

Persuasion in T.V. Advertisements: A Multimodal Analysis of the Visual Tactics in the Official Commercial of Telecom's Egypt Mobile Network 'We'

*Marwa Adel Mohamed A. Moneim Abuel Wafa**

1. Introduction

The discourse of advertising (Ad) is one of the important types of discourse in almost all societies, which is rapidly growing and gaining great interest in terms of not only its topics but the structure and aim of constructing. The features of Ads are all of interest to researchers, but most importantly is that the Ad is functional in itself; this is the main cause for persuasion of consumers (Cook, 2001). Because of its pervasive diffusion in all societies, an advertisement has evolved into a form of social discourse designed to persuade viewers to buy products or use certain services (El-Daly, 2011). Part and parcel of the functional feature of Ads is the informative one. Ads provide consumers with information about the product or service advertised for the same purpose of influencing them to buy (Durant & Lambrou, 2009). The functional and the informative qualities of Ads enable the viewer to create meaning from the Ad; a transaction is created enabling better construction of the meaning intended (Williamson, 1983). The audience socially deciphers the Ad as a key institution in “producing and reproducing the material and ideological supremacy of commodity relations” (Goldman, 1992, 2). In other words, we, as Ad viewers, indulge in ideological practices through the available signs that link our experiences of the world to the Ad. The signs are the ones that help us decide whether a statement is intended as an ideology or not by the Ad producers (Eagleton, 1991). The images are then utilized in the context in the Ad to lead the viewers/ consumers to construct meaning and link it to their own lives, creating a strong bond.

Advertisements are divided amongst three main types: consumer advertising which focuses on promoting certain products or services to the public, trade advertising which is mostly directed to professionals, and finally public relations

* Lecturer of Linguistics, College of Languages and Communication, Arab Academy of Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, Egypt.
Cairo Studies in English – 2019(2): <https://cse.journals.ekb.eg/>

advertising which is directed towards endorsing an issue of social concern. The main focus of this study is on the first type which is consumer advertising.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Many studies on advertisements focus on the analysis of the language of Ads and totally ignore the analysis of the visuals. Consequently, all the messages encoded in the imagery are neglected, and the construction of meaning is solely confined to the analysis of the verbal content. There are also studies that adopt a multimodal analysis, yet, focus on only one aspect for the analysis of imagery, such as the camera angles or the analysis of colors and discard all the other visual messages encoded in the other components of the images. The analysis of advertisements is quite cumbersome in nature with all the elements embedded in Ads (Cook, 2001). This study investigates the role the visual cues play in the process of meaning construction in advertisements. Consumer advertising, which is concerned with the promotion of products or services to the public audience, is at heart and core of this study through the analysis of Telecom's Egypt official advertisement. The study, however, focuses on analyzing the Ad through employing a particular theory which is the theory of Visual Grammar. In doing so, special attention is given to all the aspects available in the theory. The analysis of the musical notes employed in advertisements can yield to important results. However, as a delimitation of the study, no analysis of the music in the Ad under analysis is conducted.

1.2. Aim of the Study

This study aims at analyzing the visual cues in the official advertisement released by Telecom Egypt using the theory of Visual Grammar devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). This is done to investigate the role that images play in the construction of the overall meaning of the Ad.

1.3 Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following research questions: 1) How does each meta-function in the theory of Visual Grammar contribute to the decoding of the messages in visuals? 2) How do the messages in visuals contribute to the construction of the overall meaning of Ads?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Advertisements and Multimodal Analysis

Advertisements are a kind of social activity where advertisers “reproduce a sense of commodity relations as a natural and inevitable part of the lives of different individuals” (Saren, et al. 2007, 129). Advertisements represent and construct meaning and spread ideologies through the interference of external factors available in societies. In turn, the image, the normal medium of the signifier, neutralizes the powerful ideologies in the Ads. As a result, the Ad becomes the manifestation of these ideologies which in turn naturally affect the viewers who start bonding with what they receive (Dyer, 1986). The semiotic analysis of Ads gives way to decipher the content of Ads and takes them from their traditional design of the page or the screen, which was originally their natural medium, to shape and make sense of our reality and our experiences in the world (Saren et al., 2007). This is because Ads are created to mirror our lives and beliefs.

For many years, meaning encoded in Ads was only deciphered via linguistic analysis without reference to the images employed. Then, in the 70s, a trend was created where an interaction between linguistic analysis and the analysis of the image started to merge so as to unfold the secrets hidden in a text. This was the starting point for multimodal analysis to embrace an interaction between the linguistic analysis and the analysis of the image (Barthes, 1977). Multimodal elements employed in Ads are “communicative artifacts and processes which combine various sign systems (modes) and whose production and reception [call] upon the communication to semantically and formally interrelate all sign repertoires present [to create a meaningful] message” (Stöckl, 2004, 9).

The field of multimodality continued to thrive, and the need for approaches that present a systematic framework for the analysis became indispensable. Two approaches emerged for a comprehensive multimodal discourse analysis, namely Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) devised by Halliday in 1994, and Multimodal Metaphor Theory presented by Forceville in 1996. Through SFG, Halliday presents a framework that is based on seeing language as acting within a social structure to perform a certain function (Halliday, 1994). Based on SFG, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) presented their contribution in multimodal analysis with their theory of Visual Grammar; a theory that gives way to the analysis of not only the linguistic message, but the visual as well.

The messages that we receive on daily basis through advertisements, for example, are awash with assorted images, writing, sounds, gestures, and speech. Each is considered a mode of communication designed for meaning making.

Meaning is definitely encoded in messages, and multimodality looks beyond languages to analyze these modes of communication (Forceville, 2007). In their theory, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) offer a contemporary, unique, and extensively applicable approach to communication that brings all modes of communication together under one theoretical roof.

2.2. The Functions of Language and Ad Appeals

The content of both theories, SFG and Visual Grammar, focuses on the grammar, or structure, of the different types of messages. “Grammar goes beyond formal rules of correctness. It is a means of representing patterns of experience. . . . It enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them” (Halliday, 1985, 101). The focus here is not on the rules that describe how clauses and sentences are formed, but on how the abstract elements, people, and places in images are combined into a visual whole that varies in intensity and complexity. Visual Grammar focuses mainly on clarifying the essence of regularities of the way elements in images are used. The specific interpretations of experiences and modes of social interaction between the various participants are seen through the visual structures. Visual Grammar is, by and large, not a universal kind of grammar. In other words, it is culturally specific; thus, interpretations of the meanings of the elements visually combined differ from one cultural context to another (Huo & Lu, 2016). Images do not only have the aesthetic and expressive value, but they also have structures of social, political, and communicative dimensions. These notions go along the same veins of advertisement production.

The literature of advertisements is divided into the different norms of Ad appeals which audiences respond to. These divisions are the appeals which are mostly emotional and of course the effect of marketing on the service or product advertised is also considered. Appeals can be defined as persuading statements presented to consumers and that are based on either emotions or logic (Holmes & Crocker, 1987). Based on Aristotle’s modes of persuasion, Ad producers employ the rhetoric of ethos, pathos, and logos to persuade the audiences and capture their interest. Advertisements that have a rational and informative appeal accentuate and highlight the use of logic to persuade their viewers, whereas Ads that evoke emotions of happiness, nostalgia, humor, joy, or fear are ones which are mainly based on the emotional appeals (Holbrook & O’Shaughnessy, 1984).

2.3. Visual Grammar

The theoretical framework of the theory of Visual Grammar is deeply rooted in Halliday's theory, in which language is seen as an active participant in the communication process. According to SFG, language is seen as a multi-strata system that serves the communication process via three main meta-functions. The first meta-function is the ideational which is related to our experiences and concepts of the world around us. The interpersonal meta-function is the second that governs the interaction between the participants in any communication process, and it is responsible for showing the power relations between the participants. The third and last meta-function in Halliday's theory is the textual function. It is responsible for the analysis of the textual issues, such as cohesion and coherence (Halliday, 2004, Thompson, 2014). The theory of Visual Grammar serves as a useful tool in visual communication alongside the verbal language. Human societies have different modes of representation, and each mode acts distinctively for meaning-making. Each of these modes has a unique value in any context. The individuals in turn use a number of these modes and create their own subjective form and meaning of their messages. These modes interrelate to directly affect the communicative behavior (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

The ideational, interpersonal, and textual meta-functions in SFG are replaced in Kress and Van Leeuwen's theory by the representational, interactive, and compositional meta-functions respectively. The representational is responsible for displaying the patterns of representation. In other words, it explains how our experiences of the world are encoded visually. This visual encoding is carried on either via conceptual or narrative structures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

The theory of Visual Grammar guarantees that our experiences of the world are visually represented. In other words, the objects and their relationships with us in the world have a role to play through the theoretical framework. Thus, it appears as if the objects and their relations are connected to each other via vectors drawn to clarify the meaning intended. Not only do objects have relations in the communicative process, but most importantly participants act as senders and receivers of messages. A semiotic mode has to display the relation between the sender/producer and the receiver/reproducer of the encoded signs. There are different choices available to send these signs. For instance, a person may be depicted as looking to the camera to address the viewers, thus, creating an interaction between the two parties: the viewers and the ad participants. Semiotic systems must have the capacity to depict our experiences of the world; the relations between the creators of the visual signs should have the capacity to

form texts or complexes of signs that create coherence internally with each other and externally with the whole context (Hu & Luo, 2016). Visual Grammar offers a variety of resources to display signs, such as having a written text on the left or right sides or having a picture in the center to serve as ‘anchor’ of the whole message (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Kress and Van Leeuwen see the ideational meta-function in SFG as the power of semiotic systems to embody objects and their relations in a world inside the semiotic system of a culture. They choose to use the term ‘represented participants’ to refer to all elements available in the act of communication. Using this term draws the attention to the fact that there are two types of participants involved in any semiotic act: interactive and represented participants. The former are the participants who talk, speak, listen, read or write, make images, or view them; and the latter are the ones who make up the content or the subject matter of the communication. In other words, the represented participants are the people, places, and things embodied in or by the speech, writing or images. There is definitely a clear distinction between the interactive participants who are the ‘real image-producers’ and the viewers or the participants intended by the communicative act. The viewers are the silent participants implicitly and silently giving directions on the creation of the whole communicative message (Hu & Luo, 2016; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

2.4. Multimodal Studies

Many studies employ the social semiotic framework for the analysis of Ads whether TV or print Ads. The discourse of advertising creates meaning based on social values via numerous channels, thus, influencing social culture and relationships (Yang, 2007). Traditionally, the focus of the analysis was merely on the textual features of the text. In other words, the emphasis was on the lexical, grammatical, stylistic, and rhetorical levels of language (Leech, 1966; Williamson, 1978). Being the pioneer in many types of research, Leech (1966) is also the pioneer in the research on advertising discourse. Barthes (1977) and Williamson (1978) are the ones who started to analyze advertisements from a social semiotic perspective. This is when the merge between the image and the verbal information in Ads took place. Other scholars focused on the aspect of social motivation in Ads from a pure pragmatic perspective. Many researches focus on the analysis of only certain elements in Ads ignoring much of what deserves analysis. The present study employs a comprehensive framework for the analysis of all the visual aspects in images and specifically in the advertisement chosen for analysis.

3. Data Description and Methodology

This section includes a description of the data chosen in the study and the rationale behind choosing it. This is followed by a description of the analytical framework adopted in the study and as used by the researcher and the rationale for choosing it. A brief reference to the theory adopted in the study is also provided in this section.

3.1. Data Selection and Rationale

The data chosen as the subject of this study is the official TV advertisement of Telecom Egypt Mobile Network *We* released in 2018. This Ad makes a good subject of the study with all the visual cues available. It is an Ad made to address Egyptians to promote a mobile network service in its first release with the aim of capturing the widest range of support and acceptance from the audience. It is a service that concerns almost all sects of the Egyptian society with all its age groups. The visual cues employed in all the scenes are chosen with extreme caution to serve this purpose. The whole Ad makes a total of a minute and forty seven seconds (01:47). It comprises more than twenty main scenes; some of which are repeated with the same characters or rather participants and are displayed in the form of short narratives. In other words, some of the scenes are narrativized. All the scenes in the Ad are analyzed by the researcher to show how the visuals are loaded with encoded messages transmitted through the images in the Ad.

The opening scenes make the first three scenes taken from extreme long shots taking us from sunset to darkness then to light. This is a common feature in the whole advertisement: the awaiting for something exceptional and hopeful to happen, or rather the promise that something extraordinary is about to take place. It is a dominant message throughout: we will take you from darkness to light. This mood is dominantly promoted throughout. The Ad is full of places that are very familiar to Egyptians, covering almost all of the governorates of Egypt in a nostalgic emotion that is evoked during the whole time. The familiarity of the places of Egypt, the openness of the skies, the vastness of the Nile, and the familiar faces create a bond between the Ad and the viewers from the very first scene.

The limitless skies and the Nile are common participants in almost all scenes. The sky is common in all scenes as a symbol of power and supremacy. Rain is also employed as a symbol of goodness. *'We reach the sky'* or *'the sky is our limit'* is a message that smoothly flows and is clearly understood and

communicated expressing freedom and authenticity. The emotional appeal via nostalgia, enthusiasm, and anticipation dominates the advertisement.

The representation of the different groups of Egyptians is of utmost importance. All groups are represented in the advertisement, including children, adults, toddlers, men and women, different social classes, and Muslims and Christians. In other words, each viewer would identify with one of the characters of the Ad. Lyrics start with the fourth scene of fishing whose participants are the fish, the rod, and the two friends fishing; a witty opening of the Ad that expresses achievement and success. The use of the plural personal pronoun 'we', the inclusive we, is quite dominant throughout the whole advertisement, and it is even the name of the mobile network itself, creating a sense of solidarity. This evokes a sense of unity and invites the viewer to bond and get more involved in the Ad.

3.2. Analytical Framework

The advertisement, the data chosen for the study, is analyzed via one theoretical platform. Through the ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning, our experiences in the world are construed (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Since meaning construction depends not only on language but also on images, both language and images have meta-functions, as researchers exhibit (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Bateman, 2008).

The meta-functional view of multimodal discourse analysis is advocated not only by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), but by O'Halloran (2008) and Bateman (2008), including others who adopt the framework of the meta functions of images which are parallel to Halliday's meta-functions of language.

3.2.1. Theory of Visual Grammar. The data selected in this study, the *We Advertisement*, is analyzed by the theory of Visual Grammar devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). It is a comprehensive visual semiotic theory mainly devised to tackle multimodal texts. It is composed of three meta-functions parallel to Halliday's meta-functions of language. The framework is composed of elements that enable researchers to analyze every aspect of the image. The theory focuses on the analysis of the various elements in an image, such as characters, colors, glances, camera angles, and all the other aspects that encode our view of the world and our relationships with each other. The framework acts as a powerful tool in the analysis of multimodal documents.

The theory of Visual Grammar is composed of three meta-functions: the representational, interactive, and compositional. The representational meta-

function in this social semiotic apparatus is responsible for visually encoding our experiences in the world. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), visual encoding can be carried out either by a conceptual or narrative structure. The former offers an analytical model to unfold actions and events, where an oblique line, called vector, indicates directionality and links the participants to each other, whereas the latter concentrates on the analysis of the participants in terms of certain taxonomies or as carriers of symbolic meaning. The narrative process comprises five types: action, reactional, speech, mental, and conversation processes. All processes are either transactional or non-transactional depending on the participants in the image (Hu & Luo, 2016; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

The second meta-function in the theoretical framework is the interactive meta-function. This meta-function focuses on the interaction between the viewers and the participants in the image. This interaction or relation is created via elements such as the gazes of the represented participants, the social distance, and the angle through which the participants are placed in the image to be conceived by the viewers. The analysis along this meta-function is based on three factors: the visual configuration of the image act, social distance, and visual recognition of attitude or perspective.

The third component in this theoretical framework is the compositional meta-function, which combines the interactive and representational acts to each other into a whole via three systems; information value, salience, and framing. This meta-function focuses on the analysis of the depicted elements in terms of their position in the frame.

In this study, the representational, interactive, and compositional meta-functions are fully analyzed in the data chosen for analysis. Every aspect or factor in any of them is extensively analyzed and commented upon once proven evident.

4. Data Analysis

This section displays the analysis of the data selected in the study, the first official TV advertisement of Telecom Egypt Mobile Network, *We*, released in 2018. The three meta-functions that make up the theory of Visual Grammar are fully analyzed in the sample date. Therefore, the analysis is presented in three main parts, and each part tackles the analysis of the Ad scenes based on one meta-function at a time. The first part is dedicated to the analysis of the representational meta-function with both its patterns: narrative and conceptual. This is followed by the second part that includes the analysis of the interactive meta-function with its three factors: the image act, the social distance, and the

attitude. The third and last part displays the analysis of the compositional meta-function with its three systems: information value, salience, and framing. Samples or examples of the analysis of each meta-function are displayed with screen shots taken from the Ad to clarify the analysis.

4.1. Analysis of the Representational Meta-function

The first meta-function available via the theory of Visual Grammar is the *representational*. This function is parallel to the ideational meta-function in SFG which visually encodes our experiences in the world, unfolds actions or events, and represents processes of change and transitory arrangements. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen, through the representational meta-function, the relations between represented participants in the image are visually encoded. Participants are represented either via narrative or conceptual patterns or structures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, 59). The hallmark in narrative structures is the availability of a vector clarifying the visual relation; a factor that never exists in conceptual structures. The following section presents the analysis of the visual cues in the narrative structures.

A. Narrative Structures

(1) *Visual Encoding*. Visual encoding is carried out via the narrative structures in accordance with five processes symbolizing the relations between the participants: action, reactional, speech, mental, and conversation processes.

(2) *Action Processes*. The first is the action process in which actor and goal are linked to each other as the main participants through an oblique line that indicates directionality called *the vector*. Action processes can be either transactional or non-transactional. They are transactional if both actor and goal are available in the image, and non-transactional if only actors are available in the image.

In the advertisement that serves as the data for analysis, the non-transactional action processes overweigh the transactional ones. This aims at creating the bond with the viewer and showing solidarity as evoked by the emotions between the participants. The participants are portrayed as completing each other and not affecting one another or directing actions towards one another. Figures 1, 2, and 3 display examples of the non-transactional action processes in the Ad.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Figure 1 shows four participants walking right next to each other along the same line in a non-transactional pattern; none of the participants direct any actions towards the other. The four participants are employed in the Ad as actors; therefore, there is no vector drawn from a source to a target or from actor to goal. In figures 2 and 3, non-transactional processes are also manifested with two actors: a mother and her child, hugging each other. In the figure 3 the two actors are two friends, patting each other. In the three figures, all participants are visually portrayed as actors to enforce the image of equality and unity.

Figures 4 and 5 display examples of the transactional action processes where one participant affects another in a certain action.



Figure 4



Figure 5

The actors in figures 4 and 5 are not human actors, but their hands act as actors and participants. In figure 4, the scene appears with one hand patting another expressing a feeling of love and warmth, as well as, security and safety. One hand plays the role of the actor, and the patted one plays the role of the goal. This portrayal intensifies the bond and shows care, which is at the heart of the advertisement as the song playing throughout the ad with the lyrics “hands that pat, that support, that care, and that wipe out the impossible”. The same pattern also occurs in figure 5 with hands freeing a pigeon, the goal in this image, into the sky, expressing a sense of freedom, purity, and peacefulness. All the examples of the non-transactional and transactional action processes are intended to show unity, solidarity, warmth, and freedom. These are the emotions that the Ad producers are evoking from the very beginning, and these emotions are also manifested in the analysis of the reactional processes.

(3) *Reactional Processes*. The second type of processes available via the narrative structures is the reactional process. Through the reactional processes, reactions are encoded through the direction of the glances of the participants (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, 67). Therefore, the vector is formed through the direction of the glance. Similar to the action processes, the reactional process can either be transactional or non-transactional. It is transactional if the glance of the reactor is directed towards another participant: the phenomenon. It is non-transactional if the glance of the reactor is directed to the outside or to something outside the picture frame, towards the viewer or an imaginary participant. In the Ad under analysis, the non-transactional and transactional processes occur almost evenly. All these elements are visually chosen to serve the same purpose. Figures 6, 7, and 8 show examples of the transactional reactional processes.



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

In the advertisement, the glances are accompanied by facial expressions of happiness, anticipation, and celebrations; these feelings are quite prevalent throughout the Ad. In figure 6, a father, in a wedding scene, is looking to his son in law and his daughter, the newly wedded bride. Both sets of glances are directed towards an entity that exists in the picture frame which in this case is the groom. These glances reflect the feelings of the father, asking for a promise from the groom to take good care of his newly wedded bride. The facial expressions of happiness and celebration go hand in hand with the glances of all the participants. In figure 7, the glances of the two friends are directed towards the fish that has just come out of the water, expressing achievement and success; these feelings dominate the scenes. Another example of the reactional transactional processes is shown in figure 8 through the image of the friends looking to something showing on a T.V. screen while they are, most probably, watching a match and celebrating the scoring of a goal. Again, this shows the feelings of happiness and success. Figures 9, 10, and 11 show examples of the non-transactional reactional processes which are visually utilized to express the same positive emotions.

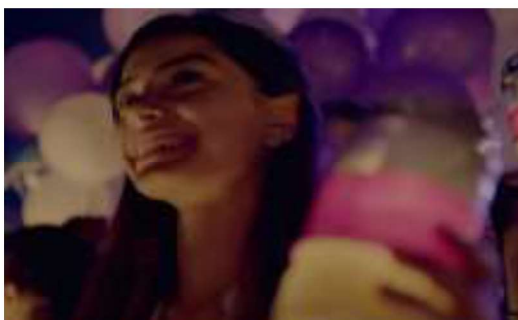


Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

Although the transactional reactional processes outweigh the non-transactional ones, some examples are evident of the latter type of processes. The glances in some scenes are directed towards an imaginary participant or a participant outside the picture frame, creating a non-transactional pattern. This is expressed through the anticipated, happy glances and facial expressions of the two young girls in figures 9 and 10, where they are shown as awaiting something important to take place. Most importantly in figure 10, the young girl is shot as standing in a window with bars, yet she is smiling and anticipating a hopeful incident. This gives the impression that what she is waiting for will free her. In figure 11, the groom is looking to his father in law, as shown in the previous wedding scene, with a glance that ensures that he will take care of his newly wedded bride, the former's daughter. Emotions of happiness and hope dominate the advertisement throughout the scenes.

(4) *Speech, Mental and Conversation Processes.* Speech, mental, and conversation processes give way to the analysis of the verbal and mental messages of the participants which are visually encoded in images. Through these processes, speakers or thinkers are linked to their speech or utterances and thoughts via dialogue or thought balloons. They exist, for example, in cartoons or educational programs. These processes are not evident in the advertisement under study. Therefore, no reference is given to them in the analysis section. The following section displays examples of the occurrences of the conceptual visual structures available in the representational meta-function.

B. Conceptual Structures

The second pattern through which the representational meta-function encodes experiences is the conceptual pattern. Through the conceptual patterns, participants are represented in a generalized and more constant manner in terms of their class, structure, or meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, 79).

Conceptual processes are divided into classificational (class), analytical (structure), or symbolical (meaning) processes.

(1) *Classificational Processes.* The classificational process relates participants to each other in a kind of taxonomy into super-ordinates and subordinates. The taxonomy can either be covert or overt. In covert taxonomies, subordinates are organized symmetrically; in other words, the superordinate can be visually inferred by the viewer. Overt Taxonomies can either be single-leveled in form of a tree structure with two or more subordinates with only two levels, and inter-ordinates exist at an intermediary level between the first two. In the multi-leveled overt taxonomy, a tree structure with more than two levels exists to connect the super-ordinate to the subordinates, and the former exists at the top or bottom of the tree structure (Hu, Luo, 2016). Classificational processes are not employed in the advertisement. All participants are represented as one and the same. Figures 12 and 13 illustrate the absence of the classificational processes.



Figure12



Figure 13

Throughout the Ad, participants are visually encoded as running, walking, or standing side by side awaiting the upcoming event as the lyrics confirm throughout the whole advertisement as shown in figures 12 and 13. In other words, all participants appear in the ad as one with no supremacy of one over another. They appear as one body, thus, intensifying the bond. No overt or covert taxonomies are employed because this will separate the collective spirit of the participants in the Ad, which is the main reason behind the bond created with the viewers. The second type of processes available in this pattern is the analytical processes.

(2) *Analytical Processes*. Analytical Processes is the second type in the conceptual pattern where participants are related in a part-whole relation as carrier (whole) and possessive attributes (parts). This pattern represents the relational processes in SFG. An illustration of this in the advertisement is through the excessive use of parts of the parts and specifically the hands. Hands are extensively employed in the Ad both in the images and in the lyrics as a symbol of accomplishment with the lyrics singing ‘hands that build, pat, carry, protect, that care etc.’ Symbolic processes make the third type in the representational conceptual patterns.

(3) *Symbolic Processes*. Symbolic processes make the third and last type in the conceptual pattern. Through the symbolic processes, analysis takes place in terms of meaning or essence. In other words, the visual encoding signifies what the participant is or means. This is employed in educational or medical institution advertisements where teachers and doctors are shown holding items related to their professions or appearing in educational text books or in hospitals. This type of processes is not evident in the Ad under analysis; and therefore, no reference is made to it. This is because the focus is on the individuals regardless of their professions. The center of attention is the human being that each and every viewer can identify with while watching the Ad.

4.2. Analysis of the Interactive Meta-function

Second in the theory of Visual Grammar comes the interactive meta-function which gives a way for analyzing what is not uttered; a language shared between producers of Ads and the viewer, where the latter implicitly and silently gives instructions on how advertisements should be created. The interactive meta-function involves two types of participants: the represented and interactive. These two types of participants are involved in three kinds of relations: between represented participants, between interactive participants, and between interactive and represented participants. Forming meaning through the interactive meta-function is realized via three factors: the visual configuration of the image act, social distance, and perspective (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006).

(1) The Image Act

The image act is realized through the participant’s gaze and its direction. This is accompanied by hand gestures that confirm and transmit the intended meaning. If the gaze is directed towards the viewer, this is described as a *demand*. This demand is directed towards the viewer, usually demanding certain

action of the latter. If the gaze is not directed towards the viewer, then this is an *offer*, and the represented participants, in this case, are offered to the viewers as food for thought or objects of contemplation to send a certain message.

There are no demand images in the advertisement under analysis. The advertisement presents offer images throughout, where the participants do not direct their gazes or gestures to the viewer, but the eye lines drawn represent vectors that connect the participants to each other. Their gazes to each other and facial expressions show their awaiting for something happy to celebrate. This is exemplified in figures 14 and 15.



Figure 14



Figure 15

Figures 14 and 15 display examples of the *offer* images. In figure 14, the gazes of all the participants are directed towards the television, leaving the viewer to contemplate and suggest the reason for their happiness. In figure 15, the two young girls direct their gazes to the sky, witnessing the rain and at the same time evoking the feelings of happiness and enjoyment. The advertisement endorses a sense of freedom and fulfillment throughout; in other words, it offers a service that suits all the viewers' needs and responds to their wants. The repeated images of joy and celebration give the viewer a sense of joy and liberty. The same sense of intimacy is also transmitted and emphasized through the social distance.

(2) Social Distance

The choice of space determines the distance between the viewer and the represented participants, and a realization of this social interaction in social contexts is of utmost importance. The construction of the image can make the viewer feel far away from or close to the represented participants. This is influenced by the different sizes of the frame which can be a close up, medium, or long shot.

The social distance is determined with reference to the human body. A close up shot signifies a close personal distance as the head and shoulders of the subject or the participant are visually focused on, but more intimacy is signified

through extreme close up shots where less than heads and shoulders of the participants are visualized. In the advertisement under analysis, close up shots are quite dominant. They are chosen to express the feelings of intimacy and closeness. One can easily identify with the participants who are intimately portrayed. Figures 16 and 17 show examples of this pattern.



Figure 16



Figure 17

Figure 16 shows a middle class woman celebrating a wedding, and she is brought forward and made close to the viewer in a close up shot. She appears so familiar; this feeling is evoked throughout with all the participants in the Ad. The same technique is followed in figure 17, where the boy from Nubia is placed in a close up frame to make him so intimate to the viewer. This intimate and close social distance is decoded through the element of social distance available in the framework. This again indicates that the Ad producers' main concern is the individual, the human being.

Medium close shots show far personal distance where the participant is cut right at the waist. The medium shots show close social distance as it ends approximately at the participant's knees. Medium long shots show far social distance as it shows the full figure. Medium close shots are quite rare in the Ad under analysis or almost absent. The aim of the Ad is to evoke a feeling of intimacy; and therefore, no such frames are portrayed. Whenever medium shots are employed, they are followed by close up shots of the same participants.

The long shots exemplify the public distance as the human figure occupies about half the height of the frame and finally the extreme long shots give the message that the participants are and will always be strangers. In other cases, the extreme long shots are used to signify supremacy and superiority (Kress & vVan Leeuwen, 2006, 125). In the advertisement under analysis, extreme long shots always include historical places of Egypt. Figures 18 and 19 display an example of the extreme long shots.



Figure 18



Figure 19

Figure 18 shows the River Nile in an extreme long shot. This expresses the vastness and greatness of the Nile. Whenever extreme long shots are employed in the Ad, they are always associated with the historical places of Egypt, evoking a sense of sublimity and greatness of the land. The same goes with figure 19 shooting a bridge in Alexandria in an extreme long shot with all the cars moving forward. The bridge is surrounded by the sea, and the long shot shows a vast area of the city. This stirs up a feeling of success and achievement along with dominance. The third factor available via the interactive meta-function is the visual recognition of attitude.

(3) Attitude/Perspective

Attitude determines the relationship between the viewer and the represented participants via the type of angle selected in the image. It can either be horizontal or vertical. The angle selection visually shows power over, involvement in, or the need to pay extra attention to certain participants or aspects in the image. The images in this case are of two types: subjective and objective. The subjective image represents everything from a particular perspective dictated by the image producer whereas the objective depicts everything about the topic and participants. In other words, they can be depicted from various angles to determine various relations. Consequently, the image producer leaves it to the viewer to make sense of the various intended stances. The horizontal frontal angles could either be frontal or oblique, and they can determine extreme involvement or detachment respectively. The represented participant is shown by a frontal angle to indicate that special attention need to be paid to it; on the other hand, participants shown by oblique angle usually suggest otherwise. The vertical perspective is realized by camera height, and it signifies different degrees of power. A high angle makes the subject look small and insignificant, with the tendency of diminishing the individual; the technique is totally absent

in the Ad under analysis. A low angle makes it look imposing and amazing, giving an impression of superiority, exaltation, and triumph, and the eye-level angle indicates equality (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, 140).

In the Ad under analysis, a low angle and eye level angles are quite dominant. They are intended to give extra attention to the individuals: the most significant participants in the Ad as they are those with whom the viewer can identify with. This is also intended to show equality, thus again, emphasizing the notion that we are all one and the same. Figures 20, 21, 22 and 23 show examples of the horizontal frontal angles employed throughout the Ad.



Figure 20

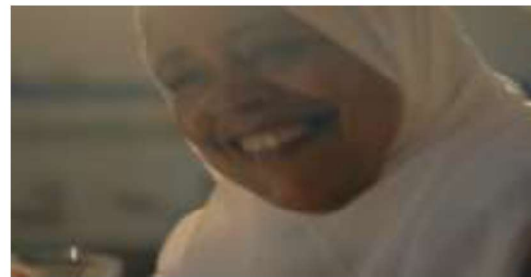


Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

Figure 20 shows a young man helping an elderly neighbor to use her smart mobile phone. Both participants are shot horizontally and from a frontal angle to bring them closer to the viewer. The same goes with figures 21 and 22, where the woman and the little boy from Nubia are seen in a horizontal frontal light to emphasize involvement and closeness. The same technique is followed in figure 23 where the participants are portrayed in an intimate light.

4.3. Analysis of the Compositional Meta-function

The third component in this theoretical framework is the compositional meta-function. Along this meta-function, visual cues are analyzed in terms of the frame in which they are portrayed. The compositional meta-function combines the interactive and representational acts to each other into a whole via three systems; information value, salience, and framing.

(1) Information Value

Information value relates the participants to each other and to the viewers in accordance with the various zones of the image. Participants could be placed left and right, top and bottom, center and margin, depending on their importance.



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26

In the advertisement under analysis, all participants are centralized. Almost all participants in the Ad, which could be high places and tall buildings, cars, and people, are placed at the center of the image to show their importance. Figures 24 and 25 show the Nile and a mosque right at the center and heart of the frame to show their importance. This is also shown in figure 26, a glass of tea, which represents a very cultural item for Egyptians, is also placed at the heart of the image. This highlights the intimacy of the item centralized and intensifies the bond created with the viewer. Salience is the second system available via the compositional meta-function.

(2) Saliency

The second element in the compositional meta-function is saliency. In images, elements are made salient to draw the attention to different degrees of importance through showing certain sharpness in color, which shows the element as either foregrounded or backgrounded. Thus, certain elements stand out. Most of the scenes in the advertisement under analysis have gold and its shades as well as yellow as the common colors expressing wealth, cheerfulness, tradition, passion, and wisdom (Singh, 2006). This is shown in the colors of clothes, jewelry, and buildings throughout the Ad to add a halo of richness. The third system in the compositional meta-function is framing which sheds light on the unity of the visuals employed.

(3) Framing

The third element in the compositional meta-function is framing. This is concerned with showing the connectedness or disconnectedness of the image. Certain elements such as dividing lines, empty spaces, or discontinuity of shapes are employed to create a connected or disconnected frame and are employed to show connectedness as a unit or separation. Connectedness and unity is the common framing multimodal feature of the advertisement under analysis. All images are shown as one unit and no elements are used to sever the images or break their unity. This is the main message transmitted throughout the advertisement; we are united as a whole.

5. Discussion

This section provides a discussion of the results of the analysis conducted in this study. This is done through answering the research questions posed. The analysis of the advertisement chosen as the data of this study was conducted using the theory of Visual Grammar devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) to address every aspect available in an image. The theoretical framework has helped arrive at the meaning intended by the Ad producers. Each meta-function in the theoretical platform offered various factors upon which the image is analyzed. To begin with, the representational meta-function enabled to researcher to unfold relationships between the participants in the Ad. The participants are placed in a relationship of equality. They are portrayed as one and the same with the viewer who bonds with the characters in the Ad from the very first scenes. This is clearly shown in the dominance of the non-transactional action processes in the Ad. The relationships between the participants in the Ad are also visually inferred through the analysis of the reactional processes, where

the participants' happy and promising glances towards one another are accompanied by facial expressions of joy and freedom. The absence of superordinate taxonomies in the Ad emphasizes the notion of unity and equality intended by the Ad producers throughout. This is made clear through the analysis of the classificational conceptual processes. All the participants are of the same status and are grouped together to celebrate the upcoming event which is the launching of the new mobile network advertised in the Ad.

The relationship between the participants and the viewers is decoded through the analysis of the interactive meta-function as the findings reveal. Through the analysis of the visual recognition of the image act, it is clearly shown that the offer images are dominant throughout. The participants are offered in the visuals to the viewers as food for thought to contemplate about. This engages the viewers and makes them more involved; and consequently, the bond is strengthened. The visual encoding of the social distance also adds to the relationship with the viewers. The feelings of intimacy and familiarity are clearly shown in the close up shots employed in the various scenes of the Ad. This is accompanied by feelings of greatness, sublimity, and nostalgia through the extreme long shots employed to shoot the important or the historical places in Egypt. Nostalgia is defined as an individual variation where a person expresses thirst for the past and starts to associate certain feelings with not only memories but places that evoke such memories for a historical place or an old one that is related to one's childhood period (Ayada, 2018). The strong bond between the viewers and the service advertised is, therefore, created from the very first scene. The selection of the frontal horizontal angle also reveals the same feeling of closeness and equality as shown through the analysis. More attention is given to the human participants than to any other aspect; this is why the viewer can identify oneself with the participants.

The focus throughout is on the humans depicted as participants in the Ad. Placing the human participants as hugging or patting each other is intended to show that they all act as actors. They are one and the same; none of them affects one another. The body parts and specifically the hands are employed not only visually but also verbally throughout the song. The analysis of the glances and the direction of the gaze has revealed many of the messages hidden in the Ad. The fact that no gazes are directed towards the viewer but towards the participants or to the sky shows the feelings of anticipation and hope awaiting something important, which is the service advertised. There are no demands directed towards the viewer but only offers.

The analysis of the compositional meta-function reveals the emphasis on evoking the same feelings of nostalgia where the historical places are made salient through being centralized. Not only are the places centralized, but cultural items as well, such as the glass of tea. This is extremely culture specific, and any Egyptian will experience this sense of familiarity with this image. This is supported by the type of angle employed throughout to signify equality, involvement, and closeness. The use of the shades of gold and yellow evokes the sense of greatness; this message is expressed through the various images of the Ad and extensively repeated.

Participants, via the compositional meta-function, are placed at the core and heart of the image to show how salient they are. This is supported by the use of the shades of gold; this colour signifies richness, supremacy, illumination, passion, magic, and wisdom (Singh, 2006). All visual factors are used in the Ad to show the service advertised as one reason for the unity, supremacy, and happiness of the viewer. The connectedness of all the frames and the total absence of any dividing lines emphasize the aim expressed in the Ad from the very beginning; we are all one and we are unified. This is also visually encoded in the representation of all groups of society.

Advertisements construct reality and organize images to encode meaning where the former act accordingly as a natural medium for messages (Dyer, 1986). In order to arrive at this intended meaning, a comprehensive framework is needed. The theory of Visual Grammar with its meta-functions offers an all-inclusive set of aspects to analyze each and every element in an image. The messages intended by the Ad producers could never be unfolded except through the analysis of all the cues employed.

6. Conclusion

In this study, the researcher analyzed the advertisement *We* to investigate the role which images play in the construction of the overall meaning intended by the Ad. Consequently, the researcher chose a comprehensive analytical framework convenient for the task; this is the theory of Visual Grammar devised by Kress and Van Leeuwen in 1996 and revised in 2006. This theoretical platform is based on Halliday's SFG with meta-functions parallel to those in the theory; the theory views language as a social semiotic practice. In order to better decipher the meaning encoded in Ads, the analysis of Ads has moved from a mono-modal analysis of linguistic signs only to a multi-modal analysis of all the visual signs embedded in the Ad (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). Employing the theory of Visual Grammar has revealed many of the secrets hidden in the Ad and

has proven quite effective in multimodal analysis. The way participants are grouped and combined shows the message intended by the Ad producers. In *We*, the human participants are organized in a relation of equality. Therefore, the taxonomy of super-ordinates and subordinates is not employed in the Ad. This is a message repeated and emphasized throughout via the image; we are all one and the same grouped in solidarity. The different emotions of hope, achievement, nostalgia emanate from all the cues employed, creating the bond with the viewer. Constructing and interpreting meaning depends on the analysis of both the image and the language. Last, this study takes only the theory of Visual Grammar into consideration. More modes and relevant theories can be added to arrive at more valuable academic results. For future research, the analysis of the music employed in Ads can also yield fruitful results as they will add to the overall intended meaning. Advertisements of other telecommunication companies can also be analyzed, and results can be compared to show the differences in the visual cues used to convey the aims of the Ad producers. This can also be beneficial if the chosen Ads are produced in different communities. The visual cues that correspond to different cultural differences will be interesting to analyze.

Works Cited

- Ayada, Wesam. 2018. "Using of Nostalgia as a Communication Strategy in TV Advertising Design Campaigns to Influence Behaviour of Brands Consumers: (An Analytical study on TV Advertisement Campaigns in Egypt)." *International Design Journal* 8, no. 1, 327-343.
- Barthes, Ronald. 1977. *Image Music Text*. London: Fontana Press.
- Bateman, John. 2008. *Analysing Multimodal Documents: A Foundation for the Systematic Analysis of Multimodal Documents*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cook, Guy. 2001. *The Discourse of Advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Durant, Alan and Lambrou, Marina. 2009. *Language and Media: A Resource Book for Students*. Abingdon, U.K.: Routledge.
- Dyer, Gillian. 1991. *Advertising as Communication*. London: Routledge, 1986.
- Eagleton, Terry. 1991. *Ideology: An Introduction*.
https://archive.org/stream/TerryEagleton-IdeologyAnIntroduction/TerryEagleton-Ideology-AnIntroduction_djvu.txt

- El-Daly, Hosney. 2011. "Towards an Understanding of the Discourse of Advertising: Review of Research with Special Reference to the Egyptian Media." *African Nebula* 3, 25-47.
- Forceville, Charles. 1996. *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*. London: Routledge.
- Forceville, Charles. 2007. "Book Review: Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis: A Multimedia Toolkit and Coursebook by A. Baldry and P. J. Thibault", *Journal of Pragmatics* 39, no. 6, 1235–38.
- Goldman, Robert. 1992. *Reading Ads Socially*. U.K.: Routledge.
- Halliday, Michael and Hasan, Ruqaiya. 1985. *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. Waurm Ponds, Victoria: Deakin University.
- Halliday, Michael. 1994. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Limited.
- Halliday, Michael and Matthiessen, Martin. 2004. *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed.). Arnold: London.
- Holmes, John and Crocker, Kenneth. 1987. "Predispositions and the comparative effectiveness of rational, emotional and discrepant appeals for both high involvement and low involvement products." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 15, no. 1, 27-35.
- Holbrook, Morris and O'Shaughnessy, John. 1984. *The Role of Emotion in Advertising*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.4220010206>.
- Hu, Chunyu and Luo, Mengxi. 2016. "A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Tmall's Double Eleven Advertisement." *Journal of English Language Teaching* 9, no. 8, 156-169. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n8p156>.
- Jewitt, Carey (ed.). 2009. *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, Gunther. and Van Leeuwen, Theo. 2001. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.
- . 2006. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Leech, Geoffrey. 1966. *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain*. London: Longman.
- Saren, Michael, Maclaran, Puline, Goulding, Christina, Elliott, Richard, Shankar, Avi and Catterall, Miriam (eds.). 2007. *Critical Marketing. Defining the Field*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Singh, Satyendra. 2006. "Impact of Color on Marketing". *Journal of Management Decision* 44, no. 6, 783-789.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740610673332>.

Stockl, Hartmut. 2004. "Language and Image in Printed Media." *Perspectives on Multimodality*. Charles Eija, Charles Cassily and Martin Kaltenbacher (eds.). Amsterdam: Benjamins, 9-30.

Williamson, Judith. 1983. *Decoding Advertisements; Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*. London: Marion Boyars.

Yang, X, and Gu, H. 2007. "Advertising Discourse Analysis: A Possible Theory for the Ontological Study of Advertising." *Journal of Jinan University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 6, 31-34.