

A MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON SELENA GOMEZ'S REVIVAL ALBUM COVER AND MAIN HIT: A NOT-SO-REVIVAL

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Abstract

The magnificence and glamorous life of public figures including singers are not always ending happily. The works pressure and fans become parts of life conflicts. Haters couldn't be also ignored since they spread negative words and rumors. However, as a professional, a singer keep being productive through her songs. The lyrics in the songs carry message that could be related to their privacy. Besides, their photograph in the album cover emblematises a purpose. Through the multimodal discourse analysis, readers are well-told about the meaning behind the photograph and lyrics. The verbal aspects in the clauses have an ideology. Additionally, the non-verbal aspects of the album cover provide visual image, posture, gesture, facial expression and color. Thus, the study aims to convey the 'not-so-revival' in lyrics and front cover image of Selena Gomez's 'Revival' album.

Key words: discourse, ideology, multimodal discourse analysis

INTRODUCTION

Singers create albums and songs as their masterpieces. They can reflect thoughts and personal life in their songs' lyrics. Moreover, it couldn't be denied that many public figures including singers undergo very difficult situation, hence they have many experiences to be expressed. The tough and challenging situation faced by most of public figures have never been imagined by regular people. In 2010, Demi Lovato, an American singer was rehabilitated because she underwent eating and bipolar disorder, and also alcohol problem (Heller, 2016). She got continuous panic attack since she was kid, hence it affected her mentality. Britney Spears, the iconic pop star, showed depression symptoms in 2007. She acted out of control after her divorce (Quintana, 2018). She also became a drug addicts and got some treatments in a rehabilitation. Market demands, fans, haters and paparazzi are able to trigger problems. Those can affect public figures' health and emotions.

On the other hand, no matter how hard the life for the public figures is, they always show the best works. For instance,

a singer keeps producing their album because they already signed a contract. It's not arguable that behind every fabulous performances, there're always be struggles. The struggles can be in their personal life or in the process of producing the works. Accordingly, the writer feels invited to study about singer's works. The photographs set on the album and songs are the language of the singer in expressing their talent. These language signs arise an interest to be analyzed because they perform linguistic and non-linguistic resources. Again, the masterpieces of singers serve story and message, however the linguistic and non-linguistic resources formed in verbal and non-verbal aspects can imply differently.

The writer picks a cover image and a hit on Selena Gomez's Revival album as the object of the study. An album cover represents the whole pack of the songs. It provides songs and its cover. Through the songs, people can hear the verbal aspects. They're also written on the lyrics. An album is also covered by a photograph. It's unspoken language but depict a meaning. Accordingly, there are semiotic modes employed to process the meaning making. There are a picture and a song's lyrics.

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They are rich of semiotic and language resources. “The description of semiotic resources, what can be said and done with images (and other visual means of communication) and how the things people say and do with images can be interpreted” (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001: 136). The photograph of the album cover holds the semiotic resources but sometimes unnoticeable. According to Fairclough (1995) types of discourse are spoken and written language that includes semiotic mode to produce meaning. Then, the photograph and lyrics are classified as a discourse. Gee (2005) adds discourse is producing and comprehend distinguished meanings through symbols, tools and object. It reveals language of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling and believing. There are hidden signs on a discourse. The finding of the signs are able to tell the concealed agenda.

The image of the photograph in an album cover and the song’s lyrics bring meaning. There are symbols and objects constructed in them. Words, structures, gestures, and colors must be revealed. Gumperz (1999) in Bezemar and Jewitt (2010) states multimodal analysis examine various types of linguistic resources. They are called non-verbal, paralinguistic, or context. Gumperz defines symbolic grammatical and lexical are parts of verbal signs. Furthermore, O’Halloran (2011) states that the analysis which explores language and other elements, such as images, scientific symbolism, gesture, action, music and sound is the analysis of multimodal. Consequently, the image of the album cover and the song’s lyrics by Selena Gomez are the symbols in linguistic and non-linguistic resources that bring meaning. The image discourse is the non-linguistic resources and the lyrics are the linguistic resources.

The writer questions how Selena Gomez expresses her resurgence power through her cover album. She named her album ‘revival’ which has some points of reborn and restoration. She also has a main

hit entitled revival, as same as the album’s title. The writer thinks about the cover and concludes how Selena Gomez has changed her life’s point of view towards her new album. Gomez said that “I work hard, and anyone that you ever talk to that’s worked with me knows. I’m professional, kind and that I care about people. I’ve been frustrated and pissed off before, but my mom has always taught me, every single time, turn my cheek the other way. It is always the best feeling waking up the next day going, They gave me their worst, I gave them my best, and that’s all I can do” (Selena Gomez, Electronic Magazine interview, 2015). Explicitly, the title of the album tells about how Selena Gomez grows and becomes mature personally and mentally. She wants to show her transformation and power through her new album. On the other hand, as a discourse, the image and the lyrics tell the contrary. It carries untold meaning and ideology. In other words, this paper explores the multimodal resources employed in the discourse to reveal the real meaning of ‘revival’.

METHOD

Multimodal analysis helped to understand a discourse in some point of views. Therefore, the writer applied multidiscipline understanding under this study. The study was explored through its verbal and non-verbal aspects. Therefore the semiotic mode has been achieved to examine the aspects. Systemic Functional Grammar Theory by Halliday (2014) and The Grammar of Visual Design by Kress and Leewun (2006) are presented to reveal the meaning.

Kress and Van Leewen (2006) present the grammar of visual design as framework to reconstruct non-verbal aspects. The framework is used to analyze images. The non-verbal aspect of the album cover provides visual image, posture, gesture, facial expression and color. These are classified as a visual communication (Kress and Van Leewen,

2006) which is included in language; speech or writing. As the spoken text, the cover ‘is never be just verbal but also visual’, (Kress and Van Leewen, 2006:41). Kress and Van Leewan’s framework is adapted from Halliday’s metafunctions: ideational, relational, and textual (1985). Halliday’s metafunctions explore the systemic functional linguistics analysis to study meaning of written text. They explain that language is the real features from human experience in the real world which are verbal and visual. Thus, the exploration of Kress and Van Leewen metafunctions are provided simultaneously with Halliday’s.

The album cover was translated into language that is uttered visually. The ideational metafunction helped the image to present a *represented participant* and the connections with the surroundings. Halliday (2014) states that every action is brought by the actor to gain a goal. On the other side, there is a recipient who responds to the action. It’s called *interactive participant* and the goal. Commonly, an interaction is found in the picture. The represented participant generally makes interaction to the object surrounding. Hafifah (2021) explains that ideational metafunctions has two main functions which are experiential and logical. They observe language as a reality to reveal events, time, and setting. The reality can be reflected through a vector to make an eye line. The reaction affected by the eye line is received by the interactive participant. It is the viewers. This viewers who receives a gaze is called the phenomenon. Furthermore, there are two results of reaction. It can be transactional and non-transactional. The transactional means that the reactor and the phenomena are presented in the image. However, the non-transaction is when the reactor is presented without a recipient. ‘If an image has only one participant, the participant is the actor and the structure in non-transactional but if the transaction flows from an actor to a goal, the structure is

transactional’, (Aragbuwa & Adejumo, 2021). In this area of exploration, the picture of the album cover presented a relation.

The relation is created through the interaction between the participant and the viewers. The participant who acts in the picture deliver a goal. This goal is responded by the reviewers which the viewers. This relation is elaborated in interpersonal metafunction (Haliday, 2014). Kress and Van Leewen (2006) in Hay Ly and Jung (2020) suggest gaze, distance and angle to be involved in the analysis. These combination are able to interpret the distance of the participant weather it is close, near or public. The distance then brings the demands or offer. Furthermore, the participant can imply power on the viewers. To relate interpersonal and ideational metafunction, the textual metafunction elaborates the integrated results. The elaborations on interpersonal and ideational metafunction are summarized to find the connection. The elements are interpret into one meaningful pack. Hermawan (2013) explains the composition of the sentences are made to describe the picture. The picture is valued as unorganized verbal aspects that must be rearranged. One aspect can influence the others that shows how interpersonal and ideational metafuntion connected.

The last element that has been evaluated in this picture is color. Van Leewen has said “colour fulfils these three metafunctions simultaneously (2002:350). According to him, color has functioned to elaborate in three Haliday’s metafunctions. Furthermore, colors code of communication. It saves meaning but cannot stand alone. Similarly, Tavaragi and Sushma (2016) agree that color is a way of non-verbal communication. In other words, colors deliver message to be understood. It communicates meaning that may influence physiological and emotional. Colors are commonly combined with other elements such as

buildings, paintings, documents and photographs. Therefore, multimodality was needed to explain the color.

To analyze the linguistics resource which is verbal language, the writer employed the Halliday's (2014) works to examine lexicogrammatical elements through her metafunctions. However, in this study the writer tended to focus on finding 'meaning and messages between various parts of a text' (Hafifah, 2021) in textual metafunction. The textual metafunction creates theme and rheme. "The theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message" (Halliday, 2014: 64). It is the first part of the clause. A theme is followed by the rheme. These two construct the message.

This study is called multimodal discourse analysis since it scrutinizes semiotic modes and linguistic elements to find ideology. Multimodality views a discourse as a package of combination. Belgrimet and Rabab'ab (2021) believe that spoken and written discourse are formed based on several elements such as intonation, gesture, typographic expressions, and layout. A discourse doesn't stand alone. It's composed with modes and elements. This study elaborates visual and verbal aspects to convey the real meaning of the album cover and lyrics's of the main hit. To do so, the writer applied quantitative study to gain deeper explanation of the findings. The discourse analysis required the writer to present insight and point of view. Jorgensen and Philips (2002) argue that discourse has qualitative data because it studies verbal and visual text.

The data were taken from Selena Gomez's Revival album. The writer focused on a photograph of Gomez's front album cover and the lyrics of the main hit namely revival. The cover album consists of her picture with a certain pose and also the phrases of song's lyrics. The writer implemented theoretical framework of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) and systemic functional grammar from

Halliday (2014) to evaluate the verbal (lyrics) and nonverbal (photograph) aspects in the data.

The explanation of the multimodal aspects included in the cover image such as, posture, gesture, facial expression and color must be delivered descriptively. In their multimodal analysis, Susetya dan Nurhayati (2020) state that the conclusion is elaborated in qualitative descriptive because the research focuses on answering the problems of human's communication mode. The communication is depicted through a discourse. Furthermore, the writer used textual analysis from Halliday's metafunctions (2014) to analyze the song's lyrics. The analysis of the color image is also implemented to enrich the finding.

This study applied the following steps at conducting multimodal discourse analysis: 1) selected the picture and the lyrics 2) describe the selected picture and clauses, 3) analyzed the verbal and non-verbal data, 4) interpreted the findings.

The method was implemented to read the verbal and non-verbal aspects of the album. In practice, the image discourse of the cover album was examined the development of the meaning. It evaluated the gestural and spatial elements. Then, the message carried by the lyrics were integrated to conclude the ideology. To unscramble the ideology, the symbols in the image and lyrics were broken down and examined. Furthermore, the meaning making was driven through the linguistics and non-linguistics elements.

RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

1. Non-verbal Analysis

Starting her career in 'Barney and Friends' show in 2001, Selena Gomez grew as a talented actress and singer. She was born on July 22, 1993 in Grand Prairie, Texas. As a singer, she has produced three studio albums and two compilation albums. Her second studio

album, 'Revival', was released on October 2015. Having the same title with the album's name, 'Revival' song becomes the main object of the writer's analysis including the cover album.

The analysis is started from the background of the album production and what Selena Gomez wants to deliver through her songs. In this album, Gomez had a big role to give opinions and ideas through the album and story behind each song. She acted as the Executive Producer, song writer, and creative control. She decided her pose on her cover album either. This album is her personal life and she is telling stories through her songs. She posted a photo on her Instagram and put a caption such "I've been keeping so many secrets... I'm reborn in every moment so who knows what I'll become. As long as I'm happy with me" (Gomez, 2015). This post indicates that she wants to show the-new-Gomez through her album by changing her personality and implying maturity through her songs. She has been hiding and ready to show the-real-Gomez. Since this is her first album without Disney and Hollywood Record, she wants to declare her independence and power. Unlike the previous album, she controls her 'Revival' album and does not receive any treats that push her to be what the home record wants.



Figure 1: Selena Gomez Revival
Album Cover
(source:

<https://i.scdn.co/image/ab67616d0000b273e6f5ed9a9059f686965ba90a>

In the picture above, there is only one participant who is Selena Gomez. The

participant sits on the floor with half-crossed legs. It is seen that she tries to cover certain body parts but in another way, she shows another body part. While sitting, she crosses her hands and put them on her thighs. Her eyes are looking straight to the camera, thus, the eye line forms a vector from her to the camera. The eye line is straight across the camera because in this context, the camera is the eyes of the reactors who are defined as the viewers. The viewers are the reactors who can be her fans or her haters. She wants everybody see her. She is the only centre of attention and it indicates that she wants to be seen and heard.

The participant in the image discourse is not doing any activities. The photograph does not present glamorous and luxury look of a famous singer. The possessive attributes of her fashion style transferred to the symbolic attributes. She is captured as a half-naked and wearing high-waist shorts. She's got untied long wavy hair that vaguely cover her breasts. She is not wearing any jewelries and accessories. The only thing she wears is only the shorts which only covers her sensitive parts. These symbols are concerned as simple and clear because she also shows her perfect skin and body curve. Moreover, she is barefoot and wearing light makeup. The presentation of the participant is considered a human being. The symbolic attributes attached to her affirm her look that it is just the way she is. By displaying a sitting pose, she tends to minimize the vulgarity, although the viewers can still notice little part of her left breast. This is able to show her self-identity as a woman. To conclude, the image presents the participant as a simple young lady.

To convey the relation between the viewers and the participant, the gaze, distance and angle are exposed. Previously, it has been stated that Selena's eye line is going through the camera. Her opened eyes seems to 'warn' the viewers. Her gaze forces the viewers to pay

attention to her because she wants to show her feelings. Adam and Kleck assume that “direct gaze, anger and joy share an approach orientation” (2005:4). They believe that to express emotions, gaze direction contributes to imply the purpose. Furthermore, facial expression drives the interpretation of feelings and the gaze direction itself is significant to help people perceive the emotions. The participant tends to attract viewers’ attention. However, the eyes expression is cold and toneless. It captures the anxiety and ambition at the same time. The distance portrayed in the image is near. Becoming the only participant in the picture leads the distance to the closest zone. However, the distance still bring demands. Previously Adam and Kleck (2005) defines direct gaze becomes an approach orientation, in this case, the participant brings a purpose to be seen and heard. She becomes closer to the viewers and intentionally shows her demands. This relationship can be defined as haters of a simple young lady.

The way camera captures the participant results the front angle. The participant’s front side in acquired equal to the camera. She isn’t looking down or captured from the high corner. Widayanti (2016) on her study states a low angle requires the participant to find obedience of the viewers and high angle asks for mercy from the viewers. It can be interpreted that there isn’t symbolic power carried by the participant likewise an action of begging. The horizontal orientation of the photograph brings a relationship of a single focus. The orientation sets the participant to be the only focus for the viewers. With this equal position from the camera to the participant, she expects herself to be seen as a regular human. She wants involve the viewers to her feelings and situation. Accordingly, the angle simplifies the participant as an indifferent woman.

The analysis of the color might show the current feelings and personalities. The image of the figure 1 applies black

and white tone color completed with grey scale and low saturation. The editing effect almost represents the participant as a naked woman, in fact she is wearing shorts. This decision indicates that the participant tends to refuse the truth. She covers the real situation she faces. Black, according to Tavaragi and Sushma (2016), refers to oppression and fear, on the other hand, it can also mean security. In other words, black is used to feel secure in hiding mission. White is clean and pure but also convey coldness. The simplicity of participant bears sincerity. It can be defined through her light makeup and nude uncovered skin. However, the viewers couldn’t feel the honesty and warmth. Van Leewen (2002) values grey scale as the human’s fundamental’s experiences. Everyone has light and dark sides. This is the journey of a human being to be in the best and worst situation. In additions, he said “low saturation may be subtle and tender, but also cold and repressed, or brooding and moody” (Van Leewen, 2002:357). In accordance with black which shows oppression and fear, this low saturation unquestionably used to evidence her unpleasant feelings. Thus, the image represent the participant as a dishonest woman that tends to disguise her sorrow and pain.

2. Verbal Analysis

The textual metafunction elaborates the verbal aspects of the discourse. The album ‘revival’ has a main hit entitled revival. This song contains lyrics as the written discourse. This discourse must be revealed to prove the ‘revival’ term. The discussion in this part selects some clauses from the song lyrics to convey the unrecognized meaning.

<i>The chains around me</i>	<i>are finally breaking</i>
Theme	Rheme

In this clause, the participant agrees that there is something ties her movement. The chains indicate disallowance and

obstacles. However, she thinks that she has overcome this problem and been free. The intention to reborn is delivered in the rheme. In contrary, the chains are the symbols of her unhappiness that results anxiety and scare, hence she wants to break the chains. The question comes up to her ability of fixing this situation that she can really do it.

<i>It's</i>	<i>my time to butterfly</i>
Theme	Rheme

Similarly, in this clause the participant implies about freedom by being butterfly in the form of to + transitivity. She reforms the noun butterfly to be an action to do. It is used to express liberty and self-determination. It means that she has misery to be released. Her life circumstances affect suffering and discomfort. From this angle, the clause becomes the reason for her liberty. She want to walk out from the dark moment in her life.

<i>I've</i>	<i>been under self-restoration</i>
Theme	Rheme

The clause above tells the participant's experience in dealing with her way of self-healing. There was a process where she struggled to eliminate the broken parts of her and accepted them. She collects every pieces and renew them. This is her recovery from the pain and sorrow. Then, this recovery leads her to change her perspective and appearance. She is willing to be reborn.

To support the participant's desire to renew her life, she explicitly said "this is my revival" it in her song. Literary, revival means a new presentation or publication of something (Merriam-webster, 2021). Similarly in Cambridge dictionary (2021), revival is a process in which something starts to grow, develop, or become successful again. These definitions depict the participant's

demand. The deep stress and unpleasant feelings must be eliminated and the participant defines this movement as revival. She was used to be free and happy, hence she wants it back. She wants to revisit her previous situation which was comfortable and safe.

<i>This</i>	<i>is my revival</i>
Theme	Rheme

To relate the clause with the image, her uncovered skin depicts her painful physique. She tends to tell that this painful feelings come to not only from her emotions but also from her body. It can be defined that actually the participant is suffering an illness. Moreover she said 'butterfly' in the previous clause. A purple butterfly is an iconic symbol of Lupus. According to Murphy (2015), Selena Gomez shows up in Billboard magazine with lupus diagnose, then she finally speaks up about her autoimmune disease in an interview with Ellen Degeneres. It occurred in 2015, several days before the album launched. She admits that she knew her condition since three years ago which in 2012 but she chose to keep it private until 2015, she told the truth.

<i>I</i>	<i>'ll burn through my skin</i>
Theme	Rheme

Another proof of the participant's illness is conveyed in the following clause. She is described as being shot by a weapon. It indicates injury, damage and hurt. The rifle that symbolizes violence affects to physical injury. When we got shot, the blood automatically comes out and leave a wound. It is painful.

<i>What shot of me</i>	<i>Like a rifle</i>
Theme	Rheme

On the other hand, the revival of the participants is expected to be noticed.

The participant tries to prove her capability of being ‘a-new-Gomez’. The subject ‘you’ in the following clause is appeared to connect the relation between the participant and the viewers. Here, ‘you’ is defined as the viewers who will witness the participant’s revival. The sentimental relationship appears to conclude the poor interaction.

<i>You</i>	<i>will see</i>
Theme	Rheme

The textual analysis strengthen the visual analysis. Every examined clause are related to reveal the meaning. The analysis finds the hurt emotions and physique. The illness and negative emotions suffered by the participant result resistance.

Discussion

The verbal and non-verbal analysis of Selena Gomez’s front album cover and main hit have resulted definitions. The definition are correlated to find the relationship. As suggested by Gee (2005) verbal and non-verbal are associated activities that show identities. They are the guidance to convey the understanding. As discourses, they are full of language resources. They express explicit and implicit words. The semiotic modes are collected to reveal disguised ideology.

As found in visual analysis, Selena Gomez is portrayed as an ordinary simple young lady who is dishonest. The result captures her demands to be seen as a truly human being with woman’s self-identity. She delivers this message for those who dislike herself. She presents herself not as a celebrity or a famous singer. She is just a regular woman with pain and sorrow. It depicts her hidden oppression of being a singer who are hated. She tends to show her strongest part by telling the revival. It is irritating for her. This leads to her preference to hide her imperfect life. She disguises her sadness and fear, even ensures the viewers that she’s just great. At

first she ambitiously to restore but she fails.

The analysis above is also gained through the verbal findings. It can be interpreted that Selena Gomez experiences physical illness, depression and anxiety. Explicitly she succeed to state her revival. However there is hidden meaning that creates deeper understanding about what she underwent. She really wants happiness but she must do extra efforts to achieve it. She’s still trapped in her sorrow. Therefore, she covers her pain and anxiety with half-naked pose. It might symbolize freedom and transformation but in contrary she turns off the color into black and white mood. Because according to Widayanti (2016) bright color shows positive energy. Revival can be achieved through bright colorful effect and cheerful facial expressions.

As a result, the carried ideology on verbal and non-verbal discourse refuses the explicit purpose of revival. The analysis convey the hidden symbols and meaning to depict the real agenda. The participant thinks that she’s able to get through the hardest time she experiences. She also claims her new version. However, the symbolic signs in the discourse strengthen the sorrow she wants to hide, hence dishonesty is obviously seen.

CLOSING

This multimodal discourse analysis applied the theoretical framework of Kress and Van Lewwen (2006) and textual analysis by Halliday’s systemic functional grammar. The study examined the front album cover and song lyrics by Selena Gomez. The album tells about her revival but the linguistic and non-linguistic resources do not tell the same term. The album cover and song lyrics were analyzed to interpret the participant representation, its relation to the viewer, feelings and personalities. Besides, it aims at discovering the meaning of the clauses. Finally, it was found that the represented participant is an ordinary young lady with

dishonesty in order to prove her revival. Unfortunately, the revival declaration is turned to not-so-revival because the participant couldn't put the meaning indicators of revival in her presentation, relation, feelings and personalities.

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