they make the messages informal and conversational.



13 The lesson teacher



Meme 14:

Meme 14 (tagged image 19), depicts another school teacher. Using yet another Nollywood actor, Tony Umez, in English wears in similar aura of fear as it shows the school teacher as someone that children dread for always giving excess homework. This also projects another social reality in the country as kids are over pressured due to emphasis on paper certificate and high expectation on academic performance which compel teachers to also give homework excessively. The child reacts to the teacher's obsession with a jibe, "the type of people that can give you homework to do during your lunch break". The meme here also shows someone who appears to be happy that the child is prevented from enjoying his/her leisure period. This depiction of the teacher suggests teachers are happy when they overwork their student.

19 The school teacher that always gives you homework.



5. Perception of Extended Family Members

Meme 15:

Meme 15 (tagged image 14) is titled a “beggy beggy uncle” because of the relational pattern in extended family relationship that allows children growing in Nigeria to have extended family members like uncles, cousins and aunts to visit their houses, sometimes regularly. The uncle figure in this meme is depicted by Adekola Odunlade in a traditional wear appearing to be sitting comfortably in the child’s family house with a look of entitlement in the man’s eye. The child calls the uncle a “beggy beggy uncle”, a term used by Nigerians, especially by children to refer to a beggarly individual. The child goes further to state that the uncle isn’t only beggarly but stingy as he “can never share with you” his proceeds of begging. Thus, still revealing why the child dislikes the individual.

14 The beggy-beggy uncle



Always coming to ask your parents for money but can never share with you.

Meme 16

Meme 16 (tagged image 15) depicts another Nollywood actress Mercy Johnson as an archetypal aunt that is always looking for husband. Aside from the picture showing someone who is trying to get a suitor at all cost by lewdly displaying her cleavage and flamboyant use of loud jewelries, she is also dreaded probably because of her lazy attitude. According to the child, “she comes out of her



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room or cooks when one of her men shows up”. The term “looking for husband” is Nigerian in nature like a transliteration from Yoruba “on wa oko”. Marriage is so much held in awe that ladies in their late twenties and thirties are pressured to do all in their power to get married.

15 The aunty that is always looking for husband



The only time she ever comes out of her room or cooks is when one of her men shows up

Meme 17:

Meme 17 (tagged image 16) shows another aunt figure who never gives children more than one piece of meat. This also shows that even at the home stead the member of the extended family resident may have more say as they stay more with the children than the parents who may be out early and come back quite late because of economic consideration or work demand. The meme of Funke Akindele, another popular Nollywood actress with a sneer and finger to depict the fact that she was not going to shift grounds is also apt here. It also shows that children are often at the mercy of these individuals in the child’s word “if there are 50 pieces of meat, you’re getting one if she had her way you get half”. The conversational manner of the text on the meme also shows in the contracted form. Also, simple use of language not only conveys the usage of children but ensure ease of comprehension.



16 The aunty that never gives you more than one piece of meat



If there are 50 pieces of meat, you're getting one, if she had her way you'll get half.

Meme 18:

Meme 18 (tagged image 17) shows yet another perception of the children towards a family member precisely a pretentious uncle that feigns American accent through repeated use of “mehn” and talks about Atlanta even though he had never travelled abroad. The uncle here is depicted by another Nollywood character Charles Okocha who most often than not plays the part of a cunning individual in home videos. “Mehn” is a Black American sociolect [term common with American English] and it is combined with the use of Nigerian pidgin in the text “...talking about Atlanta like saying him Papa na 50 cent” (Curtish James Jackson III, an American rapper, actor, television producer and businessman). This saying is humorous and at the same time shows contemptuous disposition of the children toward their uncle. The uncle in the meme is depicted with designer glasses, ear tab (common with American hip culture), posing by a tree with a mischievous smile all combined to accentuate his Americanized display. It also reveals the influence of the America English in Nigeria. Although colonised by the Britain, American English is used as a result of exposure to films, books, online materials, and travelling.



17 The uncle that always forms accent but has never travelled



Always calling everyone 'mother' and talking about Atlanta like say him-gonna be SO-Cool

Meme 19:

Meme 19 (tagged image 18) features a young chap like a child aptly depicted through the image of a popular Nollywood character, Osita Iheme (Aki), an icon of childhood pranksters displays in Nollywood home videos. This meme depicts Aki as a child that steals toys from his cousin. This character is so much dreaded that the child says “it’s only because of love for his mother that you haven’t slapped his soul into July”. The child depicted here smiles as if stating the statement underneath.

18 The cousin that always steals your toys



It's only because of the love you have for his mother that you haven't slapped his soul into July.



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It is not surprising that memes and texts are deployed to convey information to the young-at-heart as research tend to reveal that young people, teenagers, young adults in their twenties, and all those tagged as computers agers communicate more with meme.

6. Findings

The thematic analysis of the selected Zikoko blog contents reveals several key themes and patterns in the childhood memories shared by the authors. These include:

- Family dynamics: The creators described childhood memories in relation to family relationships, including interactions with parents, siblings, and extended family members in the Nigerian socio-cultural context. They described challenging relationships as portrayed in basic domestic conflicts with parents, estrangement from family members or discontent with home tutors.
- Child upbringing pattern: The meme creators described childhood memories in relation to the upbringing pattern. For example, the creators depicted how children were expected to conform to traditional roles, such as respecting extended family members and attending to many after school homework at leisure time as well as obedience to parents, notwithstanding the contact.
- Societal Values: The creators described their childhood memories in relation to societal values and practices such as being subjected to corporal punishment, undue influence from extended family members etc
- Economic Condition: The creators described childhood memories that reflected the well being of the society especially in relation to economic situation of the immediate environment that often suggest a level of poverty.

Overall, the analysis of the selected Zikoko blog messages highlighted the important role that childhood memories play in revealing Nigerian social realities. The memories shared by the creators provided valuable insights into the complexities and challenges of the Nigerian society, including issues related to family dynamics, child upbringing patterns and economic conditions.



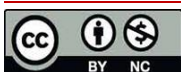
7. Conclusion

Although it may appear that some of the scenarios painted here are outrageous, experience shows that these are social realities in the country and they often lead to the breeding of children that are sad, angry and puzzled and who believe that their parents' or schools' style is the way to raise children. It is suggested that there should be more training programmes i.e., via social media platforms, print and electronic media, sensitization at the local, state and national level as to the trendy style of child upbringing which encourages openness, love, empathy and understanding. Also, members of extended family should be so guided that they do not belong to a wider net of family relations as instruments of torture for young ones.

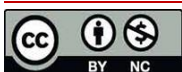
This paper has demonstrated that childhood memories can serve as a powerful tool for understanding and interpreting Nigerian social realities. The semiotic analysis of the selected Zikoko blog contents highlights the importance of incorporating such memories into broader discussions and analyses of Nigerian society. By examining the themes and patterns in these memories, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges of Nigerian society, as well as the resilience and creativity of its people.

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Ethical approval

This research did not require any ethical approval.

Informed consent

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