

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Discourse essentially refers to the language used in communication and research, which is a crucial component of human interaction (Durmaz & Yogun, 2022). Discourse functions as a complex system of semantic structures formed and reproduced through language, power, and ideology (Moghaddam, 2024). It not only reflects reality but also actively shapes it, making it highly important to study and analyze, particularly in the fields of humanities and social sciences (Moghaddam, 2024; Liu, 2024). Furthermore, discourse is replicated and disseminated through the communication systems present in society, both in the public sphere and within local communities that share specific interests or practices (Lakeman & Hurley, 2021). Without practical discourse analysis, language use may deviate from the intended meaning, hindering understanding and communication (Wakasa, 2024).

Numerous previous studies have explored critical multimodal discourse analysis in various contexts. For instance, a survey by Brands (2025) revealed how children's clothing brands in Pakistan use visual elements, language, and gestures to convey cultural narratives and gender representations. The findings indicate that such advertisements reinforce traditional cultural values and create emotional connections with consumers (Brands, 2025; Qureshi et al., 2025). In addition, Lv and Ni (2024) provided a comprehensive review of multimodal-based teaching, identifying significant potential in using multimodal textbook analysis to enhance student learning. This study also highlighted the shortcomings of previous research, such as the lack of practical classroom application, and offered recommendations for the development of more effective multimodal learning strategies (Lv et al., 2024).

Other studies focus on the representation of ideology and social issues in multimodal discourse. Gheisari and Akbari (2023) evaluated EFL textbooks in Iran to

uncover cultural and ideological representations. The results showed significant differences between local and international textbooks in reflecting source and target cultures. Meanwhile, Metastasio et al. (2024) examined social representations of sustainable mobility on social media, finding that optimistic perceptions of technological innovations such as electric vehicles are a dominant trend. This study emphasizes the importance of social media in spreading the culture of sustainable mobility. Similar findings were also reflected in the analysis of European food festivals, where the representation of social benefits was communicated through the interaction of visual and textual elements on websites (Irimias et al., 2024).

In the educational context, research has examined the impact of multimodality on learning. Ain (2024) demonstrated that Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs) significantly enhance student engagement and participation, despite some technical barriers. Alsmari (2024) highlighted that a multimodal approach is more effective in helping EFL students understand conversational implicatures compared to a textual approach. Brosseuk and Downes (2024) emphasized the lack of metalanguage in the Australian English curriculum to support students in understanding how different modes work together. Their findings suggest a more inclusive curriculum that encompasses all modes of meaning-making to support students' abilities in analyzing and producing multimodal texts.

Discourse is a fundamental aspect of human interaction that serves as a medium through which power, ideology, and social values are constructed and disseminated (Moghaddam, 2024). Although Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has successfully examined how discourse reflects and shapes social reality, current research still lacks comprehensive integration of multimodal analysis and psycholinguistics. This limitation is particularly evident in cultural and sociopolitical contexts, such as Palestinian cartoons, where visual and linguistic elements interact to convey complex meanings. Most existing studies are focused on Western contexts, leaving a significant gap in

understanding how such discourse functions in the Middle East. Addressing this gap is crucial to enriching both the theoretical and practical dimensions of discourse studies, especially within non-Western cultural frameworks.

Previous studies have provided valuable insights into multimodal discourse analysis, highlighting the interaction between language, visuals, and cultural values. For example, Brands (2025) analyzed advertisements in Pakistan, revealing how visual and textual elements reinforce traditional gender roles. Similarly, Gheisari and Akbari (2023) examined ideological representations in Iranian textbooks, identifying disparities in cultural narratives. However, limited attention has been given to sociopolitical discourse in media such as cartoons in conflict regions like Palestine. By integrating Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) and psycholinguistics, this study aims to deepen the understanding of how language and visuals collaboratively construct ideological meaning, addressing a critical gap in the existing literature.

Analyzing Palestinian cartoons through the lens of MCDA and psycholinguistics offers valuable contributions both academically and practically. Academically, this research bridges the gap between multimodal perspectives and psycholinguistics, enriching discourse analysis methodology. Practically, it provides insights into how visual and linguistic elements shape social narratives, supporting cross-cultural understanding and conflict resolution strategies. Furthermore, such research aligns with broader goals in the humanities and social sciences by highlighting the role of discourse in reflecting and shaping reality (Moghaddam, 2024; Liu, 2024). By exploring a unique sociopolitical context, this study contributes to a more inclusive and in-depth understanding of multimodal discourse.

This study examines the use of language and multimodal elements in Palestinian cartoons through the frameworks of MCDA and psycholinguistics. Specifically, it analyzes how these media convey complex sociopolitical messages and ideologies, simultaneously reflecting and shaping public consciousness. The research focuses on

identifying the interaction between visual and linguistic features in meaning-making and exploring the psycholinguistic impact on audiences. By pursuing these objectives, the study aims to advance theoretical approaches in discourse analysis while also offering practical insights into the sociocultural dynamics of media representation in conflict regions.

B. Identification of the Problems

The problem identification in this study focuses on the gap in multimodal discourse research, particularly in non-Western cultural contexts and the integration of psycholinguistics :

1. **Limitations of Multimodal Studies in Non-Western Regions.** Previous research has focused mainly on Western contexts in multimodal discourse analysis. This creates a gap in understanding how visual and linguistic elements function to convey ideological and sociopolitical messages in non-Western regions, such as the Middle East.
2. **Lack of Integration Between Multimodal Analysis and Psycholinguistics.** Although Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has successfully examined the relationship between language, power, and ideology, research integrating multimodal approaches with psycholinguistics remains limited. This results in a lack of understanding of how visual and linguistic elements collaboratively construct meaning.
3. **Limited Studies on Sociopolitical Media Such as Palestinian Cartoons.** Media such as Palestinian cartoons, which have great potential to convey complex messages through visual and linguistic elements, have received limited attention in research. However, the sociopolitical discourse in these cartoons is crucial to analyze as it reflects reality and shapes public consciousness.
4. **The Need for a More Inclusive and Contextual Approach.** Previous research has not fully reflected the cultural diversity and unique sociopolitical dynamics in conflict

regions such as Palestine. This highlights the urgent need to develop a more inclusive and contextual discourse analysis.

Thus, this study aims to address this gap by analyzing Palestinian cartoons using the Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) approach and psycholinguistics, to understand the interaction between visual and linguistic elements in constructing ideological and sociopolitical narratives.

C. Limitation of the Problems

This study focuses on the analysis of Palestinian cartoons using the framework of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) combined with psycholinguistics. Its limitations are as follows :

1. **Scope of Analysis:** This study is limited to the visual and linguistic elements in Palestinian cartoons. Therefore, other forms of communication, such as narrative text or audio, are not analyzed. This approach provides in-depth insights into the use of language and visual elements in cartoons, which can be adapted in language teaching, particularly in understanding how multimodal elements are used to convey messages.
2. **Geographical and Cultural Context:** This study focuses on the socio-political context of Palestine, with an emphasis on the ideological and cultural values reflected in the cartoons. Therefore, the findings of this research are more relevant to audiences interested in the language and cultural analysis of Palestine, and may not be fully generalizable to other regions or cultures. However, these insights are essential for language teaching in cross-cultural contexts.
3. **Data Representation:** The cartoons selected for analysis may not fully represent the diversity of ideological and cultural narratives in Palestinian media. This needs to be noted in the context of language teaching, as the representation of language and visuals in media does not always encompass all perspectives. Multimodal language learning can enrich students' understanding of the various ways language is used to express messages and cultural values.

4. **Methodological Focus:** Although this study integrates psycholinguistics, the primary focus is on the audience's perception of multimodal elements in cartoons. Therefore, this research does not explore the long-term cognitive or behavioral impacts in depth. Nevertheless, the findings of this study can be applied in language teaching to develop students' interpretive skills regarding messages conveyed through the combination of visual and linguistic elements.
5. **Temporal Limitations:** This analysis only covers contemporary cartoons, which reflect current socio-political issues. Historical cartoons that may provide additional insights into the development of ideology and language styles in Palestine are not analyzed. This focus is particularly relevant for language teaching in the context of language and media development, as it enables students to understand how language and visual symbols evolve in response to social and political changes.

D. Research Questions

To achieve its objectives, this study poses the following research questions:

1. How do Palestinian cartoons utilize visual and linguistic elements to convey sociopolitical ideology, and how can this be applied in language teaching to enhance students' understanding of multimodal use in communication?
2. What are the psycholinguistic implications of multimodal features in Palestinian cartoons, and how might these features influence audience perception and understanding in the context of language learning?

E. The Purposes of the Research

Referring to the research questions posed, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze how Palestinian cartoons utilize visual and linguistic elements to convey sociopolitical ideology, and to explore how these multimodal elements can be applied in language teaching to enhance students' understanding of multimodal communication.

2. To identify the psycholinguistic implications of multimodal features in Palestinian cartoons and how these features influence audience perception and understanding, particularly in the context of language learning.

Thus, this study is expected to provide valuable insights for the development of more contextual and effective language teaching methods, particularly in teaching the use of multimodality in communication.

F. The Significances of the Research

Theoretically, this study makes an essential contribution to the development of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) and psycholinguistics, particularly in the field of language education. By integrating visual and linguistic elements in the analysis of media such as Palestinian cartoons, this research enriches the understanding of how these two elements interact in conveying ideology and sociopolitical narratives. It fills a gap in the literature, which has predominantly focused on Western contexts, thus offering new insights into discourse theory and language education methodology that are more holistic and relevant to non-Western cultural contexts. These findings deepen the understanding of the importance of multimodal analysis in language education and communication teaching.

Practically, this study offers valuable insights for media producers, journalists, and educators in utilizing multimodal elements to convey messages more clearly and effectively. By understanding the interaction between visual and linguistic elements in Palestinian cartoons, this research can assist language educators in teaching students how to interpret multimodal components and grasp the psycholinguistic implications in communication. These findings are highly relevant for application in language teaching, where learning about the meanings embedded in media can enhance students' abilities to interpret texts that contain various dimensions, both visual and linguistic, within broader contexts such as social media or instructional materials.