

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF SIALKOT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INSTRUCTIONAL BOARDS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to create a checklist for assessing the instructional boards displayed at Sialkot International Airport based on Multimodal Discourse Analysis Theory (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). The theory investigates the ways in which various modes for example; text, image, layout, and color etc. combine to express meaning. The components of the theory that are most pertinent to static visual communication are the main focus of this investigation. Five pictures of instructional boards were examined using qualitative approach in order to develop the checklist and its subsequent implementation. Results of the current research highlight some issues observed in the instructional boards and suggest improvement in those areas to improve the efficacy and clarity of airport instructional boards.

Keywords: *Semiotic Analysis, Sialkot International Airport, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Instructional Boards*

1. Introduction

Airport instructional boards are multimodal tools that use a combination of text, symbols, and images to provide safety, direction, and procedure information. They provide safe and effective passenger mobility and are developed for a variety of people. This study examines the semiotic components of the instructional boards at Sialkot International Airport using the Multimodal Discourse Analysis Theory (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). This research is going to fill a crucial gap which was the lack of attention paid to the semiotic analysis of instructional boards in previous studies on airport signage and navigation (Mijksenaar, 2014; Liu, 2017).

1.1 Research Question

How much effective are instructional boards at Sialkot International Airport in conveying information?

2. Literature Review

According to Arthur and Passini (1992), semiotic analysis is necessary for instructional signs in airports, which are places where passengers frequently deal with stress and time constraints. The necessity of clear, effective visual cues is further supported by Huang and Fai (2017), although both studies ignore alternative forms of communication, which this study attempts to address.

Zong et al. (2022) pointed an increasing understanding of the social responsibilities of airport designs and emphasize the necessity for inclusive design that takes into account a range of skills. Although their work demonstrates how streamlined visual environments improve airport efficiency and user pleasure, it is devoid of a multimodal perspective, which is another gap, this study aims to address it.

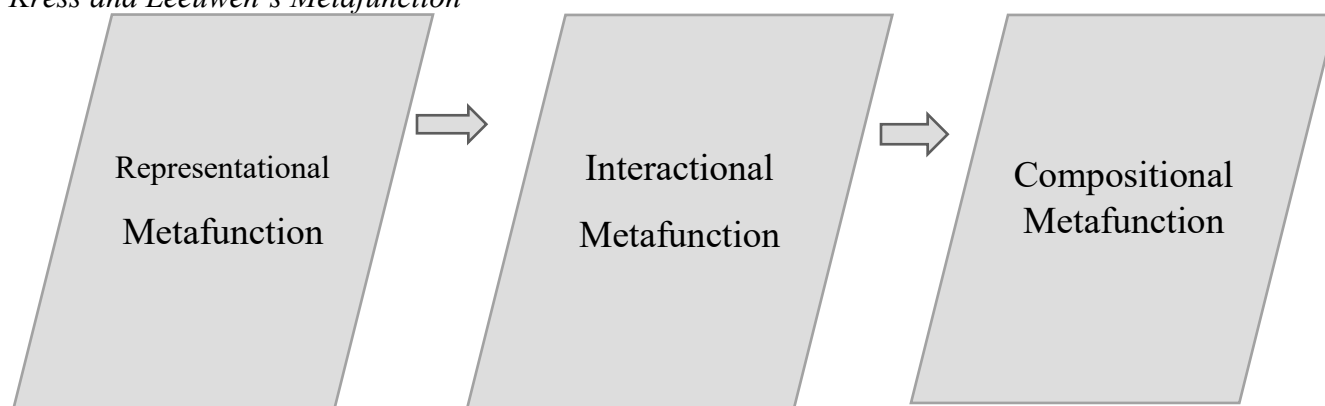
According to Kim and Lee (2019), bad navigation is associated with bad travel experiences, which emphasizes the need of human-centered design. Given the variety of airport patrons, accessibility, uniformity, and clarity must be given top priority in signs. This study will look into how multimodal and digital signs might enhance actual passenger guidance. Clear visual communication lowers passenger stress and enhances way finding, according to Schmitt et al. (2020), who also highlighted the significance of straightforward design and globally understood symbols in airport signage. However, they only use visual components in their work. By examining multimodal communication, the current study goes beyond this.

3. Methodology

The theoretical framework of this research is Multimodal Discourse Analysis. The goal of this qualitative study is to examine the 5 pictures of various instructional boards that are placed at Sialkot International Airport. Kress and Leeuwen's (1996) Multimodal Discourse Analysis will be the primary framework utilized in this research for the image analysis. The research attempts to investigate how the three metafunctions; representational, interactive, and compositional create meanings within a particular conversation using the framework of Multimodal conversation Analysis.

Figure. 1

Kress and Leeuwen's Metafunction



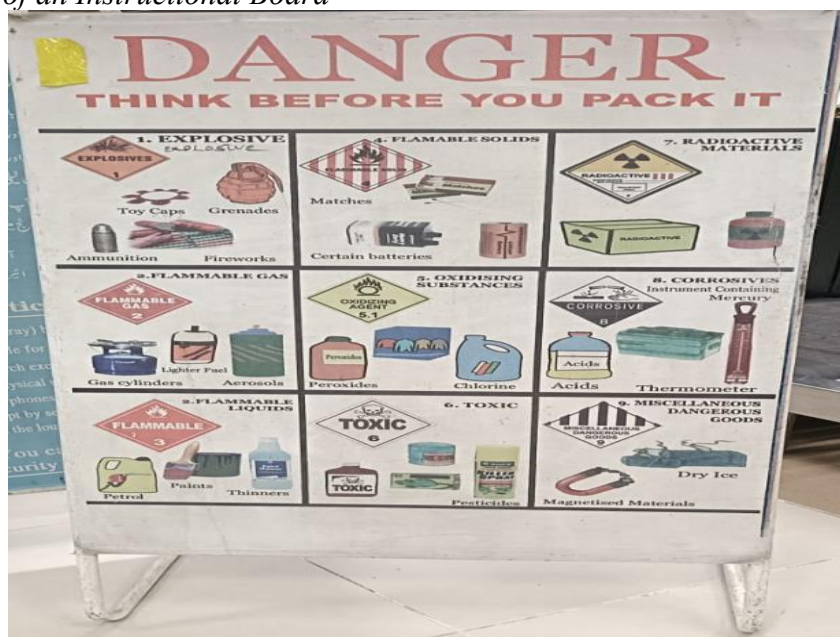
- It is multimodal context which refers how different modes of communication i.e. graphs, modals, images and diagrams etc. make meanings to represent or narrate things, places or people. **(Representational)**
- It refers to different modes i.e. gesture, images, sounds or language used to interact with each other and build relationship and meanings. **(Interactional)**
- It refers examines how the different elements i.e. layout, sound, images and language work together for creating coherence and meanings in multimodality. **(Compositional)**

4. Results and Discussion

The current research has considered only five Instructional Boards placed at Sialkot International Airport. These boards are evaluated by using Kress and Leeuwen's framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (1996). The figure below is showing the image of a selected instructional board.

Figure. 2

Sample image of an Instructional Board



This image has 9 boxes and, in each box, there are 3 or 4 objects mentioned with their images and name; "Explosives i.e. Toy Caps, Grenades, Ammunition and Fireworks". The title of this board is, "Danger: think before you pack it". The color of the title is red which is a symbol of danger. The instructions given on the board are clear and up to dated.

Figure. 3

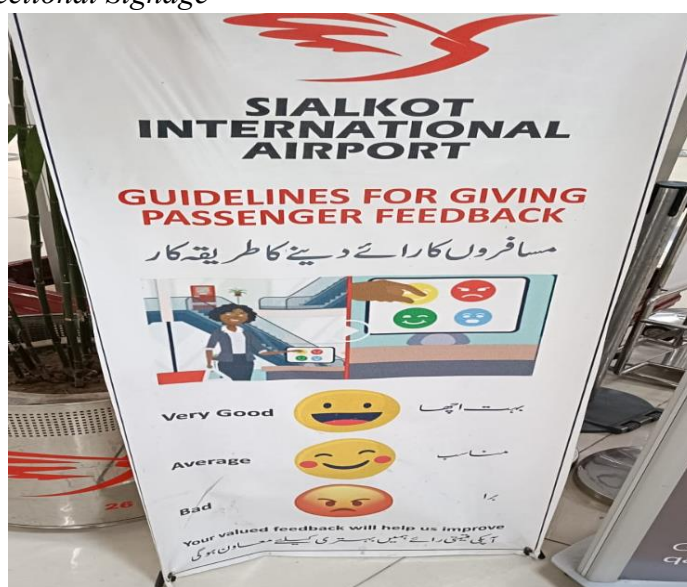
Sample image of visual clarity



This figure shows how fast and readily a viewer can see, interpret, and comprehend the information displayed on an instructional board. Visual clarity is essential for efficient communication in airport settings, where people frequently have to fight for time. In this context, the research explores that all the selected instructional boards have proper visual clarity because the boards are placed on a right way and could be seen by all the passengers and viewers' clearly.

Figure. 4

Sample image of Directional Signage



This instructional board is showing the feedback mechanism of the airport which plays an important role in guidance. The title is clear, bold and easy to read for passengers. The impressions are accurate. The background color of the image is white which is enhancing the writing.

Figure. 5

Sample image of board for digital display

Departure • روانگی					
Time	Airline	Flight	Destination	Gate	Remark
17:10	PAKISTAN	PK 179	Dubai		
19:45	QATAR AIR	GF 769	Bahrain		
--- 11.09.2024 --- Tomorrow					
02:40	Emirates	EK 619	Dubai		
03:40	AirArabia	G9 553	Sharjah		
04:00	QATAR	QR 631	Doha		
05:05	SalamAir	OV 506	Muscat		
05:45	flydubai	FZ 338	Dubai		
21:20	PAKISTAN	PK 209	Sharjah		

This image is about the flight schedule of next 24 hours. It is updated and displayed on a LED which could be seen easily from distance as well as from close view. The flight name, departing time, destination, airline name are mention on it. An airplane symbol is present at the top left side of LED which is representing flight. The flight names are present with their actual logo. Different color of this display are making different meanings. In short, digital displays has major improvement over traditional airport sign.

Figure. 6
Sample image of Image-Text Relationship



An important component of successful multimodal communication, particularly in global contexts i.e. airports, is the image and text interaction on instructional boards. In this case, text and visuals (such as icons, symbols, and pictograms) combine to provide information in a clear, concise, and language-neutral manner. It has been shown through this image.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the semiotic characteristics of five selected instructional boards displayed at Sialkot International Airport with an emphasis on how well instructional boards at an international airport communicate with a broad, multilingual, and mobile audience. The research attempts to make a substantial addition to the semiotic and multimodal analysis of instructional boards in an international airport setting. The results highlight the effectiveness of instructional boards in communication which shows the strong and weak areas of these boards. This study will provide some future dimensions too which will prove to be very helpful for the future researchers.

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