From Purple Shoes to a Fight Against Gender-Based Abuse: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of a Twitter Feminist Campaign in Argentina

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Background

- Ni Una Menos is a key political force in Argentine society in the fight for women's rights and against gender-based violence.

- A tweet posted in 2015 by Argentina radio reporter and journalist Marcela Ojeda initiated the ongoing movement, which was a response to the reporting on the discovery of the corpse of a 14 year old pregnant girl.

- The feminist movement has spread throughout Latin America and is an offshoot of #MeToo which emerged in 2006 and gained traction in the United States in relation to Harvey Weinstein allegations in 2017.

- Its dissemination is as a result of its use of social media and the formation of an online community.

- Twitter ranks in the top 5 for most used applications for social media in Argentina (Boczkowski and Mitchelstein, 2019).

- Twitter has many communication features with the '#' being the most prominent by helping to categorize, organize and promote tweets, encouraging contribution from users which has acted as a lightning rod for feminist activism campaigns.

Main Research Question

How the Ni Una Menos movement utilizes Twitter as a tool for feminist activism campaigns in Argentina, focusing on it's use of the hashtag #NiUnaMenos and the multimodal tweets associated with it

Design

- Critical Discourse Analysis is used to study "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Dijk, 2019, p.352).

- Multimodal discourse analysis examines the interplay of different modes such as text and visual where meaning is created through the interaction in a given context (Halliday, 1978)

- The year 2018 is the focus of this study due to it being a year of great salience in the movement's progression in relation to four key events: (1) The third anniversary of the annual Ni Una Menos march (June), (2) the abortion law not being passed (August), (3) Thelma Fardín sharing her account of alleged sexual assault (December) and (4) the implementation of the Micaela Law (December).

Method

- Images were analysed qualitatively in relation to both rhetoric and conceptual representation and their interaction with included text.

- This included analysing: the gaze of participants, angles, positioning, colour, symbolism and tone.

- A total of eight images were analysed chronologically, two for each event and containing the hashtag #NiunaMenos, providing a clear narrative of the organization by demonstrating the changing concentrations of the movement.

Sample of Tweets

June- Third Anniversary of the Annual March

August- Abortion Law not passed

December- Thelma Fardín

December- Micaela Law

Conclusion

- Combining text and images was functional in raising awareness about relevant topics and elucidating the movements demands through both narrative and conceptual representations.

- Images function as an invitation to the tweet, spreading a message in a way words cannot, facilitated by colour, angles, symbolism, gaze, and tone.

- Images are associated with power relations as they determine who is represented.

- Visual communication facilitated in uncovering ideologies.

- Verbal text functions as a manifestation of power and emphasises and clarifies messages.

- Visual images and verbal text coexist and integrate to accomplish the delivery of messages.

- Through this analysis, the multitude of issues that Ni Una Menos and its supporters attempt to contest in Argentina became evident.

References

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