



# Multimodal Discourse Analysis Of Professional Tourism Campaign Titled 'Saudi By Saudis.'

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## ABSTRACT

This research employs descriptive qualitative methods to conduct a comprehensive multimodal analysis of a professional tourism campaign titled 'Saudi By Saudis. The study focuses on examining diverse elements such as text, symbols, images, sounds, and gestures utilized in these advertisements, with data sourced directly from a video of a professional tourism campaign titled 'Saudi By Saudis'. The notable tagline, 'Saudi By Saudis', serves as a pivotal component in conveying the overarching message. The results reveal a sophisticated multimodal semiotic system within a professional tourism campaign titled 'Saudi By Saudis', encompassing linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial elements. These modalities are intricately interconnected in constructing the meaning of the advertisement, resulting in a message that is intelligible to the audience. Furthermore, this research aspires to contribute to the advancement of the discourse analysis discipline, particularly in the realm of multimodal analysis, thereby enhancing our understanding of how various semiotic elements collaborate in constructing meaning in advertising discourse.

**Keywords:** Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA), tourism, advertisement

## 1. Introduction

The emphasis on multimodality in discourse analysis recognizes that meaning is not solely conveyed through linguistic structures but also through visual, spatial, and gestural dimensions. This broader perspective enriches the understanding of how communication unfolds in diverse contexts, acknowledging the complex interplay of multiple modes in shaping the meaning and impact of discourse. Additionally, with the incorporation of contextual phenomena, various research emphasizes the importance of considering the broader socio-cultural and physical context within which communication takes place.

According to Fairclough's (1992) assertion that "Discourse constitutes the social" underscores the idea that language use is not merely a neutral means of communication but a fundamental element in shaping social structures and relations. His perspective emphasizes that discourse is intricately interwoven with power relations and laden with ideologies, highlighting the profound impact language can have on societal dynamics. The precision is manifested through the advertisement's multimodal features, incorporating various semiotic resources such as language, image, sound, and color, as noted by Liu (2019). A well-crafted advertisement leverages these elements cohesively to create a compelling and resonant message, ensuring that the audience not only notices the product but also understands its underlying attributes and benefits. In this context, the synergy of multimodal features becomes pivotal in constructing a nuanced and impactful narrative that transcends the superficial to engage and influence the consumer effectively.

According to Zaber (2023), advertisements are divided into print (magazines, newspapers, and other print ads), audio (radio), and audio-visual (movies, television, and other video commercials) (TV and internet sites). The concept of "multimodality" has root dates to the 1920s and gained significant development in the early 2000s,

as highlighted by Leeuwen (2020) and Jewitt (2016). Multimodality is fundamentally defined as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event." In the realm of communication practices, a multimodal approach involves the examination of textual, aural, linguistic, spatial, and visual resources, as articulated by Pearce et al. (2018). Jewitt (2016) emphasizes the relevance of digital technologies to multimodality, as they offer a diverse range of modes often in new inter-semiotic relationships with each other.

### 1.2 Research Significance

As stated, on the website of the Ministry of Tourism-committed to Reimagining Tourism, 'We win people's hearts and minds by opening our doors to the world through a tourism sector where life-changing stories happen every day'. The assertions of scholars, such as Al-Baba (2011) and Bin Said et al. (2017), highlight that the objective of advertisements extends beyond product promotion to encompass building organizational loyalty and enhancing audience positioning. Advertisements are viewed as cultural intermediaries which play a significant role in impacting cultures. This underscores the importance of scrutinizing advertising messages, as stated by Bin Said et al. (2017), which involves factors like clarity in information provision, language style, and incorporation of cultural and societal values in ads. The Ministry of Tourism started operations in 2000, focusing on long-term growth. Its main objective is to implement the kingdom's vision for tourism, along with facilitating successful collaborations and developing national human capital.

### 1.3 Research Questions

- a) Examining the use of a Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) in 'Saudi By Saudis' TV advertisements and its impact.
- b) Are interconnected Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) synergistically contributing to the generation of advertising meaning?
- c) How do visual, audio, and verbal resources work together to construct a country's images and make them appealing to the audience?

## 2. Literature Review

The Ministry of Tourism (MoT; [Arabic](#): وزارة السياحة, [romanized](#): Wizārah al-Sīāḥah), started operations in 2000, focusing on long-term growth. Its main objective is to implement the kingdom's vision for tourism, along with facilitating successful collaborations and developing national human capital.

Halliday's (1970) linguistic framework identifies three distinct functions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational function is characterized by the expression of cognitive meaning, emphasizing that an individual is characterized by the language they employ in self-expression. In the interpersonal function, language serves as a means for the speaker to intrude into the speech event, expressing comments, attitudes, evaluations, and a dynamic relationship with the audience. Lastly, the textual function, according to Halliday, is instrumental to both ideational and interpersonal functions. It pertains to the internal organization of a sentence, focusing on its meaning as a message within itself and concerning the broader context of communication.

### 2.1 Advertisement to Persuade

Advertisements serve as a ubiquitous avenue for organizations to establish a connection with their target audiences, wielding significant influence in achieving successful marketing communication objectives. Coined by Blakeman (2007), AIDA model outlines a strategic approach to guide the audience through a journey from capturing their attention to ultimately eliciting a desired action. The process begins with capturing the audience's attention, followed by fostering interest in the product or service, generating a desire for it, and culminating in encouraging the audience to take a specific action, such as making a purchase.

Helland's (2018) suggestion to advertise basic objectives with more explicit information underscores the importance of clarity and transparency in advertising. The primary aim of advertising is to attract audiences to products, and contemporary television commercials often employ a combination of characteristic and pleasing audio, imaginative visual elements, and persuasive images to achieve this goal. Effectiveness in advertising is marked by the precision with which connotations are conveyed to the audience.

### 2.2 Saudi Arabia Advertising

The Saudi government's commitment to digital transformation, as outlined in Vision 2030, has played a pivotal role in fostering a conducive environment for technology and innovation. Saudi Arabia's digital landscape is experiencing a flourishing era of opportunities, propelled by a youthful demographic and widespread digital connectivity.

According to Mattys (2023), Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Arabian Peninsula with over 36.33 million inhabitants. With a median age of 30 (9 years younger than the U.S. and 14 years younger than Europe), the Kingdom boasts one of the highest internet adoption rates in the Middle East, with over 99% of the population having internet access. With a high smartphone penetration rate of 92%, mobile devices are an increasingly significant driver of website traffic in Saudi Arabia (72%). In one example, Saudia Airlines is highly active with over 500 ads in their library. This mixed media campaign leverages both text and rich media

placements in Arabic and English, inviting audiences to act and book a flight on their website. Saudi Arabia emerges as a dynamic marketplace where businesses can tap into the vibrant digital landscape to foster lasting consumer relationships and drive sustainable growth.

According to Khan (2024), the ability of Saudi children to navigate seamlessly between Arabic and English positions them advantageously in an interconnected world where multilingual proficiency is increasingly valued. The coexistence of Arabic and English in both educational and workplace settings makes code-mixing a natural tendency for many Arab students, who effortlessly combine both languages.

According to Statista, as in Table 1, Saudi Arabia's total advertising spend reached \$2.01 billion in 2023 and is projected to grow over the next 5 years. Digital Ad spend grew almost 20% in the last year alone and makes up a significant portion of total spend, amounting to \$1.56 billion. This growth indicates the increasing significance of digital advertising across the country's marketing landscape. Offline channels, such as OOH, Print, and Television constituted 23% of total ad expenditure in the Kingdom.

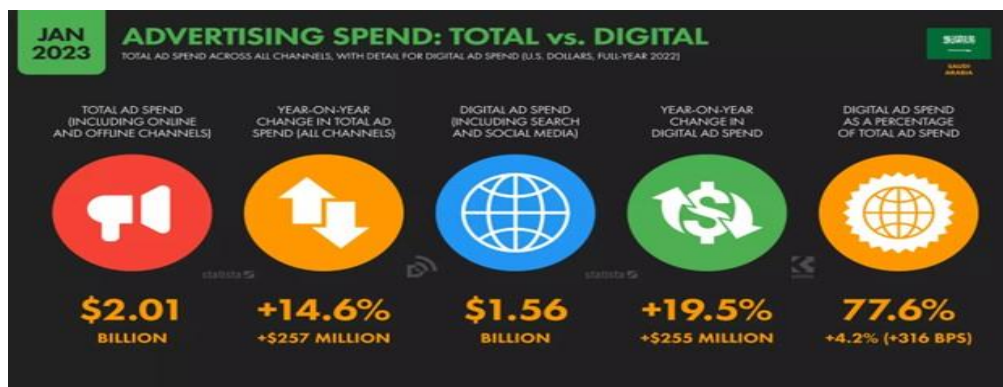


Table 1

### 2.3 Tourism in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's national tourism brand, 'Saudi, Welcome to Arabia,' has initiated a new global marketing campaign starring Lionel Messi, the international football icon and Saudi Tourism Ambassador. Saudi Gazette (2024) reports Audiences are invited to discover Saudi Arabia's diverse experiences and share their positive memories using the bilingual hashtags #ShareYourSaudi and #السعودية\_بعيونك on TikTok and other social channels. The video showcases Saudi's diverse locations, weather, and terrain — from the pristine waters of the Red Sea to the lush green mountains in Aseer, snow-covered Tabuk, the coastal city of Jeddah, and Riyadh, the bustling capital. Saudi Arabia is marking its sunny Winter Season with 17,000 events, including Riyadh Season, Jeddah Season, and Diriyah Season, alongside notable events like the Saudi Cup and the AlUla Arts Festival.

As per the records the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2022) the size of the travel and tourism sector for 2021 in the Kingdom has reached \$51.5 billion, or 6.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP). Investment in the travel and tourism sector in the Middle East hit a share of 7.4% of the region's total capital investment, the second highest percentage globally after the Caribbean region. Among all the countries in the analysis conducted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia came in third place among the countries investing the most in the tourism sector globally, with \$36.8 billion being pumped into the tourism sector in 2021.

### 2.4 Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA), as conceptualized by Kress (2010), serves as a comprehensive approach for researchers to unravel the intricate "weaver" of threads of meaning within discourse. This method employs various techniques and features that enable researchers to comprehend the diverse layers of meaning by decoding elements such as colors, gestures, images, writing, sound, and music. Kress aptly refers to texts as "multimodal semiotic entities" due to their multi-dimensional nature and structure. Halliday (2004) underscores the significance of cohesion in texts, emphasizing how coherence is established within the context in which the texts are woven. According to Kress (2012), the author acts as the actual "weaver" of ideas, and MMDA allows researchers to unearth the context and decode the intended meaning of the text. This makes MMDA a powerful tool for textual analysis, as it facilitates a deep understanding of various contributing factors to the creation of meaning as a unified whole. Additionally, Kress notes that MMDA applies to both modes of discourse, encompassing speech and writing. Van Leeuwen (2011) highlights the developmental trajectory of multimodality over nearly two decades, emphasizing its focus on studying multimodal units or ensembles of meanings.

The precision is manifested through the advertisement's multimodal features, incorporating various semiotic resources such as language, image, sound, and color, as noted by Liu (2019). A well-crafted advertisement leverages these elements cohesively to create a compelling and resonant message, ensuring that the audience not only notices the product but also understands its underlying attributes and benefits. In this context, the synergy of multimodal features becomes pivotal in constructing a nuanced and impactful narrative that

transcends the superficial to engage and influence the consumer effectively. Digital technologies can unsettle and remake genres, while simultaneously reshaping practices and interactions in discourse.

### 3. Methodology

The analytical approach employed in this study followed a systematic process, encompassing data collection, condensation, presentation, and conclusion, using Halliday's systemic functional linguistic theory, Kress and van Leeuwen's multimodal theory, and Anstey and Bull's multimodal semiotic system theory. This research delves into the analysis of multimodal elements within advertisements, focusing on products associated with movement, music, speech, and images. Its primary objective is to unveil the construction of multimodal semiotic systems in a professional tourism campaign titled 'Saudi By Saudis'. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytic approach, the study aims to provide detailed and explicit findings regarding the intricate interplay of various semiotic elements in the advertisement.

The initial phase involved actively seeking out the advertisement for examination and carefully watching and scrutinizing the video segments provided within the advertisement. The focus was on identifying and evaluating visual features and ideational functions embedded in the data. The data collection process was facilitated through online sources, primarily obtained from a website. The collected data comprised a diverse range of elements, including words, images, and physical attributes featured in the advertisement. Subsequently, the data underwent a condensation process to distill essential information and relevant patterns. The condensed data were then presented systematically, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the visual and ideational components. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings derived from the analytical process, shedding light on the intricacies and significance of the visual and ideational aspects identified within the advertisement.

#### 3.1 Data Collection

The promotional video titled 'Saudi By Saudis', lasting 59 seconds, is selected for the present study. It is among a series of promotional videos released by the Bold Agency, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to publicize the culture, history, and modernity of Saudi Arabia to viewers both at home and abroad. This professional campaign titled 'Saudi By Saudis' was published in Saudi Arabia in October 2020. It was created for the brand: Saudi Ministry of Tourism, by the ad agency: Bold. This Film medium campaign is related to the Hospitality and tourism industry and contains 1 media asset. It was submitted about 3 years ago. As per the Ministry of Tourism Saudi Arabia, we released a film that demonstrates the essence of Saudi Arabia: hospitality, culture, and grace. The film thus positions the Kingdom as the tourism hub within the Middle East and encourages Saudi citizens to partake in the HR tourism programs, as set by the Ministry. <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/saudi-by-saudis>

#### 3.2 Result and Analysis

The professional campaign titled 'Saudi By Saudis' presents a series of scenes characterized by individual chronologies, each portraying a character engaged in a short series of events. However, there is no chronological connection between these scenes, emphasizing the genre's aim to depict potentialities rather than a linear narrative. Instead, the abundance of scenes serves to sketch a diverse and dynamic collective, showcasing individuals from various backgrounds, genders, and ethnicities. Through these glimpses, viewers are invited to become part of this vibrant collective, fostering a sense of inclusivity and unity within the multi-faceted and positive nation of Saudi Arabia. The analysis of the advertisement confirms affirmative responses to all three research questions, demonstrating the effectiveness of the multimodal semiotic system in constructing advertising meaning, ensuring audience comprehension, and contributing to discourse analysis development.

##### 3.2.1 Linguistic analysis

The linguistic analysis of the 'Saudi By Saudis' campaign focuses on transitive clauses within Halliday's (1994) Functional Grammar framework, particularly emphasizing the ideational function for conceptualizing experiences and situations depicted in the advertisement. This examination underscores the significance of understanding speech purposes in advertisements to discern information and meaning conveyed through a blend of spoken and written language.

The advertisement commences with the impactful declaration, Frame 1 and 2 "Our Story begins with our people," setting the tone for a narrative deeply rooted in the collective experiences and contributions of the community. This opening line suggests a focus on human connection and shared experiences, inviting the audience to engage emotionally with the unfolding story. It serves as a compelling invitation to explore the brand's narrative through the lens of its people-centric journey.



Frame 1 **Our Story**Frame 2 **begins ...our people**Frame 3 **We're proud ... of us**

In Frame 3, the emotional resonance of the people with their nation is distinctly conveyed, **We're proud of her, and she is proud of us**, particularly emphasized in the latter part of the line where the sentiment of pride emerges prominently. This segment encapsulates a profound sense of national pride and belonging, illustrating a strong and affirming connection between the individuals and their country. The clarity in expressing pride reinforces the deep emotional bond shared by the people with their nation. Juliana and Arafah (2018) The emphasis on spoken language in the advertisement is reinforced by the diversity of written elements, such as place emblems and trademarks, enhancing its overall meaning.

Frame 4 **We know .... Culture**Frame 5 **For experience we turn to our people.**

In the subsequent part of the advertisement, the impactful line "**We know our stories, we know our culture**" in Frame 4, reflects a collective awareness and familiarity with the rich tapestry of shared narratives and cultural heritage. This assertion underlines a profound connection to heritage, suggesting a narrative that celebrates and preserves the cultural identity of the community.

The compelling line "For experience, we turn to our people" in Frame 5, underscores a shift from mere citizenship to an ancestral connection among Saudis. It accentuates a unique bond, suggesting that within this community, experiences are sought and shared not just as individuals but as an interconnected family unit. This phrase resonates with a sense of solidarity and mutual reliance within the Saudi community.



Frame 6



Frame 7

In Frames 6 and 7, the captivating visuals beautifully showcase the geographic splendor of Saudi Arabia, complemented by the evocative line "**We extend from the shore of the... to the midst of the deserts.**" This statement eloquently captures the vast diversity of landscapes spanning from coastal shores to expansive desert realms, symbolizing the rich and varied tapestry of the nation's natural beauty. It emphasizes the breadth and depth of Saudi Arabia's geographical expanse, encapsulating its unique blend of coastal, desert, and mountainous terrains.

### 3.2.2 Visual Analysis

the visual analysis of advertisement is conducted by adopting multimodal theory and combining with the generic structures of the ad as proposed by Cheong (2004). Following Anstey and Bull (2010) and Kress and Leeuwen, visual elements include color, vector, viewpoint, and moving image.



Frame 8 Visual Analysis



Frame 9 Visual Analysis

Frames 6 and 7 vividly capture the breathtaking natural beauty of Saudi Arabia, affirming the promotional advertisement's genuine purpose. Frames 8 and 9 further enhance this portrayal by showcasing the majestic high-range mountains, effectively introducing Saudi Arabia's abundant natural treasures. Through these captivating visuals, the advertisement eloquently highlights the nation's diverse landscapes, inviting viewers to appreciate its rich and unspoiled beauty.

Further visual analysis, the vibrant colors used to exhibit cultural elegance with modernity are very appreciable. In Frames 10 and 11, the traditional art of architectural decoration reflects the rich cultural heritage and regional traditions of Saudi Arabia. Highlighting a form of interior wall decoration historically practiced by women, the advertisement seamlessly integrates this cultural detail into its narrative, aligning with the "Saudi by Saudis" tagline. The intricate artistry and vibrant use of color observed in these images serve as tangible expressions of local tastes and traditions, further enriching the advertisement's portrayal of Saudi culture and identity.



Frame 10

**traditional art of architectural decoration**

Frame 11

Frames 12 and 13 exemplify the advertisement's harmonious blend of traditional values and modern amenities, striking a balance between heritage and contemporary lifestyle. These images effectively portray the seamless integration of traditional elements with modern comforts, showcasing Saudi Arabia's dynamic cultural landscape.



Frame 12

**modern amenities**

Frame 13

Frame 12 features the High City signboard, symbolizing family recreation, while code-switching on the signboard signifies the inclusivity of diverse languages. Additionally, the presence of a cable car underscores the incorporation of advanced technology and entertainment modes within the recreational setting.

In Frame 13, the depiction of public facilities highlights the significance of a well-developed transport road network in driving economic growth. The portrayal of expansive roads underscores their pivotal role as the backbone of progress for cities and nations, serving as a key indicator of development. The emphasis on paved roads reflects a commitment to infrastructure development, essential for fostering societal advancement and prosperity.



### 3.2.3 Audial Analysis

The voiceover in the advertisement acts as a guiding force, fostering a deep emotional connection with Saudi Arabia's inner beauty, while subtitles ensure universal understanding beyond language barriers. Through insightful commentary, the narration enriches the narrative, enhancing viewers' engagement with each scene. Frames 14 and 15 immerse viewers in the essence of Saudi tradition as they depict a man skillfully playing a traditional musical instrument and a group of men gracefully engaging in the Saudi traditional dance. The captivating music used in conjunction with the voiceover seamlessly aligns with the narrative, enhancing the emotional resonance of the scenes. These visuals not only highlight the cultural significance of music but also underscore its integral role in preserving and perpetuating Saudi Arabia's rich cultural heritage. By showcasing the dynamic interplay between music and cultural traditions, these frames offer a poignant glimpse into the diverse tapestry of Saudi culture, resonating deeply with audiences and fostering a sense of pride and appreciation for the nation's heritage.

The synchronized storytelling approach, harmonizing rhythm, narration, and visuals, effectively conveys Saudi Arabia's beauty and cultural richness to a diverse audience. The subtle sound effects complement the verbal announcement, enhancing the immersive experience and fostering a deeper connection with viewers. The relationship between verbal and non-verbal signs will help readers understand the message information, and meanings carried out by the product advertisement (Ketut et al., 2017).



Frame 14



Frame 15

### 3.2.4 Gestural Analysis

According to Savitri and Rosa, (2019) state the gestures in this advertisement can be seen from movement, speed of the participants' bodies, and facial expressions. These gesture advertisements are realized from the activities of the participants. Speed movement of the body and the facial expression will be the gesture of the participant.

From the smiles on their faces, it is clear what they demand is to invite the viewers to experience what they have experienced in the country; thus, the relationships of social affinity between them are created. The joyful feelings of the old men and two pretty girls in Frames 16 and 17 are revealed through their subtle facial expressions, which seem contagious to the viewers. In Frame 18 the smiling faces of the kids and in Frame 19 two girls feeding a bird, have been praised as beautiful characters with kindness also implies that Saudi people are helpful and warm-hearted.

The use of close shots in Frames 20 and 21 creates a sense of intimacy, allowing viewers to feel connected to the public figures depicted. Symbolic images like ancient architecture and local cuisines, captured in close shots, leave a powerful visual impact, while the transition from long to close shots in landscapes enhances viewer immersion, placing them imaginatively within the Saudi landscape. The use of eye-level angles in most shots suggests an equal relationship between represented participants and viewers, minimizing perceived power differences, as discussed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). This visual strategy fosters a sense of connection and inclusivity within the advertisement.



Frame 16



Frame 17



Frame 18



Frame 19

Frame 20

Frame 21

### 3.2.5 Spatial Analysis

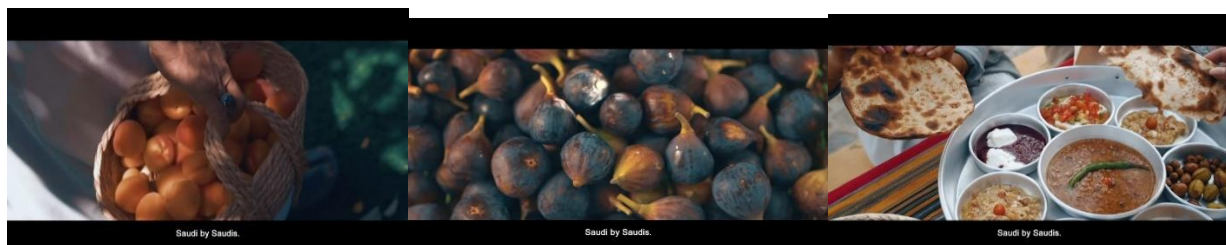
In the advertisement, each image plays a vital role in conveying a distinct facet of the narrative, yet together, they harmoniously blend to construct a comprehensive message. The dynamic portrayal of participants engaged in various activities underscores the unique qualities and accessibility of the rich culture and tradition of Saudi Arabia along with the current lifestyle, enriching its appeal to the audience. Through skillful visual storytelling, the advertisement effectively communicates the features and emphasizes its ease of acquisition. This collective synergy not only reinforces the promotional advertisement's overarching messaging strategy but also ensures a cohesive and compelling narrative that resonates with the audience, compelling them to connect with the product on a deeper level.



Frame 22

Frame 23

Frame 24



Frame 25

Frame 26

Frame 27

The advertisement embarks on a poignant journey with the opening line "Our story .... begins with our people", setting the stage for a narrative deeply rooted in the essence of Saudi culture and tradition. Through a series of captivating frames, the advertisement intricately weaves together a tapestry of cultural richness, showcasing the vibrant heritage and deep-seated traditions of the Saudi people. As the narrative unfolds, viewers are immersed in a visual symphony that celebrates the diverse facets of Saudi life, from traditional music and dance to the warmth of familial bonds.

In a masterful stroke of storytelling, the advertisement culminates with the powerful lines in Frames 22,23 and 24,"We're the family... that made Saudi," encapsulating the collective spirit and resilience of the Saudi people in shaping their nation's identity. These words resonate deeply, echoing the pride and unity of a community united in its shared history and aspirations. Finally, as Frames 25, 26, and 27 state, 'Saudi by Saudis' grace the screen, the advertisement gracefully transitions to its conclusion with the evocative imagery of fruits and traditional cuisine, symbolizing the bountiful blessings and culinary delights of the Kingdom.

## 4. Discussion

This qualitative study comprehensively analyzes the multimodal elements within the advertisement, employing frameworks by Anstey and Bull (2010) and Cheong (2004) to dissect its structure and messaging. By integrating various modes such as language, images, music, and color, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how these elements collectively convey the intended message and facilitate social communication. This



approach not only enhances the interpretation of advertising discourse but also underscores the importance of utilizing multiple modes effectively for successful information transmission.

The deliberate use of different shot types in the promotional video creates a dynamic viewing experience, fostering viewer engagement and participation. While the study offers valuable insights into constructing Saudi Arabia's image, future research should explore a wider range of promotional materials to ensure the findings' broader applicability and relevance to marketing strategies to enhance tourism.

## 5. Conclusion

In essence, the advertisement not only serves as a tribute to the rich cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia but also as a testament to the enduring spirit of its people. Through a seamless blend of imagery, music, and narrative, it captures the essence of Saudi identity, inviting viewers on a captivating journey of discovery and celebration. As the final frames fade into view, the message is clear: Saudi Arabia is not just a nation; it is a vibrant tapestry of culture, tradition, and unity, proudly woven together by its people.

From the above multimodal analysis, it can be concluded that the deployment of various modes in this dynamic discourse contributes to constructing the Kingdom's images that are glorious in history, unique in culture, picturesque in landscapes, innovative in spirits, vital in city life, and beautiful in people's hearts. The promotional advertisement also proves to be effective in engaging and aligning the viewers, thus functioning as a vital tool to market tourism. The promotional advertisement under examination is a successful model to demonstrate how promotional videos of tourism can be integrated with major events to maximize communication information and optimize communication effects. The interactive meaning of the video is realized through contact, social distance, attitude, and modality.

## Limitations

The study's focus on a single advertisement type may constrain the generalizability of its conclusions. Further research across various advertising formats could offer a more comprehensive understanding of multimodal elements in diverse contexts.

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