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**AN ANALYSIS OF COVID-19 POSTER OF THE GHANA HEALTH SERVICE: A SEMIOTIC APPROACH**

**Eric Aning**

Department of Languages

St. Monica's College of Education, Mampong-Ashanti, Ghana.

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**ABSTRACT:** *The COVID-19 virus is a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The virus is primarily spread between people during close contact, most often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, and talking. The droplets usually fall to the ground or onto surfaces rather than travelling through air over long distances. Transmission may also occur through smaller droplets that are able to stay suspended in the air for longer periods of time. Less commonly, people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their face. A number of people in Ghana are continually being infected on daily basis and as such the government has made efforts to reduce the spread and rate of infections through one of its agencies, Ghana Health Service under the Ministry of Health by educating the general public to observe the safety protocols through a COVID-19 poster advertisement. The rationale for choosing COVID-19 poster for the study is because posters are multimodal texts that combine textual and visual modes to educate the Ghanaian populace to adhere to the COVID-19 safety protocols. Textual modes refer to the words written on the selected poster while visual modes refer to the non-verbal signs displayed in the image. The objective of this study is to investigate how semiotic and textual modes are exploited to control and direct the attitude of the reader towards the images. The educative poster of the Ghana Health Service was subjected to a qualitative analysis using Barthes (1998) Semiotic Theory. This research looks at the visual and textual modes of the COVID-19 poster used at vantage points in public places and in various institutions. A descriptive research design was employed for this study as the most suitable for the attainment of the study objectives. The findings show that COVID-19 poster generally deliver a message that together we can defeat COVID-19 by following the safety protocols and obeying government regulations. And also, by observing and analysing the verbal and visual signs in the poster, each of these images and verbal signs are designed to convey an idea or a message, and communicate to readers to have a special effect on them. Again, this study establishes that the visual design as visual language is culturally specific and that the poster represents our environment; social interaction that is the interaction between the producer of the image and the reader.*

**KEYWORDS:** multimodal, semiotic modes, textual modes, visual modes, COVID-19

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## INTRODUCTION

A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new strain of coronavirus. The disease caused by the novel coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, China, has been named coronavirus disease 2019

(COVID-19) – ‘CO’ stands for corona, ‘VI’ for virus, and ‘D’ for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as ‘2019 novel coronavirus’ or ‘2019-nCoV.’ (ECDC; 2020). The virus is primarily spread among people in close contact, most often via small droplets produced by coughing, sneezing, and talking. The droplets usually fall to the ground or onto surfaces rather than travelling through air over long distances. Transmission may also occur through smaller droplets that are able to stay suspended in the air for longer periods of time. Less commonly, people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface and then touching their face. The COVID-19 virus may survive on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectants can kill it (UNICEF, NEWYORK, 2020)

From the time when the first cases of COVID-19 were identified in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019, WHO has been at the forefront of the country’s containment efforts. The WHO Country Office in China, supported by the Regional Office for the Western Pacific and global headquarters, has provided the Government of China with technical advice on detection, testing, isolation and quarantine measures to support a rapid response to contain the outbreak (ECDC, 2020).

It is most contagious during the first three days after the onset of symptoms, although spread is possible before symptoms appear, and from people who do not show symptoms. There are no vaccines nor specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public outbreak at Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 30th January, 2020 and a pandemic on 11th March, 2020. In summary, as with other respiratory infections like the flu or the common cold, public health measures are critical to slow the spread of illnesses. Public health measures are everyday preventive actions that include: staying home when sick; covering mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of used tissue immediately; washing hands often with soap and water; and cleaning frequently touched surfaces and objects. Some of other effective mitigation measures include practicing effective personal and public hygiene, protecting the most vulnerable to the disease and isolating people who are currently infected through self-quarantine and social quarantine (World Health Organization, 2020).

Local transmission of the disease has occurred in most countries which Ghana is no exception. In the case of Ghana, the rate of the infection soared within the shortest possible time which in fact compelled the President, Nana Akuffo Addo to declare a lockdown in some parts of the country on the 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020, as a measure to contain the virus.

To create awareness of this infectious disease posters have been making round on the streets and in various institutions to educate the people to adhere to the safety precaution protocols and failure to do so means contracting the deadly virus. Poster is a graphical expression of pictures and words or only words. It has been used for various purposes such as to inform people, persuade them, educate them and mobilize them. Thus, it may appear as a work of art used to increase people’s awareness related to social problems nowadays. It takes its main power as it fulfils its task sending sincere and effective messages enlightening, directing and

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persuading people (Ertef 2007: 80). This study is about the analysis of such a poster. Poster is a print material with some visuals which are posted in public places to make an announcement or advertise and to make propaganda. The Health Promotion Division of the Ghana Health Service advertisement does not only spread vital information for the society but also carry specific messages and life ideals that is very interesting to analyze. Rather than concentrating on marketing a specific good or service, the Health Promotion Division of the Ghana Health Service poster aims to make the public aware of some important issues and lead them to take a specific action. These posters are created to make more people aware of the issues with the goal that the audience will take action to reduce risks, increase safety or otherwise resolve the issue of focus. Therefore, they serve as a way to impact the public's opinion. Cook (1992: 5) states that advertising is a prominent discourse type in virtually all contemporary societies, and we live in a society where it is already well established or rapidly gaining ground. The important distinctive feature of advertising discourse is its function, because this is always to persuade people to buy a particular product, however; this is not the only function. Dyer (1986: 129) holds that advertisements as a means of representation and meaning construct ideology within themselves through the intervention of external codes which are located in society. He believes that the ideology of advertisements is so powerful; it is naturalized by the image, the neutral realm of signifier. Ideological powers, as Eagleton (1991:195) puts it, is not just a matter of meaning, but of making a meaning stick. The Health Promotion Division of the Ghana Health Service advertisement plays a very critical role, especially in this pandemic era, to observe the safety protocols which are key to our survival. The posters are designed specifically to attract people's attention so that they are aware of the information and messages within the advertisements. For that reason, posters are commonly very attractive and unique. The Health Promotion Division of the Ghana Health Service advertisement basically consists of verbal and visual signs which are created attractively. Verbal signs consist of words, phrases or sentences which aim to give information or describe particular issues. Meanwhile visual signs consist of pictures, colours, symbols, or special effects which make the advertisements more interesting and eye-catching. According to Wierzbicka (1996: 287), colour is not a universal human concept but it is related with observing because colour is only definable via observation. The concept of colour is different depending on the culture but some of it have striking similarities. In Mythologies, Barthes (2009) indicates that photographs can be the material for mythological systems, that is to say, secondary (i.e., complex) semiotic systems, which should be seen as inseparable wholes and where distinctions among signifier, signified and sign can be drawn only artificially, for analytical purposes. Saren et.al (2007: 31) argue that the semiotic analysis of ads assumes that the meanings of ads are designed to move out from the page or screen on which they are carried, to shape and lend significance to our experience of reality. Beasley & Danesi (2002: 31) points out that semiotics ultimately allows us to filter the implicit meanings ad images that swarm and flow through us every day, immunizing us against becoming passive victims of a situation. By understanding the images, the situation is changed, and we become active interpreters of signs. A sign consists of anything which generates meaning. Saussure

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(1957) believes that language is constructed by arbitrary signs, the most important construction in semiotics; hence it is considered as a model. For him, sign is a physical object with meaning consisting of what he termed the signifier” and the “signified”. The signifier is a term for the sign itself; the images as we, the audience, perceive it and the members of the same culture, who share the same language (Fiske, 1990: 43). But according to the notions proposed by Kress & Van Leeuwen (2009), there are a number of coherent alternative ways of reading the advertisement, and a number of possible subject-positions from which to understand it. The signs in the ad are too ambiguous, too “polysemic” (multiple in their meanings) to decide on one “true” meaning of the ad. These factors, which have to do with the social context of ads and of their readers, make any reading of an ad as a self-contained system of signs with a determinable ideological effect very difficult to justify as “true” (Bignell, 2002: 5). According to Hodge & Kress (1993: 212) ideological forms are structures of meaning that are inseparable from a set of practices that are themselves kinds of meaning. Hence, in order to gain a deep insight of the role that advertising plays in our society, it seems to be necessary to ask how advertising organizes and constructs reality, how ideology and meanings are produced within the ad discourse, and why images are the way they are. Every advertisement has an ideology as its identity. An ideology is a collection of ideas or beliefs shared by a group of people. It may be a connected set of ideas, or a style of thought, or a worldview. Epistemological ideologies are sets of ideas about the philosophy, the universe, and how people should make decisions. The ideology used in the poster is the epistemological ideology. It is used to persuade people to do an action as suggested by the advertisers. This study aims to analyze the meaning of verbal and visual signs in COVID-19 poster of the Ghana Health Service. After analyzing the meaning of verbal and visual signs, we can discover the overall meanings these verbal and visual signs bring to bear on the COVID-19 advertisements since the ideology is the core of the advertisements. Semiotic approach is used in analyzing the data to answer the research problems. The researcher looks at this research question;

1. How do the visual and verbal signs function in terms of semiotic meanings?
2. What do the visual and verbal signs bring to bear on the overall meaning of the poster?

### **The Theoretical Framework**

In this study, the researcher employed the theory of Semiotic by Barthes (1998) and also supported by theory of colour terms by Wierzbicka (1996) to analyze the Ghana Health Service COVID-19 poster. Semiotics is the theory and study of signs and symbols, especially as elements of language or other systems of communication.

Barthes (1998) distinguished the sign into two important parts, they are verbal and visual signs. The verbal sign is the text of the advertisement. It can be the name or slogan of the product or people, information about something, persuasion sentences, or anything else in text form. The visual signs are the signs which appearances are aimed to support the verbal signs in order to be an interesting package of advertisement. They have deep meaning that can produce message to the reader, not only as a compliment. Both verbal and visual signs carry denotative and

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connotative meaning. Denotation occurs when a sign is defined literally, obviously or based on its common-sense definition (Chandler, 2007: 137). Denotation is the most common sign that is found in society because it relates with dictionary definition. While connotation is “used to refer to the socio-cultural and ‘personal’ associations (ideological, emotional, etc.) of the sign” (Chandler, 2007: 138).

Barthes (1998) explained that denotative is the relationship between signifier and signified which generates the direct and definite meaning. For Barthes (1998) connotation is the “tone” of a text or the manner which has been decorated. Connotative is the signification level between signifier and signified which generates indirect and indefinite meaning. Barthes advanced his interpretation of denotative and connotative structures to suggest myth as another level of signification. Myth is the most obvious level of signification, but distorts meaning by validating arbitrary cultural assumptions in a way similar to the denotative sign. Both connotation and myth act as cultural codes that are interpreted through semiotic analysis. Within the everyday use of language and images, signs are organized into relationships that code systems of signs to construct meaning.

The meanings embedded within a cultural text are structured through convention. Central to interpretation of the form that carries myth is the context of signification which manifest in ideological representations within a narrative structure.

In media studies, the term “language” often refers to more than just verbal language. This idea of language involving all systems of communication is associated with the modern study of language as proposed by the French theorist, de Saussure (1922). He believed that all the ways in which human beings communicate, such as through flags, smoke signals, religious ceremonies and clothes, could be looked at and analyzed as if they were languages. Saussure called this method of studying all signs as language “semiotics”. He maintained that one of the chief tasks of linguistics was to define itself and secondly, that the objects of study in language, unlike other sciences, are not given in advance. For linguistics, it is the definition of language espoused by a theory that actually creates the object of study. Semiotics and linguistics share certain fundamental elements: the notion of forms related to meanings (linguistic sign in language and any other sign in semiotics), that function as part of code systems (language, gestures, art, music, cinema, etc) which are used to communicate information. De Saussure focused on the sign as the theoretical and methodological unit of linguistic and semiotic analysis. Semiotics and linguistics are connected and can actually function together provided that linguists adhere to the original Saussurean suggestion to adopt the sign as the primary shared unit of both linguistic and semiotic analysis. The sign is presented as the most crucial link connecting linguistics and semiotics as part of a larger structural paradigm. The above notion of the sign is the core of Systemic Functional Linguistics in which language is seen to represent and construct our perception of reality in the form of “goings-on” or processes of various types (for example doing, being, happening, etc) which incorporate different categories of participants (for example, actors, goals, receivers, sensors, attributes, etc). This study uses the linguistic sign as the unit of its analysis of the discourses in the poster. The researcher analyzes how the verbal and visual signs are used to create the awareness of the global pandemic

COVID-19 in the poster. The linguistic sign here includes the visual properties of the poster. The study also examines how the visual texts in poster impact on the readers' perceptions of COVID-19 and analyzes how visual semiotics are used in creating the awareness of COVID-19 in poster to aid meaning, interpretation and determines the impact of using the visual images on the readers' ability to interpret the messages.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data was taken from COVID-19 posters in form of printed advertisement. The educative poster of the Ghana Health Service was subjected to a qualitative analysis using Barthes (1998) Semiotic Theory. The poster used as data source was taken at vantage points in public places. The data were collected by observation method and note taking technique. The data were classified into verbal and visual signs. A descriptive research design was employed for this study as the most suitable for the attainment of the study objectives. The researcher analyzed the meaning of verbal and visual signs used in the COVID-19 poster. Then the researcher looked at the overall meaning these verbal and visual signs bring to bear on the message in the poster. The study examined the verbal and textual meanings that readers can derive from the poster.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Analysis of the Poster**

The analysis of the verbal and visual modes of signification in the language of the posters. The poster uses visual semiotics such as picture images, colour, gestures, visual and verbal image. The Health Promotion Division of Ghana Health Service poster is divided into four parts. The caption of the poster 'Protect Yourself from Coronavirus' is positioned on the left is presented as 'Given', as information that is already familiar to the reader and serves as a 'departure point' which catches the immediate attention of the reader. The title is written with an amber colour in a green background in a trapezium like shape placed horizontally. The second part is the information 'GOOD LIFE' presented at the right top as 'New', as information not yet known to the reader and hence deserving readers special attention logo of the advertisement company written in block letters with a white colour and the response to the slogan 'GOOD LIFE' is written in small letters in a green background in a trapezium like shape with an amber colour placed around the borders of the shape like trapezium placed vertically. Artistically, 'GOOD' is written horizontally which sits on the back of the capital 'L' of 'LIFE' written vertically. The response 'live it well' is also written artistically beneath the capital 'E'.

The third part is the verbal and visual modes of signification are centred in a white background. The text and picture images are beautifully arranged on the poster to allow easy reading and comprehension of the message the poster is putting across to readers.

Barthes said, 'in every society various technique are developed intended to fix the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques' (1977:39). The image-text relation in which the verbal text extends the meaning of the image or vice versa and an image-text relation in which the verbal

text elaborates the image, or vice versa. In the poster two types of elaboration are employed, one in which the verbal text comes, so that the image forms an illustration of it, and one in which the image comes first, so that the text forms a more definite and precise restatement or 'fixing' of it.



Source: Health Promotion Division of Ghana Health Service

1. The image of hands under running water (tap) followed by the text on the right part of the poster.
2. The text is written first and ends with an image of a man coughing with a fist close to his mouth with a red symbol on the man coughing.
3. Images of an eye, mouth and nose with a red symbol inscribed on them with a pointing finger (gesture) at the sense organs followed by the text explaining the picture image.
4. The text is written first at the left part of the paper followed by a person (represented participant) coughing covering the nose and mouth.
5. The last image begins with a man wearing a nose mask followed by the text containing the message.

The producer and the readers are themselves explicitly represented in the image, causing the two categories to shade into each other.

The fourth part displays the Ghanaian Coat of Arms together with the logo of the Ghana Health Service is seen at the bottom of the poster giving more details to viewers in case of doubt and

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for clarity to contact some numbers. The source and producer of the poster is given as Health Promotion Division of Ghana Health Service.

### **Visual Aspect**

The visual aspect consists of the colour, shape, position and background. Colours are used in the poster to achieve special effects with regard to the symbolism associated with the colour. Colours are culture-dependent in that different cultures associate certain colours with certain symbolic meanings (Berlin & Kay 1969). Colour appeal is used to create a pleasant and endearing feeling about the information being displayed by the poster. There are basically three colours used in the poster and these are green, white and amber. The colour white is the dominant colour used at the background which makes the text readable and the images conspicuous for the viewers/readers. White signifies kindness, virgin, morning, cold, supernatural isolating and empty. This means if one does not observe the safety protocol precautions against COVID-19 and contracts the disease, the person will be isolated. The colour green is used as the background at the top for the caption 'Protect Yourself from Coronavirus' and again the same colour is used as the background of 'GOOD LIFE' 'live it well' at the right top corner of the poster. Again, if one is able protect himself or herself from the disease the person will grow and live, hence the green colour. The colour green signified growth, nature, relaxing colour. 'Protect Yourself from Coronavirus' is written in orange and the border of the green background of 'GOOD LIFE' is also orange. The colour orange signifies warmth and light. The colour orange is used on purpose to write the title 'Protect Yourself from Coronavirus' it means if one does not observe the safety protocol precautions as a measure to protect himself or herself the person will not see light and feel warmth. Conclusively, when one dies there no light and warmth to be felt.

Lastly, the verbal signs are written in green ink. This green used in writing the verbal signs is for a purpose. If the reader observes the COVID-19 safety protocols, the reader will not contract the deadly disease and will eventually grow.

### **Gestures**

Conventionally, gestures involve the use of hands to indicate communication (Crystal 1997). Posters being still photos, the reader has only one opportunity to see gestures if the photo was taken at an instance when gesture was used. It is possible to read much into even one instance of gesture as the following illustrations show.

- a. The image of a man coughing with a closed fist to his mouth with a red symbol on the man coughing.
- b. Images of an eye, mouth and nose with a red symbol inscribed on them with a pointing finger (gesture) at the sense organs.
- c. Someone (represented participant) coughing covering the nose and mouth.

The second image is depicting a kind of action (a gesture) which is not acceptable or the best practices to indulge in. Again, the third image is informing readers not to touch the eyes, the



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nose and the mouth with the finger since the finger could be a carrier for the virus to be transported to these three sense organs. The fourth image is again demonstrating possibly what needs to be done either publicly or privately to avoid contracting the deadly disease. Together we can defeat COVID-19. The fight against COVID-19 calls for observing the protocols. Gestures blend well with other semiotic signs such as facial expressions and body language in constructing the Covid-19 discourses in the print media. Gestures reinforce other activities of the participants and help to emphasize the words which also illustrate the discourse as it is enacted by the participants. The use of gestures in the poster makes the message more explicit.

### **Gaze**

Gaze involves the use of facial expressions to communicate an idea or a feeling without necessarily saying it in words, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996). Facial expressions reveal our inner feelings and states of being. In the present advertisement, gaze is manifested in the form of eye contact from the actors and directed at the readers (who are the goals of their gaze). The use of gaze in multimodal advertisements is a communicative strategy in which facial expressions are used to invite the viewer to explore the interpretive paths in advertisements by reacting to and responding to it. The application of gaze is indispensable in everyday life as well as in business. Direct eye contact is a communication strategy in which the actor establishes rapport and holds the goals' attention. Readers and addressees need convincing hence eye contact will help do it. It is also a sign of frankness. Gaze here is signified by oblique vectors that originate from actors and directed at goals who are the readers. The reader automatically follows the actors' eyelines and subsequently gets the message of the advertisement by getting the target of the actors' gaze. In this case the actors give the readers direct eye contacts. COVID-19 is a global pandemic issue and as such a serious matter and the message about it has to be serious. The facial expressions used work together with the written texts to enhance the meaning in the poster (Head & Sterling, 1987). Facial expressions also reveal the characters' moods and attitude towards COVID-19 pandemic. The image of the actors looking outwards at the reader points to the fact that the actors are depicted as demand images. The fact that the last two participants in the poster have an outward-looking gaze means that they address the general public rather than themselves. They demand some form of action from the reader, in this case they invite the reader to join in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. The title *Protect Yourself from Coronavirus* helps to illustrate their actions. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) postulate that other pictures address us directly and the researcher agrees with Kress and Van Leeuwen because the poster is by no means different. The poster reader is either the subject or object of the look, and the represented participant is the object of the readers' unflustered scrutiny. The reader's role is that of an imperceptible onlooker. Yet the participants are themselves presented as "offer images". The poster offers the represented participants to the reader as items of information as though they were specimens in a display case. The actors invite the reader to protect themselves against COVID-19 pandemic by observing the safety protocols.

Posters use the interactive visual semiotic features to assert the "demand" nature of the image. The fact that represented participants gaze at the viewers is interpreted as a request or "demand"

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to the viewers (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). Gaze is important for passing the desired message by way of capturing viewer's attention. Direct eye contact calls for reciprocation of the same trust that the actor bestows on the reader. Participants in the poster make use of facial expressions to enhance the message. Gaze therefore, is an integral part of managing interpersonal relationships. The reader is invited by the actors to join in the fight against COVID-19 through the direct appeal of eye contact.

### **Verbal Aspect**

Firstly, the title begins with a verb 'Protect' followed by a reflexive pronoun 'yourself' and a prepositional phrase 'from Coronavirus'. The prepositional phrase is made up of a preposition 'from' and a noun 'Coronavirus' and as such acts as an adjective modifying the pronoun 'yourself'. The sentence is an imperative one instructing the Ghanaian populace as a matter of urgency to take the necessary steps to guide against the infectious disease coronavirus. The second person singular pronoun of the reflexive pronouns (yourself) is employed to admonish the reader against contracting the deadly virus. The prepositional phrase 'from Coronavirus' is the dreaded virus that readers are being asked to protect themselves from contracting the disease by simply observing the safety protocols.

The next verbal sign commences with an adverb of time 'frequently' to signify the time frame within which one must wash hands to maintain basic hygiene. It is followed by a verb 'wash' to indicate the action as to how one has to go about the action of washing to maintain the basic hygiene to protect oneself from contracting the disease. The predicator is followed by a direct object 'hands'. 'With soap' is the prepositional phrase depicting the material with which one should wash hands with. 'under running water' is another prepositional phrase depicting the place where the act of washing should take place and 'under running water' the prepositional phrase is functioning as an adjunct. The structure of 'under running water' is made up of a preposition 'under', and a premodifier 'running' functioning as an adjective modifying the headword 'water'. Again, in the same sentence there is another alternative of equal grammatical value being offered to the reader. The co-ordinating conjunction 'or' is employed for the alternative choice available for the reader. 'Rub' is the action verb instructing the reader as what to do. 'With alcohol-based hand rub' is the prepositional phrase to depict the exact material to be employed on the hands to avoid the chances of one contracting the virus. The phrase is made up of a preposition 'with' followed by premodifiers acting as adjectives 'alcohol-based hand' here the adjective is modifying the type of 'hand rub' readers must use because the 'alcohol-based' is proven to be efficient against the virus. 'Rub' is the noun being modified by the adjectives.

Another verbal sign commences with a verb 'avoid' activities that one must not engage themselves in to avoid contracting the virus. 'close contact' is the noun phrase functioning as direct object of the verb 'avoid'. 'With people coughing and sneezing' is the prepositional phrase indicating the type of people to avoid in order not to contract the virus. The prepositional phrase is made of a preposition 'with' followed by a noun 'people' and compound verbs. These

verbs are ‘coughing and sneezing’. The whole sentence is a gentle reminder to the reader to be weary of persons ‘coughing and sneezing’.

Again, the verb ‘avoid’ is employed in the next verbal sign to admonish readers to desist from the act of frequently touching the ‘eyes’, ‘nose’ or ‘mouth’ in order not to transfer the virus from the hands to these sense organs. The virus could use these sense organs as a medium to get to the throat and finally to the lungs. ‘Touching eyes, nose or mouth’ is the object of the verb ‘avoid’.

Lastly, the verbal sign commences with an adverbial clause of condition ‘if you choose to wear a face mask’ and it is followed by the main clause ‘be sure to cover mouth and nose’. This part is in fact asking the reader to be cautious and mindful to cover their mouth and nose properly and not anyhow. There is another verbal sign in bracket and it is imploring the reader not to touch the nose mask once it is put on ‘avoid touching mask’ while the second part is made up of a subordinate clause which is an adverbial ‘once it is on’. It means that whenever the mask is put on the reader must not touch it to prevent easy transportation of the virus to the mask.

## CONCLUSION

Posters have become an indispensable part of our present-day lives. Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 poster generally delivers a message that together we can defeat COVID-19 by observing COVID-19 safety protocols and obeying government regulations. By observing and analyzing the verbal and visual signs in the poster, each of these images and verbal signs are designed to convey an idea or a message, and communicate to readers to have a special effect on them. The language is imbued with robust images, colour and textual materials to map out inherent social acts of participants in the discourse. The ideology of the public poster advertisement is ‘protect yourself from coronavirus’. It means that it is better and stress free to prevent contracting the deadly virus by simply observing the safety protocols. This study establishes that the visual design as visual language is culturally specific and the poster represents our environment; social interaction that is the interaction between the producer of the image and the reader. Here, the reader is portrayed as a victim of the COVID-19 pandemic with the writers adopting a high sense of personal hygiene perspective from where they address the reader and the elements that make up the message as a whole are cohesive. And the perspective is changing behaviour through changing social practices to have an impact with a much wider group of people.

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