

Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the Poster Covers of Academy Award Winning Animated Feature Movies

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Abstract

Movie posters are multimodal forms of advertisements that are meant for promoting a movie through a combination of visual and verbal elements. For linguistic and visual analysis, this paper analyses posters of three Academy Award winning animated movies, namely, Toy Story 3 (2010), Frozen (2013), and Zootopia (2016). Each one of the posters was comprehensively analyzed using Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) three meanings: representational, interactive and compositional, as explicated by Chen and Gao (2013). The findings of the study deduced that various linguistic and visual modalities employed in movie posters converge together to give an apt representation of the theme of the movie. This article recommends the study of various multimodal pieces of discourse using Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) as a means to exploit multiple semiotic modes to reach to a comprehensive meaning of social processes.

Keywords: Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA); Movie Posters; Representational Meaning; Interactive Meaning; Compositional Meaning.

Introduction

Language is one of the inevitable means of survival for humans, a medium of emanation of a society in which individuals share definite ideologies. Whenever a language is used in order to perform a function or even used as a means of communication, it is connoted as 'discourse' which is a medium of expressing one's thoughts, ideas, feelings, and emotions. Apart from presenting views and opinions, discourses also aim at changing and influencing opinions of the receivers of discourse. It is often accompanied by intentions that are hidden and require a 'critical' approach to unravel the motives of the producers of discourses (Fairclough, 1993).

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In today's modern world most of the types of communication that take place are multimodal. Multi-semiotics deals with more than one semiotic resource in a piece of discourse and semiotic modes are simultaneously involved in structuring and composing discourse in multi-modality. The term "mode" is elucidated by O'Halloran (2008) as a passage (medium) through which a semiotic function occurs. With the emergence of images, videos, and several other features, it is equally important to discern the paralinguistic and non-verbal features along with verbal discourse of a given code, consequently, to have a better comprehension of multimodal piece of discourse (Yang & Zhang, 2014). "Semiotic resources, modes, and modalities" are the semiotic processes including language that integrate together in order to explicate a "multimodal" occurrence (discourse) such as graphic and visual materials, 3D entities, websites, posters, and even everyday happenings etc. (O'Halloran, 2011).

In the contemporary age of electronic media and technology, most of the communication is depicted by the producers of visual images including advertisers, graphic artists, image-makers, film-makers. All of them use images and signs to carry out communication. Movie posters are a multimodal form of advertisement and visual representation that is used as a means of promoting a movie before its releasing date, regardless of any genre, by publicizing all over the world (Osborne, 2008). The movie posters, according to Berger (1972) and Barthes (1979), are a medium of movie marketing campaign that not only act as a means of fulfilling economic perspective i.e. making a movie a commercial success, but also as an effective and comprehensive piece of multimodal discourse that conveys the plot and theme of the movie aptly (Tziamtzi, Kyridis, Vamvakidou, Christodoulou, & Zagkos, 2015). Evaluating a visual image like movie poster involves intricate decoding of multiple semiotic resources. The current advancements in multimedia and technology have shifted the fulcrum of attention to the visual (apparent attire) representation instead of movie plot. A sole interpretation of movie posters on the basis of either the text or only the visual design cannot do justice to multifarious nature of this discourse. The purpose of movie posters is to act as one primary means of not only introducing the general public to the upcoming movies but

also attracting much viewership though the intelligent integration of different linguistic and visual modalities. This becomes particularly noteworthy in the case of animated movies which owe their success to powerful and eye-catching cinematic display, whereas the tragic and romantic movies focus on their commercial success through a profound plot.

Therefore, acknowledgement of the multimodal nature of movie posters through research is crucial. The movie posters that are meant for advertising ostensibly remarkable movies on huge screens or advertisement banners, when taken as a form of multimodal representation can offer an enriched information about the ways in which movie makers promote the movies. Such a study including the interpretation of movie posters linguistically (semantically) and visually is an interesting dimension of research for semioticians, graphic designers, mass media researchers, sociologists and more importantly linguists that are avidly interested in the study of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (or ‘multimodality’). While interpreting the movie posters through multimodal resources, it is a viable research question to analyse how posters used to foreground salient aspects of the academy award winning movies. In order to address the aforementioned concerns, this research aims to figure out various linguistic and visual modalities in the movie posters of Academy Award winning animated movies with reference to Chen and Gao’s (2013) model and how these modalities in the posters converge to give a meaningful interpretation of the movies.

Literature Review

There has been growing interest lately on Multimodal Discourse Analysis. The study of MDA in China has been rapidly progressing. Initially, Li (2003) used Kress and Leeuwen’s (2006) “Reading Images: Grammar of Visual Design”. The term ‘MDA’, its methodology, theoretical foundation and significance was explicated by Zhu (2007). Hu and Luo (2007) pointed out the importance of improving common understanding abilities of people on a multimodal discourse. The Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) approach has been used by Zhang (2004) in order to suggest an MDA theoretical model

(as cited in Chen & Gao, 2014). Knox (2009) conducted multimodal discourse research by applying Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) "Theory of visual communication" on the home pages of three culturally different English-language newspapers (online) for analyzing visual and verbal modalities. In addition, Daniel (2015) applied multimodal approach for analyzing the cover images of the book "The New York Times" by using Kress and Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) "Grammar of Visual Images". All of these researches contributed towards application of MDA to vast genres using multiple modes of communication.

Tziamtzi, Kyridis, Vamvakidou, Christodoulou and Zagkos (2015) conducted a quantitative and semiotic analysis of US Box Office ranking Hollywood children's movie posters for evaluating their aesthetic and ideological value. It examines posters as a combination of multiple codes in order to act as a useful piece of discourse for advertisement purposes (promotion). Posters as means for advertising movies remained focus of some of the researches in this genre. Maiorani (2007) conducted multimodal analysis of promotional posters of "The Matrix Trilogy" ("fiction of science") for analyzing the verbal language and visual semiotics simultaneously as a piece of interactive social and commercial piece of discourse. The grammar of visual design by Kress and Leeuwen (2006) and Halliday's (1978) model was used for the interpretation of movie posters.

Chen and Gao (2013) used Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design in order to analyze publically famous eleven movie poster. Kress and Leeuwen (1996) hold authority in aptly analyzing visual piece of discourse containing multiple modes concurrently. The aspects that are taken into account by Kress and Leeuwen (1996) for a MDA of a graphical image is colour, composition, framing, perspective etc. The idea suggested by them in the theory is that the all semiotic processes used in a pictorial image have a certain function to portray, specifically representational, interpretational and compositional meaning. The focus of our research is to analyse the Academy Award winning animated feature movies, which despite of their great visual and promotional

appeal have remained less focus of previous researches. Numerous researches have been carried out on the movie posters from different perspectives but the Chen & Gao's (2013) model of MDA has not been used for the study of movie posters of Academy Award winning animated feature films. The research is also going to find and relate the linguistic modalities in the movie poster with the visual modalities in order to find comprehensive representational, interpretational and compositional meaning (Chen & Gao, 2013). The visual organization of multiple modes acts as a comprehensive process of visual grammar. The linguistic (semantic) means in a poster i.e. titles, taglines etc. are logically brought into one whole only through visual means. The varied multiple modes combine together in order to provide a comprehensive piece of discourse (e.g. poster). There, this research is aimed at studying how these linguistic and visual modalities converge to give a meaningful interpretation of the respective movies.

Theoretical Framework

Semiotics

Semiotics is considered as the parallel discipline of Discourse Studies and both are more likely to mix because both analyse the communicative events. It should be acknowledged in its more conventional sense that non-verbal form is also one of the dimensions of discourse. The term “semiotics” derives its origin etymologically from the Greek word, "semeion" that means “sign”. Therefore, “Semiotics” is commonly known in simple language as “the study of signs”. The American philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce (1958) and Swiss linguist Saussure (1959) are known as the founders of ‘Semiotics’ (Huhtamo, 2003). Sign is any bodily movement, mark, symbol or token etc. that depicts any information, command, emotions and feeling etc. It functions as a means of portraying human thoughts, feelings and communication (Sebeok, 1994).

According to Pierce (1958), sign cannot be called a sign unless it interprets and signifies something. A ‘sign’ gives meaningful interpretation to the object and being. The ‘sign’ as held by Pierce (1958) is the amalgamation of the represented (object), how is the object represented (the representamen), and how will the object be subjected to interpretation

(the interpretant). Pierce (1958) calls this “Triadic Semiotic Model” as “Semeiosis” (as cited in Chandler, 2007). The Piercan model is illustrated in Figure I.

The non-verbal (semiotic) aspect of discourse, according to Leeuwen (2005), encompasses intonation, music, gaze, gestures, colour, films, drawings, layout, printing types and pictures etc. Nowadays, discourse is studied and essentially investigated as a combination of verbal (language) and non-verbal aspects. It explores the language used by keenly evaluating paralinguistic features, verbal interaction, multimodal messages, texts, and communicative events. It assists in analysing formal discourse and informal ethnographic communication in a specific social setting (Dijk, 2011). Multimodal Discourse Analysis is not only based upon “Semiotics” but also “Theory of Visual Rhetoric” that deals with the understanding of communication and interpretation through symbols (signs) which can be verbal and non-verbal as well.

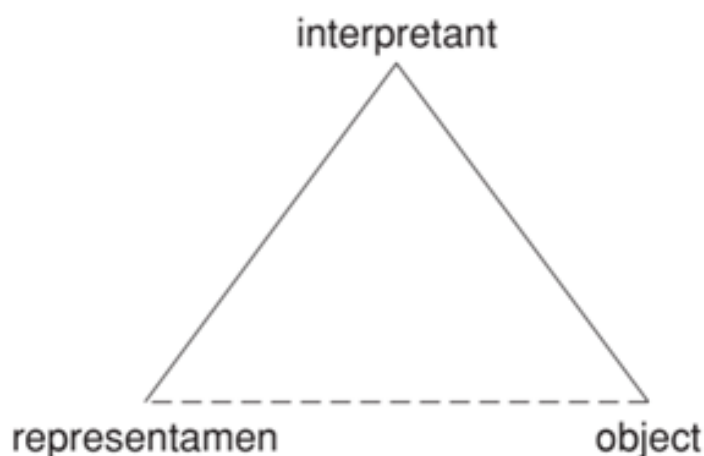


Figure 1 Pierce's (1958) Triadic Semiotic Model

Theory of Visual Rhetoric

Rhetoric encompasses the novel field of study, “visual rhetoric” that is the study of visual imagery. Rhetoric is the study of symbols (signs) used as a means to convince and to communicate. Communication is the contemporary term used for ‘Rhetoric’. The

rhetorical theorist Kenneth (1966) has enriched the discipline of Rhetoric by contributing in the field of visual rhetoric (as cited in Smith, Moriarity, Barbatsis, & Kenney, 2005).

Bulut and Yurdaisik (2005) believe that the message system (communication), linguistic or paralinguistic is a system of signs. People frequently use both, verbal and non-verbal means to communicate. In the contemporary age of electronic media and technology, most of the communication is depicted by the producers of visual images including advertisers, graphic artists, image-makers, film-makers; all of them use images and signs to draw out an effective meaning-making process. Saroyan (n.d.) says, “One picture is worth a thousand words. Yes it is true only if one sees the picture and thinks about thousand words” (as cited in Lester, 2013).

Underlying the discipline of ‘Rhetoric’, ‘visual rhetoric’ possesses two connotations. Visual rhetoric in one sense is the artefact made by individuals as they develop communication by utterly using visual symbols. The other implication for visual rhetoric is that it is the perspective used by the scholars who lay emphasis on the symbolic process through which images function as a means of communicating (Smith et al., 2011). Smith et al. (2011) takes visual rhetoric as the communicative object of the art. For the visual object to act as an artefact of visual rhetoric, it is believed that its symbolic (sign) processes will perform communicative function. The image should be such that communicates with its audiences through meaning making sign-processes depicted in the visual image.

Visual semiotics and visual rhetoric go hand in hand with each other as both deal with the study of visual signs and symbols performing communicative function. The pictures performing communicative function such as advertisements, posters, film, television, architecture, interior design, and dress-making are the chief parts of a social context (setting). The approach to communication that studies the ways in which people communicate in a social setting is known as “Social Semiotics”. It studies visual images in the context of social and cultural settings ("Social Semiotics," n.d.).

Social Semiotics

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (henceforth MDA) is a multi-disciplinary approach that stems from social semiotics. Bezemer and Jewitt (2009) explicate “Social Semiotics” as the one that deals with the meaning making process and it also deals with the people who deduce these meanings out of the modes and means used by people to communicate for developing social relations.

The term ‘social semiotics’ was used in linguistics by the renowned linguist Halliday (1978) in his book, “Language as social semiotic”. ‘Social semiotics’, according to Halliday (1978) is a means to separate language linguistically from its social context and its study was expanded beyond the verbal form of discourse (as cited in Hodge & Kress, 1998).

Halliday (1978) believed that a sign serves three following purposes at a time: ideational metafunction (talking about the world), interpersonal metafunction (relation of people who communicate with each other), and textual metafunction (relationship between signs to form a comprehensive text). The discussion about social semiotics is incomplete without “semiotic resources”. This term was coined by Halliday (1978), who believes that grammar of language is the ‘resource for developing meanings’. ‘Semiotic resources’ according to Leeuwen (2005) are “the actions and artefacts we use to communicate”. Hodge and Kress (1988), following the same view point of Halliday (1978) about Social Semiotics, explored other modes of communication (semiotic resources) used by people while communicating in a particular context. The new perspective on Social Semiotics emerged that “Social Semiotics” would be explored under a ‘context’ but through several modes and not solely through language. Hodge and Kress (1988) started evaluating different examples in a social context by using several modes including language (as cited in Bezemer&Jewitt, 2009).

Multimodal discourse analysis is based upon some approaches, among which, one is Systemic - Functional Approach (henceforth, SFL) to MDA. Several semiotic resources such as written, published scripts, physiological modes, gestures, websites, films,

pictorial images, 3D objects, and electronic texts etc. are used concurrently in SFL for interpreting meaning of a multimodal object (image) and forming certain theories and frameworks for analysing such discourses. Systemic Functional (henceforth, SF) theory is a social semiotic theory that enriches MDA with theoretical means. A wide range of approaches have been enriched to language by SF theory (O'Halloran, 2008). The approach to philology that brings in language in social semiotic system is Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1978).

The meta-functional principle of Halliday (1978) is the major strength of Systemic Functional – Multimodal Discourse Analysis (henceforth, SF-MDA) that enriches a piece of multimodal discourse by the interaction of multiple semiotic resources to form meaning. The several meaning-making modes interact together in a multimodal piece of discourse to convey an effective meaning (as cited in O'Halloran, 2008).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Kress and Leeuwen (1996, 2006) and O'Toole (1994, 2010) put forth the basis of multimodal studies on Halliday's (1978) social semiotic approach "Systemic-Functional Linguistics" to language in order to analyse other meaning-making modes such as sounds, images, gestures, color, shape, framing etc. (as cited in Hu & Luo, 2016). This respective theory was first used as a basis for analyzing multiple semiotics modes concurrently by Kress and Leeuwen (2006) in "Theory of Visual Communication". For interpreting a visual piece of discourse, Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) "Reading Images" (2006) is considered preeminent in interpreting multiple modes simultaneously. Kress and Leeuwen (2006) believed that the intricate use of several modes simultaneously in visual communication portray certain connotation, such as representational meaning, interactional meaning and compositional meaning (Chen & He, n.d.). Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) "Grammar of Visual Design" is a Multimodal approach that presents the "Theory of Visual Communication" by enriching it with orderly and detailed graphical examples.

Research Methodology

Data

Non-probability sampling method is used for selecting a population of movie posters of sixteen animated movies that won Academy Awards from 2001 to 2016. For considering posters as useful in promotion and winning Academy Award, a sample is deduced from the population by applying purposive sampling technique. The three movie posters of Academy Award winning animated movies have been selected from the population on the basis of topmost worldwide grossing of movies for MDA.

The posters and data for highest worldwide grossing of Academy Award winning animated movies is obtained from “Box Office Mojo” website (<http://www.boxofficemojo.com>). The top three worldwide grossing animated movies whose posters have been chosen are as follow:

1. Frozen (2013): \$1, 276,480,335.
2. Zootopia (2016): \$1, 023,784,195.
3. Toy Story 3 (2010): \$1, 066,969,703.

Frozen (2013)	Zootopia (2016)	Toy Story 3 (2010)
		

Figure 2 The chosen movie posters as data

4.2 Research Method

Multimodality Approach, precisely Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) theory of visual communication has been used to conduct this qualitative and interpretative research study via descriptive research method. Multimodal Discourse Analysis is the most suitable approach that evaluates the meaning produced in rhetoric and visual images portraying a certain kind of discourse emerging from the cohesive and simultaneous use of multiple semiotic modes (O'Halloran, 2008b). Multimodal Discourse Analysis of movie posters of Academy Award winning animated movies is carried out by adopting the model particularly devised by Chen and Gao (2013) for analysing movie posters. The aim of the Chen and Gao (2013) was to formulate a model for the analysis of movie posters through MDA and therefore the model best suits this current research. To attest the viability of this MDA model based on Kress and Leeuwen's theory (1996, 2006), a qualitative and interpretative approach was used.

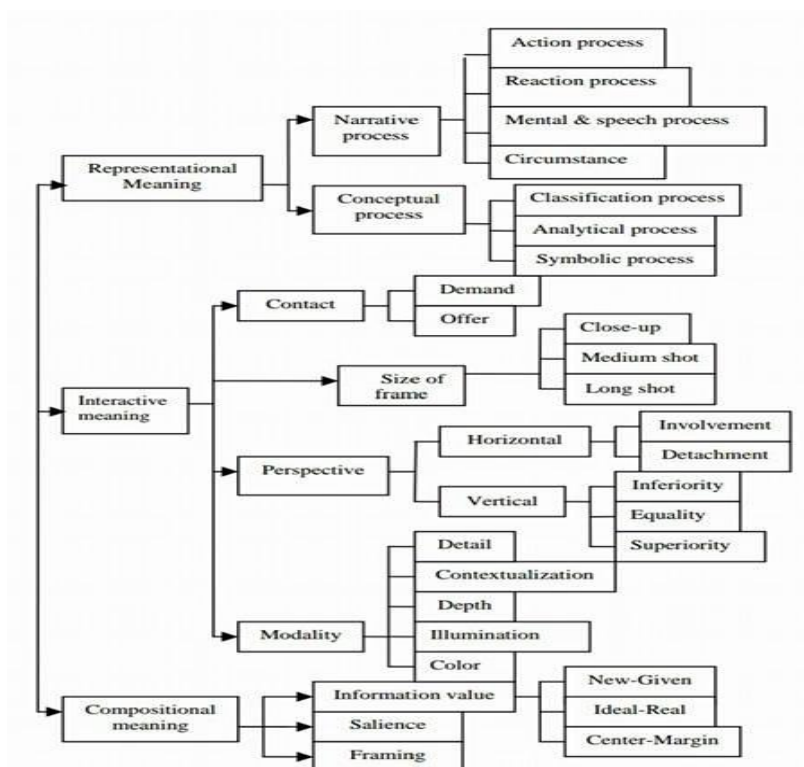


Figure 3 Chen and Gao's (2013) model for Multimodal discourse analysis of movie posters

Following the three metafunctions of language proposed by Halliday (1978) i.e. Ideational, Interpersonal and Textual metafunction, Kress and Leeuwen (1990, 2006) developed three meanings for analyzing a multimodal piece of discourse. The three meanings formed by them are Representational, Interactive and Compositional respectively. Chen and Gao (2013) suggest a model using the aforementioned three meanings by selecting certain semiotic modes essential in analysis of movie posters. The same view point and the delimited version of the model devised by Chen and Gao (2013) based on Kress and Leeuwen's (1996, 2006) grammar of visual design is adopted by the current research, which is shown in Figure 3.

The MDA of integrated verbal and visual modalities of an image is carried out using *Representational, Interactive and Compositional functions* as explicated in Chen and Gao's (2013) model. The participants, their action and the circumstance in visual images are depicted while illustrating *representational meaning* through a vector or a static relationship, hence, a narrative or a conceptual process. The *interactive meaning* deals with the relationship between the graphic designers i.e. image producers and how they have illustrated the represented participants in the image to the viewers. The *compositional function* deals with the converged meaning of representational and interactive participant and the concurrent use of verbal and visual modalities in an image.

Data Analysis

The selected three movie posters of Academy Award winning movie are analysed according to Chen and Gao's (2013) model explained above. It not only figures out the visual and verbal modes used in the formation of movie posters but it also relates these modalities with the subject matter of the specific movies.

Frozen (2013)

Representational Meaning

The objects, people and images are not only represented but their relation to the world is also depicted through their representational meaning (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). The

representational meaning possesses represented participants and interactive participants. The represented participants in the *Frozen* movie poster are five; Olaf, Elsa, Anna, Kristoff and Hans as they are illustrated with the same tone and contrast in the foreground. The representational meaning is depicted through two kinds of processes: narrative process and conceptual process. The narrative process is formed through the eye line vector of the represented participants i.e. reaction process. Three reaction processes are formed by the represented participants in the afore-mentioned poster. One is formed by Elsa, Anna and Kristoff as reactor with no phenomenon visible. In the second reaction process, Hans is the reactor and his object of vision is Elsa. Whereas, we see that Olaf is standing in the middle of the participants and his eye line vector indicates that he is seeing upwards to the title *Frozen* and the snowflake in its background. Olaf's look forms the mental process. The proverb of ancient Zen (n.d.) believes that "A snowflake never falls in the wrong place". It was considered in ancient Zen times as a symbol of individual perfection (as cited in González, 2015). In the movie, the snowflake is the representation of Elsa's identity as ice princess. Elsa has two identities in the movie: one as a queen of Arendelle and secondly her innate identity as ice princess. The circumstance enriches the visual image by providing information about the represented participants without any vector relationship. In the poster, there is locative circumstance, as in the background, the ice in the poster is sharp edged on the upper end of the poster and is shown softer by saturating colour at lower end of the poster. Henceforth, it illustrates the evil (fearful) and good side of Elsa's inborn ability of manipulating ice.

The representational meaning possesses two conceptual processes in the aforementioned poster i.e. analytical process and symbolic process. By watching movie, it is significantly inferable that the landscape (setting or the background) of the poster is the Carrier (whole) in the poster and its Possessive Attributes (part) are the two textures of snow (soft and edged) depicting Elsa's good and evil sides of her as ice princess. Consequently, the depiction of Elsa's identity through the setting is symbolic attributive. Whereas, Olaf is the symbolic suggestive of perpetual love (sisterly love) between Elsa and Anna. Olaf standing in between both the sisters in the poster shows that love is going to prevail

eternally in the movie as Olaf whose loving nature is unchanging. As illustrated in Figure 3, Olaf's love for winter as well as summer in *Frozen* movie suggests the notion that the love of the sisters will live through all seasons.



Figure 4 Screenshot from *Frozen* Movie

The snowflake is symbolic suggestive of Elsa's identity (individuality) as ice princess. Throughout the movie, we see that the plot of movie revolves around the struggle of concealing and controlling Elsa's inborn capability to control ice. After the reconciliation of both sisters as shown in Figure 4, Elsa discovers the way to reveal her identity as ice princess by controlling her abilities through the act of love. Therefore, she establishes her identity as queen of Arendelle and as an ice princess simultaneously. We witness the snowflake (symbol of her identity as ice princess) on the top of the castle of Arendelle in the last scene of movie.



Figure 5 Screenshots from *Frozen* Movie

Interactive Meaning

The interactive meaning in the visual design deals with the effort of represented participants, objects etc. to communicate with the interactive participants. It engages the viewers in terms of contact, size of frame, perspective and modality (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). The interactive participants are offered to observe the represented participants in the movie poster of *Frozen* as an object of scrutiny in order to delve into the deeper connotation of the title, snowflake and the represented participants that ultimately form the plot of the movie. There is no direct gaze of all the five represented participants in the poster towards the viewer. It offers the readers to observe the characters (their inner selves and the changes through which they will pass) objectively without making any subjective judgements in the initial moments of movie and to derive valuable lessons about a subtle sisterly unfaltering love. This develops an urge in the viewer to watch the movie. The cinematography technique is used to find out the social distance between the represented and interactive participants. There is a close-up shot (head) of the represented participants except Olaf in the poster. It invites the viewers to indulge emotionally with the characters. The moment Anna's heart is mistakenly frozen by Elsa as shown in Figure 6, the viewers feel empathy with her. The instant, when Hans shows his real contemptuous ambitions to Anna, the viewers develop a feeling of angst and disgust. Towards the end of movie, the reconciling act of true love between the sisters is a means of happiness and contentment to the viewers. Whereas, Olaf's character is represented with a long distance shot in the poster expressing the idea of his perpetually compassionate nature throughout the movie, such a size of frame also represents him as an anthropomorphic character that plays a key role in the movie.



Figure 6 Screenshots from *Frozen* Movie

The point of view is formed by the selection of a specific camera angle for depicting the represented participants. The interactive participants are offered to see represented participants from horizontal perspective offering involvement in the movie poster by looking at them through a frontal angle. This angle is used to form similar idea of the represented and interactive participants about the course of events in the movie by making viewers see the subject matter from the same plane as represented participants. It is an angle used to create an urge in the viewer by making them anticipate the plot of movie. Therefore, it is one of the effective promotional advantages of movie posters in advertisement of movies as viewers develop an active desire to watch movies. Cinematography involves the vertical angle perspective to escalate the urge in viewers for contemplation over the movie poster in order to develop an interest in watching movies. The represented participants except Olaf are shown from high camera angle depicting viewer's superiority over the represented participants. It gives the viewer an opportunity to contemplate over the represented participants and attach symbolic processes to the poster i.e. represented participant and circumstances. Olaf is represented from a slightly low level angle, providing an idea of Olaf's superiority over the viewers. This kind of representation of Olaf preaches a lesson to the viewers that one should always stay optimistic to live a jovial and contented life.

The modality in the visual piece of discourse acts as a medium to give a credible setting and environment to the represented participant. The modes i.e. depth, contextualization, detail, illumination and colour work together to give a realistic view of the represented participants in a movie poster. The *Frozen* movie poster possesses moderately deep perspective, contextualized presence of background (snowflake, harsh and soft texture of snow), thus representing moderate pictorial detail by giving light and dark shade of soft and sharp edged snow, hence, working as symbolic suggestive of Elsa's identity as ice princess. According to Cortes (2003), the blue colour of movie poster depicts the role of power, peace, melancholy etc. in the movie poster and the white colour gives the idea of purity, for example, Elsa's pure (inborn) identity as ice princess. Therefore, it is evident that all of these interactive meaning making modes effectively work together in enriching the meaning depicted by combining the linguistic and visual modalities.

Compositional Meaning

The compositional meaning incorporates all the visual and linguistic modes and the represented and interactive participants to give an integrated meaning of the visual piece of discourse (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). The compositional meaning is depicted through information, salience, and framing. The information value in the *Frozen* movie poster is Ideal-Real (Top-Bottom). The generalized significant part of a poster is depicted in the Ideal that affects the represented participants in the Real part of the poster. The mental process of Olaf develops the information value of the poster as Ideal-Real. The title *Frozen* and snowflake in its background are the Ideal in the poster that give the notion that the story will be generally based upon the notion of "frozen" and Elsa's identity (snowflake) as ice princess, whereas, the real in the poster shows the represented participants that develop the theme and the plot of movie while facing real life problems. In order to make the *Frozen* movie poster salient to the viewers, the contrast in tonal value (or colour) and difference in sharpness are added in the circumstance of setting of the poster for depicting the theme of movie through poster effectively. In foreground of poster, the characters are represented and in the background, two different textures of snow are depicted. Framing in the compositional meaning is a means of giving

individuality to the represented participants. All the represented participants in the *Frozen* movie poster are depicted in one frame, hence, creating sense of lack of individuality of represented participants as we see all of them some way or other are related to the notion of snow (or ice). It also assists back to the identity crisis Elsa faced in the movie but towards the end, she overcame it and established her individuality as a queen and an ice princess.

Therefore, all the three meanings integrate the visual and linguistic modalities in the poster together to give a meaningful interpretation of *Frozen* movie.

***Zootopia* (2016)**

Representational Meaning

The represented participants in the *Zootopia* movie poster are two: Judy Hopps and Nick Wilde. The representational meaning is depicted through narrative and conceptual processes. Action process, two reaction process and circumstance form the narrative process. Action process is formed through the hand of Hopps on Wilde's shoulder, hence, forming a vector. The action process between the two represented participants, Hopps and Wilde is unidirectional. The unidirectional transactional process signals the idea that Hopps (actor) will force the reluctant Wilde (goal) to assist her in completing the fourteen missing mammal case until he willingly helps her as is shown in Figure 7.



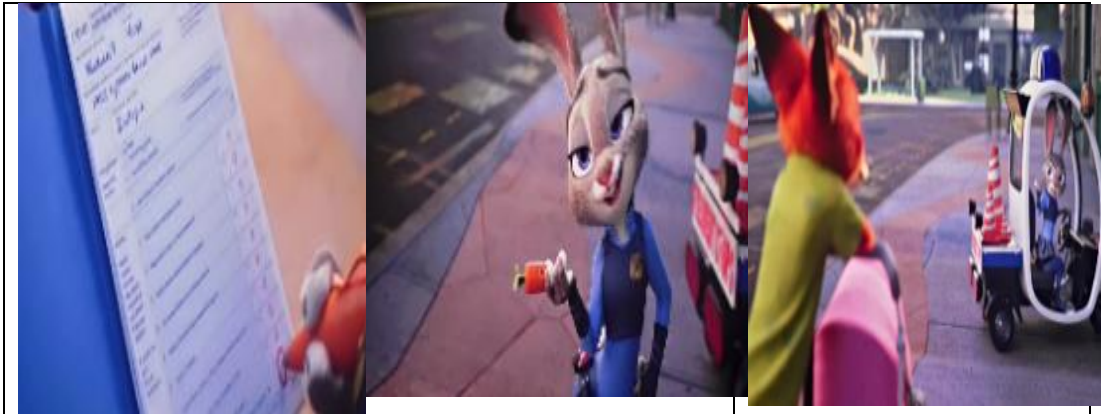


Figure 7 Screenshots from Zootopia Movie

There are two transactional reaction processes formed by Hopps and Wilde. Both of their eye line vector connects with their cell phones. It suggests the notion of evolution of anthropomorphized animals as modern and civilized mammals. The represented participants are enriched with a significant detail via two circumstances; locative circumstance and circumstance of accompaniment. There are two locative circumstances in the poster. One is the skyscrapers with the slightest sky visible explicating the setting of a metropolis. The far-off buildings in the background are less detailed as compared to the modern anthropomorphized mammals in the foreground of poster. The second locative circumstance is the big and small cars depicting city life. The cars of variant size connote that everyone is living in harmony, hence, foreshadowing *Zootopia* as “Utopia”. The circumstance of accompaniment is the participants that are related to the represented participants through setting or by different means except any vectorial relation. The circumstance of accompaniment are the “Zootopian” anthropomorphized mammals that give viewers the information of the setting in which the plot of the movie *Zootopia* is set.

The conceptual process is made up of analytical and symbolic processes in the above mentioned poster. Analytical process formed by means of the landscape of poster “metropolis”, acts as the Carrier and the Possessive Attributes are the anthropomorphized mammals of variant size and expressions (mood) in the poster as depicted in figure 1.4.5 that show how the lead character (represented participant) “Hopps” (the so-called “meek

prey”) is going to overcome the orthodox notions and how is she going to achieve her goal of becoming a helpful cop through forbearance, resilience and trust on his fox-friend “Wilde” (the so-called “Vicious and cunning predator”) against the “Zootopia” Society. The symbolic process is formed in two following ways: symbolic attributive and symbolic suggestive. The landscape (carrier) of the poster, the skyscrapers signify the sky-high passion and self-confidence of Hopps to “make the world a better place”. According to Cortes (2003), the purple colour of Hopps’ eyes are symbolic suggestive of her introspective skills and her blue dress suggests her high confidence to fight all odds in the face of accomplishing her dream of a world “where anyone can be anything”.

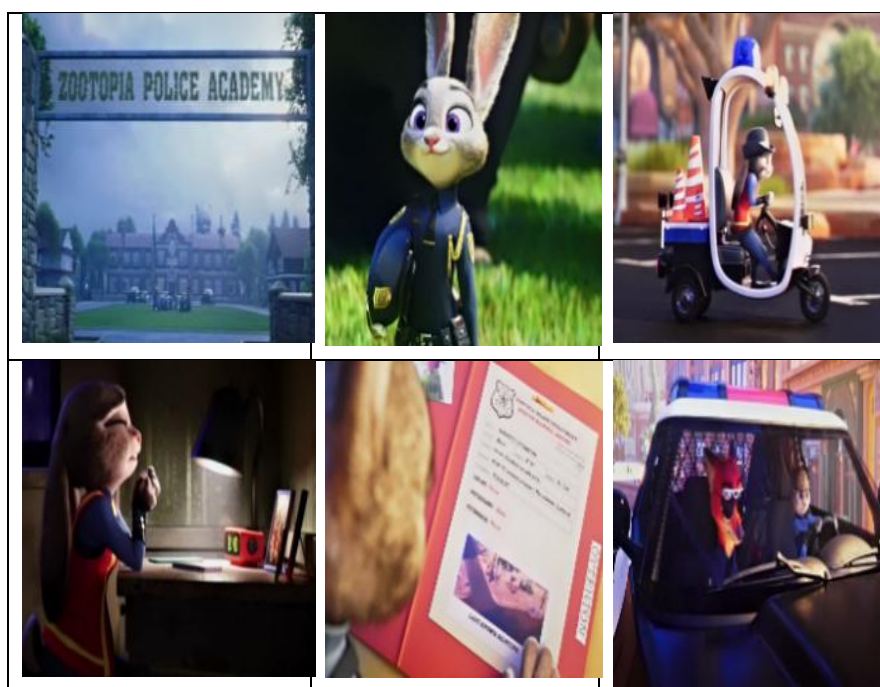


Figure 8 Screenshots from *Zootopia* Movie

As illustrated in Figure 8, Wilde’s orange and yellow colour symbolizes his ambitious and energetic nature that keeps him moving on in life even after being badly humiliated for his biologically assigned traits and superfluous notions attached to him as a fox. Whereas Nicke’s green shirt signifies his faithful and greedy nature. He is faithful to Hopps in helping her pursue her mission of finding Mr. Otterton and he is presented as

greedy in the movie at the time when he hustles people for running his “Pawpsicle” business to attain significant amount of profit (Cortes, 2003).



Figure 9 Screenshots from Zootopia Movie

Interactive Meaning

The poster offers the viewers to contemplate over the represented participants, circumstances and several other features in order to be thoughtful of the manner in which the stereotypical notions are broken and how the anthropomorphized mammals look past beyond the race. It offers the interactive participants to contemplate and think as to how they can create their own physical world as “Utopia”, where everyone enjoys equal rights and lives a peaceful life. The size of frame and a horizontal perspective develops an idea of social distance where the participants are presented from a long distance shot and a horizontal frontal angle. It acknowledges the interactive participants to contemplate on the manner in which valuable lesson and the subject matter are depicted i.e. looking beyond the conventional notions attached to every living being. Such a long shot of represented participants suggests the idea that Hopps and Wilde, while living within

diverse class of anthropomorphized and racially prejudiced mammals are going to successfully struggle to make “Zootopia”, an empathetic, harmonious and racially free “Utopian” world. A subjective high camera angle perspective is used by the image producers to illustrate the viewers’ superiority over the represented participants, thus, offering an introspective interpretation from the viewers by deriving all three meanings from the poster and making it effective for them to easily attach symbolic meanings to the visual and verbal modalities used in the poster. A realistic context is developed for the represented participants through apt use of modalities i.e. depth, contextualization, colour, illumination and detail (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). The *Zootopia* movie poster has maximally deep perspective, a detailed and articulate background. There are sky-high buildings and different sized cars moving on the road and the anthropomorphized mammals of variant lengths giving a representation of a metropolis where prey and predators evolve out of their innate traits and are living in harmony. The visual modalities have a maximum representation of illustrative detail of the poster indicating a clear image of the contextualized plot of movie *Zootopia*. The visual modalities are represented with the verbal modalities e.g. “title of movie” in order to develop a desire in the viewers to watch the movie and to figure out how come the prey and predators will evolve out to live in amity and peace. This fact is seen while watching the movie that anthropomorphized mammals evolve out of stereotypical pre-set notion with the evolution in their biological traits to live in tranquillity. The colour tone is quite saturated to give a deep perspective. Several colours are used in the poster to give a distinctive touch to participants in the poster. The significant colours of represented participants are blue, purple, orange, green and yellow, hence giving them a clear distinctiveness.

Compositional Meaning

The poster achieves its salience through a significant contrast in tonal (colour) value and by the representation of anthropomorphized mammals in the foreground and the illustration of the locative circumstances and circumstance of accompaniment in the background. The framing of the poster effectively presents the peculiarity of the

participants depicting the title (verbal modality) of movie *Zootopia* at the top of the poster.

The verbal modalities i.e. title, date of release, its producers, and media of representation (real D 3D and 3D animation) and multiple visual modalities give an apt and effective integrated meaning to the poster.

Toy Story 3 (2010)

Representational Meaning

The represented participants in the *Toy Story 3* movie poster Woody, Buzz Lightyear, Jessie, Mr. Potato Head, Mrs. Potato Head, and three Squeeze Toy Aliens, Hamm the Piggy Bank, Slinky Dog, Bullseye, Barbie and Rex develop an eye line vector, hence, forming a reaction process. The represented participants seem ambiguous (confused) and scared while looking at an invisible phenomenon that develops the notion of creating an effect of suspense and thrill by withholding information about the occurrence that is causing this reaction, hence, urging moviegoers to watch movie. The toys due to the fear of being thrown in garbage by Andy plan an escape to Sunnyside Day-care as depicted in Figure 10. The reaction process presented in the poster is the scene of movie when they arrive at day-care and meet new toys. They are terrified and uncertain that if the toys will welcome them or not. The represented participants (reactors) and their eye line vector is only visible with no occurrence of phenomenon, henceforth, making a non-transactional reaction process.



Figure 10 Screenshots from *Toy Story 3* Movie

The locative circumstance is the toy box and the toned down day-care room. The toy box in the background with the toys standing outside in front of it conveys the movie's theme of adventure and outgrowing boundaries. The movie conveys the notion of moving on and accepting the inevitable changes in life and the Andy's toys find another kind owner 'Bonnie' just because they accept that Andy has grown up and they should go and let another kind and imaginative child play with them as shown in Figure 11. This acceptance of transformation in Andy's life by toys assists them in going to Bonnie instead of lying in the dark attic room.



Figure 11 Screenshots from *Toy Story 3* Movie

The conceptual process of the poster is created through classification process. The represented participants are characterized in hierarchical multi-levelled overt taxonomy with the protagonist 'Woody' as the superordinate as he is seen standing out and ahead of all the other characters. The Interordinates are Jessie and Buzz standing behind Woody and at middle level. The subordinates are all the other remaining represented participants that are illustrated at the bottom and rear level. Woody with the assistance of Jessie and Buzz and all the other represented participants successfully leaves Sunnyside Day-care.

Interactive Meaning

The poster offers excitement and uncertainty which is meant to evoke curiosity of the interactive participants as to what is going on in the movie. The long distance shot of the participants and the horizontally involved perspective offers the viewers to contemplate upon the anthropomorphic toys and draw out value lessons about friendship and

accepting changes in life. The vertical low camera subjective angle is used by the image producers to show superiority of represented participants which is also a tool used to grasp the viewers' attention. This particular angle intends to make the viewers look up to the toys which have a story to tell that is unfamiliar to the viewers. It also shows that it is a kind of story where the toys come to life and a plot is developed. Maximum pictorial details and toning down of background are used to create clarity in the image and to make it appear as eye catching. The background lacks brightness in order to give a full representation of the participants possessing refined soft shadows around which the movie plot revolves. Bright colours are used in creating the poster and the represented participants in order to make it attractive to the children.

Compositional Meaning

The Information Value of the poster is illustrated with represented participants in the Center and the Margin shows the context of the action taking place in the poster. The margin portrays the Sunnyside Day-care. It connotes the idea that these represented participants are the centre of not only the poster but also centre of action in the movie. Every toy is given a specific colour and attire to give salience to their individual self. The title *Toy Story 3* is shown at the bottom of poster because the visual depiction of toys gives significant information about the plot and the character of movie. Whereas the verbal modality "title" adds up to the viewers' knowledge that it is the third part of the *Toy Story* movie and the tagline "the breakout comedy of the summer" gives the idea of the genre "comedy" as well as the time of release of movie. The framing of the poster depicts that all the participants are in a single frame, hence illustrating group identity of represented participants. It can be taken as a reference to the theme of unity, friendship and loyalty in the movie.

Therefore, the verbal modalities i.e. title, taglines, release date etc. and the visual modalities in all the selected movie posters portray a comprehensive meaning and apt theme of movies.

Findings and Discussion

This research study aimed to figure out several linguistic and visual modalities employed in the selected three movie posters of Academy Award winning animated movies with reference to Chen and Gao's (2013) model of MDA adopted from Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) book "Reading Images: Grammar of Visual Design". The Multimodal Discourse Analysis of selected three movie posters explicates that these posters not only aptly represent the subject matter of the respective movies but they are also composed of several linguistic and visual modalities as mentioned in Chen and Gao's (2013) model of MDA.

Several modes from Chen and Gao's (2013) model are used by image producers in the selected posters consistently.

Table-1 Representational Meaning of Movie Posters

Representational Process	Frozen	Zootopia	Toy Story 3
Narrative Process			
Action Process	✗	✓	✗
Reaction Process	✓	✓	✓
Conceptual Process			
Classification Process	✗	✗	✓
Analytical Process	✓	✓	✗
Symbolic Process	✓	✓	✓

The representational meaning of these movie posters comprise of Narrative and Conceptual process because these movies are not only created for showing action but for also teaching valuable lessons to the viewers. All these movie posters depict represented participants that are significant to the plot of the respective movie. The narrative process

of all these movie posters is created by reaction process. The eye line vector involves the viewers in focusing the traits of the represented participants significantly. The reaction process formed by the represented participants is non-transactional as there is no phenomenon visible in the poster. This intrigues the moviegoers to watch movie as soon as possible to figure out the reason behind such gaze and expression. Every movie poster possesses locative circumstances inferring that not only the represented participants explicate the theme of movie but the other visual and linguistic modalities e.g. locative circumstance, also signify the setting of the movies. All the selected movie posters consist of analytical process except “Toy Story 3” movie poster, hence attributing the symbolic attributive meaning to the represented participants. This kind of use of conceptual process is an effective means of suggesting viewers the traits of represented participants through the landscape (context) of the poster. The symbolic suggestive meaning is depicted in all the selected movie posters except “Toy Story 3” movie poster, hence giving up a more vivid meaning of theme of the movies by connoting certain details about the selected posters through their colour, attire and paralinguistic features.

Table-2 Interactive Meaning of Movie Posters

Interactive Meaning	Frozen	Zootopia	Toy Story 3
Contact	Offer	Offer	Offer
Size of Frame	Close-up Shot + Long Distance Shot	Long Distance Shot	Long Distance Shot
Perspective	Involvement + Inferiority and Superiority	Involvement + Inferiority	Involvement + Superiority
Modality	Present	Present	Present

There are certain functions of visual modalities in interactive meaning of the selected posters that are used alike. In all the movie posters, the contact developed by the

represented participant with the interactive participant is *Offer*. There is no direct gaze between both the participants, hence the posters offer the viewers to contemplate over the plot and subject matter of the movie depicted in its poster as well as to act on the lessons learnt. Except some represented participants in “Frozen” movie poster, the remaining movie posters take long shot of the represented participant, hence adding up to the notion of contemplating at the subtle lessons conveyed through the movie plot from a distance. All the three movie posters illustrate the represented participants from a horizontal frontal angle offering involvement to the viewers so that the viewers look at the represented participants from a subjective horizontal perspective.

Table-3 Compositional Meaning of Movie Posters

Compositional Meaning	Frozen	Zootopia	Toy Story 3
Information Value	Ideal-Real	Not Present	Centre-Margin
Salience	Present	Present	Present
Framing	Single Frame	Single Frame	Single Frame

A single frame is used to compose all the selected three movie posters that infer the subject matter of movies. For instance, in “Frozen” movie all the five represented participants are somewhat related to the idea of frozen. Thus there is group identity and no separate framing of individuals. Similarly “Toy Story 3” group identity of individuals (lack of framing) goes with the theme of unity and friendship of movie. The use of single frame and depiction of group identity in the other movie poster also follow the theme of movie. The poster of “Toy Story 3” utilizes the Center – Margin form of information value whereas the information value for “Frozen” movie poster is Ideal – Real. The salience of all the selected movie posters is achieved by using different modality, depth, detail, illumination, colour and contextualization in creating the posters that illustrate the theme of movie. The linguistic and visual modalities used collectively in the movie

posters convey the theme of movie effectively that develops an urge in moviegoers to watch movie.

Conclusion

The linguistic and visual modalities used in the posters aptly convey the theme of the movie. An action process is used in the narrative structure of posters to signify pertinent actions. The conceptual processes are formed in the posters to reflect the analytical and symbolic meaning of the represented participants. The depiction of represented participants either through subjective high angle and low angle are aptly meant to signify power relations between the represented and interactive participants. The image producers through a low angle and some from high angle develop a hierarchical relationship between the represented and viewers. It suggests the specific manner of looking and forming a certain point of view about the represented participants. At times, there is no use of eye line angle between both the participants which signifies the difference in imaginary world of movie and the real world of viewers. Therefore, is a difference of perspective. It assists in comprehending the subject matter by seeing the represented participants from a set perspective. The type of contact directed also is significant as it usually demands the viewers to enter into the subconscious of the characters and have a greater access to their thoughts and emotional states.

The detailed analysis of movie posters has reflected upon the utility of this genre in conveying the meaning and themes of the movie by using the strategies of audience engagement. The linguistic and visual modalities uncovered in this research have a deep relationship with the genre of animated movies and producers of movies use the posters in order to promote the movie themes and simultaneously attract the viewers. The linguistics modalities as mentioned on the posters such as release date, medium of movie release i.e. 3D animation, taglines and information about movie production house, i.e. Pixar, Disney etc. not only add up to the converged meaning of poster with the visual modalities but it is also a means of gaining high commercial success. The medium of movie release, i.e. 3D Animation etc. makes the viewers spend more money to watch

animated movies in good quality. Similarly, by knowing the producers of movies, the viewers watch movies frequently. This not only make movies win Academy Awards but it also helps them achieve top worldwide grossing.

The current research is useful for the researchers who are interested in delving further into the domain of multimodality. Future researches could concentrate on finding out one meaning e.g. representational meaning using the same aforementioned model while intensively analysing movie poster of movies belonging to any genre, i.e. adventure, romantic etc. In addition, Chen and Gao's (2013) model can also be applied to trailers and movie clips for carrying out their Multimodal Discourse Analysis.

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