الذكوات البيض

اسم مشتق من الذكوة وهي الجمرة الملتهبة والمراد بالذكوات البيض الربوات الصغيرة المحيطة بمقام أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب {عليه السلام} شبهها لضيائها وتوهجها عند شروق الشمس عليها لما فيها موضع قبر علي بن أبي طالب {عليه السلام} من الدراري المضيئة {در النجف}فكأنها جمرات ملتهبة وهي المرتفع من الأرض، وهي ثلاثة مرتفعات صغيرة نتوءات بارزة في أرض الغري وقد سميت الغري باسمها، وكلمة بيض لبروزها عن الأرض.وفي رواية إنّها موضع خلوته أو إنّها موضع عبادته وفي رواية أخرى في رواية المفضل عن الإمام الصادق {عليه السلام}قال:

قلت:يا سيدي فأين يكون دار المهدي ومجمع المؤمنين؟

قال:يكون ملكه بالكوفة، ومجلس حكمه جامعها وبيت ماله ومقسم غنائم المسلمين مسجد السهلة وموضع خلوته الذكوات البيض

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

جمهورية العراق
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
دائرة البحث والتطوير

الرقم ب ح ع / ٢٩٧
التاريخ ١٦ / ١ / ٢٠٢٢

ديوان الوقف الشيعي / دائرة البحوث والدراسات

م/ مجلة الذكوات البيض

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ...

إشارة الى كتابكم المرقم ١٠٤٦ والمؤرخ ٢٨/١٢/ ٢٠٢١ والحاقاً بكتابنا المرقم ب ت ٥٧٤٤/٤ في ٦/٩/ ٢٠٢١ ، والمتضمن أستحداث مجلتكم التي تصدر عن الوقف المذكورة أعلاه ، وبعد الحصول على الرقم المعياري الدولي المطبوع وانشاء موقع الكتروني للمجلة تعتبر الموافقة الواردة في كتابنا أعلاه موافقة نهائية على أستحداث المجلة.

... مع وافر التقدير

أ.م.د حسين صالح حسن
المدير العام لدائرة البحث والتطوير/ وكالة
١٢ /١/ ٢٠٢٢

نسخة منه الى :
• قسم التدوين العلمية / شعبة التأليف والنشر والترجمة / مع الاوليات.
• السفارة.

مهند ابراهيم
١٠ / قانون الثاني

إشارة إلى كتاب وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي / دائرة البحث والتطوير
المرقم ٥٠٤٩ في ٢٠٢٢/٨/١٤ المعطوف على إعمامهم
المرقم ١٨٨٧ في ٢٠١٧/٣/٦
تُعدّ مجلة الذكوات البيض مجلة علمية رصينة ومعتمدة للترقيات العلمية.

الذكوات البيض

الذكوات البيض

مَجَلَّةٌ عِلمِيَّةٌ فِكرِيَّةٌ فَصلِيَّةٌ مُحَكَّمَةٌ تَصدُرُ عَن
دَائِرَةِ البُحُوثِ وَالدِّرَاسَاتِ فِي دِيوانِ الوَقفِ الشِّيعِي

١-أن يتسم البحث بالأصالة والجِدّة والقيمة العلمية والمعرفية الكبيرة وسلامة اللغة ودقة التوثيق.

٢- أن تحتوي الصفحة الأولى من البحث على:

أ. عنوان البحث باللغة العربية.

ب. اسم الباحث باللغة العربي، ودرجته العلمية وشهادته.

ت. بريد الباحث الإلكتروني.

ث. ملخصان: أحدهما باللغةِ العربية والآخر باللغةِ الإنكليزية.

ج. تدرج مفاتيح الكلمات باللغة العربية بعد الملخص العربي.

٣-أن يكون مطبوعًا على الحاسوب بنظام(office Word) ٢٠٠٧ أو ٢٠١٠) وعلى قرص ليزري مدمج (CD) على شكل ملف واحد فقط (أي لا يُجَزَّأ البحث بأكثر من ملف على القرص) وتُزَوَّد هيأة التحرير بثلاث نسخ ورقية وتوضع الرسوم أو الأشكال، إن وُجدت، في مكانِها من البحث، على أن تكونَ صالحةً مِن الناحيةِ الفنّيّة للطباعة.

٤-أن لا يزيدَ عدد صفحات البحث على (٢٥) خمس وعشرين صفحة من الحجم (A4).

٥. يلتزم الباحث في ترتيب وتنسيق المصادر على الصيغة APA

٦-أن يلتزم الباحث بدفع أُجور النشر المحدَّدة البالغة (٧٥،٠٠٠) خمسة وسبعين ألف دينار عراقيّ، أو ما يعادلها بالعملات الأجنبية.

٧-أن يكونَ البحث خاليًا مِنَ الأخطاء اللغوية والنحوية والإملائيَّة.

٨-أن يلتزم الباحث بالخطوط وأحجامِها على النحو الآتي:

أ. اللغة العربية: نوع الخط (Arabic Simplified) وحجم الخط (١٤) للمتن.

ب. اللغة الإنكليزية: نوع الخط (Times New Roman) عناوين البحث (١٦). والملخصات (١٢) أما فقرات البحث الأخرى؛ فبحجم (١٤) .

٩-أن تكونَ هوامش البحثِ بالنظامِ الأكتروني(تعليقات ختامية) في نهاية البحث. بحجم ١٢.

١٠-تكون مسافة الحواشي الجانبية (٢،٥٤) سم،والمسافة بين الأسطر (١) .

١١-في حال استعمال برنامج مصحف المدينة للآيات القرآنية يتحمل الباحث ظهور هذه الآيات المباركة بالشكل الصحيح من عدمه، لذا يفضّل النسخ من المصحف الالكتروني المتوافر على شبكة الانترنيت.

١٢-يبلَّغ الباحث بقرار صلاحيَّة النشر أو عدمها في مدّةٍ لا تتجاوز شهرين من تاريخ وصوله إلى هيأة التحرير.

١٣-يلتزمُ الباحث بإجراء تعديلات المحكّمين على بحثِه وفق التقارير المرسلة إليه وموافاةِ المجلة بنسخةٍ مُعدَّلةٍ في مدّةٍ لا تتجاوزُ (١٥) خمسة عشر يومًا.

١٤-لا يحق للباحث المطالبة بمتطلبات البحث كافة بعد مرور سنة من تاريخ النشر.

١٥-لاتعاد البحوث الى أصحابِها سواء قُبلت أم لم تُقبل.

١٦-تكون مصادر البحث وهوامشه في نهاية البحث، مع كتابة معلومات المصدر عندما يرد لأول مرة.

١٧-يخضع البحث للتقويم السري من ثلاثة خبراء لبيان صلاحيه للنشر.

١٨-يشترط على طلبة الدراسات العليا فضلاً عن الشروط السابقة جلب ما يثبت موافقة الأستاذ المشرف على البحث وفق النموذج المعتمد في المجلة.

١٩-يحصل الباحث على مستل واحد لبحثه، ونسخة من المجلة، وإذا رغب في الحصول على نسخة أخرى فعليه شراؤها بسعر (١٥) ألف دينار.

٢٠-تعبر الأبحاث المنشورة في المجلة عن آراء أصحابِها لا عن رأي المجلة.

٢١-ترسل البحوث إلى مقر المجلة – دائرة البحوث والدراسات في ديوان الوقف الشيعي بغداد – باب المعظم)

أو البريد الإلكتروني:(off reserch@sed.gov.iq) (hus65in@Gmail.com) بعد دفع الأجور في مقر المجلة

٢٢-لا تلتزمُ المجلة بنشر البحوث التي تُخلُّ بشرطٍ من هذهِ الشروط .

مَجَلَّةٌ عِلمِيَّةٌ فِكرِيَّةٌ فَصلِيَّةٌ مُحَكَّمَةٌ تَصدُرُ عَن دَائِرَةِ البُحُوثِ وَالدِّرَاسَاتِ فِي دِيوَانِ الوَقفِ الشِّيعِيِّ

محتوى العدد (١٥) المجلد الأول

Emoji Semantics: Tracing Meaning Shifts Through Memes as Visual Se–miotic Resources in Digital Political Discourse

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Abstract:

This study investigates the semiotic patterns in political meme discourse, examining how visual and verbal elements function as meaning–making resources in digital communication. While existing research has extensively examined visual semiotics and digital linguistics separately, there remains a significant gap in understanding the intersemiotic relationships between visual and linguistic elements in meme communication. Through a mixed–methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis, this study examines the political memes circulated across well–known digital newspapers from 2022–2024. Employing Kress and van Leeuwen›s Social Semiotic Framework for Multimodal Analysis, the research analyzes five political memes through three primary dimensions: representational, interactive, and compositional meaning. The quantitative findings reveal consistent patterns in the deployment of semiotic resources, with the high frequency of multi–element composition recording (12.19%), while dual–frame narrative, aerial/omniscient view, and mixed perspective, each recording (2.43%), as the least. The qualitative analysis demonstrates sophisticated inter–semiotic complementarity across the corpus, where visual and verbal modes work to create a complex political commentary. The findings validate the hypotheses that visual elements function as systematic meaning–making resources and that visual–verbal combinations create specific patterns shaping communication in digital spaces. It is concluded that memes operate as complex semiotic artifacts, systematically deploying multimodal resources to construct meaning in digital political discourse, contributing to our understanding of how traditional semiotic resources are reconfigured for contemporary political communication.

Keywords: Emoji Semantics, Tracing Meaning Shifts, Memes, Visual Semiotic Resources, Digital Political Discourse.

المستخلص:

يدرس هذا البحث تتبع تحولات المعنى في الأنماط السيميائية للرموز التعبيرية في النصوص السياسية الرقمية ، وتبحث في كيفية عمل العناصر البصرية واللفظية كموارد لخلق المعنى في الاتصالات الرقمية. على الرغم من أن الأبحاث الحالية قد درست على نطاق واسع السيميائية البصرية واللسانيات الرقمية بشكل

منفصل، إلا انه لا تزال هناك فجوة كبيرة في فهم العلاقات السيميائية بين العناصر البصرية واللغوية في التواصل للرموز التعبيرية. تتبع هذه الدراسة نهجا يجمع بين التحليل النوعي والكمي للرموز التعبيرية في النصوص السياسية المتداولة عبر الصحف المعروفة خلال عامي ٢٠٢٣ و ٢٠٢٤. وباستخدام الإطار السيميائي الاجتماعي للتحليل متعدد الوسائط لكريس وفان ليوين، يحلل البحث خمس ميمات سياسية من خلال ثلاثة أبعاد أساسية: المعنى التمثيلي والتفاعلي والتركيبي حيث كشفت النتائج الكمية عن أنماط متسقة في نشر الموارد السيميائية، حيث سجلت رموز العناصر المتعددة النسبة الأعلى (١٢٫١٩٪) من المجموع بينما شكل السرد ثنائي الإطار، والمنظر الشامل، والمنظور المختلط (٢٫٤٣٪) النسب الأقل . يوضح التحليل النوعي التكامل السيميائي المتطور عبر المجموعة، حيث تعمل الأنماط البصرية واللفظية بشكل متضافر لإنشاء تعليقات سياسية معقدة. وأثبت النتائج صحة الفرضيات القائمة على اساس أن العناصر المرئية تعمل كمصادر منهجية منظمة لخلق المعنى وأن التركيبات البصرية اللفظية تخلق أنماطًا محددة لشكل التواصل في المساحات الرقمية. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الرموز التعبيرية السياسية تمثل قطع أثرية سيميائية معقدة، تمثل بشكل منهجي مصادر متعددة الوسائط لبناء المعنى في النص السياسي الرقمي، مما يساهم في فهمنا لكيفية إعادة تشكيل المصادر السيميائية التقليدية للتواصل السياسي المعاصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دلالات الرموز التعبيرية، تتبع تحولات المعنى، الرموز التعبيرية ،مصادر سيميائية مرئية ،الخطاب السياسي الرقمي.

1.1 Introduction:

Based on modern discourse analysis and digital linguistics, the investigation of meme language comes to be a vital blend between visual semiotics and digital communication patterns (Jenkins & Milner, 2020). The memes› multimodal dimensions, consisting of both linguistic and visual components, have altered people›s traditional understandings of meaning–making processes in digital spaces. This development undermines traditional linguistic analysis methods, and so, the approach must be a broader one that takes into account both the visual grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021) and the sociolinguistic effects of meme coding. The rapid spread of meme culture across digital channels has brought about the development of new paradigms of linguistic expression, in a way that meaning is expressed through the use of complex intersemiotic relationships between text and image (Shifman, 2019). The recent research in the field of visual linguistics has stressed the importance of researching memes as complex multimodal texts, functioning in a particular sociocultural environment (Dancygier & Vandelanotte, 2022). Such binaries are becoming more and more noticeable, through artifacts of digital pro–

duction and display, such as memes, which are "irreplaceable conjoining of sometimes conflicting languages: first spoken by the human actors, then encoded into animation by the production team, and finally globally interpreted ".

These digitally powered items can be unique due to their linguistic properties, which are beyond text-based analysis, incorporating components of visual rhetoric, intertextuality, and social semiotics. As Wiggins (2019) postulates, memes integrate both visual and verbal components, which are closely connected, resulting in, according to Zappavigna (2018), «digital discourse ecologies» through this display of verbal and visual. This confluence of visual and linguistic features in meme-based interaction is a very fertile area for studying how the latest digital culture is engineered and simultaneously influenced by changes in the expression of multimodal meaning (Ross & Rivers, 2021).

1.2 The Problem of the Study

The widespread phenomenon of memes as a digital communication tool has led to the construction of complex patterns of meaning that are difficult to understand by the traditional methods of linguistic analysis. Whereas the previous studies have mainly focused on either visual semiotics or digital linguistics, the truth is that such studies do not investigate the intersemiotic relationships between visual and linguistic elements in meme communication. This is a particularly relevant research problem because meme language, which is now considered a new form of digital discourse, is composed of multiple semiotic systems that are interlinked and operate in both the visual and textual domains. The main task is the development of an all-embracing analytical framework that can efficiently catch both the quantitative patterns of meme language development and the qualitative dimensions of meaning production in these multimodal texts.

1.3 Aims of the Study

1. To examine how visual elements (images, color, composition) function as meaning-making resources in internet

memes.

2. To examine how memes combine visual and verbal elements to engage with viewers and construct meaning.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

1. Visual elements in internet memes (including composition, color, and imagery) function as systematic meaning–making resources that construct and transmit specific digital discourse meanings.

2. The combination of visual and verbal elements in memes creates specific patterns that shape how messages are communicated and understood in digital spaces.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research examines digital memes circulated across major digital newspapers during the period 2022–2024, focusing specifically on the interplay between visual semiotic resources and linguistic strategies in meaning construction. Through a mixed–methods approach (qualitative and quantitative), the study systematically examines how these elements interact to create meaning within digital communication contexts. While acknowledging the broader socio–cultural implications of meme communication, this research deliberately concentrates on the linguistic–visual meaning–making processes rather than their sociological or psychological effects. The investigation employs critical discourse analysis frameworks to examine how visual and linguistic elements combine to construct and transmit meaning in digital spaces, with particular attention to recurring patterns of language use and visual composition that characterize contemporary meme discourse.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Multimodal discourse analysis has emerged as a crucial theoretical framework for understanding contemporary digital communication, particularly in the context of meme studies and visual linguistics. Research by Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) has shown that visual grammar can be a systematic means of demonstrating multimodal meaning, thus, various

semiotic tools work together to carry out coherent communicative acts. These theories of the. Moreover, this development is closely related to digital environments, as Bateman et al. (2023) say that traditional linguistic models should be synchronized with language evolving to meet the new scenarios of audiovisual and verbal discourse.

The development of multimodal analysis in digital environments has led to the rethinking of traditional discourse analytical methods. Zappavigna and Martin (2022) argue that digital communication platforms have been the breeding ground for new forms of «intersemiotic complementarity,» in which meaning is not just the result of the combination of modes but is rather a result of their dynamic interaction within the given digital ecological system. This approach is elaborated further by Chen and Wong (2024), who clarify the point that meme communication per se is a complex ramification of modal interplay in which graphic and visional as well as verbal components of unified derivation come as a full meaning-matching resource that is not at all sustainable for analysis through fragmentary treatment.

2.2 Semiotics

Semiotics, a theoretical lens of sign systems and the processes of meaning-making, has experienced a major shift in its development due to the rise of contemporary digital communication practices. Chandler (2022) shows that traditional semiotics, which are based on Saussurean and Peircean traditions, need to be significantly reconceptualized in order to deal with the highly nuanced processes of digital spaces. This theoretical evolution has been especially important in the analysis of meme communication, where Shifman (2023) in her research shows how classical semiotic concepts such as paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations appear in a different way in digital contexts, creating what she calls "networked meaning structures".

The application of social semiotics to digital communication has shown that increasingly complex patterns of meaning

construction, besides conventional types of information, are being used in the digital world. Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) design a symbolic framework, namely a semiotic framework, that is vital as it shows how visual resources operate systematically in digital discourse; the digital media meme is a particularly useful form of communication in this regard. They argue that the visual equipment serves as cataloged meaning-creating resources that are governed by catastrophic grammar systems identified by Lemke (2023). This paradigm of 'Perspective' is extended by Zappavigna in (2024), who argues that the current semiotic may not only include activities carried out on platforms, but it can also be a main function of the dynamic relationship between user practices and communicative conventions.

In recent years, semiotic analysis has been paying attention to intertextuality and metamodal relationships as the main aspects of digital communication. According to Dancygier and Vandelanotte (2023), memes are examples of the semiotic artifacts that are both continuous and transfer into other systems of meaning. They conducted a study that shows how meaning in semiotic remediation is composed of several levels of representation and recontextualization. Besides, these semiotic structures are also the content of the study of Chen and Wong (2022), who frame it in the concept of «digital semiotic chains» and explain how meaning propagates through different stages of reinterpretation and transformation.

2.3 The Concept of Meme

Memes originated from the idea Richard Dawkins put forth in the book «The Selfish Gene» (1976), where a basic element of cultural transmission was presented as a counterpart of the genes in the evolutionary process of biology. According to Blackmore (2018), memes are the replicators containing cultural information that comes about through imitation, variation, and selection. The basic knowledge has been further developed by Hull and Wilkins (2022), as they reach beyond traditional ideas and suggest that memes are distinct cultural

elements that bear intricate forms of transmission and transformation in social systems.

The theory behind memes has developed to the point that it now includes more complex models of cultural evolution. As explained by Dennett (2023), memes are said to be self-replicating units of cultural information that vie for resources and attention within what he calls "cognitive ecological niches." Sperber and Wilson (2021) go further with the idea and suggest that memes are substances of cultural choice, meaning that their ability to be successfully transferred is regulated by both cognitive relevance and social applicability. This finding confirms the idea that memes deny the meaning, memes if they are not connected with them in other cultural "epidemiological networks" mentioned by the authors. They say information travels in the same way as its biological counterpart.

The theoretical development of memetic over time has introduced sophisticated cultural transmission models. Henrich and McElreath (2022) suggest that memes are seen as different levels of selection, from one person›s interpersonal thinking to a widespread social system, according to their theoretical framework. The connection between the cognitive architecture and the cultural transmission patterns, and how memes are both the product and the driving force of cultural evolution, has been the center of their study. This is the same as Tomasello›s (2023) thesis, which describes «cumulative cultural evolution» as a process the social group constructs the memes of which are described to be a way of making complex culture.

2.4 Review of Literature

Putriayunda and Aditiawarman (2023) made an enormous contribution by using Peirce›s semiotic theory to study the meme structures on Facebook. Their research entitled "Semiotic Analysis of Memes Insulting Others on Facebook" was the one that probed the interpretative dynamics of memes› "dark joke" by the systematic analysis of representamen, objects, and interpretants. The semiotic analysis has uncovered the intri-

cate visual and verbal sign patterns that are being used in the meaning-making process on social media and especially in humor-related communication.

Likewise, in a study, Pratiwi, Sulatra, and Dewangga (2023) reported the findings of a comprehensive research titled «De-constructing Internet Memes through Semiotic Analysis: Un-veiling Myths and Ideologies in Visual and Verbal Signs.» The authors of the study examined the ideological structures that are incorporated within the memes on the internet, thus show-ing that these online objects are the means through which cul-ture is reproduced. The research results pointed out memes› power both to counter and support predominant social stories.

Al-Issawi et al (2024) conducted an in-depth analysis in their study «Linguistic and Semiotic Analysis of Memes with Eng-lish and Arabic Humor Captions.» Their inquiry was utilizing bilingual memes as markers of socio-semiotic intricacies, and through this, they looked into the way verbal and visual forms work between cultures. The research clearly showed the pat-terns of cross-cultural meaning-making in the digital com-munication scenarios and their importance.

Recently, Huang et al (2024) in their study «The Rise of Cross-Language Internet Memes: A Social Semiotic Analysis» dis-cussed the evolution of multilingual meme communication. Their research was an examination of the semantic, syntac-tic, and pragmatic aspects of bilingual memes, which exposed complicated patterns in the characters of identity and mul-timodal communication. The study was among the key as-pects that were recognized in memes as they have become more symbolically sophisticated due to the globalized nature of digital spaces.

3.1 Methodology

The study uses a mixed method, both qualitative and quan-titative research methods, to deliver a thorough analysis of meme discourse patterns. Qualitative research, according to Creswell and Poth (2023), comprises an interpretive, natu-ralistic method of studying phenomena within their natural

settings by trying to interpret the meanings that people attach to them. In this study, qualitative analysis helps to find out the semiotic connections and meaning processes within the meme communication. Maxwell and Johnson (2024) define quantitative research as the systematic and empirical examination of observable phenomena that can be carried out by means of statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Thanks to this established procedure, you can measure definite linguistic and visual manifestations that appear in the dataset. The amalgamation of these strategies is based on what Tashakkori and Teddlie (2022) call "methodological triangulation," where more methods work together to give additional clarification on complex communicational phenomena.

3.2 Data Collection

The data for this study covers «political memes» that are circulating in digital newspapers during very significant political events, which were published in 2023 and 2024. These memes combine political rhetoric with popular culture in what Shifman and Wilson (2023) call hybrid political discourse units. Specifically, the selection criteria focus on memes commenting on or responding to the major policy announcements, political debates, and governmental decisions. There is much to be gained from using this category for semiotic analysis, as it encompasses digested multimodal political discourse that is capable of producing meaning through the interplay of cultural, political references, as well as the visual rhetoric. These memes are easily accessible through platform-specific archives and political communication research databases, making them an ideal data source for systematic analysis.

3.3 Model of Analysis

In this study, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) Social Semiotic Framework for Multimodal Analysis has been applied, as well as their updated digital discourse analytical tools (2023). Their model offers a systematic analysis of the interaction of visual and verbal elements in digital communication, as well as of «intersemiotic complementarity analysis.»

The framework operates through three primary analytical dimensions: representational meaning (analyzing what is depicted), interactive meaning (looking at the relation between elements and viewers), and compositional meaning (looking at the organization of elements) as shown in Figure 1. The current model is a useful one for meme analysis because it allows for systematic consideration of both static visual elements and the dynamic processes of meaning-making. Several studies (Chen & Wong, 2024; Zappavigna, 2023) have specifically validated Kress and van Leeuwen's framework for digital discourse analysis for memetic texts. Their analytical approach leads to the development of specific tools for mapping the relation between visual grammar and linguistic features to allow for an examination of the emergence of meaning through the interaction of several semiological resources in digital spaces.
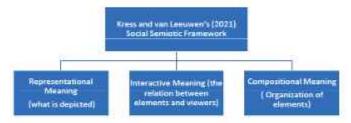
Figure 1: Model of Analysis

3.4 Data analysis

Meme 1

This political meme plays with the relationship between fiction and reality, using its visual and linguistic devices to frame the power dynamics of Israel's judicial system politically. As a metaphorical representation of institutional power relations,

the central semiotic element—a scale labeled 'Israel Justice'–with deliberately imbalanced weighting in favor of personalized authority ('Rule of Netanyahu') over constitutional governance ('Rule of Law') functions. This judicial symbolism is depicted as an agentive force manipulated by the figure of Netanyahu.

Representational Meaning Analysis

The semiotic structure uses embodied action multimodal vectors, where the exertion of narrative agency comes through Netanyahu›s gestural manipulation of the scales. The institutionally coded scales of justice serve as the central conceptual schema, while textually marked objects (the «Rule of Law»/»Rule of Netanyahu») can be seen as competing ideological signifiers. As figuration, Netanyahu takes dual forms – as activator of manipulator, and as figure and symbolized participant within the visual language that contrasts institutional justice with personalized power.

Interactive Meaning Analysis

The effectively configured modality constructs the viewer›s position using multiple semiotic resources. The oblique perspectives that Netanyahu›s lateral orientation and downward glances create form vectors that steer critical attention toward the manipulated scales. This establishes social distance through medium framing and allows one to evaluate affective elements (facial expression) and symbolic action in one view. Power relations are articulated through sharp vertical angles that draw attention to and critique authority. Highly marked modality in the realistic rendering boosts the credibility of political commentary.

Compositional Meaning Analysis

The semiotic structure works with multimodal vectors in embodied action, in which Netanyahu›s gestural manipulation of the scales enacts narrative agency. The scales of justice run as key symbolic elements, functioning as the dominant conceptual framework; textually marked objects («Rule of Law»/»Rule of Netanyahu») function as competing ideological signifiers. The figuration of Netanyahu involves dual roles, both as agen–

tive manipulator and symbolized participant through a visual grammar that contrasts institutional justice with personalized power.

Meme 2

This political meme symbolizes NATO›s expansion by showing a wall constructed around Vladimir Putin, who is Russia›s representative, thus playing chess freely. The design elements are representative of NATO members, which include both the newly joined Finland and the upcoming members like Sweden that are in the transitional process. The word "NATO Construction" serves as a textual indicator to underpin this narrative of the systematic enlargement of NATO. Hence, the expansion is a means of Russia›s restraint, as well as a reflection of the existing diplomatic tensions between NATO as an institutional framework and Putin›s regime.

Representational Meaning Analysis

The meme develops a very complicated narrative by using the metaphorical representation of the current geopolitical dynamics. The main representational process involves NATO enlargement being represented by the architectural metaphor, wherein the building of a wall is a highly powerful conceptual structure. The image shows the material process of encirclement in which each brick is both a symbolic attribute (referring to the member states of NATO) and a collective agent in the containment story. Putin›s representation, which is located in

the center of the enclosing structure, operates as both a passive goal of the action and a reactive participant, which signifies that Russia feels isolated in the new geopolitical arena.

Interactive Meaning Analysis

The meme establishes multiple layers of viewer engagement through sophisticated modality configurations. The aerial perspective creates a distinctive power dynamic, positioning viewers in an omniscient role overlooking the geopolitical scenario. This perspective choice generates what Kress and van Leeuwen term a «strategic overview» position, enabling viewers to comprehend both the systematic nature of NATO expansion and its cumulative impact. The social distance is carefully calibrated through the architectural scale, allowing simultaneous appreciation of both macro-level political processes and micro-level details of national participation. The modality markers, primarily in the depiction of the construction process, add to the credibility of the metaphorical framework by maintaining clear symbolic importance as well.

Compositional Meaning Analysis

The information value structure demonstrates sophisticated spatial organization that reinforces the meme›s ideological implications. The meme develops its narrative force through a distinctive spatial organization, wherein the circular wall structure establishes a center-periphery dynamic that positions Putin, as Russia›s embodied representative, within a constrained focal point of NATO›s strategic architecture. The compositional grammar works through noticeable scale differences – the main massive vertical component that is the wall, which is around the designed space and the visually subdued central part of the figure – which, in turn, is an excellent means of expressing the power asymmetries between the collective institutional actors and the individual state operators. The verbal part entitled "NATO Construction" is an example that ties the figurative representation with the current geopolitical discourse while also latching onto the institutional frameworks or references. As a visual means of linking be-

tween the architectural metaphor and the political symbolism, this meme narrates the multilateral way in which the international power is being redefined and the institutional barriers are controlling it.

Meme 3

The meme sets up a critical narrative by spatially showcasing an Israeli tank that is facing a door with the word «Gaza» written on it. The representational structure consists of providing dual modes: the physical process of military confrontation and the textual interplay between the tank›s declarative statement and the interrogative («We›ll allow civilians to evacuate» vs «To where?!»). The metaphorical position of the cliff›s edge, thus, acts as a very significant symbolic attribute of the spatial arrangement in accordance with a visual grammar of forced displacement without refuge. The above-mentioned intersemiotic complementarity between military imagery and environmental constraints illustrates the very core of the humanitarian crisis, with the edge of a cliff operating as a crucial metaphor for the lack of viable civilian options.

Representational Meaning Analysis

The meme constructs its ideological narrative with distinct vectorial patterns, whereby one of these patterns is the cannon of the tank aiming at the Gaza doorway, defining the main orientation line. The semiotic structure functions through the

strategic use of two main symbolic attributes: the tank with the Star of David as a signifier of the site of state military power and the Gaza doorway which has been compromised is the material representation of civilian vulnerability. This spatial configuration constructs a visual grammar of power relations through the intersemiotic play between military and architectural elements. The cliff edge introduces a critical spatial element, functioning as a visual metaphor for the limited options available to civilians. The dialogue bubbles create a transactional narrative process, where the tank‹s statement about evacuation is directly challenged by the rhetorical question «To where?!», establishing a clear power dynamic between aggressor and affected population.

Interactive Meaning Analysis

The viewer engagement is structured through multiple modality markers that position the audience as witnesses to the unfolding scenario. The side-view perspective creates an objective viewing angle that allows simultaneous observation of both power actors (the tank) and the consequences of their actions (the precarious position of Gaza›s civilians). The social distance is established through a medium-long shot that captures both the immediacy of the military threat and the broader contextual environment. The power relationship is emphasized through size differentials – the dominant tank versus the isolated doorway – and through the directional threat of the cannon, creating what Kress and van Leeuwen term a «vector of aggression.»

Compositional Meaning Analysis

The information value is strategically distributed across the horizontal axis, with the Israeli tank positioned on the left (given information) and the Gaza doorway on the right (new information), creating a narrative progression that mirrors the actual power dynamics. Salience is achieved through size relationships and the stark contrast between the heavily armored tank and the vulnerable doorway. The cliff edge serves as a crucial framing device, literally and metaphorically highlighting

the absence of viable options for civilian safety. The interse-miotic complementarity between visual elements and textual dialogue creates a powerful commentary on the humanitarian crisis, with the spatial arrangement emphasizing the physical and political constraints facing Gaza›s civilian population.

Meme 4

MACRON & VON DER LEYEN

The meme offers a biting critique of EU–China diplomatic theater through a carefully structured two–part narrative. In the opening scene, Macron and von der Leyen sitting on a cow look rather ceremonial – a cow, a European identity marker par excellence – while they communicate to Xi Jinping. What comes next is far more explicit: the second frame reveals the stripping of Yan Tian diplomatic pleasantries while Xi peers at the discarded European cow with the cutlery in his hand. The swing between those scenes is enough to tell that EU–China summits are just a front for more calculated moves although the handshakes and publicity events say otherwise. While the mem, s obvious contrast points to the already well-known public face and the hidden secret of power behind it, one can say that the meme is a real eye–opener in reality. it makes us question whether the European leaders honestly know their position in the game.

Representational Meaning Analysis

This meme creates a narrative structure in two parts that uses the passing of time to show connections in the global political arena. The major components include a cow that symbolizes the EU, which is characterized by stars denoting the members and the three main political figures, namely, Macron, von der Leyen, and Xi Jinping. A frame one debuts a scenario of diplomatic relationship, whereby the European leaders are physically mounted on their institutional symbol. The second frame introduces a transformative element through Xi›s shifted role from diplomatic recipient to potential aggressor, signified by the chef›s attire and cutting implements. This temporal progression creates what Kress and van Leeuwen term a «sequential narrative process,» where meaning emerges through the juxtaposition of diplomatic facade and underlying strategic intent.

Interactive Meaning Analysis

The viewer engagement is structured through parallel horizontal perspectives that facilitate comparative reading. The social distance remains consistent across both frames, establishing what discourse analysts identify as «sustained observational positioning.» The power relations are encoded through multiple modality markers: in the first frame, through vertical hierarchies (European leaders elevated on the EU symbol), and in the second frame, through the threatening posture adopted by Xi›s figure. The gaze patterns of all participants remain outward–oriented, positioning viewers as privileged observers of both the public diplomatic performance and its concealed implications.

Compositional Meaning Analysis

The information value structure demonstrates sophisticated spatial organization through parallel framing techniques. The horizontal layout creates a clear reading path that guides viewers from diplomatic presentation to underlying strategic reality. Salience is achieved through consistent positioning of the EU–symbolic bovine figure as the central element in both

frames, while the movement of human figures creates dynamic tension between frames. The formal flags (EU and Chinese) serve as institutional anchors, maintaining spatial continuity while emphasizing the diplomatic context. The multimodal cohesion is particularly evident in the transformation of Xi›s character from passive observer to active threat, marked by both positional and attributive changes (addition of chef›s attire).

Meme 5

In this meme by Gary Varvel, there is a homeless individual peacefully resting on a bench in the park. He is wrapped in a newspaper for warmth with the headline stating, «U.S. Fastest Growing Economy, in the World – Biden.» Beside him, there is a cart filled with his possessions, highlighting his challenging circumstances.

Representational Meaning Analysis

The meme constructs a narrative tension through the juxtaposition of textual and visual elements. The central representational process depicts a homeless individual in repose, uti-

lizing a newspaper as an improvised shelter. The newspaper headline, proclaiming economic prosperity under Biden›s administration, functions as a symbolic attribute that directly contradicts the material reality depicted. The shopping cart, filled with personal belongings, serves as a circumstantial element that anchors the individual›s socioeconomic status within the broader narrative of economic inequality. This creates what Kress and van Leeuwen term a «conceptual paradox» between official economic discourse and lived experience.

Interactive Meaning Analysis

The viewer engagement is structured through careful modality configurations that position the audience as witnesses to social contradiction. The side–view perspective of the sleeping figure establishes a very close–up and intimate relationship for the observers. Yet, it keeps them far enough to be respectful to the focal point's privacy. The observers can see the layers of the person›s vulnerability and the general social condition from an abstract perspective. The spatial distance is measured in the empty frames, which tell a story of both the person›s subjective experiences and the world they live in. The power relationship is encoded through the physical positioning of the figure – horizontal, at rest – contrasting with the vertical authority implied by the newspaper›s economic proclamation.

Compositional Meaning Analysis

The information value demonstrates strategic spatial organization that reinforces the meme›s social critique. The sleeping figure occupies the central frame, while the newspaper headline and shopping cart function as complementary elements that frame the narrative. Salience is achieved through the contrast between the stark reality of homelessness and the optimistic economic headline. The park bench serves as a framing device that literally and metaphorically supports the individual while positioning them within public space. The multimodal cohesion between the newspaper text, the individual›s circumstances, and the environmental setting creates a powerful commentary on economic disparity and social inequality.

Quantitative Analysis of Political Memes

Semiotic Category	Element	Frequency	Percentage
Power Representation	Institutional Power Symbols	4	9.75%
	Military/State Authority	3	7.31%
	Economic/Political Authority	2	4.87%
Narrative Structure	Single-frame Narrative	3	7.31%
	Dual-frame Narrative	1	2.43%
	Multi-element Composition	5	12.19%
Modal Configuration	Side-view Perspective	3	7.31%
	Aerial/Omniscient View	1	2.43%
	Mixed Perspective	1	2.43%
Social Distance	Medium-shot Framing	3	7.31%
	Long-shot Framing	2	4.87%
Compositional Patterns	Left-right Organization	3	7.31%
	Center-margin Dynamic	2	4.87%
	Symbolic Framing	4	9.75%
	Physical Framing Elements	4	9.75%
Total		41	

3.5 Discussion of Results

The analysis of political memes through Kress and van Leeuwen›s Social Semiotic Framework reveals systematic patterns in the deployment of visual–verbal resources for meaning–making in digital political discourse. This discussion examines the findings about the study›s aims and hypotheses, demonstrating how multimodal elements function as sophisticated tools for political commentary and social critique.

The quantitative analysis strongly supports hypothesis no.1, revealing that visual elements operate as systematic meaning–making resources across the examined corpus. The high frequency of multi–element composition recording (12.19%), while dual–frame narrative, aerial/omniscient view and mixed perspective, each recording (2.43%) as the least, demonstrates a consistent deployment of visual grammar in constructing political narratives. This systematic utilization is particularly evident in the representation of power dynamics, where visual elements create what might be termed «power hierarchies» through compositional strategies. The prevalence of multi–element composition indicates sophisticated manipulation of visual resources to construct layered political meanings.

Supporting hypothesis no.2, the analysis reveals consistent patterns in how memes combine visual and verbal elements to engage viewers. The qualitative analysis demonstrates sophisticated intersemiotic complementarity across the corpus, where visual and verbal modes work in concert to create complex political commentary. This is particularly evident in cases like the Gaza tank meme and the Netanyahu justice scales, where textual elements anchor and amplify visual metaphors. The high frequency of physical framing elements suggests systematic approaches to visual–verbal integration.

The findings reveal sophisticated deployment of modality configurations in viewer engagement. The predominance of side–view perspective and medium–shot framing suggests strategic choices in establishing viewer positioning and social distance. These patterns indicate what might be termed «calculated engagement strategies,» where compositional choices systematically guide viewer interpretation of political content. The analysis showed sophisticated narrative structures, functioning in all parts of the corpus. The breakdown between the one–frame and multiple–frame narratives implies different strategies of time and space manipulation in political commentary. This diversity of narrative structure is a proponent of the fact that meme makers have been capable of adjusting symbolic resources to suit the different rhetorical demands, from instant influence to complex sequential arguments.

In the case of institutional power, the result is primarily derived from the fact that the corpus is highly concerned with multi-element composition. This high–frequency mechanism implies that political memes serve as a form of critique, a mechanism that systematically uses the visual grammar to the challenge power thus forming the relational aspect of the memes. The application of symbolic representation also shows a well–set, suggested way that institutions can introduce digital discourse as a platform for the development of political critique.

Such findings indicate that political memes, as highly symbolical communication tools, are deployed in a coordinated way to integrate visual and verbal elements for meaning production in online political discourse. The study supports both claims through the identification of advanced modalities in the way multimodal elements are synchronized for the development of political commentary. This implies that the meme discourse is a more experienced form of political communication, where the traditional semiotic resources are adjusted to online environments in a systematic and well-done manner.

Conclusions:

The systematic analysis of political memes, using Kress and van Leeuwen›s Social Semiotic Framework, has shown that there are indeed complex patterns in the construction of digital political discourse. The data that they found proves that memes are complex multimodal texts in which visual and verbal elements are used to express political criticism and social commentary in a strategic way. The quantitative data, which shows high frequencies of multi-element composition recording (12.19%), while dual-frame narrative, aerial/omniscient view and mixed perspective, each recording (2.43%) as the least, supports the hypothesis that visual assets are organized elements of meaning in the digital political discourse. This organized usage of semiotic resources indicates that the discourse of memes has turned into a highly developed mode of political commentary, where the traditional visual grammar is adapted to the contemporary digital scenario.

Moreover, the examination also makes clear that memes create meaning by way of visual and verbal devices that «interact» strategically to capture the attention of the audience and put forward political positions. The main composition of Multi-element Composition and the consistent use of physical framing elements, suggest that the methods of making meaning in digital spaces are systematic. These outcomes add to our

knowledge about modern political discourse, thus showing that memes are indeed a digital rhetoric that is evolving and utilizes traditional semiotic resources that are reworked for contemporary political communication. In this way, the analysis enriches the theoretical perspective on multimodal political discourse and at the same time it gives empirical data for the systematic nature of digital political communication that is the result of meanings construction.

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