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UNPACKING IDEOLOGY THROUGH MULTIMODALITY: A VISUAL GRAMMAR ANALYSIS OF THE "DEVIL TRUE HEIRS" DIGITAL POSTER

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims to investigate the multimodal features employed in the "Devil True Heirs" digital poster in constructing meaning and to uncover the underlying ideologies conveyed through its multimodal design. A descriptive qualitative approach was adopted, with the digital poster as the sole unit of analysis. The poster was analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Framework, focusing on three dimensions of meaning: representational, interactive, and compositional. The findings reveal that the poster constructs meaning through the combination of textual and visual resources, including metaphorical language, colour, blood imagery, participant representation, gaze, social distance, perspective, information value, salience, and framing. These elements work collectively to associate the depicted political leaders with violence, oppression, and moral corruption. The analysis further reveals that the poster conveys anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist ideological positions by criticising the relationship between Israeli and United States political power and representing them as contributors to the never-ending suffering in Gaza. The study highlights how Visual Grammar helps reveal ideological meanings constructed through the interplay of text and visuals in digital posters. It also highlights the importance of critical multimodal awareness, enabling audiences to recognise ideological messages spread in social media content and engage with these messages more thoughtfully.

Keywords: Anti-imperialism, anti-Zionism, digital poster, multimodal discourse analysis, visual grammar.

INTRODUCTION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict originates in the late nineteenth century, notably in 1948. Since that time, over 1.6 million Palestinians have resided in what has been called "the largest open-air prison in the world" (Filiu, 2014). In 1947, the United Nations proposed partitioning Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, but the plan was followed by the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and the ethnic cleansing of about 750,000 Palestinians, known as the "Nakba" (Global Conflict Tracker, 2026). The region was split into three sections, namely the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the State of Israel. This was only the beginning, as about 300,000 Palestinians were again displaced due to the 1967 war that lasted for 6 days. As a result, not only were Palestinians expelled, but Israel also occupied Gaza and the West Bank. Since then, they have been under Israeli military occupation until today.

The intensified conflict has gained attention from all over the world, which has consequently attracted extensive coverage from mainstream media. While the existence of news media benefits audiences by providing information about events occurring around the world, it can also have harmful effects, particularly when information is presented in ways that may mislead audiences. This is because news coverage may differ in some respects, such as source selection, wording, visual representations, and the framing of victims and perpetrators, resulting in multiple interpretations of the same events and potentially circulating inaccurate narratives. Such differences have raised concerns surrounding misinformation, propaganda, and disinformation, particularly when complex historical and political contexts are reduced to selective narratives. As media consumption increasingly shifts toward digital platforms, like Instagram, TikTok, and X, have become important spaces for activism, public awareness, and the circulation of counter-narratives. Consequently, visual artefacts such as digital posters have emerged as prominent forms of political expression, allowing creators to communicate implicit or explicit messages through the combination of words, imagery, colour, and composition. Hence, that explains the rise of awareness posters about this disastrous event on social media.

This is where poster like 'Devil True Heirs' comes to light, created by an Instagram artist with the username @nasr24.art, as depicted in Figure 1. This poster was posted on October 18, 2023, is an exceptionally rich and relevant material for analysis due to its powerful symbolism, its role in countering mainstream narratives, and its connection to a critical historical moment. It was released amidst the intensification of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following the escalation of the events of October 7, 2023, when Hamas launched attacks against Israeli military and civilians in response to Israel's continued occupation. The poster encapsulates global outrage and scepticism toward biased reporting by mainstream media. Many mainstream media outlets have been criticised for framing the narrative in ways that obscure the true victims of violence, frequently attributing blame to people like innocent Palestinians, thus diverting people's attention from the broader context of the conflict. Therefore, the poster responds to the selective framing and disinformation that often overshadow the plight of Palestinians in Gaza while offering an alternative narrative through visual protest.

Because disinformation and selective reporting have left people confused and questioning reality, alternative methods of communication through social media have become crucial in spreading truth-telling and as a form of protest. Due to this, many artists utilised their creativity through visual metaphors and symbolism to encapsulate the gravity of events. Through this way, the intended message will be preserved, and against any distortion or manipulation by the hands of those with wicked intentions. The present poster's imagery depicts Joe Biden (U.S President) and Benjamin Netanyahu (Israeli President) smiling amidst a sea of blood, which is both disturbing and thought-provoking. It used unsettling visual metaphors and symbolism that have stirred public discourse by communicating hidden messages or ideologies to the public. This is precisely what the present study seeks to unravel in greater depth, making the poster an invaluable subject for analysis.

Figure 1

Instagram Post by @nasr24.art Featuring the Digital Poster "Devil True Heirs"



Research Objectives

With that being said, this research aims to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To investigate the multimodal features employed in the "Devil True Heirs" digital poster in constructing meaning.
2. To uncover the underlying ideologies conveyed through the multimodal design of the poster.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this research, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What multimodal features are employed in "Devil True Heirs" digital poster to construct its meaning?
2. What underlying ideologies are conveyed through the multimodal design of the poster?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) has become an important area of research in applied linguistics, communication studies, and semiotics. It is the perspective of multimodality in which the text is seen in terms of the interplay of semiotic resources such as language, visuals, gestures, sound, and spatial design in the production, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Norris, 2004). Unlike the traditional discourse analysis, whose focus is largely on written or spoken discourse, operating on the assumption that meaning is primarily conveyed linguistically, MDA operates from a different premise. MDA perspective recognises that in modern communication, very little of the meaning is

transmitted through linguistic means. Instead, meanings can also be constructed through texts, images, colours, and other modes of representation, or even through a combination of these, which can further enhance the message and convey more complex, nuanced meanings (Tang et al., 2024).

The development of MDA is closely linked to the social semiotic tradition, with significant reliance on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), a theory introduced by Michael Halliday in the 1960s (Gebhard & Accurso, 2020). O'Halloran (2008) stated that "the systemic functional approach to multimodal discourse analysis is concerned with the theory and practice of analysing meaning arising from the use of multiple semiotic resources from discourses, which range from written, printed and electronic texts to material lived-in reality" (p. 443). Halliday's framework (2004) proposes three metafunctions inherent in language for effective meaning construction. First is the ideational function, which represents experiences, concepts, and events, depicting the "who," "what," "where," "when," "why," and "how" of actions, events, and relationships. In this metafunction, language operates as a tripartite structure consisting of distinct yet interconnected elements. Firstly, there exist the participants, representing the individuals, entities, or objects that are inherently involved within the unfolding scenario being depicted through linguistic expression. Second is the processes, which articulate the actions or events constituting the core narrative or descriptive content. Third is the circumstances, which function as supplementary modifiers providing essential contextual details concerning the execution or occurrence of the identified processes, offering information such as the temporal setting, spatial location, manner of performance, and other pertinent aspects that collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the depicted reality or hypothetical construction.

Second is the interpersonal function, which mediates the expression of attitudes, the negotiation of social roles, and the establishment of interpersonal relationships (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This metafunction enables speakers to project their attitudes and emotions, shaping how their tone and interpersonal stance are perceived. It is realised through the mood system and the modality system. The mood system serves diverse interactional roles, encompassing declarative utterances conveying information, interrogative utterances soliciting information, and imperative utterances issuing commands or requests. Meanwhile, the modality system is expressed via modal verbs and adverbs. It comprises two primary subtypes. The first is modalisation, which corresponds to epistemic modality, denoting degrees of probability and usuality. The second is modulation, which corresponds to deontic modality, expressing degrees of obligation and inclination (Gebhard & Accurso, 2020; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Van, 2018).

Last but not least is the textual function, which organises discourse into coherent messages (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This can be achieved through key aspects like structuring elements into theme and rheme. The theme is the initial part of a clause, which presents "given information". Meanwhile, the rheme refers to the subsequent part of the clause. It must come after the theme, and functions to introduce the "new information". Thus, it is important for the producer to structure their multimodal text properly so that readers can move seamlessly from one topic to another, progressing from given information to the new information. Besides that, the use of cohesive devices such as connectors and pronouns also forms part of the textual function, ensuring that ideas are linked or referred to appropriately. Finally, the overall organisation of information is the crucial part of this metafunction, as sentences must be arranged logically and flow smoothly so that readers can comprehend the ideas conveyed and remain engaged (Gebhard & Accurso, 2020; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Van, 2018).

The core thesis of MDA is that all communicative acts are multimodal. For example, in a political poster, typography, colour schemes, composition, and the word choices that may be found in the accompanying slogans are all part of the rhetorical punch (Hussin, 2023). Just like an election poster studied by Sazan et al. (2024), where Anwar Ibrahim's initial "A" was stylised to resemble the Pakatan Harapan logo, shaped

like a glowing rocket ascending. This design conveys the ideology of progress and success, reinforced by a slogan of *"Demi Malaysia Yang Lebih Baik"* that promises a better future for the Malaysian people. From this instance, it is shown that MDA can reveal hidden ideologies and function as an effective guide to form persuasive speech. Aside from within political communication, this interest in semiotic integration has also been a strong driving force in other fields like social media (e.g., Gurung & Agarwal, 2025; Lityaningrum, 2021; Zahra et al., 2024), advertising (e.g., Alhuthali, 2024; Enemuo & Chukwu, 2023; Santikul, 2024), and even in classroom discourse (e.g., Guo et al., 2024; Qi, 2024; Xiao, 2024).

When asking about the relevance of MDA, its importance has become even more obvious in today's digital environment. As societies become more visual and technologically mediated, Yang and Zhang (2014) observed that meaning-making rarely relies on linguistic alone, since this risks neglecting the multimodality of communication. Social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X are intensely multimodal, relying on the interplay of visual, sonic, caption, and interactive modes. This makes MDA particularly necessary for understanding these new communication ecologies, as the combination of both text and visuals is more persuasive than words alone. Domke et al.'s study (2022, as cited in Seo, 2020) supports this claim, finding that the presence of both verbal and visual elements can be more effective in eliciting both positive and negative emotions. This also demonstrates why, in activist communication, multimodal artefacts such as posters or memes are particularly influential, especially in advancing advocacy, resistance, and counter-narratives in global conflicts (Moussa et al., 2020; Munk, 2025; Nur Alam & Noor Farida, 2025). Simply put, MDA equips researchers and practitioners with a critical lens to understand how the convergence of modes works together to create myriad meanings within contemporary communication.

Visual Grammar Framework

The Visual Grammar Framework, introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen in 1996, is one of the key approaches that Multimodal Discourse Analysis draws upon, together with Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. As defined by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), visual grammar is "a quite general grammar of contemporary visual design in 'Western' cultures, an account of the explicit and implicit knowledge and practices around a resource, consisting of the elements and rules underlying a culture-specific form of visual communication" (p.3). They further noted that, just like language, visuals can contribute to forming new concepts, conveying ideas, and establishing connections among the creator, the viewer, and the subject portrayed (Friedman & Ron, 2017). Extending from Halliday's meta-functional principles, this framework shows you how to decipher the language of images in a systematic way, which is through three key structures, namely representational, interactive, and compositional meanings.

First is representational meaning, which corresponds to Halliday's ideational metafunction, where it involves how people, objects, and environments are represented in images, with Kress and van Leeuwen referring to these elements as "participants" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). They further elaborate that representational meaning can be divided into two types, which are narrative and conceptual representation. The distinction between these two lies in the presence of a "vector", which can be understood as a line in an image that shows direction or action (Bi, 2019). Vectors are only present in narrative representations, which convey "unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 79). This category can be further subdivided into action processes (showing people or objects doing something), reactional processes (showing emotional or perceptual reactions through gaze or facial expressions), and speech and mental processes (depicting communication or thought). On the other hand, conceptual representations convey "more generalised and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure or meaning" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 79). These can be narrowed down into classificational process (organises participants into categories or groups),

analytical process (shows the parts and their relation to the whole), and symbolic process (represents meaning or identity beyond physical appearance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Next is interactive meaning, which corresponds to Halliday's interpersonal metafunction, and focuses on how images form connections between the represented participants and the viewers. This can be analysed through gaze, either in the form of "demand," where the depicted subjects establish direct eye contact with viewers, engendering a simulated form of imagined connection and evoking affective responses; or in the form of "offer", where no direct contact is involved but the subjects are instead positioned as items that provide information or prompting thought. Interactive meaning can also be examined through the distance between the participants and the viewers, whether it is close-up, medium shot, or long shot, as well as through angle, whether the subject being depicted is from the high, low, or eye level of the viewers. All of these visual decisions are not arbitrary but serve to place viewers as intimate, distant, superior, or equal to the subjects represented (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Lastly, compositional meaning has to do with the way the various elements of an image are organised to create emphasis and unity, and it corresponds to Halliday's textual metafunction. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point to three important principles. The first is information value, which dictates how elements should be arranged to be read or viewed either from left to right, top to bottom, or from centre to margin. The second is salience, which pertains to the perceptual prominence of specific compositional elements, looking at which elements stand out or draw the observer's attention the most, whether through colour, size, or focus. Finally, the framing, which refers to the degree to which elements are visually related or disconnected (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Together, these guiding tenets delineate the reader's trajectory and shape how the message is interpreted. Ultimately, the interplay of these principles determines not only 'what' the reader understands, but also 'how' that understanding is constructed and integrated into their existing cognitive schema.

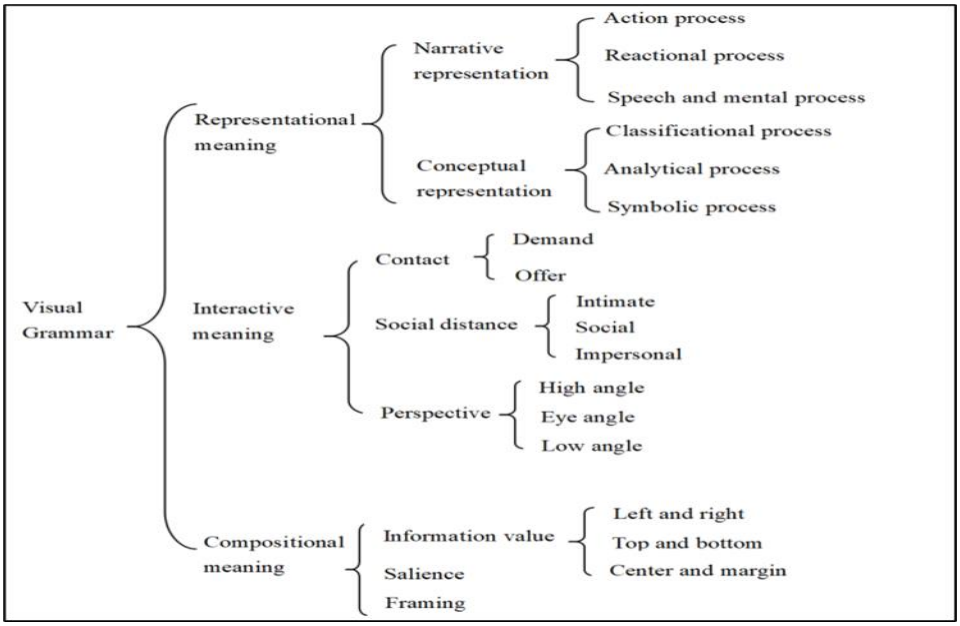
This framework has become one of the most influential image analysis models as it has been widely adopted in multimodal discourse research, offering critical insights into how texts operate within linguistics, literature, media, and cultural contexts. Researchers have applied it to film posters (e.g., Budiastono & Noverino, 2024; Yudhanto, 2024; Zhang, 2023), advertisements (e.g., Alhuthali, 2024; Enemuo & Chukwu, 2023; Nguyen, 2025), educational material (e.g., Muzdalifah & Moecharam, 2018; Qi, 2024; Xiao, 2024), protest art (e.g., Bahrudin & Bakar, 2022; Ifeoluwa & Ayobami, 2021; Nurfaizah & Harti, 2022), and many more. The functional elements of this framework (i.e., representational, interactive, and compositional) have assisted researchers in analysing visual artefacts in greater detail, like how they encode resistance, uncover injustice, and mobilise audiences.

Beyond its role as a research tool, this framework also benefits students, as shown in Emiliasari et al.'s study (2025), which found that it can strengthen critical reading and thinking skills. Such skills, in turn, can help students to develop interpretive awareness, enabling them to approach a subject with independent perspectives. This is because when students are more interpretively inclined, they are led to form their own interpretation of the subject, since images often invite multiple readings, thereby contributing to cultural variation in how they are understood. An example of this can be seen in how colours are perceived differently across cultures. The colour red, for instance, does not hold the same meaning everywhere. In Chinese culture, it is regarded as a symbol of prosperity, marriage, and political strength, whereas in Western societies, red is linked with the emotions of romance, peril, or religious sacrifice (Du, 2025). Thus, the discussion shows that visual grammar can operate as a flexible framework that not only supports researchers in analysis but also equips general readers with tools to interpret meaning in everyday contexts. With that being said, by assembling representational, interactive, and compositional dimensions, the Visual Grammar framework brings to light the invisible semiotic labour of image. It provides a systematic way of considering the ideological encoding of images and stands in harmony with the wider perspective of

MDA. In the present study, the researchers applied this framework to decode the ideologies that the producer aims to convey to viewers through the multimodal elements in "Devil True Heirs" digital poster. To illustrate its components more clearly, the following figure presents the Visual Grammar framework that is adopted from Qi's study (2024).

Figure 2

Kress and Van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar Framework (adopted from Qi, 2024, p. 250)



METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on interpreting the meanings that emerge from interactions between textual and visual elements rather than relying on numerical data to measure variables. The poster served as the sampling of the study, was thoroughly documented and analysed in its entirety to identify the semiotic resources used to shape its message. After pinpointing the poster's various elements, the study applied Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Framework to facilitate a detailed interpretation of its multimodal components. The analysis was systematically categorised and interpreted across three dimensions of meaning, which are representational, interactive, and compositional. Finally, a further analysis explored how these semiotic resources work together to deliver the underlying ideologies to the readers, revealing deeper insights into the poster's communicative strategies embedded within the poster.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer research question one, this section discusses how the "Devil True Heirs" digital poster employs multimodal features to construct meaning.

Figure 3

Full View of "Devil True Heirs" Digital Poster



Figure 4

Close-up of the Bottom Textual Features



Typography

First and foremost, in terms of textual features, the poster contains minimal text, yet it is heavily metaphoric. The most obvious one is the title, "Devil True Heirs". This phrase alone provides viewers with a gist of the poster's theme. For instance, the word 'devil' immediately conjures strong moral imagery, evoking ideas of sin, corruption, and malevolence. Meanwhile, the metaphor of 'heirs' adds another layer of meaning, implying continuity or inheritance. Putting these words together, it suggests that these figures are successors to a legacy of wrongdoing, inheriting the sins and moral corruption of their predecessors. It implies that the two figures are not merely flawed individuals but as inheritors of a lineage of wrongdoings, where the sins of the past are perpetuated through the present.

Another textual feature found in this poster is the caption at the bottom of the poster, as depicted in Figure 4, which provides additional context to the previous critique. It informs the viewers of the gruesome number of deaths of civilians in Gaza due to the massacre, referencing the 'massacre of 1000+ Palestinian civilians'. The use of the word 'massacre' is intentionally chosen not only to emphasise the severity of the event but to eliminate any ambiguity, stressing that Israel's violence is deliberate and sheer brutality. Besides that, the use of the adjective 'tragically' next to the verb 'killed' phrase 'tragically killed' emphasises the innocence and helplessness of the victims, painting a vivid picture of needless suffering. While reference to the 'American missile strike and Israeli execution' explicitly assigns who is responsible for this massacre, which is the two familiar political figures in the poster, namely President Joe Biden of the United States and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel. By employing accusatory language in this phrase, it leaves no room for neutral interpretations, clearly implying these leaders as key agents who are responsible for the 'massacre of 1000+ Palestinian civilians'. Furthermore, with the absence of qualifiers or modalities such as 'likely responsible' or 'may have contributed' in this bottom caption, it strongly suggests that the message delivered in the poster is not a mere speculation, but an indisputable fact. Hence, these word choices are intentional, with the purpose of pointing the blame towards the figures portrayed in the poster while framing the event as an undeniable atrocity.

Another notable textual feature from Figure 4 is the use of a bilingual caption that is presented in both English and Arabic. This could be intended to expand the poster's reach and ensure its message is comprehensible to a wider range of viewers. Besides, by incorporating English, which is the global language understood by many, it allows the opportunity to share awareness among international viewers who might not be fully informed about the ongoing human rights violations described. Meanwhile, the use of Arabic ensures that the message resonates with communities directly affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hence, the use of bilingual captions is not only used to ensure that the message is comprehensible and resonates with diverse viewers but also emphasizes the shared human responsibility in addressing such atrocities. This is because this issue is presented as a concern not just for Muslim communities, but for every human in general. It highlights that this is not solely a religious matter but a universal human rights issue, a call to everyone with a sense of justice and compassion to put an end to this atrocity.

Representational Meaning

This poster employs a narrative representation to convey its message. Rather than presenting a static, symbolic concept, as in conceptual representation, it depicts an ongoing process involving clear participants and actions. This analysis of representational meaning is discussed through the elements of participants, actions, and settings as follows.

Participants

As portrayed in Figure 3, the participants in the poster feature two well-known political figures who are Joe Biden, the President of America, and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel. Each leader stands as the human symbol of their respective countries. For instance, Joe Biden embodies the United States. He can be symbolically linked to the 'American missile strike' mentioned in the bottom caption, which positions him as a leader who enables violence through abundant military, financial, and political support for Israel. As can be seen in the poster, Biden's hands are mostly bloodied, while Netanyahu's hands show only faint traces of blood. This visual metaphor can be interpreted as the overarching role of the United States as a global superpower, enabling the act of 'Israeli execution'. Biden is depicted as the primary enabler, indirectly responsible for the violence. Meanwhile, Netanyahu embodies Israel. He can be symbolically linked to the 'Israeli execution' of over 1000 Palestinian civilians. If Biden is the enabler, Netanyahu acts as the executor, carrying out the actions and allowing the atrocities in Palestine to unfold with the support provided by the United States.

Inanimate things can also be considered as participants in the poster. One of the most striking inanimate elements is the blood pooling on the ground. The blood serves as a metaphor for the lives of Palestinians lost, referencing 'the massacre of 1000+ Palestinian civilians'. With the way the pool of blood flows from the hands of Biden and Netanyahu, it re-emphasizes their shared responsibility for the violence they are perpetuating. Another notable inanimate participant is the red lavish chair they are seated on. By matching the colour of the chair to the blood on the ground, it symbolically implies that their power is metaphorically 'built' on bloodshed, relying on violence to maintain authority and control.

Action

The action in the poster is equally powerful and closely aligns with several of Halliday's processes. Processes refer to actions that reflect human behaviour, which often involve expressions or reactions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In this poster, the behavioural process is shown through the leaders sitting side-by-side in a relaxed posture, smiling gleefully despite being surrounded by a sea of blood. The direction of their gazes and body posture acts as subtle vectors, reinforcing their calm and complacent behaviour within a violent context. This juxtaposition of calm demeanour and graphic violence creates a disturbing feeling for viewers. It reflects their moral detachment, portraying their indifference to the suffering of Palestinian civilians, a predicament they exploit to serve their presumable greed-driven political and economic agendas. Besides that, material processes are also present in the imagery of the sea of blood that surrounds the leaders, which serves as the most striking vector. It can be seen that the blood sourced from their hands as it flows to the ground, creating a sea of blood. This visually establishes a direct causal link between the participants and the consequences of their actions. Even though the leaders' violent actions are not directly depicted, this vector symbolises the material consequences of their policies, tying them to the imagery of 'missile attacks' and 'executions' that led to the deaths of Palestinian civilians.

Settings

Finally, the White House serves as both a participant and a setting. As a participant, it symbolises the immense power and influence of the U.S. government in supporting the 'Israeli execution' of Palestinian civilians. At the same time, it functions as the setting, placing the events within the broader context of international politics, highlighting that the U.S. political power is involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, making the message even more thought-provoking.

Interactive Meaning

Contact

The interactive meaning of the poster centres on its ability to engage the viewer emotionally. The poster engages the viewer using the "offer" approach rather than a "demand." This means that it does not establish direct interaction with the viewer through eye contact. As portrayed in Figure 3, there is a lack of engagement with the viewers and the depicted figures, Biden and Netanyahu, because, in the poster, their gaze is directed to the side rather than looking directly at the viewer's eyes. Their sideways gaze might suggest an attempt to evade direct confrontation with the viewer. By not meeting the viewer's eyes, they could be seen as avoiding accountability for their actions or the violence symbolised in the poster.

Social Distance

The poster uses a long shot to depict Biden and Netanyahu in full view. This framing gives the viewer a complete perspective of their posture and body language while also taking into account the surrounding elements, such as the blood pooling on the ground, the red lavish chair, and the White House in the

background. By capturing the entire scene, the long shot allows the viewer to connect the figures directly to the symbolic elements, evoking a sense of unsettling rather than intimacy, especially with how it complements with their comfortable posture and gleeful smile, it further amplifies the message of moral detachment.

Perspective (Angle)

Other than highlighting moral detachment, the poster also reinforces themes of power and control. As can be seen, the angle is shot at eye level. This angle should place the viewer on equal footing with Biden and Netanyahu, which should create a sense of equality, neither superior nor inferior. However, their disturbing expressions, characterised by their relaxed postures and unsettling smiles, set a sharp contrast with the horrifying graphic details surrounding them. This juxtaposition, as though they are proud or indifferent to the violence they inflicted on Palestinians, establishes a sense of psychological dominance. Their calm and almost celebratory demeanour amid such devastation leaves the viewer feeling powerless in the face of their actions.

Compositional Meaning

Information Value

The composition of the poster effectively employs the principle of information value to guide the viewer's attention. Following Qi's (2024) framework of Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar, the poster makes use of the centre–marginal layout. Firstly, the viewer is immediately drawn to the two figures of Joe Biden and Benjamin Netanyahu since their large visual and central positioning, which makes them the focal points of the design, capturing attention instantly. From there, the viewer's focus shifts upwards to the bold, fiery red title of "Devil True Heirs", which dominates the upper portion of the poster. The title not only establishes a sinister tone but also acts as a thematic anchor, linking to the surrounding imagery below to understand its hidden message. After taking in the figures and title, the viewer's attention disperses to the surrounding elements, such as the pooling blood, the lavish red chair, and the White House. These elements serve as visual hints, helping the viewers piece together the overall context of the poster's message while connecting with the title and the depicted figures. Finally, the viewer's attention is shifting downward to the small caption at the bottom. Its placement and small font size suggest it is meant to be read last. This design choice may be an intentional effort to make the caption as a concluding revelation rather than the starting point. The producer wants to compel the viewers by engaging them through visual storytelling first in order to build up intrigue and emotional impact before presenting the explicit message.

Salience

Salience is achieved through the dominant colour of red, which mostly covers the whole poster. Red is commonly associated with blood, violence, and danger (Chen & Zhang, 2021). This colour serves as an effective visual tool to evoke visceral emotional responses from the viewers, such as fear and unease, mirroring the anguish and horror experienced by the Palestinian martyrs. Besides that, it could also serve to provoke a sense of anger from the viewers, highlighting the collective outrage over the relentless killing of Palestinian civilians, including children, women, and the elderly, in the Gaza Hospital. Despite an agreement between Hamas and the IDF, the conflict would remain confined to combatants and take place strictly within designated combat zones, the IDF breached this agreement. They extended their operations beyond these zones, targeting areas such as the Palestinian refugee camp at the Gaza Hospital (McGreal, 2024). This violation intensifies the emotional impact of the poster, as it highlights the indiscriminate nature of the violence inflicted upon vulnerable populations, amplifying the viewer's sense of injustice and wrath.

Additionally, the poster is also shaded with the colour of black as the background. This colour commonly symbolises darkness, evil, mourning, and death (Torhovets, 2022). When paired with the bloody red, the black colour further intensifies the poster's sinister and ominous atmosphere, suggesting themes of moral decay, death, and destruction. This visual combination aligns with the producer's hidden message that the rising death toll of Palestinians is a consequence of an immoral and corrupt power structure. With the shadowy backdrop of the White House, combined with its foreboding tone, suggests that the thousand deaths of Palestinians are due to the immorality of power. Especially with how the dark colour also isolates Biden and Netanyahu to ensure the viewer's attention is focused on them. It further highlights the people responsible for the deaths of over 1000 Palestinian civilians. Thus, other than portraying the alliance between them, it also revealed their shared roles in contributing to the Palestinian massacre.

Framing

In regard to the framing, the producer perfectly composes elements that link the participants, their actions, and the resulting violence they exude. The focal figures, which are the two leaders, are tightly grouped as they are placed side by side, with the blood on their hands and pooling beneath them. This visual is highly connected to symbolise the direct consequences of their rulings and policies, thus reinforcing the idea that destruction and suffering are a direct result of their actions. Meanwhile, the White House sits in the background, almost hidden and shadowed at the back, creating a sense of detachment while still implying its enabling role and support in the violence. The consistent use of red throughout the poster ties the leaders to bloodshed to show their accountability. At the same time, the text "Devil True Heirs" stands out at the top, which frames the scene in a clear condemnation of the leaders' brutality. By unifying all these elements, the digital poster sheds light on the audience with criticism and shifts their perspectives on holding the leaders accountable for the killing in Gaza. Ultimately, this framing approach powerfully communicates its anti-Zionist and anti-Imperialist message while helping audiences to associate these systems with oppression and suffering.

Ideological Analysis

In response to research question two, the digital poster can be seen as projecting hidden ideological beliefs of anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism. Israel's establishment is deeply rooted in the Zionist movement since the late 19th century, with the goal of creating and maintaining a Jewish homeland (Britannica, 2026). However, the ingrained Zionist ideology has turned Israelis relentless in the settlement and occupation of the Palestinians' land. This expansionist agenda has led to Palestinians' resistance, who have fought to protect their homeland and assert their rights. However, the ensuing conflict has been profoundly unequal, with Israel benefiting from extensive military support and advanced weaponry provided by the US government, while Palestinians, often portrayed as the oppressors, are left to resist with minimal resources and weaponry (United Nations, 2024). This stark disparity in power has been a focal point of criticism, with many viewing it as an example of injustice and brutality. The digital poster seeks to highlight this cruelty and inhumanity, raising awareness while promoting an "Anti-Zionism" ideology to its audience. It uses visual and textual elements to provoke empathy for the Palestinian struggle and challenge the perceived oppression associated with the Zionist expansion.

The digital poster amplifies the hidden ideological beliefs of Anti-Zionism through the dehumanisation of Israeli and U.S. leadership. As seen from the image, the two leaders who are held responsible for Gaza's massacre are personified as *'devils'*. The dehumanisation is obvious as the producer associates the two leaders with devils. This is proven in the title of this digital poster, "Devil True Heirs", which portrays them as perpetrators of violence and the inflictors of harm that led to human suffering and death in Gaza. The ideology is further intensified through the pool of blood, posture, and expression that truly emulate devil characteristics. The producer chooses to illustrate the leaders' power by placing them on a sofa,

symbolising a throne that represents their dominance and comfort while ignoring the suffering of Gaza's people.

Besides, as we look closely, the blood is not just splattered on the floor, but it flows from the leaders' hands, which suggests direct involvement in deaths and the abuse of power. This is evident as Israel continues to attack civilians in Gaza with the weapons supplied by the US government, which has sacrificed more than 1000 people. Evidently, the blood imagery is a metaphor for violence that shows the Zionist policies are linked to destruction and death. The visual explicitly connects the leaders to the atrocities, presenting them as active participants rather than passive observers. For example, they are to be responsible for the expansion of illegal settlements in Palestine, the atrocious military siege and blockade of Gaza, and the vicious military force against civilians that increased the death toll. All of this implies that Zionist policies have led to widespread suffering and death, which stresses the ideology to oppose Zionism. As a result, the audience might feel disgusted and appalled by their violence and wholeheartedly oppose the Israeli and the USA government.

Moreover, the direct implication of their power leads to the critique of power and authority, extending the ideology of anti-imperialism. According to Britannica (2026), anti-imperialism is an ideology opposing the domination and expansionist ambitions of powerful states over others. It critiques economic, cultural, and military interventions used to exploit weaker nations and advocates for self-determination, sovereignty, and equality in global relations. Furthermore, it seeks to dismantle power imbalances and promote a fairer, more equitable world order. The digital poster critiques the exercise of power and the relationship between the USA and Israel through Anti-imperialism ideology. The textual evidence in the poster, such as the Noun Phrase "an American missile strike", links the USA directly to military aggression in Gaza, while the "Israeli execution" highlights the colonial power that oppresses the Palestinians. Meanwhile, the image of the white house and thrones can also be deduced as the source of imperialist power. The white house, for instance, symbolises American global dominance and their role in international interventions, while the throne evokes the imagery of imperial rulers that hold positions rooted in violence and exploitation. The violence is further proven by the terms 'massacre', 'execution', and 'missile strike', which amplify the producer's critique of the imperialist actions that constitute deliberate and large-scale atrocities. The terms also provide a sufficient reference for Gaza's suffering and appeal to anti-imperialism sentiment.

Another way to prove imperial ties is through the close proximity between the two leaders. The image shows the sense of camaraderie and strong relations between America and Israel. The poster manages to challenge these global hegemonic systems in their collaboration by critiquing the U.S.'s role as an enabler of Israeli policies and the source of military aid. They challenge this by appealing to the audience and to the Global South resistance movements that critique Western imperialism as exploitative and dehumanising. The use of social media and two languages, which are Arabic and English, indicates that the producer's strategies for reaching the audiences globally and enforcing the inclusion of the Arabs and Middle Eastern audiences, as they have experienced the effects of imperialism firsthand. This strategy is also called for solidarity with oppressed nations and an appeal for justice and resistance that positions the ideologies of Anti-Zionism and Anti-Imperialism further.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this digital poster elucidates the message of violence and oppression, accountability, and moral critique of Israel and the U.S. government that have caused massive destruction and death in Gaza. The use of a red and black colour scheme, which fills the poster, signifies death, embedding hidden ideologies of anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism. With the colour combination, metaphors, the language of destruction,

and illustration of the two mocking leaders, the poster criticises their lack of morals and humanity. The producer held the leaders for full accountability of the massacre that is happening in Gaza and appealed to the audience to resist the Zionist and Imperialist powers. As a result, the persuasive impact of this poster will influence audiences to associate these systems with widespread harm and moral corruption. The viewers are also compelled to sympathise with the oppressed Palestinians and perceive their humanity as a cause worth defending.

This multimodal discourse analysis is not made possible without the critical awareness of the context of the Israeli-Palestinian war and the Israel-America relationship through various multimodal modes in the digital poster, as previously analysed in the discussion section. Critical awareness is vital in understanding multimodal discourse, as it enables individuals to uncover the deeper layers of meaning behind the combination of text, visuals, and context (Norris, 2004). In the case of the current poster, this awareness helps viewers see how anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist ideologies are woven into the narrative through emotionally impactful language like 'massacre' and 'death', paired with striking visuals such as blood imagery and the carefree demeanour of the leaders depicted. These elements do not stand alone but work together to deliver a powerful critique of systemic violence and power imbalances. By recognising the socio-political context, such as the ongoing struggles in Gaza and the US's role in supporting Israeli actions, a critical viewer gains a more complete understanding of the message. Additionally, critical awareness encourages reflection on personal biases and emotional reactions, helping viewers to engage more thoughtfully with such content. Ultimately, this level of awareness allows individuals to not only interpret the explicit message but also grasp the subtle ideologies embedded in multimodal communication, deepening their understanding and fostering a more empathetic response.

In terms of contribution, this study provides a methodological contribution by demonstrating how Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Framework can be applied to a contemporary digital political poster to analyse how a political position is constructed within a digital visual artefact through the combination of representational, interactive, and compositional meanings. This approach is very relevant in analysing political posters, especially in social media spaces where the use of images, including memes, GIFs, clips, and stickers, alongside textual elements such as hashtags, emojis, emoticons, or captions, that often conveys complex political views. Empirically, this study also contributes to the growing body of multimodal research on digital political discourse by focusing on an Instagram poster related to the Israeli-conflict, therefore, extending the application of MDA to social-media-based political artefacts, and provides a focused example of how Visual Grammar can be used to decode ideological representation within this type of digital content.

Last but not least, the findings of this study also give implications for readers who engage with political content on social media. As digital platforms increasingly become spaces for political expression and the circulation of visual messages, readers need to develop critical awareness when interpreting such content. Understanding how different multimodal elements contribute to a particular ideological position can help readers recognise that digital posters can present a specific perspective rather than a completely neutral representation of an event. Therefore, this further fortifies the importance of multimodal and critical literacy in enabling readers to analyse political content more carefully, identify and understand the choices in using particular texts and visuals, and reflect on how such content may influence their understanding and emotional responses to political issues.

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