

The Nexus Between Symbol And Concept In Colour Usage: A Study Of Selected Churches In Uyo Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the areas of convergence between the symbolic and conceptual meanings of colours using selected churches in Uyo Metropolis. To do this, 20 churches were randomly selected across the different denominations. Using survey design, data were collected from responses to questionnaire administered to the respondents and analysed using descriptive method. This research affirms that there are some relationships between conceptual meaning of colours and their symbolic meanings, as well as some areas of convergence and divergence in symbolization of colour. This study concludes by noting that colour is an unspoken language that communicates meaning and that the poor knowledge of the symbolisation of the colours could lead to a breach of communication and misconception. This study therefore recommends that language users in the different speech Communities should consciously learn what these colours symbolise for effective communication.

Keywords: *Conceptual Meaning, Semiotics, Signs, Symbolism, Symbols*

INTRODUCTION

Language is very significant in human communication; no aspect of human endeavor can succeed without the use of language. As noted by Udoh and Ekpo[1], language, “is the only means through which humans interact and express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and general values within a society” (7)

The symbolic system is one creative use of English by man. Language, whether spoken or written, is symbolic, as the meaning of the word can only be determined by the ideas, images and emotions it conjures in the mind of the hearer. Symbol constitutes an important element of communication which enables the speaker mean more than what is said. A symbol denotes a person, place, action, word or thing which either by association, resemblance or convention connotes something other than itself. According to Eyo[2], “a symbol’s connotation constitutes its symbolism”(48). For instance, a white flag is universally viewed as a symbol of peace, surrender; red stands for danger, black, is for darkness and mourning and so on. Eyo also noted that, “symbols refer to objects used to represent other objects, concept, conditions, places, behavior and phenomena, but which bears no direct resemblance to what they represent” (48).

The above view revalidates Ogden and Richard’s position that between the symbol and the referent, there is no relation other than the indirect one.

Eyo’s view also revalidates Wellek and Warren’s[3] belief that a symbol is “an object which refers to another object but which demands attention also in its own right, as a representation” (189). By implication, symbols do not only perform aesthetic but also semantic functions in as much as they communicate meaning.

One of the commonly used Symbols is colours. Colour usage and its associated meaning are arbitrary. For instance, the colour white is known and used across societies, but the meaning assigned to it differs from one speech community to the other. White symbolizes peace, purity, cleanliness and so on. The usage and symbolism of these colours matter over and above their conceptual meanings in any speech community.

The church being an example of human community uses colours to communicate meanings. This usage is seen in the adorning of members and objects.

This study explores the nexus or link between the symbolic and conceptual meanings of colours, using selected churches in Uyo metropolis is a case study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SEMIOTICS

Communication plays a major part in the daily activities of humans. The nature of this communication is complex not only in nature, but also in mode and manner. Human feelings, views and experiences can be expressed in varying ways such as the use of words, images, pictures, signs, objects, gestures and so on. The core of semiotics therefore is the interpretation of these elements of communication. In a lay man's point of view, semiotics is the interpretation of meaningful signs. Semiotics is concerned with meaning, signification, and the manufacture of meaning [4].

Semiotics therefore, seeks to deconstruct the structure of meaning.

Semiotics is the study of sign and sign using behaviors. Often referred to as semiology, semiotics is the study of signs and it involves every form of element, be it verbal or nonverbal, which can be used to represent ideas, feelings as well as experiences. It is concerned with how signs are encoded and decoded as communicative instruments and it investigates how meanings could be communicated by way of the sign system. By this sign system we mean distinctive and communicative signs which are unique and definable within the context of their usage. That is, something that can generate meaning or stand for or refer to or represent something.

The study of Semiotics centers on how signs are used to convey meaning and control our perception. In language, signs are used to communicate, and each sign is made up of the signifier (the word) and the signified (the concept). Semiotics study begins with sign. This sign can be visual, aural or sonic. The meaning attached to a sign is arbitrary or conventional as a particular sign could evoke varying meanings depending on the context or environment of its usage. The idea of environment of usage is closely related to George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) Theory of Symbolic Interaction, a theory that examines the relationship among individuals within the society. That is, meanings depend on the way in which people make sense of their environment.

Semiotics comes to limelight as an independent field of study in the early 20th century. Among the earliest proponents were the Linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, the Philosopher, Logician and Mathematician, Charles Sander Peirce and Algirdas Julian Greimas. Ferdinand de Saussure's notes on linguistics studies at the University of Geneva, which were published in 1916 as "General Linguistics Studies" transformed the viewpoint on Social Sciences, impacting especially, the field of linguistics, and found application in a host of different scientific areas [4].

Semiotics as a method of analysis is established and developed along the general characteristics of structuralism. One fundamental issue in structural approach is the rejection of the subject-centric approaches that characterized the social sciences and philosophies prior to them and rather emphasis on the analysis of social phenomena in terms of 'structure', 'rules' and 'codes'.

There exist several linguistic/semiotic approaches including the General School of Linguistics, the Prague School, The Copenhagen School of Linguistics, The French School of Functional Linguistics, The Parbnis School of Linguistics and so on.

These schools hold divergent views about the analysis of signs. While some approaches seek to analyse the structure of the superficial realization of works, some concentrate only on the structure of deep meaning [4], while yet others redefine the formative structure of establishing meaning as it extends from the depth to the surface.

The differences between these schools, notwithstanding, there exist areas of convergences and similarities which could be used to draw up the general characteristics of semiotic methods.

These are enumerated by Batu in his article "An Overview of The Field of Semiotics" (467-465) as follows:

- Semioticians view objects of analysis as a structure, with the primary objective to explain the conditions of meaning perception and production within the conceptual framework
- Methods of semiotic analysis limit themselves only to the content of the subject under analysis by centralizing the work of art being studied.
- The semiotic method uses a scientific meta-language
- Its goal is to determine the layers of meaning that make up a meaningful whole, a painting, written or scientific discourse, an image, an architectural edifice, a theatre performance, a musical composition and so on and correlate it by systemizing it through the use of a meta-language.
- Semiotic approaches concentrate on the articulation of meaning than the meaning themselves. They make effort to explain the process of making meaning. Thus, they are theories of signification that are focused on the form of the context.
- They believe that comprehending the meaning of a work of art contains in the observation of divergences occurring within the context.

- In its entirety, no approach in the field of semiotics is superior to the other, but each is unique and consistent in its methodology. In line with this, we will make use of both de Saussure's and Peirce's approaches to semiotics.

Peirce and Saussure made significant discussions of semiotics. In his publication, *A course in General Linguistics* Saussure proposed the term 'Semiology' and went further to give an insight to how 'semiology' works. His position as recorded by Leeds-Hurwitz[5] is as follows;

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology: I shall call it semiology... Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be, but it has right to existence, a place stakes out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of the general science of Semiology; the laws discovered by Semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well- defined area within the mass of anthropological facts (4).

From this stand point, Saussure suggests that linguistics encapsulates Semiology. For him, language is a creative action and not a thing, that is, the connection between the sound images (signifiers) and what they are signifying (object/concept) is arbitrary and in essence, has no logical connection.

On the other hand, Peirce's idea is at variance with Saussure's. To him, semiotics is more of logic and an aspect of linguistics. As recorded by Leeds-Hurwitz[5], Peirce's position is as follows:

Logic in its general sense, is, as I believe, I have shown, is only another name for semiotics. The quasi- necessary or formal doctrine of signs. By describing the doctrine as "quasi-necessary" or formal, I mean that we observe the characters of such signs as we know, and from an observation, by a process which I will not object to naming abstraction, we are led to statements, eminently fallible, and therefore in one sense by no means necessary, as to what must be characters of all signs used by scientific intelligence, that is to say by an intelligence capable of learning by experience (4).

Deduced from the above, it could be understood that Peirce is more concerned with what we can make out of it, than subjecting it to a linguistic review. That is, our understanding of signs lies primarily on our capacity to interpret the message it conveys.

In essence, while Saussure adopted a twofold approach of "Significant/Signified" or "Form and Context", Peirce advocated the use of logic in interpretation of signs. Either way, both scholars made significant impact in the study of signification, and have further demonstrated the essence of signs in human communication.

However, in this present research, our position will tilt more to Peirce's approach to semiotics, as we try to explain how the faithful imagination and thinking evolve meaning from colours used in the churches.

APPRAISAL OF LITERATURE

Words communicate different meanings depending on the situation. In other words, which is meaningful to one person, may not be meaningful to another, or at most, may conjure a different meaning to another depending on the situation or context of its usage.

Nwala identifies three shades of meaning; the denotative meaning, the thematic meaning and the associative meaning (231).

The denotative meaning often referred to as conceptual or cognitive meaning is generally considered as a central factor in linguistic communications. It is static, that is, the conceptual meaning of a lexical item does not change. Conceptual meaning has to do with the first sense which comes to mind. It is stable and widely understood. It is the idea or principle by which something is defined or identified [6].

For example, the conceptual meaning of 'water' is a liquid compound which is colorless, tasteless and transparent.

In contrast with the conceptual meaning is the connotative or symbolic meaning, an associative meaning which Ejele describes as "the communicative value which an expression has, by virtue of what it refers to, over and above the conceptual context" (22).

Symbolic meaning is signifying or suggestive of an associative or secondary meaning, aside the primary meaning. Associative meaning is personal, restricted and not shared [7].

SYMBOL, SIGN AND SYMBOLISM

Before looking at the concept of symbol, it is worthwhile to give an insight on the meaning of sign and symbolism. Sign in its simplest form, is anything that communicates a meaning other than its ordinary meaning. This meaning could be intentional or unintentional and it is communicated through any senses including visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory or taste. According to Culler[8], “all signs consist of a significant and a signife; which are roughly speaking, form and meaning” (16).

On the other hand, symbol is a thing which represents or connotes something else. It is “a mark or character used as a conventional representation of an object, function, or process etc” [9], this means that, symbols could connote or point to idea or thought, belief, visual image, activity, abstract or tangible entity and could take the form of sounds, words, gestures, or visual images (3).

In its simplest form, a symbol is an object, event, person, animal, colour, idea and so on which conveys speed or deeper meaning and significance.

The use of symbol is referred to as symbolism. According to *Cambridge Advanced_Learners Dictionary* [10], “symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense”. For instance, a red rose may symbolize love and at the same time, a red flag may symbolize danger or fire. At this point, the symbol, in this case, ‘colour red’ is seen to shift meaning depending on the context or the environment it is being used.

Symbolism gives the speaker or the writer freedom to add other levels of meaning to an utterance or writing. Symbolism has been an integral part of human culture, specifically since the inception of artistic expression. It is oftentimes viewed as a silent language. As noted by Udoh “humans possess the power to artificially create symbols” (209). These symbols can be in form of words, sounds, features, ideas or tangible images and they convey ideas and/or beliefs.

Symbols provide deeper meaning beyond its literal sense. Thus, when symbols are appropriately used, it provides more information than is expressed, but, if otherwise, it results in confusion and misconception.

There have been increased interests in research on colours and significant advances have been made, but there exist other issues which need be addressed for the literature to continue to develop apace.

Mahdinejad et al[11] studied the concept and themes of colour and light in the Exquisite Islamic Architecture. The study adopts a descriptive analytical approach to review and explain the semantic elements of light and colour. It also looks at how they are applied and their conceptual features in the historical architecture and relates these separate elements in earlier art and architecture in order to identify the semantic features and their influence on modern architecture.

The research concludes that the effects of light and colour in Islamic architecture is undeniable and bears a significant meaning. It is an important feature in creating the spiritual space of mosque and holy places.

Udoh gives a statistical analysis on the demands for selected types and colours of paints. The research data were based principally on the sales records of Peacock Paints Limited Etinan, Akwa Ibom State but with data from the depot of the Company situated in Calabar, Uyo, Port Harcourt, Warri, Kano and Onitsha for three consecutive years of 2002-2004.

A Two-way Analysis of variance was used to test the effect of demands for Types and Colours of paints in the different depots and the interaction in the three years. The results show significant differences in demand for paints types and colours. It was discovered that the demand for yellow, white, red and blue were significantly different with yellow paint having the highest demand.

Micheal and Usoro[12] investigated the socio-cultural values of colors in Anaañ, with the view to establishing the basis for the symbolic implications of colors in traditional and contemporary Anaañ Society. Eighty (80) informants were selected from four Anaañ speaking local government areas of Akwa Ibom State, using random sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was administered to respondents using Full Group Interview (FGI), Key Informant Interview (KII) and Participatory Learning Action (PCA) techniques.

The social theory of symbolic action provided the theoretical basis for the analysis of findings. Findings revealed that Anaañ has names for black, white and red only, while others are derived from objects. The Speaking Colours in Anaañ are affected by socio-cultural environments, religion, and context of usage.

Gladday in her research[13], “Colour Terms in Rivers State Languages” provides a survey of Colour terms in Rivers state and their symbolic values. The study examines the knowledge and use of Colour terms by speakers of Rivers State Languages. The study reveals that Colour terms in Rivers State Languages are not viable and are already endangered as most speakers do not know or use indigenous terms for colour when they should in everyday conversation.

Duyan & Unver[14] investigated the impact of classroom wall colour on student’s attention. The research was conducted with the age groups of 8-9 in two primary schools, one private and the other, state. These schools have different Socio-Cultural and Economic Scale. Seventy Eight (78) students participated in this study. Five (5) colours; Red, yellow, green, blue and purple were collected by using Munsell Colour System and classroom walls were painted five (5) consecutive weeks. The students held lessons on the different wall Colours and a weekly attention tests were administered on students. The results indicate that scores were the highest among the students using the classroom with the purple wall colour and the lowest among the students in the red wall colour classroom.

Wohlfarth H[15] investigated effects of colour and light on student’s achievement; behaviour and physiology by using a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent Control group design to study and analyse the impacts of full-spectrum lights, prescribed colour and light/colour combinations, ultra Violet Lights and electromagnetic radiation in an elementary school environment. Four (4) schools participated in this study.

The study observed significant relationships between the independent variable of colour/light and student pre-adolescent mood variations and noise level.

Mbima and Edem[16] studied the impact of colours in health and wellbeing of the Built Environment in the tropics. The study aimed at identifying how colour impacts on the health and wellbeing of the built- environment. To do this, the research studied the theory of colour, colour properties, and expressive colour qualities and the optical/emotional effects of colour. The study concludes that colour has an impact, symbolization and effect on not just the health, but also the wellbeing of the built environment.

Kurt and Osueke[17] examined the impacts of colour on the emotions of students, using the Students’ Union building in a university campus. The choice of the building was due to its copious use colour variances. The research used survey as a methodology and questionnaires were administered to even range of Students, comprising both International and local students, Undergraduates and Graduates. The analysis shows that because red colours are used on the complex, one gets excited on approaching the complex. The study thus concludes that colours have psychological properties and effects on the moods of individuals, hence, the use of appropriate and/or correct colour would increase the functionality of that space.

Kashyap Parikh[18] researching on emotional values of colour claims that there is no specific laws of colour symbolization but his findings show that men show a higher preference or plain deep shades while women have a higher preference for lights.

The research noted further that bright colours are preferred by children and that colour preference varies with geographical, national, cultural, and economical factors. To Parikh, the collective colour association may be influenced by cultural convention and established traditions and individuals react to different colour in different ways, and their psychological reaction to colour has psychological effects as well.

From the foregoing, it is observed that most researches are on the psychological functioning of colours, with little interest on the semantic functioning. It is on this strength that the present research will examine this colour symbolisation to determine whether there exist similarities or divergence due to the churches' era or movement. For Example, Pentecostal, Orthodox, African Indigenous, and so on.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of this research was descriptive quantitative method. The study area is Uyo Metropolis in Akwa Ibom State. To obtain data for this study, twenty churches in Uyo metropolis were visited. For human samples, the present research adopts the purposive sampling methods to select four persons in each of the churches. The investigation involved the use of structured questionnaire to elicit relevant data. To analysed collected data, the research first of all got a list of all colours associated with the twenty (20) selected churches in Uyo Metropolis. The primary, conceptual

meanings of all these colours are taken note of, and placed side by side their symbolic meanings as used in the respective churches of association. The conceptual and semantic meanings are also analysed.

DATA PRESENTATION

| S/N | CHURCH | COLOURS | CHURCH SYMBOLISMS | CONCEPTUAL MEANINGS | AREAS OF CONVERGENCE |
|-----|--|-------------|--|--|---|
| 1. | Assemblies Of God Church | Blue | Readiness to serve in an evangelism and to serve God in spirit | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism, | Loyalty, reliability, stability, honour and trust. |
| | | Yellow | Brightness | Attention-grabbing, comfort, liveliness, hunger, optimism, intellect, happiness, energy, conflict, cowardice | Attention grabbing, liveliness, intellect, happiness and energy |
| | | White | Purity, steadfastness in evangelism, sanctity, holiness | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility | Purify, sanctity and holiness |
| | | Black | Ready for service | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Elegance, power, authority, control and strength. |
| | | Gold | Happiness, golden crown of reward | Wealth, luxury, love, wisdom, magic | Wealth, luxury, love and wisdom |
| | | Red | The blood of Christ | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love and passion |
| 2. | Believers Assembly (Evangelical) Nigeria | Light brown | Fire and strength | Friendly and approachable, sincere, honest and genuine | Friendly, approachable, sincere, honest and genuine. |
| | | Green | Prosperity and strength | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Durability, luxury, wellbeing and optimism. |
| | | Brown | A fire brand | Relaxing, confident, casual, reassuring, nature, earthy, solid, reliable, genuine, endurance | Confidence, reassuring, solid, genuine and reliable. |
| 3. | Brotherhood of the Cross and Star | Red | Love, passion, vitality, the blood of Jesus Christ | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Love, passion, boldness, strength, courage. |
| | | White | Redemption from tribulations, purity, innocence, honesty | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, Innocence. |
| | | Yellow | Purity, orderliness | Attention-grabbing, comfort, liveliness, hunger, | Comfort, liveliness. |

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| | | | | optimism, intellect, happiness, energy, conflict, cowardice. | |
| | | Blue | Healing power of God, loyalty, truth | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism, | Loyalty, reliability, trust. |
| | | Green | Wealth, immortality | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Durability, reliability, luxury, wellbeing, freshness. |
| | | Purple | Royalty, priesthood, call to service | Power, royalty, nobility, elegance, sophistication, luxury, magic, mystery | Power, royalty, luxury, nobility. |
| | | Black | Authority to administer, warning | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Formality, power, authority, control, Death. |
| 4. | Catholic Church. | White | Purity and political leadership, resurrection of Christ. | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness, virginity and innocence. |
| | | Yellow | Presence of God, spiritual leadership | Attention-grabbing, comfort, liveliness, hunger, optimism, intellect, happiness, energy, conflict, cowardice | Comfort, liveliness, optimism, intellect, happiness and energy. |
| | | Red | Passion of Christ, martyrdom, death, blood of Christ | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, passion and socialism, boldness, strength, energy, determination, desire, courage and danger. |
| | | Gold | Royalty, spiritual power | Wealth, luxury, love, wisdom, magic | Wealth, luxury, love and wisdom. |
| | | Silver | Worldly power | Industrious, sleek, modernity, glamorous, graceful, sophisticated, elegance, riches and wealth | Industrious, sleek, modernity, glamorous, graceful, sophisticated, elegance, riches and wealth. |
| | | Green | Hope, dependence on God perseverance, and attention | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Durability, safety, reliability, wellbeing and optimism. |
| | | Black | Penance, mourning | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Night, death and morbidity. |
| | | Purple | Period of remorse, sorrow, royalty, mourning, suffering, | Power, royalty, nobility, elegance, sophistication, luxury, magic, mystery | Royalty |

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| | | | pains | | |
| | | Violet | Period of remorse | The future, imagination and spirituality | Imagination, future and spirituality. |
| 5. | Celestial Church of Christ | White | Power and Holiness | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, newness, peace, and virginity |
| | | Blue | Spirit in love | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism, | Loyalty, reliability and trust |
| | | Sun yellow | Health, clarity of thought, orderliness, purity and wisdom. | Happiness, optimism, enlightenment, creativity, sunshine and spring | Happiness, optimism, sunshine and spring |
| | | Gold | Glory of God Control, practicality, endurance, creativity and playfulness. | Wealth, luxury, love, wisdom, and magic | Wealth, luxury, wisdom and magic |
| | | Green | Restoration, fertility, growth, hope, wealth and health. | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness. | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, optimism, freshness. |
| | | Black | Mourning | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, morbidity, death. | Night, day, morbidity and depression. |
| | | Red | Affliction and strife, passion, security, enthusiasm, vitality | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos. | Danger, anger, chaos, passion, desire, energy, strength, excitement determination, courage and speed. |
| | | Purple | Royalty, spiritual attainment. | Power, royalty, nobility, elegance, sophistication, luxury, magic and mystery. | Power, royalty, nobility, elegance, sophistication, luxury, |
| | | Silver | Redemptive work of Christ. | Industrious, sleek, modernity, glamorous, graceful, sophisticated, elegance, riches, and wealth. | Grateful |
| 6. | Christ Embassy | Blue | No symbolism | | |
| | | Green | No symbolism | | |
| | | Gold | No symbolism | | |
| | | White | No symbolism | | |
| 7. | Church of Christ | No preference/ reverence of any color | No symbolism | | |
| 8. | Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) | Blue | The love of God | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honor, trust, stability, conservatism | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honor, trust and stability. |
| | | Green | Growth and life | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Durability, reliability, luxury, healing, wellbeing, nature, calm, relaxation and freshness. |

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|-----|--------------------------------------|----------|--|---|--|
| | | White | The peace of God, Purity, Joy | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity and innocence. |
| | | Red | The blood of Jesus, martyrdom, glory, tongues of fire, core zeal | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, desire, passion, courage, boldness, strength and energy. |
| | | Black | Sobriety | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Elegance, sophistication and strength. |
| 9. | Deeper Life Bible Church | Blue | Holiness and peace. | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism | Peace, reliability, honour and trust. |
| | | White | Righteousness | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence and simplicity |
| | | Black | No symbolism | | |
| 10. | Four Square Gospel church | Violet | The coming of Jesus Christ, royalty | The future, imagination and spirituality | Future, imagination and spirituality. |
| | | Sky Blue | Divine cure, anointing | Freedom, self-expression, trustworthy, wisdom, joy. | Freedom, self-expression, trustworthiness, wisdom and joy. |
| | | Red | Salvation of the soul, the blood of Jesus, redemption and justice. | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, excitement, passion and socialism. |
| | | Gold | Baptism and the Holy Spirit | Wealth, luxury, love, wisdom, magic | Wealth, luxury, love, wisdom and magic |
| 11. | Full Life Christian Centre (FLCC) | White | Purity | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness, virginity and innocence. |
| | | Blue | Royalty | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism, | Honour and trust. |
| | | Sky Blue | Royalty | Freedom, self-expression, trustworthy, wisdom, joy | Trustworthy and wisdom. |
| | | Pink | No symbolism | | |
| 12. | Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel) | Yellow | | Attention-grabbing, comfort, liveliness, hunger, optimism, intellect, happiness, energy, conflict, cowardice | Liveliness and attention grabbing |
| | | Sky blue | Serenity, Peace and spirituality | Freedom, self-expression, trustworthy, wisdom, joy | Freedom and joy |
| | | Black | Power, authority, strength | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Power, authority and strength. |
| | | White | Righteousness, peace | Cleanliness, purity, | Cleanliness, purity, |

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|-----|-----------------------------|-----------|---|--|---|
| | | | | newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility | newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, |
| | | Red | Life, health, courage and love | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, courage, boldness, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage and socialism. |
| 13. | Lutheran Church | Red | Passion and blood | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Passion, warmth and love. |
| | | White | Purity in the blood of Christ | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility | Cleanliness, purity, newness, virginity and innocence |
| | | Black | The death of Christ | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Night, death, depression, morbidity. |
| | | Green | Anticipation and hope, penance | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Healing, wellbeing, reliability, safety and optimism |
| | | Rose | Penance and worship | Love and romance, femininity, optimism, intensity, energy, passion, appreciation, gratitude, recognition, grace, gentleness, joy, happiness. | Gratitude, appreciation and recognition. |
| 14. | Methodist Church of Nigeria | White | Holiness, Peace | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness. |
| | | Red | Blood of Christ, fire, confidence, boldness | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, boldness, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage and danger. |
| | | Green | Growth, Peace | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Wellbeing, calm, safety, harmony and freshness. |
| | | Navy blue | Hope | Power, authority, depth, expertise and stability | Hope |
| | | Brown | Danger, death and uncleanliness. | Relaxing, confident, casual, reassuring, nature, earthy, solid, reliable, genuine, endurance | Earthy, casual, nature. |
| 15. | Presbyterian | Purple | Royalty | Power, royalty, nobility, | Power, royalty, nobility, |

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|-----|----------------------------------|--------|---|--|--|
| | Church | | | elegance, sophistication, luxury, magic, mystery | elegance, sophistication and luxury |
| | | White | Peace, purity, holiness | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Peace, purity and holiness |
| | | Black | Balance, boldness and mourning | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Power, sophistication elegance, authority, control, strength, depression, right, death and morbidity |
| | | Blue | Trust and loyalty, strength, togetherness and love | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism | Peace, loyalty, reliability, trust and stability. |
| | | Gold | Royalty | Wealth, luxury, love, wisdom, magic | Wealth, luxury, love and wisdom. |
| | | Red | Christmas festivities | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, excitement and passion |
| | | Green | Vegetation | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Environmental, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation and freshness |
| 16. | Qua Iboe Church | Yellow | No symbolism | Attention-grabbing, comfort, liveliness, hunger, optimism, intellect, happiness, energy, conflict, cowardice | |
| | | Red | Blood of Jesus, Authority, courage | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, strength, energy, passion and courage. |
| | | Blue | Inspiration and serenity | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism, | Peace and stability. |
| | | White | Purity and youthfulness | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity and innocence. |
| 17. | Redeemed Christian Church of God | White | Purity, Peace, Holiness and eternity | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness, virginity, and innocence |
| | | Red | Blood of Jesus, power, strength, courage, beauty, hope and peace. | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, passion, courage, strength, determination and boldness. |
| | | Blue | Love, softness, freshness, truth and loyalty. | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism, | Trust, reliability, loyalty and trust |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------|---|--|---|
| | | Green | Fertility, Fruitfulness, and reproduction | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Environmental, wellbeing, nature and freshness. |
| 18. | Salvation Ministries (Home of Success) | Black | Sin | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Illegality, night, death. Depression and morbidity. |
| | | Red | Blood | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love and passion. |
| | | Blue | Baptism | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism | Peace, loyalty and stability |
| | | White | Cleansing | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, |
| | | Green | Growth | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Reliability, environment, healing, wellbeing, nature and freshness. |
| | | Yellow | Heaven | Attention-grabbing, comfort, liveliness, hunger, optimism, intellect, happiness, energy, conflict, cowardice. | Comfort, liveliness, happiness and optimism. |
| 19. | The Eternal order of Cherubim and Seraphim | Blue | Inspiration and hope | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism. | |
| | | Yellow | Hope | Attention-grabbing, comfort, liveliness, hunger, optimism, intellect, happiness, energy, conflict, cowardice. | Optimism, Comfort |
| | | White | Holiness, peace and purity | Cleanliness, purity, newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | Peace, cleanliness. Purity, newness, Virginity, Innocence, Simplicity |
| | | Red | Holy Spirit, love and courage | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, Boldness, strength, Determination, Passion, courage. |
| 20. | The Lords | White | Purity | Cleanliness, purity, | Cleanliness, newness, |

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|-------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Chosen Charismatic Revival Movement | | | newness, peace, virginity, innocence, simplicity, sterility, | peace, virginity and innocence |
| | Green | Nature | Durability, reliability, environmental, luxury, healing, well-being, nature, calm, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, harmony, freshness | Environmental, calm, freshness and nature. |
| | Red | Blood of Jesus, courage | Warmth, love, boldness, excitement, speed, strength, energy, determination, desire, passion, courage, socialism, anger, danger, chaos | Warmth, love, boldness, strength, energy, passion and courage |
| | Blue | Serenity, inspiration | Peace, loyalty, reliability, honour, trust, stability, conservatism, | Peace and stability. |
| | Black | Seriousness and strength | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control, strength, illegality, depression, night, death, morbidity | Elegance, sophistication, formality, power, authority, control and strength. |
| | Gold | Riches and Wealth | Wealth, luxury, love, wisdom, magic | Wealth, love, luxury and wisdom |

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the above analysis it can be seen that, the domain of usage is dominant in understanding the language of colours. In essence, there are no fixed meanings to these colours as used in the selected Churches. This is consistent with the Structuralists view that meanings imposed on words are arbitrary and relational. Using blue colour as an instance, it is observed that while it symbolises “readiness to serve in an evangelism” and “to serve God in spirit “as used in Assemblies of God Church, same blue colour symbolises “trust and loyalty,” “strength”, “togetherness” and “love “as used in Presbyterian Church. Furthermore, the colour symbolises “royalty” as used in Full Life Christian Center. By implication, to get the true meaning of the colour, even among the selected churches, one has to look at the specific church denomination as the symbolic meaning of a colour in one church may have no inherent connection that would appropriate it with the meaning it conveys in another church and even in its denotative sense.

The above assertion also holds true of the view of semiotics that icons, indexes and symbols convey meaning at the second level. The meaning attached to a sign is arbitrary or conventional as a particular sign could evoke varying meanings depending on the context or environment of its usage. For instance, black colour, in Salvation ministries, symbolise “sin”, a negative symbolisation, the same black colour symbolise “penance” and “mourning” , both negative symbolic meanings as used in Catholic church, also black colour symbolises “ready for service”, a rather positive symbolic meaning as used in Assemblies of God. Yet in The Lord’s Chosen Charismatic Revival movement, the colour stands for “seriousness” and “strength”, both positive symbolic meanings. In the case of Brotherhood of the Cross and Star, black colour symbolises “authority to administer” and “warning”, positive and negative symbolisms respectively, as used in the church.

SUMMARY

Colours are metaphorically conceptualised across the selected churches in Uyo metropolis. The symbolisations are not based on the churches’ era or movement, but rather they are seen to be denomination specific. The meaning dimensions on the use of colours have therefore been modified in Christianity. In the selected churches, the symbolic meanings of colours do not always speak or depict its denotative sense. This has automatically been suppressed and replaced with the particular church denomination undertones. Blue colour now symbolise royalty as used in Full Life Christian Center and Gospel Testimony of Jesus rather than the traditional purple and violet colours which stand for royalty.

CONCLUSION

This work has concluded from all findings that colour is an unspoken language that creates connection with the meaning of event or situation. It has also concluded that the symbolic meaning of colours as used in churches are fluid and denomination specific and has no relationship with the church era or movement. The research has been able to

investigate how colours are being used to communicate meanings aside their conceptual denotations. Also, meanings of some colours including black and blue have been observed to have undergone some form of amelioration from their everyday conceptualisation, when viewed against their symbolisation in some of the selected churches. Thus, the poor knowledge of the symbolisation of the colours could lead to breach of communication and misconception.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This research recommends the following:

- i. That language users in different speech communities should consciously learn what these colours symbolise for effective communication.
- ii. Users should carefully select the colours they put to use so that they do not convey wrong meanings to the audience.
- iii. That language users should consciously study the context of colour usage in order to properly assign meanings to the colours.

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