

COMMODIFICATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: A MULTIMODAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS IN INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

People with disabilities are now more visible and speak up using the social media platform, either posted by themselves or by other people about them. The use of narratives, videos, and pictures in the posts reflect particular perspectives on a host of issues including disability, family, and care, but are often not examined for their implicit economic or ideological intention. Taking the language and discourse perspective, the purposes of the study are to explore how people with disabilities are represented in social media posts; and to examine the ways in which the combination of the informative and entertaining elements of creative content are fabricated through multi-modal text for certain purposes.

Initially, the study uses a theoretical framework of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) (1,2) drawing upon the ideas of commodification. It highlights that social media posts are made of various elements of semiotic systems, such as verbal, image, motion, and sound, through which people construct identities and represent ideologies. The data of the study are social media posts involving disabled people, particularly those on Facebook, in two different contexts, namely Indonesia and Malaysia. Drawing upon Machin and Mayr (2) and Feng (3), the analysis applies a systematic framework to map out the multimodal realization of disability by looking at the attributes that are verbally articulated, either as in the form of characters' utterances or video caption and the attributes that are embedded in the visual description of the setting and characters. It seeks to argue that, rather than being concerned with the marginal position of disabled people, content creators are concerned with how their content can have more views, followers, endorsements, and financial rewards.

As we are working on the data, the results of the data analysis suggest us to do some adjustments. The classification of the types of disability adjustments shows that hearing impairment is prevalent. Therefore, the investigation is focused on the online visualization of deafness on social media. The photographs are carefully classified, interpreted, and explained to demonstrate how they visualize the deaf people online. The parameters applied are those of representation and viewer network (Van Leeuwen, 2008), visual social actor network (Van Leeuwen, 2008), and the Visual Discourses of Disability (ViDD) framework (Ang & Knox, 2020). Two clines of the visualization are identified. This first cline relates to the composition of the photographs. Images at the perspectivizing end of the cline highlight a disability, whereas images at the personizing end of the cline focus on depiction of a human or person rather than (a) disability. The second cline explains the effect of choices made in relation to the construal of emotion and power in the discourse. Enabling refers to positive depictions that empower the depicted person. Disabling is the opposite, photographs that evoke the othering of disabled actors. The Enabling/Disabling cline maps the accumulated effect of choices in a photograph with regard to the emotive and power dimensions. Enabling refers to a depiction with positive affect and one that empowers the actor. Disabling refers to a depiction with negative affect and one that disempowers the actor.

Kata Kunci: *Commodification, social media, disabilities*