Pictorial Multimodal Analysis of Selected Paintings of Salvador Dali

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Abstract : Multimodality involves the communication between verbal and visual components in various discourses. A painting represents a form of communication between the artist and the viewer in terms of colors, shades, objects, and the title. This paper aims to present how multimodality can be used to decode the verbal and visual dimensions a painting holds. For that purpose, this study uses Kress and van Leeuwen’s theoretical framework of visual grammar for the analysis of the multimodal semiotic resources of selected paintings of Salvador Dali. This study investigates the visual decoding of the selected paintings of Salvador Dali and analyzing their social and political meanings using Kress and van Leeuwen’s framework of visual grammar. The paper attempts to answer the following questions: 1. How far can multimodality decode the verbal and non-verbal meanings of surrealistic art? 2. How can Kress and van Leeuwen’s theoretical framework of visual grammar be applied to analyze Dali’s paintings? 3. To what extent is Kress and van Leeuwen’s theoretical framework of visual grammar apt to deliver political and social messages of Dali? The paper reached the following findings: the framework’s descriptive tools (representational, interactive, and compositional meanings) can be used to analyze the paintings’ title and their visual elements. Social and political messages were delivered by appropriate usage of color, gesture, vectors, modality, and the way social actors were represented.