

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the research. This research discusses the interaction of visual and symbolic modes to build meaning on campaign posters with the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). It examines essential ideas such as social representation, inequality, symbolic power, visual grammar and earlier relevant research.

2. 1 Social Representation

Social representation is a common system of meaning that helps people to interpret social realities (Moscovici, 1984). This is related to the way language and images generate cultural understandings that are influenced by ideology and power (Hall, 1997; van Dijk, 1998). Representations are not neutral since they naturalize social hierarchies and inequities (Wodak, 2015).

Bratina (2023) argues that communal visual knowledge influences the way cultures perceive inequality and identity. Thus, social representations are not a mirror of reality but are actively involved in constructing reality. They shape public understanding of topics including class, racism, gender, and health disparities. To comprehend social meaning it is also vital to investigate the power dynamics that underlie inequality.

2. 2 Inequality and Symbolic Power

Inequality is unequal access to resources and opportunities across class, ethnicity and gender (Tilly, 1998). Privilege is defined by economic, cultural and symbolic capital, and inequality remains through this capital, as Bourdieu (1984)

describes. Thompson (1990) argues that symbolic power works in a subtle way through ideology and representation, legitimating social structures in everyday life. More recent scholars have expanded these notions. Vaughan (2024) demonstrates how political imagery supports symbolic borders, and Verwiebe (2024) describes digital wealth as a new type of symbolic power. Price (2025) illustrates how symbolic violence produces regional inequality.

Campaigns thus become sites of symbolic power that function visually in terms of choosing who is visible or marginalized (van Leeuwen, 2008). In the meantime, Ramírez-Salina et al. (2025) propose that campaigns can fight prevailing beliefs via emotional and symbolic appeals. The debate then moves to the visual aspects that define meaning and power relations in campaign posters, as symbolic power is conveyed through visual and communication forms

2.3 Visual Element in Poster and the Representation of Inequality

Posters transmit social messages through graphic tactics. Images convey representational, interactive and compositional meanings that reflect power and ideology (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The visual construction of inequality is made up of a few important factors:

1. Composition The organization of visuals and text relates to power relations.
2. Framing: What is included or removed from a visual field shapes a viewer's understanding of the subject.
3. Salience: Color, size, or contrast can be used to highlight important elements and draw attention.

4. Spatial arrangement: Vertical and horizontal positioning of pieces transmits hierarchy and importance.

The elements are used to depict inequality either to serve as reinforcement or challenge to the prevalent ideology. Bateman (2014) notes that visual resources interact to construct multimodal meaning and hence posters are strong instruments for the construction of social values. So, this research uses Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to describe how various aspects combine to make meaning.

2. 4 Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA)

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) offers a way to understand how meaning is formed through the interaction of verbal, visual and other semiotic modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; O'Halloran, 2011). MDA is grounded in Halliday's (1978) social semiotic theory and sees communication as a multimodal process where language, picture, colour and spatial design interact together to make meaning (Hodge & Kress, 1988). It extends the ideas of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to visual communication, stressing that each semiotic resource contributes to meaning formation in accordance with its affordances. Visual communication can be analysed in terms of three metafunctions, which correspond to Halliday's language metafunctions: representational, interactive and compositional meanings (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

1. Representational meaning tells us how individuals, events and settings are represented in a picture. It demonstrates who the social actors are depicted as, and how their relations or activities are visually created. A woman concealing her chest in a health campaign billboard, for example, may be symbolic of both vulnerability

and strength, it may be representative of the lived experience of inequality.

2. Interactive meaning concerns the relation that is established between the portrayed participants and the viewer. The look, the distance, the angle. A direct look can be inviting emotional engagement whereas a downward gaze may be creating reflection or empathy. These decisions determine how listeners relate to the message.

3. Compositional meaning is about the arrangement of pieces within the picture space to direct the viewer's eye and create balance or focus. Features such as color contrast, framing, salience, and layout determine what parts of the image appear to be most essential and how textual and visual elements complement each other to convey the intended message.

With these meta functions, MDA provides a systematic understanding of how the verbal and visual elements work together in delivering ideological meanings. According to Machin and Mayr (2012), this approach shows how multimodal texts either reinforce or disrupt social power relations, by exposing the hidden ideologies in design and representation.

Campaign posters are inherently multimodal and use verbal phrases, symbolic pictures, color and typography to convince people and are therefore suited for analysis using MDA. Analyzing the interaction of these aspects helps academics understand how the posters portray social inequity and position people toward various interpretations.

2.5 Modes in Campaign Posters

There are two main modes of communication in campaign posters: the verbal and the visual, following the principles of MDA. These two modes work together to produce meaning and to impact audiences. Meaning in visual communication is generated by means of three meta functions: representational, interactive and compositional. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006) These functions are concerned with how images depict social actors, attract viewers and arrange visual elements.

The verbal mode consists of textual materials, including slogans, headlines or brief phrases describing the aim of the campaign. The visual mode includes non-verbal elements, such as color, gaze, and composition, that are used to support the spoken message. A poster can employ the direct gaze of participant to generate an emotional connection (interactive meaning), and contrasting colors to highlight the disparity in access to healthcare (compositional meaning).

Campaign posters blend these two techniques to get messages across more effectively than either words or visuals alone. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) emphasize that meaning is generated through the interaction of different semiotic resources rather than a single mode. This research therefore uses their approach to investigate how The Chrysalis Initiative's "Inequality You Can't Ignore" campaign develops healthcare inequity through the interaction of verbal and visual elements. The next section discusses prior research on multimodal and campaign poster analysis to link with existing scholarship.

2. 6 Previous Research

Campaign posters have been proved to be an effective multimodal media in promoting ideology, awareness, and social inequity. McWhirter et al. (2012) analyze breast cancer communication and find that the language framing and visual imagery serve to construct views of authority and responsibility and often serve to reinforce gendered power relations in health discourse. Likewise, Wakefield et al. (2010) show that the blending of verbal and visual signals in public health advertisements promotes message recall and audience engagement. (2017) Nowakowski also further demonstrates how symbolic framing, colour and layout in health propaganda posters help to maintain ideological dominance.

More recent research has applied multimodal analysis to numerous health and advocacy efforts. Ingolo and Ong'onda (2024) note that the use of strong colors and culturally resonant images in COVID-19 posters promote communal accountability but also represent existing social inequalities. Saidu et al. (2025) explain how the combination of text, image and color in humanitarian campaign posters a reflection of social inequalities and moral principles is. Ezirim and Aworo-Okoroh (2023) also employ visual grammar for Nigerian health posters to illustrate the ways in which gaze, salience, and compositional choices generate moral authority and legitimacy.

In English language education, multimodal discourse analysis has been extensively employed to analyze learning resources and pedagogical texts. Cahyati (2025) found that visual aspects on the covers of English textbooks are part of the process of building student identity and social values. Visual design of learning

materials has a considerable impact on learners' interpretation and engagement, as shown by Muhassin et al. (2022). Multimodal techniques are also conducive to inclusive teaching and culturally responsive pedagogy (Kettani & Ouahidi, 2025). Moreover, Astiti and Agung (2023) revealed that the combination of verbal and visual modes in COVID-19 posters was efficient in delivering emotional and preventive messages, indicating the pedagogical potential of multimodal texts.

Taken together, this corpus of research demonstrates that Multimodal Discourse Analysis is an excellent approach for revealing how visual and verbal aspects work together to produce meaning, ideology and pedagogy across media environments. However, in Indonesia, there is no research that specifically discusses the representation of healthcare inequity in the advocacy campaign poster utilizing multimodal resources.

Most local research focuses on educational materials, commercial advertisements, or environmental campaigns rather than health-related advocacy media. Therefore, analyzing The Chrysalis Initiative's "Inequality You Can't Ignore" (2023) campaign provides a broader and internationally relevant perspective. As the campaign originates from the United States, a context with a well-documented history of racial and social inequality in healthcare, this research offers cross-cultural insight into how multimodal discourse communicates healthcare inequality within a global advocacy context.