




## Research Article

# Analyzing Discourse Patterns Across Dapitan's Kinabayo Festival Tarpaulins

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## ABSTRACT



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This paper analyzes tarpaulins produced for the Kinabayo Festival (KF) in Dapitan City every July 25 in commemoration of the Moro invasion heroism of the horse-riding apparition carrying a sword, Senyor Santiago. The KF has instigated to be a religious spectacle among Dapitan aficionados, but through the years, it diversely evolved into a social and economic rather a historical, cultural and spiritual event. To qualitatively analyze how visual elements in KF tarpaulins contribute to this shift in perception, tarpaulins designed every July from 2013 to 2018 were purposively-chosen and subjected to Multimodal Discourse Analysis, guided by Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar to interpret conveyed meanings. The study revealed that the deployment of dynamic modes reflected in KF tarpaulins highlights the city's glorious history and culture and picturesque landscape and landmarks entailing vitality, innovation and modernization effectively market Dapitan City. However, the constructed meanings within these images frame the KF as a social and economic affair rather than a religious event. The study underscores the role of artists as empowered cultural mediators who navigate between traditional moral sensibilities and progressive artistic expression. To enhance the effectiveness of festival promotions, the local government unit (LGU) or relevant offices, such as the city tourism department, should consider commissioning artists who are not only skilled in graphic design but also visually literate in semiotics. Artists reveal moral sensibilities and cultural norms likewise conservative, but progressive and attentive making them empowered information producers, however, to serve the purpose, the local government unit (LGU) or relevant offices such as the city tourism may put emphasis on commissioning artists who are not only credentialed in graphics and designing but also visually literate who can produce a meaningful visual text in shaping the local culture to significantly promote agreement between and among consumers and producers. Alternatively, seeking consultation from a semiotician before production could ensure that the visual narratives align with the intended cultural messaging, fostering a more meaningful connection between producers and audiences.

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## Introduction

Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) has become an essential approach in understanding how different modes of communication such as text, images, color, and spatial arrangement such as work together to create meaning. Festival posters, as multimodal texts, play a significant role in promoting cultural events, conveying messages that reflect historical, political, and social narratives. In the context of Dapitan City, the Kinabayo Festival posters serve as visual representations of cultural identity, historical significance, and religious devotion. These posters have evolved over time due to advancements in digital technology, which have influenced their design, composition, and communicative function. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), multimodal texts combine various semiotic resources to construct meaning, making them an effective medium for communication.


Similarly, Bhatia (2018) emphasizes that festival posters, as promotional materials, incorporate both linguistic and visual

elements to engage audiences. In the Philippine setting, Dimaano (2021) highlights how festival posters contribute to cultural preservation and tourism development. Internationally, Machin and Mayr (2012) argue that visual communication plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and reinforcing cultural narratives. These studies provide a framework for analyzing the Kinabayo Festival posters as multimodal texts that communicate beyond their linguistic content.

Despite the importance of multimodal communication, existing studies on festival posters in the Philippines remain limited, particularly in understanding how semiotic elements contribute to meaning-making. Research on multimodal discourse analysis has primarily focused on advertisements, educational materials, and political campaign posters (Flores & Santos, 2019). However, studies examining the interaction of text and imagery in local festival posters are scarce. This gap in literature highlights the need to analyze how the Kinabayo Festival posters function as multimodal texts that reflect cultural, political,

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and social dimensions. The evolution of these posters, influenced by modern digital design tools, has altered the way festival organizers communicate with the public. Understanding these changes can provide insights into the role of visual grammar in festival promotions and its impact on audience reception.

To address this research gap, this study employs the multimodal discourse analysis framework of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to examine the linguistic and visual features of Kinabayo Festival posters from 2013, 2017, and 2018. The study seeks to understand how these elements contribute to the overall communicative intent of the festival posters. The findings of this study are expected to enhance the understanding of multimodal discourse in festival promotions, providing insights for designers, festival organizers, and researchers in the field of visual communication.

### Literature Review

As the pioneering work, Kress and van Leeuwen's *Reading Images* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1990) becomes the authority in interpreting visual compositions. They propose that the semiotic tools in visual communication are delicately represented to realize some particular functions, namely, representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning. In China, the study of MDA has been proceeding apace. Li Zhanzi (2003) firstly brings in the grammar of visual design proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen. Zhu Yongsheng (2007) articulates the definition of multimodality, the theoretical basis, methodology, and significance of MDA. Hu Zhuanglin points out the significance of enhancing people's general comprehension and identification on multimodal discourse. Zhang Delu (2009) deploys Systemic-Functional Linguistics to propose a synthetic theoretical framework for multimodal discourse analysis. Based on their introductory work, the theory of multimodal discourse analysis is beginning to be applied to different genres by Chinese scholars.

Along this line, Kahari (2013) conducted a study on the circumcision posters in Zimbabwe which has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world with an estimated rate of 7%. In 2009, Zimbabwe adopted Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision for HIV prevention based on Randomised Controlled Trials conducted in South Africa, Uganda and Kenya which showed 60 % efficacy in prevention of HIV in heterosexual men. Using a Multimodal Discourse Analysis approach the study focuses on the various interpretations of multimodal features of VMMC posters.

Kahari concluded that while there is an overwhelming support for the roll out of VMMC for HIV prevention the uptake of VMMC could be improved if male circumcision messages are clearly and effectively framed. According to her, the posters used in this study serve as a constant reminder that there is need for more inventiveness on the part of poster designers if the war on HIV is to be won. Whilst the effectiveness of male circumcision in prevention of transmission of HIV from females to males has been established, its adoption by the public may face challenges if male circumcision messages are not clearly constructed. The most critical recommendation that comes out of this study is that messages promoting VMMC need to be approached with caution.

It is critical that messaging about VMMC information should be accurate and culturally sensitive and emphasise that VMMC does not offer full protection against HIV as it is at times perceived as fully protective. If people are told of the actual prevalence frequencies from the Randomised Clinical Trials, they would clearly see that it is possible to get infected even after circumcision. Despite many interventions to change the dynamics of HIV in

Zimbabwe much more need to be done in terms of how HIV/AIDS messages are framed.

Lirola (2016) on the other hand analyzed the key political posters made for the campaigns of Irish political party Fianna Fáil framed in the Celtic Tiger (1997-2008) and post-Celtic Tiger years (2009-2012) to reveal the ideologies embedded in the texts. In this study, the researcher focused on the three posters of the Kinabayo Festival in the city of Dapitan that took place in 2013, 2017 and 2018 with the intention of pinpointing the similarities and possible differences between each. In the light of the approach in multimodal discourse analysis proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen, the author comprehensively illustrated the distinctive features of the select posters. This is important in order to observe the representational meaning of the distinctive features used to persuade the audience to join the festival and to highlight the social, cultural and political ideologies found in the texts.

Critical discourse analysis tools were also helpful in identifying the main discursive strategies employed to persuade the festival goers to come and join Kinabayo Festival in Dapitan City. Finally, the main tools of Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar (2006) were applied for the analysis of the images. The study, thus, points out that the poster is a powerful tool used in festival advertisements to highlight the activities implemented during the occasion.

The written language of the posters analyzed by Lirola shows the characteristics of political discourse, whose main purpose is to persuade the audience to vote for Fianna Fáil: use of ellipsis, positive language, repetitions, and short phrases are the main features of the slogans found in the posters. In this sense, the different slogans and the visual representation of Bertie Ahern and Micheál Martin as secure political leaders suggest the idea of Ireland as a European country that was in a process of socio-economic development in Europe and whose expansion was progressively growing.

The different visual and linguistic characteristics found in the posters show that the poster is an example of a multimodal text framed inside political genres and, as such, it is a powerful tool used in election campaigns in order to point out the political power that a party may have. It is also a text type used to persuade people to vote and to convince people of the convenience of choosing the candidate proposed by the way s/he is constructed linguistically and visually. Consequently, the poster as a sub-genre inside political genres is not only defined in terms of its structure and the multimodal elements that create it but also in terms of the political context that frames it. In this sense, the analysis presented in this paper is not just a contribution to discourse studies but also to political science and, in a more general sense, to the social sciences. The four posters analysed interact with the audience through the different visual and linguistic choices that appear in them. The political messages presented in the posters are explicit because the slogans are very catchy and clearly chosen to persuade the audience to vote for this party instead of any other and the photographs represent the leader of the party as a candidate to be the president of Ireland in the Celtic and post-Celtic Tiger period.

Chen (2013) analyzed the visual grammar; how images are interpreted in terms of their representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning in movie posters which are designed to publicize the movies and boost the box-office receipts. The discourse of movie posters encompasses a variety of semiotic resources such as image, color and language, so that to read a movie poster is to decode a complex integration of a variety of modalities. Visual Grammar makes it possible to conduct multimodal discourse analysis on movie posters and provides the researchers a powerful toolkit to account for meanings arising from images and texts on movie posters. With reference to

Systemic-Functional Linguistics, Chen takes Visual Grammar as the theoretical foundation and makes an attempt to propose a model for the multimodal discourse analysis of movie posters. Under the guidance of the proposed model, two movie posters are analyzed for a case study, aiming to explore how the realization of the three meta-functions contributes to the overall meaning conveyed by movie posters. The researcher adopts a qualitative and interpretative one with incisive exploration of a small set of movie posters.

### Methodology

The study on Kinabayo Festival (KF) posters used in Dapitan City employed a qualitative approach, utilizing Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to examine the various interpretations of multimodal elements such as images, color, text, and vectors. Grounded in Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar, this approach provided a framework for understanding how different semiotic modes contributed to meaning-making within the KF posters. The visual composition of each poster was analyzed with a focus on three key principles: information value, salience, and framing—essential elements in print media that guide the structuring of messages and influence audience reception. These principles were instrumental in determining how advertisers and festival organizers communicated information to the public. Additionally, the study examined the interaction between written language and visuals to identify how different modes co-constructed meaning.

The data for this study consisted of a collection of KF posters designed between 2013 and 2018 for the annual Dapitan City festival. The dataset was categorized into three poster groups: A (2017), B (2018), and C (2013). These posters were selected for their prominent use of the Senyor Santiago symbol, a recurring visual motif central to promoting the Kinabayo Festival celebration. While the textual messages across the posters remained consistent, variations in imagery provided insights into how the festival's visual representation evolved over time. This analysis enabled the researcher to trace shifts in the political, cultural, and social narratives embedded within the KF posters, shedding light on how these elements shaped public perception and engagement with the festival.

### Results and Discussion

Kinabayo is an exotic and colorful pageant re-enacting the Spanish-Moorish wars particularly the Battle of Covadonga. In that battle the Spanish forces under General Pelagio took their last stand against the Saracens. They were able to reverse the tide of the war with the miraculous apparition of Saint James, the Apostle. The addition of local color and innovations has made this annual festivity a popular attraction to visitors of Dapitan. In every poster, the image of Senyor Santiago is always present. The sword is gold, the pants are green, the cloak is red and the dress is yellow. Senyor Santiago is holding a shield in his other hand. He is a complete warrior who is revered by the Dapitanons. He is viewed as the representation of faith and love of country manifested through his struggles against antagonistic people who dare to conquer the one, he is defending.

Dapitanons look at his divinity and commemorate his good deeds through Kinabayo Festival. Kinabayo is a festival that glues people from all walks of life together. It keeps Dapitanons attached to a religious relationship together. Through Kinabayo, participants are united as they yell in harmony, thus creating a sense of unity. Dapitanons are united that they could fight to whatever obstacles are there in life. Devotees are connected with each other as they joyously celebrate the festivity which means further that Kinabayo Festival is not just an ordinary merrymaking, but an event that binds people together as they link

with nature and culture. Not only that, Kinabayo has a wider reach around the world that it attracts foreign elements which eventually boost tourism of the town celebrator.

Posters serve as memorabilia of cities, crafted by layout artists using various digital applications and software, often resembling paintings or original images. Understanding the intent behind these creations is essential, as they are products of advertising conventions designed for mass distribution to attract festival-goers (Postive, 2024). These posters emphasize the cultural and social aspects of events like the Kinabayo Festival. As visual texts, posters utilize colors, vectors, text, and images, each strategically positioned to convey specific messages. In this study, three poster groups were analyzed: Poster A, a poster compilation from Year 2017; Poster B, developed in 2018; and Poster C, created in 2013. The production years of these posters reflect the visual and thematic evolution of Dapitan, marking its transition from a small community to a more dynamic cultural hub.

Ogawa (2015) introduced the concept of "Given" and "New" in composition, explaining that elements positioned on the left side of a page are considered "Given," while those on the right side are categorized as "New." According to her, "Given" elements represent familiar or commonly accepted information that serves as a starting point for the viewer, whereas "New" elements introduce unfamiliar or debatable content that demands greater attention. Additionally, Ogawa highlighted the "Ideal" and "Real" framework, where the top section of a composition represents the "Ideal," abstract or aspirational content, while the bottom section conveys the "Real," which is grounded in factual or tangible details.

Furthermore, Ogawa (2015) discussed how the principle of information value extends to the "Centre and Margin" structure, where a central image serves as the focal point, with surrounding text providing contextual support. These compositional structures can be combined, as she noted, "Given-New and Ideal-Real can integrate with Centre and Margin" (Ogawa, 2015). Such frameworks play a crucial role in visual design, guiding how audiences interpret and engage with visual messages.

It is evident that the posters are designed to advertise the nature of the festival celebrated in the city. Poster A1 aligns with the composition principles outlined by Ogawa (2015), particularly the Given-New structure. According to Ogawa, elements placed on the left side of a visual composition represent "Given" information, something familiar and widely recognized by the audience, while elements positioned on the right signify "New" information that requires greater attention.

In this context, the placement of Senyor Santiago, the patron saint, on the left side of the poster reinforces his established significance among the Dapitanons. His positioning in the lower-left section further emphasizes his "realness" within the community, aligning with the Ideal-Real framework, where elements at the bottom represent tangible and historically rooted aspects (Ogawa, 2015). As a prominent and revered figure in Dapitan, Senyor Santiago is deeply ingrained in the local speech community, making his presence in the poster a clear acknowledgment of the city's religious and cultural identity.

Poster A2, however, deviates from the "Given" principle outlined by Ogawa (2015), yet the placement of the city mayor in the poster still adheres to the "Realness" framework. According to Ogawa, visual compositions typically position familiar or widely recognized figures on the left to emphasize their established significance. Given the mayor's prominence among Dapitanons, one would expect his placement to mirror that of Senyor Santiago in Poster A1. However, the designer did not follow this convention, suggesting that other symbols within the composition hold greater significance than the mayor's image.



The city mayor's placement in the poster indicates a diminished prominence compared to his actual political standing in the city. This reinforces the idea that Senyor Santiago, as the honoree of the festival, takes precedence over the mayor, who, despite being instrumental in organizing the event, is not the primary focus of the celebration. This design choice reflects a clear prioritization of the patron saint over the political figure leading the festivities. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2021), the positioning of visual elements in a composition significantly influences how meaning is constructed, emphasizing which aspects are central to the intended message.

Furthermore, the arrangement of symbols within the poster highlights an authentic intent to commemorate the festival itself rather than glorify its organizers. While it is true that without organizers, the festival would not materialize, the primary impact stems from the celebration itself, with the event's leaders serving merely as facilitators of the merriment. The festival poster thus offers multiple reading paths, allowing viewers to interpret its message through various semiotic cues embedded in the design (Jewitt, 2017).

The text Kinabayo Festival 2017 is prominently displayed in large fonts, dominating the poster's composition. Centrally placed, it becomes the most eye-catching element, reinforcing its significance and establishing a strong visual connection with the accompanying imagery (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). This strategic placement ensures that the readers' attention is immediately drawn to the text, as their gaze naturally gravitates toward it. The use of a white font color symbolizes purity, implying that the Dapitanons celebrate the Kinabayo Festival with genuine religious intent to honor their patron saint (Machin, 2016).

Notably, in Poster A1, the text appears positioned near the mouth of a woman, symbolically spreading the news of the festivity to society. This visual choice aligns with the common notion that women are effective communicators, as often expressed in cultural clichés regarding their conversational abilities (Jewitt & Oyama, 2021). Although the woman's mouth is not visible, her eyes appear to be smiling, subtly conveying the joyous and celebratory nature of the festival. Direct eye contact in visual compositions has been found to engage viewers more effectively, compelling them to participate in the event, almost as if refusal is not an option (van Leeuwen, 2020).

Additionally, the presence of lines at the ends of the woman's eyes suggests a friendly and inviting gesture, reinforcing the renowned hospitality of the Dapitanons. This design choice tempers any sense of coercion, instead fostering an atmosphere of warm invitation. However, the word "festival" (Poster A1), written in white against a solid blue background at the bottom of the poster, appears redundant. According to Bateman et al. (2017), effective typographic hierarchy ensures emphasis, yet in this case, the repetition of the term without sufficient visual impact fails to contribute meaningfully to the overall composition. Although redundancy can sometimes enhance emphasis, the small and non-striking font size diminishes its intended effect, making it visually insignificant.

The gray shadow of the text signifies melancholy, suggesting that behind the joyful expressions of those celebrating the festival, there remains an underlying grief. Color symbolism in visual texts has long been associated with emotional and cultural meanings, as Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) argue that colors in multimodal discourse carry socially and historically constructed meanings. Dapitan, before gaining recognition as the "famous city of the south," endured oppression, particularly during the incursions of Moro pirates who sought to dominate the vulnerable Dapitanons. This historical struggle is subtly reflected in the festival's visual elements, echoing van Leeuwen's (2020) assertion that visual

design often encapsulates collective memory and socio-historical narratives.

The gray color also carries a deeper cultural significance in Dapitan, symbolizing an ominous presence. As Machin (2016) emphasizes, colors in visual communication can convey metaphorical associations rooted in local beliefs. In this case, the gray shadow is interpreted as an omen linked to the tragic accident involving three individuals who perished in a vehicular crash following a beach outing. The belief in supernatural forces influencing real-world events aligns with the Dapitanons' cultural perceptions of the unseen. Jewitt and Oyama (2021) note that visual semiotics often integrate local folklore and traditional narratives, shaping the way communities interpret images and symbols. In this context, the shadow in the festival's visual representation is not merely a design element but a culturally embedded signifier of both historical struggles and supernatural beliefs.

The band worn by the woman in the poster signifies the influence of the Boholano culture in Dapitan. Historical accounts indicate that Boholanos, led by figures such as Datu Pagbuaya, were among the early settlers of Dapitan, establishing a significant cultural presence before José Rizal's exile to the area (Catubig, 2003). The cape's light blue hue traditionally symbolizes tranquility and peace in Filipino culture, aligning with the community's desire for a harmonious festival (Vogue Philippines, 2023). However, the juxtaposition of the woman's smiling eyes with the blue cape introduces a contrasting emotional narrative. While lighter shades of blue often convey calmness, darker shades can be associated with sadness or melancholy, creating an ambiguous emotional tone in the poster. This interplay of colors and cultural symbols within the poster reflects the complex layers of Dapitan's history and the nuanced emotions associated with its festivals.

This visual representation of Senyor Santiago in the poster presents a deeper cultural and gendered discourse. The positioning of the sword, appearing as if it is about to strike the woman's face, metaphorically implies the dominant-submissive relationship between men and women in society. Gender scholars argue that visual imagery often reinforces patriarchal norms, where male figures are depicted as authoritative while female figures are portrayed as passive or submissive (Connell, 2016). This particular positioning in the poster aligns with existing discussions on gender power dynamics, where symbols of masculinity often overshadow representations of femininity in public spaces (Butler, 2019).

Furthermore, the act of silencing women, either symbolically or literally, has been a recurring theme in gender discourse, particularly in media and religious iconography (Gill, 2017). The sword, aimed toward the smiling woman, may signify societal expectations that women must remain restrained or careful in their expressions, reinforcing traditional gender roles (Mendes et al., 2019). On the other hand, color psychology suggests that powder blue conveys calmness and may symbolize the woman's role in pacifying a jealous or aggressive partner (Elliot & Pazda, 2020). This interplay between color and symbolism in the poster reflects complex cultural and social narratives surrounding gender, power, and emotional expression.

This passage highlights the embedded gender inequality in the visual representation of Poster A. The portrayal of the man riding a white horse while the woman remains on the ground signifies a clear power hierarchy, where the man assumes a dominant role and the woman is relegated to a secondary, ornamental presence. Scholars argue that such imagery reinforces traditional gender roles, where men are depicted as active agents while women are reduced to passive figures (Connell, 2016). The exclusion of the

woman from an equal position on the horse emphasizes male superiority, a common theme in patriarchal visual narratives (Gill, 2017).

Additionally, the positioning of the patron saint facing the woman can be interpreted as a directed gaze, symbolizing attention or control (Mulvey, 2015). However, the skull-like shape formed by the combination of the patron saint's hat and hair introduces an ominous undertone, reinforcing negative stereotypes of male dominance and possibly predatory intentions (Mendes et al., 2019). Such representations contribute to the broader discourse of how gendered visual symbols influence societal perceptions of power and relationships.

Conversely, the presence of the woman's face in the poster suggests an attempt to balance the narrative by conveying warmth and hospitality, qualities traditionally associated with femininity (Lazar, 2018). The name "Dapitan," rooted in the word "dapit," meaning "to invite" or "to welcome," aligns with the representation of women as nurturers and caregivers (Eagly & Wood, 2016). Despite the blurry background, the visibility of multiple female figures further reinforces this cultural association, illustrating how gendered meanings are embedded in visual texts.

This analysis of Poster A2 highlights how visual elements convey political and cultural messages. The inclusion of the city logo, government center, and tourism sites signifies the local government's role in enhancing Dapitan's identity and infrastructure. According to Fairclough (2015), political discourse often integrates into cultural representations to reinforce authority and legitimacy. By incorporating tourist attractions and scheduled events, the poster presents a well-rounded image of the city, aligning with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) notion that multimodal texts strategically blend images and written content to construct meaning.

The presence of small icons representing pageantry, political connections, and fame at the bottommost part of the poster subtly underscores the intersection of politics and cultural celebrations. As Barthes (2018) suggests, the placement of visual symbols within a composition impacts the way viewers interpret their significance. The underlying message is that politics is an intrinsic part of the Kinabayo Festival (KF), not just as an administrative facilitator but as an arena for political networking. The visual positioning of these elements, particularly their alignment along the thick black underlining, suggests a deliberate attempt to equalize attention between politics, pageantry, and the festival highlights (Jewitt, 2016).

For an ideal visual balance, the study argues that while maintaining uniform image sizes ensures compositional harmony, enlarging the KF-related imagery would emphasize the festival's cultural importance. This aligns with Gestalt principles of visual perception, where size variation can establish hierarchy and focus (Arnheim, 2019). The balance between real (political connections) and ideal (cultural festivities) in the poster reinforces the duality of Kinabayo Festival as both a heritage event and a politically significant occasion.

The placement of the city government and tourism logos on the left side of Poster A2 aligns with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) concept of "Given and New," where elements placed on the left represent familiar or background information. This suggests that these entities are already well-recognized by the public and do not require additional emphasis. Fairclough (2015) also notes that such strategic positioning in visual texts reflects underlying power structures, subtly reinforcing the institutions' ongoing role in shaping local cultural narratives.

The poster also highlights the restoration of cultural elements, particularly the oil lighting system originally designed by Dr. Jose

Rizal during his exile. This act of preservation aligns with Smith's (2019) argument that cultural heritage is continuously reinterpreted to maintain relevance in contemporary society. The presence of two human-sized sheds featuring Rizal's seated figure at the government center visually reinforces the local government's commitment to honoring Rizal's legacy. As Anderson (2016) points out, monumental structures serve as tangible expressions of collective memory, fostering a sense of historical continuity and national identity.

The inclusion of these historical references in the poster signifies an effort to integrate past and present, showcasing how Dapitan's local government actively preserves its cultural heritage while promoting modern development. This aligns with Barthes' (2018) theory of semiotics, where visual elements convey deeper meanings beyond their immediate representation, reinforcing the festival's role in cultural remembrance.

The architectural symbolism embedded in Dapitan's city government center subtly reinforces historical narratives and gendered representations. The building's design, which resembles a tripartite structure with a central dome flanked by two smaller ones, can be interpreted through Barthes' (2018) semiotic analysis, where architectural forms convey deeper ideological meanings. The resemblance to phallic imagery could signify a historical bias toward male dominance in leadership, an interpretation that aligns with Beauvoir's (2011) argument in *The Second Sex* that patriarchal structures often manifest in spatial designs. However, the governance of a female mayor challenges this reading, demonstrating that leadership is not inherently gendered but rather shaped by societal progress (Smith, 2019).

The historical dimension of the building is also noteworthy. The central structure is thought to symbolize Captain Delgras, while the two smaller ones represent the artillerymen who escorted Rizal to Dapitan. This visual representation aligns with Anderson's (2016) concept of "imagined communities," where historical figures and events are memorialized through tangible landmarks, reinforcing collective identity. The inclusion of the government center in the festival poster signifies a deliberate effort to acknowledge both the colonial past and contemporary governance, echoing Fairclough's (2015) assertion that discourse including visual discourse shapes, and is shaped by power dynamics.

Furthermore, the presence of the government center in the poster functions as both a celebration of progress and a reminder of the enduring legacy of colonial authority. By incorporating this structure into the festival's visual narrative, the poster bridges past and present, reinforcing the role of the city government not only in preserving history but also in fostering socio-political development (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021).

The image of Senyor Santiago alongside the Philippine flag symbolizes a broader sense of national identity and unity, reinforcing Billig's (1995) concept of "banal nationalism," wherein everyday symbols subtly invoke national pride. This portrayal elevates Senyor Santiago beyond a mere religious figure, positioning him as a cultural and national icon (Anderson, 2016). The integration of 'banderetas' beneath the text "Kinabayo" functions as a visual cue that solidifies the festival's cultural significance, a technique Kress and van Leeuwen (2021) describe as "semiotic cohesion," where elements are strategically placed to reinforce meaning.

The Kinabayo Festival, as depicted in the poster, encapsulates multiple layers of identity such as religious, historical, social, and economic, reflecting the evolving nature of cultural celebrations (Smith, 2006). This convergence of elements aligns with Cohen's (1985) notion of festivals as performative spaces where communities negotiate and reaffirm their collective identity.

Furthermore, the inclusion of diverse activities such as sports competitions, night performances, and trade fairs highlights the festival's economic implications, paralleling Getz's (2010) perspective on event tourism as a catalyst for local development.

The use of the green color for the letter "K" in Kinabayo and the year "2017" in Poster A2 symbolizes hope and abundance, aligning with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) theory on the semiotics of color, where green is often associated with renewal and prosperity. This choice of color reinforces the aspirational theme of the festival, suggesting a promising year ahead for the community (van Leeuwen, 2011).

Additionally, the depiction of the city mayor in Balintawak attire serves as a visual representation of cultural authenticity and traditional values, reflecting Medina's (2002) argument that clothing in public imagery reinforces cultural identity. The mayor's portrayal suggests that women in Dapitan are dignified and traditional, implying that visitors should respect both the people and their heritage (Roces, 2010).

Furthermore, the positioning of her image alongside a group of politicians visually communicates her political affiliations and influence, supporting Machin and Mayr's (2012) assertion that spatial arrangement in visual texts subtly conveys power relations and ideological messages. This composition suggests that the mayor's leadership is deeply intertwined with her political network, reinforcing the idea that festivals also serve as platforms for political visibility (Getz, 2010).

The use of orange in the design of Kinabayo Festival 2017, particularly in the outline of Senyor Santiago's image can be interpreted as a visual metaphor for imprisonment. In Western and even local semiotic traditions, orange is commonly associated with prison uniforms, connoting restriction and confinement (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). By visually isolating Senyor Santiago in an orange outline, the design creates a sense of separation, reinforcing the idea that the festival's religious essence is being enclosed or constrained.

Additionally, the placement of Senyor Santiago at the center suggests that the festival revolves around his veneration, yet the choice of color challenges the notion of inclusivity. Instead of fostering unity, the outline distances the patron saint from the rest of the poster's elements, particularly the political figures. This contradicts earlier observations of the festival's politicization and instead suggests that the Kinabayo Festival retains its religious and cultural core, separate from political influence (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

This visual fragmentation aligns with van Leeuwen's (2011) theory on information linking in multimodal texts, which suggests that color choices can either unify or divide elements within a composition. The orange outline, therefore, acts as a visual barrier, subtly communicating that the festival is not wholly entangled with political affairs, as previously assumed.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), multimodal texts adhere to specific compositional structures, such as the Given-New and Ideal-Real frameworks, which determine the placement and emphasis of elements in an image. In Poster A2, the placement of Senyor Santiago and the festival title at the center aligns with the Ideal position, representing symbolic, aspirational, or abstract meanings. The positioning of the mayor and politicians at the lower section adheres to the Real domain, conveying factual or grounded information. This spatial division suggests that the festival itself is the primary focus of the poster, while the political figures play supporting roles in its realization. As previously noted, the direct gaze of the city mayor exemplifies a demand image, which, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), serves

to engage viewers, urging them to take part in the celebration. The mayor's positioning at eye level creates an accessible and relatable representation of political leadership. Her smile, coupled with the clear sky, reinforces a sense of warmth and approachability, subtly persuading viewers to associate the festival with positive governance and harmony (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001).

Color plays a crucial role in multimodal meaning-making, as it carries cultural and emotional connotations (Machin, 2007). In Poster A2, the green K in Kinabayo and the year 2017 symbolize growth, prosperity, and hope, reflecting the optimism associated with the event. The presence of orange in the outline of Senyor Santiago, however, is significant as it aligns with the cultural association of the color with imprisonment, as orange is the standard uniform color for detainees in the Philippines. This visual choice could imply restrictions or exclusivity, unintentionally suggesting that the festival is confined within a particular ideological or political framework rather than being an open celebration.

Font size and style determine the hierarchy of information in multimodal texts (van Leeuwen, 2005). In Poster A2, Kinabayo Festival 2017 is presented in bold and dominant typography, ensuring immediate recognition. The festival title is in uppercase, enhancing its prominence, while secondary elements, such as political figures and other festival activities, are in smaller font sizes, relegating them to supplementary roles. This typographic structuring emphasizes the main event while minimizing the political underpinnings of the celebration.

Posters are both cultural artifacts and political texts, as they reflect and reproduce ideologies (Fairclough, 2003). The inclusion of the mayor's image, despite her secondary placement, signifies political influence over the festival. However, her traditional Balintawak attire attempts to position her as an advocate of cultural preservation, aligning her with nationalist values. The juxtaposition of her figure with political allies at the bottom of the poster indicates political networking, subtly suggesting that the festival is not solely about cultural heritage but also serves as a space for political engagement.

Poster A2 is a rich multimodal text that encodes multiple layers of meaning through its spatial arrangement, gaze, color choices, and typography. While it aims to foreground the Kinabayo Festival as a cultural and religious event, its composition also reveals underlying political and ideological messages. The juxtaposition of elements such as Senyor Santiago, the city mayor, and political figures creates a complex narrative that oscillates between celebration, governance, and power dynamics.

While posters generally aim to communicate key messages clearly, excessive graphics, 3D elements, and spark icons in this modified version create visual clutter, reducing readability and impact. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), effective multimodal design requires coherence between elements, but in this case, the additional visuals disrupt the hierarchy of information. Instead of reinforcing the festival's cultural significance, these embellishments shift attention away from the event, making the poster look overly commercialized.

The inclusion of multiple logos, particularly that of an official media partner, signals the increasing privatization of cultural events. As Fairclough (2003) notes, public discourse, including festival promotions, is increasingly shaped by commercial interests. The presence of a private entity's branding in a government-led initiative suggests financial constraints, reinforcing the idea that the local government may have relied on external sponsorship due to a limited budget. While partnerships can enhance production quality, in this case, they also introduce unintended marketing elements that overshadow the festival's core identity.



The appearance of the Facebook icon is noteworthy. Beyond simply encouraging engagement, it signifies Dapitan's digital modernization. Social media integration in official government posters reflects a shift in public communication strategies, where traditional print-based campaigns merge with digital platforms for broader outreach (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2016). However, the direct call to like the media partner's page blurs the line between cultural promotion and corporate advertising, subtly commodifying the festival.

This modified poster represents a departure from the 2017 design, reflecting evolving media trends, financial constraints, and corporate influence. While the inclusion of digital and 3D elements suggests modernization, they also introduce visual clutter and commercialization. The growing presence of sponsors, logos, and social media branding indicates a shift from a purely cultural representation of the festival toward a more commercially driven promotional strategy.

The countdown element clearly signals the anticipation of the event. However, the placement of sparks at the topmost part of the poster disrupts the logical sequence of time. Sparks are typically associated with the climax of celebrations, such as fireworks marking the culmination of an event (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Repositioning them beneath the countdown could create a clearer narrative structure: anticipation at the top, followed by the celebratory moment after the countdown reaches zero. This spatial reorganization would align with the natural cognitive flow of viewers and enhance coherence.

The sparks positioned near the logo of the city tourism office suggest a direct connection between the festival and economic gain. This aligns with the commodification of cultural heritage, wherein traditional festivals become platforms for tourism-driven revenue generation (Heller, 2019). While tourism contributes to the city's economy, its prioritization over cultural authenticity raises concerns about the dilution of the festival's historical and religious roots.

The dominant use of violet and its analogous hues introduces an underlying theme of mourning and loss. In Western and Philippine traditions, violet is associated with death, grief, and solemnity (Berlin & Kay, 1991). While not necessarily intentional, this color choice subtly reinforces the idea that the original essence of the festival centered on the Battle of Covadonga is fading. Instead of historical dramatization, commercial events increasingly dominate the festival schedule. This shift reflects a broader trend in cultural festivals worldwide, where economic and entertainment elements gradually overshadow historical significance (Machin & van Leeuwen, 2016).

The poster's visual choices such as countdown positioning, sparks iconography, tourism branding, and dominant colors, collectively reflect the transformation of the Kinabayo Festival. What was once a historical and religious commemoration is now leaning toward a commercialized spectacle. While economic benefits are undeniable, the decreasing emphasis on the Battle of Covadonga raises questions about cultural preservation and the future trajectory of the festival.

The text "Kinabayo Festival" appears in multiple colors, yet its attractiveness is diminished by the disjointed combination of hues. Color inconsistency can lead to cognitive dissonance, preventing viewers from forming a cohesive visual interpretation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The oversized letter "K" in violet, a color associated with solemnity, reinforces the concern that the cultural essence of KF is at risk. The dominant purple hue implies a shift from historical and religious traditions toward a more politicized and commercialized event (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

The radiating light from the festival title toward the city mayor signifies her role as a guiding figure for Dapitanons. Light, often associated with hope, wisdom, and unity (Jewitt, 2009), metaphorically positions the mayor as the unifying force behind the festival. This visual metaphor strengthens the connection between political leadership and cultural preservation, positioning the mayor as the "mother of the city" who fosters community cohesion. The strategic placement of her image reinforces this narrative, directing the audience's gaze toward her as a central figure.

The spark icon above the mayor's head visually resembles a crown, reinforcing notions of authority and prestige. Crowns have long been associated with power, nobility, and divine right (Forceville, 2010). The juxtaposition of the spark with the violet color, which also symbolizes royalty, further elevates the mayor's status. This subtle visual rhetoric positions her not just as a political leader but as a revered figurehead, emphasizing her pivotal role in the celebration.

The combination of text placement and gaze direction suggests an implicit call to action. The mayor's gaze directly engages the viewer, a characteristic of "demand images" that invite interaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The accompanying text beneath her photo explicitly identifies her role, reinforcing her authority while simultaneously encouraging festival participation. This persuasive technique aligns with multimodal strategies used in political and tourism advertising, where visual and textual elements work together to shape public perception (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001).

The KF poster's multimodal features construct a narrative that intertwines culture, politics, and tourism. While the celebration remains the central theme, the visual choices such as color symbolism, light direction, and icon placement suggest an evolving identity where political figures become integral to cultural heritage. This dual representation can be both unifying and problematic, as it raises questions about the balance between tradition and contemporary political branding.

The central positioning of the KF icon establishes it as the focal point, reinforcing its prominence in the poster's narrative (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The arrangement suggests a center-to-margin reading path, where peripheral elements gain meaning in relation to the festival's core identity. This visual hierarchy ensures that while supporting visuals (e.g., the city mayor and 3D graphics) contribute to the overall message, they remain secondary to the festival's significance.

The city mayor's direct gaze serves as a powerful communicative strategy. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), a demand image where a subject looks directly at the viewer creates an interactive and engaging dynamic. The mayor's facial expression, complemented by an inviting posture, reinforces sincerity and warmth. This nonverbal interaction signals an implicit invitation, subtly urging viewers to participate in the event.

A notable tension in the poster emerges from the 3D graphics, which encroach upon the city mayor's traditional Balintawak attire. This visual obstruction serves as a metaphor for cultural erosion, symbolizing how technological advancements and modernization threaten traditional identities (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The partial concealment of the Balintawak foreshadows a shift toward technological integration at the expense of organic cultural heritage.

Additionally, the evolution of Senyor Santiago's depiction across festival posters reflects Dapitan's cultural transformation. The patron saint's changing appearance suggests a departure from traditional religious imagery, aligning with the notion that

Dapitanons are technological immigrants, individuals transitioning from a heritage-based culture to a digitalized and globally connected identity (Prensky, 2001).

The KF poster encapsulates the dual forces of cultural preservation and modernization. The central placement of the KF icon asserts its primacy, while the mayor's gaze enhances viewer engagement. However, the dominance of 3D graphics signals an impending cultural shift, with digital and commercial influences gradually redefining the festival's essence. This multimodal representation not only celebrates tradition but also subtly documents its transformation in a rapidly evolving sociocultural landscape.

Senyor Santiago, an apparition that once helped Dapitan during its plight, is depicted with a sky-blue background, which suggests tranquillity and divine presence (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). Blue, as a color, is widely recognized as the color of the sky and sea, often associated with depth, stability, and faith (Lupton, 2017). Psychologically, blue evokes trust, loyalty, wisdom, and intelligence, reinforcing its role in religious and cultural iconography (Elliot & Maier, 2014).

The Kinabayo Festival (KF) is dedicated to Senyor Santiago precisely because of these connotations of faith and protection. The people of Dapitan, known as Dapitanons, venerate Senyor Santiago as their spiritual protector, believing that through his intercession, the city remains peaceful and resilient in times of hardship (Mirzoeff, 2015). This belief is deeply embedded in Philippine folk Catholicism, where patron saints are often entrusted with the fate of communities (Roces & Roces, 2019).

Moreover, color psychology suggests that blue produces a calming effect, which aligns with the assurance of security and success that the festival embodies (Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018). The blue background in the KF visuals, therefore, is not merely aesthetic as it symbolically reinforces the protective and unifying presence of Senyor Santiago in the festival. The continued annual commemoration of the apparition's heroism serves as both a religious reaffirmation and a cultural tradition, ensuring that the city remains bound by faith and shared history.

The dominant colors in the poster are orange to red-orange, which are psychologically associated with energy, excitement, and enthusiasm (Elliot & Maier, 2014). In color theory, orange is known to stimulate feelings of warmth, vitality, and movement, making it a fitting choice for a festival dedicated to celebration (Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018). The orange text in the poster is shadowed by white, a neutral color, which serves as a balancer or moderator of intensity (Lupton, 2017).

The text "Kinabayo Festival!" is followed by an exclamation mark, a typographic element that signifies strong emotions and heightened excitement (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). This punctuation choice reflects the lively shouts and dynamic engagement of festival-goers, who collectively celebrate the triumph of Dapitan through Senyor Santiago (Saint James), the city's patron saint. The graceful curve, where the horse appears to be galloping, represents the trials and challenges the city must navigate to ensure a successful KF.

Viewed abstractly, the two curved lines resemble punctuation marks for interrogative sentences, suggesting an implicit questioning of the festival's achievements and execution. This subtle visual cue raises doubts about the event's overall success, thereby challenging the effectiveness of the leadership at the time (Mirzoeff, 2015). The large curve encapsulating the city government's logo, which then stops at a specific point, metaphorically implies that the local government is hindered by issues, particularly in festival management and administrative concerns (Roces & Roces, 2019). These visual elements contribute

to a broader multimodal interpretation of the sociopolitical and cultural dimensions embedded in the poster's design.

The image of Senyor Santiago riding his horse while holding a sword is once again integrated into the poster, but its diminished size relative to the city government's logo suggests a shift in prominence. This visual hierarchy aligns with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2021) theory of multimodal discourse, where the larger elements in a composition are perceived as more dominant or central to meaning-making. The placement and size reduction of Senyor Santiago subtly reframes the religious aspect of the festival in favor of municipal identity and governance.

The text "Dapitan City, Philippines" is rendered in green, a color often associated with growth, renewal, and harmony (Elliot & Maier, 2014). Following this phrase, the elliptical mark ("...") is a typographical device that suggests omission, hesitation, or an open-ended idea (Lupton, 2017). In this context, the ellipsis symbolizes unfinished discourse, implying that the city has more attractions and events to offer during the festival but these remain unsaid due to their perceived lesser importance within the poster's hierarchy.

The text "2018," colored red, appears detached from "Kinabayo Festival," which is in orange. This color contrast and spatial separation indicate that the year is not necessarily part of the festival's official branding but rather a distinct element. In visual semiotics, such deliberate separation through color and space signals a break in conceptual unity (Jewitt & Bezemer, 2016).

At the right corner of the poster, a male and female figure dressed in blue are prominently featured, the position where the most important information is typically placed (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). This visual strategy emphasizes gender representation and equality, reinforcing the city's advocacy for inclusivity and strong communal ties among Dapitanons. The blue color of their attire symbolizes trust, loyalty, and stability, further reinforcing the social harmony and shared identity being promoted (Wilms & Oberfeld, 2018).

Meanwhile, the prominence of the Kinabayo Festival text, significantly enlarged and centrally positioned on the poster effectively draws readers' attention. This design choice aligns with semiotic principles, where strategic text placement enhances visibility and engagement (Hua & Xiang, 2015). The use of multiple colors, rather than a plain white background, further amplifies this effect, making the festival's name more recognizable and attracting attention to the entire poster. While Poster A employs a white font, its substantial size ensures a strong visual impact. Such prominence of the festival's name underscores themes of merrymaking, enjoyment, and festivity, as seen in other studies analyzing visual media's role in cultural events (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021).

However, incorporating the city mayor's image, a distinctly political element diverts focus from the festival's cultural and historical significance. This inclusion may suggest that the festival is driven by economic and political motives rather than genuine cultural celebration, similar to findings in studies on festival commercialization (Getz & Page, 2016). Despite this, the posters' visually rich and culturally evocative imagery helps mitigate perceptions of commercial intent. While local governments often implement projects to boost tourism revenue, it is crucial to preserve the festival's deep-rooted cultural and religious significance (Smith et al., 2018). The Kinabayo Festival remains a cherished tradition among the Dapitanon people, deeply connected to their ancestral heritage.

Designers, as key visual communicators, navigate moral sensibilities and cultural norms. Some maintain a conservative



approach, while others exhibit progressive and dynamic artistic choices. However, their creative freedom is often constrained by festival organizers' directives. At times, designers incorporate their own artistic insights, positioning themselves as empowered producers of visual information (Jewitt, 2017). Meanwhile, festival participants, as consumers and active contributors to local media culture, display critical awareness in interpreting visual messages.

To ensure that the festival's visual representation aligns with its cultural essence, individuals overseeing the tarpaulin design should possess expertise in semiotics. Without such knowledge, Dapitan City risks producing visuals that may be critiqued by those well-versed in visual literacy (Machin, 2016). Ensuring that at least one individual involved in the approval process has formal training in visual design and communication would facilitate the production of cohesive visual texts. This approach fosters mutual understanding among stakeholders and reinforces the festival's authentic cultural identity (Hua & Xiang, 2015).

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The visual representation of the Kinabayo Festival plays a crucial role in shaping public perception of the event. While the festival's name is prominently highlighted in the tarpaulin designs, reinforcing themes of festivity and celebration, the inclusion of political figures risks diverting attention from its cultural and historical essence. This shift raises concerns about the commercialization of the festival and its potential detachment from its religious and ancestral significance. Moving forward, there is a need for a more culturally sensitive approach to festival branding. Designers should not only be skilled in graphic design but also possess a deeper understanding of semiotics to ensure that visual elements align with the festival's intended meaning. Likewise, decision-makers in the approval process should have expertise in visual communication to prevent misrepresentation and reinforce the festival's authenticity. Striking a balance between tourism promotion and cultural integrity is essential to preserving the Kinabayo Festival's identity as a historical and religious tradition, ensuring that it remains a meaningful celebration for future generations.

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