

AN ANALYSIS MULTIMODAL OF HUMANITARIAN ISSUES POSTERS

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Abstract

Revealing humanity issues through posters is a strategy to address conflicts. Therefore, campaign posters should attract the readers to concern about these issues. The unlimited multimodal texts provide chances to be semantically analyzed. This study focuses on social semiotics with a multimodal perspective in campaign posters that contain humanity issues. This study aims to identify the use of campaign posters in spreading principles of humanity and to reduce the prolonged humanitarian crisis in the world. The study applied reading images theory proposed by Kress & Leeuwen (2006), systemic functional linguistics proposed by Halliday (2004), the connotation of names and terms of address proposed by Keith Allan (2001), social semiotics proposed by Bezemer and Kress (2008), and observed the relation between verbal-visual texts through logico-semantic proposed by Martinec and Salway (2005). The study showed that the campaign posters can be considered as a part of efforts to improve the awareness of freedom, equality, and values comprehensively through multimodal.

Keywords: *Semiotics, Multimodality, And Humanitarian Issues.*

Introduction

Humanitarian issues still become a multidimensional issue during the industrial revolution 4.0 and the era of the domination of artificial intelligence to realize civil society 5.0. As published on the website of the United Nations Human Rights (UNHR), current humanitarian issues cover human rights violations, poverty, racism, religiophobia, human trafficking, and war conflicts. To deal with those issues, campaigns against conflicts on humanitarian issues are intensified around the world through various media, both digital and conventional [1]. As propaganda media, posters are built on a unique semiotic system as language and images interact cohesively. It is designed with a logical system to convey meaning in the communication process and requires an appropriate system to build meaning [2].

Thus, readers should have an appropriate system to deconstruct the meaning on campaign posters concerning humanitarian issues to avoid mistakes in interpreting the message to be conveyed. As

the most important part of the poster, verbal and visual modes are not only about what the reader can sense but also about how the reader can understand it as an initiation process in the social order which is a form of social action or social semiotics that will embody the social dimension [3]. Meanwhile, a related multimodal study investigated how multimodal in an advertisement (music, sound, action, and images) work together in constructing an interpersonal meaning [4]. In different circumstances, the way to construct ideational and representational meanings in wonderful Indonesia advertisements can be implemented in various contexts such as English language teaching programs [5]. *In addition*, multimodal in a context has challenged today's readers requiring them to be familiar with art, media, and semiotics [6]. In the online and offline context, linguistic studies concerning humanitarian issues are still limited. Thus, increasing awareness of conflicts in humanitarian issues through posters is important to be investigated as current humanitarian

messages are not only through verbal messages but also verbal and visual forms. Besides, visual representation is a component that strengthens the verbal mode (semiotic source) in sending messages to readers [7]. It is in line with states that when visual and verbal interact, modes can provide meanings that expand other modes spatially, temporally, and causally through enhancement [8]. This study aims to analyze how social semiotics and multimodal perspectives play a role in constructing the concept of humanitarian issues which are sequentially discussed in the description of transitivity and mood, the use of pronoun device selection as a social distancing strategy, social semiotics, reading pictures, and relationships built on campaign posters concerning humanitarian issues.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive qualitative method. It used 1) Kress and Leeuwen (2006) theory about read the visuals on campaign posters to see the representations that appear in sending humanitarian messages; 2) systemic functional linguistics proposed by Halliday (2004) with transitivity and mood analysis to see clause structures that represent ideational meanings; 3) semantics proposed by Keith Allan (2001) to see the use of pronoun tools as the connotation of name and terms of address [9]; 4) social semiotics proposed by Bezemer and Kress (2008) which focuses on the practice of constructing social meaning both verbally and visually [10]; and 5) logico-semantic proposed by Martinec and Salway (2005) to see the relationships built on campaign posters concerning to humanitarian issues [11].

Multimodal refers to how individuals exchange meaning using two or more modes in communication [12]. If a text is analyzed using two modes, verbal and visual, then, mode means as sources established from social and cultural spaces to convey meaning. The source of the mode

is not limited to language, but it also refers to sounds, spaces, pictures, and motion which can send messages and offer meanings through the mode [10]. The poster campaign can be interpreted freely by the reader, but this perspective is bounded by social reality [7]. Therefore, this study tries to identify the relationship of the verbal and visual campaign in constructing the poster campaign concerning humanitarian issues as an effort to fight humanitarian issues.

Findings and Discussion

The data were posters taken from the website of the United Nations of Human Rights (UNHR) and interpretation of the randomly-selected students.

Figure 1. “#FIGHTracism”



(Source:

<https://www.standup4humanrights.org/layout/files/racismday2019/fightracism-lorde.jpg>)

Interpretation:

1. NF (25): “This poster is really nice. From this picture, we can see what is the intended meaning of this poster. The locution has a deep meaning to the society's perspective on differences. All aspects of this poster look fit and proportionate so that can be easily understood”.
2. DN (20): “This poster explains how to react to a difference, it can be race, ethnicity, culture, or religion”.

The findings first showed the results of the transitivity and mood analysis of the

verbal text in the concept of systemic functional linguistics, semantics, and then it is followed by the results of the analysis of visual text and the relationship between visual and verbal modes on the poster. Figure 1 shows that humanitarian messages are built through a mental process with a declarative mood. Mental processes are processes of cognition or perception reflecting or relate to human consciousness [13]. The declarative mood is to construct spontaneous and factual statements about what is felt and witnessed. The ideological value in the picture can be seen in the transitivity of the text in the form of sense. Thus, ordinary people can easily recognize it and the emergence of the phenomenon illustrates that the social reality is very urgent.

The strategy in selecting the first plural pronouns in the form of "our" and "us" has resulted in a power of words connotation and it affects the social distance closeness with intimate social personal styles. Hence, viewers can easily be influenced by the author. This strategy is used as a way of personalization that has the power and function to influence speakers and interlocutors [9].

The visual mode showed a natural object of a young girl as the represented participant. She has straight black hair that stretches out across her shoulders and wears dark clothes. The gaze of the represented participant does not show a vector between the reader's eye line because she does not look directly at the viewer. It means there is no eye contact between the represented participant and viewer. The viewer is placed as the observer and it is considered as an 'offer' of information and not a 'demand'. Thus, the observer can reject or accept it. The picture of the represented participant was shot using medium close-up shot technique and placing the observer parallel to the social distance point of view with personal or friendly characteristics. In terms of compositional layout, it can be identified as a given form meaning that what the represented participant does is a symbol of

the differences in the social reality of society.

Furthermore, visual mode showed the represented participant with a different highlight contrast as a form of resistance in fighting racism on skin color differences. This supports the refutation of Stockl's statement in concerning the semantic limitation that "some meaning relations like causality cannot be expressed by images" [11]. The verbal mode in the image sharpens the visual manifested by the projection of information through locution (words) from the visual to verbal modes. It will help determine what is conveyed through the visual mode in the verbal mode.

Figure 2. "Freedom, Respect, and Compassion"



(Source: https://www.standup4humanrights.org/layout/files/Posters/UDHR_70_poster-low_res.pdf)

Interpretation:

1. DM (20): "According to this picture, we can conclude that every human being has the freedom and respect for fellow human beings. In addition, a sense of empathy can increase a sense of caring for others".
2. SA (23): "In my opinion, the poster depicts several portraits of humanity, such as conflict and relation between each others".

Figure 2 showed that humanitarian messages are constructed through the material process and imperative mood. The emerging ideological value is the use of the superlative level which refers to the level of quality or the highest value among all compared references which is manner. In the end, even though there is participant immersion, the observer is considered good at what the author meant.

The loss of pronouns in the text does not merely eliminate social distancing relations as the power of the speaker who acts as consultative can affect the interlocutor. Based on the point of view of visual mode, it showed 3 frames with natural photos in one picture and the compositional layout of the image is in the middle. The top frame showed 4 represented participants shot using the medium close up shot technique in one picture and the condition is like the immigrant group: 1. A man with a beard and a mustache wearing a brown vest and a blue shirt folded up to his elbows with a black watch on the left hand while raising his hand as if to say something; 2. A girl with loose black hair wearing a pink dress with a cartoon rabbit pattern; 3. A woman wearing an orange hijab frowning while smiling a little; and 4. A boy wearing a blue shirt turning his back on the camera.

The middle frame showed a man as the represented participant shot using the extreme shot technique, shoulder-length close-up shot, who is looking down. He has thick eyebrows and dark skin with wrinkles on his face. He is shirtless with a posture ready to run. In this shooting technique, the observer is placed at the top so that he has more power over the represented participant and even tends to be authoritarian.

The bottom frame showed a hand of a child (characterized by the small size of the arm) wearing pink clothes and holding the index finger of an adult's right hand who wears yellow clothes (characterized by wrinkles on the arm skin). It is commonly found when a child walk with her/his parents walk (holding hands). From all

image frames, only the top frame showed the view of the represented participant, so it can produce a vector between the reader's eye line with the represented participant.

The emerging relationship between visual and verbal modes is that they support and complement each other. The verbal mode strengthens the visual mode through locution and the visual mode complements the verbal mode through pictures taken from current social phenomena. Thus, they can be easily recognized by the viewer/observer.

Conclusion

The results of the analysis show that the selected posters are the potential to represent and convey humanitarian messages through multimodal texts. By using multimodal resources which consider semantic features, the use of pronoun device selection as social distance, compositional layout, and the relationship between visual and verbal modes will increase the effectiveness of the poster to convey the messages. Visual mode identification showed that the poster maker's experience is represented in a relevant way in a poster with social reality content supported by a verbal mode in the form of locution. It is expected that this multimodal can shape the character of the reader to better understand the message and behave in accordance with the messages conveyed by the poster. In the end, the construction of thought that is continuously built regarding humanitarian issues will result in a true civil society 5.0.

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