

Constructing “King Babar”: A Multimodal Analysis of Babar Azam Fans’ Posts on Social Media

Tooba Kiran¹ Hafsah Ghias² Saqib Aziz³

ABSTRACT: This research aims to explore the acknowledgement given by fans of the Ex-Captain of the Pakistani Cricket Team, Babar Azam. The digital platform this study will be using is “X”. This study has chosen tweets of multiple accounts by purposive sampling. 6 tweets have been taken from X in the span of 2023 for this purpose. The data is analyzed qualitatively, and the framework employed for this research is Multimodal, proposed by Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar, which provides an accurate description of the replicating meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning of picture conversation and is also applicable to the analysis of X discourse. This study discusses how various symbolic elements communicate with one another in order to create an entire discourse with linguistic signs, such as the use of certain adjectives, angles, and colors, and then express additional interpersonal interactive meaning. The importance of this study resides not just in its attention on cricket sensation Babar Azam, but also in its methodological creativity. The study goes beyond the typical analysis of text by including Kress and Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar paradigm. This enables a more sophisticated comprehension of how fans use visual components such as angles, colors, and emoticons to create and convey an idealized picture of their star. The findings suggest that through the utilization of such linguistic signs, the fans have glamorized the image of Babar Azam. Along with that, the findings also suggest that visual grammar is viable and practical for analyzing multimodal X posts. The backdrop and content of X conversation may be successfully reinforced and clarified, and it is critical to increase viewers' capacity to interpret tweets.

KEYWORDS: Multimodal Analysis, Babar Azam, Cricket, Social Media Platforms, X, Tweets

¹ M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: tubakiran27@gmail.com

² M.Phil. Scholar, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: hafsaghias237@gmail.com

³ Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: saqib@bzu.edu.pk

Corresponding Author: Saqib Aziz

✉ saqib@bzu.edu.pk

Introduction

Cricket is a deep-rooted sport in the hearts of Pakistani people, and the people express their love for this sport via many online digital platforms. It is only very rarely that we see stars being born. The star we shall throw light on is none other than Babar Azam, the world's No. 1 ODI Batter, the ex-Captain of the Pakistan Cricket Team. He is more than a batter; he is an artist who creates miracles on the canvas of the field with his bat (Express News Service, 2023b). To properly comprehend Babar's skills, we must look at the set of skills that differentiates him. Babar's cover drives are works of art, a flawless display of time and precision. Babar

doesn't just score runs; he builds them from the ground up, brick by laborious brick. He examines the bowlers with the deliberation of a detective, forecasting their strokes and analyzing their weaknesses. His shot selection exemplifies discipline and precision, with no missed strokes and a systematic strategy to the inevitable: a mountain of runs (Babar Azam Is No Less Than Don Bradman: Ramiz Raja, [2023](#)).

You might say that the name Babar Azam is significant because of his quality, dedication, and amazing insight. On the other hand, he has led Pakistan to great heights in cricket and inked himself into the annals of time as one of the world's most prolific batters. He earned every bit of his meteoric rise to stardom through his dedication, innate skill, and devoted fan base. A biography of Babar Azam is now on its way to completion. Although young, Babar has made great strides that have placed him among the way-out-great. The monumental milestones he reaches and the records he shatters are just the start of an epic adventure. We don't know if he will become more famous than Bradman, Tendulkar, and others, as he still is a young prodigy, but we do know one thing for sure: Babar Azam is well on his way to leaving his mark on the history books of cricket. And he is doing it one beautiful over at a time.

This research aims not only to analyze responses from fans on X but also to learn what draws them to admire Babar Azam so much and what kind of contact they have with him. By assessing followers' methods of contact with their favorite cricketing idol, text messages, photos, or smiles, we get to know their attitude towards the players. With the latest information on Babar Azam, X users can now be judged more accurately by followers. According to recent data from X, the network has 454 million active members, of which 82% are active mobile users, and receives over 1 billion unique monthly visitors (Twitter - Company, [2017](#)). X is the sixth largest social networking site among the population, according to a recent Pew Research Centre research. According to a survey, around 25% of individuals who use the internet also use X, with younger users being more involved on the platform than older ones (Greenwood et al., [2016](#)).

Owing to the expansion of online communities and electronic media, the way fans interact with athletes they like has changed dramatically. The fans of Babar Azam can contact him on X, a microblogging service that not only offers real-time feedback but is also a place to share thoughts, photographs, and feelings. The constant stream of tweets, running the gamut from true gratitude to humorous memes, lets us see just a bit of the love Babar Azam's fans have for him.

This study has conducted a multimodal analysis of fan tweets on X, hoping to excavate what kind of basic themes and attitudes arise from these communications. With textual content, imagery, and emoticons added together, the researcher has devoted herself to a comprehensive study of such a combination of elements. In these tweets, the fans' attitudes can be found out in the process. Such tweets make up for textual deficiencies yet do much more than that: they also give us a fuller look at how fans perceived. From the analysis of textual content, visual imagery, and emoticons used in these tweets, this study hopes to have a comprehensive understanding of fans' perspectives on Babar Azam's captaincy and batting, as well as his overall character as a man. In one sense, the results show how much the fans adore Babar Azam; on the other hand, they also give a vivid picture of his popularity as a national symbol of Pakistan, and in the international cricket world, expectations for him are even higher still.

Significance of the Study

The study is important for cricket fans and anyone interested in the complex dance between public opinion and online popularity. It also highlights how websites influence athlete appeal and how fans relate to their heroes through digital means. The study enhances our understanding of the unique circumstances that have contributed to the success of Pakistani cricket as well as the attractiveness of sports in the technological era. We obtain a vital understanding of modern fan psychology, virtual community dynamics, and the wider context of internet identity creation by analyzing how pictures and language interact on X to establish and glorify a sporting superstar. Ultimately, this research illuminates the power of fan-created narratives in shaping perceptions and fostering a sense of belonging in the digital age, offering valuable knowledge for athletes, sports organizations, and anyone navigating the ever-evolving world of online communities.

Research Questions

The following questions will be answered in this research article:

1. What kind of visual techniques do the fans use to glorify the image of Babar Azam?
2. How do creative fan-made images and edits on X contribute to shaping Babar Azam's public image and fan identity?

Research Objectives

- ▶ To uncover and deconstruct the graphical strategies supporters adopt to boost Babar Azam's popularity on X.
- ▶ To discover how fan-created images on X impact Babar Azam's public portrayal and help to establish an overall fan persona.

Delimitation

The delimitation of the current study is that this study has employed a multimodal framework of Kress and van Leeuwen to analyse the fan-made edits available on X only. The data used for this article spans the period 2023. A total of 6 tweets have been selected from 3 X accounts in this regard. The research is carried out to analyse the fan edits of Babar Azam only, and no other celebrity has been chosen.

Literature Review

Barthes (1977) was the first researcher to explore multimodal discourse, discussing the interplay between speech and picture in producing meaning. After decades of study, multimodal discourse examination has evolved into two major methods: the multimodal metaphor approach and the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) method. Forceville (1996) pioneered the multimodal metaphor method by analyzing multimodal conversation from an intellectual standpoint. Meanwhile, Halliday (1994) introduces SFL as an interpretation of the operational link between speech and the framework of society.

Halliday (1985) used the expression "multimodality" at the Sydney School of Semiotics to refer to the multiple methods of inquiry that may be applied to semiotically inferred entities and words. Furthermore, multimodality has its origins in the Prague School, which began with linguistics and gradually expanded to include art and theatrical analysis. Furthermore, these methodologies originated in linguistics, and as a result,

they were used by many researchers to analyze antique artworks and pictures, analyzing clothes as a repository of knowledge for an individual's position, age, and religion, but also for era or incident, locations, motions, or activities (van Leeuwen, 2015: 448). As defined by Leeuwen (2015: 447), multimodality alludes to interpersonal features beyond speech, such as "voice, actions, visual expressions, or elements of presenting oneself." Multimodality refers to semiotic assessment methodologies, which imply semiotic modalities such as picture, sound, and speech for understanding generated accompanying multimedia innovation. Furthermore, Kress's (2012: 38) viewpoint on multimodality is an interdisciplinary topic that incorporates ideas and methodologies from several fields of inquiry.

According to Kress & Leeuwen (2006), every aspect of a multimodal text is ascribed with probable significance. They must collaborate to create value. According to Kress & Leeuwen (2006), using many semiotic patterns at the same time strengthens and completes what it means. Thus, linguistic and nonverbal language must be integrated to get the desired meaning and readily interpret the conversation. Multimodality discourse analysis is an innovative approach in the field of discourse analysis that expands the investigation of spoken language to include additional tools such as visuals, technical symbolic language, motion, sounds, and audio (O'Halloran, 2011). Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) examines how interpretation is formed through the incorporation of many channels for interaction rather than merely speech. For instance, the usage of online platforms helps people to recognize the mix of listening, movement, sounds, visuals, and engagement to produce meaning. Thus, it may aid in the interpretation of online communication from both language and nonlinguistic perspectives.

When it comes to online communities, X is one of the most well-known platforms in the entire globe. X is classified as microblogging since it can offer information rapidly and effectively. A microblog is a platform in which the dimension of the post is limited. In 2006, the three co-founders of X, Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone, launched a social media platform with the ability to submit a brief post with a restricted number of characters. X, as one of the microblogging platforms, allows users to compose messages for a tweet or status update of not more than 140 characters (Zarrella, 2010). This online networking platform lets individuals modify their status with a restricted number of characters or words, referred to as "tweets," which are visible to anybody who has elected to become a follower of that individual. Furthermore, followers can "like" or "retweet" the posted status. X clients use the tweet section to send textual texts, images, GIFs, or videos. Tweets enable individuals to openly exchange data with the general population.

According to the description aforementioned, there are various past studies that use multimodal analysis of online networks. To begin, Baykal (2016) concentrated on the Multimodal Synthesis of Female Appearance in Mascara Advertising on TV Commercials. Second, Meitafasiana (2017) used Multimodal Analysis to investigate The Notion of Perfection in Rahasia Gadis' Instagram Profile. Third, Ivany's (2018) work, Multimodal Analysis on Awkarin Instagram Profile. Brady (2015) conducted an experiment on A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Female K-POP Music Videos. Fifth, Pratiwy & Wulan (2018) explored Multimodal Discourse Analysis in a Dettol TV ad. The contrast between those prior investigations and the current one is that I refocus on the X app as the topic of the investigation, whereas earlier examinations utilized other digital networking platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TV advertisements.

Since the study's focus is the relationship between words and other styles, the present investigation employs a multimodal technique to analyze different tweets relating to the Ex-Captain of the Pakistan Cricket Team, Babar Azam, whose content is an amalgam of visual pictures and spoken language. Therefore, the photos and phrases in such X accounts will be examined utilizing those ideas and aspects to fully grasp what was meant by them. Kress & Leeuwen (2006) used Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics notion in creating the grammar of visual layout and characterizing the three metafunctions in an illustration picture. Halliday's idea focuses better on verbal examination, but the spoken method must be comprehended by considering all of the sign techniques that surface in daily life. Thus, this study has selected to explore multimodality on X using the associated hypotheses since both hypotheses are equipped to analyze how the two modalities operate collectively to generate the entire significance for interpreting the published tweet.

There has been no research conducted on any cricketer in the Pakistani context. This study will focus on the fan-made edits made by the fans on the X application for their beloved cricketer, Babar Azam. The framework employed for this research is Kress & Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar approach to analyze visuals, colors, angles, text, as well as the whole concept behind a single tweet.

Methodology

Multimodal discourse analysis is the exploration of many symbolic structures within a piece of literature that transcends many of the limitations of traditional discourse analysis. I used the "Multimodality" framework from discourse analysis as the foundation for this current investigation. The qualitative method of description is used here to undertake a multimodal examination of fan-made edits of Babar Azam posted on X in the form of tweets. The goal of utilizing a qualitative method is to articulate the reality underlying the manifestations related to fan-made edits analysis. The purpose of this research is to gain a thorough grasp of the visual and linguistic meanings of tweets posted in favor of Babar Azam. Multimodality describes a method for analyzing a text with multiple viewpoints by employing a variety of analytical instruments. Thus, in this study, the multimodal approach is employed to examine the many ways of image representation on X.

The current study is classified as a descriptive qualitative investigation, as it has analyzed all the tweets in great detail. As a result, the primary tool included was the person conducting the study herself, because she carried out all processes, including gathering information, inquiry, and examination. An additional study tool that was part of the evaluation procedure was fan-made photos acquired from the X site.

The main data of this research were the fan-made edits made for the Ex-Captain of Pakistan Cricket Team, Babar Azam, chosen from various X accounts. The tweets that were chosen in the analysis were the tweets where fans glorified and appreciated Babar Azam. Some tweets also gave us the impression that much more is expected from Babar Azam in the field of cricket. Only the tweets that were posted during the year 2023 were chosen for visual as well as linguistic analysis.

The goal of this research is to evaluate fan-made edits of Babar Azam, the former captain of the Pakistan cricket team, and how they express the fans' love, aspirations, and goals for him. In order to collect the data, the researcher followed some steps. First of all, she installed the X application from the Play Store. Then, she created my account on the application. Thirdly, she searched for well-known X accounts that admire Babar Azam the most and post in his favor. Fourthly, she downloaded all the relevant fan-made edits in the form of

screenshots (attached in the Analysis Section). Fifthly, she used purposive sampling to choose 6 tweets that featured fan-made edits of Babar Azam. She picked the tweets with the most likes, retweets, and comments because they demonstrated the appeal and impact of the fan-made edits. She also made certain that the tweets were posted in 2023, as this was the year of her study. She preserved the tweets as well as the edits as screenshots for additional research.

Analysis

In this section, the researcher will analyze the fan-made edits of Babar Azam in detail, employing Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). The theoretical framework this study has chosen is that of Kress & Leeuwen (2006), visual grammar. This study will be analyzing 6 tweets posted by 3 different X accounts. The research will throw detailed light on certain elements of MDA, such as the content, context, style, structure, representational, interactive, and compositional meaning of the image.

Figure 1



Figure 1 shows Babar Azam in action with a quote overlaying the image. His action pose suggests movement and achievement. The quote *"He's like a drug, he's a technician"* is in red text, which draws the viewer's attention and emphasizes its importance, and serves as the focal point of the figure, as well as indicating high praise for Babar's skills, and adds context to his skills and impact in the game. The player's action pose suggests movement and achievement, while the quote adds context to his skills and impact in the game. Fig. 1 is a tweet from a user named "BABAR NATION", which includes text praising a cricket player named Babar. The tweet says, *"Some players are fans' favorite, but he is the commentators' favorite. "BABAR ERAAA IS BEAUTIFULLLLL MANN"*. The embedded picture within the tweet shows Babar Azam in white attire playing on the field. The white attire is proof of the fact that it is a Test Match. The background shows part of a cricket field with boundary ropes visible, providing additional context to the image. There are social media icons indicating 14 retweets, 105 comments, and 901 likes, also suggesting that the image has been well-received by the public. The detailed analysis is as follows:

- ▶ **Content:** The figure's content conveys the point of view that the tweeter wants to transmit to the audience. In this example, the message is that Babar is a terrific cricket player who has wowed the commentators with his abilities. Text, emoticons, and an athletic picture of Babar convey the topic.
- ▶ **Context:** The figure's context is the setting and backdrop that impact the image's creation and perception. In this example, the setting is cricket fans and the celebration of Babar's brilliance. The use of cricket-related phrases like fans, commentators, and era, as well as the national flag of Pakistan and the green color scheme, identifies the setting. The image's tone and style, which are casual and joyful, are also influenced by the environment.
- ▶ **Structure:** The structure of the picture in Figure 1 refers to how the image's parts are structured and organized. The organization in this situation is hierarchical, with Babar as the centerpiece and the quote as additional evidence. The arrangement also follows the typical English reading order of left-to-right and top-to-bottom. The format also provides a distinction between the written content and the visual element, as well as between the picture's actual and symbolic components.
- ▶ **Style:** The figure's style is the combination of linguistic and visual elements that produce a certain impact and effect on viewers. The style in this example is colloquial and humorous, with emoticons, abbreviations, and signs of punctuation used to express sentiment and emphasis. Exaggeration and humor are also used in the approach, which portrays Babar as both a drug addict and a techie. Color and type are also used to create a feeling of shared identity in the design, with green and white as the dominating colors and a bold and wide font for the text.
- ▶ **Representational Meaning:** The figure's representational significance is the way it portrays reality and the interaction between the individuals. The graphic displays Babar as an energetic, skillful athlete who is praised by the critics in this scenario. The remark "He's like a drug, he's a technician" alludes to his addictive watching sensation and technical abilities in cricket. The picture also indicates that the tweeter and the audience approve of Babar's batting skills.
- ▶ **Interactive Meaning:** The interactive meaning of the image in Fig. 1 is the way that the image establishes a relationship between the producer and the viewer. In this case, the interaction is established through the X interface, allowing likes, comments, and retweets. The tweet text engages viewers by expressing admiration for Babar's skills and inviting them to join the celebration. The image also positions the viewers to look at Babar from a slightly lower angle, emphasizing his elevated status and power.
- ▶ **Compositional Meaning:** The compositional meaning of the image in Fig. 1 is the way that the image organizes the information and creates a coherent whole. In this case, the composition follows the principles of salience, framing, and alignment. Salience refers to the relative prominence of the elements in the image. In this case, the most salient element is the action shot of Babar with the bold overlaid text drawing attention to his praised skills. This is supported by additional textual elements expressing admiration. Framing refers to the use of boundaries or separations between the elements in the image. In this case, the framing is minimal, indicating a close connection between the elements. Alignment refers to the arrangement of the elements along horizontal or vertical lines. In this case, the alignment is mostly horizontal, creating a sense of balance and stability.

Figure 2



This photo in Fig. 2 shows Babar Azam in an energetic position with an orange foam roller. He's outfitted darkly athletically. With purple tones and abstract shapes, the landscape is vivid and colorful. The image has white text at the bottom that says "HEADED TOWARDS PERFECTION." A logo appears to be for an athletic or gymnasium firm or organization in the top right corner, although it is hard to comprehend. Because these components are interdependent, the image sends a narrative of progress, success, and growth via a healthy lifestyle. The guy in the shot, Babar Azam, employs a foam roller to improve his physical health and wellness, while the caption "HEADED TOWARDS PERFECTION" emphasizes the importance of striving for excellence and attaining one's goals.

Here is a brief analysis of the image based on these metafunctions:

- ▶ **Representational:** Babar Azam's illustration displays a person using a foam roller, emphasizing the topic of wellbeing and physical exercise. The phrase "HEADED TOWARDS PERFECTION" reflects a focused and aspirational mindset. The logo in the top right corner shows that the picture is part of an item or a company's advertising effort.
- ▶ **Interactive:** The photograph in Fig. 2 is shot from a low perspective, making the subject look bigger and more prominent. The individual is likewise gazing down, establishing a power imbalance between themselves and the audience. The picture invites the spectator to admire or envy the individual rather than empathize with them. The content is written in a huge, strong typeface that commands the viewer's attention and cooperation. The logo is modest and unobtrusive, emphasizing that the brand or product is not the image's major emphasis.
- ▶ **Compositional:** The artwork employs a dramatic and contrasted color palette of purple and blue to convey energy and enthusiasm. The white dashed lines establish a boundary around the figure,

emphasizing it as the image's focal point. The phrase is put at the bottom of the picture to create harmony and proportion with the person. The logo is positioned in the top right corner, following the viewer's reading orientation.

Figure 3



Figure 3 is a screen capture of an individual's tweet. The tweet carries a message of adoration and longing for Babar Azam, a cricketer. The image below shows a cricket player wearing a white jersey and a pink cap. As seen by his attire and the fuzzy green background that resembles grass, he appears to be on the field during a game. The player's climb from the slums of Lahore to big successes in cricket is described in the tweet. It also indicates appreciation and affection for the player's dedication and achievements, while simultaneously acknowledging his approaching retirement.

- ▶ **Representational:** Babar Azam is seen in the illustration sporting a pink hat and a white shirt with an emblem on it. The backdrop text describes his accomplishments and plans for retirement. According to the narrative, the individual is a great cricket player named Babar Azam, popularly known as Badshah (King).
- ▶ **Interactive:** A close-up view is used in the photograph, making the individual look larger and more prominent. In addition, the subject is gazing away from the camera, conveying a sense of alienation and disdain. The picture invites the spectator to marvel at or envy the individual rather than empathize with them. The language is written in a courteous and formal tone, showing appreciation and gratitude on behalf of the user. Anyone who follows the person or looks for the associated hashtags will see the tweet.

- **Compositional:** The image has a clean and straightforward arrangement, which creates an impression of concentration and clarity. The individual is the sole element in the photograph, taking up the majority of the area. The color palette is predominantly pink and white, representing the person's headgear and shirt. The phrase is positioned at the top of the image, contrasting and emphasizing the figure.

Figure 4



Figure 4 shows a screenshot of two tweets.

The first tweet is by Babar Azam, a Pakistani cricketer who used to be the captain of the national team in all formats. The tweet announces his decision to step down as the captain of Pakistan's cricket team.

- He expresses gratitude and pride in serving the team and country.
- Mentions his commitment to continue representing Pakistan as a player.
- Thanks to the Pakistan Cricket Board for their trust.

The second tweet is by Ahmed, a user who responds to Babar's announcement.

- Ahmed suggests that public figures or heroes are often eventually disliked or hated by the people who once admired them.
- It implies a transient nature of public adoration and a cynical perspective on human nature.
- The symbolic significance of this graphic is centered on an X exchange in which Babar Azam, a professional cricketer, declares his resignation as Pakistan's captain in all formats. Ahmed reacts with a slightly pessimistic view of popular admiration, implying that the greats are frequently regarded with scorn.
- The content of Fig. 4 is a snapshot of a tweet that includes a quotation from another tweet. The tweet has text that quotes a sentence from the film *The Dark Knight*, which is about Batman and his archenemy, the Joker. The Joker says this to Batman, hinting that despite his noble actions, the people of Gotham will ultimately rebel against him. The tweet in question is from Babar Azam, who has

announced his retirement as captain of Pakistan's cricket team in all forms. He thanks the PCB and the supporters and pledges to continue performing for Pakistan with zeal.

- ▶ The artwork is mostly black and white; the black and white color scheme expresses gravity, drama, and grief. It also clashes with the blue symbols indicating the broad use and influence of tweets, as well as the green text displaying the names of individuals and usernames.

Figure 5

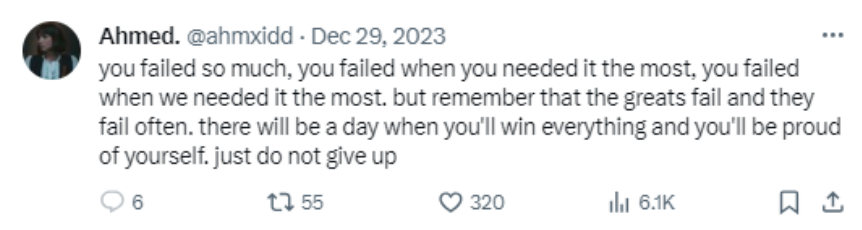


Figure 5 is a snapshot of a tweet from a user named Ahmed, in which he expresses his desire to overcome disappointment. The tweet recognizes the sorrow and sadness of loss while encouraging persistence by emphasizing that even outstanding individuals struggle. The tweet has received a lot of engagement, indicating that it resonated with many people who may have faced similar challenges or situations. The image also reflects the social and cultural context of X, where people share their thoughts, opinions, and emotions with others. The image may also appeal to the emotions of the viewers, especially those who can relate to the message of the tweet.

- **Content:** The content of Fig. 5 is the message that the tweeter wants to convey to the audience. In this case, the message is that failure is not the end, but a part of the journey to success. The content is expressed through verbal elements, such as textual elements. The word “you” is directed towards Babar Azam. In the year 2023, during the Asia Cup as well as the ODI World Cup, Babar Azam couldn't give his best in terms of batting. The tweet highlights the fact that Babar should never give up, as giving up is not even in the equation. The tweeter sends hope to all reading the tweet and conveys that one day he will shine like the brightest star he actually is.
- **Representational Meaning:** The image in Fig. 5 depicts the reality of failure and the relationship between the tweeter and the audience. The tweet text acknowledges the reality of failure, but also offers hope and encouragement. The tweet text also implies a positive evaluation of the audience by the tweeter, as well as a shared experience of failure and success.
- **Interactive Meaning:** The interaction is established through the X interface, allowing likes, comments, retweets, and quote tweets. The tweet text engages viewers by addressing them directly using “you” and inviting them to join the conversation. Fig. 5 also positions the viewers to look at the tweet text from a close distance, creating a sense of intimacy and involvement.
- **Compositional Meaning:** The composition reinforces the message of the tweet. The black text on a white background creates a stark and attention-grabbing contrast. The use of all lowercase letters gives the text a casual and intimate feel. Overall, the image's compositional meaning is one of directness, intimacy, and incompleteness. This aligns with the representational meaning of the tweet, which is a message of encouragement and support to Babar Azam, who has experienced failure. The image's

interactivity, through the affordances of the X platform, invites the viewer to engage with the message and share their own thoughts and experiences.

Figure 6



Figure 6 is a screenshot of two tweets, one quoting the other. The original tweet is from “Pakistan Cricket”, the official account of the Pakistan Cricket Board. It celebrates the achievement of @babarazam258, a Pakistani cricketer. It mentions that he received a special souvenir and cap on his 50th Test appearance, presented by @shani_official, another Pakistani cricketer and the captain of the Test Team. The quoted tweet is from a user named Ahmed, who expresses personal affection towards Babar Azam’s success. He uses the words *“his success always feels so personal”* and *“may he keep shining like a star”* to convey his admiration and support. He also uses a period at the end of his tweet, indicating a confident and assertive tone.

The embedded image shows two cricket players in the locker room, holding a special cap. They are wearing green jerseys with white pants, indicative of Pakistan’s national cricket team uniform. Cricket gear, including pads and gloves, can be seen in the background, stored neatly.

- ▶ **Representational Meaning:** The image in Fig. 6 depicts the reality of Babar’s feat and the relationship between the tweeter and Babar. The tweet text praises Babar’s feat, using the metaphor of “era” to indicate his dominance and influence. The players are seen in a festive mood, with one passing up a cap to another as a gesture of acknowledgment and thanks. The picture also suggests that the tweeter and the viewer both like Babar, as well as having an identical identity and fan base.
- ▶ **Interactive Meaning:** The interaction is established through the X interface, allowing likes, comments, retweets, and quote tweets. The tweet text engages viewers by addressing them directly using “@babarazam258” and inviting them to join the celebration.
- ▶ **Compositional Meaning:** The illustration shows a spirit of happiness and respect for Babar Azam’s successes, as he played his 50th Test match. The tweet overlay gives context for this information, and it also displays the response of another user who has an emotional attachment to the athlete. The image

also suggests a link between the two players in the shot, since one is the captain who gave the keepsake and cap to the other. The tweet overlay also connects the image with the textual information, creating a cohesive message. The two players in the photo are not framed by any physical separation, indicating a connection or relationship between them. They are also aligned horizontally, suggesting a symmetrical or equal status. The two players in the photo are the most salient elements, as they are positioned centrally and occupy a large portion of the image. They are also wearing green cricket uniforms, which contrasts with the white background and the blue tweet overlay.

Discussion

The use of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) and Kress & Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar to examine fan-made edits of Babar Azam demonstrated how supporters formed and conveyed their appreciation and love for the cricket star using numerous techniques and tools. My investigation yielded the following key outcomes:

- a) **Gaining an awareness of fan culture:** It clarifies how enthusiasts create meaning and show their adoration in virtual forums like X. It surpasses the analysis of texts by examining multimodal components, including text, images, and emoticons, to accurately represent the complexity and subtlety of fan conversation.
- b) **Image and Impact of Babar Azam:** The study shows how supporters present Babar Azam, emphasizing his regarded abilities, character, and nationalistic importance. This helps to clarify his public persona and level of influence in the sports world.
- c) **Cricket and Pakistani Identity:** The country's emblems and cricket jargon are used to illustrate how closely fandom, sports, and national identity are related in Pakistan. It illustrates how cricket provides a forum for exhibiting a sense of pride in one's country and identity.
- d) **Multimodality in Discourse:** The results highlight the significance of multimodality in meaning-making and provide backing for theoretical frameworks such as MDA and visual grammar. It illustrates how meaning is created not just by language but also by the interaction of emojis and visual components.

All things considered, the research offers insightful information on how fans use multimodal resources to create meaning and show their loyalty online. In the backdrop of Pakistan and cricket, it provides a greater knowledge of fan culture, sports popularity, and internet conversation.

Conclusion

The current research investigated multimodal fan reactions to Babar Azam, the former skipper of Pakistan's cricket team, on X, as well as how followers employ multiple verbal and visual cues to create and pass on a favorable and appealing image of their celebrity using Kress & Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar paradigm. According to the study, admirers show their love and support for Babar by reciting his successes, portraying him as a king, and utilizing emojis and colors. The study also demonstrated the applicability and implementation of visual grammar for analyzing multimodal X communications, since it gives a complete and systematic technique of identifying and assessing the representational, interactive, and compositional meanings of tweets. The research contributes to the existing literature on multimodal discourse analysis, fan

culture, and celebrity studies, as well as a better understanding of how social networking users develop and trade meaning over numerous platforms and media of communication.

This article also offers some future research possibilities. To begin, it would be fascinating to examine the differences between fan reactions to Babar Azam and those to other cricket players from various nations or regions, as well as to investigate how cultural and national elements impact multimodal fan discourse. Secondly, it would be interesting to investigate how Babar Azam interacts with his followers' tweets, as well as how he creates his own multimodal identity and presence on X. Thirdly, it would be good to undertake interviews or surveys with fans to learn more about their motives and perspectives, as well as interactions with Babar Azam and his tweets.

Future researchers can utilize different social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and many others, in order to conduct a similar study on Babar Azam. Future researchers can also employ the framework of Halliday (2004), that is, Systematic and Functional Linguistics. Since this study chose Babar Azam only, future investigators can conduct a study on other Cricketers of Pakistan as well. Along with that, this study chose the data that spanned the time span of 12 months, i.e., 2023. However, future researchers can go further back and select the data spanning more than just 12 months. Additionally, multiple methodologies and mode components may be applied for analyzing multimodal investigations.

References

- Babar Azam is no less than Don Bradman: Ramiz Raja. (2023, May 6). Cricket Pakistan. <https://cricketpakistan.com.pk/en/news/detail/babar-azam-is-no-less-than-don-bradman-ramiz-raj>
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image Music Text*. London: Routledge
- Baykal, N. (2016). Multimodal construction of female looks: An analysis of mascara advertisements. *Dilbilim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 27(2), 39-59. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/263977>
- Brady, C. K. (2015). A multimodal discourse analysis of female K-pop music videos. *College of Arts & Law, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT United Kingdom*.
- Express News Service. (2023b, June 14). ‘He’s that good’: Imran Khan believes Babar Azam will eclipse Virat Kohli. The Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/cricket/hes-that-good-imran-khan-believes-babar-azam-will-eclipse-virat-kohli-8662010/>
- Forceville, J. (1996). *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*. London: Routledge
- Greenwood, S., Perrin, A., & Duggan, M. (2016). Social media update 2016. https://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/11/10132827/PI_2016.11.11_Social-Media-Update_FINAL.pdf
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. (1st Ed) London
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London Edward Arnold.
- IVANY, N. N. (2018). Multimodal Analysis On Awkarin Instagram Account Undergraduate Thesis. [Doctoral dissertation]. Universitas Airlangga.
- Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Meitafasiana, T., & Ardaniah, V. (2017). *Multimodality Anaysis of Beauty Guidance in Rahasiagadis Account in Instagram*. [Doctoral dissertation]. Thesis. Surabaya: Airlangga Univeristy.
- O'Halloran, K. L. (2011). Multimodal Discourse Analysis. In: *Hyland K & Paltridge B. (Eds.), Companion to Discourse Analysis*. Pp. 120-137. London: Continuum.
- Pratiwy, D., & Wulan, S. (2018). Multimodal discourse analysis in Dettol Tv advertisement. *KnE Social Sciences*, 207-217.
- Twitter - Company. (2017). https://about.twitter.com/en_us.html
- Leeuwen, T. V. (2015). “Multimodality.” *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, Volume I and II, edited by Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton, and Deborah Schiffrin, Blackwell Publishers, Malden and Oxford.
- Zarella, D. (2010). *The Social Media Marketing Book (1st ed.)*. Canada: O'Reilly Media.