

A Multimodal Analysis of the Portrayal of Dr. Magdi Yacoub in TV Advertisement of Heart Foundation

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Abstract

Multimodality involves the interaction between many different modes in various discourses. Advertising discourse is regarded as one of the discourses where multimodal analysis is used frequently. This research investigates the portrayal of Dr. Magdi Yacoub in the Egyptian advert made for the donation campaign held for his Heart Foundation, and shows his relation with other participants in the advert, as he is an influential character in the entire world. It is conducted with regard to investigating the representational and interpersonal meta-functions. The main objective of this research is to find out how Dr. Yacoub is portrayed in the Egyptian advert and how the relationship between him and the participants, or between him and the viewer, is revealed. This analysis is based on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of Social Semiotics. This study concludes that there is an intimacy between Dr. Yacoub and the children with heart problems. In addition, he stands beside them and holds their hands to support them to recover, something that reveals his affection side.

Keywords: Advertising, multimodal analysis, social semiotics, representational meta-function, interpersonal meta-function

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تحليل متعدد الوسائط لتصوير الدكتور مجدي يعقوب في الإعلان التلفزيوني لمؤسسة القلب

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المستخلص

يتضمن تعدد الوسائط التفاعل بين العديد من الاساليب المختلفة في الخطابات المتعددة، يعتبر الخطاب الإعلاني من احدى الخطابات التي تستخدم التحليل متعدد الأنماط بشكل دائم. يتناول هذا البحث تمثيل دكتور مجدي يعقوب في الإعلان التلفزيوني المصري الذي يتضمن التبرع لمؤسسة القلب، كما يوضح علاقته بالمشاركين في الإعلان حيث انه شخصية مؤثرة في كل انحاء العالم. يتم اجراء هذا البحث بواسطة تناول كلا من الوظائف التمثيلية والتفاعلية. الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو معرفة كيفية تصوير دكتور يعقوب في الإعلان المصري وتوضيح العلاقة بينه وبين المشاركين او بينه وبين المشاهد. وهذا التحليل قائم على نظرية Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) للسيمائية الاجتماعية. وتنتهي الدراسة بوجود مودة بين دكتور يعقوب والأطفال الذين يعانون من مشاكل بالقلب، بالإضافة انه يقف بجانبهم ويمسك أيديهم ليساندهم على التعافي وهذا يعكس الجانب الإنساني لديه. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** الإعلانات، تحليل متعدد الأنماط، السيمائية الاجتماعية، الوظيفة التمثيلية، الوظيفة التفاعلية

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1. Introduction

Mass media plays a crucial role in our everyday life; therefore, it has the ability to reach many audiences or viewers with influential messages. This study is mainly focused on advertisements, as they have an effect on people's daily lives. The advertisements deliver various messages in communication and they are transmitted through mass media. They include different modes and each mode convey different meaning. Through advertisements, we can identify the participants. Dyer (2009) states that advertising "has become more and more involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes, and less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services" (p. 1). This current study concentrates mainly on the portrayal of Dr. Magdi Yacoub in TV advertisement and it shows how he deals with the children in his Heart Foundation.

2 Aim of the Research

This research aims to investigate the representational and interpersonal meta-functions in an Egyptian advert about the Heart Foundation of Dr. Yacoub. Then, it shows how these two meta-functions help to portray the character of Dr. Magdi Yacoub in dealing with children in his Foundation.

3 Research Questions

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- How can the representational meta-function analysis portray Dr. Magdi Yacoub?
- 2- How can the interpersonal meta-function analysis reveal the relationship between Dr. Yacoub and the participants in the advert or between him and the viewer?

4 Literature Review

Many researchers apply multimodality on advertisements to illustrate the importance of the amalgamation among different semiotic resources in communication.

Ahmed (2020) tackles multimodality in political discourse, especially campaign advertising. It is about understanding the representation of both Trump and Clinton in the 2016 presidential campaign advertisements. This study

adopts Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of social semiotics, Van Leeuwen's (1999) theory of sound, Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework, and Van Dijk's (1998) theory of critical discourse analysis. The data consist of six videos, and they are retrieved from New Republic's 2016 campaign Ads archive. The researcher concludes that different modes portray Clinton as open and sympathetic person while Trump appears as a successful businessperson with good skills. Clinton uses her mind, so she is logical while Trump uses his heart so he is emotional.

Liu (2019) aims to investigate the interactive meaning in three public service advertisements. The study adopts both the theory of systemic functional linguistics of Halliday and visual grammar of Kress and Van Leeuwen. The research reveals that the four aspects of interactive meaning, which are contact, social distance, perspective and modality, are working together in delivering the message. It is also found that the images are in high modality to make them reliable.

Savitri and Rosa (2019) investigate the audio-visual advertisement which is about Samsung Galaxy S9. The researchers adopt the theories of multimodality by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2004), systemic functional linguistics by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), and structure by Cheong (2004). The data of this study are taken from Samsung Youtube account. The analysis reveals that all semiotic resources are in harmony together and they complete each other to give a full meaning to the viewer.

Pratiwy and Wulan (2018) study a television advertising, which is made for a Dettol commercial, by applying the multimodal approach. They adopt many theories to analyse different modes: Anstey and Bull (2010), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), Hermawan (2013), and Halliday (2004). The researchers conclude that the combination of different resources makes the message clear and complete, so the viewer will have a full understanding of the advert.

Halle (2017) tackles the psychology of political advertising through investigating the sponsored advertisements of Clinton during the 2016 presidential

election. The researcher applies content analysis to describe the advertisements through three aspects which are tone, topic and content. The finding of this study is that the strategy of Clinton's advertising took a more positive approach, and advocacy tone. In addition, it (the study\the strategy) concentrates on future promises.

Baykal (2016) applies multimodal analysis on the advertisements of beauty products. The aim of this study is to show how far the verbal and visual modes integrate together in communication. The researcher uses the framework of critical discourse analysis. The data were collected from two Turkish magazines of women between 2013 and 2014; the data discuss six different brands of mascara advertisements. The researcher concludes that the advertisements focus on the perfect look of the eye by putting emphasis on eyelashes.

Hu and Luo (2016) investigate the advertisement of Tmall's double Eleven by adopting Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of visual grammar. The aim of this study is to show how the role of visual mode shapes the customer behaviour. The researchers conclude that the multimodal analysis of the advertisement conveys the purpose of it through using bright color which presents a bright image to the viewer.

Li (2016) attempts to discuss the interpersonal meaning of TV advertisement with the hilltop of coca cola jingle song. The researcher adopts two theories: the first is the theory of multimodality, introduced by Kress and Van Leeuwen, and the second is systemic functional linguistics by Halliday. She uses them to show how different modes integrate together to deliver the meaning. The researcher concludes that the various semiotic modes are integrated with each other to communicate the interpersonal meaning that is enacted between the participants in the advert, on one hand, and the viewer, on the other.

Xu (2012) discusses the theoretical framework of visual grammar by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), to investigate the advertisements of 'No Smoking Day'. The researcher concludes that both verbal and visual resources elaborate each other. The integration between these resources

makes the idea clear to the viewer; therefore, the advertisement becomes more persuasive.

4 Theoretical Background

4.1 Multimodality

Multimodal research concentrates on the amalgamation of different modes. Kress (2010) states that mode is defined as “a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning. Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects are examples of modes used in representation and communication” (p. 79). The focus of multimodality is on two things. The first is the ‘semiotic resources of communication’. The second is the ‘communicative practices’. The former is about the signs or modes while the latter is about the representation of different modes in the image and the interaction between these modes (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, pp. 111-114). Therefore, multimodality makes us able to analyze modern texts such as films, articles, posters, cartoons, advertisements, and so on (Mazid, 2008, p. 434).

4.2 Advertising

McQuarrie and Phillips (2008) declare that advertising is considered as “the largest organized persuasive endeavour in the world today” (p. 14). There are many functions of advertising such as, informing, persuading, reminding, and influencing. Advertising is also used to change opinions or attitudes (Cook, 2001).

Kalotra (2015) states that there are different types of advertising as television advertising, online advertising, radio advertising, billboard advertising, product advertising, press advertising, etc. The most effective one is TV commercials.

Cook (2001, pp. 1-3) states that there are three different visions related to advertising. According to the first point of view, advertising may make a good or bad influence on society. As for the second, advertising is considered as moral because it reflects state changes in society, whether it is good or bad. Concerning the third view, advertising is an act of deception and advertisements are always bad.

4.3 Visual Social Semiotics

Depending on Halliday's social semiotic model of language, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) build their theory on visual communication by establishing a framework for multimodality. They declare that "visual structures point to particular interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction" (p. 2). Therefore, they assert that visual design can fulfill Halliday's three meta-functions, which are ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational function is concerned with the representation of the inside and outside world. The interpersonal function represents social interactions. The textual function is about coherence in texts. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), "whether we engage in conversation, produce an advertisement or play a piece of music, we are simultaneously communicating, doing something... and representing some aspect of the world..., and we bend these activities together in a coherent text" (p. 15).

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) theory of communication is based on social meanings. They state that "the different modes through which texts are constructed show these social differences, so that in a multimodal text using images and writing, [check the reference] the writing may carry one set of meanings and the images carry another" (p. 20). Therefore, they propose three kinds of meanings for visual communication with regard to Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual meta-functions. They call them representational, interpersonal and compositional meta-functions. In the same vein, Jewitt (2013) asserts that multimodality can apply these three different meta-functions to all modes in order to "better understand their meaning potential—'what can be meant' or 'what can be done' with a particular set of semiotic resources" (p. 256). This study will focus only on the representational and interpersonal meta-functions and they will be discussed in detail below.

- **Representational Meta-function**

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) state that representational meta-function is about people, things, or

places that exist in the image and what they stand for. This meta-function includes two processes: narrative and conceptual.

- 1- Narrative Process. It is concerned with the represented participants. These participants are connected together through a vector. This vector takes the form of gaze, touch, and so on. This process has two participants: Actor and Goal. It has many techniques and they will be discussed below:
 - a) Action Process. According to Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 60), the image has a participant who looks at something or someone in the image. This process may be transactional, which includes an Actor and a Goal, or non-transactional, where there is only an Actor and there is no Goal in the image.
 - b) Reaction Process. This process has two participants: (a) reactor who forms a vector to someone or something in the image, and (b) phenomenon which is the participant who receives the vector.
 - c) Speech Process. The participants are connected with their speech through a vector. It may take the form of balloon.
 - d) Circumstance Process. As for Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 72), there are two participants in this process: major and secondary participants. The latter is connected with the former but without using any vector.
 - e) Geometrical Process. It is a dynamic process as it includes only a vector.
 - f) Conversion Process. The participant may be an Actor in one action, and a Goal in the other.
- 2- Conceptual Process. This process includes three techniques: classificatory, analytical and symbolic. In classificatory process, the participants are members of the same class. The analytical process takes the shape of 'part-whole' structure. The Symbolic process is related to who the participant is, and the significance of using a specific symbol.

The representational meta-function is summarized in the following figure:

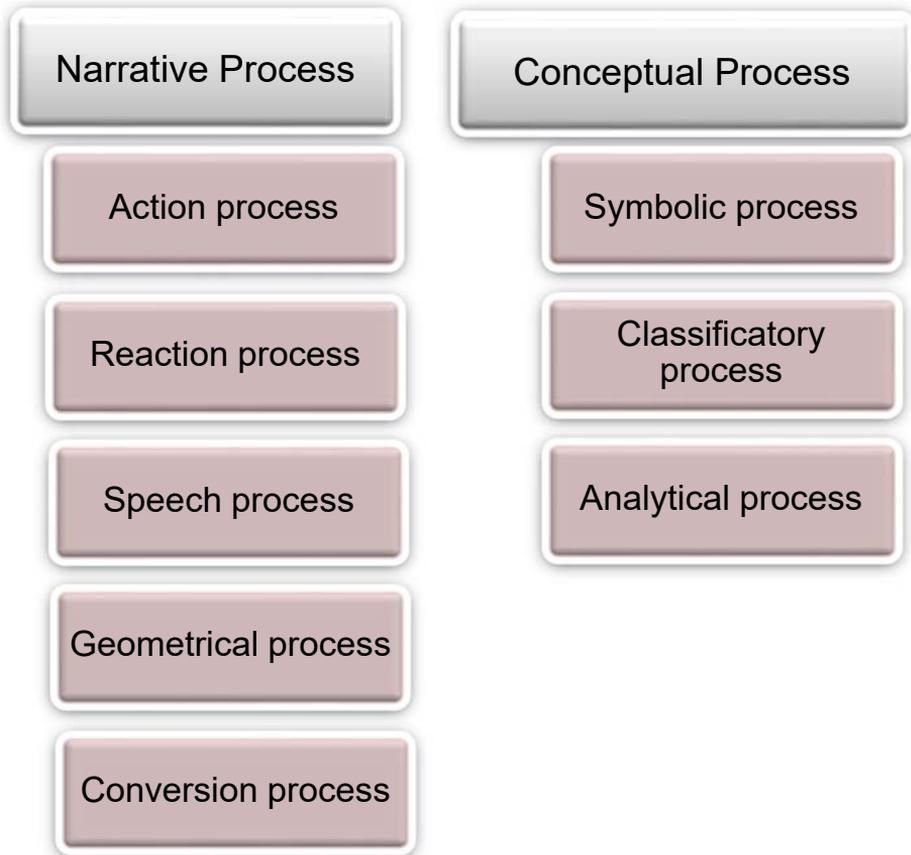


Fig. (1) Processes of the Representational Meta -function

- **Interpersonal Meta-function**

This Meta-function deals with the interaction between the participants in the image or between the participants and the viewer. It has three techniques: image act, social distance and the angle.

1. Image Act. The participant directs a looking to someone within the image, or to the viewer, and it may be either a demand or an offer image. In the demand image, the participant demands something from the viewer so s/he

directs the looking directly at the viewer. The offer image presents information to the viewer as the participant looks at someone or something in the image.

2. **Social Distance.** Lacey (1998, p. 18) differentiates between types of shots. A close shot includes the head and shoulders of the participant, so it is a close social relation. The medium close shot presents the participant down to his or her waist. The medium shot presents the participant to his or her knees, so it is a far personal relation. The medium long shot presents the whole participant, and this type may take two forms: close social relation and in this case, the participant is depicted as a whole figure in the image (Kress & Hodge 1988, p. 52); or far social relation, where the participant is depicted with a space around him or her. A long shot presents the participants as strangers; therefore, it is a public relation.
3. **The Angle.** This process includes two techniques: vertical and horizontal. The former may be high, low or eye level angle. High angle presents the participant small and it refers to inferiority. Low angle shows the power of the participant (Lacey 1998, p. 16). Eye level angle shows the equality between the participants. The latter, which is horizontal angle, may be frontal or oblique. Frontal angle presents the interaction between the participant and the viewer by sharing the eye line. In oblique angle, the viewer cannot identify the participant.

The interpersonal meta-function is summarized in the following figure:

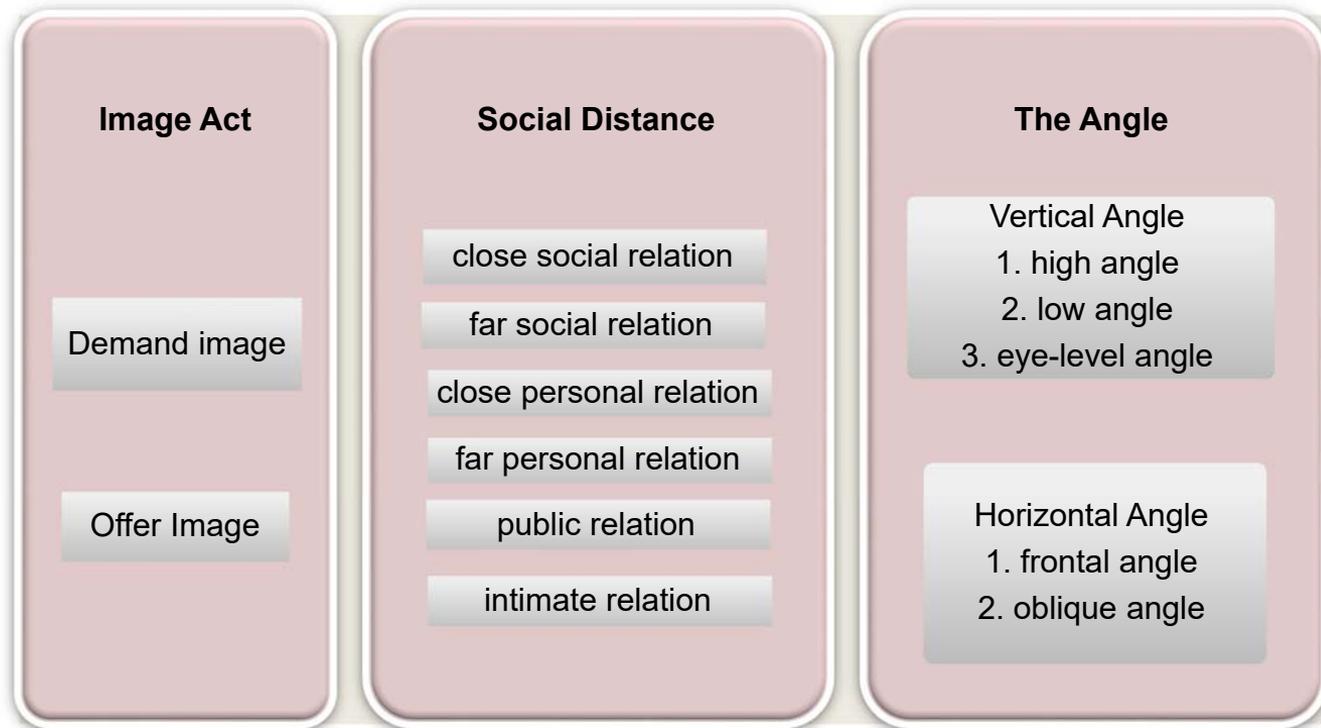


Fig (2) Processes of the Interpersonal Meta_function

5. Methods

5.1 Data of the study



Fig (3) Representational Meta-function

This research includes only one pledging advertisement downloaded from Youtube.com. It is about the Heart Foundation of Dr. Magdi Yacoub. The reason of choosing this advertisement is to encourage people to donate to help sick children with heart problems and to show how the advertisement reflects the character of Dr. Yacoub. The researcher has divided the advertisement into subsequent shots and picked the most prominent ones that help answer the questions of the study.

5.2 Sample Analysis

The idea of the advertisement becomes obvious through action process as it tells the viewer what is happening in the image. The first shot includes a narrative process where there is an action process. The boy is the actor and he looks at something within the image (the Arab actors Ahmed Helmy and Donia Ghanem) as clear in the advertisement. His facial expression expresses his hope to recover when he goes to Magdi Yacoub Heart Foundation. The boy represents children who suffer from heart problems.

In the second shot, Dr. Yacoub is the actor of the action and he directs his looking to someone in the image (the boy). This action process tells the viewer that Dr. Yacoub always helps and stands beside the children, and he also does his best to make them recover. Dr. Yacoub is a symbol of surgeons who sacrifice their lives in helping people to recover. His smile and his gaze indicate his love and devotion to his job. Dr. Yacoub is considered a hope to all people who have heart problems.

The third shot includes the two action processes. The first is clear in Dr. Yacoub, who is the actor of the action, with the goal (the boy). The actor is connected to the goal through Dr. Yacoub's gaze. The second one is apparent in Dr. Yacoub's hand (the actor) and the boy's hand (the goal). These action processes indicate how close Dr. Yacoub is to the children, and his smile comes to assert this idea.

The action process in the fourth shot is apparent in Dr. Yacoub's hand that is the actor and the heart necklace which is the goal; they are connected together through touching (vector). This shot includes a reaction process where the boy is the reactor (who reacts to Dr. Yacoub's action) and Dr. Yacoub is the phenomenon; they are connected with the boy's gaze.

6 The Interpersonal Meta-function

This advertisement is dominated by an offer image as the maker of the advertisement wants to tell the viewer a certain idea. In the offer image, there is no direct contact between the participants and the viewer. The first shot concentrates on helping children with heart problems to recover. These children need support from all people to boost their morale. The other three shots deliver the idea of the enthusiasm of Dr. Yacoub in helping these children. He is always beside them and does not leave them alone until they recover. Therefore, this gives an idea to the parents who are worried about their children to be sure that their children are safe with Dr. Yacoub. This is clear in the last shot where we can see the happiness of the child with Dr. Yacoub as the child discovers that he does not leave him alone.

As for the social distance in this advert, the selected shots show that the close personal relation is the most frequent relation in the advert. This relation indicates the intimacy and closeness of the participants and it is clear between the child and Dr. Yacoub as he is shown close to those sick children with heart problems; his role is to save their lives. This is a message to the children for not losing hope.

This closeness is also clear through using the eye-level vertical angle in the advertisement. This angle indicates the equality between the participants and the viewer. It also provides a natural scene to the viewer. All the Egyptian people and all surgeons from all over the world should adopt the typical attitude of Dr. Yacoub through giving their patients hope and help them as much as possible.

7 Conclusion

This advertisement deals with the representation of the influential character, Dr. Magdi Yacoub, as it highlights the idea that his principal job is helping people with heart problems and giving them hope. This can be realized through looking at the child with a loving smile and holding his hands to reassure him that he would always support him till recovery. It is also realized through heart necklace that Dr. Yacoub gives to the boy. He wants to deliver the message that 'don't worry, in this foundation you will recover and return to your life without pain'.

This advertisement sheds light on the character of Dr. Magdi Yacoub, as he achieves success in his work as a surgeon, and it is clear through depicting him as the actor of the action. He is also a role model to follow in helping people and sacrificing his life for his work and also for the sake of sick children.

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