

# Rubrics for Girls in Arab Children's Magazines: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis Approach

Thiziri Aziri

The University of Jordan, Jordan

Zahra Awad\*

The University of Jordan, Jordan

**Abstract**—The present study aims at examining the semiotic modes used in the rubrics for girls and the topics they reflect in Arab children's magazines. To this end, eight girls' sections were extracted from two Arab children's magazines, namely *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active). We adopted Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar in our data analysis. We focused on representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions. The results show that although both publications used a variety of semiotic modes to express meaning, there are some differences between them. That is, *Majid* is richer than *Hatem* in terms of layout, the use of pictures, and vibrant colors. The findings also indicate that the two periodicals discuss similar topics, mainly recipes, fashion, and etiquette, but they vary in the attention given to each topic. While *Majid* concentrates on fashion and beauty, *Hatem* places much more focus on recipes and handcrafts. These results suggest that the variations in focus on specific topics could be related to the socio-economic contexts in which the two magazines are published.

**Index Terms**—Arab children's magazines, rubrics for girls, semiotic modes, visual grammar, metafunctions

## I. INTRODUCTION

Magazines are an integral part of visual media that come in print and digital forms. Behshad and Ghaniabadi (2015) define a magazine as "a complex collection of signs that can be extensively decoded and analyzed by different factors. The most spectacular components are documentary photos, manipulated images, and portrait photos" (p. 20). That is, the different semiotic resources contained in this genre of media, particularly pictures, are worth deciphering as they are not employed purely for illustration or entertainment purposes; they are also used to create meaning (Liu, 2013). So, editors of this genre do not rely solely on language, but they also invest in every visual mode, including designs, graphics, signs, and colors, to transmit an array of meanings.

One type of this genre is children's magazines, which constitute a good example of multimodal discourse. Such magazines are distinguished from those meant for adults by their abundance of visuals such as photos, cartoons, colors, signs, and an appealing layout. Adamski (2019) suggested that children's magazines should have an attractive cover, be colorful, be printed on high-quality paper, and cover children's favorite topics to appeal to young readers.

Most research on the discourse of children's magazines has focused on content analysis, including advertising (e.g., Jones & Reid, 2009; No et al., 2014), educational values (e.g., Pomerantz, 1986; Adamski, 2019), and gender representation (e.g., Sazonenko, 2021; Kurt, 2021). When it comes to Arab children's magazines, it is observed that research focused on a variety of topics, including comic strips (De Blasio, 2020), the attitudes of education specialists, parents, and children (Alyounes et al., 2006), identity (Peterson, 2005), and ideologies perpetuated in magazines (Abdul-Ameer & Abdul-Ameer, 2022). However, the multimodal structure of children's periodicals has received less attention (e.g., Carvalho, 2013; Abdul-Ameer & Abdul-Ameer, 2022). In particular, the existing literature on the multimodal discourse of Arab children's magazines is scarce.

As for comparative studies on Arab children's periodicals, their concentration was on the active magazines, ignoring the non-active ones (Abwini, 2008; Abdulrahman, 2012; Ehab, 2014). To fill this gap, this study compares two Arab children's magazines, *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active). It focuses on the different semiotic modes found in the rubrics for girls' sections and how they relate to the socio-economic contexts in which the magazines have been published. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the semiotic modes employed in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active) Arab children's magazines?
2. What topics are reflected by such rubrics in these magazines?
3. How do these rubrics relate to the socio-economic contexts in which the magazines have been published?

---

\* Corresponding Author

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Multimodality is an interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological approach that analyzes the meaning of discourse, whether spoken or written, based on different linguistic and visual resources. At the core of multimodality, meaning is communicated through language and other semiotic resources, such as facial expressions, gestures, intonation, colors, images, layout, and signs, among others. “A number of frameworks emerged to analyze the multimodality of different types of discourse” (Belgrimet & Rabab’ah, 2021, p. 192). The grammar of visual design, developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006), is one of these frameworks that systematically analyzes multimodal discourse.

### A. *Theoretical Framework*

The grammar of visual design introduced by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) is primarily developed to analyze visual images. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) suggested that visual images are linguistic tools used to communicate meanings that cannot be expressed verbally. Their framework is regarded as an extension of Halliday’s (1985) systemic functional linguistics theory, which views language as a social system that serves ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. They developed a three-dimensional framework consisting of representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions that correspond to Halliday’s ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions, respectively.

#### (a). *Representational Metafunction*

This metafunction analyzes images in terms of participants, processes, and circumstances. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) distinguished between two types of participants: represented and interactive. The former refers to entities depicted in images, such as people, places, and objects, whereas the latter is related to the viewers, as well as the photographers and painters, of these images (Ly & Jung, 2015). This metafunction is realized through two types of processes, which are conceptual and narrative. Regarding conceptual representation, it denotes stable situations. This process is further divided into classification, analytical, and symbolic sub-processes. In contrast, narrative representation refers to dynamic situations in which participants are depicted performing actions. Four sub-processes are included in the narrative structure: action, reaction, verbal and mental, and conversion processes (Hussein & Aljamili, 2020). The main difference between conceptual and narrative representations is related to the presence of a vector, a distinctive property of the narrative process. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) defined the vector as “elements that form an oblique line, often a quite strong, diagonal line” (p. 59), and that can be constituted by bodies, tools, or limbs. As for circumstances, they are secondary participants that are divided into locative circumstances (settings) and circumstances of means.

#### (b). *Interactive Metafunction*

The interactive metafunction deals with the relationship between the participants depicted in the visuals and the viewers. At this level, images are analyzed based on contact (gaze), the size of a frame and social distance, attitudes (perspective and subjective images), and modality. For contact, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) distinguished between demand and offer images. In the former, the represented participants direct their gazes toward the viewers, while in the latter, their gazes are directed away from the audience. Furthermore, the size of the frame refers to the selection of a shot (close-up, medium, or long) to display the participants. These shots establish various social relationships (for example, intimate, medium, and impersonal) between the portrayed participants and the viewers. Perspective or attitude is another component of the interactive dimension; it refers to the choice of an angle or point of view, namely horizontal and vertical angles. The horizontal can either represent the viewers’ involvement (frontal angle) or their detachment (oblique angle). The power relation is associated with the vertical angle, which is achieved at high, eye-level, and low angles. Finally, modality refers to the images’ credibility, truth, and realism. It is measured by different markers, including colors, representation, contextualization, illumination, and brightness.

#### (c). *Compositional Metafunction*

The compositional metafunction relates the representational and interactive structures using three principles: information value, salience, and framing. The informational value refers to the distribution of different elements in the visuals, such as left-right, top-bottom, and center-margin, and their arrangement imparts to them varying values, including given-new, ideal-real, and center-margin, respectively. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) reported that “coding orientations are culturally specific, certainly where the horizontal dimension is concerned” (p. 181). They illustrated that “in cultures which write from right to left, the given is on the right and the new on the left” (p. 181). Given that Arabic’s coding system is from right to left, this suggests that the items on the right are given, while those on the left are new. Regarding salience, it refers to the image’s noticeable elements that are used to draw the viewers’ attention (Widayanti, 2016). The final principle of the compositional meaning is framing, which is concerned with the connection and disconnection of the different resources employed in the visuals. They can be disconnected using different framing tools, such as colors, space, and framing lines.

### B. *Previous Studies on Children’s Magazines*

Children’s magazines constitute a significant area of research that has attracted the attention of discourse analysts. Numerous studies have been conducted to explore the discourse of children’s periodicals from various perspectives. To

begin with, Kurt (2021) conducted a qualitative study to assess the portrayal of masculinity and femininity in children's publications during the modernization of the Republic of Turkey. To this end, the researcher selected 35 issues from eight Turkish children's periodicals that were published between 1945 and 1950. The data analysis revealed disparities in gender portrayals. It was found that women were neglected as they rarely appeared in these magazines. They were often depicted as being in charge of domestic tasks and supportive duties. Further, they were usually featured as mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters. In contrast, men were shown as family leaders and representatives of modern Turkey.

In a multimodal study, Carvalho (2013) employed Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar to examine the social meanings constructed in the advertisement section of *Visão Júnior*, a Portuguese children's magazine. His results revealed that this magazine mostly featured different types of advertisements, including those for foods, animals, nature, banks, TV shows, books, movies, fashion and accessories, and mobile phones. The researcher argued that food advertisements encourage children to engage in physical activities because they are often associated with sports. Furthermore, these advertisements enrich children's general knowledge and prepare them for the real world in intriguing ways, such as by acquainting them with the potential relationship between money and banks.

In an earlier study, Pomerantz (1986) analyzed *Ranger Rick*, a nature magazine that is meant for children. The researcher administered a pre-and post-test to determine its ability to improve children's knowledge of animals and the natural environment. Subjects were requested to read three issues of the magazine over three months. The study's findings demonstrated that this magazine has a positive effect on children's knowledge. It contributed to the development of three crucial dimensions: animals, plants, and ecological concepts. This has been confirmed by the participants, who claimed that magazines constitute one of the main sources of information.

Concerning Arab children's magazines, Abdul-Ameer and Abdul-Ameer (2022) investigated the ideologies reflected on nine front covers of an Iraqi children's magazine, namely (المزمار) /'Al Mizmār/ (Tr. Oboe). The data were drawn from two political eras in Iraq's history: the 1970s and the 1980s. The researchers analyzed the data using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar, focusing exclusively on the compositional metafunction. Their findings suggested that hidden meanings and ideologies were communicated through alternate modalities (i.e., visual images) other than language since the audience is children. The visual imagery of the 1970s promoted tolerance, acceptance, and modernization, while that of the 1980s was more violent as it depicted war, troops, and military uniforms. Their study concluded that the hidden ideologies were intentionally implemented and controlled by dominant and ruling groups in Iraqi society.

In a study originally written in Arabic, Ehab (2014) compared the layout and production of images in two Arab children's magazines, namely *Majid* and *Samir*. The sample comprised 36 issues that were analyzed using content analysis. This piece of research revealed that *Majid* outperformed *Samir* in terms of image production and design. Some serious editorial and typographical flaws were identified in *Samir* that need to be taken into consideration. The researcher also suggested that this magazine needs to reconsider its editorial and pictorial policies. Furthermore, the study concluded by emphasizing the significance of recruiting experts and skilled painters to enhance the quality of *Samir* magazine.

Alyounes et al. (2006) investigated the attitudes of education specialists, children, and parents toward *Hatem* magazine. Their results showed that education specialists were satisfied with the layout of this magazine, the number of pages, and the pictures used. However, they criticized it for its use of advanced vocabulary, which they believed was not suitable for children in the fourth and fifth grades. As for the children, they liked the cover of the magazine, the colors used, and the way the sections were organized, and they indicated that they were most interested in the religion and entertainment sections. In addition, parents were satisfied with the content of this magazine and believed that it contributed positively to the education of their children.

Previous research on Arab children's magazines seems to have placed a greater emphasis on the ideologies communicated in them, the attitudes of children, parents, and specialists toward them, and the evaluation of image production. It is also clear that the multimodal discourse of children's magazines, despite its significance, has attracted little attention from discourse analysts. As a result, the current study aims to fill this gap and contribute to the literature on the multimodal discourse of Arab children's magazines. It examines and compares two children's magazines, *Majid* (active) and *Hatem* (non-active). It delves particularly into the visual techniques and areas of interest in the girls' sections.

### III. METHOD

#### A. Data Collection and Sample Selection

The data for this study were collected from *Majid* and *Hatem*, two Arab children's magazines. *Majid* is a monthly magazine that is intended for children aged 5 to 11. It was founded in February 1979 by Abu Dhabi Media Company in the United Arab Emirates and distributed in several Arab countries, as well as a few non-Arab ones. Similarly, *Hatem* was a monthly magazine that was first issued in November 1998 by the Jordan Press Foundation, Al-Rai. It was meant for children aged 6 to 16. This magazine was temporarily put on hold in May 2013 due to financial difficulties. There was an attempt to revive *Hatem*, but it only lasted one year before stopping its publications permanently. As this study

focuses on sections addressing girls in the two publications, we gathered a total of eight rubrics for girls (four from each magazine) from the issues of 2011 to 2017. The following table describes the selected sample from the two magazines.

TABLE 1  
THE DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY'S SAMPLE

Magazine Name	Date of publication	Issue number	Page number
Majid	December 2011	1713	64-65
	July 2012	1742	54-55
	February 2013	1777	52-53
	September 2017	2011	56-57
Hatem	December 2011	153	16-17
	July 2012	160	16-17
	February 2013	167	16-17
	September 2017	178	38

### B. Data Analysis

The current study adopts a qualitative method to identify the semiotic modes employed in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* and *Hatem* and the topics they cover. Given that the discourse of children's magazines is multimodal, the researchers used Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) grammar of visual design as a framework to analyze the chosen sample. More specifically, the selected girls' sections are examined in terms of their representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. The Analysis of the Rubrics for Girls in *Majid* Magazine

This section analyzes the semiotic modes employed in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* and identifies the topics reflected in them. Our analysis is based on Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) metafunctions: representational, interactive, and compositional.

#### (a). Representational Metafunction

At this level, the multimodal element is analyzed in terms of participants, processes, and circumstances. In the girls' sections of this magazine, it is noticed that the same represented participant, a female cartoon character named Karamila, has been duplicated in all of the selected rubrics, doing different actions. That is, in one case, she is depicted gazing confusedly at the commercial ticket on the apple, as shown in Figure 1. This is supported by a text presented in a bubble next to this girl; it offers information about the stickers put on fruits to familiarize children with them. In Kress and van Leeuwen's terms, Karamila is engaged in a reactional process in which she is the reactor, the ticket represents the phenomenon, and the direction of her gaze creates the vector. In another case (Figure 1), Karamila is featured smiling as she is brushing her hair into a Rasta hairstyle. In this respect, the action performed by Karamila indicates an action process, where she plays the role of the actor and her hands represent the vector.

In Figure 2, the same character is depicted in three different ways. In the first instance, she is seen posing like a model while wearing a traditional Persian dress; details about the dress are found in the supporting paragraph next to the represented participant. The second and third illustrations are also supported by texts; they both indicate that the represented participant is sitting in the knees-to-chest pose and wearing different outfits, high heels, and socks, respectively. The different actions depicted in Figure 2 exemplify a reactional process, where the reactor (Karamila) directs her gaze at the viewers with a broad smile on her face, and the direction of her glance forms the vector.

Figure 3 depicts three separate illustrations of Karamila. In the first example, she is shown wearing traditional Jamaican attire; the accompanying text includes background information on Jamaica and a recipe for a chicken jerk, a classic Jamaican meal. The second drawing, which shows her lying in a bed, is joined with a text on the negative effects of unhealthy sleeping habits. The third illustration features Karamila smiling and staring at the viewers; this transmits pleasant vibrations to them, and more importantly, invites them to read the text attached to it. The latter encourages the use of summer fruits for facial skin treatment. As far as processes are concerned, the three paintings of Karamila include three different reactional processes; all of which she serves as the reactor, with the vector formed by the direction of her gaze.

In the same fashion, this girl appears three times in Figure 4. In the first occurrence, she is shown wearing a veil and is positioned next to a text that offers veil-wearing tips. In fact, Figure 4 comprises two types of processes: action and reactional processes. For the former, it occurs as Karamila (the reactor) directs her glance toward the audience; it is the direction of her eye line that forms the vector. For the latter, two action processes are involved where the represented participant plays the role of the actor: in the first, Karamila is shown cleaning her clothes, while in the second, she is captured sitting with a young girl as she opens a gift. Each of these illustrations appears to be associated with a small textual caption. The first provides clothes-cleaning tips and suggestions, and the second instructs female readers about proper gift-receiving etiquette.

In addition to the different portrayals of Karamila, the girls' sections in *Majid* also included different illustrated recipes, such as salad chicken (Figure 1), potato fingers with sauce (Figure 2), home-made ice cream (Figure 3), and chicken tabbouleh (Figure 4). The ingredients that appear in Figures 1 and 2 stand for the analytical process. That is, they are regarded as constituents (possessive attributes) of these dishes; the latter in this case serve as carriers. For locative circumstances, the represented participants as well as the textual captions are placed in the foreground against undefined backgrounds in most sections (Figures 2, 3, and 4). Thus, it seems plausible to suggest that the designer of these sections purposely disguised the background to direct the attention of the female readers to the linguistic and visual resources provided in the foreground.

#### (b). *Interactive Metafunction*

At this level, images are analyzed with regard to contact, size of frame, attitude, and modality. For contact, the selected samples employ a variety of offer and demand images. Regarding offer images, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) suggest that they offer information rather than demand something from the audience and also show the represented participants as objects of contemplation. Indeed, the offer images in the examined sections provide the readers with plenty of information and present Karamila as a visual technique to grab the attention of readers. Figures 1 and 3 illustrate offer images where the image designer detaches the viewers from the world of Karamila by directing her gaze away from them. On the other hand, Figure 2 shows Karamila establishing direct eye contact with the viewers. This suggests that she is inviting young girls to wear high heels and socks and attracting their attention to the Persian dress that she is wearing. Likewise, Figure 3 features two instances of demand images where the represented participant directs her glances toward the audience with a smile on her face. In the first instance, she shows her flawless skin to girls and invites them to maintain a daily skincare routine using the tips mentioned in the caption, while in the second instance, she is demanding attention to the Jamaican traditional dress that she is wearing.

In *Majid's* girl sections, the image designer often opts for a long shot to frame Karamila. This viewpoint shows both the setting and the represented participant's entire body from head to toe. It can be suggested that this angle is adopted to allow girls to view the character's hairstyle and her different clothing choices and thus indirectly inspire them to emulate her fashion sense. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), the long shot communicates a distant relationship between the represented participant and the viewer. However, in this context, one could claim that the viewers maintained a close relationship with Karamila as she appears repeatedly in each section, which makes viewers familiar with her.

As for attitude, both horizontal and vertical angles were used. In particular, a horizontal frontal angle is used in several illustrations; this perspective is adopted to involve the girls in the world of Karamila. That is, this angle enables them to share some moments of her daily life and feel her joy. In terms of the vertical perspective, the illustrations are placed at eye level, indicating a power balance between the viewers and Karamila.

In terms of modality, a wide range of saturated colors are used to create cheerful illustrations and appealing texts. Pink, however, has been observed to predominate among all colors, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. These vibrant colors are used to grab readers' attention. In terms of contextualization, Karamila is placed in the foreground with an obscured background; that is, no contextual indicators are visible to viewers except in Figure 1, which includes a detailed background. As a result, contextualization lowers the modality. Further, in representing Karamila, the image producer portrayed her in a detailed manner; that is, her facial features and expressions, her clothes, the color of her skin and hair, and other things are all visible to the viewers. For illumination and brightness, *Majid* magazine is characterized by the use of different light sources and shades, as well as bright and vibrant colors. All of the parameters except for contextualization increase the modality. As a result, it can be concluded that the modality in *Majid* magazine ranges from medium to high.

#### (c). *Compositional Metafunction*

The visual and textual resources in the girls' sections are presented in an aesthetically pleasing layout with a variety of forms, colors, and decorative shapes to attract girls' attention. For informational value, left-right and top-bottom structures are adopted. In terms of left-right structure, Karamila appears to the right of the supporting textual captions in the majority of the selected sections. This indicates that the viewers are familiar with her, while the texts present new information. For top-to-bottom alignment, the recipes in Figures 1 and 2 are placed at the bottom of the page, which gives the impression that they are less important elements than the content placed at the top.

As far as salience is concerned, Karamila is the most salient element. She has been noticeably present on all pages, placed in the foreground, appears in highly saturated colors, and occupies a significant amount of space on these magazine pages. This indicates that the editor places more attention on Karamila as compared to other visuals.

Regarding the framing, various frames are identified, which are as follows: recipes, household recommendations, health and beauty, historical clothing, etiquettes, handcraft, and traditional meals from the world. It is worth noting that all of these frames are supported by visuals that reflect their content. Therefore, the linguistic and visual resources of each frame rely on one another to deliver meaning to the readers. All of the presented frames are disconnected from one another through colors, framing lines, and space.

### B. *The Analysis of the Rubrics for Girls in Hatem Magazine*

This section seeks to identify the semiotic resources employed in the rubrics for girls in *Hatem* as well as the topics covered by these rubrics. The selected samples were analyzed in terms of their representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions.

(a). *Representational Metafunction*

In terms of the representational structure, the selected rubrics from *Hatem* depict both human and non-human participants. With regard to the human participants, it is noticed that two girls of almost the same age are duplicated in the selected sections. The first girl is portrayed putting items in a bowl and mixing them. The designer of these rubrics paired her with various illustrated recipes, including sandwiches (Figure 5), oatmeal cookies (Figure 6), milk and kiwi juice (Figure 7), and date cake (Figure 8). This suggests that this girl is represented to visually reinforce the recipes offered. As far as the processes are concerned, two narrative processes are represented: a non-transactional action process and a reactional process. The former refers to the cooking action, where the girl plays the role of the actor and her arms are the vector. While the latter appears to be accomplished through this participant's eye contact with the audience, in which she is the reactor, the audience represents the phenomenon, and her gaze reflects the vector. The second girl can be seen sewing with a needle and thread. The designer inserted the drawings of this girl next to different paragraphs explaining distinct handcrafts, including clothespin-made products (Figure 6), a cat doll made out of a sponge (Figure 7), and decorated candles and vases (Figure 8). This character is engaged in a non-transactional action process in which her hands serve as the vector and she is the actor. It is worth noting that there is a third participant (a young girl) who appeared once in Figure 8; she illustrates a reactional process as she (the reactor) maintains direct eye contact with the viewers (phenomena). In this case, the vector emanates from the reactor toward the phenomenon.

In addition to the above-represented participants, other objects are displayed in Figure 5 (e.g., a jean pencil case along with the materials required to make it and three types of sandwiches); these objects are instances of conceptual structures (both analytical and classification). To start with the analytical process, which is based on the part-whole relation, the first object (the jean pencil case) that corresponds to the whole (carrier) is made up of a combination of different elements that refer to the possessive attributes (parts). As for the classification process, it is encoded in the second object, which refers to the three represented types of sandwiches that are regarded as subcategories (subordinates) of the sandwich category (the superordinate). By the same token, two other conceptual processes are identified in Figure 7: classification and analytical processes. The classification process is shown through the two depicted mini jean skirts (subordinates), which come under the skirt category (superordinate), while an analytical process is represented by a part-whole relationship in which the clothespins are the possessive attributes (parts) and the items made by them refer to the carriers (whole). Lastly, Figure 8 demonstrates an analytical process that is manifested via the displayed vases and candles (carriers) that are decorated by discarded socks (possessive attributes or parts).

Regarding the locative circumstances, all the represented participants and objects, along with the textual captions, are foregrounded against undefined backgrounds. The designer purposefully obscured the background to draw girls' attention to the linguistic and visual resources that are offered in the foreground.

(b). *Interactive Metafunction*

In terms of the interactive aspect, both offer and demand images were identified. The drawings of the first girl next to the recipes in all the figures are instances of demand images, as she is looking directly at the viewers. Her gaze can be interpreted as an indirect invitation to other young females to try the displayed recipes. This invitation is emphasized by her broad smile, reflecting her enjoyment of cooking, and she seeks an imaginary relation of social affinity with the viewers. As for the offer images, they appear in Figures 6, 7, and 8. Such images are represented by the portrayal of the girl who is sewing and turning her gaze away from the audience; she is looking at the needle and the thread in her hands. Thus, these images are used to inform the readers about the different crafts that she is making.

Regarding the sizes of frames and social distance, the represented participants and objects are captured in three different shots, including very close, medium-close, and long shots, each of which conveys a distinct social distance. The very close shot is adopted in Figure 8 to capture the girl who appears next to the presented mail in which only her head is visible. This shot brings her closer to the viewers and enables them to be affected by her observed facial expressions. This angle signals an intimate and very close relationship between her and the audience. The medium-close shot is employed to depict the young girl who is cooking to reflect a close social relationship; this shot displays this participant's upper body. The third shot is long and is used to represent the girl who is doing crafts and all the displayed objects to fully depict them. This perspective communicates a distant relationship.

For image subjectivity, both horizontal and vertical angles were identified. The frontal horizontal perspective was adopted to emphasize the viewers' involvement. The designer purposefully selected such an angle to immerse girls in the world of the represented participants. The employment of this angle suggests that the viewers are engaged with the textual and visual resources provided to them and are expected to react positively to the content offered in these rubrics. They are, for instance, expected to try the crafts and the recipes that have been provided to them, as well as to send messages to be published in this section of the magazine. From a vertical perspective, the eye-level angle is used to convey the absence of a power relationship between the represented participants and the audience.

As far as modality is concerned, the selected rubrics display a wide range of saturated colors, but pink is dominating. In contextualization, the participants and the depicted objects are placed in the foreground to draw children's attention

to them, while the background is not clearly articulated. Thus, contextualization tends to reduce modality. However, the details offered about the participants and objects, such as their natural colors, and the girls' facial expressions, and features, raise the degree of modality. For illumination and brightness, the selected samples are distinguished by the presence of light and shade sources, as well as the use of bright and vibrant colors. As a result, the modality ranges from medium to high.

(c). *Compositional Metafunction*

For the compositional metafunction, the selected sections include both linguistic and visual resources that are aligned in left-right and top-bottom structures. The results showed that the girl who is cooking appears on the right side of the illustrated recipes; thus, she is perceived as a given piece of information or a familiar character. On the other hand, these recipes are on the left. They contain new information that female readers should pay close attention to. Similarly, the depicted skirts in Figure 7 are shown on the left side of the accompanying paragraph. In this case, these skirts represent the new or key information, whereas the text represents the given information or the source from which the message departs. In other words, readers need to read the text first to comprehend the information provided on these skirts. For top-bottom (ideal-real) alignment, the girl making crafts is positioned at the top of different illustrated paragraphs. She is used to conveying ideal and essential information. In other words, this girl's appearance helps children recognize that she is illustrating various crafts. While the supporting paragraphs are regarded as real information due to their lower placement, they provide details on the displayed crafts.

As far as salience is concerned, the majority of illustrations employed in all of the figures are eye-catching since they are presented in almost the same size, are easily noticeable, occupy more space, and feature highly saturated colors. However, the drawings of the two young girls who illustrate the recipes and crafts are more salient as they are repeatedly depicted in the selected sections.

Regarding framing, it is noted that the rubrics for girls in *Hatem* are made up of different frames, which are as follows: food recipes, handcrafts, recommendations, etiquette, fashion, and girls' mail. The content of most frames is delivered through visual and textual resources, except for the recommendations and etiquette frames, which are delivered purely through textual features. The visual and linguistic resources in these frames are connected to deliver one unit of meaning. It is worth noting that all of the frames represented in these sections are disconnected from one another through colors, framing lines, and space, implying that they convey different content.

In short, the current study revealed differences in both the semiotic modalities and the topics manifested in the rubrics for girls in *Majid* and *Hatem*. These two magazines employ a variety of semiotic modes; however, *Majid* uses more images and highly saturated colors, and its content is delivered more attractively. Certain topics discussed are similar, such as recipes, fashion, and etiquette. However, the attention that is given to each topic varies. *Majid*, for instance, focuses more on fashion and beauty. This could be explained by the high individual income in the United Arab Emirates, where the magazine is published, which reflects the ability of parents to provide essentials for their children. On the other hand, *Hatem* focuses more on cooking and crafting, which reflect the traditional roles assigned to women in Arab society.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined and compared the discourse of two Arab children's magazines, namely *Majid* and *Hatem*. In particular, it focused on how different meanings in the girls' sections are constructed visually. To this end, it implemented Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar, which analyzed the magazines' sections aimed at girls in terms of three metafunctions: representational, interactive, and compositional. The results revealed that the two magazines used a wide range of semiotic modes. However, *Majid* had a far more appealing layout, employed more vibrant colors, and used more miscellaneous pictures as compared to *Hatem*. It has also been found that the most covered topics in *Majid* are concerned with fashion and beauty, whereas those in *Hatem* pertain more to cooking and handcrafts. According to what has been stated earlier, it can be argued that *Hatem* was an informative and entertaining magazine due to its creative use of semiotic modes and the interesting topics it covered. Unfortunately, it did not last long due to financial problems, as declared by its publisher. Therefore, one can suggest that the magazine deserves financial assistance to be revived; otherwise, it would be a significant loss. *Majid's* survival, on the other hand, can be attributed to its publisher, "Abu Dhabi Media Company," one of the wealthier companies controlled by the UAE government. Accordingly, this company has a variety of revenue streams that allow it to provide high-quality content to its audience.

APPENDIX



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abdul-Ameer, M. A., & Abdul-Ameer, I. A. (2022). The representations of ideology in the front covers of selected Iraqi children's magazines: a multimodal critical discourse analysis. *Majalatu 'al-qādisiyah lil'ulūm 'al-insāniyah* [Al-Qadisiyah journal for human sciences], 65(6-6), 146-164.
- [2] Abdulrahman, S. G. (2012). Wāqī' saḥāfat 'al-atfāl wa dawruhā 'al-ma'rifi fi 'al-'ālam 'al-'arabi: dirāsah tahlīliyah taqwīmiyah [Children journalism and its informational role in the Arab world: An analytical and Evaluation study]. *Journal of Arts & Social Science*, 2012(31), 99-120.
- [3] Abu Dayyeh, A., & Al-Dulaimi, A. R. (2017). 'Al-qiyam fi majallāt 'al-atfāl 'al-orduniyah: majallat Hatem onmūdhaj (Dirasah fi tahlīl 'al-madhmun) [Values in Jordanian children magazines: «Hatem» magazine as a model (A study in content analysis)]. *The Journal of Media and Social Studies for Specialized Researches*, 1(4), 79-105.
- [4] Abwini, I. A. Y. (2008). 'Al-madhāmīn 'atarbawiyah fi majallāt 'al-'atfāl 'al-orduniyah "Dirāsah tahlīl muḥtawā li majallatay Wesam wa Hatem" [Educational content of the Jordanian children's magazines "Content analysis of Wesam and Hatem magazines"]. [Published Ph.D. dissertation]. Yarmouk University, Jordan.
- [5] Adamski, A. (2019). Children's magazines as tools (not only) reading education. *Folia Litteraria Polonica*, 3(54), 151-172.
- [6] Alyounes, Y., Bakeer, O., & Hamdan, M. (2006). Dirāsah taqwīmiyah chāmīlah li majallat Hatem lil-'atfāl 'aṣādirah 'an 'al-mu'assasah 'aṣuḥufiyah 'al-urduniyah Al-Rai [A comprehensive evaluational study of "Hatem" magazine, published by the Jordan press foundation- "Al-Ra'i" for children]. *Dirasat*, 33(1), 27-50.
- [7] Behshad, A., & Ghaniabadi, S. (2015). Visual analysis of magazine covers. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 7(5), 20-32.
- [8] Belgrimet, S., & Rabab'ah. (2021). A multimodal discourse analysis of English posters in violence awareness campaigns against women. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 11(2), 191-201.
- [9] Carvalho, F. F. (2013). Social semiotics and literacy: a case study about the social meanings constructed by ads of a children's magazine. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 36(3), 169-181.
- [10] De Blasio, E. (2020). Comics in the Arab world. Birth and spread of a new literary genre. *Anaquele de Estudios Árabes*, 31(2020), 117-126.
- [11] Ehab, H. S. (2014). 'Ikhrāj 'aṣuwar 'aṣaḥāfiyah limajalāt 'al-'atfāl [Press images production for children's magazines]. Cairo: 'Al-maktab 'al-'arabi lilma'arif [The Arab bureau for knowledge].
- [12] Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1st ed.). London: Edward Arnold.
- [13] Hussein, A. T., & Aljamili, L. N. (2020). COVID-19 humor in Jordanian social media: a socio-semiotic approach. *Heliyon*, (2020), 1-12.
- [14] Jones, S. C., & Reid, A. (2009). Children's magazines: reading resources or food marketing tools?. *Public health nutrition*, 13(3), 393-399.
- [15] Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- [16] Kurt, Ş. K. (2021). Roles of gender in the Turkish family in modernization process: a review on children's magazines. *International Journal of Turcologia*, 16(31), 6-28.
- [17] Liu, J. (2013). Visual images interpretive strategies in multimodal texts. *Journal of language teaching and research*, 4(6), 1259-12663.
- [18] Ly, T. H., & Jung, C. K. (2015). Multimodal discourse: a visual design analysis of two advertising images. *International Journal of Contents*, 11(2), 50-56.
- [19] No, E., Kelly, B., Devi, A., Swinburn, B., & Vandevijvere, A. (2014). Food references and marketing in popular magazines for children and adolescents in New Zealand: A content analysis. *Appetite*, 83(2014), 75-81.
- [20] Peterson, M. A. (2005). The Jinn and the computer: Consumption and identity in Arabic children's magazines. *Childhood*, 12(2), 177-200.
- [21] Pomerantz, G. (1986). Environmental education tools for elementary schoolchildren: the use of a popular children's magazine. *The journal of environmental education*, 17(4), 17-22.
- [22] Sahin, G. G. (2012). Children's literature, children's journalism and magazine publishing in Turkish Republic (the Period between 1923-1940). *Procedia - social and behavioral sciences*, 46(2012), 1658-1663.
- [23] Sazonenko, M. (2021). Gender analysis of game material of the Soviet era on the example of children's magazines (1920-1980). *Journal for educators, teachers and trainers*, 12(2), 37-42.

- [24] Widayanti. (2016). A Case study of multimodal analysis: the representation of a female model in the 'insight' rubric of male magazine 147th edition. *Passage*, 4(2), 126-143.

**Thiziri Aziri** is an Algerian Ph.D. student at the University of Jordan, department of English Language and Literature. Her areas of research interest include discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and pragmatics.

**Zahra Mustafa-Awad** is a Professor of Linguistics at the University of Jordan and has been a visiting scholar at several universities in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East. Her research focuses on Discourse Analysis, Language and Media, Cross-Cultural Communication, and Foreign Language Teaching. Her publications include articles in international journals, chapters in edited volumes, and two textbooks. She is a member of the Editorial Boards of the International Journal of Arabic-English Studies and *Voices in Asia Journal*. Dr. Awad has also been long involved in higher education management and accreditation at both the national and regional levels. She has received several prizes, grants, and scholarships.