

THOUGHTS ON INTERPELLATION AND INTERTEXTUALITY AMONG FACEBOOK COVER PHOTOS OF FOUR MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES AS VISUAL NARRATIVES DURING THE TURKISH GENERAL ELECTION OF 2015 CAMPAIGN

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ABSTRACT

The main goal and interest in this paper is to explore how visual narrative processes function through single visual texts as cover photos on official Facebook pages of four major political parties (Justice and Development Party (JDP) a.k.a. AKP, Republican People's Party (RPP) a.k.a. CHP, Nationalist Movement Party (NMP) a.k.a. MHP and Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) a.k.a. HDP) represented in the Turkish Grand Assembly during general election campaign of 2015. The cover photos which illustrate appeal for vote and support are intended to communicate political competition and elicit political, ideological support and social responses. Using these cover photos on the Facebook profiles of these political parties as a sample, the paper reflects on intertextuality and interpellation processes and how these concepts contribute to further understanding the ways that engaged voters as viewers become participants and supporters in the narratives generated by these single visual texts. What narrative processes are in action during an encounter with a visual appeal for vote and support and how these processes function and how voters as viewing subjects might be able to exchange positions differently in relation to the visual texts appearing in the Facebook cover photos of the related political parties are the main questions to be answered and discussed in this study . Using a qualitative methodology, the study concludes with an overall comparative evaluation of the subject.

Keywords: *interpellation, intertextuality, visual narrative, social media, Facebook, political discourse*

TÜRKİYE 2015 GENEL SEÇİMLERİ SÜRECİNDE DÖRT TEMEL SİYASİ PARTİNİN GÖRSEL ANLATI OLARAK FACEBOOK KAPAK FOTOĞRAFLARI ARASINDAKİ METİNLERARASILIK VE ÇAĞRI ÜZERİNE DÜŞÜNCELER

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı ve ilgi odağı, görsel anlatı süreçlerinin 2015 genel seçim sürecinde Adelet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP) ve Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP) gibi Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinde temsil edilen dört siyasi partinin resmi Facebook sayfalarındaki kapak fotoğrafları üzerinden nasıl işlediğini değerlendirmektir. Oy talebi ve desteği çağrısını resimleyen kapak fotoğrafları siyasi rekabet iletişimi kurma ve sosyal, siyasal ve ideolojik yanıtlar temin etme amaçındadırlar. Bu dört siyasi partinin Facebook profillerindeki kapak fotoğraflarını örnek olarak kullanarak bu çalışma metinlerarasılı ve çağrı süreçlerini ve bu kavramların, izleyici konumundaki oy verenlerin tekli görsel metinlerce üretilen anlatım sürecinde birer katılımcı ve destekçiye dönüşmesine nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu anlamaya çalışır. Oy ve destek isteme görsel çağrısı sürecinde ne tür anlatı süreçlerinin devreye girdiği ve bu süreçlerin nasıl işlediği ve izleyici özneler olarak oy verenlerin ilgili siyasi partilerin Facebook kapak fotoğraflarındaki görsel metinlere göre nasıl pozisyon değiştirebildikleri bu çalışmada yanıtları aranan ve tartışılan temel sorular arasındadır. Niteliksel yöntem kullanarak çalışma konuyu genel bir karşılaştırma ile sonuçlandırır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *çağrı, metinlerarasılılık, görsel anlatı, sosyal medya, Facebook, siyasi söylem*

INTRODUCTION

Cultivated from an immense collection of a knowledge base, throughout centuries people have exploited a vast number of ways in order to exchange, transfer and store information that serve as a valuable asset to human heritage. To do this, many different forms were used as a medium. People acquired the knowledge of the world around them through verbal or written stories in childhood which were often accompanied by visual language forms. Belova (as cited in Crinall, 2009) states that within a story-making activity, the visual image is not a sole performer; it is a participant in an intertextual web of discursive forms and endless meaning-making exercises. It is part of a complex, fluid experience. Exploring different ways of interacting with narrative Fuery (1995:39) in her study concluded that meaning and processes of signification are artifices. It is therefore imperative that we develop methods of analysis in order to see how things come to mean and have signification, rather than merely what they mean and signify.

POLITICAL DISCOURSE

People actively engage in selecting, interpreting, accepting, resisting and constructing narratives in all phases of their lives. Doing these provide meaning to themselves as individual viewers and readers of images and texts. In addition, dominant discourses (such as political ones here) are conveyed through narrative meaning-making processes constantly and they seek to position us with subjective identities in that they attempt often successfully, to shape our beliefs and values. Schirato and Webb (as cited in Crinall, 2009) state that single images, far from offering simple representations, throw up more complex interpretive challenges for the narrative researcher. This is mainly due to the absence, or minimal presence of spoken or written text, and lack of obvious duration and direction. According to Schirato and Webb, the fewer the words accompanying an image, the broader its range of possible meanings: If a picture paints a thousand words, it is also true to say that it may be read in a thousand ways, and tell myriad stories, because pictures are always open to personal interpretation, and relatively inaccessible to any who lack very specific literacies Unlike abstract or obtuse artworks, documentary photographs, advertising images and posters are more easily read, because they are coded to deliver an intended message. Even so, as with other forms of narrative inquiry, it is obscured meanings which most often become the focus of inquiry. The capacity of these textual signs and codes to form and connect with narrative patterns across micro and macro levels, from the socio-cultural and political to the individual and personal, offers opportunity for insight into how single image-objects position subjects. This can affect social behaviours, such as inducing viewers to vote for a political party. However, in addition to single images, Cohn (2011) states that narratives are an integral part of human expression and he draws attention to the fact that study of sequential images, their structure and how people create meaning out of them are rare in literature

INTERPELLATION

Interpellation is a term applied by Louis Althusser to describe the process through which individuals are recruited into subject positions, thereby creating self-identity (Althusser, 1998). It describes the process by which ideology addresses the individual. The first stage of interpellation is 'calling out' or 'hailing'. A communication is directed towards a particular audience, an individual or group to illustrate how interpellation functions in the context of ideology Althusser used the example of the policeman who shouts "Hey, you there!" At least one individual will turn around (most likely the right one) to "answer" that call. At this moment, when one realizes that the call is for oneself, one becomes a subject relative to the ideology of law and crime. The example of the policeman furthermore suggests that we really have not a choice in this matter. Were we to ignore the call, we would sooner or later be forced to adhere to it (Brooker, 1999).

People are hailed according to a range of signifying categories, such as age, gender, physical characteristics and occupation. In responding to the call, the target indicates recognition of the social position that the communication has ascribed to them. If the response is cooperative, the person is considered to have adopted the assigned or assumed subjective position. According to Fiske (as cited in Crinall, 2009) the appeal or hail is the 'process by which language identifies and constructs a social position for the addressee' Interpellation is the 'larger process whereby language constructs social relations for both parties in an act of communication and thus locates them in the broader map of

social relations in general.’ Any form of discourse can convey the communication: speech, music, performance, written text, photographs, artworks, etc.

According to Althusser as a structuralist, the individual should not be regarded a self-conscious, autonomous being whose actions can be explained by personal beliefs, intentions, preferences and so on. For him, individuals are rather subjects constituted as a result of pre-given structures. Introducing the concept of ‘interpellation’ to describe the process by which individuals are constituted as subjects interpellated (have social identities conferred on them) through ideological states apparatuses from which people gain their sense of identity as well as their understanding of reality.

As Crinall (2009) cites from Belova meaning production in visual communication is complex and fluid, and emerges out of the viewing experience as the meaning of images always necessarily lacks completeness. In this case, when approach interpellation (subjective positioning) and narrative (meaning-making) processes are approached as forms of organic engagement and connection, narratives recognizing the fusion of body, thought, image, object, subject and context begin to come out.

INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality is one of the most commonly used terms in contemporary literary theory. According to Kristeva, Barthes, Riffaterre, and other pioneers of the field, every text has its meaning only correlation to other texts; texts as viewed by modern literary theory are lacking in any kind of independent meaning. The act of reading plunges us into a web of textual relations, a network of other texts. (Kalogirou & Economopoulou,2012)

In a broad sense, intertextuality is the reference to or application of a literary, media, or social “text” within another literary, media, or social “text.” In literature, intertextuality is when a book refers to a second book by title, scene, character, or storyline, or when a book refers to a social “text” such as a media, social, or cultural story. This borrowing invites a comparison between the understanding of the text outside of the book, and its use inside of the book. Intertextuality asks the reader to think about why the author is choosing that particular literary or social text, how they are including the text in the book, and to what effect is the text re-imagined by the book, or the book shaped by the text.

Intertextuality in political visual narratives is part of an ordinary world as long as viewers share four areas of understanding. Most obvious is the contextual knowledge of what the narrator is commenting upon, whether an immediate social problem or a specific news item. Second, there is knowledge of how the image or cartoon works, including its visual language of signs (images, symbols, captions, and quotes), conventions (expectations about what a sign is meant to signify), and rhetorical devices (caricature and analogies) used to convey satire, irony, and ridicule. Third, allusions to historical events and personages, or to past cultural texts (e.g., poems, novels, famous quotations, art), are only successful as the reader is able to access the allusionary base from which the analogies are drawn. And lastly, there is some understanding of the broader discourse itself that distinguishes political cartoons from the comics, political or commercial ads, and photojournalism. Lack of any aspect of this assumed shared memory might render an image opaque. In that sense, intertextuality only works as readers have access to the assumed memory bank that provides currency for communication. (Werner, 2004)

Sturken and Cartwright (2001:49) state that meaning is constructed through at least three components not including the image itself or the producer of the image: First one are the codes and conventions that structure the image and that cannot be separated from the content of the image, second the viewers and how they interpret or experience the image and finally, the contexts in which an image is exhibited and viewed. So, the meaning of an image does not lie in its production but in its consumption. One may employ semiotic analysis to reveal the sign system found within any image - or how the image serves as a part of a larger sign system.

Interpellation, as Sturken and Cartwright (2001:50) discuss, occurs when images “call out to us” or connect with us as individuals. An image interpellates someone only if he or she is “a member of a group to whom its codes and conventions ‘speak’” regardless of the varied interpretations with which

that image may be received from person to person. They use advertising to demonstrate this, stating it “strives to interpellate viewer consumers in constructing them within the ‘you’ of the ad” Political images also interpellate their voters in particular ways, hailing them as ideological subjects. As all images are produced within dynamics of social power and ideology, ideology is the necessary representational means through which we come to experience and make sense of reality

MEDIA TEXTS AND INTERPELLATION

Schirato and Webb (as cited in Crinall, 2009) defines text as an object that consists of words on pages, sometimes accompanied by photographs, sometimes extended to other mediums such as film or television. A text is made of signs that exist in relation to other signs. Shifting the focus away from the state Althusser’s notion of ideology and interpellation, and applied it to various kinds of media texts. In this vein, cultural theorists such as Horkheimer and Adorno (1979:8) have argued that the homogeneity of mass media interpellate passive subjects. Like Althusser, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the proletariat submit to ideologies that interpellate them as passive, and thus comply with their own domination. Similarly, Gauntlett (2002: 27) describes how “interpellation occurs when a person connects with a media text: when we enjoy a magazine or TV show, for example, this uncritical consumption means that the text has interpellated us into a certain set of assumptions, and caused us to tacitly accept a particular approach to the world.” Here, Gauntlett seems to echo Adorno and Horkheimer’s argument that media consumers unquestioningly accept a medium’s subject positioning of them as passive viewers. This structuralist framing will be countered by later theorists who will argue for more agency for interpellated subjects.

THE STUDY

METHODOLOGY

Through interpellation, Althusser’s primary interest is how ideology is used effectively and imposed through this process, however this study’s concern is about the relationship between interpellation and narrative by focusing on elements such as interpellation and intertextuality that facilitate (visual) narrative process in images used on Facebook pages of four major political parties during election their campaign of 2015. The viewer, already situated as a subject in this process, is hailed, or appealed to, and subsequently interpellated into becoming a voter and thus a fan, supporter, contributor. As interpellation is possible only when intertextuality exists, intertextuality is assumed to deserve a great attention. Instead of the story told, how the voters or supporters as viewers are positioned by, and implicated in the narrative processes of these photos should be once again main concern of this study. In these Facebook cover photos, the hail or appeal is delivered visually and textually through political slogans. People are hailed to ‘vote’ or ‘support’ and thereby positioned and subjectified as able subjects, capable of lending support and assistance to vote for the (favoured) political party.

For that reason, a qualitative and descriptive method of comparative analysis in order to see how things come to mean and have signification was used. In doing so, concepts of interpellation and intertextuality were reassessed accordingly to explain some of the processes where viewers are either implicitly or explicitly positioned and compelled to respond, and also how they contribute to identifying meanings which reach beyond commonly their perceived and received political understanding and readings in visual and textual platforms.

TOOLS

SOCIAL MEDIA

Means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks are called social media. In other words, social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of

social media. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Foursquare, YouTube and Vimeo can be given as some of the most common applications with a trademark. ("Social Media" Def: *WhatIs.com*)

FACEBOOK

Created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and being the world's largest social network, with more than 1 billion users worldwide, Facebook is a popular social networking website that makes it easy for registered people to keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues online and free of charge. Today, not only individuals but all the institutions and associations use Facebook for various purposes. Available in 37 different languages, Facebook includes public features such as groups, events and pages. The reason why Facebook pages of the four political parties were chosen for the study lies in the fact that these pages display a hectic profile especially during election campaigns and thus they allow their visitors to enjoy a number of activities such as post, share, comment about the political party especially followers have become an active platform. Plus, Facebook is the most widely used social networking

FORMER ELECTIONS BEFORE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION

When its coalition partner MHP called for early elections in the summer of 2002, Democratic Left Party (a.k.a. DSP) was forced to enter early elections, before the results of the wide economic reforms could be felt. As a result, none of the coalition parties were able to pass the 10% national threshold in the November 3 elections in 2002.

Founded in 2001 by members of a number of existing conservative parties, Justice and Development Party won the general election victories in 2002 and following 2007 and 2011, winning 34.3%, 46.6% and 49.8% respectively. Having almost won a Two-thirds majority of the 550 parliamentary seats in 2002, the party won 341 seats in 2007 and 327 in 2011. The party currently forms a third-term majority government since 18 November 2002, having had their electoral success mirrored locally in the municipal elections of 2004, 2009 and 2014 (Democratic Left Party (Turkey),(n.d.). In Wikipedia) The Turkish general election of 2015 is on June 7, 2015 to elect the 550 members of the Grand National Assembly. The election is the 24th general election in the history of the Turkish Republic and the elected members are to form the 25th parliament of Turkey. After 2001, Democratic Leftist Party (DLP) a.k.a. DSP lost election, Justice and Development Party won power and it has been ruling the country since then (Turkish general election, 2015, (n.d.). In Wikipedia)

JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY (JPD)

The Justice and Development Party (Turkish: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi), abbreviated JDP in English and AK PARTİ or AKP in Turkish, is a social conservative political party in Turkey. It has developed from the tradition of Islamism, but has officially abandoned this ideology in favour of "conservative democracy". The party is the largest in Turkey, with 312 members of parliament. Its leader, Ahmet Davutoğlu, is Prime Minister, while former party leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is President (Justice and Development Party (Turkey),(n.d.). In Wikipedia)

The Slogan: They Talk ; JDP Acts



Image 1. JPD's cover photo on its official Facebook page

Actions speak louder than words. This is what JDP draws attention to throughout its campaigns by reminding and recalling what has been achieved as a political part in power since 2002. As the cover photo reads, “visitors to the page are interpellated to support through on strong wording bearing the signifying colors of JDP. What is meant by “They” appears to have an intertextual connotation implying opposition parties, groups or persons. Strong emphasis on the pronouns of “They” and “Us” is a very common categorization found in similar typical political discourse. However, absence of “you”, is part of the hidden discourse where citizens who are eligible to vote are subjectified as “you”. Next to this is the image strongly asking for “Yea” for a license to do more if it comes to power again. The visual narration in this wording is indeed linked to a set of sequential images and texts used in this campaign that have been exhibited on billboards or posted in social media. The slogan is also hashtagged as signification of mention in social media.

THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

The Republican People's Party (Turkish: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) is a Kemalist and social-democratic political party in Turkey. It is the oldest political party of Turkey and is currently the Main Opposition in the Grand National Assembly. The Republican People's Party describes itself as "a modern social-democratic party, which is faithful to the founding principles and values of the Republic [of Turkey]". Also the party is cited as "the founding party of modern Turkey" (Republican People's Party (Turkey). (n.d.), In Wikipedia).

The Slogan: “ A liveable Turkey is coming”

Using circular image in red and white-party’s colours, the Republican People's Party reiterates that under the current rule, the country is in many forms hard to live and get by for the people. The text situated in the middle of the circle signifies the target strategy: “ A liveable Turkey” . That is, people are interpellated to support the party through a political discourse that implies an intertextuality addressing to the texts or images that signify unfavourable living conditions and circumstances under the current –opposition party’s rule as RPP claims.



Image 2. RPP’s cover photo on its official Facebook page

THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT PARTY

The Nationalist Movement Party (alternatively translated as "Nationalist Action Party"; Turkish: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP), is a Turkish far-right political party. The party is also informally known as the Grey Wolves, referring to its unofficial paramilitary youth wing.] In the 2011 general elections, the party polled 13.01% (5,585,513 votes) and won 53 seats, retaining its status as the third largest group (Nationalist Movement Party. (n.d.). In Wikipedia).

The slogan: Walk with us Turkey



Image 3. NMP's cover photo on its official Facebook page

The Nationalist Movement Party is the only political party that used its chairman (Devlet) Bahçeli and party symbols- the three crescents in the cover photo. The image apparently poses an imperative type of interpellation with little reference to intertextual elements in uttered during the election campaign. Chairman's image and the text lying beneath him constitute a bound and dependent intertextuality. Like in the cover photos of other three parties, the emphasis on the use of pronouns is also observable in NMP's calling attention to themselves as a party.

THE PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Peoples' Democratic Party (Turkish: Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP) is a left-wing political party in Turkey, acting as the fraternal party to pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP). It was founded in 2012 as the political wing of the Peoples' Democratic Congress, a union of numerous left-wing movements that had previously fielded candidates as independents to bypass the 10% election threshold. The party operates a co-presidential system of leadership, with one chairman and one chairwoman. As of 22 June 2014, these chairpersons are Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ respectively (Peoples' Democratic Party (Turkey).(n.d.). In Wikipedia).

The Slogan : We, to the Parliament



Image 4. PDP's cover photo on its official Facebook page

As being the only party struggling to bypass the 10% election threshold, People's Democratic Party's main concern and focus is on the interpellation (call) for a support from people to help achieve this. Another noticeable feature is the style where the Turkish pronoun "we (biz)" was written with an apostrophe and re-pluralized. Two forms of "we" used intend to give two different messages: First, "We" without an apostrophe signifies the party and its supporters (mainly left-wing people of Kurdish origin). Second, adding the plural suffix to "the pronoun "we" with an apostrophe this time is meant to signify all the 'peoples' regardless of any ethnic origins. There is an intertextuality between the pronoun "we" without an apostrophe and the one with the apostrophe in that meaning into meaning was maintained in metaphorical way. Furthermore, as a universal signifier for peace, the slogan framed by two parallel bars with two olive leaves on both sides is a visual narrative that can be construed as an interpellation for a pacific atmosphere that the party strongly puts emphasis on as a part of the conjectural future action plan after years of conflicts.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As Hernández-Guerra (2013) points out that a political discourse contains some features that must be constant in them to be recognized and understood by the audience as such but, at the same time, must fulfill the purpose of transmitting the message aimed in that venue with a personal and original style. This is commonly done through layers of direct or subtle content. This view is also supported by Belova (2006:47) in which she suggests that visual encounter would perhaps be better described as an event whose meaning is created in movement and dialogue between the image, author, viewer, and circumstance of perception or a wider discourse.

As in the case of a political campaign like the one here, the discourse is created through visual and textual slogans where voters or supporters start an intertextual dialogue that is likely to lead to a wider discourse. The sample cover photos here show that interpellation and intertextuality were maintained over the emphatic use of pronouns of “they” and “we” (JDP, NMP and PDP) issuing an appeal to the voters as viewing subjects to exchange positions in the political discourse with a broader sense of visual reminder in the political timeline of the country. While olive leaves used by PDP is the only symbolic visual element signifying peace at large, NMP’s three crescents as its official emblem is the only ideological element found. Hashtag found in JPD’s slogan is the only iconic visual element that probably targets especially Y generation who are very comfortable with social media use.

Based on the interpretation of the visual and textual data, it can be inferred from the study that every text and visual bearing the elements of signification as the signified and the signifier has a message. That message can be construed as interpellation, an appeal to its reader or viewer within a number of texts making an intertextual discourse. Political discourses also benefit from these concepts like the ones in the study. How voters as the readers or the viewers of this political discourse will respond to this some ideological some social appeal lies in the great expectations of both sides.

The study had to be kept limited to four major visual and textual elements for two reasons: First, it is believed that most of other related visuals and texts were generated from the ones involved in this study. Second, the number of such visuals and texts reached such huge numbers (plus individually created ones) during the campaigns that the scope of the current study could hardly handle and process that amount of information.

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