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Intertextuality as a Driver of Multimodal Creativity in Political Advertising

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Abstract. This article is concerned with the creative use of intertextual elements in multimodal discourse. Specifically, it explores the way intertextuality is employed in political posters to shape the meaning and transmit the desired message. The material includes British and American campaign posters viewed as semiotically complex texts in which verbal and non-verbal modes build some links with prior texts. The purpose of this research is to reveal the way the pre-existing verbal texts and images are modified to build a new meaning. The study is set in the integrated framework of multimodal discourse analysis, intertextual analysis and cognitive stylistics. The research establishes the types of transformations prior texts undergo in the process of recontextualization. It offers a new perspective on the mapping of pre-existing texts' modifications and reveals patterns typical of visual political advertising that encompass not only verbal but also non-verbal modes. The findings show that intertextualization triggers the employment of rhetorical means which include verbal and visual metaphor and metonymy, irony, parody and word play. The research opens avenues for investigation of intertextuality and creativity in other forms of visual communication, namely static and dynamic promotional texts.

Keywords: political advertising, creativity, multimodal texts, intertextuality, transformations, recontextualization.

Research area: social structure, social institutions and processes; media communications and journalism.

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Интертекстуальность как драйвер поликодовой креативности в текстах политической рекламы

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена креативному использованию интертекстуальных компонентов в мультимодальном дискурсе. В частности, исследуется применение интертекстуальности в процессе создания авторского посыла в тесте политического плаката. Материалом послужили англоязычные тексты предвыборной рекламы, которые рассматриваются как семиотически осложненные тексты, вербальные и невербальные компоненты которых содержат отсылки к созданным ранее текстам. Цель заключается в выявлении специфики креативного использования вербальных и изобразительных интертекстуальных элементов в текстах статической политической рекламы. Работа выполнена в рамках интегративного подхода к анализу поликодовых текстов с применением мультимодального дискурс-анализа, интертекстуального анализа и когнитивно-стилистического анализа. В результате определяются типы трансформаций созданных ранее вербальных и изобразительных текстов в процессе их реконтекстуализации в рамках англоязычных политических плакатов. Новизна заключается в том, что трансформационные модели выявляются как в вербальных, так и невербальных интертекстуальных компонентах текста. Исследование показывает, что интертекстуализация лежит в основе поликодовой креативности, манифестацией которой служат такие средств выразительности, как вербальная и визуальная метафора и метонимия, языковая игра, пародия и ирония. Применяемая в работе методика открывает новые перспективы в исследовании креативности и интертекстуальности в других жанрах визуальной коммуникации, включающих статические и динамические продвигающие тексты.

Ключевые слова: политическая реклама, креативность, поликодовый текст, интертекстуальность, трансформации, реконтекстуализация.

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Introduction

Modern scholarship on intertextuality viewed as the ability of texts to draw on pre-existing texts reveals its great rhetorical potential (Peterson 2005; Li 2019). It becomes instrumental in advertising discourse due to its power to

organize and orient the recipients' attitude and behavior, resorting to their prior experiences (Kelly-Holmes 2000). The employment of intertextual elements in promotional texts helps to attract attention and affect the viewers emotionally enhancing the pragmatic effect of advertisements. Intertextuality is appealing and fascinating for the recipients because intertextualization combines the focus on their prior knowledge and its reference to modern issues: pre-existing texts are taken out of context or in other words decontextualised and then transplanted to a new context or recontextualised (Bauman, 2004; *Höllerer* et al., 2019). The process of recontextualization involves creative usage of prior texts when something traditional acquires a new meaning after being placed in a new context. The elements bearing some reference to prior texts or in other words precedence-setting tokens (Malyuga, Akopova, 2021) are imbued with several layers of meaning which are intriguing for the viewers to decode.

Intertextuality serves a useful stylistic means in various types of promotional texts including commercials, social ads and political advertising. Research on commercial advertising elucidates the importance of intertextuality focusing on its persuasive power and the ability to camouflage the appearance of the ads' commercial nature (Li 2019; Meân et al., 2010). The Russian scholars Khriplya and Issers explore intertextuality as a means to shape ideological messages in social advertisement (Khriplya, Issers, 2023).

The investigation of intertextuality in visual political communication has been fragmented and to-date it obviously lacks sustained attention. The research in this field encompasses the examination of visual intertextuality in political memes (Gearhart et al., 2020) and campaign yard signage (Pandey, 2017). However, the mobilization of intertextual elements to shape politically relevant messages in such a firmly established type of visual political communication as campaign posters remains an understudied area.

Though modern studies on political posters do not normally use the term *intertextuality*, they consider cases that are indicative of creative modifications of elements borrowed from some prior texts. Discussing the visual design of posters, Seidman (2008) observes that images such as the Statue of Liberty, which epitomises the American democracy or the USA, are employed by political designers in different countries. It shows that visual political communication uses a universal language of images crossing linguistic and cultural boundaries. The way it is achieved deserves thorough consideration. In our research we try to fill the gap in scholarship on intertextuality exploring its rhetorical power in political still visuals in the light of multimodal creativity.

The present paper has the following structure. The Theoretical Background section provides an overview of current scholarship on intertextuality and multimodal creativity. It is followed by the Statement of the Problem. The Methodology and Material section elaborates on research design and process. The Results and Discussion section details and interprets the findings. The Concluding Remarks provide an outline of the implications of the study.

Theoretical Background

The intertextual dimension of a text analysis

The treatment of text and textuality changed dramatically in the last decades of the 20th century due to the development of post-structural paradigm. As opposed to structuralists' perception of the text as a closed-off, discrete entity, which presupposes the analysis of its constituent elements only within the boundaries of a given text, poststructuralists and postmodernists viewed a text in the light of intertextuality, examining the multiple links it builds with pre-existing texts.

The phenomenon of interrelation of texts was analyzed before the term *intertextuality* was coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s and further refined in the 1980s (Kristeva, 1986). The idea of intertextuality can be traced to Mikhail Bakhtin's book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984, originally published in 1963). To describe the interplay between writers, their texts and other texts, Bakhtin (1984) used the term *dialogism*, treating it as an inherent property of any text. Developing Bakhtin's

ideas, Kristeva observed that no text is independent of other pre-existing texts, thus a text is seen as a point of intersection of countless other texts. Any text is a mosaic of citations, as it absorbs and transforms other texts (Moi, 1996). Thinking along the same lines, Roland Barthes (1988) argues that a text is not a set of words conveying a certain meaning; it is a much more complex thing that can be described as a multidimensional space, a result of blending and clashing of prior texts.

The notion of intertextuality has been subject to multiple interpretations, it has been constantly evolving, so the approaches to its treatment are multifold. In its broad sense intertextuality is understood as a coexistence of two or more texts within one text (Bauman, 2004; Farrelly, 2020). Thus, such a treatment highlights the most essential property of intertextuality – the interconnection of texts, their "dialogue". In linguacultural research the interrelation of language, cognition and culture is explored, in that intertextuality takes centre stage being a manifestation of cultural phenomena in the language (Matiová & Navrátil, 2019).

Studies based on literary theoretical approaches explore different modes of intertextual representation, which include quotations, allusion, reminiscences, parody among others (Culler, 2001). Various intertextual references are categorized as direct and implied (Fairclough, 1992), obligatory and optional (Cruz, 2019). We find these intertextual practices instrumental not only for literary studies but also for advertising discourse analysis.

A separate strand of research considers intertextuality from the standpoint of its reception which means that intertextuality is treated not only as an intentional product of the author, but also as a result of its interpretation (Van Zoonen, 2017; Tsakona, 2018). This approach is relevant for the present research as for political advertisement to be effective it should employ prior texts that are recognizable and easy for the majority of viewers to interpret.

Another approach to the analysis of intertextualization concerns the unravelling of its mechanisms. In his seminal work on intertextuality, Bazerman (2004) explores the techniques the authors use to recontextualize some pre-existing resources and proposes the following strategies for the intertextual analysis of a text: 1) the creation of a list of instances of intertextuality in the text, 2) the evaluation of the way intertextuality is expressed, 3) establishing the source of intertextuality, 4) the interpretation of the intertextuality from the pragmatic perspective (Bazerman, 2004: 92). This framework was developed for monomodal texts, that is the ones based on natural language only. The exploration of intertextuality in multimodal texts presupposes attention to various semiotic resources encompassing verbal, pictorial, colour, graphical and acoustic ones. Modern scholarship on intertextuality in multimodal texts tends to focus on static and dynamic commercial advertisements, considering their audial intertextuality (Terskikh, 2019), exploring the persuasive power of intertextualization (Feng, Weignell, 2011; Xing, Feng, 2023), mapping intertextual practices typical of advertising discourse (Opran, 2022).

Modern studies devoted to intertextuality employed in various discourses show that recontextualization of pre-existing texts always generates new meanings playing on the recipients' prior knowledge and bringing about some element of surprise. Therefore, the usage of intertext in political advertising texts calls for their analysis in the light of creativity.

Approaches to multimodal creativity

Considering creative processes in the framework of cognitive science, Boden (2004) introduces three types of creativity: combinational, exploratory and transformational. The combinational creativity means making unfamiliar combinations of familiar ideas that engenders surprise. Two other types involve the exploration and transformation of conceptual spaces in people's minds. It resonates with the ways intertextualization works. Becker (1995) views it as taking some prior texts and reshaping them into new contexts. Since this process involves certain variations of the original text, it entails the creation of the so-called intertextual gap (Briggs and Bauman, 1992). The scholars posit that such a gap can be maxi-

mized and foregrounded revealing creativity and innovation (Briggs and Bauman, 1992: 149). Building on it, Hodges examines parodies as transformations of prior texts based on intertextual "play" seen as a manifestation of artistic creativity (Hodges, 2015: 47).

The exploration of creativity is developed in the studies devoted to visual metaphors and metonymies used in such multimodal texts as cartoons (El Refaie, 2003) and commercial ads (Forceville, 2016). The scholars assume that in semiotically complex texts verbal and visual metaphors build an intricate mosaic of meanings that viewers are expected to decipher. The examination of cartoons carried out by Marín-Arrese (2019) shows that creativity stems from innovation and recontextualization which involve the interaction of "cognitive mechanisms, such as metaphor and blending, and semiotic resources" (Marín-Arrese, 2019: 119). Moreover, the researcher traces recontextualization and intertextuality to the use of irony, allusions and parody as well as to the employment of quotations from historical and literary sources.

Another advancement in the exploration of creative power of intertextuality in multimodal texts is made by the Russian scholars Radbil and Pomazov whose research focuses on the universities' websites containing some intertextual elements (Rudbil, Pomazov, 2020). The scholars posit that modifications of prior texts in the course of their recontextualization make the recipient text exceptionally attractive for the viewers. The modified intertextual elements are semantically complex: the cultural information of the prior text is complemented by a new layer of information which is relevant for a specific context (Radbil, 1999). The mapping of transformations of precedence-setting tokens in the multimodal texts of universities' websites encompasses semantic, lexico-semantic, structural and syntactic modifications, allowing for creation of some rhetorical means, such as word play, irony and the literal reading of an original metaphorical text (Rudbil, Pomazov, 2020).

We assume that the way intertextuality is used in multimodal texts is genre and discourse related. Baring on the modern research in the fields of multimodal creativity and intertextuality we aim at uncovering the way intertextual elements are employed in political still visuals.

Statement of the problem

The analysis of research on intertextuality and multimodal creativity shows that these lines of investigation have never been extended to political advertising. Based on our interest in how intertextuality affects meaning building in campaign posters this article addresses the following research questions (RQs):

- What types of sources do still visuals draw upon? (RQ 1)
- How are the prior verbal texts augmented to create a new meaning in this form of visual political communication? (RQ 2)
- What types of transformations of prior visual texts are employed in political posters? (RQ 3)
- How does multimodal creativity work in political advertising? (RQ 4)

We hypothesize that the creative application of intertextuality in political advertising will have specificity because unlike commercial advertisements aiming to create a positive image of a product political ads attack as well as acclaim. These pragmatic functions are bound to affect the creative employment of intertextual elements in the sample texts.

Methodology and Material

To carry out the analysis of the ways intertextuality works in still visuals we chose to explore British and American campaign posters as a well-established means of visual political communication, a ubiquitous campaigning tool, which has been in use for more than two centuries. The research employs *multimodal critical discourse analysis* (MCDA) which aims at studying social interaction and meaning making as multimodal, in other words, based on the usage of several modes. The multimodal critical discourse analysis allows for identification of modes within the text and establishing their interrelation which is essential for meaning-making (Fairclough, 2013).

We proceed from the assumption that meanings are derived from immediate context, created by a combination of semiotically diverse elements in a multimodal text, and

from past experiences of prior texts that manifest themselves as intertextually linked textual items. It calls for the employment of *intertextual analysis*, which reveals what types of relationships exist between the texts and the culture in which they are embedded. It aims at establishing resources which political, cultural and social contexts provide for the new texts' creation. Bearing on the model of intertextual analysis introduced by Bazerman (2004) we establish the types of intertextual elements embedded in the sample texts, trace their sources and reveal the transformations pre-existing textual units undergo to fit the pragmatic purposes of visual electoral advertising.

Recontextualization of pre-existing verbal and pictorial elements results in the emergence of new associations and their chains. We find the framework of *cognitive stylistics* (Stockwell, 2002; Naciscione, 2020) instrumental for uncovering figurative meanings created in multimodal texts that adopt intertextual fragments. The transformations of precedence-setting tokens entail the creation of new figurative meanings, which we analyse from the stylistic perspective establishing tropes that make the advertising texts expressive. To highlight this stylistic aspect of analysis, we do a case study of creativity employment in a political poster.

The sample chosen for intertextual and stylistic analyses includes 86 British political posters and 103 US presidential campaign posters spanning 1970–2023. The material for this research is based on the collection published in the book *Words to Win By: The Slogans, Logos, and Designs of America's Presidential Elections* (Kaplan, 2020). The British sample is selected from the Conservative Party Archive: Poster Collection. This material is augmented by digital images of political posters used in British and American mass media covering electoral campaigns. The selected posters have some reference to prior texts, which means that they incorporate at least one intertextual element, be it a verbal precedence-setting token or an image with some links to a pre-existing text.

Results and Discussion

One of the key features of campaign posters is quite laconic usage of verbal and visual resources. They should express their message in a few words and avoid being overloaded with visual signs as posters are expected to be easily discerned from afar by pedestrians or drivers. The best campaign posters are those whose elements, though simple and limited in number, manage to be emotion-laden and expressive. The employment of intertextuality is one of the means to achieve it. The analysis of sample texts revealed that they fall into three groups: 1) the posters that contain only verbal elements, 2) the posters that have only pictorial elements, 3) the posters that incorporate both verbal and pictorial elements.

The first group, that is devoid of pictorial elements, contains a limited number of texts, which aligns with the image-centred approach to visual communication. For example, the 2020 poster in support of Michael Bloomberg employs no iconic elements and relies only on the verbal mode to reach the voters. It contains the line *I like Mike Bloomberg*, which is a modification of *I Like Ike* slogan used in the 1952 presidential campaign commercial for Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The second group contains semiotically heterogeneous texts that shape their political messages building on prior visual images refraining from the usage of natural language. One of such posters is produced by Ron English to promote Obama in the 2008 presidential campaign. The Democratic candidate's facial features are blended with those of the outstanding President of the US Abraham Lincoln. Seidman (2008) observes that this fusion created an image that happened to be appealing to young voters, which generated excitement for Obama's campaign.

The third group of posters comprises multimodal texts that build their meaning using both pictorial and linguistic modes and employing visual intertextual elements and/or verbal precedence-setting tokens. More than half of the sample posters of this type contain visual intertextual elements, while their verbal dimension does not have precedence-setting tokens. About one third of sample texts contain intertextual components both in the pictorial and verbal strata of multimodal texts. Only 12 % of campaign posters, in-

corporating both verbal and pictorial modes, reveal links with prior verbal texts. It proves that pictorial elements play a dominant role in terms of appealing to culture relevant information shared by the electors.

It is quite evident that for the poster to stand out, its appeal should be enhanced by some creative **modifications** of pre-existing texts that are familiar to recipients. The examination of precedence-setting tokens allows for some mapping of such transformations.

Patterns of recontextualization of verbal resources

The first stage of analysis involves the examination of patterns of recontextualization of verbal intertextual elements. The findings reveal the main patterns which include *blending, substitution, contraction, and expansion*.

Blending presupposes the amalgamation of parts of two prior texts to build a new linguistic element, which is the case with VATMAN in the 1992 Labour's poster, attacking Tory's fiscal policy: *VATMAN. Vote Conservative and you're voting for 22 % VAT* (Fig. 1). The abbreviation VAT, that stands for *value added tax*, blends with the proper name Batman, one of the most iconic fictional characters. The new coinage VATMAN is quite ironic since raising VAT to 22 % seems incongruous with the noble mission traditionally associated with Batman. The ironic effect is enhanced in the pictorial mode which contains the image of a purse in a yellow circle creating associations with taxation and replacing the picture of a bat in the original Batman image.

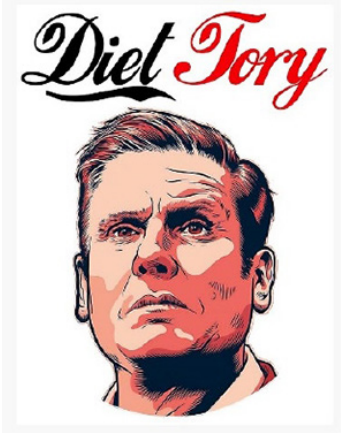

Fig. 2. The Diet Tory poster

Substitution is a modification of the pre-existing verbal text by way of removing one item to use a new one in its place. The poster attacking Leader of the Labour party Keir Starmer has recognizable graphic and colouristic features of the Diet Coke logo (Fig. 2). The word *Coke* of the brand name is substituted for *Tory*, which alludes to the right-wing agenda allegedly supported by Starmer. Importantly, the choice of colour for the verbal part of the poster signifies the ambiguous nature of Starmer's politics: the colour red is traditionally associated with the Labour party, while Tory is linked with the blue colour. On the one hand, the red colour complies with that of the Diet Coke brand, on the other hand, it signals the left-wing agenda, which stands in striking contrast to the politics advocated by Tories. Playing on it and using very limited linguistic and graphical resources,

Fig. 1. The VATMAN 1992 poster

the designers manage to create multiple associations and stimulate the viewers' interest.

Expansion takes place when some new elements are added to the prior text specifying it or altering the initial message completely. It can be found in the modification of the slogan found with the Tide commercial *Removes Stubborn Stains*, which was extended to ***Vote***. *Removes Stubborn* ***Orange*** *Stains* in the anti-Trump campaign poster. The element *Vote* is a direct call to go to the polling places, while *Orange* alludes to Trump's hair colour. Therefore, by adding two lexemes to the Tide slogan the designers shape their message attacking the presidential hopeful in an implicit way and mobilizing the electorate.

Contraction means reduction of the source text constituent elements when some parts are cut off. Since linguistic components of posters tend to be quite laconic, the cases of contraction of a message which is originally brief are not numerous. Running for reelection in 2020 Trump used a modification of his MAGA slogan tailoring it to the purposes of a new presidential campaign: Keep America Great. The element Again was contracted, while *Make* was changed for *Keep* to convey the message that the retention of power as a result of Trump's reelection might be beneficial for society. In this slogan contraction was combined with substitution.

The creative recontextualization of prior visual texts

Prior texts' transformations encompass not only the verbal elements of posters, but they are also mirrored in the iconic segment, which conforms to the idea that in a multimodal construct various semiotic modes work in unison to shape a desired message. The sample campaign posters reveal the employment of *pictorial blending, substitution, contraction and expansion*, some cases being underpinned by a combination of such modifications.

Pictorial blending is understood as the merger of two unrelated graphical images, photographs, portraits. This type of transformation is used in the 2008 campaign Abraham Obama poster by Ron English (Fig. 3). It is executed with very limited resources refraining from any verbalization of the message, however, blending the image of Obama with the picture of one of the most prominent US presidents of the past acquires salience and allows for various associations, which helps to shape a powerful message in a very concise way. The amalgamation of Jeremy Corbyn's portrait with that of Che Guevara's builds the ideological stance in the Che Corbyn poster, pictorial blending highlights the affinity of the leftist Corbyn with the Latin American revolutionary spirit.

Pictorial substitution presupposes the change of an element of a pre-existing visual image for a new one. It can be exemplified by the modification of the graphical representation of the queue first used to attack Labour in the 1978 *Labour Isn't Working* poster (Fig. 5). The long queue of people outside an unemployment office snaking into the distance is reproduced in the 2005 poster issued by Labourists to criticize Tory's health care policy. The layout of the

Fig. 3. Abraham Obama and Che Corbyn posters

Fig. 4. Labour Isn't Working poster and its modification

queue is preserved, however, some of its elements are altered: the young people depicted in the foreground of the original poster are substituted for older ones, some of them moving in wheelchairs.

Pictorial expansion means the modification of a prior visual image by adding some element to it. The 2020 election campaign poster targets Trump's immigration policy using the Burger King logo adding to it the picture of smiling Trump who shows his appreciation with a thumb-up gesture (Fig. 5). This expansion of the recognizable logo sets the poster at the intersection of commercial advertising and political discourse. The smiling picture of Trump may symbolize the consumer's approval of the product associated with the famous brand. However, the substitution of *Burger* for *Border* in the logo alludes to Trump's support for the construction of the wall at the Mexican border. The pictorial expansion is aligned with the substitution in the original verbal text which takes the shape of paronymy as the words *burger* and *border* are similar phonetically. Such modifications are designed to attack the presidential candidate triggering a chain of associations and creating a satirical undercurrent.

Pictorial contraction is understood as a removal of some parts of the prior image and placing it in a new context in a reduced form. For example, the registered trademark symbol ® of the Burger King logo was omitted in the Border King poster (Fig. 5). In some sample political advertising texts, contraction takes the shape of visual metonymy when a part stands for a whole, as is the case when Uncle Sam's top hat is used in the posters instead of the whole pictorial image which traditionally personifies the US federal government or the country in general.

Creativity in multimodal advertising texts: A case study

The way prior texts are employed creatively both in linguistic and pictorial components of political advertisements is revealed in *The*

Fig. 5. Border King poster and its prior text

Sound of mEUsic poster targeting the leader of British Labourists Jeremy Corbin. The designers used the poster for the musical The Sound of Music (1965) as a prototype because being one of the key elements of modern cinematic culture it is recognizable and imbued with various associations (Fig. 6).

The political poster also bears references to a more recent prior text – the musical about the life of Jeremy Corbin, staged in London in 2016. The text in the top left-hand corner of the poster *Jeremy Corbin, The Musical* serves as a precedence-setting token. The element that unites the cinematic text produced in 1965 and the performance staged in 2016 is their appurtenance to the genre of musical. Using grotesque the designers depict the British politician as a female character of the film dancing to the music. The picture of a dancing girl central to the Sound of Music film poster undergoes some modification acquiring recognizable features of Corbin, which can be classified as *pictorial blending.* The figures of children and adults depicted in the middle ground in the film poster are not included in the political poster as a result of *pictorial contraction.* The original images of a bag and a violin case are also modified: the addition of the inscriptions EUROSCEPTIC BAGGAGE and I'VE CHANGED MY TUNE are the markers of *pictorial expansion.*

Placing the text of the original film poster in the contemporary political landscape, the designers modify the linguistic elements of the prior text. To express their critical attitude to Corbin's inconsistent policy on Brexit, they alter the film's title adding the letter *E* to the word *music*. This expansion is supported graphically making EU the prominent part of the title: *The Sounds of m**EU**sic*. As a result, the play on word based on expansion acquires prominence and rivets the viewers' attention.

Interestingly, the designers substitute the depiction of keynotes, that complements the original title, for a circle of gold stars serving as symbols of the European Union. In line with it, the colour of the film title is changed into blue, which is also indicative of the EU. It is possible to conclude that the *substitution* encompasses both pictorial and colour modes of the multimodal text.

Apart from the alterations found with the title *The Sounds of mEUsic*, the creative modifications of linguistic elements are revealed in the sentence *I've changed my tune* added to the picture of a violin case. The designers use the idiom *to change one's tune* as a prior text, playing on its literal meaning and its metaphoric one *to alter one's attitude.* They create two layers of meaning to expose Jaremy Corbin's indecisiveness and lack of a clear agenda. Another phrase *Eurosceptic Baggage* added to the original picture of a bag, carried by the main character, is a metaphor that alludes to Corbin's pro-Brexit stance. Importantly, the inscription on the bag, characterised by metaphoricity, attributes some figurative meaning to the picture itself, therefore, the usage of a metaphorical linguistic element

Fig. 6. The Sound of mEUsic poster and its prototype

generates a pictorial metaphor. The recontextualisation of components connected with two musicals – The Sounds of Music and Corbyn the Musical – creates a number of multimodal tropes. Specifically, it allows for combining a linguistic metaphor, a pictorial grotesque, a pictorial metaphor and a play on word in the frame of one poster to enhance the pragmatic effect of the advertising text. The transtextualisation of linguistic and non-verbal components of the prior texts is achieved by way of creative modifications encompassing verbal, pictorial, graphical and colour modes, attributing more than one meaning to all elements of the text. All semiotically heterogeneous elements of the poster are united by cohesive ties, which helps to shape the message playing on the semantic complexity of intertextual components.

Concluding remarks

This research extended the study of intertextuality used in political advertising to campaign posters that serve as a reliable and well-established visual communication form. The exploratory analysis of verbal and non-verbal elements employed in posters shows that they build a tightly interwoven texture of components that belong to diverse semiotic modes. They encompass verbal and non-verbal ones, the latter incorporating iconic, graphical and colour modes.

Being deeply rooted in political, cultural and social contexts, campaign posters build intertextual ties with various prior texts. It is revealed that each mode of a poster has the capacity to create such links. The verbal intertextual elements of the sample multimodal texts mainly build on prior slogans, citations and familiar sayings. The pictorial intertextual components refer to traditional political symbols, prior political posters, or pop art texts.

The research reveals that in campaign posters the verbal mode plays a minor role in terms of intertextualization, it is the pictorial mode supported by the colour and graphical ones that is employed more readily to shape the meaning establishing some ties with prior texts.

Recontextualization of prior texts entails certain modifications of verbal and pictorial components, which allows for establishing basic types of transformations of pre-existing elements that can be described as blending, contraction, substitution, and expansion. Blending tends to be quite common in the linguistic mode when two prior verbal texts merge to build a new entity, while pictorial blending seen as an amalgamation of some unrelated graphical images proves to have quite limited application. The findings show similarity of transformation patterns in linguistic and pictorial intertextual elements.

The apt application of different types of prior units helps to elucidate some underlying meanings, providing surprising stimuli for the recipients, which enhances the pragmatic effect of the still visuals. The findings confirm the hypothesis that the functional pragmatics affects the multimodal creativity engendered by intertextualization in political advertising. Along with linguistic metaphor and metonymy which are also found in commercial ads, political advertising reveals such forms of satire as irony and parody produced by the interaction of verbal and non-verbal modes.

Our study can have implications for the investigation of the creative potential of intertextualization in other types of multimodal texts used in visual communication.

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