

# **Multimodal Discourse Analysis of COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign Posters: Visual Grammar Approach**

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## **Abstract**

Several studies have utilized multimodality to analyze texts such as advertisements, storybooks, posters, and videos. However, few have attempted to include COVID-19 vaccination campaign posters considering the currency of the issue. Thus, this study looked into the visual structures embedded in the representational, interactional, and compositional semiotic functions of selected vaccination campaign posters of the Department of Health (DOH) in the Philippines. It applied the Grammar of Visual Design (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) to illustrate the meaning potential of the selected posters. Furthermore, it tried to explain how the various semiotic resources established the purpose of the discourse and the posters' communicative goal. The analysis revealed that narrative patterns, 'offer' images, personal distance, frontal horizontal angle, low vertical and eye level angles, and high modality was significant in the posters. Furthermore, the visual element was presented as new information, while the verbal element as given information, allowing visual content to be salient. Results suggest that the potential meaning of multimodal texts is improved when the relationship between viewers and represented participants is established. This can be achieved when viewers become part of the participants' worlds and experiences as depicted and represented in the posters. For vaccination campaign posters like these, the appeal to emotion is considerably valuable for yielding a positive response from the viewers. Consequently, people's responses will be geared toward vaccination and its perceived effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Visual Grammar, Representational, Interactional, Compositional

## Introduction

There are other rich sources of meaning other than language. Language is only an aspect of a text where meaning is not limited. Halliday (1978, 4) substantiated that "... there are many other modes of meaning, in any culture, which are outside the realm of language." This notion implicates the indispensable roles of other semiotic resources as potential sources of meaning and (Baldry & Thibault, 2010) how these resources are used to "create other texts in addition to the spoken and written word." Similarly, these available multimodal resources in a particular culture are used to make sense "in any and every sign, at every level, and in any mode" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Indeed, numerous diverse and expressive modalities contribute to the development of meaning in a complementary and integrated manner (Matthiessen, 2007).

As Halliday (1989) postulated, the functionality of language and texts are not limited to spoken and written forms. What is conveyed in language by using different word classes and clause structures, for example, can be expressed in visual communication by using different colors or compositional structures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Undoubtedly, these multimodal resources allow images and text to enter the communication environment in new and significant ways (Jewitt, 2009).

Some multimodal posters can be visually described as having distilled text and distinguishing visual elements (Stepanov, 2016). Posters contain a considerable number of semiotic resources (i.e., images, verbal texts, colors, framing) that facilitate meaning-making among viewers and heavily rely on semiotic resources to signal the intended meaning of the producers (Oyebode & Unuabonah, 2013). As an information resource, posters can be indispensable in educating people about an issue. For instance, Dallyono and Sukyadi's (2019) analysis of environmental protection posters discussed the significant contribution of posters towards protecting the environment through environmental education. Similarly,

Isalambo and Kenneth (2020) have emphasized the use of compositional characteristics of posters like information value and framing, as well as connective devices to lead readers while engaging in multimodal public health communication regarding COVID-19.

The emergence of a global pandemic demands more vital positions for governments to provide invaluable information about COVID-19. In the Philippines, the Department of Health (DOH) established a system to deliver updated COVID-19 content to viewers, ranging from COVID-19 trackers, policies, and case bulletins. The use of social media sites like Facebook, according to Hunt (2015), makes the dissemination of health-related information rapid and can potentially influence behaviors on a large scale. Now, vaccination campaigns highlight the department's information drive in the account of achieving "herd immunity" in the country. However, this requires changing people's behavior toward vaccination and its efficacy. To realize this goal, the government should consider vaccination campaign posters effective in necessitating people to be vaccinated.

Hence, this study attempted to analyze the vaccination campaign posters of the Department of Health (DOH). Using the Visual Grammar (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) as a theoretical framework, it aimed to describe the selected vaccination posters in three semiotic functions: representational, interactional, and compositional. Even more, it tried to explain how the various semiotic resources established the purpose of the discourse. Contrastingly, the study did not determine the effectiveness of the posters being analyzed.

## Review of Literature

The following review highlights the theoretical framework mainly utilized in this study. The Grammar of Visual Design by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) provides a system of analysis to "describe how depicted elements – people, places, and things – combine in visual "statements" of greater or lesser complexity and extension" (p.1).

## Visual Grammar

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) developed a system of

analyzing how semiotic resources, in particular texts, interactively work together to create potential meanings. They introduced their visual grammar to describe how depicted elements in texts are combined to create meaningful wholes. They strongly suggested that “the visual component of a text is an independently organized and structured message, connected with the verbal text but in no way dependent on it—and similarly the other way around.”

The “Grammar of Visual Design” has its theoretical roots in Halliday’s functional grammar. According to Halliday (1994), there are three metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The first metafunction involves using language to represent a person’s experience of the world, or in other words, the experiential function of language. It includes the analysis of functional constituents as participant, process, and circumstance. For Halliday (1985, p. 53), ideational metafunction is “the meaning in the sense of “content.” In visual grammar, the ideational metafunction is applied in understanding how visual elements “represent objects and their relations in a world” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

The second metafunction is the interpersonal function of language. Interpersonal metafunction shows the use of language to encode interaction (Halliday, 1994). The speaker and listener relationship is established as they engage in a communicative situation. What is shown also are the interactive distinctions between whether participants are exchanging information or goods and the type of interactions as demanding or offering (Butt et al., 2000). Following this, the visual grammar framework suggests that “any semiotic mode has to be able to project the relations between the producer of a (complex) sign and the receiver/reproducer of that sign. Any mode has to represent a particular social relationship between the producer, the viewer, and the object represented” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 42).

Lastly, the textual metafunction points to combining language resources into a coherent whole or text. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 43) emphasized this, noting, “Any semiotic mode has to have the capacity to form texts, complexes of signs which cohere both internally with each other and externally with the context in and for which they were produced.”

## Representational Semiotic Function

Similar to Halliday's ideational function, the representational semiotic function describes how semiotic resources in a text create representations of the world. Notably, there are two identified processes involved here: narrative and conceptual.

The narrative process involves a vector or a line formed by the depicted elements in the text, like the bodies, limbs, or tools "in action." Also, it can be formed through the eyeline or glance of the represented participants. The presence of a vector creates vectorial patterns or narratives that reveal the sequences and changes of events or processes in the text (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The participant from which vectors emanate is referred to as the actor, and the participant receiving them is the goal. In this case, an actional narrative is made. However, a reactional narrative is made when a vector is formed by eyeline or glance. In this case, the actor becomes the reactor, and the goal becomes a phenomenon. The action and reaction process can be transactional or non-transactional.

The conceptual process has no vector involved and represents participants in terms of their "more generalized and less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure, or meaning" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). That is, "conceptual processes are concerned with the representation of ideas in images where participants can be analyzed, classified, or defined" (e.g., charts, tree structures, and scientific diagrams) (Ly & Jung, 2015).

## Interactional Semiotic Function

The interactional semiotic function considers the relationship of images and participants (interactive and represented) in text and corresponds to Halliday's interpersonal function of language. Included in the analysis is the social meaning encoded and organized by image-producers using the different semiotic resources (i.e., gaze, distance, angle). The viewers will make sense of the text and enter into an imaginary relationship with the represented participants and/or the interactive participants (image-producers).

Commencing the interactional analysis of a text is the

recognition of semiotic resources like gaze, social distance, and angle. The gaze establishes contact or a pseudo-social bond with the viewer, even at an imaginary level. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) emphasized the fundamental distinction created when participants look at the viewers or not. A demand for an image act is made when represented participants look at the viewers. This image act is used by producers if they want something from the viewers. The kind of relationship being established depends on the facial expression and gestures of the represented participants. A smile can mean that viewers are asked to engage in a social affinity relationship; a stare of cold disdain suggests that the viewers are asked to relate with the participants (e.g., as an inferior relates to a superior); a seductive pout can mean that the viewers are asked to develop desire towards the participants; a gesture of hand pointing at the viewer can mean that the participants want the viewer to come closer; and a defensive gesture, which can mean “Stay away from me” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). On the other hand, when represented participants in texts are not looking directly at the viewers, an offer is made. On this, viewers are transformed into “invisible onlookers” who scrutinize the participants as “specimens in display case” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119).

Other than the relationship created by gazes, distance is another element that builds interaction between participants. This involves the level of involvement of the viewers with the represented participants, and the casual relationship of physical proximity in everyday interaction is created (Horakik, 2015). Following Hall (1966), Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006, p.124-125) determined the following types of distance: intimate distance, close personal distance or the distance at which ‘one can hold or grasp the other person,’ far personal distance or the distance that ‘extends from a point that is just outside easy touching distance by one person to a point where two people can touch fingers if they both extend their arms’; close social distance or the distance at which ‘impersonal business occurs; far social distance or the distance where business and social interaction has a more formal and impersonal character; and public distance or the distance between people who are and are to remain strangers.’ It can be inferred that the closer the distance of the represented participants to the viewer is, the more intimate relationship is formed.

Another resource that institutes the relationship between the participants and the viewer is the angle or perspective. When applied to images, angles allow the viewers to develop subjective attitudes toward the represented participants. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) discussed two types of angles: horizontal and vertical. The horizontal angle emphasizes either involvement or detachment by positioning the participants as paralleled, aligned, or diverged from one another. A frontal horizontal angle shows involvement, while an oblique horizontal angle reveals detachment.

Furthermore, the vertical angle shows power relations among participants. For Martin (1968), a high angle denotes the subject as inferior or insignificant, while a low angle denotes the subject as superior or the feeling of exaltation and triumph. However, no power relationship is involved when the angle is set at eye level and equality is suggested.

Lastly, the modality of text also contributes to the interactional dimension of the multimodal text. The concept of modality, as applied in visual communication, refers to the degree of realism in the representation of the world. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) emphasize that defining realism depends on what is considered real based on some established criteria and its expression based on 'right,' the best, the (most) "natural" form to represent reality. Accordingly, the modality judgments, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), are "social, dependent on what is considered real (or true, or sacred) in the social group for which the representation is primarily intended" (p. 156). To achieve high modality in text, image-producers consider the following key markers: color, which can be through saturation, differentiation, and modulation; contextualization or the articulation of abstract; representation or the representation of pictorial detail; depth or perspective; illumination or the play of light; and brightness, or the lightness or darkness of the color.

## **Compositional Semiotic Function**

The compositional semiotic function corresponds to Halliday's textual function. It relates images' representational and interactive meanings through the following systems: information

value, salience, and framing. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) explained that the position of elements (e.g., images and texts) endows them with a certain information value based on the various zones like left and right, top and bottom, and center and margin. In a left-and-right structure, given information is placed in the left zone while new information is on the right. Information is given if the viewers already know about it and are new if it is something not known.

On the other hand, the top and bottom structure reveals what information is real and ideal, with the top as ideal and the bottom as real. Ideal information includes the generalized essence of information or the most salient part, in contrast to the real, specific, or practical. Further, when elements are found in the center, they are considered the nucleus of the information, and the elements in the margin are ancillary and dependent.

Salience is also another resource in analyzing the compositional function of the text. Image-producers decide which elements should receive a more significant amount of salience in terms of placement in the foreground or background, relative size, and color contrast, among others, which enables them to attract the viewers' attention. Lastly is the framing, which points to the connection and disconnection of elements through dividing lines or actual frame lines (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). Framing indicates whether or not elements in the text belong or do not belong in some way.

### **Related Studies**

Numerous research employs multimodal analysis, particularly on posters, ads, and other forms of text. Specifically, Isalambo and Kenneth's (2020) investigations revealed how multimodal resources employed by poster designers help readers while engaging in public health communication. Guo and Li (2020) demonstrated that visuals and text collaborate in multimodal discourses regarding the COVID-19 pandemic to achieve their overall meaning. Similarly, Aning (2021) observed that the verbal and visual cues in COVID-19 posters on health services are intended to transmit an idea or message and communicate with readers to have a specific effect on them. The research by Jarreau et al., (2021) found that visual narratives enable

individuals to act on health information and incorporate it into their daily lives, enhancing health literacy. More findings show that the interaction of diverse semiotic resources aids in the formation of intended meanings at various levels (Bedi, 2019) and reveals a repeating narrative in the text that motivates readers to act (Deocampo, 2019).

Moreover, the multimodal analysis demonstrated the persuasive influence of advertising through representational functions reached through narrative and conceptual processes (Ananda et al., 2019). It emphasized the capacity of pictures to transmit multidimensional meanings in advertisements (Ly & Jung, 2015). When used to create storybooks, the combination of visual and verbal features enables young children to readily comprehend the narratives and maintain their interest in the tale being told.

## Methodology

This study analyzed the purposively selected COVID-19 vaccination campaign posters of the Department of Health (DOH) in the Philippines. Correspondingly, eight materials were downloaded from the official Facebook page of the agency under the title “Resbakuna: Kasangga ng Bida” posts content. These posters depicted participants as healthcare workers and family members and were accompanied by verbal texts. However, in this analysis, only the visual structure of the text was considered, following the Grammar of the Visual Design framework (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) as an analytical tool. Accordingly, each campaign poster was described and analyzed using the three semiotic functions of representational, interactional, and compositional. Initially, the visual structures were described based on how participants were represented, the suggested relationship between the participants and the viewers, and how the representational and interactive elements were integrated. Finally, an interpretation of how the identified visual structures relate to the purpose of the discourse was made. Remarkably, the description and analysis of the campaign posters were grounded on the assumption that posters in the Philippines were within the Western visual design. In their study, Kress and Van

Leeuwen (2006) noted that the discourses and iconography of Philippine advertisements leaned toward Western visual design.

## Results

This paper analyzes campaign posters as texts using the Visual Grammar framework postulated by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). Employing the three semiotic functions, representational, interactional, and compositional, the authors identified the semiotic properties of campaign posters and explicated their meaning potential.

All campaign posters represented participants viewed as images of people (i.e., medical workers and family members). The narrative representations of texts were exhibited in Figures 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, in which narrative processes were identified through the presence of vectors. This oblique line was formed by depicted elements forming a directionality, demonstrating a connection or relationship between and among represented elements in the text (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Furthermore, the represented participants in the narrative appeared to be 'doing something' and could be identified as either transactional or non-transactional, consequently creating both action and reaction processes. On the other hand, Figures 2 and 4 seem motionless and "not doing something" in the text. This kind of representational characterization belonged to a conceptual process utilizing the symbolic process of attribution relations. The represented participants in this process were not engaged in any narrative process whose purpose is to display themselves to the viewer.

Moreover, the interactional semiotic function of texts suggests a form of interaction between the producer of the texts and the intended audience or viewer of images. The interactive participants (producer and viewer) were involved in different relations according to how they made sense of images (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). To establish the interaction, viewers should decode the various social meanings encoded by the producers in the images using gaze or gesture, the distance of the represented participants to the viewers, perspective or angle, and modality, representing the truthfulness or credibility of an image.

On contact, most of the campaign posters represented

participants who were not making eye contact, which indirectly addressed the viewers. Represented participants, on this note, 'offer' themselves as objects for evaluation or scrutiny by the viewers. On the one hand, Figures 1, 2, and 4 projects 'demand' image acts that engage viewers in an imaginary relationship with the represented participants.

Also, five posters established a sense of involvement among viewers, as indicated by their perspective or angle. Images were placed at a frontal horizontal angle to connect the viewers with the participant's world. On the contrary, the participants in Figures 3, 5, and 6 were shown from the side at an oblique horizontal angle. Hence, viewers were detached from the participants and their world. Besides the horizontal angle, the vertical angle that showed power relations was found in posters. Participants in Figures 3, 5, 6, and 8 were at a low vertical angle, causing them to symbolically exercise power over the viewers (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006), while the remaining posters made evident equality or no power difference.

Also included in the analysis of interactional meanings was the distance, which established the social relations between the participants and the viewers. Based on the given classifications, seven posters comprised participants who established personal social relations (Hall, 1966, as mentioned in Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The images were in medium close-up, prompting the participants to express personal relationships like those of a friend or family member. One of the posters, nevertheless, depicted a close social distance brought about by a medium-long shot. In brief, the posters were thought to have high modality based on several modality markers.

The compositional value of visual texts was as crucial as their representational and interactional semiotic functions. Elements associated with representational and interactional meanings were combined and linked here, integrating them into a logical whole. The interrelated systems of information values, framing, and salience was analyzed. Concerning information values, Figures 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 positioned the text as given and the image as new, compared to Figures 1, 2, and 4, where the text is new and the image as given. Similarly, all identified participants were proven to be salient and essential items in the posters.

Below is the tabular presentation of the visual grammar analysis of the posters based on representational, interactional, and compositional semiotic functions.

**Table 1***Representational Analysis*

Figures	Narrative	Representational	Conceptual
1	One represented participant; action process; vector emanates from actor's thumb to text; goal is the text; unidirectional transaction		
2			One represented participant; no vector; symbolic attribute relation depicted by symbolic medical items
3	One represented participant; reactional process; vector emanates from reactor's gaze; phenomenon is unknown; non-transactional		
4			One represented participant; no vector; symbolic attribute relation depicted by symbolic medical items;
5	Five represented participants but two are salient; reactional process; vectors emanate from reactors' gaze; phenomenon is unknown; non-transactional		
6	Three represented participants; reactional process; vector emanates from reactor's gaze; Baby's response is phenomenon of reactional structure; transactional		
7	Two represented participants; action and reactional processes; vectors emanate from man's arm and woman's gaze; goal is the woman and phenomenon is giving of gift; transactional		
8	Two represented participants but one is salient; reactional process; vector emanates from man's gaze; phenomenon is the child's reaction; transactional		

**Table 2**  
*Interactional Analysis*

Figures	Interactional			
	Contact	Attitude	Social Distance	Modality
1	Demand	Frontal horizontal angle; eye level	Medium close shot; far personal distance; personal	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization
2	Demand	Frontal horizontal angle; eye level	Medium close shot; far personal distance; personal	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization
3	Offer	Oblique horizontal angle; low vertical angle	Medium close shot; far personal distance; personal	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization
4	Demand	Frontal horizontal angle; eye level	Medium close shot; far personal distance; personal	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization
5	Offer	Oblique horizontal angle; low vertical angle	Medium close shot; far personal distance; personal	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization
6	Offer	Oblique horizontal angle; low vertical angle	Medium close shot; far personal distance; personal	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization
7	Offer	Frontal horizontal angle; eye level	Medium close shot; far personal distance; personal	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization
8	Offer	Frontal horizontal angle; low vertical angle	Medium long shot; close social distance	High modality on other modality markers except for contextualization

**Table 3**  
*Compositional Analysis*

Figures	Information Values	Compositional	Saliency
1	Image (given); text (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size
2	Image (given); text (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size
3	Text (given); image (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size
4	Image (given); text (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size
5	Text (given); image (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size
6	Text (given); image (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size
7	Text (given); image (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size
8	Text (given); image (new)		Participant is contrasted; foregrounded; relatively big size

## Discussion

Analyzing how semiotic resources work in given texts offers affordances to the target audience in understanding meanings. Solely relying on verbal elements may not elucidate the intended message to the audience and inevitably hamper communication. Matthiessen (2007) exemplified various modalities' complementary and integrated contributions to creating meaning. Hence, recognizing the role of semiotics and its available resources (e.g., gestures, colors, sizes) as manifested by various modalities potentially increases the constitution of meaning in texts. Besides, "the visual component of a text is an independently organized and structured message, connected with the verbal text but in no way dependent on it—and similarly the other way around" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, 18).

## Representational Semiotic Function

Generally, the vaccination campaign posters of the Department of Health (DOH) depicted real human images represented by participants. Drawing images from real-world objects establishes a meaningful and personal connection with viewers. The illustrations of medical workers and family members in the posters enhanced the function of the materials to disseminate health-related information.

Figure 1



Figure 6



Figure 3



Figure 7



Figure 5



Figure 8



In Figures 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8, the represented participants were observed to be ‘doing something,’ as evident through the vectors formed. From this, narrative structure transpired to be action or reactional processes and transactional or non-transactional structures. In particular, action processes were apparent in Figures 1 and 7, where represented participants were perceived to have done something for the goal in a transactional process. As shown, a vector emanated from the participant’s thumb towards the verbal element inside the box in Figure 1. This verbal resource was the action’s goal, which became a critical aspect of the poster emphasizing the verbal message. Thus, the verbal text entered into an intersemiotic relationship with the image. In Figure 7, both action and reactional processes were expressed. The vector created from the man’s stretched arm holding a small box towards the woman demonstrated the transactional structure of an action process. On the other hand, the reactional process was realized from the

vector formed by the woman's gaze toward the small box. Giving a gift became the phenomenon of a reactional structure in which the woman was a reactor (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). A man giving a gift to a woman is typical of gender roles in society in which men are perceived as givers and women as objects of gifts. Hurlock (2001) mentioned that an archetypal feminine personality involves passivity and dependency, while a masculine personality involves dominance and activity. Also, this image worked complementarily with the poster's verbal resource, signaling how vaccination can protract time being with your loved ones.

More reactional structures were expressed in Figures 3, 5, 6, and 8. A seemingly praying participant is represented in Figure 3. An outward direction of the vector from the medical worker's gaze was pointed to an unknown entity, which could be a celestial being in this sense. Perhaps the image producer desired to reveal a hopeful and strong 'front liner' amidst the pandemic. Though a symbolic cape of heroism was attached to the image, still, what was being emphasized here was the participant's dependence on the divine. In Figure 5, two represented participants were highlighted through color contrast. Set in the background were members of the family who appeared to be younger than the foreground participants. A vector emanated from the foreground participants' gazes towards an upward direction—a symbolic representation of looking into the future. The absence of a phenomenon categorized the image as a non-transactional reactional process and left the viewers to imagine what the reactors were looking at or thinking about. Thus, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), it creates among viewers "a powerful sense of empathy or identification with the represented participant."

Contrary to Figures 3 and 5 as non-transactional reactional processes, the presence of phenomena in Figures 6 and 8 classifies them as transactional reactional processes. The older adult and woman were reactors, and the vectors formed from their gaze toward the child resulted in a phenomenon (the child's reaction). Similarly, Figure 8 contained a reactor gazing towards the child in which the child's reaction became the phenomenon. A concentric theme of gazing at a child in Figures 6 and 8 illustrates parental aspiration to apportion what they have for their

children's future. In doing so, the producer intended to employ the emotional dimension of images in relating to the viewers.

Figure 2



Figure 4



Further, when participants appeared to be “motionless” or “not doing something,” a conceptual representational process was exhibited. In Figures 2 and 4, the represented participants were in a symbolic attributive relationship. They were posing for the viewers’ scrutiny and did not engage in any actions that could be interpreted as narrative. Medical items (i.e., stethoscope, syringe, kit) functioned as symbolic attributes associating participants with the medical world or profession, thus establishing their identity as medical workers. It can be inferred from this set of images that the amplification of authority imposed on the viewers’ inhibition of vaccination. Highlighted, as well, was the profound desire of the department to reestablish people’s confidence in the efficacy of the vaccines, as displayed by medical workers receiving the initial doses.

### Interactional Semiotic Function

The second metafunction in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) Visual Grammar involves the interaction between the represented and interactive participants. In analyzing the interactional semiotic function of posters, the contact established by gaze, attitude created by perspective or angle, social distance, and modality marker should be considered.

According to Royce (2007), the presence or absence of visual techniques determines the speech function of a particular visual. The direction of a participant’s gaze has potential meanings regardless of whether the participants look directly at the viewers. In cases where represented participants look at the viewer, both the participants and the viewers are involved in an imaginary relationship or

contact (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). They termed this image “demand. On the contrary, some images indirectly address the viewers, as the represented participants do not look at the viewer. The type of image projected here is an ‘offer’ (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006) that identifies the represented participants as items of information or objects of contemplation.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 4



There were three posters exhibiting demand images. Figures 1, 2, and 4 represent participants engaged in addressing the viewers to do something or carry out an action. For Halliday (1985), gazes express demand from the viewers, resulting in an imaginary relationship. For instance, participants asked the viewer to relate to them, as shown by their cold, disdainful stares. The participants directed the viewers to be part of their world in a pseudo-social bond. In context, these demand images pulled the viewers towards being vaccinated and believing in the efficacy of the vaccines.

Figure 3



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



On the contrary, the represented participants in Figures 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 did not develop affinity but an impersonal and detached relationship with the viewers. No demand from the image producers was directed at the viewers since no eye contact was established. In such cases, they offer information for viewers to acknowledge or contradict and do not demand the reader to carry out a particular action (Guijarro & Sanz, 2008).

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 4



Figure 7



Figure 8



As for angle or perspective, most images were at a frontal horizontal angle. In Figures 1, 2, 4, 7, and 8, the viewers were involved in the represented participants' world. The image-producer wanted to probably immerse the intended viewers in the lives of the participants. In this kind of campaign, it is imperative that viewers and participants relate to particular experiences. Viewers should be part of the participants' world to create accord and agreement on the information embedded in posters. This is to ensure that what is perceived to be experienced by the participants is similar in the real world. Although involving viewers in some kind of relationship is essential, some posters appeared detached.

Figure 3



Figure 5



Figure 6



The participants in Figures 3, 5, and 6 were positioned at an oblique horizontal angle. The sense of being "other" was empha

sized as viewers were not involved in the participants' world. Just like an offer image, this depiction positioned the participants as an object of evaluation among 'invisible onlookers' (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Figure 3



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 8



Other than involvement and detachment, the angle reveals power relations between participants and viewers. Figures 3, 5, 6, and 8 show a low vertical angle, while the rest have an eye-level angle. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), a low vertical angle expresses a power difference. In the posters, participants positioned at a low angle expressed feelings of exaltation or triumph. Viewers were positioned to see the exuberance and to admire the same feeling after being vaccinated. In an eye-level situation, equality is imposed. Posters containing participants' eye-level angles articulated no power difference. The goal of the image-producer was to equalize relations between viewers and participants. In doing so, viewers can associate their personal disposition with the represented participants and act in the same way as the participants.

Medium-close shots convey a personal layer of friendship or family relationships regarding social distance. The posters set up a social environment where viewers could get into a closed relationship circle with participants. Effectively, these posters on vaccination project a sense of accountability as "family" would not want their members to suffer.

In terms of modality, all posters could be treated as having high modality, as exemplified by the saturation, differentiation, and modulation of colors. Representation, depth, illumination, and brightness also showed balance, contributing to the natural and realistic depiction of the images. The participants received ample representation of their physical attributes, like clothes, hair color, and so on. However, as noted, the posters projected decontextualization, making the participants appear typical rather than particular

examples. The decontextualization was the effect of the absence of a setting due to less articulated backgrounds. An interpretation of why the backgrounds in the posters were unmodulated could be to emphasize the salient part of the image. So, the viewers' attention was drawn to the people being shown and not the things around them.

### **Compositional Semiotic Function**

In the compositional semiotic function, the object of analysis was the relationship between representational and interactional elements. Primarily, the discussion revolved around the three compositional principles of information values, or the placement of elements in various zones; salience, or the identification of eye-catching elements; and the framing, or the belongingness of elements in a text.

For information values, the majority of the posters had verbal information in the given zone and represented participants in the new zone. The given zone suggests that the information presented in verbal mode is already known to the viewers, while the new zone includes something the viewers are not yet knowledgeable about. In this sense, the image-producer would like to present the image as “problematic” information. This is to direct the viewers to the represented participant rather than the verbal message. Thus, it can be inferred that the emotions or experiences expressed by the represented participants were more important than the verbal message. The image-producer believed that highlighting the dramatic actions of participants could be an effective way to get the intended viewers vaccinated.

On salience, it could be noted that represented participants had significant sizes and colors. Viewers could easily identify the participants in a given frame. Basically, for size, important elements occupy more space in the background. With the other elements, the size of the represented participants was way more prominent than the text. To infer, verbal messages were deemed secondary in importance. Represented participants become the prime bearers of the most important information. However, it must also be noted that visual and verbal elements work interdependently in the posters (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

Generally, the colors utilized in all the posters were similar,

with orange dominating the background and blue for the text. Blue and orange are complementary colors in the color wheel. Therefore, a combination of these colors evokes balance. More importantly, orange is considered “extrovert and playful, demanding attention and appealing to adolescents and young children (Ambrose & Harris, 2005, p. 112),” making the campaign posters visually appealing to people. Moreover, the color blue is associated with hospitals and sickness, and its use in the posters revealed the kind of service offered by image-producers. Eiseman (2000) emphasized that the color blue connotes reliability, trustworthiness, dependability, and commitment. For a campaign like this, the Department of Health (DOH) must establish credibility as to the efficacy of the vaccines. Thus, the prevalence of orange and blue colors helped them achieve the purpose of the discourse.

### Conclusion

In brief, analyzing the poster as a visual communication tool on health-related issues can provide invaluable information on its effectiveness. With the pandemic in sight, people need clear and accurate knowledge when making decisions, particularly about vaccination. In response, the Department of Health (DOH) put up posters for vaccination campaigns to meet this need. The analysis of the selected posters revealed that they represented animated participants composed of medical workers, or “front liners,” and family members. Narrative processes were dominant, consisting primarily of reactional structures. Further, most posters contained “offer” rather than “demand” images. The image-producer would likely provide active engagement among viewers without insisting on their performing an action. The goal probably was to allocate space for voluntary vaccination among people without suppressing their rights. The personal relationships established by close medium shots enriched the effectiveness of the posters in making the viewers part of the experience. Supported by the frontal horizontal angle, viewers become immersed in the represented participants’ world.

Additionally, power relations were established in terms of low angle, probably suggesting the triumph of represented participants.

The posters showed a high level of realism based on color saturation, differentiation, and modulation. However, they were decontextualized due to the absence of background. Lastly, visual elements were placed as new information, while text elements were given information.

These findings suggest that posters can be an effective resource for health-related information when various semiotic resources are interactive and integrative in achieving the purpose of the discourse—interactive and integrative means working together visual elements to carry out the text's intended meaning. Indeed, the potential meaning of multimodal texts may be improved when a relationship between viewers and represented participants is established. This can be achieved when viewers are actively engaged in the participants' worlds and experiences through representations such as distance, frames, angles, perspectives, modality, and salience.

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