

A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Impoliteness in Algerian Hirak Posters

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Abstract:

The present study aims at providing a state of the art picture of a multimodal perspective on impoliteness strategies in selected Algerian Hirak posters. To this end, the study adopted a combination of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) *Visual Grammar* and Culpeper's (2011) *Impoliteness model*. Further, a number of three protest posters were analyzed qualitatively. The results demonstrated the prominence of representational, interactive and compositional metafunctions in constructing meaning of the discourse of protest, reprimand and criticism. In addition, the findings exhibited the manifestation of a set of multimodal modes indexing possible impoliteness strategies in Algerian Hirak posters. The posters under analysis revealed the presence of participants picturing figures of Hirak supporters to increase the feeling of nationalism and patriotism in the audience. Importantly, the present study pointed to the persuasive nature of multimodal resources that targeted mobilizing and urging the persistence of anti-corruption Hirak movement.

Keywords: Multimodal Discourse Analysis; Impoliteness Strategies; Algerian Hirak; Protest posters; Visual Grammar.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The key notion of politeness has received noticeable attention in research due to its importance in maintaining social relationships with others. Conversely, impoliteness is the opposite of politeness as it achieves the opposite effect of social disruption (Culpeper, 1996). Recently, research has switched to the study of impoliteness in different discourse domains, namely, political discourse, legal discourse and classroom discourse. Hence, the present research deals with the manifestation of impoliteness strategies in posters of Algerian “*Hirak*” as an under researched discourse genre. Accordingly, posters can be defined as a multimodal communicative genre, with text, graphics, colors, speech, and even gestures used to convey meaning (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). In this regard, Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) is revealing in this type of discourse to touch on how language interacts with other semiotic resources in aiding meaning-making based on Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) seminal work of Visual Grammar.

The proliferation of protests and social movements in the Arab world, known as the Arab Spring, including: Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Syria increased instances of protest discourse and expressive usage of language. In fact, protestors’ language appeared in posters and slogans as persuasive tools that assist in conveying their messages to the targeted authorities and political regimes. The present study is dedicated to the 2019 Algerian social movement of Hirak in which Algerians chanted against the gang of corrupt and the deceitful regime demanding that “they all leave”. The large number of protest chants, slogans and posters in the Algerian Hirak mirrored the use of different polite and impolite acts of expression. The present study is concerned with the analysis of verbal and non-verbal instances of impoliteness strategies in selected Hirak protest posters from a multimodal perspective.

1.1 Research objectives:

This study is targeted at offering new contributions to the existing literature on impoliteness and multimodality in one of the underexplored discourse genres namely, protest discourse.

The study is aimed at:

- Unveiling the different semiotic modes that manifested in the Algerian Hirak posters.

- Casting light on the way semiotic modes contribute in the enactment of meaning.
- Capturing instances of visual and textual impoliteness strategies in the sampled posters.

1.2 Research Questions:

To meet the research objectives, the following research questions are designed:

- 1) What are the different semiotic modes manifested in the Algerian Hirak posters?
- 2) In what way do these semiotic resources assist in the enactment of meaning?
- 3) To what extent strategies of impoliteness appear in the analyzed Hirak posters?

2. Literature Review:

Multiple attempts of research turned to explore the notion impoliteness in different disciplines and discourse domains. The focus of many researchers was to identify impoliteness strategies relying on well -established theoretical models. Additionally, the bulk of the literature exhibited a growing interest of researchers to apply multimodality in different domains. Therefore, it appears adequate to highlight a set of key concepts in these areas of research.

2.1 Impoliteness:

Recently, research has switched to cast light on impoliteness in different discourse domains such as; legal discourse, political discourse, classroom discourse. Unlike politeness, impoliteness is the opposite as it communicates the opposite effect that is social disruption (Culpeper, 1996). Further, Bousfield (2007: 2186; 2008: 132), in his definition of impoliteness, maintains that impolite acts must be intentionally performed “1) unmitigated, in contexts where mitigation equates with politeness is required and/or, 2) with deliberate aggression, that is with the face threat exacerbated, ‘boosted’, or maximized in some way to heighten the face damage inflicted”. He went further to stress that for impoliteness to be

successful, the receiver must understand the intention of the speaker 'to offend'.

2.2 Culpeper's Impoliteness Framework:

Parallel to politeness theory, Culpeper (1996) devised a counter model that looks at social disharmony and conflict. He referred to the model of impoliteness as the 'Opposite' or 'Parasite' of politeness. In fact, his fundamental work constituted the base for many impoliteness studies. In a recent work, Culpeper (2011; 2016) critically revised his early model and proposed a bottom-up framework of impoliteness triggers mirroring Terkourafi's work on politeness (e.g. 2002, 2003, 2005). In this model, the term 'triggers' replaced the term 'strategies' and two main types of impoliteness formulas were identified i.e., conventionalized impoliteness formulae and non-conventionalized impoliteness formulae. The list of conventionalized impoliteness formulae comprised of nine main categories. The first three correspond with his earlier positive impoliteness super-strategy and the remaining six are consistent with negative impoliteness. The following is a list of impoliteness conventionalized formulas according to Culpeper (2011, 2016):

1. Insults (personalized negative vocatives, personalized negative assertions, personalized negative references, personalized t
2. Third-person negative references (in the hearing of the target).
3. Pointed criticisms/complaints
4. Unpalatable questions and/or presuppositions
5. Condescensions
6. Message Enforcers
7. Dismissals
8. Silencers
9. Threats
10. Negative Expressives

It is worth mentioning that Culpeper (2011, 2016) pointed to instances where people may consider or perceive something as impolite even if it 'was not preloaded' for impoliteness. Hence, he defined implicational impoliteness as "an impoliteness understanding that does not match the surface form or the semantics of the utterance or the symbolic meaning of the behavior" (Culpeper 2011: 17). The following are the three categories of implicational impoliteness:

1. Form- driven: the surface form or semantic context of a behavior is marked. (insinuation, casting aspersions, snide remarks)
2. Convention-driven: (sarcasm, teasing) a- Internal: the context projected by part of a behavior mismatches that projected by another part; or b- External: the context projected by part of a behavior mismatches the context of use.
3. Context-driven: a- Unmarked behavior: an unmarked (with respect to surface form or semantic context) and non-conventionalized behavior mismatches the context; b- Absence of behavior: the absence of a behavior mismatches the context.

2.3 Studies on Impoliteness:

Various investigations examined impoliteness in different contexts. Some delved into gender differences, while others focused on the use of impoliteness strategies. In computer-mediated communication, several investigations were undertaken to spot acts of impoliteness. By way of example, in Arabic discourse Hammod and Abdul-Rasul (2017) discussed Culpeper's (1996) impoliteness strategies in English and Arabic Facebook comments to identify impoliteness types. Their study showed some similarities in the type of impoliteness strategies between Arabic and English data. On the contrary, a difference was noticed in the type of topics prompting impolite behaviors.

In a similar vein, Al-Yasin and Rabab'ah (2018) looked into gender differences in impoliteness strategies made by African American characters in the TV series '*The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*' to enact humor. The results were in accordance with previous research suggesting that males use impoliteness strategies more than females especially in eliciting impoliteness and responding to face attacks. Additionally, the findings revealed that African American characters preferred attacking the hearer's negative face than attacking the hearer's positive face. Interestingly, gender differences existed in initiating negative impoliteness and sarcasm or mock impoliteness.

In a similar manner, Rabab'ah and Alali (2019) explored impoliteness in the comment section of the Al-Jazeera Arabic news website to unveil the forms of impolite acts which commenters produce online. The outcomes of their research highlighted that commenters used both conventionalized and non-conventionalized impoliteness formula of Culpeper's (2011) taxonomy to offend writers. Interestingly, the study exhibited that Arabic commenters employed colloquialisms, proverbs and idioms, religious expressions, and interjections to cause or aggravate the offense.

2.4 Multimodality:

Multimodality is a growing field of research that has developed since the early 1990's to describe how multiple modes (semiotic resources) like colors, gaze, gestures, words, images, etc, are integrated in communication to express richer meaning. This approach is associated with the work of the pioneers of multimodality Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) who introduced their book of *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996). The authors maintained that multimodality is grounded on Halliday's (1960) theories of social semiotics and systemic functional grammar to build a paradigm to account for the semiotic resources of images and analyze how these resources can be configured to design interpersonal meaning, to introduce the world in specific ways, and to realize meaning. In fact, the adaptation of Kress and Van Leeuwen was to match the visual mode by introducing three types of meaning, namely, representational, interactive and compositional.

2.5 Visual Grammar Framework:

In their book, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) introduced the comprehensive framework of Visual Grammar where they viewed language as a social semiotic form. Their modal deals with three types of meaning including: representational, interactive and compositional meanings. To start with, representational meaning mainly explores the representation of the objects represented in the real world. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) posited that representational meaning can be realized by three components namely, processes, participants and circumstances. Also, processes manifest in both narrative and conceptual ones. In essence, narrative processes appear in vivid and dynamic images that reflect motion or a given action; however, conceptual processes occur in images that lack motion or dynamism.

Further, interactive meaning is related to the description of the relationship of image marker, image representation and readers. The elements covered in this type are contact (gaze), social distance (relationship between participants) and subjectivity (the angle from which the image is displayed). Finally, compositional meaning means the whole layout of multimodal discourse. It encompasses information value (the positing of elements in an image), framing (the space between elements in the image) and salience (the catchy elements in the background and foreground of the image).

2.6 Studies on Multimodality:

With the growing interest and prominence of multimodal approaches in the analysis of communication, a number of investigations attempted to adhere to multimodality to explore different discourse domains. In their study, Teo and Zhu (2018) conducted a multimodal analysis of affect and education in China's English textbooks. Their study casted light on the verbal and visual representations of affect and attitude in a number of English as a Foreign Language textbooks published in China. The results revealed how verbal and visual resources with positive appraisal meanings are used to foster positive affect and attitudes toward English language learning, China, and foreign cultures in the textbooks.

Regarding the Arab discourse, Alsanhoury et al. (2020) undertook a study to shed light on the different verbal and non-verbal meaning making resources that manifested in the speeches of Donald Trump during his presidential campaign in 2016. The results concluded that both verbal and non-verbal meaning-making resources, in terms of representational, interactive and compositional meanings, work intersemiotically to deliver a full account of meaning and unravel Trump's populist leadership.

2.7 Protest Discourse:

In their sociolinguistic study, Al-Haq and Hussein (2012) conducted an analysis of four hundred slogans collected from different places in Tunisia and Egypt using internet, TV channels, and newspapers with a view of investigating the language functions that the slogans convey. Their results revealed that slogans communicate

twenty linguistic functions among which humiliation was the most prevailing. In a similar fashion, Srage (2013) discussed the phenomenon of ‘clause equivalent’ of the slogan ‘Irhal’ used by protestors in Al-Tahrir Square in the Egyptian revolution. He argued that this one-word statement constitutes a highly significant, semantically condensed verbal clause that reflects the protesters awareness of the need of political change. Furthermore, Lahlali (2014) has investigated some textual, social, cultural and political aspects of the slogans used during the Egyptian uprising of 2011. In his study, Lahlali (2014: 12) maintained that the language register used “echoes the diversity of Egyptian society and the different political orientations of its groups, including, amongst others, Islamic, secularist and liberal views”.

2.7.1 The Algerian ‘Hirak’:

In ‘The Arab Spring’ of 2011 many authoritarian political regimes in the Arab world witnessed tremendous movements seeking radical changes and reforms. In fact, waves of protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria called for changes and democracy. A multiplicity of slogans and chants appeared in these movements to reflect the protestors’ anger, disappointment and determination to achieve the change. The present study is dedicated to throw light on the Algerian revolutionary movement of February 2019 known as the ‘Revolution of Smiles’ or ‘Hirak’ that has brought significant changes into the political landscape of Algeria. The Algerian Hirak is unique in that it merges the traits of a revolution and a social movement rejecting any type of violence. Differently worded, in the Friday gathering ‘the Hirakists’ persist on their dramatic demands ‘Trouhou Gaa’ (You Leave All) and respond to any possible provocations with smiles and peaceful tactics to the authorities.

The Hirakists were demanding the Algerian regime to step down and resign so as to build a new nation. In their demonstrations, Algerians used language in multiple ways to express ideas via diversity of means such as social networks, newspapers, TV channels. Interestingly, a number of Hirak posters appeared to target different issues reflecting the production of varied polite and impolite forms. In fact, such posters included a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic elements that may stand as polite or impolite acts to demand a new government, in a sense, a new nation.

Many posters communicated the Algerians rejection of the French and American complicity and interference via slogans like: *“Allo Allo Macron, the grandchildren of November’s 54 are back”*, *“Dear USA there is no more oil left. Please stay away unless you want olive oil”*. Indeed, a number of Algerian slogans were supported with pictures, colors, signs and caricatures so as to strengthen the expression of rejection, anger and satire.

3. Method:

3.1 Sample and Data Collection:

The researcher selected a number of three posters that were produced in the period of the 2019 Algerian Hirak based on availability, recency and relevance. The dataset was gathered from Algerian Instagram pages reporting the news of Hirak (see Appendix A).

3.2 Data Analysis:

In order to meet the research objectives and appropriately answer the research questions, the researcher adhered to qualitative analysis. That is, qualitative analysis was adopted to account for the semiotic modes present in the selected posters in relation to Kress and Van Leeuwen Visual Grammar (2006). Also, Culpeper’s (2011) framework of impoliteness strategies was used to capture instances of impolite acts in the gathered data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Semiotic Modes Present in the Algerian Hirak Posters and their Enactment of Meaning:

Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) paradigm of Visual Grammar was adhered to in order to identify semiotic modes and the way they aid in the meaning making of Algerian Hirak posters. This framework was used to discuss and interpret the assistance of semiotic modes in enhancing the Algerians’ protest demands and calls.

4.1.1 The Representational Metafunction:

- **Participants:**

The Three posters under investigation (see appendix A) exhibit the presence of represented participants. To start with, poster one

includes a number of fifteen represented participants, three women and twelve men. More precisely, the poster designer provided a portrait of the following rejected political figures in the Algerian government: Ali Haddad, Amar Ghoul, Ahmed Gaid Salah, Abdelmajid Teboune, Ahmed Ouyahia, Chakib Khalil, Abderazak Makri, Djamel Oueld Abbas, Louisa Hanoun, Naima Salhi, Amar Saadani, Abdelmalek Sellal, Nouria Benghebrit and Said Bouteflika. Additionally, the poster designer characterized the represented participants with different heights to refer to the Daltons gang who differed in their degree of intelligence and their heights. On the top of poster one, the poster producer adopted the famous Hirak icon ‘Sofiane Bakir Turki’ who launched the Algerian Arabic legendary slogan of “ يتتحو قاع ” (Tr. They All Should Go).

Second, poster two reveals two famous represented participants in the Algerian political scene namely, the ex-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika and his brother Said Bouteflika. More specifically, the President Bouteflika is sarcastically described holding the Oscar award and sitting in his brother’s lap. Such characterization reflects the thoughts of protesters who believe that Bouteflika was obliged to stay in power by his brother who wielded power in his stead between 2014 and 2019.

Additionally, poster three shows two represented participants that stand as an actor and goal respectively. In fact, the poster designer described an Algerian football player as an actor kicking the interim president Ahmed Bensaleh as a goal. More specifically, the Algerian football player is described wearing a sport outfit (T-shirt of Algerian national colors). Also, Ahmed Bensaleh is depicted as ‘shouted’ or ‘kicked’ in a blue outfit and a perplexed face. It is important pointing to the fact that the audience to whom such posters are destined is considered as the interactive participant.

- **Processes:**

The dataset analysis postulates the presence of instances of both conceptual and narrative processes. A closer look at poster one shows a conceptual process in which no dynamism is reflected in the representation. More explicitly, the represented participants appear to have no agency in this poster. However, the Algerian Hirak icon Sofiane Bakir Turki is described in his famous scene (pointing with his hand) to demand the whole regime symbols to leave. In a similar

vein, poster two indicates a conceptual process in which no dynamicity is perceived. That is, the representation lacks the agency of represented participants being described in a static and steady state. As far as poster three is concerned, the analysis reveals a narrative process due to the presence of dynamism. That is, the Algerian player is described in the action of kicking the interim president, Ahmed Bensaleh. In brief, one represented participant shows agency and takes action to affect the goal.

Circumstances:

The parameter of circumstances is divided into two main categories, namely, locative circumstances and circumstances of means. The locative circumstances inform about the background and foreground observed in the poster. With regard to the circumstances of means, it incorporates elements of visual instances of 'gaze' that assist in classifying 'offer' and 'demand' posters. Firstly, in poster one the designer opted for a blue background and a foreground including the fifteen represented participants and the caption in Algerian Arabic "YE TNAHAW GA3!" (Tr. They All Should Go) which stands as an exclamative statement. As far as the circumstances of means are concerned, Ouyahia, Sellal and Saadani are described with a direct gaze to the audience. Also, the Hirak icon Sofiane Turki appears to have a direct eye contact with the viewer. Therefore, the present poster may be classified as a demand poster due to the meaning of mobilization and motivation expressed by the condensed linguistic expression 'YE TNAHAW GA3!' (Tr. They All Should Go). On a different note, the portrayal of Ouyahia, Sellal and Saadani with a direct eye contact with the audience seems only to reproduce their real repetitive facial expressions and body postures.

The locative circumstances in poster two illustrate a white background. The foreground incorporates two represented participants and linguistic captions. Regarding the circumstances of means, poster three reveals that both represented participants lack a direct gaze with the audience. Such representation enacts an offer poster through which the poster designer provides information about who controls the political scene in Algeria.

An investigation of locative circumstances in poster three exhibits a red background in the upper part of the poster and a white color in the lower part. The represented participants and the Arabic captions “لن نتوقف عن المسيرات حتي ترحلو كلکم و” (Tr. Get out) “ارحلو” (Tr. We will not stop marching until all of you leave, and we will not recognize you and your elections) are focused in the foreground of the present poster. With regard to the circumstances of means, poster three lacks the gaze of the represented participants. Importantly, the face of Ahmed Bensaleh is taken from one of his public discourses in which he was addressing another audience. Consequently, his eye-line contact does not face the viewer in the present poster. Such a fact implies that the present poster is an offer rather than a demand one. In other words, the poster designer aimed at giving information with regard to the political landscape in Algeria in which Bensaleh is disapproved.

4.1.2 Interactive Metafunction:

- **Gaze:**

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) Visual Grammar, gaze is a key parameter in the interpretation of an image as it reflects the type of interaction between the viewer and the participant. The gaze has two types of demand and offer depending on its absence and presence. In poster one, two and three the represented participants seem to lack a direct eye-line contact with the audience. Therefore, such representations are considered as offer posters that generally inform the audience about the prominent Hirak demands and the deceitful political regime in Algeria. Conversely, in poster one the Algerian Hirak icon ‘Sofiane Turki’ is depicted with a direct eye contact with the audience to signal a demand of mobilization and motivation of change.

- **Size of Frame and Social Distance:**

Social distance is affected by the size of frame leading to distinct relations between represented participants and the viewers (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006: 124-129).

In this respect, poster one appears to exhibit both a close-up and long shots. On the one hand, the Hirak icon Sofiane Turki is demonstrated from a close-up shot. Such representation implies an intimate close relationship with the audience. On the other hand, the

long shot captures the other represented participants (as prisoners) to entail a distant relationship with the audience.

Regarding poster two, it reveals that the represented participants are captured with a long shot in which the whole figures are shown. In this case, the portrayed represented participants seem to have a distant social distance with the audience (the Algerian population).

Finally, poster three demonstrates a long shot in which the whole figures are shown. Similar to poster two, this representation suggests a distant social relationship with the audience and the pictured represented participants.

- **Perspective**

The notion of perspective refers to the angle of representation or interaction that is selected by the poster producer. In fact, the type of frontal and oblique angles conveys the meanings of detachment and involvement that the audience holds towards the people in the image (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006).

A closer examination of poster one displays a frontal perspective. Such representation suggests a sense of involvement and engagement to the audience. In essence, the poster designer aimed at influencing and affecting the Algerians to be aware of the political reforms that should affect the Algerian political landscape. In other words, through the focused representation of symbols of the Algerian regime as Dalton gang and the influential slogan of “YE TNAHAW GA3!” (Tr. They All Should Go), the audience is expected to endure and persist to strive for the political change and radical reforms. In a similar fashion, a frontal angle is apparent in poster three in order to communicate a sense of involvement to the audience. Differently worded, such angle of representation implies the Algerian audience involvement to endure the mass protests and dismiss all figures of the corrupt political regime. On an opposite note, poster two is presented from an oblique angle. This point of representation implies detachment with the viewer. In this concern, both represented

participants (ex-president and his brother) are not recognized and appreciated in the Algerian society.

- **Modality:**

Modality is a key parameter that measures to what extent an image is naturalistic, authentic and real. A set of components are essential to evaluate the modality of a given picture including: colors, contextualization, representation, brightness and illumination.

Poster one under analysis demonstrates the employment of divergent colors including: yellow, black, red and blue. Further, poster eight appears to lack modality in relation to contextualization. That is, the inclusion of Algerian political figures may not sufficiently contextualize the poster under scrutiny. Therefore, the present poster seems not to include contextual cues that symbolize the social movement of Hirak in Algeria. By way of illustration, the poster producer could have incorporated the Algerian national flag or a vivid picture of mass protests to increase modality in this poster.

Poster two displays a varied use of colors. In fact, the red color is employed to emphasize on the key words in the captions, namely, “Système”, “+ 4”, “Oscar” and “Politique”. In addition, white, blue, and black colors are employed to depict the characters. With regard to representation, poster three exhibits a detailed description of participants. That is, the facial details, the skin color, hair color and outfit details appear to reflect the actual look of characters in reality. Such a fact increases the modality of this poster in relation to representation.

Poster three displays the employment of multiple colors of different shades. Indeed, the poster designer opted for the Algerian national colors to portray the player in action that symbolizes the Algerian country. Further, the red, white, yellow, black and blue colors manifested in the other poster elements. On a similar note, poster three indicates that the inclusion of the Algerian national colors offer a certain degree of contextualization to the poster. However, the poster designer could have incorporated more supportive contextual cues to offer the reader a clearer view regarding the social movement of Hirak in Algeria.

However, poster one and two appear to lack modality in relation to contextualization. By way of example, in poster one the inclusion of Algerian political figures may not sufficiently

contextualize the poster under scrutiny. Therefore, the present poster seems not to include contextual cues that symbolize the social movement of Hirak in Algeria. By way of illustration, the poster producer could have incorporated the Algerian national flag or a vivid picture of mass protests to increase modality in this poster.

Regarding representation, in poster one the poster producer provided an impressive portrayal of Algerian political characters that imitate the outlaws Dalton cartoon. In fact, the poster designer offered a detailed description of the represented participants' skin color, facial traits, hair color... (etc). By way of example, the military chief Ahmed Gaid Salah is depicted with a military cap, black sunglasses and white hair. Moreover, Ahmed Ouyahia is represented with a raising eyebrow, real hair color and his famous posture of crossed arms. In short, the poster designer succeeded to realize and approximate the real characters with a natural authentic touch in providing their skin color, facial traits and hair color. Such representation enhances modality in poster one in relation to representation as it approximates reality and factuality.

Poster two exhibits a detailed description of participants. That is, the facial details, the skin color, hair color and outfit details appear to reflect the actual look of characters in reality. Such a fact increases the modality of this poster in relation to representation. In poster three, the representation of participants appears to provide a moderate degree of modality. Despite the fact that the facial details of the male football player are hidden, the skin color, hair color and body details are demonstrated in the poster. Regarding the representation of Ahmed Bensaleh, the poster producer opted for a caricaturing portrayal to represent his body and a real picture of his face.

Concerning illumination, it looks to be lacking in three in which no illumination effects are directed to the represented participants. As for poster one, it seems that the lower part of the representation displays illumination values in comparison to the upper one. In short, the absence of illumination suggests a lower degree of modality and thus reality. Further, poster one, two and three encompass different brightness values of vivid colors and distinct

shades. Indeed, the degree of modality of an image is based on different key parameters that attribute authenticity and reality to representations.

4.1.3 Compositional Metafunction:

- **Information Value:**

Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 177) define information value as the ‘placement of elements in different positions relative to each other and to the viewer in order to convey meaning’. Indeed, poster one indicates a top vs bottom (real vs ideal) representation. The visual elements are positioned in the bottom of the poster expressing the real actual information. In other words, the poster designer explains the actual situation in Algeria by positioning the corrupt persons who are responsible in corruption issues in the bottom of the poster. However, the information presented in the top of the poster signals the ideal course of events. This suggests that the represented corrupt and dishonest figures need to be removed for a better prospering future in Algeria.

In a similar fashion, poster two illustrates a top vs down (real vs ideal) visual realizations. On the top, the poster producer positioned the represented participants and the caption: “Said Systeme +4” (Said’s System +4). On the bottom, the caption in French ‘OSCAR DE LA MEILLEUR MANUPULATION POLITIQUE’ (Tr. Oscar of the best political manipulation) signals the actual real information in the poster.

Finally, poster three appears to include two types of information, namely, verbal information and visual information. The captions adopted in this poster “ارحلو” (Tr. Get out) “لن نتوقف عن” (Tr. We will not stop marching until all of you leave, and we will not recognize you and your elections) is placed on the top to communicate an ideal type of information. The pictorial information is positioned on the bottom part of the poster to imply the actual political scene in Algeria. Consequently, it may be pointed out that the arrangement of the caption on the top and the pictorial elements on the bottom is complementary.

- **Salience:**

Salience is a prominent system in the composition of visual meaning in relation to specific visual cues including: sharpness of focus, size, color contrasts and placement in the visual field. The three selected protest posters revealed the salience attributed to the represented participants to attract the audience's attention. Moreover, the use of the Algerian national colors seems to offer prominence to the represented participant taking action. In addition, the highlighted captions with bigger font size appears appealing to the audience. For instance, the captions “ارحلو” (Tr. Get out), “لن نتوقف عن المسيرات” (Tr. we will not stop marching until all of you leave, and we will not recognize you and your elections) are highlighted in yellow and white colors with bigger font size in a red attractive foreground.

- **Framing:**

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar, framing is another system that connects the representational meaning with the interactive one. In fact, the degree of connection of elements affects the way they communicate the same information. A closer examination of poster one, presents the red colored caption of “YE TNAHAW GA3!” (Tr. They All Should Go) in connection to the portrait of Sofine Turki who released this popular slogan in Algerian Arabic. Such connection indicates the Hirak icon's standpoint with regard to the represented outlaws Dalton gang. That is, the message of the caption seems to target the rejected Algerian political regime symbols that need to be eradicated.

Regarding poster two, it exhibits the presence of three frames. To start with, the frame including the represented participants is connected to another frame containing the caption: ‘SAID SYSTEM + 4’ (Tr. Said's system +4). Second, the third frame contains the French caption: ‘OSCAR DE LA MEILLEUR MANIPULATION POLITIQUE’ (Tr. Oscar of the best political manipulation) that is seen to overlap with the other frames. Finally, poster three

incorporates two frames in which textual and pictorial information are presented to the viewer. In fact, the top and lower frames seem to express the same meaning because they are placed next to each other. In brief, the frame containing the represented participants and the one including the caption appear to target the same concern of eliminating the inappropriate Algerian regime figures.

3.2 Identifying Impoliteness Strategies in the Selected Posters of Algerian Hirak:

The conducted analysis revealed a set of impoliteness strategies in the posters of Algerian social movement of Hirak.

4.2.1 Conventionalized Impoliteness:

- **Dismissals:**

In poster three, the instance of dismissal is captured in the Arabic word ‘ارحلو’ (Tr. Get out) that is expressed in the imperative mood. As aforementioned, the protestors’ slogan ‘لن نتوقف عن المسيرات حتي ترحلو كلكم و لن نعترف بكم و بانتخاباتكم’ (Tr. we will not stop marching until all of you leave, and we will not recognize you and your elections) reflects their objection with regard to December 2019 Algerian elections and insistence to pursue the social movement of Hirak in order to achieve the ultimate radical change.

Concerning the visual representation in this poster, one represented participant is pictured as a male Algerian football player in the process of shooting the interim President Bensaleh. Such depiction signals the Algerians’ high degree of rejection and intention to remove the interim President Bensaleh. Additionally, the presence of the football player foot print in Bensaleh’s character indicates an offence and humiliation to the interim President.

In a similar vein, dismissals formulae can be noted in poster one popular slogan ‘YETNAHAW GA3!’ (Tr. They All Should Go). Indeed, this Algerian specific slogan marked the Algerian social movement of Hirak since its spontaneous announcement from an Algerian young man to the news channel of Sky News Arabia. This condensed affirmative phrase called for the dismissal of the entire Algerian regime that is deceitful and hopeless to the Algerian population. On a similar note, the multimodal elements in the present poster display the characterization of prominent political symbols in the Algerian government as the Dalton band of outlaws. Such analogy

attributes a negative standing to the pictured Algerian politicians as they are perceived as offenders and outlaws.

4.2.2 Implicational Impoliteness:

- **External convention-driven:**

Poster two communicates a sense of sarcasm that goes in line with Culpeper's (2005) who pointed to an interdependence between impoliteness and entertainment. In fact, both textual and visual elements in poster three mismatch the context of use. More explicitly, this representation incorporates a sarcastic slogan in French 'OSCAR DE LA MEILLEURE MANIPULATION POLITIQUE' (Tr. OSCAR OF THE BEST POLITICAL MANIPULATION). In other words, the Algerian protesters referred to Bouteflika's brother interference and manipulation of the country's decisions and affairs as an acting that deserves an Oscar award. It can be deduced that Algerians made fun of their own concerns to express their willingness of radical change. Such impoliteness category appears to enjoy a humorous potential.

By the same token, the ridiculous and sarcastic visual representation of participants in this poster conveys a sense of offence and mockery that stand for impoliteness. Differently worded, the description of the ex-Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika as a sick, incapable and powerless 'puppet' sitting in his manipulator brother's lap transmits a sense of offence, humiliation and ridicule to the rejected represented participants. In short, the visual representation in this poster matches the sense of textual impoliteness that was captured in the slogan.

3.3 Specific patterns to the Algerian discourse:

The researcher noted some particularities in the themes apparent in the analyzed protest posters and slogans. That is, Algerian protestors incorporated the pictures of different Algerian and non-Algerian celebrities including: comedians, presidents, football players and cartoon characters. Such illustrations supported and enriched the messages communicated by Hirakits. By way of example, Algerian protestors used the pictures of well-known politicians to express their

opposition and rejection of the Algerian regime leaders. In fact, the protestors' goal was to express their messages and grab the attention of the audience through a high-impact picture and slogan. In general, celebrity endorsement may be seen present in the protest posters and slogans of the Algerian Hirak to empower and strengthen the social movement's ends. In addition, a plethora of Hirak posters incorporated slogans in Algerian Arabic, French and English to reflect the social and linguistic profile of the Algerian society.

The findings of the present qualitative study demonstrated the prominent role of multimodal sources in constructing and supporting the ideas and premises of the Algerian Hirak movement. In the majority of posters, the frontal angle of representation was adopted to reach the involvement and engagement of the audience with the different elements of posters. Further, the connectedness of frames appeared of paramount importance to signal the overlapping messages of Hirak demands. Also, the different use of colors and font size attributed salience to the representation of each poster. Interestingly, the inclusion of the Algerian national flag in each representation appeared to increase the feelings of nationalism and patriotism in the audience.

The analysis also revealed a set of instances of both conventionalized and implicational impoliteness strategies in line with Culpeper (2011) model. In fact, in accordance with Culpeper's model the results displayed instances of conventionalized impoliteness forms including dismissals and examples of implicational impoliteness acts as external-convention driven strategies. Differently put, dismissals appeared as the most prevailing impoliteness strategy through which Algerians damaged the face of the government and expressed their total rejection of the corrupt regime. This finding is in line with Srage (2013) analysis of the Egyptian uprising slogan 'Irhal' (Tr. Leave) that exhibited the wide use of this strong imperative slogan that signals the dire need of radical political change. In addition, the current research highlighted the textual and visual sarcastic and offensive representation of some government symbols to cause humiliation and scorn. This result appears to be in accordance with Al-Haq and Hussein (2012) study on Tunisian and Egyptian protest slogans showing that humiliation represented the major linguistic function of such slogans.

4. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the presence of impoliteness strategies in one of the under explored areas namely, protest discourse from a multimodal perspective. To this end, both Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) *Visual Grammar* framework and Culpeper's (2011) *model of impoliteness* were adopted. The study adhered to a qualitative approach in order to capture the semiotic modes and their assistance in meaning making in the selected dataset. The findings revealed the manifestation of linguistic and non-linguistic components that assist in the production of meaning. Further, the analyzed protest posters exhibited instances of conventionalized and non-conventionalized impoliteness strategies.

The results demonstrated the prominence of representational, interactive and compositional metafunctions in constructing meaning of the analyzed dataset. To start with, the representational level revealed that most of the posters included represented participants of distinct forms. Also, the posters under analysis reported mainly examples of conceptual processes and one instance of narrative process. Further, in the majority of dataset the circumstances exhibited an eye-catching background highlighting the Algerian national flag and real pictures of the Hirak mass protests. In addition, the results indicated that the corpus under scrutiny displayed both offer and demand posters. Through the former, the poster designer provided information about the Algerian political scene to the viewer. As for the latter, the poster producer included the eye-line contact with the audience to create reactions of mobilization and endurance in the Algerian mass protests.

Secondly, the interactive level showcases that the dataset included mainly instances of close shots and long shots. The close shots, indeed, signaled the close intimate personal distance with the audience. However, the long shots imply the far personal distance of the represented corrupt figures with the Algerian viewers. On a similar note, the adoption of the frontal angle was prevalent in most the protest posters in order to enact involvement of the Algerian viewer. The findings also pointed to a moderate degree of modality in protest

posters with different degrees of contextualization, colors, illumination and brightness values.

Thirdly, the compositional level indicated that the information value supported the transmission of meaning via top vs bottom and left vs right type of information. The present findings indicated that some of the protest posters displayed the top information to signal the ideal situation of the Hirak demands namely, the new democratic Algeria. Further, the bottom information places emphasis on the actual and real situation in Algeria that needs radical change and reforms.

Ultimately, the results evinced instances of dismissals and external convention-driven impoliteness strategies. That is, both conventionalized and non-conventionalized types of impoliteness were identified. Interestingly, the undertaken qualitative analysis exhibited visual impoliteness (non-linguistic) forms in the scrutinized protest posters. Further, the results indicated that the use of boldface and capitalization to express emphasis may be considered as impoliteness forms.

The present study pointed to the persuasive nature of multimodal resources that targeted mobilizing and urging the persistence of anti-corruption Hirak movement. It also reflected the nationalism and endurance of Algerians to build a new democratic Algeria. One may argue that the discussed forms of impoliteness seem not to include vulgarity; they only include a sense of anger, disagreement and indignation. The study further informed that the dominance of politeness discourse in Arabic culture has been altered with discourse of protest, reprimand and criticism. Other lines of research may investigate larger corpora of discourse of protest to semantically analyze protest slogans, chants and posters to know more on how language echoes the resisters' voice.

5. Appendices

Appendix A:

PosterOne:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BvUQlfpngRX/?igshid=acfspuxwmfvj>



PosterTwo:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BvCGiY4n571/?igshid=1wot8f6p3hETF>



PosterThree:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/ByIhNeSnVNa/?igshid=1nc8jtss44ius>



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