Exploring Visual Resources in Covid-19 Cautionary Posters: A Semiotic Study

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Abstract
The outbreak of Covid-19 compelled health-care authorities to make the public aware of the possible avoidance of the disease. Cautionary posters are used to reduce the risk of Covid-19 and stop the spread of the pandemic, making the public aware of the life-threatening disease. Covid-19 has impacted the lives of people from all walks of life. This study analyses semiotic resources used in five Pakistani and five WHO designed posters, distributing cautionary messages about Covid-19 pandemic. This is qualitative research, and the semiotic resources used in the ten cautionary posters have been analyzed using Kress and Leeuwen's semiotic model. After analyzing the posters, it is found that various semiotic resources such as gaze, long and medium shots, colour, human and quasi-human images, foregrounding and backgrounding are used in designing these posters. These resources are used to make the public aware of this deadly disease, enabling them to adopt precautionary measures against the pandemic. The findings also reveal that local Pakistani posters are relatively simple and have limited semiotic resources as compared to the posters designed by the World Health Organization.
Keywords: semiotic analysis, cautionary posters, Covid-19 pandemic.
Keywords: Visual Resources, Covid-19, Cautionary Posters, Semiotic Study.

Introduction
Covid-19 has adverse effects on the daily life of people worldwide and it has affected businesses badly around the globe. The pandemic has ended the lives of thousands of people, and the health department has reiterated the implementation of significant precautionary measures to curb it. Moreover, the health department officials emphasized wearing masks, using sanitizer, washing hands frequently and social distancing. However, the study of Haleem, Javaid and Vaishya (2020) reveals that the repercussions of the pandemic are adverse and grave on social, economic and healthcare aspects of human life. Besides, it has put an enormous burden on the existing medical system, and people suffering from chronic disease are ignored in the hospitals due to the extra load of the pandemic. Along with this, Rupani et al. (2020) reported that the pandemic obstructed human mobility and transportation across the world.

The upswing in technological advancement made people more dependent on using semiotic resources to produce and convey messages with a clear meaning. With this upgradation, multimodal discourse became a prominent field of study. In addition, the semiotic resources include highlighted text, visual images, font size of the images and text, the gaze of the

represented participants and the colour of the visuals. All of these semiotic resources potently affect the meaning of a message being conveyed. Similarly, during the outbreak of Covid-19, much information has been extensively distributed to inform the public about the pandemic through cautionary posters that comprise text and visuals.

Meaning-making with several signs in the visuals is not a new field, and its scope has been enhanced over time. According to Jewitt (2008), using different signs such as gaze, gestures, and language in normal conversation is a part of people's daily lives. Besides this, the signs make the meaning of the text clear to the targeted receivers; therefore, its role is remarkable in generating meaning. Additionally, the contribution of visuals in meaning-making is as essential as language, and it plays an essential function in the teaching-learning environment while making, distributing and receiving the message with more clarity.

The meaning of the messages relies on the flashes of the viewers, and opting text, colours, pictures, framing of monogram and photos concerning the text, caption and title are considered in visual rhetoric (Ullah, 2013). Furthermore, the role of these signs is undeniable in meaning-making as a picture demonstrates meaning. Over and above that, Curtin (2009) discussed that semiotics is mainly about the meaning produced with the help of various semiotic resources such as objects, colours, images and language. Besides, the field of semiotics is overarching than the study of symbols because semiotic resources aid in the explication and discernment of meaning. For Saussure, semiotics is the field of study that talks about signs concerning society (Araki, 2016). However, the cultural background and context associate different meanings with a sign. The model of Saussure declared that the signified (a concept) and the signifier (a sound image) are linked with the use of a word, and the relationship is influenced by the culture and context of the language speakers. Transformation of historical times needs alteration in strategies, and social semiotics deals with how meaning is created, interpreted and distributed and how a shift in the existing conditions shapes it. The Covid-19 demanded that healthcare authorities think of a strategy to make people aware of the disease. Therefore, the World Health Organization and Pakistani health departments spread cautionary information through many semiotic resources. The whole world has utilized the message spread by the cautionary posters including educated and uneducated individuals. Several semiotic resources, including font, colour, foregrounding and images are used to deliver meaning. However, the general public was unaware of the role of these semiotic resources in the production of meaning and the use of various semiotic resources. Therefore, the study analyses the posters carrying precautionary information about the Covid-19, exploring the visual resources used.

The significance of the present study is that it will enable the receivers of the message to use a critical perspective and question the design of the posters used to spread information. It will help the readers of the study to know about the decoding of the meaning and its comprehension disseminated through such posters. The research will help the posters designers make their messages more influential with the help of various semiotic resources.

Research Question

The research question of this study is:

What semiotic resources are used in the posters distributing cautionary messages about Covid-19?

Literature Review

The centre of attention of social semiotics is the contribution of sign makers and the context of the conversation in generating meaning. Semiotic resources are the connection between the user and the representational resources and play a key role in the composition of multimodal texts. Further, they are tools for conversing with people, whether established through gestures,

facial expressions, or vocal apparatus. A potential meaning and affordance are carried by semiotic resources influenced by the social and cultural context and preceding use (Bezemer & Jewitt, 2009). The material around the major part of the text that surrounds the primary text, such as framing the title, subtitles, preface, and illustration, is known as paratextuality (Genette, 1997). In addition, the external condition significantly influences these elements of paratextuality, which cannot be overlooked.

While looking from the cultural and social perspectives, Barthes indicated that signs and significations are ever-changing elements (Aiello, 2019). The focus of Barthes was mainly on the text of visuals such as images, music, signs and icons and his purpose was to reveal the connection of non-linguistic resources (signs) with meaning across different historical, cultural and social contexts. Further, it was declared that the meanings produced by the visuals could be taken as connotative (symbolic meaning influenced by the cultural norms) and denotative (literal meaning) and the text combined with the visuals make the message clear. The place of language remains dominant in most communication systems; sometimes, other modes of communication take its place (Taylor, 2014). Alongside, children's communication comprises diverse semiotic resources, for instance, gestures, gaze, posture to make sense, facial expressions and language, and all of them perform function mutually.

Moreover, the writings are made multimodal with emojis in the digital world, and their use is enhanced by the emergence of social media (Parkwell, 2019). The purpose of using emojis is to create meaning or make meaning of the text complete, and it also creates a social linkage among the parties. Along with this, the boundaries of social semiotics and social media are deeply connected as the use of single emoji illustrates multiple layers of meaning. Similarly, the study of Pozzer-Ardenghi and Roth (2004) shows that photos have become an essential part of science books, and they couple with different gestures to avoid ambiguity in the production of meaning when presented to the students. The gestures act as another semiotic resource in clarifying meanings during a lecture making it evident that language and other resources like signs, gestures, speech, and images are fundamental modes in every communication (Danielsson, 2016). However, the meanings linked with these resources are shaped by the cultural context over time.

Nowadays, meaning is constructed with the help of combining several semiotic resources, including sounds, images, gestures and gaze. All modes of communication are independent but sometimes work interdependently, which varies from text to text. The deployment and co-deployment of visuals become necessary in withdrawing meanings as text cannot make meaning on its own all the time (Royce & Bowcher, 2007). Additionally, the efforts of Baldry, Leeuwen and Kress mainly gave a way to the use of multiple modes in communication. With the use of these semiotic modes, different concepts are presented on screens, and these modes make the communicative experiences in crafting strategies (Hashemi, 2017).

Saussure presented the concept that a sign comprises two elements: signified and signifier. However, signified is the real-world entity, and signifier is a textual element used for producing meaning (Curtin, 2009). Moreover, there is a lack of one-to-one relationship between these two elements, and their meanings change from culture to culture. Besides, they are contextually constructed and vary from language to language. On the other hand, Pierce presented that a third entity known as the interpreter establishes a relation between the sign and its object. Curtin (2009) further explains that signs enable us to get information about an object, and each of these three entities is further divided into three sub aspects that are sinsign, qualisign, legisign, indices, icons, symbols and argument (Krampen et al., 1987). The concept of the sign has its foundations in the traditional semiotics, and it consists of a signifier and a signified (Bezemer and Jewitt,

2009). In addition, the interest of the meaning makers is very important in social semiotics because meaning-making depends on them, which makes the linkage of signifier and signified motivated rather than arbitrary.

Semiotics is a meaningful whole of material, visual, symbolic and pictorial signs (Jewitt & Leeuwen, 2001). The concept of social semiotics is the influence of a specific culture or society on meaning-making, and the members of that society provide specific meanings to different resources (Adami, 2016). Further, font provides potential meaning in a multimodal text, and it is a perfect choice for the sign-makers to widen the meaning of a piece of writing in this technologically advanced world.

The concept of multimodality goes in line with semiotics, and it is the utilization of various modes in the same instance of communication such as pictures, images, videos and sounds in relation with language for meaning production (Paltridge, 2012). Besides, it is concerned with how the composition of multimodal texts happens and how different semiotic tools such as color, positioning of objects, framing and foregrounding contribute to meaning-making in a multimodal text. Language is a collection of modes: gaze, postures, and images that contribute to meaning-making and enhance the meaning of the textual resources used in communication (Jewitt, 2009). These modes are used according to the interest and need of the users in a specific communication, and the social norms can also influence the meanings generated as a result of using multiple modes. Thus, the concept of multimodality can be seen in almost every form of communication, including daily life conversations among people.

However, multimodal analysis deals with the study that enables language users to know how meaning is generated through various tools, what meaning is generated, and how it is molded by the context in which it is produced (Kress, 2010). Furthermore, it digs out the role of each semiotic tool or mode in the meaning production in multimodal texts and gives an insight into their importance too. A similar view is discussed by Machin (2007) that multimodality gives an idea of the role of different modes in producing meanings in a specific communication. It is viewed that different modes work together to form a unified meaningful whole in multimodal communication or text. Hence, it provides multiple modes to assist meaning's creation in a text (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). The role of contexts in this process is undeniable (Halliday, 1978), and the base of multimodality lies in writing and speech (Jewitt, 2008). For Leeuwen (2005), multimodality combines various semiotic tools such as colour saturation, salience, positioning of elements and framing. The semiotic resources include writing, layout, speech, gestures, still and moving images (Adami, 2016).

There is a one-to-one relationship between media and multimodality as there is much use of multiple modes in print and electronic media. Wodak and Krzyzanowski (2008) believed that print media is not only limited to magazines, books and newspapers, but its scope is also extended to posters, academic journals and billboards. While print media is used for highlighting social issues, it also influences the public in shaping their social and political views (Jibril, 2017). In addition, it plays a significant role in advertising different social aspects and grows uninfluenced by the advent of new forms of media (Sorce & Dewitz, 2017). We can access authentic and worthy information through newspapers (Nyilasy et al., 2011). The position of print media is still dominant and less affected by the emergence of new forms of media as a huge number of people are still interested in reading printed books, newspapers (Nossek, Adoni & Nimrod, 2015). Semiotics establishes relationships among signs, pictures, symbols and written text in newspapers; therefore, it is a powerful approach in print media (Bignell, 2002).

Posters also come under the category of print media. The eighteenth-century semioticians described posters as a collection of images and written text or displaying pictorial elements in

public (Allen, 1994). They are mainly used to spread a specific message among the masses; therefore, they convey messages to the audience rather than amusing them. The posters carry a hidden message that is incorporated through some idioms and an ensemble of symbols. Beasley and Danesi (2002) presented the view that posters were used to circulate messages in the medieval age, and it is the least expensive and effortless way of spreading information. The history of posters is parallel to that of human beings, and symbols or semiotic resources reveal the hidden message (Hiatt, 1896).

The research of Juliantari (2014) shows that using different signs such as images, shape, colour, visual and verbal aspects of television in the advertisement of the movie 'The Conjuring' enhances the meaning of the text. His study was based on Saussure's semiotic theory of signifiers and signified and Dyer's concepts. The focus of his research was that the use of signs in the advertisement of the movie aimed to attract the attention of the targeted audience. Semiotic resources, including modality, colours, cohesion and images combined with text, influence the audience (Najafian & Ketabi, 2011). Their study was about those advertisements with textual and visual resources, and they aimed to unveil the words behind the images. Moreover, the data were analyzed in the light of Kress and Leeuwen's social semiotic approach and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. While using the three-dimensional approach of Fairclough for analyzing magazine advertisements, Ferreira and Heberle (2013) found that semiotic resources were used to grab the attention of viewers at the international level. Besides, the multimodal study of environmental posters conducted by Dallyono and Sukyadi (2019) reveals that visuals make the message clear to the audience.

Research Methodology

Research Design Of The Present Study

The data of the present study is qualitative; therefore, it is a qualitative study. The researchers have used the semiotic theory of Kress and Leeuwen (2006) to analyze the data. The data taken for this research includes posters from the World Health Organization social media page and local Pakistani posters about Covid-19.

Research Method

This study is qualitative and descriptive as the researchers have described the semiotic resources used in the cautionary posters of Covid-19. The analysis of the data is based on the Kress and Leeuwen semiotic model (2006).

Data Collection Method

This research explores the cautionary posters related to Covid-19. The data contains five posters designed by the World Health Organization and five local Pakistani posters. The researchers tried to explore the semiotic resources used in the design of these posters.

Data Collection Procedure

The data for the present study include cautionary posters disseminating information about Covid-19. The social media page of WHO was used to collect the data and the local Pakistani posters were taken from different institutes. Both of them continuously spread an enormous amount of information during the pandemic to make the public aware of the life-threatening disease.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this research is based on the semiotic theory of Kress and Leeuwen (2006). They presented the Social Semiotic Theory of Communication in their book *'Reading Images'*. The theory states that visual resources should carry the potential to meet some communicational and representational needs to act as a complete system of communication.

The idea of this theory was taken from Halliday's notion of metafunction used for the analysis of images. The three metafunctions of the theory are the following.

The Ideational Metafunction

The ideational metafunction of the semiotic theory states that any semiotic mode should have the potential to show the aspects of the world as men experience them. It should establish a relationship between an object and the external world. Moreover, a vector or tree structure will represent this relationship. In visuals, vectors act like action verbs to link the participants (Zhang, 2018). Besides, this metafunction also includes conceptual and narrative structures where the conceptual structure represents participants in general, and the narrative structures deal with the events and actions in visuals.

The Interpersonal Metafunction

The interpersonal metafunction of the theory states that a semiotic mode should be able to create a relationship between the sign-maker and its targeted audience. Moreover, a represented person may be shown to have direct eye contact with the viewers or shown as turned away from them. In the former case, an intimate relationship is established with the viewers, and in the latter case, the purpose is only to convey information or message. Direct eye contact symbolizes if the represented participant demands the viewers, and lack of gaze only shows the offer of information. Furthermore, colour saturation and the size of the frame also come in this category, aiming to show the importance of an object or text and the participants' relationship with the viewers through long, close and medium shots in visuals.

The Textual Metafunction

This metafunction states that a semiotic mode should have the capacity to form a meaningful whole that has coherence with the internal and external contexts for which they are created. The position of the elements such as top, bottom, left and right placement of an image carry different representational values. Besides, the maximum connection or maximum disconnection shows the relationship of the represented viewers in an image.

The researchers have analyzed the semiotic modes used in the cautionary posters spreading information about the Covid-19 pandemic in the light of this theory. The data were analyzed to explore how different semiotic resources combine to form a unified whole.

Data Analysis

Figure 1, Avoid The Three Cs

The poster in figure 1 is designed by the World Health Organization to be cautious about Covid-19. It combines semiotic resources and text to represent the urgent need to follow the Standard Operating Procedures. The imperatives in the poster combine with the declarative clauses to

inform the public about the situation. The use of color, bold and large font have foregrounded the important information and the heading. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), there are two types of ideational representation: narrative and conceptual. In this poster, the clauses covering a cough, wearing masks and sneezing through hand are narrative processes, and the isolated images represent some conceptual processes. The basic purpose of these narrative and conceptual processes is to inform the public to follow the standard operating procedures to keep themselves safe from the pandemic.

Additionally, the poster has human and quasi-human images with no direct eye contact with the viewers, and if there is a lack of gaze, the represented participants aimed to offer information only (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). The long shot of the images points out that the relationship of the represented participants with the viewers is public, not personal. Besides this, the mid-range modality markers such as colour saturation reveal that every part of this poster is equally important.

Figure 2, Five Keys to safer Food

In social semiotics, the narrative representation symbolizes actions or events represented through a vector (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). In Figure 2, the washing action is shown with an image of the hand in close contact with a bar of soap; therefore, the hand is an actor who interacts with the goal (soap). Besides, the clauses (keep clean, separate raw and cooked food and use safe water) show narrative processes that represent the larger concept of having safe food. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), these processes establish a part-whole relationship in which the attributes are treated as part and the carrier as a whole.

The designer has utilized specific modality markers to make things clear to the audience. For instance, the blue background of the poster demonstrates hygiene and the logo of the organization is foregrounded with bright yellow color to attract the attention of the viewers. The mid-range modality of the poster aimed to enhance the believability of the message as Kress and Leeuwen presented this view of mid-range equivalence with believability. Moreover, the long-shot of the images proved that it aims to offer information rather than demanding goods and services.

Figure 3, Wearing a Medical Mask

Kress and Leewuen (1996) argue that images in visuals associate an imaginary relationship between the viewers and the represented participants. The size of the frame creates an intimate relationship in this poster, and the close-shot also reflects the close relationship of the human participants with the audience. In contrast, the lack of gaze suggests that the images are aimed to disseminate information rather than putting demands on the viewers.

Different narrative actions are shown with the images present in the poster, for instance, washing hands which is a vector proceeded towards the goal. The images showing how to wear a mask reflect the action processes and serve as attributes of the carrier. Furthermore, the message in the poster is made clear with the use of mid-range modality markers, and the blue background is used to make it evident that the message is related to healthcare as blue is generally associated with hygiene and healthcare. In comparison, the purpose of the bold font of the heading is to get the viewers' attention and make the aim of the poster clear to them.
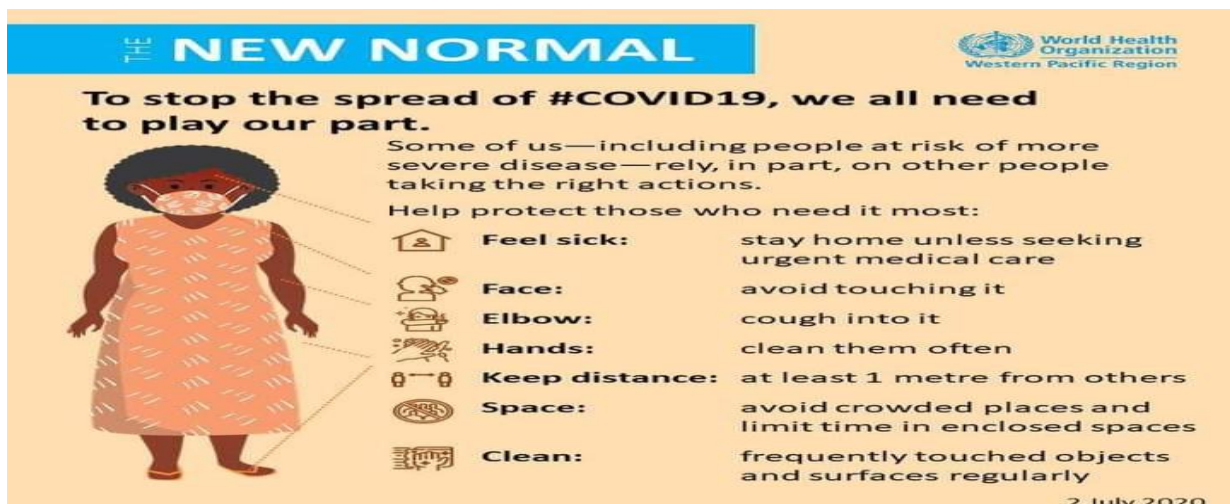

Figure 4, New Normal

Different semiotic resources make communication more comprehensive, and it best performs the function of a language. The poster in the present figure throws light on the precautionary measures necessary to curb the disease. While the poster is designed with a catchy heading 'new normal', it gives a sigh of relief to the audience during the testing pandemic. It tries to compel the public to adopt the precautions to live a normal life again. Moreover, the headings and sub-headings are bold, highlighting how crucial these steps are to be followed during the pandemic.

Besides, the introductory part is declarative, while other instructions are given in brief imperative clauses which reinforce the urgency of the actions in this particular situation of Covid-19.

The ideational level of the poster shows that there are both narrative presentations and abstract patterns present in it. Several narrative processes such as avoiding crowded places, keeping distance and cleaning hands aimed to create a conceptual structure regarding the new way of life. The clauses like staying at home if feeling sick represent reactionary narrative processes and enhance the conceptual representation. The images of human or quasi-human participants with long shot angles signify no intimate relationship between the represented participants and the viewers. Kress and Leeuwen (2006) declared that images with long shot angles in visuals symbolize a lack of personal relationship between the participants and the image receivers. Further, the lack of eye contact between the represented participants and the viewers suggests that the poster is made to offer information.

Figure 5, Wash Your Hands

The poster in figure 5, designed by the World health organization, spreads information about Covid-19. It specifically gives precautions to the audience to protect themselves from the disease. With all other posters, this one is also designed with an ensemble of semiotic resources, including colors, images, fonts and text. The images, semiotic resources, and text convey the message to the audience how to eliminate the deadly pandemic. The main heading of the poster is attractive as it is according to the interest of the public. It enables them to get out of the fearful situation of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, the second heading with bold font declares the urgency of washing hands time and again. Furthermore, the imperative clauses such as after coughing or sneezing, when caring for the sick and before eating add to the conceptual representations of these actions. The imperative clauses show the need for the actions and their urgency (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). With a mid-range modality, the poster is made naturalistic.

Pakistani Posters

Figure 6, Covid-19 SOPs

According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), an ensemble of semiotic resources is employed in an image to convey an important message. The poster being dealt with is designed by a Pakistani local institute that has limited resources. There are simple and plain composite images combined with imperative clauses to spread the message of being cautious during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, a cautionary message is conveyed through the use of this combination.

In addition, the clear boundaries among the images make it noticeable and depict the importance of each image. As Kress and Leeuwen (2006) believed that clear boundaries among the images show their singularity, and placement of images at a certain position in the visuals reflect its importance. For instance, the message of washing hands is at the top of the poster, demonstrating that it is prioritized over the other two images. On the other hand, there is no color saturation or background, implying the absence of modality markers. Besides, the narrative representations are indicated with the first two images where the water is the actor directed towards the hands (goal), and the personal relationship of the represented participants is symbolized through the close-shot.

Figure 7, Ask for Medical Help

There is a clear message of contacting medical facilities if a person experiences the symptoms of Covid-19 in the present poster. Kress and Leeuwen (2006) presented the concept that specific color is used to contextualize the message incorporated in visuals' background. The blue

background in this poster is linked with healthcare to show positivity in the testing times of the pandemic, and red is used to highlight the importance of the message.

The text plays a key role in enhancing the meaning of the visuals (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006) and the same occurs in this poster as the text helps convey the message to the viewers. Moreover, the human participant in the poster has direct eye contact with the viewers, which is meant to put a demand on the viewers. If there is a direct gaze, there is a demand for goods and services on the viewers rather than offering information (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). In the present case, the represented participant demands the viewers to follow the instruction immediately. Besides this, the represented participant shares an intimate relationship with the viewers, which is clear by the close-shot of the image.

Figure 8, COVID-19 SOPs

The present poster is taken from the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, to spread awareness about the pandemic. There are three isolated images in this poster, the girl wearing a mask represents a conceptual narrative of avoiding Covid-19, and washing hands indicates an action narrative. Kress and Leeuwen (2006) argue that visuals have conceptual and narrative structures that perform their role in creating meaning. Besides, observing social distance is represented by the visual in the third isolated image, which also signifies the concept of dominant patriarchal society in Pakistan, where social mobility is linked with only male members of the society. Moreover, the heading attracts the students' attention to know about the deadly pandemic and its avoidance.

Besides, the close-shot of the image of the girl suggests that there is a demand of putting masks on the viewers, whereas the long-shot of the boys keeping distance denotes that there is an offer of information only. In addition, the clear boundaries of the isolated images enable the viewers to know the distinctiveness of each message. These visuals, coupled with the text, enable the students of that institute to observe the Standard operating procedures of Covid-19. The textual resources make the meanings of the visuals clear when they are combined (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

Figure 9, Keep Social Distance

The image of the boy wearing the mask in the present figure reveals that wearing a mask is the need of time to prevent you from the deadly pandemic. The image represents a narrative process that is 'wearing a mask,' and the caption shows the flexibility of wearing a mask if maintaining social distance is difficult for you. Besides, the close-shot aimed to create an intimate relationship (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006) between the represented participants and the viewers.

Furthermore, the boy in the image does not have direct eye contact with the viewers, which suggests that the image only offers information. As Kress and Leeuwen (2006) opined, lack of gaze in visuals indicates information rather than demanding goods and services. If we talk about the modality markers, the present image has a sharp blue color which is a sign of optimism, and there is also a clear boundary between the text and the image in the said poster.

Figure 10, Wash Your Hands for at least 20 Seconds

Kress and Van Leeuwan (2006) argued that images are framed in a certain way to foreground or background any information. The value of the represented participants is made evident from its framing, for instance, placement of these participants or images at top/bottom or centre/margin. The poster under study conveys that washing hands is an important activity in the pandemic because it will decrease the chances of catching novel coronavirus. Further, it is not only safe for you but for those who come in contact with you daily. The image also has two other pictures that symbolize the entity 'coronavirus' and the dangerous outlook of the virus aimed to grab the viewers' attention.

In addition, the water in the current image is a vector directed towards the goal of hands. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), a vector is directed towards a goal in visuals. Besides,

the close-shot of the washing hands illustrates the urgency of the act during the outbreak of Covid-19. The centralized placement of the washing hands proves the notion of Kress and Leeeuwen (2006) that images are placed at certain positions in order to make them important.

Conclusion

The present study aims to answer the question posed: to find the different semiotic resources used in the Pakistani local posters and those designed by the World Health Organization. Following is the key finding of this study.

1. The analysis of the posters shows that gaze, long shot, medium shot, images, human and quasi-human images, colour saturation, modality markers, foregrounding and backgrounding, text including imperatives, conceptual and narrative representations, are used in the design of these posters.

The analysis of the posters shows that the poster designers use images, symbols, colours and gestures to complete the meanings of the message being spread and attract the audience's attention too. This research also reveals that WHO posters are more comprehensive in their design because they are aimed at many audiences.

This study is similar to and different from a large existing study; for instance, Zhang (2018) also researched public health posters and applied Halliday's systemic functional linguistics. The theoretical framework makes it different from this study, and the nature of data for the study in hand resembles Zhang's study. However, he collected data from two cities, and this research has also worked on the data collected from two areas.

Many posters were circulated worldwide to educate people about the outbreak, signs, symptoms, and spread of Coronavirus named Covid-19. The posters disseminated at different places and on social media aim to make the audience know how to prevent this life-taking disease by following and adopting significant precautionary measures. Moreover, the pandemic also compelled the World Health Organization and Pakistani local authorities of different institutes to contemplate the urgency of the situation; therefore, they provide the public with an enormous amount of content through these posters. The detailed semiotic analysis of the posters, the present study concludes that all of the posters are designed with a collection of semiotic resources such as highlighted and bold text, gaze, still images, imperatives, framing, conceptual and narrative structures to make the meaning of the message clear to the audience and aim to inform them to be cautious of the deadly pandemic in a better way.

Recommendations for Future Research

The study in hand examines how different semiotic resources combine to enlighten the public about the Covid-19 pandemic and grip the attention of the targeted people through its design. They are constructed in such a way to influence the viewers; thereby, future researchers can have an insight into the views of the designers while designing posters.

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