

## **Abstract**

This paper proceeds within the scope of visual semiotics, a branch of semiotics. It examines the visual semiotic components of I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon's (State of Law coalition) logo, a distinguished political Iraqi coalition. The theoretical framework adopted in the analysis of this logo is Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) Reading Images. Basically, the analysis of this logo is manipulated via the three Halidayan metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual as well as the narrative processes. It has been found out that this logo demonstrates a variety of components to reach its goals, namely to galvanize and to gain the approval of voters. Volumes and vectors are used to affect and persuade voters. Colour manipulation is found to be significant to persuade voters. In addition, all the narrative processes are available in this logo in the sense that both interactive and represented participants are well represented.

**Key words: visual semiotics, political logos and posters, reading images, volumes and vectors, narrative processes**

## المخلص

تنبثق هذه الدراسة من علم السيمياء البصرية ( علم دراسة الرموز والإشارات) والذي هو جزء من علم السيمياء وتبحث الدراسة في مكونات السيمياء البصرية لرمز أيقونة ائتلاف دوله القانون، احد ابرز الائتلافات ألسياسيه في العراق. ولغرض تحليل هذا الشعار تم إختيارالاطار النظري لمنهج كريس وفان ليوفن في كتابهما (قراءة الصور) (Reading Images) لعام 2006 لتحليل شعار الائتلاف. وقد تم التعامل مع تحليل الشعار من خلال الاستفاده من الوظائف الثلاث لهاليدي والتي تشمل الوظيفة الفكرية والوظيفة التواصلية والوظيفة النصية وعمليات السرد. أثبتت الدراسة استخدام عدة مكونات للشعار السياسي بغية الوصول لأهدافه والتي تصبو إلى إثارة الناخب والحصول على استحسانه حيث تم استخدام الحجوم (المشاركون) والقوى الموجهة (العمليات) كي تؤثر وتقع الناخب. كذلك خلصت الدراسة الى أن توظيف الألوان له دور فاعل في أفتاع الناخب. فضلا عن ذلك، أستنتج أن جميع أنواع عمليات السرد متوفرة في هذا الرمز(الشعار) من حيث التمثيل الجيد لكل من نوعي المشاركين وهما التفاعلي والتمثيلي.

**الكلمات الافتتاحية : السيمياء البصرية، الملصقات والشعارات**

**السياسية، قراءة الصور، المشتركون والمتجهات، العمليات السردية**

## 1. Introduction

Owing to the tremendous development in technology, texts tend to have multimodal perspectives. Via graphics, pictures, photos, signs, logos, slogans, adverts, layout techniques, words and others, such texts convey ideas, attitudes, and other communicative venues. This study aims at identifying and describing the semiotics of the logos and/ or posters of the dominating Iraqi parties but the researchers have selected I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon (literally, the State of Law Coalition) as a representative example in Basra Province Elections of 2015. Another basic aim is to single out the strategies adopted in their logo to motivate voters. Communicating via logos and posters is to reflect the identity and mission of a given party, to galvanize voters and seek intimacy with them. In fact, this notion of familiarity as a hallmark of logos and posters dates back to a study by Zajonc (1968). In other words, one of the functions of these communication tools such as logos is to “imply social rapport and social power” (Baudrillard, 1983: 88).

It is a matter of literacy to employ such techniques like slogans, logos, and posters. In other words, the notion of literacy does not utilize only the verbal mode but also the visual perspective which has its own role to play. The visual literacy also makes meaning out of the pictorial and graphic image presented to the readership in question. Thus, the visual images offer a way of interpreting the world around us. Readers and viewers should have the ability to decode and encode these visual images. In fact, it is a kind of interaction that happens

between voters and election posters. Interpreting such posters and logos depends on the observer (Grant, 2003: 96). One of the ways to enable readers and viewers to decode meaning is through the lenses of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's (2006) *Reading Images*. That's why, the researchers in this paper adopted their interpreting approach. The majority of other studies in this area can only apply one of the components of visual grammar. Thus, the gap to be filled in this study is the application of all the components of visual grammar in analyzing political logos.

This paper endeavours to answer the following research questions:

- 1-What are the compositional components of Dawlat Al-Qanoon's logo?
- 2-How are the representational, interactional and compositional metafunctions represented in this logo?
- 3- How does this logo manipulate the notion of narrative processes?
- 4-How does modality function in this logo?

## **2. Theoretical Background**

Interestingly enough, public signs represent the image of the city in that they involve the notion of imageability which comprises two components: the physical side and the cultural side. Both of them contribute to the identity, structure and meaning of the entity in question (Lynch, 1960). Posters are signs that reflect the identity of certain groups because they are part of the landmarks that are used to identify something. On the level of functions, such public signs can serve

certain functions such as indicative, suggestive, restrictive and mandatory (Ma Qiannan, 2012: 169). Because political posters tend to bring the attentions of voters and make them believe in their goals, these posters basically tend to achieve the indicative and the suggestive functions.

The indicative function is manifested via giving basic information about the thing referred to by that sign. Giving information goes on a par with the symbolical function (Landry and Bourhis, 1997). They represent a system that encapsulates information and knowledge which “cannot have any independent existence” (Scollon and Scollon, 2003, vi) because they need to be located in the material world. Such signs acquire their meaning out of the location, time and context in which they are used. In fact, a public sign is a mode of communication which targets positive goals for the good of the side issuing such signs.

In order to analyze public signs in a satisfactory way, Barni and Bagna (2009, 132 - 133) offer us three levels to be adopted: semiotic analysis, macro-linguistic analysis and the micro-linguistic one. As for the second type of analysis, it basically entails the association of authorship and readership (Landry and Bourhis, 1997: 17), and this is the most important part of political posters (See Jaworski and Thurlow (2010), Akindele (2011), for more details about the linguistic landscape role in signage and space interpretations). They tend to make the electorate vote for their parties. What is important is the reaction of the readers, and in this issue those readers and viewers are the voters.

To sum up, Logos and posters are effective means for persuading viewers and readers in a given case, which are widely used for achieving political goals.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Data**

The data selected in this study included the logo and/or posters of (I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon (literally, the State of Law Coalition) during Basra Province elections of 2015. The rationale behind selecting this party is because it is somehow dominating the Iraqi political scene. Another rationale is related to the scope of this study. The logo of this party is available all over Iraq. As a result, analyzing this logo means analyzing all the posters belonging to I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon.

#### **3.2 The Model : Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design**

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) model is built on the framework of Hallidayan social semiotic approach; therefore, it envisages a model of the three metafunctions, namely the ideational, interpersonal and the textual ones. Out of these three metafunctions, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) interpret visual images via the representational meaning, interactional meaning and compositional meaning respectively. Their model is a kind of tool-kit for interpreting images and making meaning out of them.

To encode interpretations of experience, they build on the resources of grammatical forms, and the social

interaction forms that are also arrived at via those grammatical resources. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 3) have stated that their visual grammar is a “contemporary visual design in “western” cultures, an account of explicit and implicit knowledge and practices around a resource, consisting of the elements and rules underlying a culture-specific form of visual communication”. Those two authors have utilized the Social Semiotic Theory of Representation as their theoretical framework by which they interpret the visual images. They interpret their visual targets via the three metafunctions mentioned above.

As for the treatment of visual images, Kress and van Leeuwen map them onto the verbal forms, where there is a kind of parallelism holding between the linguistic interpretations and the visual images. From a semiotic point of view, Barthes showed that the visual signs can only be interpreted in terms of the linguistic forms (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 17). According to them, the visual arts have their own field and power to be distinguished as a separate field of inquiry in the sense that the linguistic interpretations corroborate the visual explanations. These are done via adopting the three Hallidayan metafunctions. In addition, they provided us with the patterns by which visual grammar can provide ways of encoding social experiences through the visual lenses (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 15).

Regarding the notion of narrative representation, they have dealt with the exchange of messages where the focus was on represented participants. These entail ‘What/ Who are in the visuals’ and there are ‘interactive

participants' including those participating in the act of communication. They have classified the narrative processes into different types in terms of the vectors involved and the number and kind of participants. On the other hand, there are conceptual processes which are categorized into classificational, analytical, symbolic, and embedding. In this regard, Kress and van Leeuwen touched upon the affinities and discrepancies between the realization of conceptual linguistic structures and the visual ones. They equal, for example, the visual classificational and analytical structures with the intensive and possessive attribute clauses, respectively. On the interpersonal level, images, like the linguistic forms, have their impacts on viewers in the sense that they have their own visual force. In fact, to give a concrete and panoramic picture of the whole social representation, Kress and van Leeuwen also encapsulate the interaction holding between the image and the viewer. Furthermore, the relations involving the viewers and the producer of a given image are "represented rather than enacted" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 116) due to the fact that those producers are not available in the spot where the interaction and communication occur between the image and the viewer.

As for modality, it concerns the truth value of images together with the messages conveyed. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 156) relied on the modality markers to arrive at the credibility of the communicative values in question. Reading images in terms of their modality weight is incorporated within the interpersonal representations in the sense that they reflect whether the



message intended is true or not in a given social group. In fact, there are key markers of visual modality including colours, representation, contextualization, brightness, angle, depth, illumination and others. These markers convey different shades of meanings. As for colours, they are interpreted in terms of three scales: saturation, differentiation, and modulation. In the Arabic culture, colour is a phenomenon which is widely used especially in the Quran so as to build an artistic image. This artistic image plays a role in making meaning in the Quran. That is, colours can express different shades of meanings, showing 'genres', 'types', 'attitudes', 'species', 'tokens', and so on (Al'Khafaji, 2012: 48), the researchers' translation). For example, the green colour is the colour of trees, greens, land after rainfall, the garments of Heaven residents (Al'Khafaji, 2012: 50). In addition, it represents the colour of life, kinesis, joy, peace, growth, pessimism, living nature, gardens and what not (Al'Khafaji, 2012:54). However, different cultures build different perspectives on colours. For example, the white colour refers to sadness in some western cultures, but for the Arabs, the black basically is the colour of sorrow and sadness (Al'Khafaji, 2012: 112). Al'Khafaji (2012: 183 - 184) has summed up his ideas about the semiotic dimension of colours in the Quran saying that:

The Generous Quran reveals effects and implications of colours upon the human

soul such as: whiteness represents total purity, cleanliness, clarity and being

accepted by God; blackness is total dimness and death ....; yellowness relates to illness, perishability, and withering in that it refers to losing life,

nothingness and debris but if this colour intermingles with whiteness (bright yellow), it gives comfort, joy, pleasantness; the green is one

of the selected colours of Paradise and it refers to bliss, life, fertility and stability; the dark blue in the Quran indicates deep sorrow, feeling of dying, depression, unlike light blue which refers to love, romance;

the red colour is the one of strength, passion and strong heat.

### **(Researchers' translation)**

Thus, it can be recognized that the Arabic culture employs colour a lot and it has philosophical implications. As a result, political parties make use of colours in their election campaigns in order to affect voters psychologically. In a separate study on the significance of colours in the political life, Sawyer (2007: 39) concluded that "Political colours help to create and sustain collective identities and illustrate the role of affect in political life."

On the textual level, things are related to the composition in images. It represents the way wherein "representations and communicative acts cohere into meaningful whole" (Sawyer, 2007:15). That is to say, readers of images should attend to the materiality of visual designs. There are factors of information value, salience and framing within the visual image; these make up the compositional meaning of those images. In this textual level, colours also play an important part.

#### **4. Literature Review**

It has been stated that democratic elections utilize slogans and posts as an effective propaganda tool for candidates to disseminate their ideological dimensions, which is done in relation to the expected changes in their societies (Nikate, 2011). To the knowledge of the

researchers, the first study that attempted to study political posters was conducted in 1970 by Yanker.

Considering the effects of with or without the Communist party, Deželan and Maksuti (2012) conduct a study of the role of posters as a political communication tool in Slovenia. They analyzed 841 posters that were collected from periods in the Communist reign and after the Communist era. It was found out that after 1991 era the political posters demonstrate the liberal democracy characteristics, unlike posters under the reign of Communism. It was concluded that those dominating the Slovenian political scene tended to use the persuasive mode in their poster campaigning, but those who were less dominant focused on the informative side. In a similar vein, Vliegenthart (2012) conducted a longitudinal study of 225 posters via analyzing the Dutch election posters from 1946 to 2006. They also reviewed the notion of the professionalization of political communication by dealing with the textual and visual components of political posters. It has been concluded that the visual part of political posters undergoes changes by focusing on the increasing presence of the party leader but there is a decrease in the representation of ideology visually. On the other hand, the textual side of ideology increases. Another finding was that the notion of negativity, i.e. devaluation of opponents decreases.

In a Nigerian context, Sharndama and Mohammed (2013) examine selected campaign posters by drawing upon Crystal and Davey's (1985) stylistic model. Their findings showed that these posters are of different shapes and sizes and have got descriptive and emotive

vocabulary. As for their stylistic significance, the focus was on utilizing the declarative and/ or the imperative mood. Different shades of colour were used to entice and persuade the electorate to vote for a given political party. They also concluded that these posters “are embodiments of political candidates' ideologies and missions” (Sharndama and Mohammed ,2013: 68).

In a study regarding the Jordanian context, Al-Azzam, Khalil and Taiseer (2014) investigate the various perspectives that are employed in the electoral slogans in Jordan. They analyzed those slogans in terms of the translational problems encountered by translators. In addition to the translational corner, there appeared a discussion of the socio-cultural, political, linguistic, and religious aspects. They concluded that translating such slogans is difficult owing to linguistic, social, political and religious orientations. These orientations have to be taken into considerations if a comprehensive and adequate translation is to be triggered and achieved (Al-Azzam, Khalil and Taiseer (2014: 286).

From a semiological perspective, Manki (2015) scrutinized the 2012 presidential election campaign publications in South Korea. He has adopted the function of Jakobson Rare for analyzing the campaign slogans and catch phrases and Barthes semiotic model for analyzing the visual representations. These publications were given to 120 students in the Department of Political Advertisements and Mass Culture of the Department of Advertising Public Relations of Namseoul University. Their findings showed that the political communication of Park GeunHye and Moon Jae In is characterized by

adopting “the directive and agitative message expression”( Manki , 2015:384). Linguistically speaking, metaphors were favoured by GeunHye, but the semantic relation of meronymy, which is part-to-whole relationship, was the vehicle of Moon Jae- In. Both of them have drawn on enticing the voters' emotion and the significance of ‘ political culture ’. On the visual level, both of them were “authoritative and aristocratic”. There were propaganda methods utilized by them: “glittering, generality, transfer, testimony, plain folks, bandwagon and card stacking” (Moon Jae- In, 2012 : 384).

In analyzing the campaigns of the Irish political party Fianna Fáil in the Celtic Tiger frame (1997-2008) and post- Celtic Tiger years (2009-2012), Mariã Martínez Lirola (2016) focus on the manner of representing the leader, similarities and differences between candidates, and persuasion discursive strategies. She adopted the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis, van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor theory and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar for the purposes of her research. She followed Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2006a, 2006b) in studying political posters as a sample of political advertizing where posters are seen as powerful tools for persuading voters to vote for a given candidate.

In her thesis, Mehidyeva (2016:19) studied the aesthetic aspects of the 2016 US campaigns. She selected Donald Trump of the Republican party and Bernie Sanders of the Democratic party. These aesthetic aspects include the camera angle, the image perspective, the lighting used, the colours utilized and other related ones. It has been stated that the systematic positioning of these

aesthetic manipulations has an impact upon the emotive side on the part of voters. The symbolic side also has its own role to play and to draw the voters' attention. By drawing upon the tools of the Rhetoric Theory the researcher attempted to reveal the hidden messages in those candidates' posters. Interestingly, every society has its own way of thinking and those candidates shared their knowledge with their people and they understand the ways that affect them and consequently they know how to win their votes.

## **5. Data Analysis**

The analytical framework used to analyze the political Iraqi logo is Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar. The political party adopted in this study is the spin-doctor of the Iraqi political situation, namely State of Law Coalition, which has participated in the elections of Basra Province Council in 2015. This data will be analyzed in the perspectives of visual grammar in the following section.

### **5.1 I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon (State of Law Coalition)**

I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon (State of Law Coalition) is the party which is led by Noori Al-Maliki, ex - Iraqi Prime Minister. As the logo indicates, it consists of a scale with its pans hanging, two green spikenards in the centre of the logo, and the name of the party right in the heart of that logo. The name is written in red. These two spikenards embrace the name of the party. The two golden pans hang from three strings. These three strings

emanate from one string which hangs from the hook of the scale. The image of the logo is:



According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 13) , the sign makers of this logo have chosen it to be criterial for representing their goals, beliefs, values and ideology. On the ideational level, the logo represents the world view of Dawlat Al-Qanoon, which is that of applying the law and showing justice. This symbolic meaning is widely known as shown in Hamilton (2005: 296). On the interpersonal level, it enacts an interaction with voters to build a social relationship with them by showing them the validity of their ideology. The logo visually represents the textual level in that it shows the internal elements as coherent and connected with the outside world.

As for the two types of literacy according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 23), this logo shows its visual representation as “openly structured”. This is because the Arabic culture and all cultures strongly emphasize the role of law and justice. This is asserted by (Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 35) in the sense that “The characteristic values of a culture may determine which of the potential uses of land are realized”. The values of justice and making law dominant are highly significant in the Arabic

culture. These ' modes of representation ' are not set separately in the mind of the individual in that these modes should be understandable on the part of the society in which that mode is used (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 41). On the level of participants, there are two types: interactive and represented (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 48). As for the latter, it concerns the ' subject matter of communication ' , which is law and justice. Vertical and horizontal lines represent the vectors which represent ' processes ' in visual grammar (Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006: 54). According to Nash (1974) as cited in(Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 54) , it is asserted that " Shapes exult and shapes depress, they elate and make desperate" . In this logo, we have straight lines both vertical and horizontal and we have the two pans. Straight lines can denote "straightness and related compatible range of meanings" Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 56). Interestingly, such straight lines can be related to " the spiritual power of law" (Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006: 56). These two pans are in the shape of a circle. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 54) show that " Circles are self-contained, complete in themselves". Furthermore, it has been pointed out that " Circles denote ' endlessness, warmth, protection ' , or as ' the traditional symbol of eternity and the heavens " (Thompson and Davenport, 1982: 110, as quoted in Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 54). The two green spikenards are also set in the form of a semi-circle where the reference can be for " an organic and a natural world" ( Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 55).



As for the narrative aspect, which is represented by vectorial patterns, this logo is representational and classificational. These narrative patterns “serve to present unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements” Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 60). In the logo of Dawlat Al-Qanoon, the process of change is manifested through the lenses of law and justice as these two significant values are absent in the Iraqi society. The vector here is a tool which is the scale of weighing. Another narrative is manipulated through the connected strings in this scale. That is to say, these sign makers try to emphasize the importance of being connected or related to each other. In Barthes's terms, this logo can be considered as a Relay because there is a relationship between the text and the image: the text explains the meaning of the image (Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006: 69). As for the notion of Circumstance, there is a contrast between the foreground and the background: the background is white and the scale is brown with the green spikenards. In addition, the scale is a tool for measuring things, and in visual grammar tools are considered as Circumstance of Means (Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006:72).

Regarding the conceptual representations, which create social constructs, there are classificational processes wherein participants are superordinates or subordinates (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 79). Because the composition of the scale is symmetrical, the subordinates (the two pans) are visually equivalent. The decision-makers of Dawlat Al-Qanoon look at their audience as equal. In a decontextualized way, the

participants in this logo are represented as objective. This is evident in the sense that “ The background is plain and neutral. Depth is reduced or absent. The angle is frontal and objective. And frequently there are words inside the picture space” (Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006: 79). All these characteristics are available in this logo. If one examines this logo carefully, there is an arrow pointing downwards to the two pans, which indicates ‘ the ranking of phenomena ’ (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 86). This arrow is considered a vector in visual grammar, so it represents the process of guiding and doing. It is the origin of things: it is the highest power. In visual grammar, it is said that “ The difference between the oblique and the frontal angle is the difference between detachment and involvement” (Kress and van Leeuwen ,2006: 136). The frontal view shows that there is a kind of involvement between producers and viewers. The decision makers of such signs want to convey the idea that they are not separate from their voters. They collaborate together. In diagrams and charts, objectivity is pictured (Kress and van Leeuwen ,2006: 145) in that what is encoded is the objective attitude for the makers of such signs.

Concerning modality, which is a basic aspect in Functional Grammar and Visual Grammar, it is manifested within the domain of the interpersonal metafunction. The targeted object in modality is the truth value of the sign presented and the hidden ideology behind it. To guarantee the truth of the sign intended, what is of significance is colour saturation. Visually speaking, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 162) have

identified eight modality markers: (1) colour saturation, (2) colour differentiation, (3) colour modulation, (4) contextualization, (5) representation, (6) depth, (7) illumination, and (8) brightness. If there is a horizontal line, the information value is distributed in the sense that what is on the left side is the Given information and what is on the right is the New. In the logo of I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon the left pan is the same as the right one. Thus, one can deduce that the information value adopted by them is constant. It does not undergo change, a fact which may reflect positive or negative consequences. In visual grammar, the position of some parts is significant, for example, "the dominant image holds the centre" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 195) not the margin. In our case, what holds the centre is the two green spikenards and the text of the name of Dawlat Al-Qanoon. In doing so, it is clear that what is emphasized is the importance of law.

As a semiotic mode, colour plays a significant part in conveying the intended meaning. It is a means for making representations through certain elements (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 226). Lexis is represented through utilizing colours (For more details about colour meaning and symbolism, see John Gage (2000); Stephen Quiller (2002). On the ideational metafunction, colours can denote volumes (participants) and circumstances (places). For example, the colours of a flag refer to a specific country or state (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 228). On the interpersonal function, colours also have their own impact. Colours can affect our feelings whether positively or negatively. Colours are similar to speech acts in that we can do things with them. One can warn against

something dangerous. For this issue, we can use orange or red. The matter is culture-specific. On the textual level, colours also play a role in that “Colours can create coherence in texts.... Colour coordination can promote textual cohesion” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 230). According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 232), colours are considered as signifiers, not signs. In addition, they have two distinctive features: value and saturation. Value ranges from light white to maximum black. As for saturation, it ranges from intense one (e.g. pastel) up to complete desaturation (e.g. black and white). It is shown that high saturation can be positive, unlike the low one (Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006: 232). Interestingly, pure bright colours are key signifiers of the ideologies of modernity(Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006: 233). The green colour of the two spikenards is of grass, so it is modulated. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 233) pointed out “ Modulated colour is specific” in that it refers to something natural. That is why, modulated colours are naturalistic. This analysis and its results are discussed in the following section.

## **6. Discussion**

Out of the analysis findings, Dawlat Al-Qanoon's logo basically consists of a measuring scale whose centre is occupied by the name of the party surrounded by two green spikenards. There are two hooks in both extremes, and from them hang two pans. There are three lines carrying the two pans. However, there is one single string out of which these three stem down: this is a single line represents the leader who manages them. As far as

typography is concerned, the name of the party is written in the middle and in bold type, and it is framed by the two green spikenards. All this reflects leadership and strength. The whole logo is surrounded by a square black frame. In visual grammar, framing is highly influential and expressive. In reading images, framing is a multimodal semiotic resource which can either connect or disconnect participants. The thickness of the frame means more segregation and/or separation (van Leeuwen, 2005: 15 - 17).

As for the ideational or representational meaning, this logo basically represents the beliefs and values of I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon. It applies law and achieves justice for the good of the Iraqi society. This leads to the fact that this party attempting to be strong, transparent and efficient for the sake of a prosperous country. This logo can affirm that this party assumes the role of the leading political force in Iraq. The driving inspiration can be represented as gaining the trust of voters as a motivation for them to vote. The two parallel scale pans can be interpreted as signs for stability, justice, security and competitiveness, while the two green spikenards can represent prosperity, refreshing agriculture and fertility. Furthermore, the green colour can signify positive implications such as safety, harmony, health, ambition and growth.

On the interpersonal level, this logo attempts to persuade voters in the validity of their beliefs and values. Interactionally, it is an invitation for voters to participate in the elections and select I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon because it will fulfill

their wishes in spreading law, justice, and safety . As mentioned previously, there are two types in the narrative of visual signs: interactive and represented participants. Interactive participants here include the sign producers (the party and its members) viewers and voters. On the other hand, represented participants reflect the subject matter of that image or sign. As proved, the subject matter is applying law and achieving justice. On the level of literacy, the visual structure of I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon is openly structured in its calling for law and justice. Including straight lines whether horizontal or vertical in this logo reinforces the position of that party in gaining the power of law. Another aspect that represents the interpersonal metafunction is the notion of modality. In this sign, modality is represented by the modality markers of colour. Most important markers include colour saturation, differentiation, contextualization, representation and brightness. On the ideational level, colours denote entities whether animate or inanimate. The red colour refers to 'warmth, energy, salience, and foregrounding (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 235). The name of Dawlat Al-Qanoon was written in red. This is something related to the notion of 'salience' in visual grammar (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 201), a case which is related to the textual metafunction. It concerns the importance of certain elements in that being central is far more salient than those in the margin. Being central adds a lot to its information value. Interpersonally, the acts of colours can motivate or discourage people to do things. Colours have a strong emotional force which can instruct the

human soul to follow a certain way of conduct. The green colour, for example, of the two spikenards instigates a feeling of hope and safety in viewers. What is of significance of the component of the two spikenards is that they were inscribed on the tail of some metal Iraqi coins such as the coin of twenty and fifty Fils during the reign of the Iraqi Kingdom in 1955.



(adopted from [www.aliexpress.com](http://www.aliexpress.com))

This brings to mind the deep-rooted past of Iraq. I'tilaaf Dawlat Al-Qanoon attempts to bridge the present with the past. This is a relational process. As for differentiation, the logo is not monochromic because it has several colours: white, green, golden, red and black. This gives us a coherent image, which reflects the coherent ideas to be held by that party. This constitutes the textual level.

Structurally, this logo achieves the three types of narrative processes: transactional, classificatory, and analytical. In visual grammar, there are two important aspects: vectors represented by lines and arrows and volumes represented by geometrical figures. Vectors represent forces and volumes represent participants. Volumes are the 'being' processes, but vectors are the '

acting ' processes. The parts of the logo constitute the whole: This represents the classificatory and transactional relationships among participants. Mathematical figures can denote feelings and attitudes. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006: 53), circles, squares and triangles are considered ' quasi-scientific atoms ' of the visible world. As referred to previously, circles are ' self-contained ' , and they can signify ' endlessness, warmth, protection ' ; thus, it can be deduced that the circular figures of this logo, namely the two pans and the two green spikenards, help voters to recognize these meanings. The three strings holding the two pans form the figure of a triangle, which " can convey directionality, point at things " (Kress and van Leeuwen ,2006: 55), and a triangle figure can hold both a vector and a volume. Interestingly, triangles in visual grammar stand for the meaning of ' generative power ' (Kress and van Leeuwen, (2006: 55). The vector is the doer of the action, which is highly important in any narrative. The tool of the scale is a vector in itself, which represents the hub of the logo. Vectorality represents narrative processes in visual grammar (Kress and van Leeuwen , 2006:60).

Concerning the textual level, one can arrive at the textual meaning of a verbal or a visual text via a sequence of recursive steps. The first entails perceiving the sign or the object presented, then a reader / viewer attempts to decode the message intended and constructs his own understanding, and finally tries to integrate all this information into a coherent whole. This brings to mind the ABC triangle of Sparrow and Knight (2006) which



consists of three steps: Feeling, thinking and doing. Visually, this textual level encapsulates information value, salience and framing. The positioning of the parts in this logo reflects the information value and the salience of the parts. As they mentioned above, for example, the centrality of the name of the party and the two green spikenards manifest their importance and information value. As for framing, it is highly important in conveying the meaning intended by producers of signs. In visual grammar, there are two sets of relations that can be expressed by framing: bound (decontextualized) and unbound (contextualized). The former means that there is no frame separating the image from its wider context, but the latter means the opposite. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) single out the importance of utilizing frames in visual discourse and how frames can exert segregation or separation on the part of interlocutors, i.e. producers and viewers. When framing is absent in a given sign or image, it means that producers invite their viewers in, i.e. to let them participate in a given situation in a given sociocultural context. Participants are involved in the process intended, for example, to participate in decision-making. However, when there is a frame, it is a matter of detachment, separation or exclusion from the narrative process in question. Enclosing the logo by a thick frame is considered a drawback on the part of its producers.

## **7. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Using Signs and symbols in political campaigns is highly significant. The cultural sign plays a role and the use of visual semiotics in such area is influential. The four research questions have been answered in the above

discussion. It has been concluded that political parties utilize logos and posters to achieve their goals. There are visual structures utilized to exert their power and to persuade voters. This is a kind of soft hegemony through persuasion in political conflicts (See Angulano and Berumen, 2016, for more details about persuasive strategies in electoral propaganda). All the metafunctions of grammar work together in their logos to galvanize their voters to vote for their good. Mathematical figures and colours are the weapons of visual political hegemony.

Pedagogically, this study is also of significance in that teaching visual grammar will widen the students' knowledge in analyzing and understanding visual images. It is of value for teaching while using the visual aids inside classrooms. In reading comprehension texts that are accompanied by pictures and / or visual images, this study can pave the way for more equipped analyses and interpretations. The work of Kress and van Leeuwen(2006) has developed the multimodal perspectives. Successful analyses should include both linguistic analyses and visual ones. Students, teachers and researchers while implementing the tools of visual grammar will understand how communication is best described via encapsulating the elements of visual grammar. Furthermore, reading an image can save a lot of time being spent in reading a written text. The role of colours can also shorten long texts via understanding the significance and philosophy of colours and how they help conveying different shades of meaning. This study is hoped to be exploratory for further studies in the same area via analyzing other political logos and posters.

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