

The Communicative Functions of the Image Act in Advertisements

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Abstract

The unwritten interaction established when people look at one another, either directly or indirectly, in real-life situations is also present in the viewer/image relationship in visual communication. Interpersonal interaction in visual communication involves a represented participant (image or human) and an interactive participant (viewer). The interactions among people, places, and objects represented in images have been studied by many scholars from diverse perspectives, including semiotics, cognitive approaches, visual literacy, text-image relations, multimodal discourse analysis, art history, and aesthetic composition. However, little attention has been given to the concept of the “image act,” which refers to the interpersonal interaction that occurs when individuals engage visually with one another or with images in visual communication. This study adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework, *The Grammar of Visual Design*, which is grounded in Hallidayan metafunctions within Systemic Functional Linguistics, to examine the meanings that emerge from the viewer/image relationship in selected German magazine advertisements. The aim of the study is to uncover the types of meanings generated through viewer/image interpersonal interaction in specific social contexts and to identify the strategies advertisers in the selected German magazines employ in the placement of their advertisements. The findings reveal that visual contact with images establishes a form of interaction that influences the viewer. The study further demonstrates that images perform two communicative functions through gaze direction: ‘demand’ and ‘offer’. A direct gaze at the viewer constitutes a ‘demand’, while the absence of such gaze is categorized as an ‘offer’. Notably, the ‘offer’ function is more prevalent in the selected German magazine advertisements. The study concludes that exploring the image act fosters critical thinking and supports diverse meaning-making processes in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

Keywords: image, viewer, visual, gaze, interaction, multimodality, advertisement.

Abstrakt

Die ungeschriebene Interaktion, die entsteht, wenn Menschen sich im wirklichen Leben direkt oder indirekt ansehen, ist auch in der Betrachter-Bild-Beziehung in der visuellen Kommunikation erreichbar. Die interpersonelle Interaktion in der visuellen Kommunikation umfasst einen dargestellten Teilnehmer (Bild oder Mensch) und einen interaktiven Teilnehmer (Betrachter). Die Wechselwirkungen zwischen Menschen, Orten und Dingen, die in Bildern dargestellt werden, wurden von vielen Wissenschaftlern aus verschiedenen Perspektiven untersucht, nämlich (Semiotik und Kognition, visuelle Kompetenz, Text-Bild-Beziehungen, multimodale Diskursanalyse, Kunstgeschichte, ästhetische Komposition usw.). Dem 'Bildakt', d. h. der zwischenmenschlichen Interaktion, die stattfindet, wenn Menschen sich gegenseitig oder Bilder in der visuellen Kommunikation betrachten, wurde jedoch wenig Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt. Diese Studie verwendet das sozialsemiotische Rahmenwerk von Kress & Van Leeuwen, die Grammatik des visuellen Designs (2006), basierend auf hallidayanischen Metafunktionen in der systemischen funktionalen Linguistik, um die Bedeutungen zu untersuchen, die von der Betrachter-Bild-Beziehung in ausgewählten deutschen Zeitschriftenanzeigen ausgehen. Das Ziel dieser Studie ist es, die Art von Bedeutungen aufzudecken, die in der interpersonellen Interaktion zwischen Betrachter und Bild in einem gegebenen sozialen Kontext produziert werden. Und zeigen auch Strategien, die Werbetreibende in ausgewählten deutschen Zeitschriften bei der Platzierung ihrer Anzeigen anwenden. Die Studie zeigt, dass beim Betrachten von Bildern ein Kontakt hergestellt wird, der den Betrachter beeinflusst, sie zeigt auch, dass Bilder durch ihre Blickrichtung zwei Funktionen erfüllen können, nämlich: 'Nachfrage' und 'Angebot'. Ein direkter Blick auf den Betrachter (Nachfrage) oder nicht (Angebot). Das Angebot ist jedoch das am häufigsten verwendete Muster in den ausgewählten deutschen Zeitschriftenanzeigen. Die Studie kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Bildakt kritisches Denken anregt und unterschiedliche Sinnbildungsprozesse im Fremdsprachenunterricht und -lernen fördert.

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Schlüsselwörter: Bild, Betrachter, visuell, Blick, Interaktion,
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Introduction

Visual resources such as images, gestures, and written texts are considered from a functionalist perspective in visual communication, similar to any other semiotic resource, due to their ability to perform multiple metafunctions simultaneously in the process of meaning-making. Images are not merely tools for aesthetic or expressive purposes; they also embody structured social, political, and communicative dimensions. The growing body of evidence on the significance of visual communication, coupled with the problematic absence of adequate frameworks for discussing and conceptualizing what is actually communicated through images and visual design, has necessitated a more rigorous investigation of visual forms of communication alongside linguistic forms. This reflects a shift away from earlier misconceptions that meaning can only be constructed through linguistic means. This position aligns with Roland Barthes' discussion in his essay *Rhetoric of the Image* (1977: 32–51). Barthes (1967a) argues that the meaning of images, and other semiotic codes such as dress and food, is always related to, and in some sense dependent on, verbal texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 18). He further claims that images are inherently polysemous, open to multiple interpretations, and therefore require the anchoring function of language to achieve a fixed meaning. He describes visual meaning as a "floating chain of signifieds" that can only be stabilized through the linguistic message (ibid.). However, Barthes' proposition overlooks a crucial point: the visual component of a text constitutes an independently organized and structured message. While it may be connected to the verbal component, it is by no means dependent on it, and the same holds true in reverse (ibid.). Traditionally, linguistic grammar has been studied in isolation from meaning. However, Halliday (1985: 101) posits that grammar goes beyond formal rules of correctness; it is a means of representing patterns of experience. It enables individuals to construct a mental representation of reality and to make sense of their experiences both in the external world and within themselves. Grammatical structures thus serve as resources for encoding interpretations of experience and patterns of social interaction. The same principle applies to visual communication. Just as linguistic structures influence interpretation, visual structures also guide the viewer toward specific meanings and social relations. For instance, while language may convey distinctions through the choice of word classes and clause structures, visual communication may

express similar distinctions through the use of colour, framing, or compositional arrangements, all of which affect the meaning constructed by the viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 18). This study employs the Kress & Van Leeuwen *Grammar of Visual Design* (2006) to examine the viewer/image relation and the meanings that are established as a result of their interaction in a specific social context. Exploring meanings in images exposes foreign language learners to different ways of meaning-making other than linguistic means. It affords learners of foreign languages the opportunity of decoding meaning through multiple means. This enhances the cognitive ability of a learner. Hence, the cognitive ability is ignited through critical thinking. In line with this, this study will help in teaching and learning of German and other foreign languages.

Multimodality and Multimodal Texts

Multimodality is a concept that has been introduced and developed over the past two decades to account for the diverse resources employed in communication to convey meaning. The term serves both as a descriptor of a communicative phenomenon and as the designation for a diversified and expanding field of research. As a communicative phenomenon, multimodality refers to the integration of different semiotic resources, or modes, within texts and communicative events, including still and moving images, speech, writing, layout, gesture, and proxemics (Adami, 2016: 3). Historically, the dominant role assigned to verbal language, particularly written language, has overshadowed the multiplicity of semiotic resources that societies have socially developed for communication. This dominance not only reflects the advanced level of articulation achieved in speech and writing, but also underscores the disproportionate focus of research and education on describing, prescribing, and standardizing language use. Consequently, the study of other modes has largely remained confined to specialized disciplines such as musicology and the arts (Adami, 2016: 3).

However, in recent years, the social impact of digital technologies for text production, among other factors, has made more visible the fact that texts are multimodal and hence that language alone cannot be sufficient to explain meaning made through them. Digital technologies have reduced costs for the production of printed images and the use of colour. Their

‘(market-led) widespread use has made available to an unprecedented number of sign-makers forms of text production that afford modes other than speech and writing’ (4). Online environments have provided sign-makers with platforms and easy-to-use interfaces for publishing their multimodal texts and distributing them to diversified audiences, thus making the phenomenon of multimodality visible to an unprecedented extent. The digital texts we daily engage with make meaning through the combined use of colour, writing, sound, images, and layout, at least. It is not only the case of texts that we encounter on the web, but also of ‘texts’ that we interact with daily, to fulfil ordinary tasks in our offline environments, such as the ‘interfaces displayed on the screens of ATM machines or those for purchasing a train ticket, for instance’ (5). This holds also for the texts that we produce; everyday communication in digital environments confronts sign-makers with a wide range of modal options. The multimodal character of digital texts is also redefining the use of the resources of language (5); writing itself is changing its functions, as lexis integrated in visual ensembles/syntagms (6), or as something to be acted upon rather than read, as in the case of URLs used as hyperlinks (Adami, 2015); writing is also increasingly developing resources for meaning-making, like those of font (7), which are generally disregarded in linguistic studies.

Multimodality in Advertising Discourse

Advertising is a communicative act aimed at capturing the audience’s attention, whether towards a product, idea, or service. To achieve this, advertisers and marketers employ various tools to enhance persuasive appeal and sustain the audience’s engagement. Print advertising, in particular, exemplifies the diverse roles that discourse can play in society. It demonstrates how people communicate and interact within the various spheres of their daily lives (Simoes & Freitas, 2012: 427). While advertising has existed since the nineteenth century, its advancement has paralleled broader social and technological developments. Contemporary advertising now employs multiple modes that go beyond language, incorporating visual elements such as photographs, graphics, cartoons, and other imagery.

The emergence of a trend toward visual representation of information, previously conveyed primarily through language, and the increased accessibility of technologies enabling new methodological approaches to multimodal communication have facilitated the growing use of multimodal strategies in advertising discourse (O'Halloran, 2011: 122). Multimodality refers to the various ways distinct semiotic modes, such as language, image, music, sound, and animation, are deployed together and contextually integrated within a communicative event to produce meaning. Advertising discourse represents a significant domain for the application of multimodal discourse, as it is fundamentally geared towards human interaction. The rise of new discourse forms and the increasingly multimodal nature of contemporary communication have enabled the integration of textual and visual elements within structured layouts. A mode is defined as "a socially shaped and culturally given resource for making meaning" (Kress, 2009: 54). The combination of multiple modes, such as language, image, music, and video, in a single communicative act is referred to as multimodal communication. This relationship concerns "all modes used in communication and the way they are represented" (El-Sayid, 2018: 544). In advertising discourse, multimodality refers to how advertisers employ various communicative modes to convey messages and persuade consumers. The meaning-making potential and affordances of different modes necessitate their integration to enhance communicative effectiveness.

Literature Review (Conceptual Review)

Visual communication conveys information and ideas visually by visual means. Along with its various types, it has been studied from various perspectives, such as: visual literacy (Felten 2008); social semiotics dimensions (Stoian, 2015, Jewitt & Oyama, 2001); semiotics and cognitive perspective (Wong 2018); visual as a thinking tool (Lazo 2012). Stoian (2015) explores the theories and models of visual social semiotics from Kress & van Leeuwen's *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996, 2006). He notes that Halliday's metafunctions of language have been extended to visual communication and are categorized as representational, interactive and compositional. Stoian (2005:29) highlights some domains where visual analysis can be applied such as 'promotion,

websites, teaching material, printings, fairy tales etc'. Wong (2018) examines visual image analysis from semiotics and cognitive perspectives which he considers as new ways of analyzing and interpreting images. The study notes that 'visual-analytic tools suggested by the social semiotic approach perfectly complements the inward cognition of an image-viewer, a synergy which has rarely been envisaged by scholars from both disciplines' (39). In other words, visual analysis is seen as both semiotically and cognitively relevant. He suggests that knowing the cognitive processes required to fully comprehend visual structures is necessary in visual communication. The social semiotic perspective of visual communication involves 'the description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted' (Jewitt & Oyama 2001: 134). Visual resources are, thus, considered from a functionalist approach; like any semiotic resource, they perform several metafunctions simultaneously in order to convey meaning. Felten (2008) states in his work titled 'Visual Literacy' that the new 'pictorial turn' means that images no longer exist primarily to entertain and illustrate (1). Rather they are becoming central to communication and meaning-making. In other words, visual literacy involves the ability to understand, produce, and use culturally significant images, objects, and visible actions. This ends the centuries-long domination of texts and words in culture observations, because they always portray meaning (Leavy, 2009; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009 in Lazo 2012:8). The importance of images 'lies in their influencing power and their high resonance on audience's emotions, which enables their potential to generate an extraordinary impact on population' (Lazo, 2012:7). The way an image is interpreted is never fixed. If the creator does not take into account the reference frame of the spectator it is very possible that communication will not occur. The designer makes the image with a special intention. If the spectator makes the right interpretation that depends on the correct use of visual elements. Leavy (2009 cf Lazo, 2012:8) explains that the persuasive power of images, via art works, advertisements, photographs, and digital manipulations, relies on their descriptive and evocative power which has been used to promote beliefs. This author argues that the evocative power of images lies in the fact that they are profoundly rooted in an individual's memory; that images can remain and recall emotions, thus are used as vehicles to influence.

El- Sayed (2018) investigates Text-Image Relations in Print Advertisement within the framework of Kress and Van Leeuwen's multimodal discourse analysis, drawing upon Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly Martinec & Salway's system, two analytical approaches were applied to the study, namely, Martinec & Salway's system of text-image relations and Cheong's Generic Structure Potential (GSP). It focuses on the semantic relations that hold between the text and image in advertisement. The study examined the integration of the textual and visual modes and the ways they contribute to the meaning-making process in the genre. It was demonstrated that imagery and text are integrated and interrelated and both serve the advertisers' overall intended meaning. Likewise, both facilitate orientation and processing of the advertisement. It concludes that the visual and linguistic elements of the advertisements support and complement each other to get across the intended idea to the viewer.

Hai Ly & Kwan Jung (2015) carried out a Multimodal Discourse analysis of the Visual Design of Two Advertising Images within Kress & Van Leeuwen (2006) social semiotic principles. The Grammar of Visual design of two digital images were examined focusing on their representational and interactive dimensions in relation to the magazine advertisement genre, with the aim of revealing the meaning making potentials embedded in the images. The results show that the framework identified narrative and conceptual processes, relations between participants and viewers, and symbolic attributes of the images, which all contribute to the sociological interpretations of the images. The identities and relationships between viewers and participants suggested in the images signify desirable qualities that may be associated to the product of the advertiser. The study highlighted the potential of images to convey multi-layered meanings. This paper argues that like language, images are rich in meaning potential and are governed by visual grammar structures which can be utilized to decode the meanings of images. It concludes that further development in visual semiotic theory, images, as a semiotic resource, may have the potential to take a more prominent role in communication.

The Interactions in Visual Communication

The visual communication on its own has resources that enhance interaction between the image-producer and the viewer. The visual

communication involves two participants which Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:114) termed ‘the represented and the interactive participants’. The represented participants constitute ‘the people, the places and the things depicted in images and the interactive participants are the people who communicate with each other through images, the producers and viewers of images. Kress and Van Leeuwen note that three kinds of relations exist between these two participants (the represented and interactive). The first relation exists between the ‘represented participants’. The second relation exists between the ‘interactive and represented participants’. This expresses the attitude of the interactive participants towards the represented participants. The third relation is between the ‘interactive participants’, this expresses ‘the things the interactive participants do to or for each other through images’ (114). The interactive participants are the actual people who ‘produce and make sense of images in the context of social institutions which, to different degrees and in different ways regulate what may be ‘said’ with images, how it should be said, and how it should be interpreted’ (114). Most times, the interaction is often ‘direct and immediate; producer and viewer know each other and are involved in face-to-face interaction’ (ibid). This face-to-face interaction could be seen in the processes of taking photograph of each other, drawing maps to give directions and engaging in explaining ideas through diagrams.

However, indirect interaction also occurs where there is no immediate engagement of the producer and the viewer. For instance, the photographs that often appear on the pages of magazines, newspapers, books etc. The only thing we see is the photographs and not all the people that are involved in the production like the producers, the photographers that took the shot, the assistant who processed and printed them, the agency that selected and distributed them, the picture editor who chooses it, the layout artist who cropped it and determine its size and position on the page. The way most viewers will not meet the people that contributed in the production process but may have a limited idea of the production process of the image. The same manner the producers can never actually know their audiences, rather they create a mental image of ‘the viewers’ and ‘the way’ viewers make sense of their pictures (114).

The interactive participants and represented participants are always recognizable in every direct communication since there is always a

producer and a viewer. But when there is a disconnection between the context of production and the context of reception, when the producer is not physically present and the viewer is alone with the image. This could be seen in writing. 'Writers too are not usually physically present when their words are read and must address their readers in the guise of represented participants. Readers too are alone with the written word, and cannot usually become writers in turn' (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006:114-115). In other words, despite the disconnection between the context of production and the context of reception, there still exist common features between the two, which are the 'image itself, and knowledge of the communicative resources' (115) which enhances its expression and clarity; and the manner social interactions and relations can be represented in images. It is a known fact that the producer and the viewer possess different forms of knowledge. The producer is considered to be more active by engaging in the 'sending' as well as the 'receiving' of 'messages' (115). That is, the producers are able to 'write' as the viewers are able only to 'read' (115).

However, Kress and Van Leeuwen insist that attempts to make the knowledge explicit will show that the interactive meanings are visually encoded in ways that rest on competencies shared by producers and viewers (2006:114). This stresses the fact that understanding and decoding of meanings that are embedded in visual resources (e.g. Images) rest greatly on the acquisition and exhibition of knowledge of the ways and manners social interactions and relations are encoded in any given visual resources' (114). Hence, our ability to explain and understand the embedded meanings in images is enhanced by our knowledge of the way social interactions and relations are represented through images.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Halliday's theory of metafunctions (1994; 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), which postulates that language fulfils three metafunctions simultaneously, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions have been extended to visual communication by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) grammar of visual design which presents the theory and vocabulary needed to talk about and read images. They assert that 'the visual, like all semiotic modes, has to serve several communicational (and

representational) requirements, in order to function as a full system of communication' (2006: 41). The metafunctions are renamed (i) representational which has to do with the patterns of representation, in other words, the way experience is encoded visually. (ii) interactive is represented by the patterns of interactions between participants. Several types of participants are involved in visual communication, namely represented (depicted) and interactive (real). They can lead to various relations within the same types and between the different types (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 114). And (iii) compositional functions being related to 'the way in which representations and communicative acts cohere into the kind of meaningful whole we call 'text' (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996: 181). Meaning is built by three interrelated systems: information value, salience and framing. In addition, these systems are not restricted to single pictures, but they apply also to composite visuals, i.e. visuals, which combine text, image and/or other graphic elements, and their layouts. The reality of the metafunctions is embedded visually in images as 'types of structure, process, participant and circumstance; the types of image act, social distance, perspective, point of view, modality; and the types of information value, salience and framing' (29). The interaction and relation established between participants; and the meaning composed are decoded visually. These meaning-making metafunctions and visual resources cannot only be described and observed, but also interpreted. The complexity created by the description and interpretation of images and/or any other type of visuals raises interest in various fields where visual communication is thoroughly used. This model proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen is applicable to domains, such as 'promotion, websites, teaching material, paintings, fairy tales, spatial arrangements of buildings, tourism and/or cultural aspects of non-verbal communication' (Stoian, 2015:29).

The Interpersonal Metafunction (Interactive Metafunction)

Base on Halliday's interpersonal Metafunction, the study examines image/viewer interaction towards communicative acts in a multimodal text. In verbal communication interpersonal Metafunction manifests when a speaker in the act of speaking adopts for himself a particular speech role, and in so doing assigns to the listener a complementary role which he wishes him to adopt in his turn. For example, in asking a question, a speaker is taking on the role of seeking information and requiring the

listener to take on the role of supplying the information demanded. The interpersonal meaning in language is extended to interactive meaning in image which establishes a kind of (imaginary) relationship between the producer, image and the viewer of the image. The interactive metafunctions is represented by the patterns of interactions between participants. Several types of participants are involved in visual communication, namely represented (depicted) and interactive (real). They can lead to various relations within the same types and between the different types (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 114).

The interactive meaning of images has three dimensions: image act, social distance and point of view. The *image act* is related to the gaze direction of the represented participants, which can be directed at the viewer (demand) or not (offer). Demands are considered to establish an imaginary relation with the viewer since they address him/her directly. The act can also be emphasized by facial expressions and gestures (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 116-118). It could also be a smile on the face of the participant or a kind of dressing or position of part of the body (Olateju et.al (2014:56). Machin (2007 in Olateju et.al. 2014) notes that ‘this is imaginary relationship that communicates something. Unlike real life where there will be immediate consequences, there will not be any immediate consequences if we do not react or respond to an image act’ (56). In a situation where a viewer wants to practically respond to the demand, if it is an advertisement the viewer goes for the product being advertised. In images where represented participants do not look directly at the viewer, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:119) call them ‘offer’ images because they offer ‘the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case’. Based on investigation of interpersonal meaning by Halliday (1994), Kress and Van Leeuwen (1997) go into more and more detail to exploit interpersonal meaning from a multimodal perspective ranging from image, movement/action to sound, music and speech and the like (Baldry and P. Thibault, 2006, Van Leeuwen, 1999). A specific aspect of the interpersonal meaning in advertising discourse is represented and conveyed through gaze. This study adopts the interactive metafunctions of images as proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) to examine the interaction between the represented participants and the interactive participants in adverts from

selected German magazine adverts., in view of revealing the imaginary relationship that exists between the participants.

Table 1: Types of Demand Relations

Facial Expression/Gestures	Relationship between Represented Participant and Viewer
Smile	Asks viewers to enter relation of social affinity
Cold Stare	Asks viewer to relate to participant as an inferior
Seductive Pout	Asks viewer to desire the participant
Looking up leading	Asks viewer for pity
Finger pointed at viewer	Grabs viewer's attention, invite viewer to come closer
Defensive gesture	Asks viewer to stay away

The Concept of ‘Image Act’/Gaze: ‘Demand’ and ‘Offer’ in Relation to the Concept of ‘Speech Act’

It is possible for represented participants to involve the viewer in a certain (imaginary) *action*: This is called an ‘image act’ (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:117). An Image act can be realised by a certain action, with which a presented participant is depicted. For example, an image of a woman who is holding a glass of wine towards the viewer, smiling, can be said to engage in an image act, in that she is represented to be inviting the viewer to take part in the action: accepting the glass of wine. As one of the formal categories which provides the medium through which represented participants can interact with the viewer, there is eye contact between the two parties. This is *Contact* and it has two kinds of realisations: *Demand* and *Offer*. The former interactive meaning is realised when a represented participant has eye contact with the viewer; such as a represented participant looking at or smiling at the viewer. In line with Halliday (1985), the participant’s gaze (and the gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enters into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her. They may smile showing demand for a social affinity relationship with a viewer. Also, a stare at the viewer with cold disdain indicating demand perhaps as an inferior relates to a superior. They may seductively look at the viewer in which case the viewer is asked to desire them (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006:118). The later type of interaction is realised when a represented participant has no direct eye contact with the viewer and the represented participant presents him/her/itself to be ‘looked at’ by the viewer, that is, ‘it offers the represented participants to the viewer as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case’ (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006:119).

The ‘demand’ and ‘offer’ concepts can be related to another concept in linguistics, that is the ‘speech act’. This Halliday terms ‘speech functions’ in his introduction to Grammar, (1985). According to Halliday (1985) each of these speech acts is part of an interactional dyad, and has its ‘expected’ and its ‘discretionary’ (alternative) social response (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006:122). Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996:122) believe that images can equally perform some ‘image acts’. In image act ‘a demand’

can be expressed through a smile on the face of the participant, open hands for embrace, a serious unsmiling outlook, a pointed finger, a kind of dressing, body position that could express a visual confidence, alertness or security consciousness etc. In other words, the 'image acts' and the 'speech acts' do not work in the same way, even though they express some similarities. The 'speech act' concept is of immediate effect and mostly applicable in face-to-face communication. It is of immediate enactment and response, while the 'image act' concept does not work in the same manner. For instance, in image act, when images express 'offer' they only offer information (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006:123). In relation to advertisement Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:123) explicate:

In advertising, image may show someone offering something to the viewer and this offer may in fact be a real offer, which can be obtained by writing to an address specified in the advertisement. But if there is such an 'offer' of goods and services in images, it must take the form of an 'offer of information'. It must be represented. It cannot be enacted directly'

The 'speech act' concept is carried out directly while the 'image act' must be a representation and with no direct response.

Methodology

The data base of this study consists of one hundred and sixty-five advert posters of visual images and their linguistic captions purposively selected from four different German magazines in relation to the objectives and focus of the study. These numbers were selected for a wider range capture of adverts, which will enhance a dynamic application of the approach upon which the analysis will be based. The data for the study covered a period of twelve months (1st January, 2017 to 31st December, 2017). The magazines considered were: *Der Stern*, *Der Spiegel*, *Die Bunte* and *Bild der Frau*. They were selected based on their on-line rating. The data were grouped into two major categories which are human image and non-human image represented participants. The human image represented participant is of two categories (a) Renowned Personality Image Representation (RPIR) and Non-Renowned Personality Image Representation (NRPIR) while the non-human represented participant is made up of (a) Animal Image Representation (AIR), (b) Hybrid Image Representation (HIR), (c) Abstract

Image Representation (ABIR), and (d) Inanimate Image Representation (INIR).

The study adopts a descriptive-qualitative analysis method to explore the communicative functions of the image act in multimodal text. The general principle of the study is drawn from researches on visual communication, multimodal discourse analysis, interactive Metafunction especially on image/viewer interpersonal relation in social contexts. The aim is to reveal the kind of interpersonal meanings that could be achieved in image/viewer interaction in multimodal text. It identifies the represented (image, human) and interactive (viewer) participants in the selected texts and the kinds of relationship that are suggested to exist between the viewer and represented participants? The interpersonal meanings that are realised from their interaction in relation to the purposes of the magazine advertisement genre? These are based on Halliday's interpersonal metafunction, paying attention to the contribution of the interpersonal Metafunction to the communicative effect and purpose of the image/viewer interaction in a given social context. Kress & Van Leeuwen's *Grammar of Visual Design* (2006) was adopted to investigate the viewer/image interaction in selected German magazine adverts.

Discussion and Result

This qualitative analysis examines the interpersonal functions in visual communication using Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic framework, which is grounded in the interpersonal metafunction of Systemic Functional Linguistics as developed by Halliday. The interaction between the image producer and the viewer, referred to as interactive participants, constitutes the second dimension of analysis proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), based on Halliday's (1978) interpersonal function. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, producers visually encode social meanings into images through elements such as the gaze of the represented participant, the perceived distance between the participant and the viewer, and the angle from which the participant is presented. In this study, the selected advertising images will be analysed specifically from the perspective of the represented participant's gaze.

The Image Act (Demand)

Just as the speech act emphasises the use of language to carry out one function or the other, the 'image act' focuses on the use of image in performing one act or the other. In visual communication, messages are transmitted through images, therefore the manner they are positioned (standing, seated, side by side, face to face) with each other also passes one message or the other to the viewer. These messages are expected to be decoded by the viewer, in order to assign meaning to a particular image that is presented.

A direct look by a represented participant at the viewer creates a visual form of direct address, which Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:118) in line with Halliday (1985) term 'demand'. The participant's gaze (and gesture, if present) demands something from the viewer, demands that the viewer enters into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her. It may be a 'cold disdain' stare which may express demand for a relation as 'an inferior relates to superior' (118). The same applies to gestures, a hand can point at the viewer, in a visual 'Hey, you there, I mean you' or invite the viewer to come closer, or hold the viewer at bay with a defensive gesture, as if to say, 'stay away from me'. In each case the image expects something from the viewers or wants them to do something either to come closer, to stay at distance, or form a 'pseudo-social' bond of a particular kind with the represented participant. And in doing this, images reveal to a certain degree the identity of a particular viewer (e.g. male, inferior to the represented participant, etc.), and in this way exclude other viewers (118). Kress and Van Leeuwen further point out that: 'represented participants who look at the viewer are usually human (or animal), but not always. The headlights of a car can be drawn as eyes looking at the viewer' (118). For instance, a company or an organization may use an image of a creature whose head and body has the shape of the product being advertised. This image may be presented smiling, waving or doing any other thing to attract customers' attention, thus 'demanding' a friendly recognition with the intended customers. Kress and Van Leeuwen (118) explain 'whether they are human or not, by being represented as looking at the viewer, they are represented as human, anthropomorphized to some degree'

In other words, whatever is being represented be it human or not, as long as it gazes at the viewer, it serves as a human representation. The identity of the viewer could be revealed through the use of imperative, which

expresses command. For instance, an image with a bold 'X' sign on a cigarette addresses smokers. Again, images of males and females on certain kind of attire or some attire marked with a bold 'X' address viewers that are indecent in their dressing. This indicates that any form of indecent dressing is not allowed in that place. Hence, the unconcerned viewers are exempted.



NRPIR23

The portrait displayed above shows the picture of a man, a woman, a boy and a girl. The man is of blond hair and is putting on a white long-sleeved shirt. The woman has a long blond hair, and she is wearing a sky-blue long-sleeved shirt. The boy is of blond long hair and a blue shirt. The girl also has a long blond hair and a brown dress. The background of the displayed image is white and grey in colour. They are all smiling and looking directly at the viewer's angle. Judging from their appearance and position, one tends to suspect that they are a family. They appear joyful, relaxed and fulfilled; this could be seen in their outlook

The kind of relation the represented participants in the picture presented above demand is determined by their facial expression. They look directly at the viewer, creating, thus, a visual form of direct address, thereby, establishing an imaginary relation with the viewer using a demand act. Their gaze and smile indicate that they seek recognition and demand the viewer to enter into a relation of social affinity and identification with them.

Image Act (Offer)

An indirect address by images, that is when pictures address us indirectly depicting the viewer as the subject of the look while the represented participant is indicated as the object of the viewer. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006:119) note that 'the viewer's role is that of an invisible onlooker'. They categorize all images which do not contain human or quasi-human participants looking directly at the viewer into this group. These kinds of images they call an 'offer' according to Halliday (1985). 'It 'offers' the represented participants to the viewers as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimen in a display case' (119). That is when there is no eye line contact between the represented participants and the interactive participants. Diagrams, maps and charts are most often found in the 'offer' context as a result of a kind of knowledge they offer, which are 'objective, dispassionate, ostensibly free of emotive involvement and subjectivity that are highly valued' (118). Those kinds of images serve as something to be studied, a sort of case study. Serving as 'items of information' entails that they have facts embedded in them which the viewers are expected to decode in order to fulfil a given communicative goal. One of the aims of 'offer' image is allowing the viewer to engage in critical thinking, extensive and intensive examination of the represented participant to deduce the facts and ideology behind such images. However, in the process of decoding the message embedded in a given represented participant, the producer's ideology and the viewer's ideology may not go in the same direction, because the viewer is guided by his own cultural perspective which may differ from the producer's cultural and ideological background and influence. Hence, the critical thinking could be in line with the viewer's perspective. The choice between 'offer' and 'demand' differs and each is suitable and appropriate to a specific context.

In some contexts, like television, news reading and the posed magazine photograph, the 'demand' picture is preferred. Because these contexts require a sense of connection between the viewers and the authority figures, celebrities and role models they depict. In other context like film and television drama and scientific illustration the 'offer' is preferred as a result of a real or imaginary barrier that is erected between the represented participants and the viewers. A sense of disengagement, in which the

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viewer must have the illusion that the represented participants do not know they are being looked at and in which the represented participants must pretend that they are not being watched (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006:120).

In any case, in the context of 'demand' there is the need for connection between the viewer and what the represented participant depicts while in the context of 'offer' the reverse is the case. This means that what is acceptable in one context may not be acceptable in the other context.



WhatsApp Hass Ärger

NEU IN DIGITAL

NEUES SPITZENMODELL
Erstes Foto aufgetaucht: So
Samsung Galaxy S9 aus
Von Malte Mansholt

WANN

Hass auf Whatsapp: Warum ich immer noch telefoniere

Ihr Menschen führen ihre Smartphone-Gespräche nur noch im Messenger, statt ieren. Das führt in eine schreckliche Whatsapp-Kultur, findet *Malte Mansholt*. Ein für das Telefonat.

sholt

The represented participant in the displayed picture has a white phone on his hands and smokes are seen coming out from both ears. He has all his attention focused on the phone. Beside the human represented participant are two phones placed on a white background with the linguistic captions *NEU IN DIGITAL* placed above and *NEUES SPITZENMODELL* below the two phones. Relating the linguistic caption *Mein Hass auf Whatsapp: Warum Ich immer noch lieber telefoniere* with image of the represented participant. One guesses that the represented participant is facing some

challenges with the *Whatsapp*. As a result of this he prefers communicating through phone call than chatting on whatsapp. This is evident in his statement *Warum Ich immer noch lieber telefoniere*. However, the above statement and the linguistic captions on the displayed phones contradict each other because the actual problem is not expressed. In other words, one does not know if the problem has to do with the phone or the WhatsApp application the represented participant is using.

The eyes of the represented participant in Fig. 2 are directed not at the viewer but at the phone. The represented participant becomes the object of what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006:116) call ‘the viewer’s dispassionate scrutiny’ and the viewer becomes an ‘invisible onlooker’ (116). As a result, Fig. 1 can be categorized as an ‘offer’ image where the represented participant offers himself to the viewer as an object for contemplation. Without eye contact, the viewer may see the participant in an impersonal and detached way, perhaps as someone who is preoccupied in his own world, which the viewer is excluded from.

The summary and individual distributions are presented in the tables below:

Table 2 The Summary Distribution of Image Act

Image Act	Number	Percentage
Demand (Gaze)	38	23
Offer	71	43
Misc	54	34
Total	165	100

The above table of distribution for image act shows that the *demand (Gaze)* could be seen in 38 adverts which amounts to twenty-three percent (23%) of the data, while *offer* could be found in 71 adverts resulting to forty-three percent (43%). Then those adverts that are neither gaze nor offer are categorized under miscellaneous and they are 54 which comprise of thirty four percent (34%) of the whole data. It could be observed that the offer is the most applied pattern followed by the miscellaneous, then the gaze pattern.

Conclusion

This study examines how interpersonal meaning is represented and communicated through the image act by exploring the types of meaning realised in image/viewer interactions in advertising. According to Hai Ly and Kwan Jung (2015:55), the primary function of advertising is to introduce a wide range of consumer goods and services to the public. In many cases, advertisers utilise social images and constructs to promote specific products. Therefore, it can be inferred that one of the core functions of advertisements is to establish social relationships between the represented participants and the viewer. The development of advertising has progressed alongside social and technological evolution, resulting in high-quality layout designs and the deployment of multiple modes, including language and visual elements such as images, graphics, and other visual resources for meaning-making. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996; 2006) have developed a grammar of visual design, providing the theoretical framework and vocabulary necessary for interpreting and discussing images. They extend Halliday's metafunctions to visual communication and classify them as representational, interactive, and compositional. The current era of digital literacy presents multiple opportunities that enhance the teaching and learning of foreign languages, as it facilitates engagement through various modes of communication and promotes the development of diverse skills. The integration of multimodal resources and activities into the learning process fosters cognitive development and critical thinking. It encourages learners to engage with classroom activities through transitions between visual and verbal modes, thereby increasing motivation, improving comprehension, and supporting the interpretation of complex concepts. Consequently, it exposes learners to, and familiarises them with, diverse approaches to learning.

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