
THE MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN AND SOUTH KOREAN TV DRAMA POSTERS

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ABSTRACT

TV drama posters generally differ from one cultural background to another. Ironically, there has been no study comparing TV drama posters from different cultures. Therefore, this study was intended to compare the difference of TV drama posters between Indonesia and South Korea by using multimodal discourse analysis. To meet the goal, the visual grammar by Kress and van Leeuwen was used to analyse the visual composition from representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. Therefore, the comparison of the TV drama posters for both countries has been interpreted first through visual grammar. In describing the findings, descriptive qualitative was used. There were six posters used for this analysis, three Indonesian posters and three Korean posters. As a result, the study revealed that there are two differences. The differences are size of frame and narrative visual processes. On the other hand, the similarities are on modalities, framing, and point of view features.

Key Words: Posters, Multimodal Discourse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Drama is a television series which aired daily or twice a week. In Indonesia, the term *Sinetron* is more popular than drama (Subijanto, 2009). It usually consists of several episodes. Before airing the drama, some production houses release poster to attract the audiences. TV drama posters generally differ from one cultural background to another. Indonesia and South Korea have a culturally different background. Thus, the TV drama posters created from both countries will be dissimilar.

The culture can be seen from the way someone communicating with others. In the case of South Korea, they did not always explicitly say what is on their mind. Someone must guess what is hidden behind the words. This ability to read what is on another person's mind is called *Nunchi* (Kim, 2003). While in Indonesia, the people tend to express what is on their mind. It has been known that Indonesian people are friendly, especially to tourist (Wardana, 2015). To know what the difference and similarities between TV drama posters from Indonesia and South Korea is, the

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analysis to the multimodal discourse of poster is needed. Six posters are analysed, three from Indonesia and three from South Korea. The element of the TV drama posters consists of images and written texts. The combination of two or more different modes of communication to create meaning is needed to refer to the multimodal discourse analysis (Lirola, 2015). This paper refers to multimodality is because it pays attention to the combination of language and other semiotic modes to create meaning.

The term multimodality is used by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) in their book where they proposed tools to analyse visual text and it is known as the "grammar of visual design". This method is thought as the systematic tools for studying the structural factors of different modes to make meaning in a specific cultural setting (Papademetriou, 2015). These meanings are described from three meta functions, they are representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. The representational meaning refers to the ways visual mode is used to tell what is going on in the image (Shanahan, 2013; Forceville, 1999). The interactive meaning focuses on the interaction between images and viewers (Chen & Gao, 2013). The compositional on the

other hand is taken from the collaboration of representational and interactive meaning to compose meaning (Roberts & Philip, 2006). For instance, the placement of the object within the image and the connection between the viewer and the image are all part of the resources to meaning making. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, p. 45), the representational meaning refers to events going on in the image and the relations between semiotic systems and the culture. There are two processes of representational meaning: Conceptual process and Presentational processes (An Introduction to the grammar of visual design, 2002).

Conceptual process explains the depicted participants while Presentational processes explain the development of actions and issues of the participants within the image (p.3). In the Conceptual process, Kress, and van Leeuwen proposed that there is symbolic meaning which takes two forms: the attributive and the suggestive. The attributive symbolic process "emphasize on one represented participant in an image where the functions are to connect its meaning with the other one" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). Thus, one represented participant will be more attractive than the other. The suggestive symbolic process, the meaning is "derives from

within the Carrier” (Unsworth, 2001, p. 92).

Presentational processes explain the narrative process based on the vector, the number, and kind of participants. There are two types of presentational processes, they are actional and reactional. According to Almeida (2009), the participant in the presentational process referred as (1) Actor/Reactor and Goal/Phenomenon, (2) Sayer and Utterance, or as (3) Senser and Phenomenon. When there is a vector connected the Actor and the Goal in an image, this image is called as transactional. However, when the Actor doing some action but there is no Goal, the image is having non-transactional processes. The reaction process happens when the participant is looking at something and the thing here “is referred as Phenomenon rather than a Goal” (Almeida, 2009).

The interactive meaning focuses on the interaction between images and viewers. (Chen & Gao, 2013). A focus of this meaning is whether the participants in the image look directly at the viewer. If the participant is looking directly at the viewer, the image is called ‘demand’ where the represented participant is asking an attention from the viewer. The opposite of ‘demand’ is ‘offer’. It happens when the participant is “the object rather than

the subject of the look” (Forceville, 1999). In other words, the participant in the image is not looking directly at the viewer and the focus of their gaze is on something else.

The second factor which is the focus of the interactive meaning is the size of frame or distance where a shot will create a different relationship between the participants and the viewers. When the participant in the image is captured from a close-up shot where the head and shoulders are shown and the shot is close, the relationship between the participants and the viewer is intimate. The opposite of close-up shot is long shot where the participant occupies half of the height of the frame, the relationship between the participants and the viewer is far social distance. Between close and long shot is medium shot where the subject of the image is cut off between the waist and the knees, the relationship between the participants and the viewer is far personal distance. (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006)

Another factor of interactive meaning is perspective or point of view and modality. Perspective or point of view means that the “visual semiotic structure denotes the audience’s ‘subjective attitudes’ toward the represented participants, which is instantiated by means of frontal,

oblique, and vertical angles". (Almeida, 2009). Certain angles or point of view will determine the relationship between the participant and the viewer. The modality means that the visual representations are made based on different truth criteria, i.e., naturalistic (high degree of realism), sensory (low degree of realism), scientific or technological (low degree of realism, abstracts from detail), and abstract (low degree of realism). (p. 490-491)

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) claim that compositional meaning combines representational and interactive elements to create whole meaning (p. 176). There are three resources of compositional meaning; (1) Information value is taken from the placement within the image, (2) Saliency is the element which made to attract the attention of the viewers, (3) Framing is realized by elements which created lines to divide the elements. If the elements are connected to each other, the framing described as weakly framed. If the otherwise is happened, the framing is disconnected they said to be strongly framed (Almeida, 2009).

So far, very few researchers have been done in researching the discourse analysis of TV drama posters. It is necessary to make references to the previous research in the study of poster. Yunru Chen (2013) used the

perspective of multimodal discourse analysis to interpret movie posters. She was testing the applicability of the multimodal discourse analysis by formulating a model of multimodal discourse analysis of movie posters. Maria Martínez Lirola (2015) offers a multimodal analysis to examine samples of political posters in Ireland. The aim of her research was to analyse the key political posters made for the campaigns of Irish political party. The result of her research revealed that politicians are represented in a positive way, with status and formal appearance so that the people are persuaded to choose them as their political leaders.

METHODS

In the discussion, the descriptive qualitative approach is adopted. This method is a utilizable tool for description, interpretation, and comprehension of the interactions among other semiotic modes in the multimodal discourse analysis.

The data to be analysed in this paper consists of TV drama posters from Indonesia and South Korea which was aired in 2017. Consequently, six TV drama posters are chosen, three from Indonesia and another three from South Korea. TV drama posters from Indonesia are *Anak Langit*, *Malaikat tak bersayap*, and *Cinta dari Surga*. TV drama

posters from South Korea are *Introverted Boss*, *Strong Woman Do Bong Soon*, and *School 2017*.

The first step of this study is analysing each poster based on the three meta functions: the representational meaning, the interactive meaning, and the compositional meaning. The next step is comparing the posters from Indonesia and South Korea to find the differences and similarities between two different cultural backgrounds.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section starts with an overview of each of the TV drama posters with each poster is analysed using the model for multimodal discourse analysis. After interpreting each poster, the comparison was done to see the difference and similarities between TV drama posters of two different countries. The posters which are starting to analyse first is from Indonesia, and after that, the poster from South Korea will be analysed.

Analysis of the poster of Anak Langit

Representational Meaning

The represented participants in this poster are the people (the subject of this poster) and the interactive participant is the viewer. The people in this poster

play the role of 'Actor', the one who does the actions. However, there is not the receiver of the action in this poster. Thus, this poster has no 'Goal' and having non-transactional processes. The superordinate participant in this poster is the couple who is wearing blue coat and place in front of the subordinate participant. The taxonomy of this poster is referred as overt because the superordinate participant is "displayed in an explicit manner" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006). The attributive symbolic processes of this poster are the motorcycle because it was placed on the front along with the main couple; the size of the motorcycle is bigger and more focused than the one in the back. Thus, this poster is presented to the viewer as the group identity of a motorcycle gang. It was represented by the outfit and the transportation they used.

Interactive Meaning

From the visual contact, the actors are making strong eye contact or demand for the attention from the viewer. Thus, the actors form an imaginary relationship with the viewer. The actors are shot on a medium shot which suggests the social distance between the actors and the viewers. Thus, it indicates that the actors and the viewers are friends. From the perspective or point of view, this poster

uses frontal angle which suggests the viewer is involved in the world depicted in the poster. The modality used in this poster is naturalistic or real because it looks the same with the one in the real world.

Compositional Meaning

Considering the top and bottom placement of the poster, the upper section and the lower section form an Ideal-Real structure. In the Ideal part, the sky is very clear, and it symbolizes peace, tranquillity, and power. From the real part, the sight of a couple of teenagers riding motorcycle represents the adolescent life in Indonesia where the teens like to group in a motorcycle gang. In terms of framing, the image is connected, overlapping with the background because there are no clear framing lines around the image. Thus, it describes as weakly framed. The salience of this poster is reflected from the size of the main actors bigger than the rest of the actor in the image.



Figure 1. Poster of *Anak Langit*

Analysis of the poster of Malaikat Tak Bersayap

Representational Meaning

The represented participants in this poster are a man and a little girl. They both play the role of 'Actor', while the 'Goal' is not represented. There are no events happening in this poster, both actors are looking outside of the frame and there is no interaction between them. Thus, this poster is having a non-transactional process. Since they are asymmetrically organized across the picture space, the taxonomy of this poster is overt because the man and the little girl did not belong to the same group. The man in the poster is presented as an angel by the existence of wings while the little girl is only a human.

Interactive Meaning

Both actors are not looking at the viewer making the contact to be an offer. From the distance or size of frame, we can see that the actors are shot up from their waist and we can see their expression. According to Douglass and Harnden (1995), the shot where we can see the actors were cut off above or below the knees and we can still see their expression, the shot is called as medium-wide shot. Thus, the distance of the actors in this poster is medium-wide shot and this poster indicates the relationship between the actors and the

viewer are social distance. From the perspective or point of view, this poster uses the vertical angle where the angle of this poster is on the eye-level of the viewer. Thus, the represented participant and the viewer are having a same equality of power. The modality of this poster is naturalistic because the poster uses the photograph of the actor.

Compositional Meaning

The placement of the actor is occupying the centre of the frame. The salience of this poster is the background of the poster. It focuses more on the wings rather than the actors. Light entering from the right of the poster slightly reflects the face of the little girl. In terms of framing, the elements are connected to each other. Thus, the poster is weakly framed.



Figure 2. Poster of *Malaikat Tak Bersayap*

Analysis of the poster of *Cinta Dari Surga*

Representational Meaning

The represented participants in this poster are a woman and two men. They played the role of 'Actor' with no 'Goal'. There is no interaction between the actors. Thus, this poster is having a *non-transactional process* because there are no events happening on the poster. Concerning the *classificational* visual structures, the taxonomy of this poster is *covert*, because the participant is placed symmetrically where the woman is standing between the two men. It suggests that they belong to the same group.

Interactive Meaning

The actor of this poster is *demanding* the viewer's attention. This poster is considered *medium shot* as the actor is only shown up to their waist. Thus, the relationship between the actors and the viewer is *social distance*. There are two *perspectives* or *point of view* in this poster, the first is the use of *frontal angle* and the second is the use of *vertical angle*. From the *frontal angle*, we can see the facial features of the actors. The *vertical angle* of the poster is at *eye-level*. Thus, the actors are inviting the viewer to get involved in their world and the power between the represented participant and the viewer is equal. The *modality* of this poster is *naturalistic* because it looks really like what we see in the real world.

Compositional Meaning

In compositional terms, the placement of the actors is occupying the *central position* within the frame of the poster. The *salience* of this poster is the woman because she is placed in the centre of the focus. The colour of the actor and the background are nearly similar, which they were using the white as their clothes and so is the background. White colour symbolizes peace and purity. Thus, it might symbolize heaven where the title of the poster itself is using the word '*Surga*' which means 'heaven' in English. From the *framing*, there is no clear framing line. Thus, the element in the posters is *connected* and described as *weakly framed*.



Figure 3. Poster of *Cinta Dari Surga*

Analysis of the poster of Introvert Boss

Representational Meaning

There are two represented participants in this poster: a man and a woman. A man played a role of 'Actor' and the woman is the 'Goal' because the man is looking at the woman who

stands in front of him. Therefore, this poster is having transactional processes. In terms of classificational visual structures, the taxonomy of this poster is overt, because the superordinate participant is placed behind the subordinate and the colour of his clothes matched the background while the woman is wearing a colourful dress which makes her stand out more than the man. The colour of the background matched the suit that the man wore. It looks like a chameleon which can change into another colour to hide. There is a possibility that the man is hiding from something or someone. From the title of the poster, we know that the man is introverted, thus, this poster might symbolize something. Therefore, this poster is having Suggestive symbolic processes, because the "symbolic meaning is coming from the Carrier" (Unsworth, 2001, p. 92).

Interactive Meaning

There are two types of gazes in this poster. The first one is the man looking at the woman on his right side, while the woman is staring directly to the viewer's eyes. Thus, the man is described as offer while the woman is demanding the attention of the viewers. In terms of size of frame, this poster offers a long shot distance. Thus, the relationship between the actors and the viewers are far social distance. It means

that the represented participant and the interactive participant is merely a social partner. The perspective or point of view of this poster is using the vertical angle where the image is shot at eye-level. Therefore, the actors and the viewers are on equal power. This poster has naturalistic images because it has “(1) high colour saturation; (2) diversified colours; and (3) modulated colours” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Almeida, 2009).

Compositional Meaning

In terms of information value, the poster is using the Given and New position. The element which is regarded as the Given is the man because he is the boss which own the room in that poster. The man and the background of the poster have the same colour, its blue, in which it represents the quietness of the boss. The woman, on the other hand, is the New because she is the secretary and by the colour of her clothes, we can see that she is a cheerful person. Thus, the man is represented as a shy person whose personality known as introvert while the woman is extrovert because she looks very cheerful. Considering the frame, this element of this poster is connected to each other. There are no spaces which differentiate the elements. Thus, this poster is described as weakly framed. The salience of this poster is the woman

because she is wearing colourful dress contrast to the man and the background which only has one colour that is light blue.



Figure 4. Poster of Introverted Boss

Analysis of the poster of the Strong Woman Do Bong Soon

Representational Meaning

There are three represented participants in this poster, the woman who is standing and two men who are sitting. The woman plays the role of ‘Actor’ and the men are ‘Goal’ because the woman is doing something that makes the men look surprised. Thus, this poster is having transactional processes. The taxonomy of this poster is referred as overt, because the superordinate participant is displayed and played the main role in this poster. The symbolic processes of this poster are suggestive because the woman who holds car is symbolizing something. It suggests that the woman is having

some superpower which makes her looks stronger than men.

Interactive Meaning

The gaze of the two men is directed to the woman while the woman is looking at the viewer. The two men gazes are described as offer while the woman gaze is described as demand. The woman is inviting the viewer to engage interpersonally with her. The distance in this poster is long shot which provides an impersonal relationship with the viewer. The horizon line is lower from the actor's eye line which lowers the power of the viewer position. The vertical angle of the poster is at the eye-level. It means that the relation equality between the participant and the viewer are equal. The poster is having naturalistic modality.

Compositional Meaning

The information value of this poster is adapting the Ideal-Real composition. The Ideal is proposed as "the main menu of the image while the Real is the information of how to obtain it" (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). The Ideal of this poster is the car where the car is positioned on top and on the bottom is the Real where the actors are placed. The element of this poster is connected from each other. Thus, this poster is weakly framed. The salience from this poster is the woman because

she is standing and holding the car. Therefore, the woman is standing out more than the men in that poster. The colour of the background is also indicating that the main participant of this poster is the woman.



Figure 5. Poster of the Strong Woman Do Bong Soon

Analysis of the poster of School 2017

Representational Meaning

The represented participants in this poster are the people. They played the role of 'Actor'. However, there is no receiver of the action or having no 'Goal'. Thus, this poster is having non-transactional processes. Since the represented participants are sitting at the same level and they are coming from the same group of 'teacher and student'. Thus, the taxonomy of this poster is covert.

Interactive Meaning

The represented participants in this poster are looking directly at the viewer's eyes. They form an imaginary relationship with the viewer. Thus, the

type of this gaze is demand where the represented participants are asking attention from the viewers. The participants are seen from a medium shot which we can see from the waist-up; although the legs are visible, they were sitting. It provides social distance between the participants and the viewers. The horizontal line is higher than the actor's eye-line, which is higher the viewer's position of power. The use of frontal angle in this poster is indicating that the viewers are invited to get involved in the world depicted in the poster. The modality of this poster is naturalistic because the participant in the poster is like what we see in the real world.

Compositional Meaning

Considering the information value of the poster the Ideal-Real ideology structure is adopted. The Ideal is the background of the poster which represents the school wall. Thus, the general information of this poster is that the setting of this drama is at school. The Real element is the actors who were sitting on the ground. In terms of framing, the elements are connected to each other. There are no clear lines between the elements, thus it describes as weakly framed. The salience is the actors because they were placed at the lower level and the colour

of their clothes are contrasted with the background of the poster.



Figure 6. Poster of School 2017

Difference and similarities

From the representational meaning of the TV drama poster from Indonesia, the three of them are having non-transactional processes. The actors did not do some actions; they are merely standing and looking at the viewer. On the classificational side, there is two posters which having the taxonomy of overt, and one covert. The posters which classify the actors in the same group or have the same interest are referred as covert. On the other hand, the poster which classifies that the actors did not belong to the same category (human and angel) is referred as overt.

The TV drama poster from South Korea is having transactional processes. There is something happening in the poster, thus resulted the 'Actor' has its 'Goal'. The taxonomy of the poster is having two overt and one covert. The TV drama poster from South Korea is

having suggestive symbolic processes, where two of the posters symbolizes “some meanings from the carrier” (Unsworth, 2001, p. 92).

The interactive meaning from TV drama poster of Indonesia highlights the direct gaze from the actor to the viewer. The result is demand, which means the actors are asking attention from the viewer. The distance of the shot is also affecting the relationship between the represented participant and the viewer. The three posters from Indonesia are using medium shot and vertical angle. It means that the represented participant and the viewer are having the same equality of power.

The same goes for TV drama poster of South Korea, the interactive meaning is established through demand and offer. However, for the distance, the poster of South Korean drama is using long shot and medium shot. Thus, the relationship between the represented participant and the viewer is social distance. Although the gaze is demanding the attention from the viewer, the relationship between the represented participant and the viewer is not intimate.

As for the compositional meaning, the TV drama poster of Indonesia is adopting the Ideal-Real and central zones. The main information is put on the centre, thus, the salient of one

poster from Indonesia is similar. The poster of *Cinta dari Surga* put the woman in the centre of the frame, and she is put in between two men. Thus, the focus of the poster falls to the woman. From the framing, the three posters are weakly framed, because the elements within the layout in the image are connected. There are no lines separating between each element in the poster. TV drama posters from South Korea are adopting the Ideal-Real and Given-New structure. As for the framing, the three posters are weakly framed. The salience of each poster is different because each poster has something different which stands out than the other.

Thus, the difference between Indonesian and South Korean TV drama posters is the narrative processes, where the Indonesian TV drama poster is more non-transactional while South Korea is transactional. There is a story unfold in the TV drama poster from South Korea while the TV drama poster from Indonesia is only highlighting the direct gaze to the viewer. The second difference is the distance or size of frame of the poster. Indonesian TV drama poster uses medium shot while South Korean drama poster uses a long shot. Thus, the relation between the participants in Indonesia TV drama poster is more

intimate than South Korea TV drama poster.

On the other hand, there are many similarities between Indonesian and South Korean TV drama posters such as the modalities are natural, the framings are weakly framed, and the points of view are on eye level. Thus, the power between the represented participants and the viewer is equal. The modality of each poster is naturalistic because it uses photographs instead of drawings. Therefore, the image in the poster is closer to the one we see in the real world.

CONCLUSIONS

The major visual structures of the TV drama posters become apparent that features such as narrative process, and conceptual process in which the represented participants are depicted, and the highly naturalistic modality used in the TV drama posters have connections with the culture in which they represented. Through discussion, we can see that the model of multimodal discourse analysis proved to be applicable and effective in conducting the analysis of TV drama posters. Moreover, the cultural background supports the characteristics and unique design of the TV drama posters. However, due to the limitations of the personal academic

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capacity, this study is only a small step towards the multimodal discourse analysis. Further study can be done to enrich the study in the field of multimodal discourse analysis.

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