

Huiyu Zhang and Yuanhong Wei*

Visual frames in promotional video: a semiotic analysis of *What is Peppa?*

<https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2022-0006>

Received January 6, 2022; accepted November 22, 2023; published online February 27, 2024

Abstract: In January 2019, *What is Peppa?*, a promotional video for a Chinese New Year movie, received widespread attention in China immediately after its release. This paper explains the success of the video from the perspective of visual framing, and employs Systemic Visual Grammar to analyze how visual semiotics are applied to frame prominent topics so as to achieve promotional purposes. The results show that: (i) visual semiotics are used to frame the topic of empty nesters, implying that this issue brings negative consequences and evoking the audience's empathy and concern; (ii) visuals frame the topic of family love, in which the main protagonist's actions are highlighted; and (iii) the topic of family reunion is mainly framed and realized by delicate compositional arrangements. Using various visual semiotics at the denotative, stylistic-semantic, connotative, and ideological levels, this video establishes both visual and emotional communication between the main character and the audience, making the promotional purpose more successful. The results highlight and specify the important roles of visual frames in promotional videos, and the integration of Peppa with traditional Chinese culture, love, and family reunion represents a visual approach to globalization.

Keywords: *What is Peppa?*; promotional video; systemic visual grammar; framing theory; visual semiotics; business communication

1 Introduction

On January 17th, 2019, *What is Peppa?*, a promotional video for the movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New Year*, was released in China, and surprisingly this short video, produced in only two days, gained significant currency nationwide. The movie was co-produced by Alibaba Pictures in China and Entertainment One in the UK, and co-directed by Dapeng Zhang, Neville Astley, Mark Baker, Joris van Hulzen, and

***Corresponding author: Yuanhong Wei**, TP-Link Corporation Limited, Chengdu, China,

E-mail: weiyuanhong@zju.edu.cn

Huiyu Zhang, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China, E-mail: zhanghuiyu@zju.edu.cn. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1354-1581>

Sarah Roper. The promotional video was produced by Alibaba Pictures and directed by Dapeng Zhang. The story is set in a village and the main actor, Yubao Li, is just a local villager. However, in only two days the video received 1.5 billion views, and this number kept rising,¹ with the video becoming even more popular than the promoted movie. In contrast to this video's success, many other promotional videos for movies, such as those for *Hero* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, usually involving famous actors, fancy settings, and picturesque scenes, are not well-received by audiences. Therefore, a question arises: How did such a short and simple promotional video become so popular?

Some studies have analyzed promotional videos in terms of their functions (e.g., Akhtar et al. 2015; Maier 2009; Nielsen 2014) and business strategies (e.g., Choi et al. 2016; Yan and Santos 2009), but scholarly attention, especially from linguistic scholars, has been inadequate (e.g., Bortoluzzi 2009; Noad and Barton 2020). While previous studies have conducted semiotic analysis of such videos, most attention has been paid to the verbals (Gong and Tung 2017). Multimodal discourse analysis has become more prevalent in recent years (e.g., Alcaraz and Valenzuela 2021; Bateman 2013; Maiorani 2011; Tseng 2012), but without proper frameworks, applying linguistic approaches to visuals sometimes causes misleading linguistic-oriented analogies (Bateman and Wildfeuer 2014). Moreover, the extant literature generally focuses on static visual artefacts (e.g., Bateman et al. 2017; Laurier and Brown 2011), ignoring the fact that understanding characters in dynamic images is critical in narrative comprehension and interpretation (Tseng 2013).

To fill these gaps, this paper integrates framing theory with Systemic Visual Grammar (hereafter SVG; Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996, 2006) to conduct a visual framing analysis of the Peppa video, and tries to explore how visual semiotics contributed to its success. Specifically, we explore how visual semiotics are used to frame prominent topics associated with the main actor Yubao Li to establish smooth communication with the audience and achieve the desired promotional effects.

2 Literature review

2.1 Promotional videos

Promotional videos are a brief introduction to a subject with the aims of informing, influencing, and persuading the audience. This is a relatively new device, allowing the audience to access the information anywhere and at any time via the internet (Nielsen 2014). Smith and Thakore (2016) find that there are two distinct forms of

1 Data source: <https://tech.sina.com.cn/i/2019-01-21/doc-ihqfskcn8892537.shtml>

promotional video, the informative promotional video and the hyper-produced, thematic, and narrative promotional video, both of which work well in promotion. Choi et al. (2016) point out that the purpose of a promotional video is to attract the consumer's attention, maximizing the promotional effect by using strategies of storytelling and color marketing. In addition to these strategies, new expressive techniques such as intelligent information technologies like Machine to Machine and the Internet of Things can also make the videos more effective (Choi et al. 2016).

There are some significant advantages of using videos as promotional media. For example, they can be made available to people in a very short time, offering convenience and a combination of audio and visual materials to make the content more vivid (Akhtar et al. 2015). More importantly, they enable the audience to visualize and fantasize, thus generating a good image of and positive perceptions towards the promoted items (Buscemi 2017; Gong and Tung 2017; Kim et al. 2017; Pan et al. 2017; Shani et al. 2010). In the film industry, companies adopt various methods such as advertisements, roadshows, and posters to attract audiences to the cinema, and the production of a promotional video prior to a film's release is one of the most regularly-used approaches (Moore 2015). It is seen as a highly effective promotional medium that has a large influence on the audience's expectations and perceptions (Bridges 1993; Karray and Debernitz 2017).

The extant literature has explored and elucidated promotional videos from different perspectives. Based on empirical evidence, Nelson-Field et al. (2013) argue that high arousal emotions are the primary drivers for the success of such videos. Yan and Santos (2009) employ critical discourse analysis to analyze the promotional video *China, Forever*, and they propose that this video conforms to Orientalistic discourse through two specific channels: it reveals a nostalgic and mythical China that appeals to the Western Orientalistic imagination, and it creates a modern China subjugated to Western understanding. Maier (2009) emphasizes the functions of visual evaluation in such videos, finding that the interplay of visual evaluative devices plays an important role in creating persuasive effects. Other scholars have explored auditory perception; for example, Noad and Barton (2020) conduct a semiotic analysis and report that music and voice sounds are crucial to the interpretation of a film's narrative meanings. It is worth noting that multimodal discourse analysis has drawn scholarly attention in recent years, and has been used to analyze promotional videos in different sectors (Francesconi 2014), including film (Ghaznavi et al. 2017), tourism (Francesconi 2017), education (Gottschall and Saltmarsh 2017), and so on. For example, Wang and Feng (2021) explore how Xi'an constructs its digitalized urban imaginary with promotional videos on TikTok, with results showing that various linguistic and visual resources are used to highlight Xi'an's dual identity as a modern metropolis and a historic city. Promotional videos from other countries and regions, such as the European Union (Lähdesmäki 2017)

and India (Poonia and Chauhan 2015) have also been analyzed within the framework of multimodal critical discourse analysis.

Despite extensive research in this area, however, it is clear that promotional videos have not received significant attention from linguists. While there are discourse studies about promotional videos, including studies utilizing multimodal discourse analysis (e.g., Bateman et al. 2017; Bortoluzzi 2009), how linguistic approaches and theories are applied to visual semiotics is still a contested area (Bateman and Wildfeuer 2014). Extant theories such as Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which explains why visuals are more easily perceived, have proposed and confirmed the primacy of visual information (Nagel et al. 2012). However, previous studies have mainly focused on static visuals and largely neglected the importance of characters' actions and interactions in terms of visual cognition and narrative comprehension (Tseng 2013). Thus, the current research integrates the socio-functional approach of SVG with the linguistic-oriented approach of framing theory, and conducts a visual framing analysis of the promotional video *What Is Peppa?* so as to explore the functions of visual semiotics in establishing communication and achieving promotional effects in such videos.

2.2 Framing and visual framing

Framing has been applied as a bridging model to analyze different stages of the communication process from different disciplinary perspectives and methodologies (Geise and Baden 2015). According to Entman (1993: 55), "Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described."

Framing highlights some aspects of reality, allowing us to "meaningfully structure the social world" (Reese 2001: 11). Bateson (2003) defines a frame using two analogies, picture frames and Venn diagrams, to illustrate that frames accentuate what is inside them and exclude outside factors so that the receiver can perceive the key information.

In framing theory, the kernel is how the topic or event is described. Different descriptions of an event might change people's previous opinions, and subsequently affect their behaviors (Chong and Druckman 2007). According to Slothuus (2008: 4), there are three possible mediators of framing effects: the accessibility mode, which hypothesizes that the highlighted frames are more accessible while others are "shunted to the side"; the importance change mode, which works by changing the importance of people's existing considerations; and the content change mode, which

proposes a new consideration. Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) describes pairs of frames, i.e., media frames (frames in communication) and individual frames (frames in thought), strong frames and weak frames (judged by their persuasive effect), and specific and generic frames (in view of their generality), all of which are frequently used in research. According to this analysis, the frames in *What Is Peppa?* are media frames, which are built on the “written or spoken word, still or moving images, sounds and visual elements of all kinds, etc.” (Ardèvol-Abreu 2015: 431). Specifically, because of their iconicity, indexicality, and syntactic implicitness, visuals are particularly effective tools for framing (Messaris and Abraham 2001) that offer “a number of different condensing symbols that suggest the core frame” (Garrison and Stuart 1992: 60).

Visual framing highlights the special role of visual semiotics in framing. As defined by Brantner et al. (2011), visual framing organizes some aspects of the perceived reality and accentuates them via visual stimuli. It begins with the choice of events, followed by the selection of pictures, the way they are captured (angle, perspective, biases, etc.), and what is to be framed (Schwalbe 2006). In the context of visual framing, the images and photographs help with the interpretation of an event (Entman 1993), which serve as the “contributors” and “framed objects” (Bock 2020: 4). Journalists frequently use visual frames for global news coverage (Zelizer 2017); Parry (2010) examines the photographic representation of the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict by comparing the use of press photographs in *The Times* and *The Guardian*, and suggests that visual framing is used to fit with different moral evaluations and political interpretations of the war. Seo and Ebrahim (2016) analyze news images posted on the official Facebook pages of the Syrian President and the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces in 2013 and 2014, and find that visual frames are used to present the Syrian civil war, and that human-interest framing produces higher values. The effective use of visual frames lies in the framing devices, which involve the prominence and placement of the event, as well as graphic devices in photographs (Fahmy 2010). For example, Pfau et al. (2006) point out that photographs with captions elicit a greater emotional response and make the event more salient to the readers. Thus, “the more redundant the visual theme and the more prominent, the clearer the indication we get about the presence of visual frames” (Fahmy 2010: 699).

Among all the studies on this theoretical base, Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011) propose a four-tiered model of visual framing by conceptualizing frames at the denotative, stylistic-semiotic, connotative, and ideological levels (Hellmueller and Zhang 2019). At the denotative level, frames are identified by describing the visual materials and organizing those design elements into “themes” (Rodriguez and Dimitrova 2011: 53). The stylistic-semiotic level “takes into account the stylistic conventions and technical transformations involved in representation” (2011: 54),

in which social distance, visual modality, and subject behavior are highlighted to show the social meanings of the visuals. The third, connotative level focuses on the ideas or concepts attached to the persons or objects, and visuals are examined as symbols. Finally, the ideological level centers on the ideological meaning of the visuals, providing the underlying “why” behind the stylistic features (2011: 57) to “ascertain those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion” (Panofsky 1970: 55). This model allows us to explore and elucidate visual framing at different levels, and provides a comprehensive approach to identify and analyze visual frames.

3 Methodology

In this section we first present the analytical framework of the current study, and then introduce the video as well as the salient topics in it. We also explain how we collected and analyzed our data, and how we assured the credibility of our analysis.

3.1 Analytical framework

Visual framing underpins this study. Responding to the need for visual and multimodal analysis, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) drew on Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday 2004) and provided the Systemic Visual Grammar as a consistent framework for such analyses, transforming the linguistic paradigm and applying it to designed images (Almeida 2009). Following this classic framework, some new frameworks and approaches were later proposed and developed. For example, Bateman (2008: 107) put forward the GeM mode, which involves the analysis of genre and multimodality, “treating the multimodal page as a multilayered semiotic artefact.” O’Halloran et al. (2013) proposed a “multimodal digital semiotics” approach, involving the application of digital media technology, mathematical techniques, and scientific visualization to analyze multimodal phenomena. Building on Segmented Discourse Representation Theory, Bateman and Wildfeuer (2014) articulated a model of discourse pragmatics to capture artefacts’ technical features and interpret their contextual meaning. Among all these frameworks, we chose SVG because it is considered “a comprehensive visual semiotic theory” (Bell and Milic 2002) for visual analysis, and it has been widely used in areas such as media studies and film studies (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Building on SVG, subsequent research has extended it into new domains (e.g., Jewitt 2005; Macken-Horarik 2004; Martinec

2004), which suggests that it is “groundbreaking work” (Machin 2013: 347) for visual analysis.

According to SVG, visual images fulfill three major meanings. First, representational meaning represents the experiential world in terms of narrative process and conceptual process. The former is the process of doing something (the stylistic-semiotic level), while the latter reflects participants in terms of their more generalized essence, class, or structure, which can be viewed as the connotative level. Second, interactive meaning enables the producer of the images to interact and establish communicative and even emotional ties with the receiver, delivering messages to and even persuading them. By means of gaze, size of frame, perspective, etc., the interaction guides and enables the receiver to grasp the stylistic conventions and social meanings embedded in the visuals, and makes relevant visuals into stylistic-semiotic systems. Third, compositional meaning functions by arranging the visual resources and making the frame as a whole highlight the underlying meaning of the designed images, which reveals the ideological representation behind the visual and is in accordance with the fourth level of analysis in Rodriguez and Dimitrova’s (2011) model. In fact, the other three levels in the model are also embodied by the three meanings in SVG, which demonstrates the close and even inherent connections between the model and the framework. Therefore, we integrate both in the analytical framework of the current study (see Figure 1). Using our visual framing analysis, we aim to explore and exploit, first, how the chosen topics are saliently interpreted in the visual images, and second, how the interpretation of these topics establishes communication with the audience and achieves the promotional purpose.

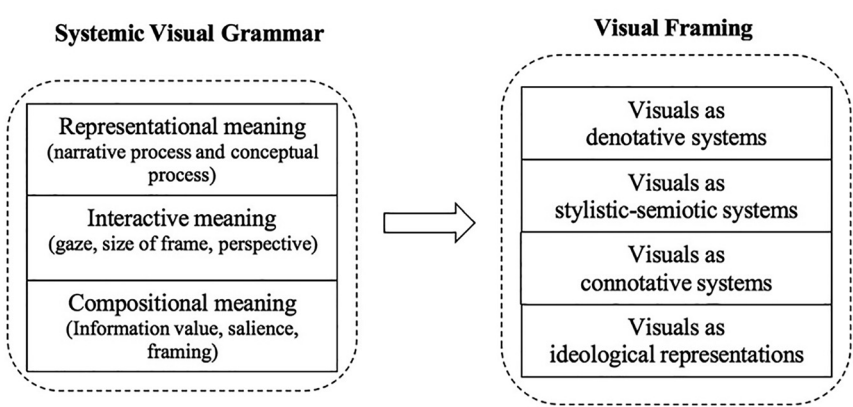


Figure 1: Framework of visual framing analysis in the current study.

Specifically, based on the denotative system for the analysis of representational meaning, we mainly focus on Li's actions and Settings. In the narrative process, Vectors are defined as "action verbs" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 46). The Actor is the participant from which the Vector derives, carrying the most important information. Setting, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), requires a foreground and a background to highlight or obscure participants and create a visual contrast. Analysis of representation, which mainly reveals the stylistic-semiotic and connotative levels of visuals, indicates how the main Actor is portrayed to impress the audience, and how a specific Setting is adopted to underline the background of the video.

For the analysis of interactive meaning, we choose gaze and size of frame as the subjects. Gaze categorizes an image as a "demand" or "offer" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 119), and size of frame suggests different social distances. Analysis of interaction suggests how gaze and different sizes of frame are used to establish communication with the audience at the stylistic-semiotic level. For composition meaning, information value and salience are highlighted. Information value is realized by the placement of elements, and salience "creates a hierarchy of importance among the elements" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006: 201) through size, color contrast, placement, cultural factors, etc. Analysis of composition demonstrates how the placement of elements and salience are employed to integrate the visuals into a meaningful whole to represent the ideology behind it. Thus, the integration of the three meanings within SVG with Rodriguez and Dimitrova's (2011) model of visual frames will enrich our understanding about the roles of visuals in the case of promotional videos, and how visual semiotics are used to frame salient topics.

3.2 Peppa and salient topics in the video

The case video *What Is Peppa?* was produced to promote the Chinese New Year movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New Year*. It centers on the question "what is Peppa?". Peppa is the piglet protagonist in the British children's cartoon series *Peppa Pig*, which is popular among children in many countries (including China) and which has become part of popular cartoon culture. As suggested by Dapeng Zhang, the director of the film, the promotional video also aims to localize the character and the film.

In the video, Yubao Li, an empty nester living in a remote village, is asked by his little grandson in the city to prepare a 'Peppa' (*Peiqi* in Pinyin) as a New Year treat for the boy. However, Yubao Li is ignorant of what Peppa is, so he asks other residents in his village and receives many wrong but interesting answers, such as a camgirl, shampoo, and a board game. Finally, he figures out what Peppa is, manages to make one with an air blower, and gives this special gift to his grandson. To some extent the

story also reveals the globalization of Peppa in China. In the video the homemade Peppa is more than a cartoon figure for entertainment; it also carries a similar glocalizational denotation (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006; Robertson 1992). This will be further elaborated in our analysis.

We also collected some interviews with the director Dapeng Zhang, and found that he repeatedly discussed and stressed some crucial topics of the video (see Table 1).² As Table 1 suggests, the director focused on family, family reunions, and family love nine times in twelve interviews, which clearly conveys that family reunions and family love are the most important topics in the video. In almost every

Table 1: Topics mentioned by the director Dapeng Zhang in different interviews.

Date	Media	Topics
January 18th 2019	The Beijing News	Family reunions and happiness
January 18th 2019	NetEase Entertainment	Love and companionship
January 18th 2019	Iqilu.net	Family reunions, harmony, and generation gaps
January 18th 2019	Changsha Evening News	Family reunions and generation gaps
January 18th 2019	Nanfang plus	Family reunions, love, and empty nesters
January 18th 2019	Beijing Youth Daily	Family love and empty nesters
January 19th 2019	CCTV.com	Family reunions, love, and generation gaps
January 19th 2019	Chengdu Economic Daily	Family reunions and love
January 19th 2019	Nanfang Metropolis Daily	Family love
January 19th 2019	Huanqqui.com	Love and caring for families
January 21st 2019	Knews	Family love
January 21st 2019	Sike	Love and happiness

2 News reports are available at the following sites:
The Beijing News: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1622964362352786898&wfr=spider&for=pc>
NetEase Entertainment: <http://ent.163.com/19/0118/16/E5QN900800038FO9.html>
Nanfang plus: <http://dy.163.com/v2/article/detail/E5QHB919055004XG.html>
Beijing Youth Daily: <http://www.chinanews.com/yl/2019/01-19/8733380.shtml>
Sike: <http://sike.news.cn/statics/sike/posts/2019/01/219541337.html>
CCTV.com: <http://news.cctv.com/2019/01/19/ARTIlgFPFd1S5dZCNHzfQub190119.shtml>
Iqilu.net: <http://news.iqilu.com/shandong/yaowen/2019/0118/4171070.shtml>
Changsha Evening News: <https://www.icswb.com/h/153/20190118/580818.html>
Knews: <http://dy.163.com/v2/article/detail/E62ISERE0514EGPO.html>
Nanfang Metropolis Daily: https://www.sohu.com/a/290073217_161795
Chengdu Economic Daily: https://e.chengdu.cn/html/2019-01/19/content_642061.htm
Huanqqui.com: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1622999376703225790&wfr=spider&for=pc>

interview, he tried to tell the audience that the video was more than a medium for promotion, emphasizing that it was also a public service announcement. In addition, he also talked about happiness (two times), companionship (once), and caring (once), serving as supplementary explanations for family reunions and love. It is worth noting that empty nesters and generation gaps were also discussed in the sampled interviews (twice for both), in which the director illustrated that the issue of empty nesters is the primary cause of generation gaps. If family reunion and love stand for traditional values, then empty nesters and generation gaps represent current social issues. Integrating and reinterpreting traditions alongside contemporary issues makes this video more relatable and thought-provoking.

The above-mentioned topics can be abstracted into three salient topics, namely, empty nesters, family love, and family reunions. It is not difficult to infer that such topics played a critical role in attracting audiences and in the success of the promotional video. Thus, we conducted a visual framing analysis of the video to demonstrate how visual semiotics were used to frame the three topics.

3.3 Data collection and analysis

First, we downloaded the video *What Is Peppa?* from the popular video platform *Bilibili* and transcribed it.³ The video lasts for about six minutes. According to Iedema (2001), the analysis of dynamic discourses such as videos can be divided into six levels: frame, shot, scene, sequence, generic stage, and discourse as a whole, in which studies on scene transition marked one prominent turning point in film analysis, providing insights into “how meanings in film are created and signaled to the viewers” (Tseng 2012: 123). In the editing process, filmmakers combine scenes with different settings and durations so as to convey underlying information to the audience (Eisenstein 1969). Since sequence is instituted by a group of scenes with a certain level of unity (Iedema 2001), we took the level of sequence as our research perspective in the current study. This perspective allows us to undertake an in-depth analysis of how the sequence of this video was edited, i.e., how a number of scenes were arranged to reflect the same issue that shares similar connotations with the salient topics in the video. Thus, we segmented the video by important scenes and explored the visual semiotics in those scenes. Specifically, for each topic we captured prominent scenes and conducted visual analysis on them. After a detailed analysis, we were able to illustrate how those scenes were used to frame salient topics at the denotative, stylistic-semantic, connotative, and ideological levels.

3 The video was downloaded from https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1kb411C7VQ/?spm_id_from=333.788.videocard.17

To assure the credibility of this study, all the scenes used in the study were screenshots captured by two researchers, and each scene was analyzed by both. In addition, the final results were cross-checked by a third researcher. The three researchers reached a consensus on all the analyses.

4 Analysis and results

4.1 Frame of empty nesters

This video is mainly set in a remote mountain area. The special Setting plays a prominent role in its success. The first frame draws on the remote mountain Setting and uses different levels of visual frames to highlight the topic of empty nesters.

The first picture that appears in this video is a range of bare mountains. Against this background, Li asks, “When are you coming home?”. As Figure 2 shows, Li is placed in the foreground and the Setting is obscured. The picture serves as a denotative system that directly expresses Li’s desire to be reunited with his family. Additionally, the close-up shot makes Li’s facial expression clearer, as if we were close enough to touch the subject, which conveys the interactive social meaning embodied in the stylistic-semiotic system of the image. This situation is familiar and easily understood; parents will always be concerned about when their children will come home, and this is particularly the case on the eve of the Spring Festival in China. The use of a close-up shot suggests personal distance, which facilitates the communicative effect. The carefully chosen Setting of a range of mountains, combined with Li’s words and desires, reflect a prominent social issue in China: empty nesters. This happens when the younger generation moves away for work and the



Figure 2: Screenshot: Li is asking his son when he will come home. Used with permission.

older family members are left at home, just like parent birds left in an empty nest after their fledglings have flown. Because of China's ongoing social and economic development, more and more young people are moving to large cities from rural areas, leaving the old at home. Throughout this video, Li lives alone in a small cottage, and he is therefore representative of many empty nesters, in particular in rural China. This image easily evokes the audience's empathy, contributing to the realization of emotional communication.

To illustrate the consequences of empty nesters, this frame first implies that the issue of empty nesters creates generation gaps. In Figure 3 Li's grandson wants a Peppa (*peiqi* in Chinese pinyin). Li asks, "What is *peiqi*?" He asks the same question four times. The Setting is dark, and Li wears old-fashioned white working gloves. This color-contrasted visual composition highlights the antiquated cellphone in his hand, which indicates the phenomenon of information blocks in rural life and further suggests the "why" underlying Li's ignorance of Peppa. As an empty nester, Li is isolated from the outside world. It is therefore natural for him not to know about Peppa. Li's grandson, living in the city, is exposed to novelty every day, and he takes it for granted that his grandpa knows about Peppa. This conveys the connotation that there are huge gaps between Li and his grandson in terms of both their generation, the old versus the young, and their environment, the urban versus the rural; this also happens to other empty nesters like Li. It is worth noting that Peppa is also the main character in the movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New Year*, and by constantly mentioning the character the video increases the significance of Peppa and arouses the audience's interest in the movie.

Second, this frame shows that without children's company, happiness is absent from the life of the elderly. In Figure 4, Li walks alone with a sad facial expression and gloomy eyes. Moreover, the colorless Setting also gives this picture a sense of



Figure 3: Screenshot: Li is asking his grandson, "What is *Peiqi*?". Used with permission.

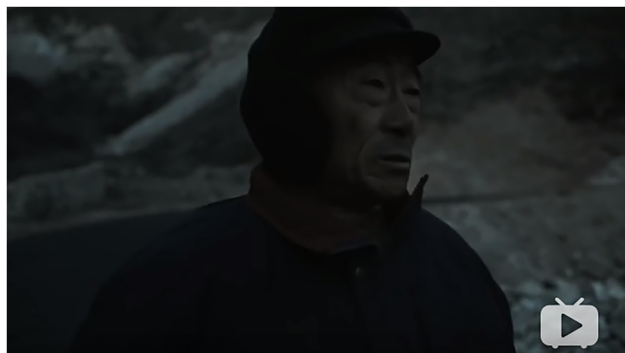


Figure 4: Screenshot: Li walks alone. Used with permission.

bleakness. At this level, the denotative meaning of the visuals suggests his sadness in the moment of knowing that his son may not come home. The medium shot, with its stylistic-semiotic meaning, combines Li's image and the Setting well, further accentuating his feelings. Li looks into the distance for a long time. This "offer" transmits these feelings to the audience directly; they are not unique to Li, but are also felt by other empty nesters. The visuals convey that without the company of their children and grandchildren, the life of elderly people is difficult and lonely. The issue of empty nesters is ubiquitous in rural areas, and the image of Li represents thousands of empty nesters. The description represents the real situations of many elderly people, easily arousing the audience's sympathy.

In all three images Li does not look at the audience, which offers information rather than demanding. In fact, this video presents every figure as an "offer," which means that no characters make any eye-contact with the audience, and every figure offers different information to the audience. The choice of "offer" as a frame creates disengagement between the characters in the video and the audience. In such an indirect interaction, the characters offer information to the audience and the audience is the invisible onlooker, receiving the information either consciously or unconsciously.

4.2 Frame of family love

In this video Li is the main Actor, and his construction of Peppa constitutes the main section of the video. Just like many other elderly parents and grandparents in China, Li does not express his emotion directly in words; instead, he embodies his

love in the process of making Peppa. The second frame, drawing significantly on the stylistic-semiotic meaning of the visuals, demonstrates Li's deep love for his family through his actions.

To prepare Peppa as a present for his grandson, Li first refers to a dictionary, which is shown at the start of the second frame. Figure 5 depicts Li carefully going through the dictionary. The behavior of referring forms a Vector, Li is the Actor, and the dictionary is the Goal. The close-up shot shows Li's rough fingers, a typical Chinese peasant's hand. To demonstrate his limited knowledge and the lack of available technology in the village, the yellowing dictionary is Li's only reference. He points at every word which is pronounced 'pei', such as *peidai* ('wear'), and *peizhong* ('hybridization'). The close-up shot indicates personal distance, establishing a close relationship between the participant and the audience, almost as if we were referring to the dictionary too. The rough hands and yellowing dictionary are placed in the central position, with blurring of the surroundings. At this level the design elements form a stylistic-semiotic system to illustrate his concentration and his efforts to find out about *peiqi*, which also further illustrate the gap between the rural and the urban.

However, he fails; the dictionary is no help. In a further effort to discover the meaning of *peiqi*, Li consults many people. Figure 6 shows a scene where he goes to the grocery store and the shopkeeper gives him a bottle of shampoo, which is named *peiqi*. The blurring of the background causes a visual contrast, making the shampoo the central element in this figure. The camera moves from a long shot to a close-up shot, gradually presenting the two-character word *peiqi* clearly. Then the shopkeeper adds, "We also have hair conditioner." Such a visual denotation is humorous, entertaining the audience. Besides the shampoo, Li also receives many other ridiculous answers, such as a camgirl, a villager named "Peiqi Zhang," a board game,



Figure 5: Screenshot: Li is referring to a dictionary. Used with permission.



Figure 6: Screenshot: A shampoo named *peiqi*. Used with permission.

etc. The action of consulting, with new stylistic-semiotic meanings, forms a new Vector, which suggests Li's determination to fulfill his grandson's expectation of receiving a Peppa.

Eventually he understands what Peppa is, and starts to make one with some simple materials – an air blower, a saw, and some other tools. He keeps modifying the design using these simple materials and eventually manages to make a Peppa. The sequential actions of referring, consulting, and modification suggest Li's endeavors to satisfy his grandson. More importantly, Li takes every word from his grandson seriously, testifying his love directly.

As the first frame suggests, there are generation gaps between Li and his family. Although these gaps exist, Li tries hard to bridge them, and the final Peppa is a successful attempt. Figure 7 shows the Peppa made by Li. In this picture, Peppa is the central element, with the window and firework as the Margin. The camera slowly moves from the bottom to the front of Peppa, making this object the focus of the scene. In addition, the size of Peppa constitutes the major portion of the image, and the pink color, contrasting with the light color of the curtains, also highlights its information value. This description answers the question of what Peppa is; Peppa is a cartoon figure. This special Peppa is funny at first sight, but it embodies many symbolic meanings. The second frame demonstrates that this Peppa is an invisible bridge, reducing the gap between Li and his grandson because of Li's newly-acquired knowledge about Peppa and his love for his grandson. Partly as a result of the generation gap and the information shortage in his remote mountain village, the old grandfather initially seems ignorant and clumsy, and this is emphasized for the audience by the jokes during the process of making the present. However, he manages to express his deep love for his grandson in his own way. This Peppa, different from those which can be purchased, is handcrafted from iron, serving as

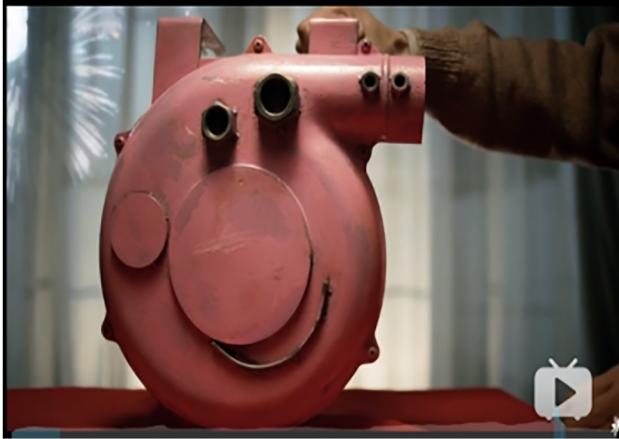


Figure 7: Screenshot: A handmade iron Peppa. Used with permission.

the carrier of the grandfather's love. Adding the local cultural element of family love to this foreign cartoon figure enriches Peppa's image and refreshes people's existing recognition of the character, further underpinning the movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New Year*.

4.3 Frame of family reunion

As the director mentioned in his interviews, family reunion is the most salient topic in the video. The last frame draws on contrasts, functioning as a framing device to underline the value of family reunions. Subsequently, the reunion of Li's family directly highlights the ideological meaning behind this topic.

To frame this topic, first the video depicts the reunion of other families, creating a stark contrast with Li's loneliness, disappointment, and even sadness. Figure 8 shows a scene where another villager's son has come back home, while Li's has not. The other villager and her son on the hillside form the Setting, which is made darker by underexposure, losing visual details in the depiction. The villager says, "You are back, my son ... Come inside the house"; the visual denotation clearly conveys the happiness of their family reunion. In this scene no participant is placed in the most salient position, with the purpose of accentuating the function of the Setting. The medium shot allows the audience to realize specifically what the subject is doing; Li is cleaning the yard, preparing for the Spring Festival by himself. At this level the depiction of others' reunions becomes a stylistic system, forming a sharp contrast to Li's sorrow and loneliness. Another contrast is shown in a piece of news, in which the



Figure 8: Screenshot: The family reunion of other villagers. Used with permission.

reporter says that because of the Spring Festival travel rush many people are already on their way home. However, Li's family are not. In this frame two contrasts are used to reflect Li's loneliness as an empty nester, conveying the value of family reunion to the audience.

The truth is that because of the poor telecommunication signal in the remote mountains, Li was not able to hear his son clearly on his cellphone and thus has misinterpreted the message. In fact, his son returns home later and takes him to spend the Spring Festival with his family in the city. Frames are used here to highlight the ideology of family reunion directly. Figure 9 shows the scene where Li's whole family goes to the cinema to watch the movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New*



Figure 9: Screenshot: Li's whole family go to the cinema to watch the movie. Used with permission.

Year. When there is more than one subject in the image, a long shot determines how much of the other subjects comes into our field of vision and what function they assume. In this figure, they applaud in the same way while facing in the same direction, which establishes a connection between them. It creates a happy picture of family reunion with smiles on everyone's faces, which is a stark contrast to the description of Li's loneliness before. This contrast manifests the value of the family reunion, resonating with the audience's emotions. Additionally, the headline "On the first day of Lunar New Year, we wish you a happy family" is placed at the top of the screen, using a highlighted placement to express its information value. The promotional video was released on the eve of Chinese New Year, a time for family reunion and a significant focus for the whole country, just as it is for Li and his family. This ideological representation reveals the shared community and family values of Chinese people at that time.

Figure 10 shows the end of the video. The villager against the telegraph pole is playing the suona. He plays it twice in the promotional video. For the audience, this scene seems strange, because it appears to be unnecessary, but the video plays the melody twice. Later the director revealed that the melody played by the suona is the theme song of the movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New Year*. This arouses the audience's curiosity and improves their perception of the movie.

At the same time, the camera takes the perspective of the villager standing in the middle of the shot. He slowly looks at the banner on the wall, which draws the audience's attention to this as well. This banner is separated from other elements through color contrast and its higher position, which highlights the words on it:



Figure 10: Screenshot: The promotional banner on the wall Used with permission.

‘No gift for Chinese New Year Day; the whole family enjoys the Peppa movie in town’ (*dànián chūyī bù shōulǐ, quán jiā jìnchéng kàn pèiqī*). Peppa here refers to the movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New Year*. Taking the direct words as denotation, the end of this video still underlines the importance of family reunion, achieved by the words *quán jiā* (‘whole family’).

In the framing of the three salient topics in this video, Yubao Li is the main character and Peppa is always the main subject moving the frames forward. Peppa is representative of popular cartoon culture. To attract different groups from the worldwide audience, this promotional video, released in China and targeting a wide audience in both urban and rural areas, endows Peppa with traditional Chinese values of family love and family reunion by conceptualizing visual frames at denotative, stylistic-semiotic, connotative, and ideological representation levels. This reflects the glocalization of the cartoon character and relevant products, and highlights the role of visuals in this process. Endowing such values on this figure that is familiar to audiences worldwide means that Peppa becomes more localized and appealing to Chinese people, and this special glocalization strategy makes the video and the movie suitable for the Chinese market.

Above all, different from other promotional videos which come straight to the point, this video uses an emotionally affecting story to pave the way for the promotion. The whole video lasts for about six minutes, but only a few seconds are used for direct promotion; far more time is given to the ideological representation of family love and family reunion, which is accordance with the themes of the promoted movie. The story told in the video embodies these traditional values and minimizes the commercial nature of the material, which makes its promotional purpose more acceptable and magnifies the promotional effect.

5 Discussion and conclusion

Focusing on the promotional video *What Is Peppa?* and applying an SVG-based visual framing analysis, this study has examined how visual semiotics are employed to frame prominent topics, so as to establish communication with the audience and achieve the desired promotional effects. It is found that visuals are mainly used to frame three salient topics, namely, empty nesters, family love, and family reunion. In the first frame, the Setting of remote mountains highlight the topic of empty nesters. To further illustrate the consequences of the empty nest phenomenon, this frame suggests that it causes generation gaps and creates an unhappy life for older people, which establishes emotional communication with the audience using different levels of visual frames. In the frame of family love, by describing Li’s endeavors to bridge the generation gap the video illustrates his love for his grandson mainly by

employing visuals at the stylistic-semantic level; this is realized through his Actions. The process of making Peppa is both difficult and humorous, showing Li's persistence and amusing the audience, thereby enhancing the promotional effect. Every scene in the video is presented as an "offer." Li is the main participant, and the offered information makes his image more effective. In the final frame, contrast is used as framing device to highlight the ideological representation of family reunion, and the composition arrangement accentuates this using visual similarity which conveys a unity of information. At the end, the visual separation of the banner indicates its promotional purpose. The foreshadowing in earlier parts of the video makes its commercial nature more acceptable. Overall, this video successfully presents the image of an empty nester, Yubao Li, in a simple but effective way. The salient topics are clearly and effectively framed by diverse visuals at the denotative, stylistic-semiotic, connotative, and ideological representation levels, easily catching the audience's attention and emotions and thereby magnifying the promotional effect.

This study enriches the extant literature on visuals by highlighting the critical role of visual semiotics in promotional videos (Maier 2009; Wang and Feng 2021). Designed images mainly assume three functions, namely, representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006). Analysis of representation suggests that this video portrays the image of Li through the description of his actions, and highlights the most salient topic by choosing remote mountains as the Setting. Analysis of interaction reveals that the video frequently employs close-up shots to create a close personal distance between the participant and the audience. Analysis of composition shows that placement and salience are used to convey the values of family love and reunion. In terms of other semiotic techniques, they also assume complementary functions. For example, verbals help the audience to understand the intentions of the speaker directly. However, in this promotional video, compared with other semiotics, visuals have several special advantages and are important in attracting, impressing, and touching the audience (Barnhurst and Steele 1997). The variety of colors, frame sizes, and movements makes the video easily understood and accepted, and thus facilitates the visual communication between the characters and the viewers.

This study corroborates the importance of visual frames in communication (Brantner et al. 2011; Fahmy 2010), and, more importantly, extends the analysis from political communication (Cheng 2016; Jerit 2008; Nelson et al. 1997) to business communication, particularly promotional videos. Framing contributes directly to the realization of promotional effects in such videos. As important elements in promotional videos, visuals are not randomly chosen or arranged; instead, they are employed to frame topics. Different frames might change people's opinions, and subsequently influence their behaviors (Chong and Druckman 2007). The framing effect of this video shows that frames in promotional videos can also assume the

function of persuasion. With the employment of various visual semiotics the video manages to frame three topics, i.e., empty nesters, family love, and family reunion. After its release many people commented that they wanted to go home immediately and they were eager to visit their families, proving the framing effect, on the one hand. On the other hand, however, those frames also decrease the commercial nature of the video, making it more acceptable. The success of the promotional video increased the audience's expectations in relation to the movie *Peppa Celebrates Chinese New Year*, which was in accordance with the initial purpose of the video.

This study also contributes to the emerging literature on glocalization (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006), proving that the integration of particularity and generality in the visual frames of promotional videos reflects and promotes the glocalization of target objects. Glocalization highlights the combination of homogenization and heterogenization (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007). In this video, Peppa, a popular cartoon figure introduced from the United Kingdom, provides an ideological representation of the traditional Chinese values of family love and family reunion. In different cultural backgrounds the notion of family has different connotations, but for the Chinese, family love is an eternal theme and family reunion is of vital importance, especially during the Spring Festival. This combination of foreign popular culture and traditional values in the process of framing reflects glocalization in the promotional video. The morality embodied in *What is Peppa?* easily evokes resonance with the audience, contributing to the significant success of this promotional video.

Research funding: This study was supported by National Natural Science Foundation of China (71872165). National Natural Social Science Foundation of China (23AYY018). Zhejiang Provincial Philosophy and Social Science Program of Leading Talents Cultivation Project for Distinguished Young Scholars (24QNYC02ZD). Research Fund by the Language Commission of China (ZDI145-74).

References

- Akhtar, Shahid, Andre Beck & Ivica Rimac. 2015. HiFi: A hierarchical filtering algorithm for caching of online video. In *Proceedings of the 23rd ACM international conference on multimedia*, 421–430. New York: ACM Multimedia.
- Alcaraz, Carrión Daniel & Javier Valenzuela. 2021. Distant time, distant gesture: Speech and gesture correlate to express temporal distance. *Semiotica* 241(1/4). 159–183.
- Almeida, Danielle. 2009. Where have all the children gone? A visual semiotic account of advertisements for fashion dolls. *Visual Communication* 8(4). 481–501.
- Ardevol-Abreu, Alberto. 2015. Framing theory in communication research in Spain: Origins, development and current situation. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social* 70. 423–450.

- Barnhurst, Kevin G. & Catherine A. Steele. 1997. Image-bite news: The visual coverage of elections on U.S. television, 1968–1992. *International Journal of Press/Politics* 2(1). 40–58.
- Bateman, John A. 2008. *Multimodality and genre: A foundation for the systematic analysis of multimodal documents*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bateman, John A. 2013. Multimodal analysis of film within the gem framework. *Revista De Língua E Literatura* 64. 49–84.
- Bateman, John A., Francisco O. D. Veloso, Janina Wildfeuer, Felix HiuLaam, Cheung Nancy & Songdan Guo. 2017. An open multilevel classification scheme for the visual layout of comics and graphic novels: Motivation and design. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 32(3). 476–510.
- Bateman, John A. & Janina Wildfeuer. 2014. A Multimodal discourse theory of visual narrative. *Journal of Pragmatics* 74. 180–208.
- Bateson, Gregory. 2003. A theory of play and fantasy. In Caro Isabel & Charlotte Schuchardt Read (eds.), *General semantics in psychotherapy*, 267–283. New York: Institution of General Semantics.
- Bell, Philip & Marko Milic. 2002. Goffman's gender advertisements revisited: Combining content analysis with semiotic analysis. *Visual Communication* 1(2). 203–222.
- Bock, Mary Angela. 2020. Theorizing visual framing: Contingency, materiality and ideology. *Visual Studies* 35(1). 1–12.
- Bortoluzzi, Maria. 2009. Towards a framework of critical multimodal analysis: Emotion in a film trailer. In Anna Esposito & Robert Vich (eds.), *Cross-modal analysis of speech, gestures, gaze and facial expressions* (Lecture Notes in Computer Science 5641), 50–62. Berlin: Springer.
- Brantner, Cornelia, Katharina Lobinger & Irmgard Wetzstein. 2011. Effects of visual framing on emotional responses and evaluations of news stories about the Gaza conflict 2009. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 88(3). 523–540.
- Bridges, Eileen. 1993. Service attributes: Expectations and judgments. *Psychology & Marketing* 10(3). 185–197.
- Buscemi, Francesco. 2017. Build your nation in 5'25'': Social constructions of Italy in official and user-generated videos on YouTube. *Social Semiotics* 27(2). 129–144.
- Cheng, Maria. 2016. The power of persuasion: Modality and issue framing in the 2012 Taiwan presidential debates. *Discourse & Society* 27(2). 172–194.
- Choi, Hak-Hyun, Seung-Ae Lim & Jung-Hee Kim. 2016. An efficient expression technique for promotional video production based on IoT (The Internet of Things) in cultural art institutions. *Multimedia Tools and Applications* 75. 14111–14124.
- Chong, Dennis & James N. Druckman. 2007. Framing theory. *Annual Review of Political Science* 10. 103–126.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. 1969. *Film form: Essays in film theory*. New York: Harcourt.
- Entman, Robert M. 1993. Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication* 43(4). 51–58.
- Fahmy, Shahira. 2010. Contrasting visual frames of our times: A framing analysis of English- and Arabic-language press coverage of war and terrorism. *International Communication Gazette* 72(8). 695–717.
- Francesconi, Sabrina. 2014. *Reading tourism texts: A multimodal analysis*. Great Britain: Short Run Press.
- Francesconi, Sabrina. 2017. Dynamic intersemiosis as a humor-enacting trigger in a tourist video. *Visual Communication* 16(4). 395–425.
- Gamson, William A. & David Stuart. 1992. Media discourse as a symbolic contrast: The bomb in political cartoons. *Sociological Forum* 7(1). 55–86.
- Geise, Stephanie & Christian Baden. 2015. Putting the image back into the frame: Modeling the linkage between visual communication and frame-processing theory. *Communication Theory* 25(1). 46–69.

- Ghaznavi, Jannath, Katherine L. Grasso & Laramie D. Taylor. 2017. Increasingly violent but still sexy: A decade of central female characters in top-grossing Hollywood and Bollywood film promotional material. *International Journal of Communication* 11. 23–47.
- Giulianotti, Richard & Roland Robertson. 2007. Forms of glocalization: Globalization and the migration strategies of Scottish football fans in North America. *Sociology* 41(1). 133–152.
- Gong, Tianyi & Vincent Wing Sun Tung. 2017. The impact of tourism mini-movies on destination image: The influence of travel motivation and advertising disclosure. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 34(3). 416–428.
- Gottschall, Kristina & Sue Saltmarsh. 2017. ‘You’re not just learning it, you’re living it!’ Constructing the ‘good life’ in Australian university online promotional videos. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 38(5). 768–781.
- Halliday, Michael A. K. 2004. *An introduction to functional grammar*, 3rd edn. England: Hodder Arnold Press.
- Hellmueller, Lea & Xu Zhang. 2019. Shifting toward a humanized perspective? Visual framing analysis of the coverage of refugees on CNN and spiegel online before and after the iconic photo publication of Alan Kurdi. *Visual Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357219832790>.
- Iedema, Rick. 2001. Analyzing film and television: A social semiotic account of hospital: An unhealthy business. In Theo Van Theo & Carey Jewitt (eds.), *Handbook of visual analysis*, 183–204. London: SAGE.
- Jerit, Jennifer. 2008. Issue framing and engagement: Rhetorical strategy in public policy debates. *Political Behavior* 30. 1–24.
- Jewitt, Carey. 2005. Multimodality, “reading,” and “writing” for the twenty-first century. *Discourse* 26(3). 315–331.
- Karray, Salma & Lidia Debernitz. 2017. The effectiveness of movie trailer advertising. *International Journal of Advertising* 36(2). 368–392.
- Kim, Seongseop, Ja Young Choe & Suna Lee. 2017. How are food value video clips effective in promoting food tourism? Generation Y versus non-generation Y. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 35(3). 377–393.
- Kjeldgaard, Dannie & Søren Askegaard. 2006. The glocalization of youth culture: The global youth segment as structures of common difference. *Journal of Consumer Research* 33(2). 231–247.
- Kress, Gunther & Theo van Leeuwen. 1996. *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, Gunther & Theo van Leeuwen. 2006. *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*, 2nd edn. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Laurier, Eric & Barry Brown. 2011. The reservations of the editor: The routine work of showing and knowing the film in the edit suite. *Social Semiotics* 21(2). 239–257.
- Lähdesmäki, Tuuli. 2017. Politics of affect in the EU heritage policy discourse: An analysis of promotional videos of sites awarded with the European Heritage Label. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23(8). 709–722.
- Machin, David. 2013. What is multimodal critical discourse studies? *Critical Discourse Studies* 10(4). 347–355.
- Macken-Horarik, Mary. 2004. Interacting with the multimodal text: Reflections on image and verbiage in art express. *Visual Communication* 3(1). 5–26.
- Maier, Carmen Daniela. 2009. Visual evaluation in film trailers. *Visual Communication* 8(2). 159–180.
- Maiorani, Arianna. 2011. Reading movies as interactive messages: A proposal for a new method of analysis. *Semiotica* 187(1/4). 167–188.
- Martinec, Radan. 2004. Gestures that co-occur with speech as a systematic resource: The realization of experiential meanings in indexes. *Social Semiotics* 14(2). 193–213.

- Messariss, Paul & Linus Abraham. 2001. The role of image in framing news stories. In Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy Jr. & August E. Grant (eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*, 215–226. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Moore, Sophie. 2015. Film talk: An investigation into the use of viral videos in film marketing, and the impact on electric word of mouth during pre-release and opening week. *Journal of Promotional Communications* 3(3). 380–404.
- Nagel, Friederike, Marcus Maurer & Carsten Reinemann. 2012. Is there a visual dominance in political communication? How verbal, visual, and vocal communication shape viewers' impressions of political candidates. *Journal of Communication* 62. 833–850.
- Nelson, Thomas E., Rosalee A. Clawson & Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. Media framing of a civil liberties conflict and its effect on tolerance. *American Political Science Review* 91(3). 567–583.
- Nelson-Field, Karen, Erica Riebe & Kellie Newstead. 2013. The emotions that drive viral video. *Australasian Marketing Journal* 21(4). 205–211.
- Nielsen. 2014. Content is king, but viewing habits vary by demographic. <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/content-is-king-but-viewinghabits-vary-by-demographic.html> (accessed 10 January 2024).
- Noad, Betty & Georgina Barton. 2020. Emotion resonance and divergence: A semiotic analysis of music and sound in “The Lost Thing,” an animated short film, and “Elizabeth,” a film trailer. *Social Semiotics* 30(2). 206–224.
- O'Halloran, Kay L., Marissa K. L. E., Alexey Podlasov & Sabine Tan. 2013. Multimodal digital semiotics: The interaction of language with other resources. *Text & Talk* 33(4–5). 665–690.
- Panofsky, Erwin. 1970. *Meaning in the visual arts*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Pan, Steve, Carla Santos & Seongseop Kim. 2017. Promoting tourism, projecting power: The role of television commercials. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing* 34(2). 192–208.
- Parry, Katy. 2010. A visual framing analysis of British press photography during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. *Media, War & Conflict* 3(1). 67–85.
- Pfau, Michael, Michel Haigh, Andeelynn Fifrck, Douglas Holl, Allison Tedesco, Jay Cope, David Nunnally, Amy Schiess, Donald Preston, Paul Roszkowski & Marlon Martin. 2006. The effects of print news photographs of the casualties of war. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 83(1). 150–168.
- Poonia, Arun Kumar & Gajendra Singh Chauhan. 2015. A multimodal discourse analysis of select tourism video commercials of incredible India campaign. *International Journal of Tourism and Travel* 8(1/2). 1–12.
- Reese, Stephen D. 2001. A bridging model for media research (prólogo). In Stephen D. Reese, Oscar H. Gandy Jr. & August E. Grant (eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*, 7–31. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Robertson, Roland. 1992. *Globalization: Social theory and global culture*, 25–41. London: SAGE.
- Rodriguez, Lulu & Daniela V. Dimitrova. 2011. The levels of visual framing. *Journal of Visual Literacy* 30(1). 48–65.
- Schwalbe, Carol B. 2006. Remembering our shared past: Visually framing the Iraq war on US news websites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12(1). 264–289.
- Seo, Hyunjin & Husain Ebrahim. 2016. Visual propaganda on Facebook: A comparative analysis of Syrian conflicts. *Media, War & Conflict* 9(3). 227–251.
- Shani, Amir, Po-Ju Chen, Youcheng Wang & Hua Nan. 2010. Testing the impact of a promotional video on destination image change: Application of China as a tourism destination. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 12(2). 116–133.
- Slothuus, Rune. 2008. More than weighting cognitive importance: A dual-process model of issue framing effects. *Political Psychology* 29(1). 1–28.

- Smith, Jason A. & Bhoomi K. Thakore (eds.). 2016. *Race and contention in twenty-first century U.S. media*. New York: Routledge.
- Tseng, Chiao-I. 2012. Audiovisual texture in scene transition. *Semiotica* 192(1/4). 123–160.
- Tseng, Chiao-I. 2013. Analyzing characters' interactions in filmic text: A functional semiotic approach. *Social Semiotics* 23(5). 587–605.
- Wang, Yilei & Dezheng Feng. 2021. History, modernity, and city branding in China: A multimodal critical discourse analysis of Xi'an's promotional videos on social media. *Social Semiotics* 33(2). 402–425.
- Yan, Grace & Carla Almeida Santos. 2009. "CHINA, FOREVER": Tourism discourse and self-orientalism. *Annals of Tourism Research* 36(2). 295–315.
- Zelizer, Barbie. 2017. *What journalism could be*. Cambridge: Polity Press.