Multimodal pragmatics in the political logo: The correlation between visual and verbal pragmatics

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Key words

multimodal

visual pragmatics

political logo

speech acts

implicatures

Relevance Theory

Grammar of Visual Design

Abstract

This article proposes an integrative approach to the analysis of political logos by combining relevance theory, speech act theory, the Gricean cooperative principle, and the grammar of visual design. The findings show that both the verbal and visual elements of a logo can be pragmatically interpreted through weak and strong implicatures, speech acts, and the flouting of conversational maxims, as they function as ostensive stimuli that prompt cognitive effort toward optimal relevance. When stimuli are incongruent, greater inferential effort is required to derive coherent meaning. The analysis identified multiple sources of incongruity both within and between modes: (a) mismatches between formal indicators of speech acts and their felicity conditions, often undermined by visual context or verbal vagueness; (b) discrepancies within the visual mode itself – between ideational, interactive, and compositional meanings – or between these visual layers and the verbal message; (c) conceptual inconsistencies between a slogan and the visual representation. These incongruities stimulate deeper cognitive processing but can hinder optimal relevance and increase the likelihood of unintended interpretations. Special attention is given to visual cues. At the ideational level, logos incorporate symbolic elements; the interactive level includes modality cues aligning with the sincerity condition of speech acts. Compositionally, the right part of the visual field signals new or rhematic information, affecting conceptual strength, while the upper part corresponds to "promise", reinforcing or weakening commissive illocutionary force. In sum, ambiguity or inconsistency in multimodal cues can compromise the communicative effectiveness of political logos by violating relevance-based expectations.

1. Introduction

While multimodality has lately been advanced as one of the focuses of discourse studies (Bateman, 2014; Dicerto, 2018; Jewitt & Oyama, 2001; Kravchenko & Shanaieva-Tsymbal,

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2024; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Machin, 2007; O'Halloran, 2004), the problem of the pragmatic meanings generated by visual codes in their interplay with verbal messages remain comparatively underexplored (Braun, 2016; Clark, 2011; Huang, 2022; Kravchenko & Zuienko, 2025; Mubenga, 2009; Yus, 1998).

According to Roland Barthes (1973), the verbal code serves as an anchor for decoding meanings embedded in the visual, primarily graphic symbolic component of the multimodal message. However, if the verbal code does not sufficiently explicate the communicative intention, the visual mode becomes a context that may either clarify or further obscure the pragmatic transparency of the verbal message. This paper assumes that visual devices, like verbal utterances, can be pragmatically interpreted in terms of implicatures, speech acts, and violations of conversational maxims.

To further explore multimodal pragmatics in terms of correlation between verbal and visual modules, this study incorporates the relevance-theoretical perspective (Wilson & Sperber, 2004), according to which all communicative stimuli are processed in accordance with the presumption of optimal relevance. Using the example of political party logos, the paper intends to show how ostensive stimuli are encoded visually and verbally to guide the audience's inferential processes toward intended meanings, values, and ideological cues.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how visual and verbal modes in political logos cooperate or clash in the generation of pragmatic meanings and relevance effects. Specifically, the paper aims to identify cases where pragmatic incongruities stimulate cognitive processing that either strengthens or hinders interpretation. By synthesizing relevance theory, speech act theory, the Gricean cooperative principle, and the grammar of visual design, this study aims to contribute to the field of multimodal pragmatics by analysing political logos as complex, relevance-driven communicative acts.

2. Literature review

The theoretical and methodological background of this article includes (a) multimodal pragmatics, including pragmatic analysis of verbal and visual modes in terms of speech acts (Searle, 1969), Grice's cooperative principle (1975), and the relevance theory approach (Wilson & Sperber, 2005; Carston, 2004); and (b) visual grammar analysis by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). Key to understanding the theoretical foundations of this article are the concepts of multimodal pragmatics and multimodal semiotics.

Recently, the linguistically relevant issue of multimodality has been enriched by a new dimension – multimodal pragmatics. In particular, investigations in this area have been carried out within the framework of speech act theory (Huang, 2022) and relevance theory (Dicerto, 2018). Huang's monograph "made speculations about the multimodal means of illocutionary forces" (2022, xxxv). Dicerto's book offers an approach to multimodal communication through the lens of relevance theory. According to Dicerto, multimodal

pragmatics refers to the application of relevance theory to multimodal discourse in the sense that "contextual factors assist a recipient in disambiguating a message with the least effort", and multimodal texts "are used as a pragmatic strategy to provide context through the addition of information in different modes" (Dicerto, 2018, pp. 37–59). Also valuable for this study is Dicerto's analysis of multimodal texts across three dimensions: multimodal pragmatic meaning, the interaction of modes, and meaning in the individual modes (ibid., p. 63).

This article attempts to synthesize the approaches of relevance theory, speech act theory, and Grice's cooperative maxims in a multimodal pragmatic analysis. Such an integrative approach is prompted by the research material – political logos – in which verbal slogans may be ambiguous in terms of their illocutionary force, may flout cooperative maxims, and may be visually incongruent with the verbal component. Visual elements can also be inconsistent with each other. These mismatches or ambiguities trigger an inferential process in the viewer, who must resolve the tension between visual cues and verbal content in the search for optimal relevance.

Thus, when the verbal code flouts cooperative maxims, prompting the search for discursive implicatures, the visual code provides "a set of options" that support or challenge inferential hypotheses about the intended implicature. The visual mode of the logo can also undermine the felicity conditions of the direct speech act expressed by the verbal slogan.

The interface between pragmatics and semiotics refers to the pragmatic meanings acquired by texts through various semiotic resources, identifying the ways in which these resources "may generate a range of meanings" (Watson & Hill, 1993, p. 193). The pragmatic aspect of semiotics is primarily associated with the concept of multimodal pragmatics, as studied within the framework of visual grammar analysis by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). The application of the three metafunctions proposed in Halliday's (1994) functional grammar – ideational, interpersonal, and textual – and adapted by Kress and van Leeuwen to non-linguistic multimodal symbols, requires further commentary due to the genre-specific nature of political logos.

In particular, the ideational (or representational) meaning – manifested either narratively or conceptually – relies primarily on the conceptual component due to the high degree of stylization and generalization in logos. This component may be expressed through symbolic elements (e.g., national flags, emblems, etc., as observed in our research) and through attributes (symbolic connotations conveyed via light, detail, hue, saturation).

The interactive meaning of the logo, connected to elements such as contact, distance, relationship, and modality, also displays certain genre-specific characteristics. In the absence of a visible human "participant", traditional interactive cues such as gaze, interpersonal distance, and angle of view become less relevant. In the semiotic landscape of the logo, contact should instead be understood as the emotional response of the addressee, evoked either by the illocutionary force of the verbal slogan or by the visual code. The intensity of this

emotional response may correlate with the felicity conditions of expressive speech acts, either reinforcing or transforming the illocutionary force of the slogan. Emotional contact, in turn, is directly linked to the modality of interactive meaning, which is influenced by colour saturation, harmony, contrast, brightness, and related visual properties. However, the decoding of visual interactive cues is "dependent on what is considered real in a social group for which the representation is primarily intended" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 156).

Compositional meaning, which corresponds to Halliday's textual function, is shaped by principles of information value, salience, and framing, as outlined by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, pp. 179–185). Information value is foregrounded by three main visual areas: left and right, top and bottom, and centre and margin. Like sentence perspective, adopted in linguistics, the left-right part is associated with the given information, a starting point for the message to the viewers. The right side contains the new information for the sake of which the visual message has been composed. The visual information presented at the top is more ideal, containing a kind of "promise". The images on the bottom illustrate more specific information. The centre visual area focuses on some key information, whereas the margins are subservient to the centre (ibid., pp. 194–200). Salience is marked by visual clues such as size, tonal and colour contrast, placement in the visual field, perspective, etc. (ibid., pp. 201–203). Framing consists in the way of the visual elements' connection or disconnection by lines, shapes, or empty spaces.

Finally, a brief note must be added on the relevance-theory approach, which is one of the key frameworks for the present study. At its core lies the principle of optimal relevance, according to which information processing is geared toward achieving the best balance between processing effort and positive cognitive effects. According to this principle, an ostensive stimulus must (a) be relevant enough to justify the audience's processing effort, and (b) be consistent with the communicator's abilities and intentions (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 612). In political logos, ostensive stimuli rely primarily on visual components, either to foreground a central idea (i.e., produce a strong positive cognitive effect) or to guide interpretive effort (i.e., reduce cognitive load).

Due to their salience, ostensive stimuli attract cognitive attention and prompt the viewer to generate interpretive hypotheses that reconcile potential contradictions between verbal and visual features. In line with the presumption of optimal relevance, such efforts should be "rewarded" with positive cognitive effects – e.g., the construction of new knowledge about the party's values, conceptual clarification, or the recognition of implicit connections between ideas.

The logo is processed on two interconnected levels: explicature and implicature, with mutual adjustment according to the viewer's expectations of relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, p. 182; Kravchenko, 2025). Explicature involves resolving ambiguities, identifying referents, and integrating contextual elements that are pragmatically implied but not overtly

stated. This provides the foundation for contextual implications and other cognitive effects (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, pp. 176–193). The viewer subsequently formulates hypotheses about the implied premises, which support the inference of the implied conclusions (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 621). These conclusions may vary in strength, resulting in strong implicatures (explicitly intended by the communicator and easily accessible to the viewer) and weak implicatures (less central, more interpretatively open). According to the communicative principle of relevance, the viewer expects the slogan's relevance to align with the promotion of the party's ideas and goals, while the communicator's intention is for the viewer to infer precisely these meanings.

3. Methods and material

The research material includes two logos of Ukrainian political parties that had a pro-Russian orientation and now have ceased to exist. The analysis focuses on the correlation between verbal and visual pragmatics and is conducted in four main stages:

1. The first stage involves a review of theoretical concepts and approaches related to the pragmatics of logos in the context of multimodal semiotics.

2. The second stage centres on the pragmatic interpretation of the slogans, with particular attention to: (a) illocutionary force and indicators (where available) of compliance or non-compliance with felicity conditions, and (b) observance or flouting of Gricean cooperative maxims, which trigger the derivation of discursive implicatures.

This stage draws on explanatory tools from speech act theory (following Searle, 1969), primarily concerning the felicity conditions of acts, namely: directives require the preparatory condition (the speaker believes the hearer can perform the act) and the sincerity condition (the speaker wants the hearer to perform the act). Commissives (e.g., promises, vows) require the preparatory condition of the speaker's ability to act. Expressives depend primarily on the sincerity condition (the speaker genuinely feels the expressed emotion). Grice's (1975) taxonomy of maxims is also used, including maxims (a) of quantity: be as informative as required; (b) of quality: do not say what you believe to be false; (c) of relation: be relevant, coherent and cohesive, stay on topic; (d) of manner: avoid obscurity and ambiguity. Grice (1975, pp. 45–47) thought that implicatures arise by flouting maxims (p. 49). Flouting implies a deliberate breach aimed at triggering specific implicatures, when addressers are not deliberately trying to mislead their interlocutors but are intentionally not observing the maxims, in order for the interlocutors to understand another set of meaning (Levinson, 2008, p. 109). At the same time, the incongruities observed in the analysed political logos, which stem from the lack of coherence between visual and verbal elements, often undermine the intended implicature meanings. This complicates the inferential process, prompting the viewer to engage in subsequent cognitive processing to resolve the ambiguities.

3. At the third stage, the pragmatic meanings identified in the slogans are examined within the visual context of the logos through the lens of optimal relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, 1995). The analysis considers various cognitive effects: (a) contextual implications from verbal-visual correlation; (b) strengthening of existing assumptions; (c) contradiction of assumptions; (d) elimination of assumptions. Ostensive stimuli (Wilson & Sperber, 2004, p. 612) – such as ambiguous visual cues – initiate interpretive processes requiring confirmation or rejection by the viewer. For instance, thin italic letters in a party name may iconically suggest uncertainty, which contrasts with a slogan promising stability – producing semantic incoherence. In contrast, if the slogan promotes innovation, such typography may iconically support the message.

This stage also incorporates visual grammar analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), attending to ideational, interactive, and compositional meanings through elements such as colour saturation, shape and size harmony, contrast, background elaboration, scene framing, and brightness.

4. In the final stage, the results are interpreted in terms of optimal relevance – or insufficient relevance – of the logo, and the extent to which it supports or undermines the intended political message. It is important to note that these stages are not rigidly sequential, as real-time perception of logos often involves recursive or parallel inferencing. The process may begin with the verbal anchor – the slogan – and then draw in visual context to elaborate or revise the emerging interpretation.

4. Results and discussion

The multimodal pragmatics of the logo in its verbal-visual correlative aspect is analysed based on two models of analysis, namely, sequential and simultaneous analysis of the verbal and visual modes. Both models led to similar conclusions.

4.1. Logo 1: multifaceted pragmatics in sequential relations

4.1.1. Verbal code: pragmatics of infelicity and ambiguity

Fig 1. Слов'яни всіх країн, єднайтеся! (Slavs Of All Countries, Unite!)

Соціал-патріотична асамблея слов'ян (Ukr. Slavs Social-Patriotic Assembly).

An analysis of the slogan as a speech act reveals that, although it includes the formal indicators of directive illocutionary force, it does not fully meet the felicity conditions required for such acts. As a result, it functions as an infelicitous directive. Let us demonstrate this through a sequential verbal and visual analysis of the logo's pragmatics.

Grammatically, the imperative mood and the exclamation mark clearly signal a direct directive – an explicit call to action aimed at the addressee. To some extent, the slogan also aligns with certain felicity conditions of directives. These include the assumption that the action benefits the addressee, and that the speaker genuinely wants the action to be performed. These assumptions are supported by the collective address "Slavs", which evokes a shared ethnic or cultural identity, and by the emphatic punctuation. This appeal to commonality implies a unifying purpose, potentially in response to a perceived threat or shared challenge.

The slogan's directness can also be viewed through the lens of Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of the bald-on-record strategy – a directive act that is unmitigated yet not face-threatening. This is justified when (a) there is a strong sense of shared identity (as implied by "Slavs") and (b) urgency is conveyed (through the exclamation and imperative structure).

However, a closer examination of the felicity conditions indicates that the directive fails to function effectively. Specifically, it does not meet the preparatory conditions: (a) the speaker must have the authority to request the action, and (b) the addressee must be able to carry it out. The phrase "Slavs of all countries" is so broad and abstract that it lacks a clear referent: although political party slogans typically address national voters, this one refers to an international group – "Slavs of all countries". This vagueness undermines both the speaker's authority and the feasibility of the directive. The ambiguity surrounding the addressee and the questionable authority of the speaker (regarding the feasibility of his call for the unification of the Slavs of all countries) diminish the slogan's illocutionary effect. The failure to satisfy preparatory conditions ultimately disrupts the essential condition of a successful directive – namely, that the addressee is motivated to act.

In addition to the speech act method, the relevance-theory analysis also reveals that the slogan functions as a suboptimal ostensive stimulus – failing to deliver a balance between communicative effort and cognitive effect. In the context of a political logo, the slogan must operate as an ostensive stimulus – a communicative act designed to attract attention and convey the speaker's intention to be understood. However, the degree to which the stimulus achieves optimal relevance is debatable.

On the explicature level, the processing of the slogan should be aimed at resolving ambiguity. However, the scope of Slavs remains vague – does it refer to ethnic Slavs worldwide, all Slavic nations, or some ideological community? The same goes for referential assignment: the addressee "Slavs of all countries" lacks a pragmatic anchor in a concrete socio-political context, as well as enrichment through pragmatic inference: the imperative "Unite!" is

enriched by context-dependent assumptions – possibly implying political mobilization, cultural solidarity, or nationalistic ideology. However, due to the lack of specificity, these assumptions remain weakly communicated.

Thus, the explicature remains underdetermined, and the audience must make a cognitive effort to assign coherent meaning, which risks violating the principle of least effort central to relevance processing.

On the implicature level, the slogan gives rise to several weak implicatures, including: an implied premise: "Slavs are currently disunited or under threat"; a potential conclusion: "therefore, unity is necessary for their survival or empowerment"; a further implication: "the party proposing this slogan represents the unifying force or solution." However, these implicatures require considerable inferential effort from the audience. This may lead to communicative failure or misinterpretation, especially among addressees not ideologically aligned or not identifying with the ethnonational framing of "Slavs". As a result, a special role in the cognitive processing of the logo belongs to the visual mode of the logo.

4.2. Visual mode pragmatics

The visual component of the logo operates as a complex ostensive stimulus, aimed at directing the viewer's attention. Through its visual contrasts – colour, form, symbol, and composition – it generates semantic incongruities that weaken the verbal directive "Slavs of All Countries, Unite!" The visual message flouts the Gricean maxim of manner at the levels of representational, interactive, and compositional meaning, thus prompting the search for contextual implicatures.

First, the logo flouts the maxim of manner at the level of compositional meaning – through the visual juxtaposition of incompatible symbols. The Ukrainian national emblem placed at the centre of the composition clearly references national identity. Its central position – part of the compositional structure – may suggest the leading or integrating role of the Ukrainian political party (as the logo's addresser) in uniting the Slavs. At the same time, the inclusion of the blue and yellow circle in the red background, evokes historical associations with Soviet supranational ideology, particularly the political idea of Slavic unity under Soviet control.

This incongruity flouts the supermaxim "be perspicuous" (avoid obscurity and ambiguity), as the ideological implication of the red background is not coherent with the national symbolism it encloses. This interacts with the interactive meaning carried by colour, most notably the stark contrast between the saturated red background surrounding the circle and the blue-yellow palette of the Ukrainian flag and emblem within the circle. The red, as a historically and mentally charged ostensive stimulus, evokes associations with Soviet-era supranational unity. This association clashes with the representation of national sovereignty conveyed by the emblem, thus creating semantic incongruity and pragmatic tension.

Thus, the visual components of the logo deliberately flout the maxim of manner, so that the addressee extracts the hidden meaning – the implicature that the unification of the Slavs is possible on the basis of Soviet political ideology.

In relevance-theory terms, inconsistencies in the visual message function as stimuli prompting inferential search for the communicator's meaning. On the explicature level, the viewer infers that the circle symbolizes unification, due to its shape and composition; that the central placement of the Ukrainian coat of arms implies a prominent role for Ukraine in this union; that colour coding signifies ideological positions: red as the symbolic colour of the Soviet legacy, blue/yellow as the marker of Ukrainian independence; that the circle within red suggests a tension between internal unity and imposition (external ideological pressure).

These explicitly visualized elements encoding ideational meaning are enriched pragmatically by context and encyclopaedic knowledge about the colour symbolism and historical associations. Yet, the incoherence between them obstructs a unified explicature: is Ukraine leading the union, protected by it, or being absorbed into a red-coded supranational construct?

The discursive implicatures arise through the interpretive tension among visual cues:

Weak implicature 1: the slogan and red background imply ideological unity reminiscent of Soviet-style collectivism.

Weak implicature 2: the Ukrainian emblem at the centre counters this interpretation with a nationalist or identity-preserving interpretation.

Strong implicature (by contextual inference): the logo attempts to appeal to two ideologically incompatible audiences – those who support national identity and those nostalgic for Soviet-era supra-nationalism.

These implicatures rely heavily on the viewer's background assumptions. The mutual adjustment between explicature and implicature is cognitively costly and unstable. The contrast in colour codes of interactive meaning requires additional cognitive efforts from the audience to weigh contradictory premises (e.g., Ukraine leads the union vs Ukraine is being subsumed into a red mental structure).

This ambiguity in the visual message undermines communicative efficiency and correlates with the infelicity condition of the accompanying verbal directive act, expressed by the slogan, because the visual content does not establish a coherent or credible rationale for the basis of unification that the directive calls for.

The visual logo fails to achieve optimal relevance due to the incompatibility of its visual codes and the ambiguity of its ideological message. As with the verbal slogan, the visual message ultimately exposes the pragmatic and ideological incoherence of the unification call, undermining the felicity of the speech act and diminishing its persuasive potential. The viewer is forced to resolve referential ambiguities (e.g., the central emblem implies Ukraine, but the red background broadens the ideological scope) while simultaneously hypothesizing

contextual premises such as "unification in the post-Soviet space may still be ideologically relevant" or "national leadership is compatible with supranational identity".

Thus, the logo's design strategically activates representational, interactive, and compositional meanings, but also introduces discrepancy among them, which in turn functions as an ostensive stimulus. This discrepancy invites the viewer to engage in relevance-guided inferential work to extract the communicator's underlying intention – namely, to promote a vision of unity that symbolically merges national sovereignty with a broader, ideologically coloured supranational project.

4.3. Logo 2: multifaceted pragmatics in synchronized complementary framework

The second logo flouts the maxim of manner due to the incongruence between the visual elements, as well as between these elements and the concepts of national unity and development expressed by the slogan. From the perspective of relevance theory, this incongruence triggers a more effortful inferential process in the viewer, who must resolve the tension between visual cues and verbal content in search of optimal relevance.

Fig 2. Сильні регіони! Міцна держава! Заможні люди! (Strong regions! Strong state! Wealthy people!)

The maxim of manner is flouted through the ambiguous layout, where the background and foreground meanings clash, creating obscurity instead of clarity. In particular, at the compositional level, the map of Ukraine – an icon symbolizing statehood and national integrity – is markedly smaller and relegated to the background, both in terms of spatial placement (right-hand corner) and graphic salience (tonal contrast, reduced scale). In contrast, the name of the political party – "Party of Regions" – is rendered in large capital letters, centrally positioned, and visually dominant. This composition creates a clear Given – New structure, as defined in the grammar of visual design: the right-hand background (New) holds the map, while the centre (Given/Theme) prioritizes the party's name. This is not consistent with compositional expectations, as new, important information (national unity) is visually marginalized.

This asymmetry draws attention away from the state symbol and toward the party's name, which contradicts the apparent goal of affirming national integrity, expressed by the slogan and the ideological implication of the background map and the inscription "Ukraine", both of which connote the broader civic entity the party claims to represent. The ambiguity of the visual message – the visual prominence of the party's name vs the image of the state, marginal and tiny in size – is deliberately aimed at generating the implicature intended by the addresser that only regional power (under the auspices of the party) is capable of ensuring a transition to a powerful state.

At the same time, the derivation of such an implicit meaning is undermined by further compositional cues that contribute to the ideational incoherence, which arises from the disjunction between the symbolic function of the map and its visual treatment. The country map is placed in the right-hand background of the layout and rendered in two sharply contrasting colours: saturated light yellow and saturated dark blue. These contrasts create a visual focal that iconically connote fragmentation – division within the state – an implication at odds with the slogan's declared values. In addition, the idea of decentralization stems from the order of elements in the slogan – STRONG REGIONS! POWERFUL STATE! WEALTHY PEOPLE! The first structural part of the slogan is "Strong regions!" instead of "Powerful state". By foregrounding "strong regions," the slogan implies a transition from regional power to powerful state, yet the visual representation undermines this by minimizing the symbol of the state.

From a relevance-theory perspective, the viewer is confronted with competing sets of assumptions: one supporting a strong, united country (as promised in the slogan), the other suggesting regional fragmentation (as implied by visual form). The principle of relevance predicts that the viewer will attempt to reconcile this contradiction by deriving implicatures consistent with the broader sociopolitical context, e.g., a latent emphasis on regional autonomy over central statehood. This interferes with the implicature intended by the slogan – that "strong regions lead to a strong state," suggesting instead that regional strength may come at the cost of national unity.

The illocutionary force of the slogan is also ambiguous. The slogan – STRONG REGIONS! POWERFUL STATE! WEALTHY PEOPLE! – is structured as a tripartite exclamatory sequence, designed to convey either a commissive act (a promise to ensure strong regions, a powerful state, and prosperity) or an expressive act (a passionate declaration of values). Expressive illocution is marked with three exclamatory marks in three expressive stylistically connoted nominative sentences.

For the commissive illocution, a key felicity condition is the perceived ability of the speaker – the party – to fulfil its promise. On the one hand, the slogan implies an implication based on thematic-rhematic relations: "Strong regions!" mean "strong Ukraine". To strengthen the above inference, implying subject-predicate relationships, the visual area of the logo is

expected to reproduce thematic-rhematic relationships of the slogan. However, visual thematic-rhematic articulation reproduces the verbal one only at the level of compositional (and not ideational) meaning – the Party's name is placed in the left, while the country name and its map are situated on the right. Due to its "rhematic" (predicate) position in the visual space, the right part associated with the idea of the "statehood" should play a decisive role in maintaining inference ("Strong regions are the key to a strong country"), on which the main felicity condition for the commissive speech act (here – the party's ability to make a strong country) and, accordingly, its illocutionary force are based. Yet the right-side rhematic elements, which should signal importance, are visually diminished, thus diminishing the illocutionary force of the promise; the compositional meaning conveyed by the map's small size and fragmented colour scheme (saturated yellow against dark blue) connotes disunity, invoking the idea of internal division or decentralization. These features iconically oppose the slogan's promise of a cohesive, strong state.

In the case of expressive illocution, the visual mode does not support the sincerity condition as the basic felicity conditions of expressive acts. Modality cues in the visual design – such as the cool, unmodulated blue palette and the impersonal tone of white capital letters (colours often perceived as emotionally neutral or cold), suggest low interpersonal engagement. In terms of visual grammar, these features correspond to low modality. This visual austerity may cast doubt on the sincerity of the party's emotional investment in the message, thus diminishing the expressive force of the act.

Overall, the viewer is presented with a set of partially contradictory ostensive stimuli, requiring greater inferential effort to derive coherent meaning. Rather than strengthening the message intended by a slogan, the visual elements generate weak implicatures that may undermine its persuasive force and cast doubt on the addresser's capability and sincerity. The analysis shows that while the slogan aims to communicate strength, unity, and prosperity, the logo's visual design introduces dissonant cues that obstruct optimal relevance and increase the risk of unintended interpretations – such as an association with decentralization, division, or unreliability.

5. Conclusions

This paper has attempted to integrate research tools from relevance theory, speech act theory, the Gricean cooperative principle, and the grammar of visual design to develop a multimodal pragmatic approach to political logos. The findings show that both verbal and visual components of a logo can function as ostensive stimuli that prompt cognitive efforts toward interpretation and relevance assessment.

Our analysis reveals that political logos can contain incongruities both within and between regimes that trigger the viewer's inferential mechanisms. These include: (a) discrepancies between the formal indicators of illocutionary force in verbal slogans and their felicity

conditions, which may be undermined by vague reference or contradictory visual cues; (b) discrepancies within the visual mode itself, between ideational, interactive, and compositional meanings, or between the elements of each of the visual layers, or between these visual layers and the verbal message; (c) inconsistencies between visual representation and the concept implied in the slogan.

Conflicting ostensive stimuli complicate the inferential process, requiring the viewer to infer contextual assumptions, resolve ambiguities, and construct hypotheses about weak and strong implicatures. The result may be a reinterpretation of party values or goals, although such effects are not always in line with the communicator's intentions, including those expressed by implicatures triggered by intentional flouting of maxims. In this way, dissonance between modes may disrupt optimal relevance and result in unintended interpretations.

In sum, political logos operate through a dynamic interplay of verbal and visual modes. When the interaction of these modes is incongruent or ambiguous, it may diverge from expectations of relevance and the cooperative principle, leading to optional interpretations. The design of political logos must take this into account.

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