

Meaning Construction and Ideological Messages in UNDP Egypt Annual Report 2024 Brochure: A Multimodal Critical Approach

Original Study

Shaymaa Taher Sallam
Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Suez University, P.O. Box: 43221, Suez, Egypt
shaymaa.sallam@arts.suezuni.edu.eg

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Abstract: The study attempted a multimodal critical analysis of UNDP Egypt Annual Report 2024 brochure to identify embedded messages, ideologies and power forms and to understand how ideologies and power are maintained in a hybrid discourse, integrating developmental, political and policy-oriented discourses. Qualitative analysis was conducted using a new critical framework based on Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (2006), Machin and Mayr's (2025[2012]) and Jancsary et al.'s (2016) MCDA frameworks. The study found that verbal and visual cues work as a coordinated multimodal system to generate power and ideologies. Power is seen in UNDP's institutional authority, Egyptians' expertise (in the technological and healthcare sectors) and establishment of human rights, while the identified ideologies are: technological transformation, gender equality, inclusiveness, partnerships and peace for progress. The study adds to linguistics and communication research and helps professionals improve their reporting skills.

Keywords: multimodal system, critical analysis, ideologies, power, hybrid discourse

INTRODUCTION

Egypt has faced socioeconomic challenges during 2024 resulting from increasing regional instabilities such as the war in Gaza and Sudan. Yet, it is establishing sustainable development programs for its people and the displaced hosted population. These programs are supported by UNDP and other national, regional and international partners. Not only has UNDP collaborated with Egypt in 2024, but it is also implementing the Country Strategic Note (2025–2027), which targets issues of innovation, inclusion and resilience. UNDP's achievements are presented in the UNDP Egypt Annual Report 2024 brochure, from which this study sources its data and which also highlights key 2025 development priorities in Egypt.

Multimodal research suggests that meaning interpretation relies on integrating various semiotic modes,

which are "socially developed as resources to make meaning" (Adami 2017, 451), "to express and shape values, ideologies, and power relations" (Adami 2017, 452). So language has become a means of constructing meanings and not the only one (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006[1996], 19).

The study aims to examine the verbal and visual semiotic modes in the UNDP Egypt Annual Report 2024 brochure (henceforth The Report) to unravel how these modes collaboratively construct messages and ideologies, maintain power and possibly influence public opinion to support particular policies. Thus, the study seeks to answer the following research questions (RQs):

- 1) What messages and ideologies are constructed in The Report through the combination of verbal and visual semiotic resources? How are they reinforced?

- 2) What forms of power are embodied in The Report, and how are they maintained?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Liu et al. (2024, 3) refer to Hart (2016) as saying that Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) is an interdisciplinary field encompassing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to reveal how various semiotic resources collaboratively frame ideologies and social power. On the one hand, CDA is interested in disclosing hidden ideologies and power dynamics in discourses (Fairclough 1995, 2001, 2005; van Dijk 2001; Wodak 2006).

On the other hand, with the development of technology, discourses shifted from monomodality into multimodality, marking the role of combining various modes, such as language, image, layout and music, in conveying meanings. Hence, in 1996, Kress and van Leeuwen laid the foundation of MDA, proposing their Visual Grammar Theory which they modified in 2006. While Kress and van Leeuwen's 1996 Visual Grammar Theory addresses forms of static visual communication such as charts, maps and three-dimensional entities (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, ix), their updated framework in 2006 integrates new forms of semiotic cues like moving images, colors and new digital media examples such as websites (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, vii). Given the social change and its effect on semiotic cues, Kress and van Leeuwen introduced a refined framework in 2020, including examples from the new digital landscape to illustrate their framework's principles (Nguyen 2023, 155). In their 2020 framework, they use the term *Validity* instead of *Modality* "to highlight the different realizations of the truth in different semiotic modes" (Nguyen 2023, 154).

Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 20) define multimodality as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event." Influenced by Halliday's 1995 Systemic Functional Grammar, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 1) argue that their *visual grammar* describes how depicted elements such as things, places and people combine into a "meaningful" visual form of communication similar to language. This similarity lies in Halliday's (1978, 192) words: "the grammar of a language is not a code, [...], but a 'resource for making meanings'."

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) propose three kinds of visual meaning: representational, interactional and compositional, which correspond to Halliday's (1994) three language meta-functions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 79–105), any visual element has a representational meaning which refers to how that visual element is presented; conceptually (through classificational, analytical or symbolic processes) or narratively (through actional, reactional, transactional or non-transactional processes realized by Vectors) (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, 63–68). For them, interpersonal meaning refers to the relationships between interactive participants (producers/viewers) and represented participants (people/things/places) (Kress,

van Leeuwen 2006, 114). These relationships are realized through gazes, frame sizes and camera angles (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, 116–140). Meanwhile, compositional meaning addresses the visual elements' organization and is based on three systems: (i) *information value*, which is the informational value attached to "participants and syntagms that relate them to each other and to the viewer" (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, 177) based on their placement in the visual mode (i.e. Top-Bottom, Left-Right, Centre-Margin); (ii) *salience*, where the visual elements' organization attracts viewers' attention, such as "placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or color), differences in sharpness, etc." (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, 177) and (iii) *framing*, referred to as the presence/absence of framing devices that "disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense" (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, 177).

Van Leeuwen (2012) argues for incorporating CDA in multimodal discourse. Subsequently, Machin and Mayr (2025[2012]) introduce their MCDA framework to help reveal power forms and ideologies in a multimodal discourse. Their framework includes analytical elements such as connotative words, overlexicalization, lexical absences, and structural opposition. They maintain that connotative words create certain associations and overlexicalization leads to "over-persuasion" and indicates "ideological contention" (Machin, Mayr 2025[2012], 37).

Other scholars contribute to MCDA, such as Jancsary et al. (2016) who develop a methodology based on five analytical steps guided by a number of questions. The first step deals with identifying the discourse genre, its spatio-temporal context, its audience and purpose. Step two clarifies the "conventional meaning of words and visual elements" (Jancsary et al. 2016, 18) by highlighting the vocabulary, rhetorical devices, stylistic features, design and layout. Step three discloses latent meanings and highlights verbal and visual absences in discourse. Step four examines the relationship between verbal and visual modes in discourse and identifies the integrated messages. Finally, step five discloses forms of power and interest in discourse and how integrating both kinds of modes reinforces/conceals power.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research was conducted on MCDA applied to various discourse types. For example, Tan (2011, 2014) conducted two studies focusing on business discourse. The study in 2011 examined how business events of the Bear Stearns breakdown during the mortgage crisis in the USA are contextualized and how social actors' identities are multimodally constructed by online business news networks, such as CNBC, Bloomberg, Reuters and FBN on 19–20 June 2008. Tan found that the same event is not always presented explicitly across the different webpage elements. An event can be recontextualized when an authorized *certified expert* presents the event's key facts followed by an agenda projection. Tan also found

an increasing tendency towards *conversationalization*, making business/finance news more accessible to a wider audience.

Tan's 2014 study explored how business news networks' identities, FBN, CNBC and Bloomberg, are constructed in their online business news video clips. Tan found that the typical social actors' identities in online business news networks (News Affiliates and Institutional Actors) are represented differently. Only *celebrity* News Affiliates are constantly figured as active participants in the headline, videobite thumbnail and summary-lead. Tan also concluded that various techniques, such as dynamic movement of images and logos and big three-dimensional font size, are used to represent institutional identities.

Shao and Janssens (2022) investigated how power is embedded in multinational companies CSR videos. They found that three kinds of subjects in responsible corporations are constructed verbally/visually: hero, missionary and architect. Shao and Janssens concluded that multimodality can "mask" power through normalizing the subject constitution and involving the audience in subject constitution. They also concluded that subordinating others does not necessarily mean presenting *other* social groups negatively, but multimodality might construct them positively and even obscure inequalities.

Developmental discourse was examined through MCDA lens, where Machin and Liu (2023) investigated documents produced to "communicate" the UN Agenda 2023 for sustainable development. Machin and Liu concluded that despite inconsistencies, imprecise buzzwords and unclear "causalities", the Agenda is presented as an engaging and highly technical one with a high moral stance, reinforcing its rhetorical power.

In the developmental field, Liu et al. (2024) also conducted a diachronic study to trace the change in government poverty-reduction posters over three historical periods since the foundation of the Republic of China. They found a focus shift over the three periods with initial focus on collective agricultural activities, ending with featuring technological progress and individual successes.

From the literature review, it is observed that the hybrid genre, developmental, political and policy-oriented discourse, has not received much attention in MCDA research. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by conducting an MDA of The Report as a hybrid discourse.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study investigates the verbal and visual semiotic modes in the UNDP Egypt Annual Report 2024 brochure entitled DRIVING IMPACT through PARTNERSHIPS (henceforth The Report). This Report was specifically chosen for investigation since it is the most recent UNDP official document reporting on the development status in Egypt during 2024, the year of regional crises that have

had negative spillovers for Egypt. It is also accessible to everyone, both Egyptians and international audience; therefore, it can be a tool for branding Egypt as "a key actor in the Arab region and the African continent" (UNDP 2025). Moreover, The Report embodies a variety of verbal and visual semiotic resources that help unveil the ideologies and power forms in it. Finally, no study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has conducted an MCDA of the verbal and visual semiotic cues in The Report.

The Report consists of 41 pages in addition to two cover pages. It features texts and visual elements, represented in cartoons, naturalistic images, icons and colors. The images chosen for investigation are numbered consecutively (Fig. 1, Fig. 2, and so forth) according to the order of their appearance in the brochure.

The study starts with an introduction, including the aim of the study and RQs. Discussion of the theoretical background is then provided and followed by the Literature review. Then the study's data and methodology are detailed, followed by the analysis of the data. The study ends with the Conclusion, which summarizes the findings and answers for the RQs.

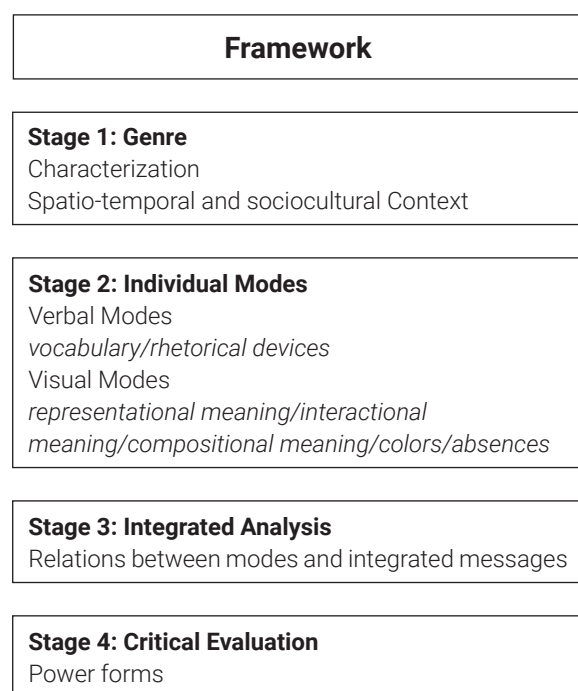
Qualitative analysis is conducted in The Report. Yet, the free AntConc software (version 4.3.1) is used to identify the frequency of personal pronouns (Table 1) to clarify how the prevalence of particular pronouns conveys messages and ideologies. For the qualitative analysis, an analytical framework (Diagram 1 – explained below) is designed, drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar, Machin and Mayr's (2025[2012]) and Jancsary et al.'s (2016) MCDA frameworks. The study's analytical framework is structured in sequential stages. The focal points in each stage are specifically selected from the previously mentioned frameworks because they present a logical progression starting by providing contextual background for The Report, then analyzing the verbal and visual semiotic modes in it, followed by clarifying what messages are constructed through these modes and ending with a final identification of power forms resulting from the integration of these verbal and visual modes.

Since not much attention has been paid to adopting Jancsary et al.'s (2016) MCDA framework and since their approach is characterized by *adaptability*, encompassing steps that "may be extended or scaled down" (Jancsary et al. 2016, 12), the present study's framework includes modifications of their framework to test the applicability of a simplified form of their framework, in addition to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar and Machin and Mayr's (2025[2012]) MCDA framework, in conducting MCDA on the study's data. Thus, while the present study's designed framework adopts Jancsary et al.'s (2016) structured form of analysis, it follows neither their three-layered structure nor their five steps. It only adopts their framework's core ideas of presenting the data's genre, highlighting verbal and visual modes, drawing the relationship between the modes and their

role in revealing integrated messages and identifying power forms in the data.

The present study's designed framework adopts from Machin and Mayr's (2025) framework its means of lexical analysis (word connotations and overlexicalization) (Machin, Mayr 2025[2012], 32–38). Meanwhile, the analysis of visual cues is based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar.

Diagram 1: Analytical Framework



The present study's framework (Diagram 1) is based on four stages. In stage one, the Report's genre, audience and spatio-temporal/sociocultural context are provided. Stage two includes a description of individual verbal and visual modes. For the verbal modes, vocabulary and rhetorical devices are highlighted while the visual modes are discussed based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar. Visual absences are also addressed. The framework's third stage, "Integrated Analysis" highlights messages conveyed through integrating verbal and visual modes. Finally, the fourth stage provides "critical evaluation", in Jancsary et al.'s (2016, 23) terms, disclosing power forms in The Report.

The present study has its limitations. It focuses on examining only one annual report and on "reading" only the colors, cartoons and naturalistic photos to reveal their roles in imparting messages and ideologies and power forms. The remaining forty-five icons are not addressed in the analysis since their positioning as discrete elements due to the spatial separation between them and their embodiment of complex elements, such as numbers, colors, drawings and different font sizes, require extended analysis which cannot be covered in one study. Despite the study's limitations, it has shown the plausibility of the newly designed framework to reveal

messages and ideologies and power forms in multimodal hybrid discourses as discussed in the following section.

ANALYSIS

Stage 1: Genre

The Report focuses on Egypt which is characterized by its distinguished geographical location in the Middle East, giving it a geopolitical advantage and making it subject to harmful socio-economic consequences resulting from regional crises. Therefore, regional crises such as the ongoing war in Gaza and Sudan in 2024 have had their negative repercussions on Egypt, added to the struggle to survive other international economic problems. Moreover, the Egyptian society is socio-culturally diverse, among which are vulnerable social members for whom protection programs, such as Takaful and Karama, are provided. Egypt also hosts a number of regionally displaced populations of diverse social-cultural backgrounds. All these conditions require accurate reporting on current and future development programs in the various social, economic, environment, business, health, technology and governance sectors. Hence, The Report has been drafted, highlighting the developmental achievements in 2024 and the 2025 priorities.

Being accessible on the internet and in a brochure form, the intended audience of The Report are Egyptian and international population. Part of the audience is assumed to be high-level Egyptian government officials, who need quick highlights of the key UNDP's achievements in Egypt to assess how UNDP's activities align with Egypt's national development plans. International donors are among the expected audience, who similarly need a clearly defined summary of UNDP's work in Egypt to decide their future financial contribution to UNDP programs. Other likely audiences are the Egyptian general public, who understand English and who want to know the impact of UNDP's work on their lives, and media professionals, who likewise understand English and look for UNDP success stories to include in news articles.

Although The Report includes aspects of business discourse, such as performance reviews and statistics, and business-oriented vocabulary, such as *stakeholders*, *entrepreneurship* and *partnership*, it can be classified as a hybrid discourse integrating developmental, political and policy-oriented discourses. It is political and policy-oriented as it is produced by the UN, which works with issues related to supporting governments, human rights and public policy and these are issues addressed in The Report. The Report also, as part of its political function, reviews UNDP's work impact in Egypt, thereby legitimizing continued funding by donors and extended partnerships. The developmental discourse in The Report is represented in development narratives such as domestic success stories; SDGs alignment and other development-related issues.

Since The Report includes texts and visual elements, the following section analyses the various verbal and visual elements to disclose the integrated messages and ideologies and power forms.

Stage 2: Individual Modes

a-Verbal Modes

Vocabulary

The Report includes connotative words such as *scaling (up)* and *resilience* which have a persuasive effect on the audience. For example, *scaling (up)* in “[...] our newly developed Country Strategic Note (2025–2027), which provides a clear roadmap for scaling up innovation, [...]” and “*Scaling digital impact*” implies having robust infrastructure to achieve goals, persuading the audience of UNDP’s productivity in Egypt. Meanwhile, *resilience* in “*Building resilience to climate change [...]*” and “*UNDP contributed by [...] mobilizing financing pipelines aligned with biodiversity and resilience goals*” implies the ability to survive hardships and adapt to change.

Overlexicalization of words that express dynamic actions and signify change to better conditions is noted in The Report. They promote ideologies such as partnerships, efficiency and technological transformation, persuading the audience to accept future policies. Examples of these words are *progress*, *growth*, *initiative*, *innovation*, *goals* and *ambition*.

Although nominalization obscures responsibility, it shifts attention in The Report to ideas, rendering the discourse as formal and objective. Among nominalized words are *contributions* in “*Our contributions also extended to global platforms*” and *achievements* in “*These achievements, detailed throughout this Annual Report 2024, demonstrate the power*”.

Rhetorical Devices

As shown in Table 1, the first-person plural pronouns (we/our/us) are dominant in The Report, mentioned 31 times, about 65% of all pronouns in The Report. Examples include:

- 1) *Together, we advanced Egypt’s green, inclusive economic growth [...]*

- 2) *Our joint programmes in 2024 also facilitated 69,000 microloans [...]*
- 3) *As we move through 2025, we are already implementing our newly developed Country Strategic Note (2025–2027) [...]*
- 4) *Our focus was twofold: helping Egypt mitigate and adapt to climate risks [...]*

Most of the first-person plural pronouns appear in the Forward by the UNDP resident representative in Egypt. Rhetorically, these inclusive pronouns have persuasive power as they instill a sense of solidarity and of having a shared vision, motivating the audience to participate in future collective work. They also establish the representative’s authoritative power.

Yet, these inclusive pronouns contextually refer to different groups of people. For instance, *we* and *our* in examples 1 and 2 refer to the speaker (the UN representative in Egypt); other “national stakeholders” and “international development partners”. In example 1, the adverb *together* emphasizes empowering parties besides UNDP while shared responsibility is stressed through the adjective *joint* in example 2, enhancing the speaker’s credibility and encouraging readers to participate in collaborative programs. Meanwhile, in example 3, *we* includes both the speaker and the Egyptian society, indicating UNDP’s resolution to assume its development responsibility in Egypt. In example 4, *our* refers to UNDP and the Egyptian Ministry of Environment, softening UNDP’s involvement in development work in Egypt and suggesting shared responsibility.

The second top pronoun category in The Report includes the third-person plural pronouns (they/them/their/themselves), employed 14 times, about 29% of all pronouns in The Report. Examples include:

- 5) *They conducted over 38,725 home visits [...]*
- 6) *These enterprises are more than just numbers—they are the hopes and dreams of entrepreneurs striving*

Table 1: Frequency of Personal Pronouns in The Report

Type	Examples	Frequency	Total
First-person plural pronoun	We	15	31
	Our	15	
	Us	1	
First-person singular pronoun	I	Once	2
	My	Once	
	Me	Zero	
Third-person plural pronoun	They	2	14
	Them	2	
	Their	9	
	Themselves	1	
Third-person singular pronoun	He/she/him/her/himself/herself	Zero	Zero
Second-person pronoun	Your	Once	1

to build better futures for themselves, their families, and their communities

In example 5, *they* refers to the “sixty female health promoters and supervisors” mentioned in the previous sentence, establishing their agency and responsibility as a unified group. Meanwhile, *they* in example 6 refers to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) established in Egypt, linking them to their nature as the entrepreneurs’ aspired goals. Also, in example 6, the possessive *their* indicates assigning responsibility for progress to entrepreneurs rather than to only UNDP while *themselves* suggests the entrepreneurs’ competent, autonomous and responsible agency.

Rhetorical devices are employed to manipulate readers. Thus, beginning The Report with UNDP representative’s word adds a formal and authoritative tone to it, preparing readers to accept the information that follows. Moreover, appealing to logos and pathos, in Aristotle’s terms, generates a persuasive effect. So, while the repetitive use of the first-person plural pronouns appeals to the readers’ pathos, expressing solidarity, using numbers appeals to the readers’ logos, adding credibility to The Report.

Other influential rhetorical devices are metaphors. A prominent metaphor in The Report is DEVELOPMENT IS A JOURNEY and is realized in the examples “[...] *a more inclusive, green, and resilient development pathway*” and “[...] *the war is straining Egypt’s economic reform efforts and development trajectory*”. In these examples, development is construed as a journey through the words *pathway* and *trajectory*, suggesting that development is gradual and needs time. The metaphor implies that the development process might face obstacles that need wisdom and patience to be dealt with. Accordingly, readers become prepared for future policies.

Another metaphor is EGYPTIANS’ CAPACITIES/ SKILLS ARE BUILDINGS. It is realized through the examples “UNDP also conducted capacity-building trainings [...]” and “*In parallel, 14 tailored training programmes were delivered [...], building skills in strategic planning, [...]*.” In these examples, Egyptians’ capacities/skills are construed as buildings through the word *building* itself, suggesting that capacities/skills are improved through deliberate efforts and that they require continuous training to keep them at high level similar to a construction which needs maintenance to keep it durable. Thus, allocating resources for training individuals becomes justified.

Overall, the analysis of the verbal modes (vocabulary/rhetorical devices) clarifies how language conveys messages and influences readers. These messages are promoting shared responsibility between Egyptian entrepreneurs and UNDP; acknowledging UNDP’s productive development work in Egypt and having patience and wisdom to make progress. The following section addresses the visual modes in The Report, which are the second aspect of the study framework’s second stage.

b-Visual Modes

The Report is shown on a two-page spread, except for the first and last cover pages, and features verbal and visual elements. Among visual elements are sixty-three images: five cartoons, eleven naturalistic photos of real human beings including the UNDP representative’s photo, one photo of a solar-powered plant, one photo of a bird and forty-five icons. Cartoons and naturalistic photos chosen for analysis constitute seventeen Figures as presented below.

The analysis of the selected visual elements in The Report is based on Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) Visual Grammar. Starting with the representational meaning, all selected Figures in The Report include conceptual structures which manifest through symbolic and analytical processes. Conjointly, the varied narrative processes in these Figures convey diverse messages. As for interactional meanings, the most common interactional features are Offer, long shot and frontal perspective as observed in Figs. 4, 12, 15, 16 and 17. Meanwhile, half of the Demand Figures appear in medium close-up shots, allowing viewers to have a personal connection with the participants and discern their facial expressions/personal emotions. Yet, oblique horizontal and high-angle shots in Figs. 1, 2, 5 and 9 evoke a sense of detachment, allowing viewers to focus on the depicted scenes rather than on individual experiences. Speaking of the compositional meaning, most of the selected Figures have the Centre-Margin composition, foregrounding the central participant to stress certain messages. The Top-Bottom visual organization also highlights the Ideal-Real information in Figs. 1, 3, 4, 5, 12, where participants at the top Ideal place suggest aspired values. The Left-Right composition is no less significant. Notably, assigning colors to the different program areas in The Report imparts certain emotions/associations with the different addressed areas.

Among significant conceptual processes is the one in Fig. 1 with a salient laptop, being centrally positioned; the virtual screen and the bar chart symbolize technology and the high angle shot implies control over the technological system. The compositional feature seen in the upward-trending line above the salient laptop suggests aspired technological development. In Fig. 2, participants’ outfits, the pills and hospital beds symbolize the healthcare field, and the Figure involves narrative reactional and actional processes. The reactional processes are noted through the nurses’/doctors’ eyelines (vectors), signifying that each individual in the healthcare field is dedicated to their own tasks and that their roles are complementary for providing good service. Meanwhile, the actional process seen in the vectors formed by participants’ arms and legs indicates doing activities. The high-angle shot in Fig. 2 positions viewers as people who are evaluating/managing the healthcare system. “Digital Transformation and Innovation” (Fig. 1) and “Social Protection and Health” (Fig. 2) are assigned the highly saturated blue color with its variants (dark blue/light blue/sky blue), suggesting

Meaning Construction and Ideological Messages in UNDP Egypt Annual Report 2024 Brochure: A Multimodal Critical Approach

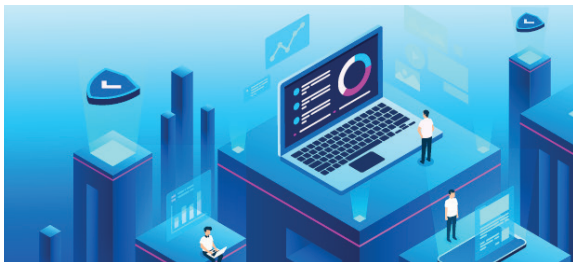


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

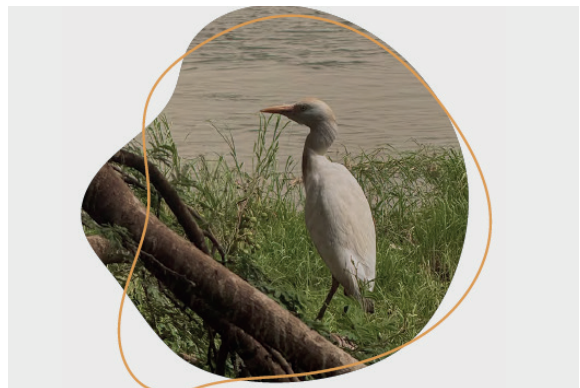


Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17

professionalism and authority and thus evoking trust in the audience. The high saturation of the color reflects strong passion for technological development and active work in the fields of technology and social protection and health, respectively, encouraging the audience's active participation in these fields.

Production is symbolized by the gears in Fig. 4, which involves a narrative reactional non-transactional process. The three depicted young people are looking at something not shown in the Figure. They are only standing beside each other, reflecting the teamwork idea. Fig. 4 might also impart the message of youth empowerment as three young people are depicted using their arms (vectors) to raise/push gears (actional process). From the interactional side, participants are perceived as inviting viewers to only contemplate the Figure's general messages. Given the compositional aspect, the centrality of the young lady implies that she is the team's central actor, imparting the gender equality ideology, while the kite at the top of the Figure reflects aspired progress.

The naturalistic photos in The Report include participants symbolizing different aspects of reality. For example, the woman's smile (Fig. 6) symbolizes happiness/satisfaction, feelings supported by the reactional non-transactional process, as her eyeline (vector) is directed at something not shown in the photo. Being central in the Figure, the woman and her emotions are foregrounded. The elderly woman (Fig. 8); the man (Fig. 11) and the girl (Fig. 16) symbolize the Egyptian culture/tradition. The narrative processes in Figs. 11 and 16 are reactional and actional non-transactional, where, on the one hand, the man and the girl are looking at something not depicted in the Figures (reactional), showing feelings of contentment and dissatisfaction/distress, respectively and on the other hand, the Means (stick, robe and the man's arms in Fig. 11 and the girl's arms and the robe in Fig. 16) only connect them to other participants (Goals) in the Figures without doing actions to these Goals (actional). Through the Offer frontal shots in both Figures, participants invite viewers to recognize them as vulnerable citizens. Fig. 8 includes a Demand process where the elderly woman, centrally positioned, gazes at viewers, allowing them to discern her emotions/facial expressions.

The check in Fig. 7 symbolizes achievement and attracts attention, by being foregrounded in a big size, to the efficiency of teamwork and youth empowerment. The frontal angle demands viewers to recognize and share the young people's feeling of achievement. Moreover, placing the young man in the central position indicates his pivotal role in the team and suggests the young ladies' supporting role, highlighting the gender equality ideology.

Published in English, The Report follows the Western-culture Left-Right composition, implying UNDP power in terms of deciding the language of The Report. (Forms of power are discussed in the Critical Evaluation section) Given the Report's two-page spread layout, the selected Figures are shown on both pages. Figures placed on the Right page draw attention to intended, New, messages

such as technological transformation (Fig. 1), provision of good healthcare service (Fig. 2), collaboration and gender equality (Fig. 4), inclusiveness (Figs. 6, 13 and 16) and teamwork and youth empowerment (Fig. 7).

Colors create particular moods/emotional associations for the different program areas. Thus, the green color in Fig. 3 suggests tranquility and clean environment. Through the hybrid purple color (light/dark), the audience is guided to contemplate "what might be" (Kress, van Leeuwen 2006, 159) in relation to governance. MSME and local development areas are assigned the warm red color, with its hybrid variants (dark pink/reddish-purple), suggesting intense enthusiasm for active work in these two fields, entrepreneurs' adventurous spirit and urgency for setting up development programs, motivating the audience to accept relevant policies. With issues of "Crisis Response and Recovery", the hybrid golden-brown color is assigned, probably reflecting an action-oriented mood.

Notable also is the combination of colors on different pages addressing different points of discussion. For example, on the first cover page, variants of blue and orange are combined, strengthening the authoritative tone of The Report so that the audience believes the information in The Report. Similarly, the "Key Highlights 2024" page has a combination of red, pink and blue, where the intensity of the colors at the top aligns with the key achievements referred to in the headline, stressing UNDP's impactful work in Egypt.

What The Report visually lacks is notable representation of people with disabilities (PWDs) (illustrated in only one icon out of all The Report's visual elements) although they are verbally referred to as beneficiaries of the development programs, obscuring ideologies about them. Moreover, there is no visual representation of "the forces" that have led to economic, social, financial, medical, poverty challenges in Egypt, probably giving priority to reviewing successes rather than addressing causes of challenges. This kind of absence is similar to what critics note about the SDGs Agenda: "[...] they exclude the forces that bring about the problems we face. The Agenda excludes geopolitical competition for resources, [...], global financial markets, as well as regional political relations and conflicts" (Machin, Mayr 2025, 24).

Stage 3: Integrated Analysis

When verbal and visual cues are combined together, they reinforce the message in The Report. For example, medium close-up shots impart messages of creating a close connection with viewers and maintaining solidarity with the depicted participants (Figs. 8, 13 and 14). The same messages are expressed verbally through the first-person plural pronouns. Another underlined message is keenness of objectivity which is communicated verbally through nominalization and visually through Offer long shots (Figs. 4, 12, 15, 16 and 17). Similarly, concepts of dynamism and dedication to work are expressed verbally through overlexicalization of vocabulary indicating change/dynamic actions, such as *development*

and *initiative*, and visually through Offer Figures of participants engaged with their tasks (Figs. 1 and 2).

Ideological messages can be identified through the integration of verbal and visual elements in The Report. For example, the formality and professionalism (Fig. 1) suggested by the blue color, “rhyme”, using van Leeuwen’s (2005, 9) word, with the heading “Digital Transformation and Innovation” to gloss UNDP’s ideology of promoting technological change for human progress. A Figure showing a young lady and two young men (Fig. 4) and a Figure showing a young man and two young women (Fig. 7) besides texts such as “[...] support for more than 2,000 women entrepreneurs” (The Report 2024, 14) and “[...] totaling 3.4 billion EGP, which were equally distributed between men and women [...]” (The Report 2024, 16) underline the gender equality ideology. The inclusiveness ideology is recognized through Figures depicting individuals from different sociocultural/socioeconomic backgrounds (Figs. 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14 and 16) supported by textual content such as “[...] inclusive social protection and accessible health services become essential” (The Report 2024, 18) and “to ensure that all segments of society can benefit from technological advancement” (The Report 2024, 13).

The partnership ideology is similarly highlighted verbally/visually as shown on the first cover page and the “UNDP Egypt’s 2025 Priorities” page. On the first cover page, “DRIVING IMPACT through PARTNERSHIPS” (The Report 2024) is written in bold capital bright white color, against a bright colored background to make the text stand out, except the preposition *through* which is written in small orange italicized letters. The bold capital letters underline *partnerships* as a viable approach for progress in Egypt while the orange color italics suggest urgency for adopting this approach. Meanwhile, the partnership idea is highlighted verbally on the “UNDP Egypt’s 2025 Priorities” page through the statement “Together with our partners, we are committed to shaping a more inclusive, sustainable and green Egypt” (The Report 2024, 40) and visually by being written in bold white against a bright colored background in a speech-bubble frame. Other instances of reinforcing the partnership ideology are in “together, these partnerships enabled the design and delivery of integrated solutions [...]” (The Report 2024, 39) and “partnerships are the foundation of UNDP’s ability to deliver impact at scale” (The Report 2024, 38).

Stage 4: Critical Evaluation

This final stage of the analysis focuses on identifying power forms in The Report and clarifying how verbal and visual elements collectively generate/construct power.

UNDP’s power is realized first through choosing English to be The Report’s language. Second, its power is visually manifest through the UNDP logo on the first and last cover pages and the UNDP representative’s photo at the top of the Forward page. Third, frame selection suggests UNDP’s power in terms of deciding what to be included/excluded in The Report, guiding the audience’s interpretation of reality. For example, when frames

include a large laptop, graphs, virtual screen (Fig. 1) and a solar plant (Fig. 9), audience is directed to think of future as dependent on technology and sustainable energy. Fourth, the choice of the pages’ background colors guides the audience’s perception of The Report’s information. Thus, vibrant warm background colors invoke vitality/dynamism while blue, green and purple background colors instill impressions of formality, reliability and professionalism.

Visual manifestation of UNDP’s power is reinforced verbally through active verbs such as *scaled up*, *helped* and *installed* in “UNDP also scaled up youth-led green innovations and helped connect more than 1,400 enterprises [...]” (The Report 2024, 2) and “UNDP installed over 200 megawatts of solar capacity [...]” (The Report 2024, 2). UNDP’s agentive power is also manifest in passive structures such as *was delivered* and *were equipped* in “[...] targeted capacity-building was delivered for 33 government officials [...]” (The Report 2024, 32) and “[...] 52 homes were equipped with off-grid solar systems [...]” (The Report 2024, 21). Besides, verbs that entail giving help/benefits to others such as *benefited* in “key government institutions and national initiatives [...] benefited from UNDP’s integrated and adaptive programming model” (The Report 2024, 38) and *provided [...] support* in “UNDP provided policy, technical, and institutional support to help Egypt [...]” (The Report 2024, 24) underscore UNDP’s power in The Report.

Another unstated power form is the power of technological expertise. It is perceived through the high camera angle in Fig. 1, implying that the technological field is under control. Verbally, a phrase such as “*marking Egypt as a global thought leader in inclusive digital transformation*” (The Report 2024, 13) and verbs in the past such as *accessed* in “65+ MSMEs accessed new markets including via e-commerce” (The Report 2024, 14) back the visual message in the Figure. The expertise power is also seen in Fig. 2, where the high camera angle indicates command of the healthcare system, and Fig. 9, where the high-angle shot connotes controlled transition towards “clean energy”. However, unlike the technological field, texts about the healthcare system and clean energy transition express UNDP’s guiding role rather than Egypt’s experts’ role. Examples are: “UNDP supported the National AIDS Programme” (The Report 2024, 19) and “UNDP provided technical and implementation support for Egypt’s clean energy goals” (The Report 2024, 21).

Power uses ideology to influence audience position towards situations. In other words, presenting ideologies through a powerful actor ensures influencing audience stances and legitimizing the powerful actor’s future actions. For example, UNDP’s reinforced partnership ideology positions the audience, specifically the Egyptian public and media professionals, as supporters and beneficiaries of better services if they support partnerships. Therefore, UNDP’s future decisions would be justified. For international donors, upon seeing their funds being disbursed wisely based on UNDP reporting, continued funding would be accepted. Conversely, embodied ideologies

justify the perceived power as inevitable. For example, the inclusiveness ideology and the gender equality ideology, perceived in Figs. 4 and 7, uphold the power of establishing human rights and render it a natural process.

CONCLUSION

The present study attempted to unveil the implied message/ideologies in The Report and uncover how power forms are maintained in it through adopting a newly designed analytical framework which draws on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar, Machin and Mayr's (2025[2012]) and Jancsary et al.'s (2016) MCDA frameworks. The study concluded that in hybrid discourses such as the present study's data, dominant power forms are the UNDP's institutional power, expertise and human rights establishment. Moreover, ideologies and power are in a mutual relationship and are embodied in discourse through verbal and visual integration. Also employed are colors, ranging from that suggesting formality (blue) to those indicating enthusiasm and urgency (red/orange).

The analysis provided the answer to RQ 1, which is about identifying the messages and ideologies in The Report and clarifying how they are reinforced. The study revealed that key embodied ideologies are technological transformation, partnerships, inclusiveness, gender equality and peace for progress. Other enclosed messages are keenness on developing close connection with The Report's audience, maintaining solidarity among people from different sociocultural/socioeconomic backgrounds who live in Egypt and being objective in presenting information in The Report. Verbal and visual elements complement each other to reinforce these messages and ideologies. Colors highlight ideologies of technological shift (blue), entrepreneurship (red) and peace for progress (golden-brown). The accompanying text supports these ideologies by featuring work done in the fields of technology and private sector partnerships. Similarly, language reflecting the ideologies of inclusiveness such as *inclusive social protection*; gender equality such as *distributed between men and women* and peace for development, such as *promoting peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and regional stability* complement the visual elements which construct these ideologies, as discussed in the Analysis.

The analysis also provided the answer to RQ 2, which is about pinpointing the power forms in The Report and how they are constructed. The analysis showed that power is evident in UNDP's institutional power, Egyptians' expertise (in the technological and healthcare sectors) and the establishment of human rights. These power forms are constructed through combined verbal and visual elements. UNDP's authoritative agency is projected visually in various ways, ranging from placing its logo on the cover page and the UNDP representative's photo in the Forward page to including/excluding particular frames and using the formal blue color. UNDP's authority is also noted verbally by active/passive voice

and language that signalizes the provision of benefits for people. The Egyptians' expertise power is recognized in the high angle shots in Fig. 1 (technological development) and Fig. 2 (healthcare system), accompanied by the relevant texts. Finally, the power of establishing human rights is singled out through the verbal and visual cues (Figs. 4 and 7) that express gender equality.

Being in a mutual relationship, power controls embedded ideologies to manipulate audience into accepting future policies. In The Report, for example, UNDP has the power to decide what is needed for development. Mutually, ideologies advocate forms of power as inevitable such as substantiating Egyptians' expertise as necessary for Egypt's growth.

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