



CONTRASTIVE SOCIAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND ARABIC SOCIAL MEDIA PALESTINE IMAGES

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Article history:		Abstract:
Received:	17 th October 2023	The aim of this study was to establish the relationship between language and pictures of Palestine through the use of social semiotic analysis. The purpose was to analyze the semiotic features (colors, angles, and capitalization) present in the six selected photos(English and Arabic). This study collected extensive data that enabled the identification of the semiotic attributes of photos, such as their visual strategies, framing, colors, and types of clause as linguistic analysis. This study utilises the semiotics theory of Kress and van Leeuwen's <i>Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design</i> (2006) as analytical frameworks. The document aims to address the following inquiries: 1. What visual strategies are employed in Palestine images? 2. What is the primary language used in Palestine images? 3. What is the importance of sign framing in Palestine images? 4. How are colors used to depict the contrast between English and Arabic culture?. This article specifically examines the disparities between English and Arab individuals in their approach to addressing Palestine-related matters, utilizing visual aids to bolster the cause of the Palestinian country.
Accepted:	14 th November 2023	
Published:	20 th December 2023	

Keywords: Social Semiotics, Palestine images, Framing, colors, visual design.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Language is a semiotic system that can be conveyed through several concepts. It diverges from the system of writing, the deaf-mute alphabet, courteous expressions, symbolic rituals, and military signals. According to De Saussure (1916:16), this system of signs is considered the most significant among others.

The term "semiotics" is derived from the Greek root "seme", specifically from the word semeiotikos, which refers to someone who interprets signals. Semiotics is a scientific study that specifically examines the process of interpreting signs and the mechanics behind their functioning (Cobley and Litza, 1999:4).

Semiotics, as described by Crystal, refers to the scientific examination of the characteristics of signalling systems, whether they are of natural or artificial origin. Semiotics is a field of study in philosophy that focuses on the analysis of sign and symbol systems. The study of communicative systems involves the examination of linguistic, philosophical, social, and psychological aspects (2008:431).

Photographic semiotics is the academic discipline that examines the process of creating significance and understanding between a photograph and its viewers. Therefore, in order to comprehend the photographer's objectives, it is crucial for the audience to prioritize comprehending the underlying significance of the images. The semiotic analysis enables the audience to acquire deeper insights and meaningful contemplations on this subject (Leon, 2017).

Semiotics and social semiotics diverge in that social semiotics specifically investigates the correlation and interrelation between social activities and text (Kress, 2005: 5). Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 263) argue that social semiotics builds upon traditional semiotics by extending the linear process of communication from sender to message to receiver, and instead focuses on the complex and interactive network of relationships between many elements.

The concept of culture is quite complex and can be defined and comprehended from several perspectives. The interpretation of the term 'culture' is largely dependent on the frame of reference and context in which it is used (Baldwin et al, 2004: 188).

2.2 METHODOLOGY

2.2.1 Kress and van Leeuwen's Social Semiotics:

According to Van Leeuwen (2005:1), social semiotics can be defined as a new and distinct approach to the practice and philosophy of semiotics. Social semiotics is a theoretical framework that explains how social and cultural factors influence texts and the meanings conveyed through multimodal visual narratives. The combination of multimodality and social semiotics enhances our comprehension of various types of communication (Huang, 2009:2, and Kress, 2010:16). In their book "**Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design**" (2006 [1996]), Gunther Kress and van Leeuwen introduced a distinctive approach to examining visual semiotics via the lens of social semiotics, treating it as a form of "grammar". The overall interaction between the various modes undermines the intended outcome. Their technique is referred to as a 'grammar' in order to emphasize the presence of "culturally generated regularity". Kress and van Leeuwen base their framework on Halliday's social semiotic approach, which centers on three metafunctions of language: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual. They introduce new vocabulary to describe these metafunctions. Kress and van Leeuwen describe the ideational as 'representational' instead of 'ideational'; 'interactive' instead of interpersonal'; and 'compositional' instead of 'textual' (Jewitt and van Leeuwen, 2001:138).

3.3 THE MODEL OF ANALYSIS

1. Image

The image employs a social semiotic approach to convey meaning via visual communication. Many studies on visual semiotics have mostly focused on what might be considered as the analogous of 'words' (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2005: 1). The image encompasses the following elements:

1- **Sign placement:** This refers to the positioning of depicted individuals within a visual space, with the aim of conveying certain information. Hence, the positioning of participants, whether it be on the left, right, center, margin, top, or bottom, directly impacts the interpretation attributed to them. According to Kress (2010: 33), the positioning of a sign is functionally dominant in conveying the most significant "informational load" of the image.

2- **Given and New:** The frameworks of Given and New emphasize horizontal alliances and are prevalent in Western societies. Culture

3- **Visual Modality:** According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 89), visuals can have varying levels of modality, similar to verbal modality. They can be either high modality or low modality. High modality in visuals refers to the degree to which objects or individuals appear realistic, resembling their actual appearance. Low modality refers to a state in which things or persons appear unrealistic.

4- **Framing:** Framing is a tool that can influence the recipients' comprehension. It is employed when there is a need to indicate separation or connection between pieces or groupings within a layout (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 214). Various techniques can be employed to achieve framing, including the use of frame lines, the presence of color or shape discontinuities, or the deliberate absence of color.

5- **Power and Angle:** A low angle in images reveals the dominance of the individuals being portrayed over the viewers. Kress & van Leeuwen (2006, 140) state that low angles typically convey a sense of superiority, exaltation, and triumph. On the other hand, high angles tend to reduce the individual, morally flatten them by reducing them to ground level, and portray them as trapped in an insurmountable determinism.

2. Word

Words serve as a tool for visual communication and are closely connected to the signifier of a sign. Hodge and Kress (1988: 8) argue that the selection of word classes and phrase structures in language can be analogous to the selection of color or compositional structures in visual communication.

1- **Choice of Language:** The language might be either formal or informal. The formal language employs unconventional syntax to convey meaning in marketing messages. Specialized terminology and intricate sentence structures are employed to convey significance.

2- Color

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 229) state that color is mostly associated with emotions. The utilization of color can significantly impact the effectiveness of advertisements. Colors serve as non-verbal signals and often capture the immediate attention of the recipients. Colour is employed to signify individuals, locations, objects, as well as categories of individuals, locations, objects, and broader concepts.

3.4 Data of Analysis

3.4.1 Visual analysis of English data

Image NO. 1.



Image Description

Thousands of American-Jews and their supporters congregated outside the US Capitol and on the National Mall in Washington, DC for a demonstration titled "Jews Say Stop the Genocide of Palestinians".

1. Placement of Signs

One image of the woman is placed at the center of this image. Behind the woman, there is an image for the American demonstrators. Putting the woman and her logo in the center creates a special relationship between the image and the woman.

2. Given and New

The image of the logo is *Given* because it is an element of familiarity. All other people behind and around her are unfamiliar because, they are a real demonstrated people. The *New*, on the other hand, is represented visually through the picture of the woman. It is New because it is the first time she is introduced to receivers.

3. Visual Modality

It contains a realistic photo of human image who is a real demonstrated woman. Therefore, this image has a high modality in terms of using real images.

4. Framing

In this image, connection is observed between the photographed woman and the logo image from the purview of framing. There is no separation between the image of the woman, the people around her and the logo. The significance of this framing is to make clear the idea that stresses group identity and connection.

5. Power and Angle

Images of the woman and the logo in this announcement are photographed from an eye level, then the point of view is one of equality and there is no power difference involved. The photographed woman looks straight on receivers. She is not depicted as exercising symbolic power on receivers.

6. Words (Language: Formal / Informal)

Written text in this image is considered informal when everyday syntax, words, language and everyday terms are utilized to communicate meaning within the message. Equal power, frequent contact, and high effective involvement are the typical situation of language used in this image.

7. Colors

The color of the is white to express completion and perfection to draw the attention. The background is colored green. It indicates the color of setting. It also means justice ,contemplation, justice' as well as hope.

Image NO. 2



Image Description

Protests persist in major cities in the Western world, marking the 29th consecutive day since the Israeli onslaught on the Gaza Strip intensified. The attendees condemned the genocidal acts perpetrated by the occupying forces against innocent inhabitants, as well as the deliberate attacks on hospitals and the infrastructure of the sector.

Massive protests took occurred in multiple locations across Britain on Saturday, November 4, 2023. The demonstrators demanded an immediate cessation of hostilities in Gaza and a halt to the deliberate attacks on hospitals, schools accommodating displaced individuals, ambulances, and people. The protests were organized in response to the appeals made by several Palestinian organizations and entities, such as the Palestinian Forum in Britain, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the Friends of Al-Aqsa Organization, the Islamic League in Britain, the "Stop the War" coalition, and the "Stop Nuclear Weapon" coalition.

1. Placement of Signs

The image of the poster is placed at the center of this picture. Behind the poster, an image of British demonstrators. Putting the people and the poster in the center of the image creates a special relationship between the image and the woman, man who hold the poster.

2. Given and New

The image of the logo is *Given* because it is an element of familiarity. All other people behind and around the logo are unfamiliar because, they are real demonstrated people. The *New*, therefore, is represented visually through the picture of those people. It is New because it is the first time they are introduced to receivers.

3. Visual Modality

This image features a lifelike photograph of a genuine male and female individual. Due to the utilization of authentic images, this image possesses a high degree of modality.

4. Framing

In this image, connection is observed between the photographed people and the logo image from the purview of framing. There is no separation between the image of the poster and the people around it. The significance of this framing is to make clear the idea that stresses group identity and connection.

5. Power and Angle

The photographs in this announcement capture the individuals and the poster from a perspective at eye level, creating a sense of equality and eliminating any power dynamics. Individuals direct their gaze directly onto receivers. They are not shown as exerting symbolic authority over recipients.

6. Words (formal and informal language)

Written text is considered informal because every day syntax, words, language and everyday terms are utilized to communicate meaning within the message. **"No justice, No peace"**, this utterance follow no regular syntactic rule. Therefore, equal power, frequent contact, and high effective involvement are the typical situation of language used in this image.

7. Color

This image contains an amazing array of hues, including red, green, white, and black. The poster's black background, which dominates the image and is centered to imply authority, is a dominant color.

Image NO. 3



Image Description

On October 9th, in Sydney, Australia: A procession of advocates for Palestine advances towards the Sydney Opera House during a demonstration on October 09, 2023 in Sydney, Australia. According to official sources, the Palestinian militant group Hamas carried out an unexpected assault on Israel from Gaza using land, sea, and air forces over the weekend, resulting in the deaths of over 600 individuals and injuries to more than 2000. According to reports, Hamas has abducted Israeli soldiers and civilians, transporting them into Gaza. Following the incident, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war, leading to continuous military bombings by Israel on Gaza, resulting in the deaths of hundreds. The photo was taken by Lisa Maree Williams/Getty Images.

1. Placement of Signs

A small section is dedicated to verbal signs. This suggests that the human gathering for the refusal of the war is the central means of conveying information by holding Palestine's flag. Inserting the photographed humans carrying posters and the Palestinian flag builds a relationship between them and their desire.

2. Given and New

The poster image is used as it serves as a familiar aspect in this design. The concept of "The New" is visually conveyed through the depiction of individuals in the image.

3. Visual Modality

This image contains realistic photo of human image (the photographed people) and the poster, a real poster, and real flags. Therefore, the picture has high modality in terms of using these two images.

4. Framing

No significant 'disconnection' is observed between the people and the product image from the purview of framing. There is no separation between the images of the people and the poster through frame lines or pictorial framing devices. The absence of framing in this image stresses group identity between those demonstrated people and the Palestinian one.

5. Power and Angle

The individuals in the shot are gazing in the direction of the recipients. Therefore, they are not portrayed as exerting symbolic authority over recipients. They are congruent to the receivers as they lie within the same angle.

6. Words

The poster that is carried by the women "Palestine is Ukraine" reflects the formal language because it contains usual syntactic form. Infrequent or one-off contact and low effective involvement are the typical situation of language used in this poster.

7. Colors

The picture uses the color red, which symbolically emphasizes the violent and criminal deeds of the enemy. The color red holds various metaphorical connotations across diverse cultures, encompassing concepts such as vitality, well-being, strength, conflict, bravery, wrath, affection, and religious zeal. All of these activities necessitate a strong sense of passion. Therefore, this color is ideal for this purpose, as it signifies the distinctiveness of the crime's identity. The second color, white, symbolizes innocence or purity, embodying purity and morality, and is commonly associated with many religious rituals. Black is frequently associated with negative connotations, such as mortality, apprehension, or melancholy. The color green represents wisdom.

3.4.2 Visual Analysis of Data in Arabic



Image Description

Greetings from Beirut to Palestine.....

The Lebanese capital recently witnessed the largest demonstrations since the start of the Zionist aggression on the Gaza Strip. These demonstrations coincided with a general strike organized by Palestinians in the occupied territories in 1948, as well as subsequent confrontations with the occupying army in the occupied West Bank.

The participants departed on Tuesday afternoon from the Mar Elias camp for Palestinian refugees at UNESCO Roundabout, heading towards Riad Al-Solh Square in central Beirut. They proudly displayed Palestinian flags and banners denouncing the Zionist atrocities that have taken place across Palestine. Additionally, they carried banners with the hash tag **#Lebanon Supports Palestine**, urging its widespread usage on various social media platforms.

1. Placement of Signs

A large section is dedicated to verbal signs. This suggests that logo is the central means of conveying information. Inserting the photographed humans above the post builds a relationship between the man and the product.

2. Given and New

The image of the poster is *Given* because it is an element of familiarity in this ad. The *New* is represented visually by the image of the people. The text or headline itself the image is given because Lebanon is with Palestinian people all the time.

3. Visual Modality

This image consists of a poster and a realistic photograph of human subjects (the photographed individuals). As a result, the image's modality while utilizing these two photos is high

4. Framing

No significant 'disconnection' is observed between the people and the product image from the purview of framing. There is no separation between the images of the people and the poster through frame lines or pictorial framing devices. The absence of framing in this image stresses group identity between people around this poster.

5. Power and Angle

People who are being photographed are oriented toward the receivers. Consequently, they do not appear to possess symbolic influence over recipients. They are congruent to the receivers as they lie within the same angle.

6. Words

This poster has a written text which reflects the formal language because it contains usual Arabic syntactic form. There are specific technical terms and complex syntax used to communicate meaning.

7. Colors

The main color in this picture is red, which makes the blood and crimes done by the enemy stand out even more. Some people think that the color red helps with the ideational function because it makes people feel strong emotions. Because of this, it is the right color for this case because it shows the specifics of the crime. White, which means innocence or purity, is the other main color. In this picture, the ground of the sign is written in white.

Image NO. 5



Image Description

On Thursday, October 19, nationwide, numerous popular marches were initiated in response to invitations from various political parties and organizations. These marches aimed to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and condemn the acts of violence inflicted upon them by the Zionist occupation. These marches further strengthen Algeria's unwavering stance as a nation and its people in their endorsement of the just Palestinian cause. A number of political parties and civil society organizations have issued a "call to support Palestine," urging all segments of the Algerian population to participate in public demonstrations throughout the country. The purpose of these marches is to express solidarity with the Palestinian people, who are engaged in defending their sacred sites and opposing the acts of genocide, forced displacement, and brutal massacres perpetrated by the Zionist entity. The marches also reinforce the unwavering stance of the Algerian government and its people on the Palestinian matter, while rejecting any initiatives aimed at its dissolution.

1. Placement of Signs

The arrangement of the pieces (representing the participants and their connection to each other and the spectator) assigns distinct informational significance to different areas of the image. Images of demonstrative actions, placards, and flags are prominently included in every picture. The majority of the image is filled with a depiction of the people, taking approximately three-fourths of the space, while a smaller portion is allocated for linguistic signs. This suggests that the human image serves as the primary method of communicating information.

2 Given and New

The image of the people is *Given* because they are real people. The *New*, on the other hand, is represented visually by the poster and the flags, and verbally by the text in the poster.

3 Visual Modality

This image contains realistic photos of human image and people. Hence, they have high modality in terms of using images.

4. Framing

There is no significant disconnection observed between the demonstrated people, flag and posters image from the purview of framing. There is no separation between these two images through frame lines or graphic framing devices. This indicates that people are so attached the reason behind their demonstration.

5. Power and Angle

Human image have no symbolic power over receivers. Because the picture is at eye level, then the point of view is one of equality and there is no power difference involved. Therefore, this image has high angle without exercising power over receivers.

6. Words(Formal and Informal Language)

This ad. has a written text which reflects the formal language because it contains usual syntax. There are specific technical terms and Arabic syntax used to communicate meaning. Unequal power, infrequent or one-off contact and low effective involvement are the typical situation of language used in this image.

7. Color

The color white is employed to represent social studies. This graphic depicts a photograph of individuals accompanied by a written description, as well as an illustration representing Algerian supporters of the Palestinian people. The illustration employs a white background to symbolize innocence and purity, while the use of green for the written text signifies hope.

Image NO. 6



Image Description

For the third consecutive day, a demonstration was arranged in Casablanca to express solidarity with the Palestinians and their resistance. Moroccan citizens assembled and vocalized slogans urging the resistance to persist in their unwavering stance. Additionally, they demanded that Moroccan authorities cease all forms of normalization with Israel and extend official assistance to the Palestinian population.

1. Placement of Signs

Two images of poster are placed in the left bottom and behind that demonstrated people images are located. The large colored human images occupy three-quarters of the image and a relatively small section is devoted to the verbal signs. This implies that the human images are the central means of conveying information. There is a special relation between photographed people and the poster through the attachment between them.

2. Given and New

The image of humans is *Given*, because they are real elements of familiarity. The two posters are *New* because they are introduced for the first time through this image.

3. Visual Modality

This Image has high modality because it contains image of real people and posters.

4. Framing

There is no noticeable gap between the individuals in the photographs and the depiction on the posters. The absence of framing accentuates the absence of division between elements inside the image. The greater the interconnectedness of the parts in the spatial composition, the more they appear to be cohesive, forming a unified unit of information.

5. Power and Angle

These people in this image are depicted as exercising symbolic power over receiver. The demonstrated people in this image is photographed both from a low angle, as having symbolic power over receivers, and from a high angle, as being at reach and equal to receivers.

6. Words(Formal and Informal Language)

This image is considered as having formal written text because it contains regular syntax, word, and language of everyday terms that are utilized to communicate meaning within the message.

7. Colors

The image predominantly features the color green, which is somewhat ironic considering its connotations of environmentalism, luxury, optimism, healing, well-being, nature, calmness, relaxation, safety, honesty, optimism, and harmony. These demonstrators aim to address the injustices committed against the Palestinian people. The utilization of the red hue in this photograph additionally signifies its ideational role. The artwork prominently features the color white, which is both calming and symbolic of purity and a desire for peace. Black symbolizes

power and dominance; it is widely regarded as a highly formal, refined, and esteemed color. It has the potential to evoke a sense of perspective and depth.

CONCLUSION

1. The first three pictures are from English-speaking countries: Britain, Australia, and the United States. They are English because they are holding a simple, one-sided sign in support of Palestine.
2. The last three pictures show an Arabic protest in Lebanon, Algeria, and Morocco to support Palestine. The people carrying the big, wide poster look like they all agree with what's written on it.
3. Because English pictures focus on the people carrying the posters, they are seen as new. Arabic images are less important than the posters themselves. This means that posters are new and Arabs are taken for granted because we share the same culture.
4. Pictures in English and Arabic don't have frames that separate people from their pictures.
5. Pictures in English and Arabic have a lot of different types because they show real people, nature, signs, and flags.
6. Posters in English and Arabic are written in different ways. English ones are written in a casual way, with short forms and the negative form of "No." Arabic posters with full, correct sentences that say "Congratulations" to the people of Palestine are now being sent.
7. All of the backgrounds on Arabic signs are white. A message from Arabs says "Save Gaza, Free Palestine, and Save the Children." The children are innocent, like white people, and have no blame.
8. The words and background of English posters are black, which is a sign of power.
9. The English signs are placed at eye level, which makes everyone feel equal and gets rid of any sense of hierarchy. People keep their eyes on the people who are receiving. Recipients are not shown to be under the symbolic control of the people in question.
10. While being photographed, Arabs face the people doing the photographing. Because of this, they don't seem to have any power over the people who receive them. They are the same as the receivers as long as they are in the same place.

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