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A Multimodal Analysis of Male Chauvinism

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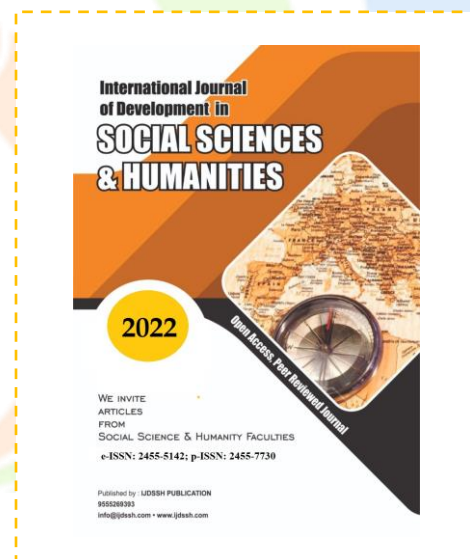*Department of English, College of Education, University of Thi-Qar, Iraq

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at showing how to apply the multimodal aspect of discourse analysis to express the social problem concerning with how males treat females in most societies, it is the male chauvinism. This problem explicitly can be explicated in all types of discourse, and this study focuses on how to expose such a phenomenon in the multimodal discourse. It shows how females around the world suffer from the way by which males unfairly look at them. This can be embodied in many images posted in different sorts of the social media, such as Google, Facebook, You Tube, TikTok, and so on. Kress and van Leeuwen's framework (2006) is adopted to analyze and interpret the data collected. Multimodal discourse analysis is highly rooted in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1994).

Keywords: *male chauvinism, embodied, multimodality, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Multimodal Discourse Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, discourse has been an interesting term, although it has not been employed and defined indiscriminately. It has been used ambiguously with or without precise meanings in various contexts. However, underlying the term 'discourse' refers to the general thought that "language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life, familiar examples being 'medical discourse' and 'political discourse''. Discourse analysis is used to analyze such patterns (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002: 1). In general, discourse refers to representing aspects of the world, such as social, physical, psychological ones. Discourse is related to various groups of people who act in various social positions. Discourses are different in representing the social events, the way of including and excluding certain events, choosing either a concrete or an abstract way of representing the events and specifying the way of representing the events (Fairclough, 2003).

Analyzing discourse should include "studying language in the context of society, culture, history, institutions, identity formation, politics, power, and all the other things that language helps us to create ", by which language inevitably has its own meaning in particular ways to achieve particular purposes. Thus, discourse analysis is a branch of linguistics that highly contributes to the various sciences. It is related to various social and cultural aspects, discourse analysis can be applied to a numerous number of disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, history, political science, or education (Gee and Handford, 2012: 5).

To handle human communication, discourse analyzes different modes to convey meaning like language and visual images,

and thus it is called multimodal discourse analysis. Multimodality refers to the employment of various semiotic modes at the same time using a certain way in order to reinforce and complete the meaning in a particularly communicative text. In other words, multimodality is a way of providing procedures that can be used to analyze discourses using various semiotic resources (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001). Multimodality indicates to how language is used as one source among others in the same discourse (Ventola and Moya, 2009; Jewitt, 2009).

The role of this semiotic resource is to account for the events that take place in the social context of its users (the ideational metafunction); it should be able to document and deal with the social actions, showing how members in the society are related to and interacted with each other. (the interpersonal metafunction); it should be capable of forming complicated semiotic entities that are internally consistent and related to the social world in which they are formed and employed (the textual metafunction) (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021). Discourse should socially be grounded in order to analyze the social problems, such as exposing and determining the social injustice (Rogers, 2004). The present investigation handles the well-known social problem that is the unfairly male view towards females, using some images that are shared in different social media.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Discourse Analysis

The traditional definition of discourse highly focuses on language, including the spoken and written forms of language, as it is defined by Brown and Yule (1983) who assert that any spoken or written form of language can be treated as a discourse. Familiar examples of the idea that discourse is the way of structuring language in relation to variant patterns to be followed in the social life are 'medical discourse' and 'political discourse', and discourse analysis is the analysis of these patterns. However, this definition is not enough to help clarify what a discourse is, how it functions, or how it can be analyzed (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002).

Foucault (1972) explains that meaning with wider structures of the society is associated with discourse. Discourse analysis can be defined as studying language above the level of the sentence, of the ways sentences are combined to create meaning and to accomplish purposes. However, it refers to meaning that we give to language and the action we achieve when we use language in particular contexts. A single sentence or utterance may be analyzed as a

communication or an action, and not just as a sentence structure whose literal meaning is derived from the nature of grammar. By grammar, we know what "I pronounce you man and wife" literally means, but not when and where it really means you are married. So discourse analysis represents a study of language in use (Gee and Handford, 2012).

It is worth mentioning that discourse analysis is not merely one approach, but a series of interdisciplinary approaches which can be used to find out many different social domains in different types of studies. The prominent approaches to social constructionist discourse analysis are Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory, discursive psychology and critical discourse analysis. These approaches share the starting point which indicates that the ways of our talking do not only neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations but also play a significant role in creating and changing them. These approaches represent prolific theories and methods for research in communication, culture and society. (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002).

It has been noticed that "all discourses recontextualize social practices, and that all knowledge is, therefore, ultimately grounded in practice, however slender that link may seem at times" (van Leeuwen, 2008: VII).

Wodak and Chilton (2005) confirm the interrelation between discourse analysis and the social theory, explaining how discourse is associated with the human experiences. In fact, discourse is commonly employed in social theories and their analyses, indicating to how different areas of knowledge are structured in various ways. Accordingly, the discourse in the medical science dominates the area of the health care. In this sense, discourse highly depends on employing language and particular symbolic forms together as in visual images (Fairclough, 1992).

Multimodality

Multimodality refers to the field of dealing with the semiotic work, it is the realm of inquiring and describing the space and other sources involved in constructing meaning in particular. The main principle of multimodality is that language is just one means for creating meaning, and there are other resources. According to multimodal discourse analysis, the modal resources, that occur in a particular culture, require to be viewed as one consistent, constitutive field among other resources to create meaning. In other words, the multimodal approach is one that works beyond the approaches which depend on the linguistic tools in the analysis, it deals with writing linguistically and images using the art history. In such approach, all

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modes are structured in just one field. Accordingly, all modes are dealt with as one related cultural resource for constructing meaning that is made by a social group at a certain moment. In each discourse, all the modes should be viewed equally, potentially and distinctly (Kress, 2012).

Until recent times, linguistic research papers have focused on the linguistic devices in constructing meaning, regardless of the main role of other meaning-making resources. This results in an impoverished view of how discourse functions to construct meaning. The recent research papers in multimodality have changed such a view to include all modes involved in meaning construction. Multimodal discourse analysis is a group of research papers concerning multimodality, and such papers deal with how theories and practices of the discourse analysis are developed and how to make use of the multiple semiotic resources in such field, such as visual images, architecture and space. Recent social semiotic frameworks are used to analyze a wide range of discourse genres in dynamic and static electronic media, print media and the three dimensional objects in space. Analyzing and interpreting language use can be contextualized in relation to other semiotic resources, and these resources are simultaneously employed to construct meaning. For instance, on the printed page, multimodal analysis deals with the meaning and function of the visual images and the meaning resulted from the integrative use of both semiotic resources besides the linguistic devices and their typographical instantiation (O'Halloran, 2004).

LeVine and Scollon (2004) assume that all discourses are multimodal in that language in use (whether in the spoken or written form of language) should be constructed in relation to the various modes of communication, implying speech and gestures in the spoken form of language and contextual phenomena like using the physical spaces by which we achieve different discursive actions, papers, design and the typography of the documents to represent texts.

Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Systemic Functional Grammar has a deep impact on most contemporary schools of discourse analysis, such as multimodal discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and mediated discourse analysis. Although such fields are basically concerned with the clause as its primary level, the analytical tools of SFG have been brought to be adapted to deal with logical relations, participants, qualities, processes and their evaluations by both the speaker and listener

as they are developed in a particular text or through a group of texts (Bhatia, et al., 2008: 2-3). There are three language metafunctions that look at grammar as meaning-making (Halliday, 1994; Gerot and Wignell, 1994). Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) show that Halliday's social semiotic theory includes that the human communicational system naturally carries out three metafunctions which are the ideational metafunction that constructs how the world can be represented, the interpersonal metafunction that helps enact and can be identified by particular social purposes and particular social relations and the textual metafunction that arranges the communicative acts into wider wholes, into the communicative events or texts which comprehends certain social practices. Multimodal discourse analysis refers to the relation between language and other semiotic resources to show that studying language codes should be associated with other resources like images and graphs (Benderbal, 2017).

Kress and van Leeuwen's framework of modality (2021) assumes that Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions should be met depending on all semiotic modes. The ideational function relates to the way of seeing and feeling the world around us. To achieve this function, several semiotic modes (including their different affordances) are variously improved in various cultures and times, with regard to the grammatical resources, and thus the represented elements are drawn to be associated with each other. Two elements may be associated with each other when they are interacted, and such interaction can visually conceived by a vector or several vectors. This metafunction is often about how people represent their experiences. The interpersonal functions represents the social relations of individuals while the textual metafunction is the last one that concerns with explaining the relations among the existing resources in their environments.

In their Visual Grammar, Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) display how the ideational metafunction presents the representational meaning that is narratively and conceptually represented, guided by the way the represented participants (including the whole entities in the image) are analyzed. The interpersonal metafunction indicates to the interactive meaning that depends on the analysis of the relationships among the represented participants and their viewers by the size, angle shot and gaze of frame. The third function is the textual metafunction- it emphasizes the compositional meaning that refers to how the three categories (information value, salience and framing) are analyzed.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Analyzing the collected data adopts a method of qualitative research. There are three images used for the purpose of the analysis that are available in many websites. The data are analyzed depending on three aspects which are: representational (ideational), interactional (interpersonal) and compositional (textual). This is the framework guided by Kress and van Leeuwen in their Visual Grammar (2021). There are three images chosen in order to exhibit the social phenomenon of male chauvinism, and these images include different situations with the same message.

DATA ANALYTICS OF THE SELECTED IMAGES

There are many photos and pictures that represent the male chauvinism in the world, and such photos and pictures stand for explicit protests to the negative male behaviour against females. The images are chosen in relation to expressing how females are oppressed in their communities.

Image (1)

This image is divided into two parts with two ideas that are contradictory to each other. In this image, there are two women with two different actions. This contrast explains people in the world look at the woman and what a situation the woman really experiences. This image is shown below:
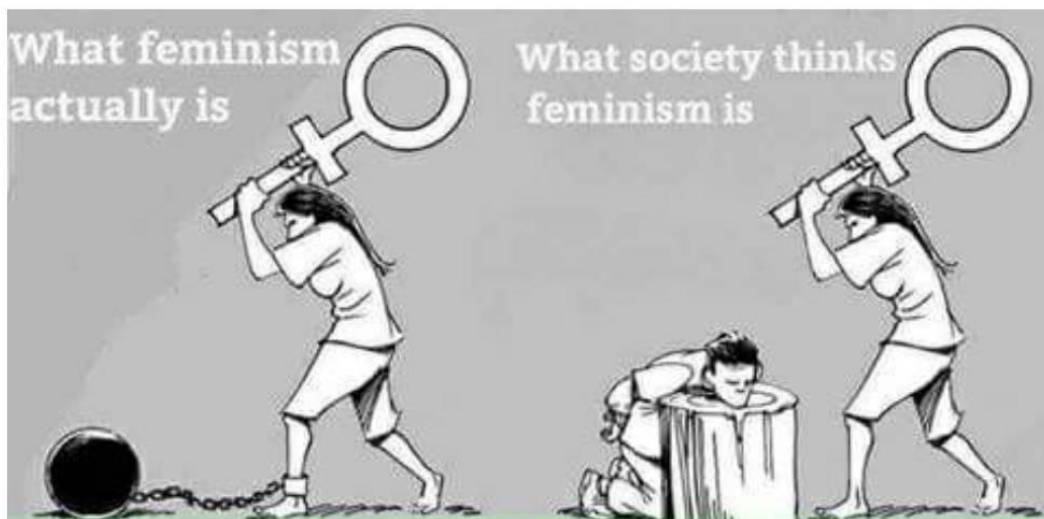

Image (1)

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Ideational Metafunction

According to the ideational metafunction level, one should identify the various elements and their functions in the image that help elements and their features to be represented. The kind of this image is realistic because it is drawn- it is divided into two contrasted parts: the first part is drawn on the right side of the image, representing how males in our society look at the woman as this who has a criminal nature and tries to control men using various ways. Meanwhile, the second part represents how females suffer in their society and how they are constrained by variant social and religious norms. According to its function, this image can be explicated in terms of the category of the narrative representation, and the elements involved in this image are associated with each other by describing the process, change and action that connect the elements in our daily life.

Interpersonal Metafunction

This level is concerned with examining the ways of interacting the represented elements with the viewers. In this level, three parameters (contact, social distance and attitude) should be dealt to produce the interpersonal meaning. The given image creates a contact with all males in the world, although the main participant doesn't directly look at the viewers. The image functions as offer-image, providing information on the real position of females. Moreover, another way of expressing the interactive meaning involves the system of the social distance that is a matter of the main participant and the viewers. So it refers to the nature of distance between females and males in the world. The last way of making the interactive meanings indicates to the system of the attitude that may be subjectively or objectively carried out. This study is concerned with the subjective attitude which depends on the sort of the angle, and the angle of the main participant is high that expresses an involvement with the participant.

The style here is public because the message adopted in a context of situation needs an impersonal distance between the sender and the viewer. Thus, most human relationships are built on the basis of power and involvement, and this image shows the unfair relationship between males and females in general and the husband and the wife in particular.

Textual Metafunction

The textual metafunction level focuses on how the text is interrelated to the image and how they are spatially divided, highlighted and arranged in order to produce a wide visual composition of the ideational and interpersonal meaning. In this level, there are

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three associated systems that help relate the interactive and representational meanings: the first variable is the informational value that results from the visual elements which depend on how the visual composition is structured. The verbal element in this image is placed on the two sides; therefore, it adopts the Given/ New structure in which the sentence "What feminism actually is" is on the left side to represent initial information. On the right side, there is a sentence that is "What society thinks feminism is", it represents the new information.

The second system is 'salience' that refers to how the verbal element appears to the viewer- the value of this element highly depends on the contrasted elements in that the information on the right side reflects how society negatively looks at females while the information on the left reflects the fact of most females in our society. The third system is 'framing' that refers to how the elements of the visual composition are correlated to each other in that the text is written on each picture to explicate the main idea of the drawing. They are related to each other by a particular frame device which is segregation-they occur in two different parts (right and left) to be separated.

Image (2)

This image is similar to the first one in discussing the same subject (male chauvinism). Here is a male view towards females, this view includes that the female's position is in the kitchen. This means that the main job of the female is cooking for her family, and she should not work side by side with the male. According to this view, cooking is the only job females can do. This image is shown below:

Image (2)

Ideational Metafunction

The type of this image is realistic because it includes a human being that is a woman and a symbol (a kettle). The main element in this image is that the woman is on the right part while on the left part, there is a kettle employed for the purpose of the comparison. Accordingly, the woman is viewed in our society as one of the kitchen stuff used for cooking (a kettle) that should stay only in the kitchen, and the woman is similar to this tool that should be found only in the kitchen. According to its function, this image can be explicated in terms of the category of the narrative representation, and the elements involved of this image are associated with each other by describing the process, change and action that connect the elements in our daily life. The representation of this image is analytical by which the main element exhibits meaning in relation to the symbolic element (the kettle) that achieves the attributes of the main element.

Interpersonal Metafunction

This function sheds light on how elements are interacted with their viewers. The first system in this level is the contact, and this image also creates a contact with all world males- the main element (the woman) looks directly to the viewers. The image has a function of offer-image that reflects the miserable fact of most females. The second system of expressing the interactive meaning is the social distance which displays how most females are dealt by males in general, and how wives' positions are endowed by their husbands. The last system involved in creating the interactive meaning is the attitude that is subjectively expressed depending on the researcher's view. The attitude here explicates how the appearance of another element (kettle) is associated with the main element (the woman). This image has a public style because it sends a message implied in a context of situation, and the distance between the sender and his viewers is impersonal because it simulates the real situations of most females in the world.

Textual Metafunction

This textual metafunction shows how language helps create the interactive meaning of this image. The interactive meaning depends on three systems: the first system is the informational value that is related to the way of drawing the structure of the visual composition. The verbal element here is placed on the two sides of the image at bottom. Thus, it adopts the Given/ New structure in which the sentence on the left is "This stayed in the kitchen", representing initial information (i.e. the kettle stayed in the kitchen and it is safe) while the sentence on the right is "This did not" , representing the new information (i.e. the woman went

out the kitchen and she is punished). The second system is salience that shows how the woman is dealt as one item that should be always found in the kitchen. The third system is framing that helps correlate all elements to send a message concerning how females suffer from their partners (males) in the society.

Image (3)

This image expresses the women's sufferance from male chauvinism at home and in work. It shows how women try their best to get rid of such negative treatment. This image is shown below:
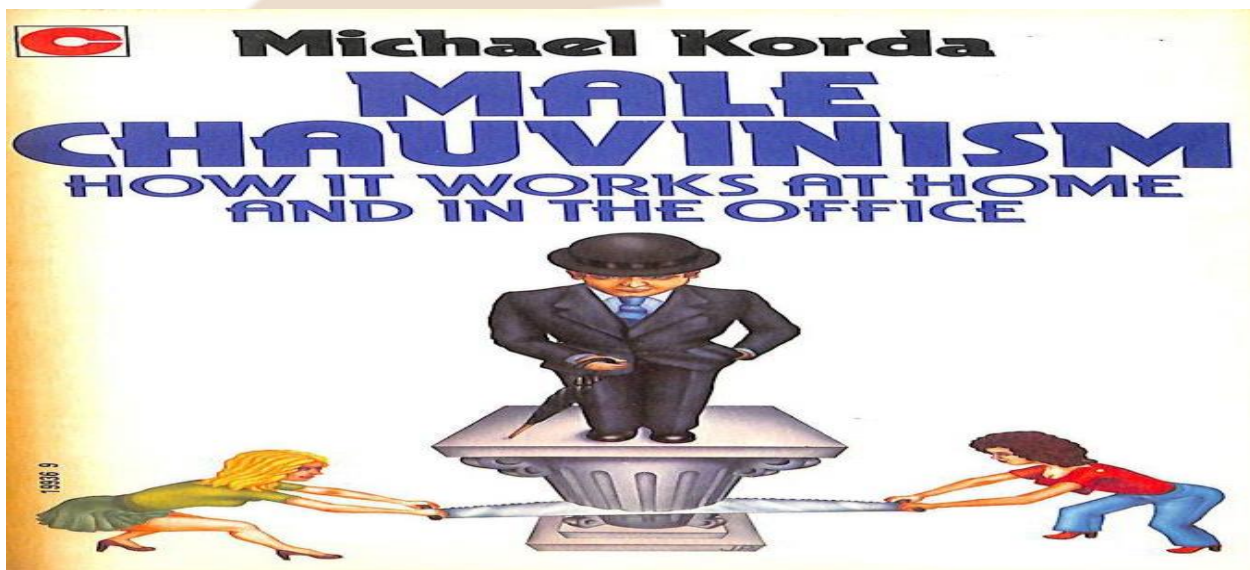

Image (3)

Ideational Metafunction

This type of images is also realistic since there are human beings (two women) and a statue of a man. This image is similar to the first ones since it deals with the male chauvinism- it explicates how two women suffer from the negatively manly viewpoint against them in the society, wishing they finish such a view which includes that males should have the superior position either at home or in the office. This image can be shown in relation to the category of the narrative representation in that the elements of this image interact with each other in order to express the main idea of how the society endows men the power over women. The representation of this image is analytical by which the main elements express meaning depending on the symbolic element (the man's statue) that achieves the attributes of the main element.

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Interpersonal Metafunction

Here is a way of discussing how the represented elements are interacted with their viewers. This image tries to establish a contact with the world in general and men in particular. Although the main elements (the two women) are looking at the third element (statue), that represents the character of the man, they make a kind of contact with their viewers. The image functions as offer-function, reflecting their struggles with men to get fair treating. The second system (the social distance) shows how men discourteously and disrespectfully deal with women. The last system is the attitude that is subjectively expressed in relation to the researcher's view. The attitude of this image implies how the minor element (the statue) is employed to refer to the women's views towards men, and how men frustrate and discourage women to show the difference between the two sexes. The image tries to send a message to all viewers in the world, it expresses how women are oppressed in the society by men. This message is public; therefore, the style followed in this image is public, and thus the distance between the sender (the two women) and the viewer is impersonal.

Textual Metafunction

The first system involved in the interactive meaning is the informational value which is concerned with structuring the visual composition, the verbal element in this image occurs on the top side of the surface, so it is structured according to the ideal/ real structure, by which the written words (MALE CHAUVINISM: HOW IT WORKS AT HOME AND IN THE OFFICE) are analyzed to exhibit the intended meaning of the message. The salience explains the fact of how males deal with females. Framing helps the involved elements send the message.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, most people in the world often think that females have more negative characteristics than males, such as hatred, exploitation, backbiting, procrastination. Men always look at women as they were negligent in their daily duties. Therefore, the general idea is that women are treated unfairly and such a social problem causes many frustrations to them. They try to express this idea in visual images that are most effective than involving themselves in long arguments which may not affect the listeners. Using images with a few words is a very popular technique because it can be used to communicate to others offline in different parts of the world. Multimodal discourse analysis is the appropriate approach employed to treat such discourse to convey the encyclopaedic meaning of visual images with their linguistic components.

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However, each visual image has been analyzed to interpret one significant message (showing the male chauvinism), and there are other possible messages that can be inferred by other researchers.

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