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Marketing Language Proficiency: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of IELTS Advertisements and Their Impact on Consumers' Perception and Their Experience

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Original Article

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Keywords

Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Visual Grammar Theory, CDA, IELTS advertisement brochures, language proficiency, language and education marketing, proficiency marketing

Abstract

This study investigates the marketing of language proficiency through a Multimodal Discourse Analysis of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) advertisement brochures in Pakistan. This research investigates how these advertisement brochures present language proficiency as a commodification and analyzes its effect on the stakeholders' perceptions. The study focuses on the commodification and the marketing strategies that are adopted in analysing five IELTS brochure advertisement brochures. Further, following the Visual Grammar Framework of Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), the study examines the visual elements the advertisements employ to persuade consumers to enrol in academies or language centres for coaching purposes. Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed for textual analysis. Firstly, the language used in the advertisement brochures was qualitatively analysed. Secondly, a questionnaire is used to assess learners' perceptions of advertisement brochures. The findings of the study reveal that language centres employ linguistic and visual strategies in their advertisement brochures to make them attractive to persuade potential students, often highlighting the idealized image of language proficiency and institutions that sometimes do not match the ground realities.

1. Introduction

The education system in Pakistan is deeply divided by the medium of instruction, reflecting underlying socioeconomic disparities. Elite private schools, colleges, and universities primarily use English, while public-sector schools predominantly teach in Urdu, and Islamic seminaries (madrasas) also cater to students from lower-income and rural backgrounds, using Urdu as the medium of instruction (Rahman, 2004). Despite English being widely taught, public institutions tend to emphasize the memorization of grammar rules and vocabulary, often neglecting the development of communicative competence. This results in a significant gap between theoretical knowledge and

practical usage, particularly evident when students and professionals attempt to take the IELTS to pursue further education or work abroad (Bouton, 2017). While private schools and colleges offer a more functional approach to English, their high costs remain a barrier for most students, pushing many to turn to language centres for alternative learning opportunities.

English proficiency is increasingly vital for academic success, career progression, and global mobility (Haidar & Fang, 2019). As a global lingua franca (House, 2003), English facilitates cross-cultural communication and economic opportunities (Tylén et al., 2010). The IELTS, recognized by over 12,500 institutions across 150 countries, is the most widely accepted standardized test of English proficiency, essential for university admissions, employment, and migration (IDP Pakistan, 2024). Given the prominence of IELTS, this research aims to examine how language centres in the Pakistan market this essential language proficiency, using multimodal strategies to influence learners' perceptions of the commodification of English, ultimately highlighting a gap in research regarding multimodal discourse analysis in IELTS advertisements.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This paper examines the concerns related to the increasing commodification of English language proficiency as an essential tool for global success, idealised in IELTS advertisement brochures in Pakistan. However, the claims the centres make in these advertisements may not be realistic; these centres use these advertisement brochures as linguistic and visual strategies to influence the public's perception of admissions. No research has explored the IELTS advertisements from this perspective of students and IELTS takers. To fill this research gap, this paper explores IELTS advertisements through a comprehensive mixed-method approach.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1. To critically analyze how IELTS advertisement brochures in Pakistan commodify English language proficiency using both linguistic and visual strategies
2. To examine how these advertisement brochures shape the perceptions of prospective IELTS test-takers regarding language proficiency, success, and global opportunities
3. To evaluate the alignment between the claims made in these advertisement brochures and the actual experiences of IELTS preparation services provided by the centres

1.4. Research Questions

1. How do IELTS advertisement brochures in Pakistan commodify English language proficiency through linguistic and visual strategies?
2. In what ways do these advertisement brochures shape the perceptions of prospective IELTS test-takers regarding success and global opportunities?
3. To what extent do the marketing claims of IELTS preparation centers align with the actual educational experiences of IELTS preparation services provided by the centers?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are significant to IELTS centre owners on the issue of marketing for language courses. By analyzing how the IELTS is commodified through advertisement brochures, these findings can help these centres to understand the perceptions of the consumers and can assist in better understanding their marketing strategy as per the demands of the learners. Moreover, the study aims to make students and IELTS holders aware of the linguistic and visual strategies employed in these advertisements and examine the actual situations in these centres of English language proficiency. It also stresses the requirement for honest and true advertising of educational institutions to accurately picture their teaching practices and, therefore, help the stakeholders to

make factual statements. Furthermore, this study contributes to a broader discussion about how educational advertisements on consumer behaviour and learning experience are helpful for educators, marketers, and policymakers to promote more transparent and ethical communication of language education marketing.

2. Review of Literature

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) examines how multiple modes, such as text, images, gestures, and sound interact to create meaning in communication. It explores visual grammar, inter-semiotic relations, and context, making it useful for analyzing media, advertisements, and digital content. Multimodal Discourse Analysis helps uncover how different semiotic resources shape understanding and persuasion. According to the theory, meaning is constructed through the integration of various semiotic resources, including visual, linguistic, and textual elements, which work together to create a cohesive message. This theory is particularly relevant in analyzing IELTS advertisements, which combine both visual and textual elements to communicate that English proficiency is a key determinant of global success. In line with the work of Heller (2010) and Block et al. (2012), English is increasingly regarded as a valuable asset in the neoliberal economy. IELTS advertisements, therefore, frame English as an essential tool for career progression and social mobility. This framing is further reinforced by Khan and Haidar (2024), who highlight that language centres in the Pakistan market English proficiency through IELTS as a means of enhancing individuals' prospects for social and economic advancement.

Drawing upon Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar theory, IELTS advertisements employ pictures of students within inspirational visuals and a persuasive written message that shows that success in IELTS opens the doors to international opportunities. In these advertisements, IELTS is marketed as a key gateway to migration, employment, and educational success (Saville, Hawkey (2010), and Spolsky (2008). However, the structure of these advertisement brochures largely emphasizes achieving a high score, often promoting a test-driven approach to language learning (Hamp-Lyons & Davies, 2008; Green, 2007).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a powerful framework for understanding how education, particularly language proficiency tests, has been commodified within the neoliberal economic landscape. Ball (2003) and Giroux (2002) argue that education has turned from a public good into a commodity traded in the market, with the schools promoting education as a profitable enterprise. A shift in this case has happened, for instance, in the case of IELTS, as the test is no longer just an assessment of language proficiency but rather a product that sells to those seeking access to global opportunities (Shohamy, 2009). According to Foucault (1977) and Bernstein (2001), the control of knowledge experiences certain dynamics of power, with organizations that select, certify, validate, and verify such knowledge. IELTS centres, for example, use English language proficiency as a means to acquire and maintain access to the international elite spaces. In line with Bourdieu's (1991, 1997) formulation of 'linguistic capital', English functions as a commodity for social and economic mobility.

Similarly, Moore (2018) argues that advertisements position proficiency as a personal responsibility, further promoting the idea that success is directly related to test performance. In the context of Pakistan, IELTS centres market English proficiency as a tool for social mobility, influencing students' motivation and perception of success (Khan & Haidar, 2024). This reveals how IELTS institutions and language academies manipulate language and visuals to attract admissions in the name of IELTS preparation.

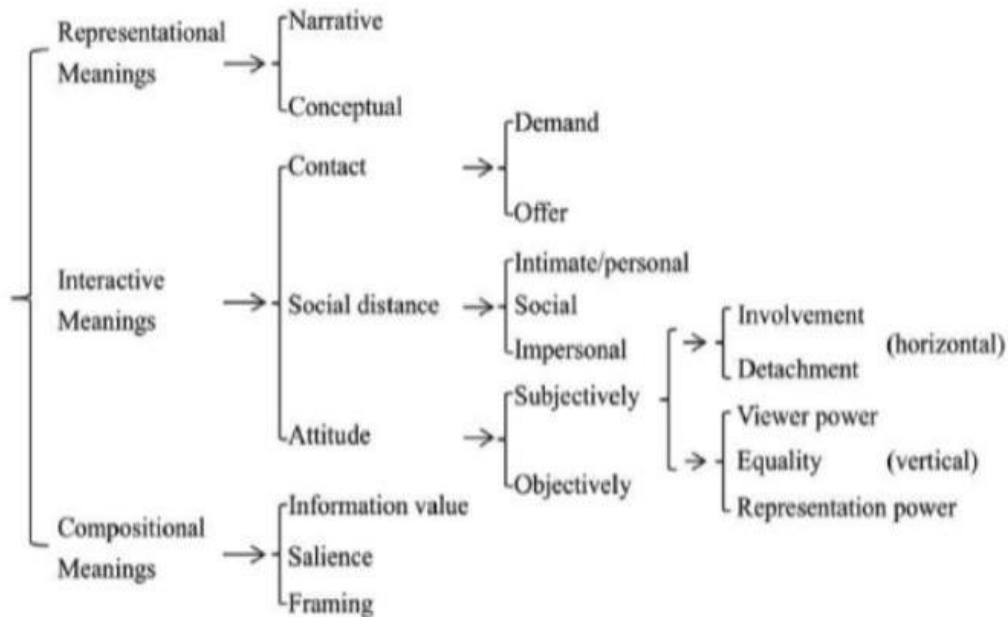
The literature cited above reveals that multimodal discourse analysis has been applied to other fields, such as beauty product advertisements, tourism marketing, and school advertisements. However, no study on IELTS advertisements from this lens has been conducted. This literature establishes a gap for this paper by applying multimodal discourse analysis to IELTS promotional materials. This study aims to uncover how the visual and textual strategies used in these advertisements shape consumer perceptions and experiences. Such an investigation is crucial for understanding how the commodification of language impacts learners, particularly in a context where the IELTS test is marketed as a key to global success and social mobility. Thus, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection of multimodal communication, language commodification, and consumer behaviour in the IELTS industry.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study employs a multimodal discourse approach by integrating Visual Grammar Theory (VGT) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) within the framework of Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). Visual Grammar Theory provides a framework for analyzing visual meaning-making. The first element is representational meaning, as it identifies and classifies what is depicted and how it is portrayed (and hence gives meaning to the images) in some terms, namely participants, processes, and circumstances depicted, and narrative (dynamic actions) vs. conceptual (static representations). It helps to understand how visual components show the value and the meaning of the advertised product. The second dimension of interactive meaning views the image as meaning that emerges in relation to the viewer: the interaction (eye contact), social distance (shot closeness), attitude (angle and power contest), and modality (the level of color and realism). Finally, the compositional meaning approaches analyze the role of placement and prominence of visual elements in the message, while strong framing leads viewers' focus to important details.

With this, the CDA provides further strength to the analysis by highlighting how these visual elements with their textual content build social meanings and power relations. It examines how language, power, and ideology shape discourse, particularly in advertisements, where persuasive techniques construct desirability and urgency (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). This study applies CDA to analyze the persuasive language, ideological framing of IELTS as essential for success, and power dynamics between institutions and learners.

This research integrates VGT and CDA into Multimodal Discourse Analysis for the analysis of IELTS advertisement brochures to reveal how multimodal techniques generate consumers' decisions and perceptions of IELTS preparation services. This theoretical triangulation creates a comprehensive framework to analyse IELTS advertisements.



4. Methodology and Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining the elements of qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative analysis analyses five IELTS advertisement brochures which are based on Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) Theory of Multimodal Discourse Analysis. The quantitative element uses a questionnaire shared with 50 IELTS students to collect data on their perceptions of the IELTS advertisements.

4.1 Data Collection

The data for this research consists of five randomly selected IELTS brochures from various language centers in Pakistan, obtained from Instagram. A Likert-scale questionnaire was shared with 50 IELTS students to collect data on their perceptions of the advertisements and quality of language teaching offered at these centres.

4.2 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar framework and Critical Discourse Analysis to explore how visual and textual elements in the brochures convey messages about language learning and its commercialization. The analysis is based on representation, interaction, composition, and the interplay between visual and textual elements.

4.2.1 Qualitative Analysis

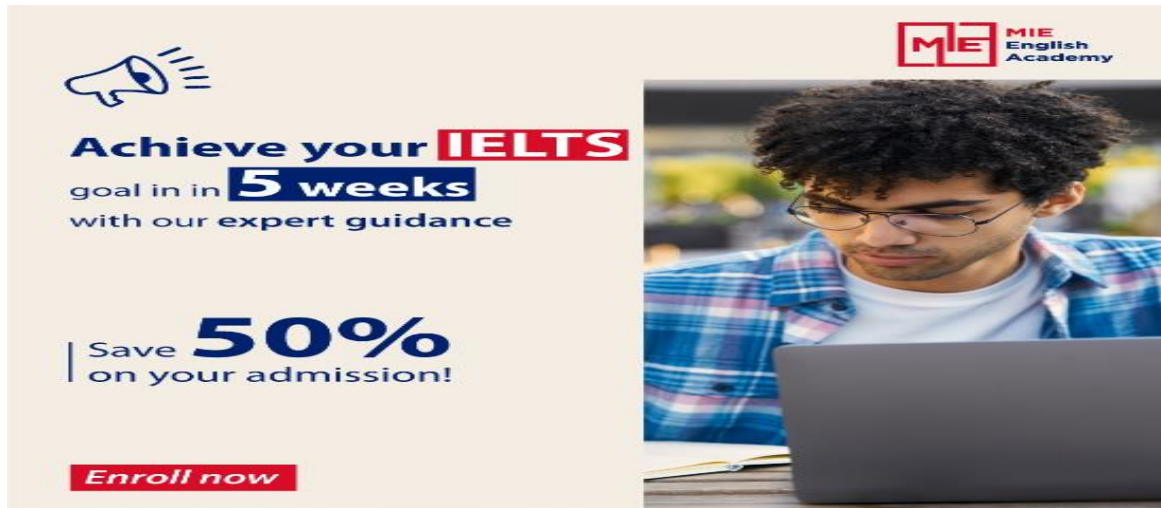


Image 1: Advertisement by MIE English Academy

Representational Meaning: This image adheres predominantly to a conceptual representation. The central figure, a student with a laptop, is depicted stably and timelessly, indicative of someone preparing for the IELTS exam in an academic context. There is no unfolding event or action; instead, the individual represents an ideal participant engaged in the process of studying for an important examination. The blurred background places the figure at the center, enhancing the concept of focus and dedication, typical of academic environments. The absence of dynamic action aligns with the portrayal of readiness and academic engagement.

Interactive Meaning: The contact is indirect, as the student does not make direct eye contact with the viewer. This establishes a sense of neutrality or detachment, ensuring that the viewer is not drawn into an emotional interaction. The social distance is medium; the close-up shot maintains a professional yet approachable distance from the viewer, which allows for identification without creating a feeling of intimacy. The attitude of the image is horizontal as the viewer is positioned at eye level with the subject, encouraging involvement but without direct engagement. The modality is medium, indicated by the relatively muted, yet still professional, color palette that keeps the image grounded in realism.

Compositional Meaning: The information value structure is well-defined. The student is centrally positioned, symbolizing the core message of academic dedication. The text is positioned at the right of the image, representing the new or actionable information, which viewers are encouraged to act upon. The salience of the individual is heightened by their larger presence and focused attention, which draws the viewer's gaze immediately. The framing is weak as there are no strong lines or edges that define the subject from the background, subtly blending the individual into a more open environment and reinforcing the idea of academic focus.

Textual Analysis from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis

The image's text employs a persuasive tone to promote the idea of efficient IELTS preparation. The phrase "Achieve your IELTS goal in 5 weeks" employs temporal urgency, presenting a short time frame to reach success. The imperative language ("Enroll now") reinforces a call to action, compelling the viewer to act immediately. The use of "expert guidance" establishes a sense of authority, positioning the program as a credible and professional resource. Furthermore, the phrase "Save 50%" promotes accessibility by suggesting an exclusive offer, appealing to those seeking value while pursuing an educational goal.



Image 2: Advertisement by PAKEUROLINKS

Representational Meaning: The representation in this image is also conceptual, as the young woman is not depicted in a dynamic or unfolding event. Rather, she is portrayed as a figure of excitement and optimism, embodying the ideal student preparing for the IELTS exam. Her gesture, where she points upward with a raised finger, suggests enthusiasm, signaling to potential students that achieving success in IELTS preparation is both an attainable and exciting endeavor. The vibrant background reinforces this sense of energy, with the woman representing the positive outcomes of successful exam preparation.

Interactive Meaning: The contact is direct, with the woman making eye contact with the viewer, which fosters a sense of personal involvement. The social distance is medium, with the woman positioned at a slightly closer distance to the viewer, suggesting intimacy and inviting connection. The attitude of the image is horizontal, as the woman's gesture and facial expression create an inclusive and engaging atmosphere. The use of bright, saturated colors suggests high modality, implying realism and a sense of urgency to engage with the advertisement. The energetic expression in the image implies that the viewer is being drawn into a successful learning experience.

Compositional Meaning: The information value structure follows a typical pattern where the central figure represents the given information i.e., the woman in the advertisement—and the promotional details are placed to the right, signaling new or actionable content. The salience is high, with the woman's expressive face and raised hand being the focal point, drawing attention to the positive aspects of the product. The framing is weak, as the background merges with the subject, enhancing the sense of inclusion and approachability.

Textual Analysis from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis

The textual component of this image uses a persuasive tone to communicate that success in IELTS preparation is both attainable and beneficial. The words "Amplify your IELTS score" suggest not just achieving a passing score but enhancing one's performance. The phrase "Open doors to Europe" links success in the IELTS exam to significant opportunities, particularly in the context of migration or education. The language positions the service as a gateway to greater achievements, inviting the viewer to envision the benefits of preparing effectively for the exam. The use of emphatic language further reinforces this aspirational message.

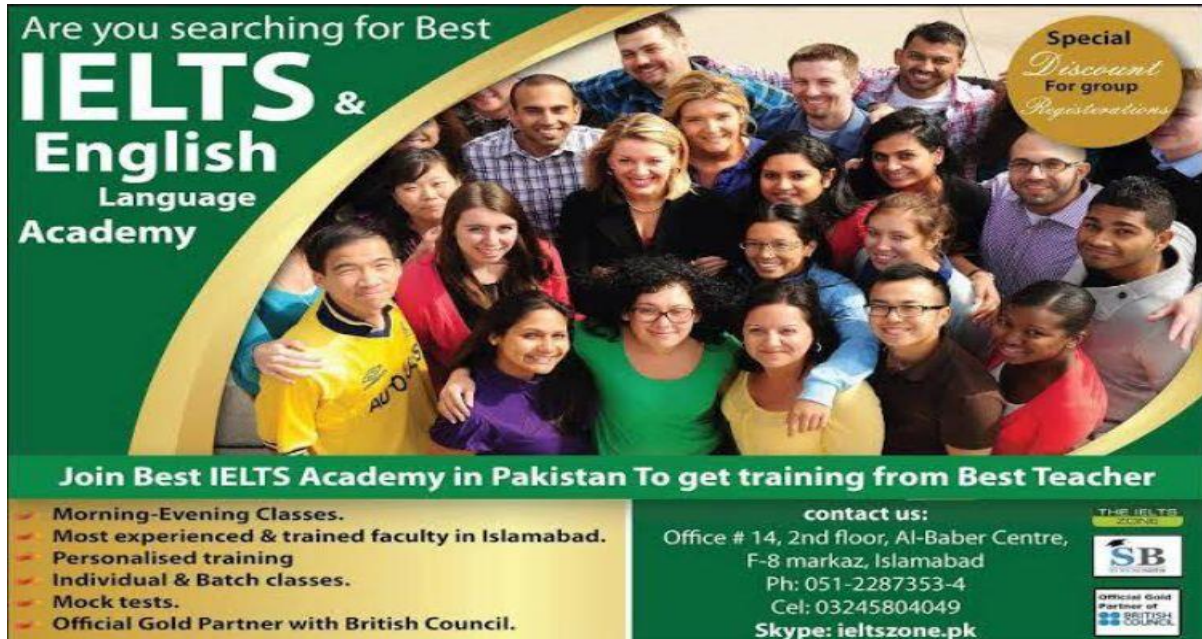


Image 3: Advertisement by the IELTS Zone

Representational Meaning: The image utilizes a narrative representation, where a group of diverse participants is depicted as engaged in a shared academic experience. The interactions between individuals suggest a communal and interactive environment, underscoring the idea of collective learning. The diversity within the group, ranging from different ethnicities to varied expressions, emphasizes inclusivity and the universal applicability of the IELTS preparation service. While no specific event is depicted, the group dynamic suggests a positive, collaborative academic journey.

Interactive Meaning: The contact here varies among the group, as some individuals make direct eye contact with the viewer, while others do not. This mixed contact reinforces the idea of inclusivity viewers are made to feel part of a larger academic community. The social distance is medium to long, allowing the viewer to observe the participants in a more detached manner. The attitude is horizontal, as the participants are shown in a way that engages the viewer but does not force direct interaction. The modality is medium, with the colors being bright yet soft, representing a balanced approach to realism and abstraction.

Compositional Meaning: The information value follows a center-periphery layout, with the group of people positioned in the center, signifying the heart of the message—togetherness and diversity in learning. The advertisement text and contact information are positioned around the periphery, suggesting that they are secondary to the group dynamic. The salience is moderate, as no single individual dominates the frame; instead, attention is drawn to the collective experience of the group.

The framing is weak, allowing the individuals to blend into their environment, and reinforcing the communal aspect of the message.

Textual Analysis from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis

The textual elements of the image suggest an emphasis on expertise and credibility, particularly the phrases "Most experienced & trained faculty" and "Official Gold Partner with British Council." These terms establish the academy's authority in the IELTS preparation space. The offer of group discounts targets potential students looking for more affordable options, making the service appear accessible while still promising quality education. The language used highlights a professional and trustworthy atmosphere, positioning the academy as a reliable and high-quality choice for potential IELTS test-takers.



Image 4: Advertisement by House of Learning

Representational Meaning: This image features a conceptual representation of a young woman engaged in academic study, presumably preparing for the IELTS exam. Her pose, holding a pencil and appearing thoughtful, is a static portrayal that emphasizes preparedness and intellectual engagement. There is no unfolding event; the focus remains on the woman as a representative figure of successful exam preparation. The background is muted, focusing attention on the subject's concentration and study process, reinforcing the theme of diligence and focus in the pursuit of academic goals.

Interactive Meaning: The contact is indirect, as the young woman's gaze is directed elsewhere, which establishes a contemplative, introspective tone. The social distance is medium, with the shot allowing the viewer to engage without intrusion into the subject's personal space. The attitude is subtly involved, with the woman's posture suggesting intellectual engagement while maintaining a neutral, unobtrusive connection with the viewer. The modality is medium, with soft colors and lighting that create a calm, professional atmosphere without drawing excessive attention to the visual elements.

Compositional Meaning: The information value is arranged in a top-down layout, with the woman representing the ideal (focused study) placed at the top, while the practical details—such as "Online Class Available" are positioned below, signifying actionable information. The salience is placed on the woman, who stands as the main subject of the advertisement. The framing is weak, as no strong visual lines separate the subject from the background, reinforcing the integration of the individual within a study-focused context.

Textual Analysis from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis

The text positions the IELTS preparation class as accessible through the “Online Class Available” feature, appealing to those who need flexibility. The imperative language (“Join Now”) directs the viewer toward immediate action, while the mention of an online option broadens the appeal to a global audience, emphasizing convenience. The modality of “Online” suggests an easy, modern approach to learning, catering to individuals looking for practical, adaptable solutions in their academic journey.



Image 5: Advertisement by ZENITH ACADEMY

Representational Meaning: This image again presents a conceptual representation, where the young woman holding books and looking surprised or excited acts as the symbolic representation of a student. The excitement on her face, combined with the bright colors, signals positivity and achievement, which suggests the successful outcomes of IELTS preparation. The static nature of the image reinforces the idea of readiness and engagement in the study process, with no action unfolding in the scene.

Interactive Meaning: The contact is indirect, with the woman’s gaze directed away from the viewer, fostering a sense of contemplation rather than a direct connection. The social distance is medium, placing the viewer in a comfortable range from the subject. The attitude is subtly involved, with the woman’s expression suggesting engagement but without a direct invitation to interact. The modality is high, with bold, vivid colors such as the green background, creating a sense of urgency and immediacy, thus driving action.

Compositional Meaning: The information value follows a center-periphery structure, with the central image of the woman representing the main focus, and the discount information placed around her, serving as new or actionable details. The salience placed on the woman’s expression draws immediate attention. The framing is weak, ensuring that the subject is integrated seamlessly into the environment, reflecting the idea of engagement without barriers.

4.2.2 Findings and Discussion of the Qualitative Analysis

The analysis of the five IELTS promotional images reveals several strategies through Kress and van Leeuwen’s visual grammar and multimodal discourse analysis. The following key findings were identified:

1. **Visual Engagement through Representation:** The images under question use conceptual representations, where participants are portrayed in a static and timeless manner, highlighting preparedness and academic engagement. No action or narrative is shared; rather, these images show idealized representations of students engaged in their learning process. The focus is on individual participants, such as students with books or computers, enhancing the universal appeal of the images, and making them accessible to a broad audience of potential IELTS candidates.
2. **Interactive Engagement:** The contact between the participants and the viewer varies. Some images employ direct eye contact, fostering a personal connection, while others, such as Image 1, use indirect contact, creating a neutral or detached atmosphere. The social distance and attitude vary, from close-up shots that encourage intimacy to more formal medium or long shots. The horizontal attitude in most images invites engagement without forcing emotional involvement.
3. **Modality and Realism:** The modality of the images balances realism and artistic abstraction. Most images feature medium to high modality, using bright, saturated colors to evoke energy and urgency, signaling that viewers need to act quickly in their IELTS preparation. Images like 2 and 5, with vibrant and bold backgrounds, utilize high modality to create urgency and capture the viewer's attention.
4. **Compositional Strategies:** The information value is structured effectively, with the central participant placed at the center and practical details placed at the periphery. This directs the viewer's attention first to the core message, and then to actionable details. Salience is emphasized through the central positioning of the participants, and weak framing blends them with the background, promoting inclusivity.
5. **Persuasive Language:** The text employs a persuasive tone using imperative phrases like "Achieve your IELTS goal in 5 weeks" and "Save 50%," urging immediate action. The use of expertise and authority through phrases like "expert guidance" reinforces credibility. Discount language like "50% OFF" appeals to price-sensitive students, maintaining the professional image of the academy.

4.3 Quantitative Analysis

The survey results on the IELTS course advertisement brochures indicate a generally positive reception, though with some mixed responses on certain aspects.

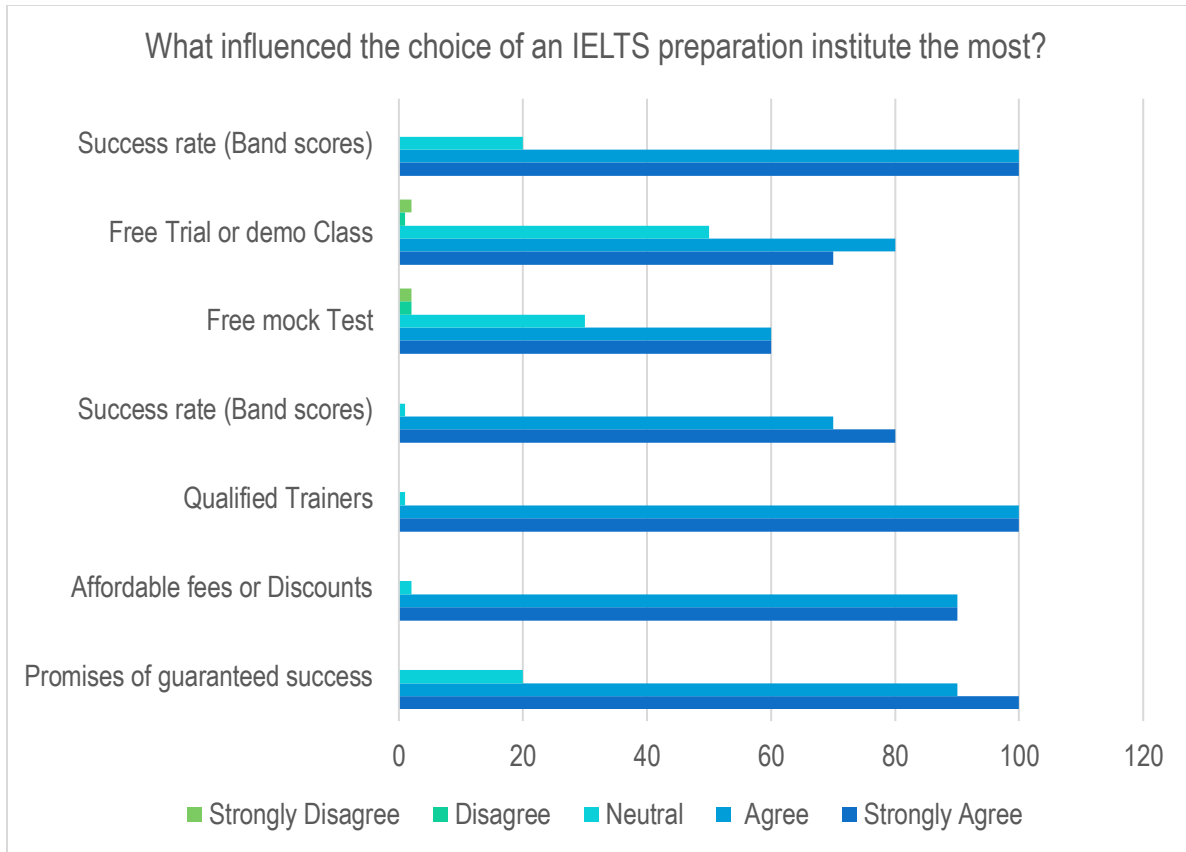


Table 1

Table 1 reveals that most participants agreed the brochures effectively communicated the course's benefits, particularly the potential for achieving a high IELTS score. Many respondents believed the course could lead to international opportunities like studying or working abroad. However, some expressed uncertainty about whether the promises made in the brochures would be fully realized, indicating a lack of trust in the exact fulfillment of the course's advertised benefits.

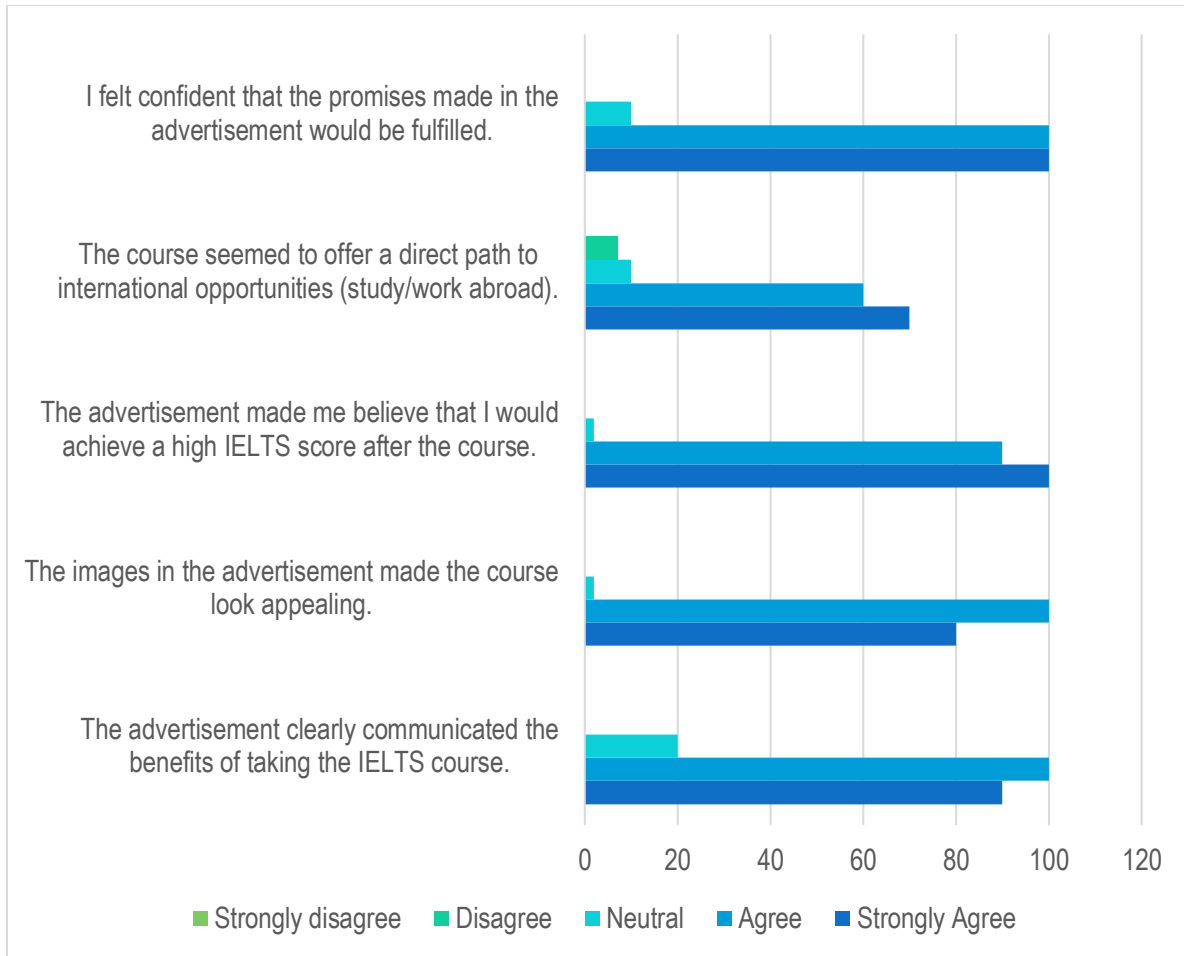


Table 2

In Table 2, it is shown that nearly half of the respondents agreed that the brochures effectively conveyed the advantages of the course. This increased their belief that taking the course would help them secure a high IELTS score. The notion that the course could open career and educational doors abroad was also supported by most participants. However, there was some hesitation about whether the promises made in the brochures would be fulfilled, indicating that while the brochures created a positive image, they left some doubts.

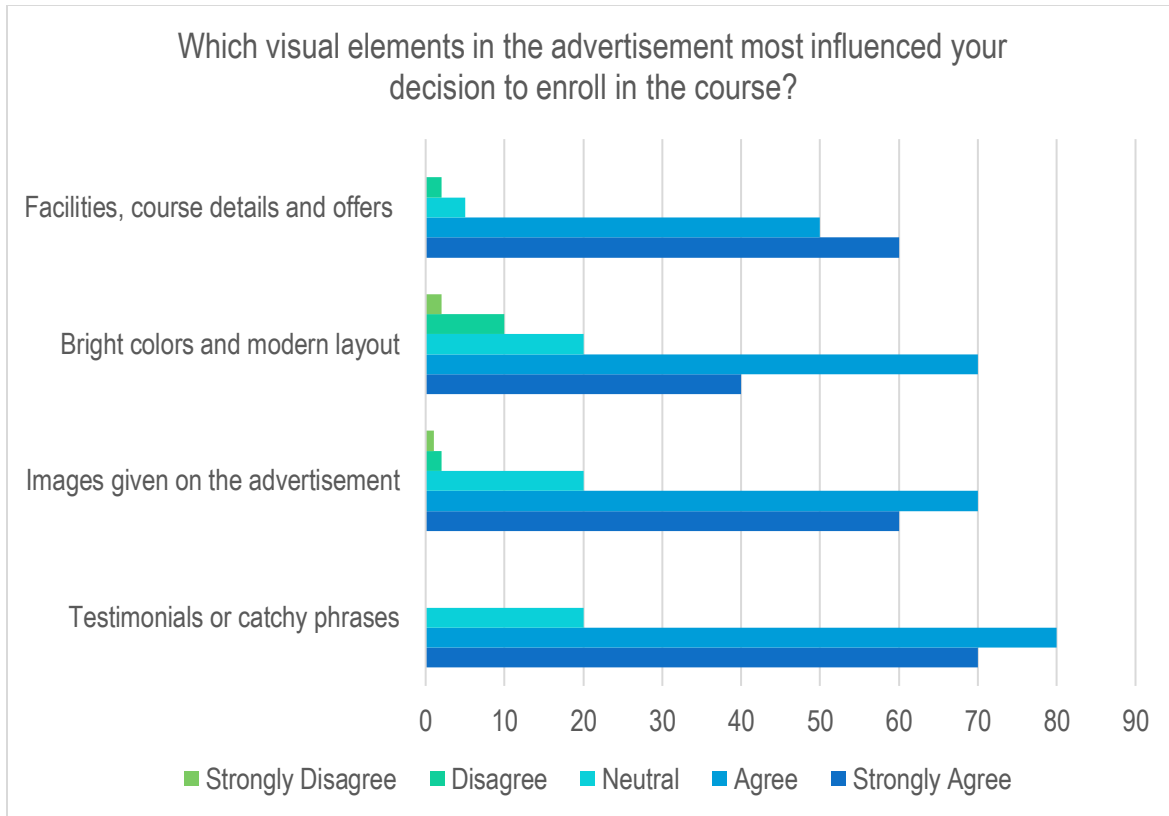


Table 3

Table 3 demonstrates the influence of various visual elements in the brochures on participants' decisions. "Testimonials and catchy phrases" were the most impactful, with many respondents agreeing that these elements positively affected their decision to enroll. Additionally, practical information such as "facilities, course details, and offers" was also well-received, showing that these aspects were important for potential enrollees. However, visual elements like "bright colors and modern layout" were less effective, with many respondents remaining neutral, suggesting that aesthetics alone were not strong enough to sway decisions. Lastly, "images" in the brochures had a moderate influence on enrollment decisions, but their impact was less significant compared to the testimonials and course details.

In summary, while the testimonials, course details, and offers had the strongest influence on participants, layout, colors, and images had less impact on their decisions.

4.4 Thematic Analysis of Consumers' Perceptions and Experiences

The thematic analysis uncovered key patterns and themes from consumer perceptions of IELTS advertisements, particularly around preparation for the test.

1. IELTS as a Gateway to Global Opportunities

Recurrent in the data was the failure for IELTS to be regarded as a gateway to success in the global world. The respondents stated that the brochures were designed in such a way that the message and the level of English proficiency — certified by IELTS — was a significant requirement for higher education abroad and career opportunities. This theme also stated that the ability to speak in English

through IELTS is not just a linguistic ability; rather it is a key ingredient for success in this globalized world, which in turn means attaining entry to the most prestigious and elite universities and recruitment into the most competitive and rewarding job market across the world.

2. Influence of Visual and Aspirational Messaging

The aspirational imagery was another major theme that appeared in the brochures. Most of the visuals showed successful professionals, students, or travellers who arrived at where they are today because of English proficiency. They interpreted these as perpetuating a notion that passing the IELTS test would render success and open doors to many opportunities in the world. Some brochures tended to cultivate high expectations among learners, who would easily assume that a high IELTS score automatically opens the door for learning in top foreign institutions, and could find jobs. It fostered an aspirational message that learners set out to mimic this path of success.

3. Stress and Pressure from Performance Expectations

The second analysis reveals that advertisement brochures put pressure and stress due to the high-performance expectations they impose. Brochures often depicted the IELTS examination as straightforward to success, but many respondents felt that the approach to test preparation indeed cramped the room for the aim on holistic language development. However, by emphasizing examination-specific skills (mostly how to perform well in a test), it became focused on test-driven learning that shifted learners' attention to test-taking strategies and not the overall language development. However, this kind of learning was viewed as an attempt to commodify language such that being able to communicate through language only to pass an examination rather than develop a thorough command of linguistic ability.

4. Misalignment of Marketing Promises and Realities:

One of the most important findings was the mismatch between the marketing promises and the actual struggle of the IELTS test preparation. The brochures presented the IELTS test as a not-so-complicated procedure to attain success; most respondents felt that the preparation for the test was neither easy nor quick. They stated that the brochures made the preparation for the IELTS examination seem easier than it was. As the advertised simplicity of the mentioned examination and its preparation swayed too far from reality: learners showed dissatisfaction and frustration since they were misled by the marketing strategies that oversimplified the requests of the examination and its preparation.

4.5 Findings and Discussion of the Quantitative Analysis

- 1. Positive Reception with Some Uncertainty:** The IELTS course advertisements were well-received, with respondents agreeing that the brochures highlighted the potential benefits, such as high IELTS scores and international opportunities. However, there was uncertainty about whether the course would fully fulfill its promises.
- 2. Influence of Testimonials and Course Details:** Testimonials and course details were the most influential factors in encouraging enrollment. Practical information about course offerings and facilities was valued more than visual elements, which had less impact.
- 3. Aspirational Messaging and High Expectations:** The aspirational imagery in the advertisements created high expectations, with many respondents believing passing IELTS would lead to academic and professional success. However, this also led to unrealistic expectations about achieving success easily.

4. **Pressure to Perform:** The focus on test-taking strategies created pressure, limiting the focus on holistic language development.
5. **Discrepancy Between Marketing and Reality:** Many respondents found the preparation process more challenging and resource-intensive than advertised, leading to frustration and dissatisfaction

Conclusion

The IELTS promotional images and course brochures demonstrate a sophisticated integration of visual semiotics and persuasive discourse to effectively target potential candidates preparing for the IELTS exam. Through the strategic application of Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar model, the advertisements utilize conceptual representations of idealized students, enhancing the relatability and engagement of viewers. The varying degrees of contact, social distance, and attitude allow for a broad appeal, catering to different levels of viewer involvement. The compositional structure, with a clear center-periphery layout, directs the viewer's focus on the central figure (the student) before guiding them to actionable information, reinforcing the persuasive intent of the advertisement.

The textual elements further support the visual strategy, employing imperative language ("Enroll now") and creating a sense of urgency through offers such as "Save 50%." The emphasis on expertise and credible associations with reputable institutions enhances the advertisements' authority, positioning them as trustworthy sources of IELTS preparation. These visual and textual strategies not only convey the promise of academic success but also drive action by motivating viewers to engage with the service and ultimately enroll.

However, despite these strengths, the advertisements present some discrepancies between the aspirational imagery and the reality of the IELTS preparation process. While the brochures successfully create a positive image and cultivate high expectations, they also contribute to unrealistic perceptions about the ease of achieving success. The gap between the promises made and the actual preparation required for the IELTS exam led to some dissatisfaction, highlighting the need for more transparent and realistic marketing in future campaigns. Ultimately, while these promotional strategies are effective in attracting potential enrollees, they must balance ambition with authenticity to ensure long-term trust and satisfaction among prospective students.

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