

The Digital and Multimodal Turn in Eid Greetings: Reconfiguring the Meaning of Text in the 2026 Digital Eid al-Fitr Greeting

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the implications of digital communication in expanding the definition of text from linguistic and cultural studies perspectives, focusing on Eid al-Fitr greetings in 2026 as the object of analysis. Traditionally, text has been understood as a linear linguistic structure centered on verbal elements. However, the rapid development of digital technology has transformed communication practices into multimodal forms that integrate various semiotic resources, including visuals, colour, typography, layout, audio, and animation. This study employs a qualitative approach using Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) to investigate how meaning is constructed through the interaction of these semiotic modes in digital greeting messages. The findings reveal that text can no longer be confined to a purely verbal entity but must be understood as a complex and dynamic semiotic ensemble. Meaning is produced through the orchestration of multiple modes that function simultaneously and interdependently. Visual elements, such as religious symbols, colour schemes, and compositional design, play a dominant role in shaping audience interpretation and emotional engagement, often preceding verbal processing. Additionally, the study highlights the significant role of users within digital ecosystems as active producers (prosumers) who creatively combine semiotic resources to express religious identity, cultural values, and social relationships. Furthermore, digital Eid greetings function not only as religious expressions but also as social practices that maintain and strengthen interpersonal connections in virtual spaces. This transformation indicates a broader paradigm shift in communication, where texts become participatory, multimodal, and context-dependent. Consequently, this study contributes theoretically to the redefinition of text in the digital era and emphasizes the importance of multimodal approaches in analyzing contemporary communication practices.

Keywords: Multimodal Text, Digital Communication, Eid al-Fitr, Semiotic, Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Abstrak: Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti implikasi komunikasi digital dalam memperluas definisi teks dari perspektif studi linguistik dan budaya, dengan fokus pada ucapan selamat Idul Fitri tahun 2026 sebagai objek analisis. Secara tradisional, teks dipahami sebagai struktur linguistik linier yang berpusat pada unsur verbal. Namun, perkembangan pesat teknologi digital telah mengubah praktik komunikasi menjadi bentuk multimodal yang mengintegrasikan berbagai sumber semiotik, termasuk visual, warna, tipografi, tata letak, audio, dan animasi. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menggunakan Analisis Wacana Multimodal (MDA) untuk menyelidiki bagaimana makna dibangun melalui interaksi mode semiotik ini dalam pesan ucapan digital. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa teks tidak lagi dapat dibatasi pada entitas verbal semata, tetapi harus dipahami sebagai ansambel semiotik yang kompleks dan dinamis. Makna dihasilkan melalui orkestrasi berbagai mode yang berfungsi secara simultan dan saling bergantung. Unsur visual, seperti simbol keagamaan, skema warna, dan desain komposisi, memainkan peran dominan dalam membentuk interpretasi audiens dan keterlibatan emosional, seringkali mendahului pemrosesan verbal. Selain itu, studi ini menyoroti peran penting pengguna dalam ekosistem digital sebagai produsen aktif (prosumer) yang secara kreatif menggabungkan sumber daya semiotik untuk mengekspresikan identitas keagamaan, nilai-nilai budaya, dan hubungan sosial. Lebih lanjut, ucapan Idul Fitri digital tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ekspresi keagamaan tetapi juga sebagai praktik sosial yang memelihara dan memperkuat hubungan antarpribadi di ruang virtual. Transformasi ini menunjukkan pergeseran paradigma yang lebih luas dalam komunikasi, di mana teks menjadi partisipatif, multimodal, dan bergantung pada konteks. Akibatnya, studi ini memberikan kontribusi teoritis terhadap redefinisi teks di era digital dan menekankan pentingnya pendekatan multimodal dalam menganalisis praktik komunikasi kontemporer.

Kata kunci: Teks Multimodal, Komunikasi Digital, Idul Fitri, Semiotik, Analisis Wacana Multimodal

INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of factors influencing the way humans communicate. One of these is the development of technology and science. Digital technology is particularly influential. In recent decades, digital developments have significantly influenced how people communicate in many aspects of life, including cultural and religious practices such as greetings for the Hajj and Eid al-Fitr.

Indonesian Muslims, known for their hospitality and strong desire to connect with others, especially those closest to them, use the Eid al-Fitr moment to strengthen their relationships. One way to do this is by sending them *a happy Eid al-Fitr*. Previously, they used only written or spoken messages. However, with the advancement of digital technology, Eid al-Fitr greetings have evolved into digital and multimodal forms that combine text, video, audio, emojis, and other visual icons.

This shift marks what experts call the digital and multimodal turn, a paradigm shift in understanding text as an entity that is no longer single but complex and intersemiotic. This phenomenon occurred particularly during the

2026 Eid al-Fitr celebrations. Indonesian Muslims used social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and others. A lot of Eid greetings took the form of digital posters, short videos, and memes. Some people even used artificial intelligence-based content. This phenomenon demonstrates the expansion of the definition of text, from a mere string of words to a multimodal configuration encompassing various sign systems simultaneously.

Kress (2023) says that the multimodal approach emphasizes that messages can be conveyed not only through language but also through a combination of words, sounds, images, actions, and so on. Here, people no longer interpret texts as mere linguistic products but as complex social practices. It is particularly relevant to Eid greetings, which now combine religious, cultural, linguistic, and visual aesthetic elements within a single message.

This event is also related to the way Indonesian Muslims build social relationships. Eid al-Fitr greetings serve not only as a religious expression but also as a means of maintaining social networks in the digital space. Therefore, research on Eid al-Fitr greetings from a multimodal perspective is crucial for understanding how religious identity, meaning, and values are constructed in the digital age.

Several studies have examined the use of multimodality in communication. Three will be presented here. First, Chen et al. (2025) examined the development of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). The approach used was biometrics, involving 1,500 scientific articles. The results show that over the past 10 years, research on digital communication and social media has advanced significantly. Chen et al.'s research confirms that contemporary texts are no longer limited to the verbal or written modes but now integrate various modes, such as visual, audio, and gesture.

The second research was conducted by Wang and Taabaldiev (2025). Their research focused on the dynamics of multimodal discourse in social media news, using thousands of digital contents from various platforms. This research found that meaning in digital communication is formed through the complex integration of text, images, video, and audio, and is influenced by user participation. Wang and Taabaldiev's research also emphasized the importance of digital media affordances in shaping how messages are produced and consumed.

The third research was conducted by Sitinjak et al. (2023). They explored Indonesia's G20 flyer using a multimodal approach. The result shows that the integration of text, symbols, colours, and logos was used to construct an image of national identity and social solidarity. Sitinjak et al. (2023)

emphasized that nonverbal elements in digital texts play a crucial role in shaping ideological meaning and social representation.

However, previous studies mainly examine multimodality in education, public communication, and promotional discourse. Religious greeting discourse remains underexplored, especially from the perspective of how verbal, visual, symbolic, and cultural resources jointly redefine the concept of text in digital interaction. This study contributes theoretically by extending multimodal discourse analysis to digital religious communication. It demonstrates that digital Eid greetings operate as integrated semiotic ensembles rather than collections of written messages. The contribution lies in the reconceptualization of text within contemporary religious communication instead of the selection of the research object alone.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). This approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth analysis of multiple modes of sign systems in digital texts.

The research data consisted of fifteen digital Eid al-Fitr greeting posters uploaded publicly on Facebook during the 2026 Eid celebration. Purposive sampling was applied to select greetings containing verbal expressions, visual symbols, colour composition, typography, and religious imagery. The selected data represented different visual styles created by individuals, communities, and institutions.

Data were collected through documentation and observation. Each greeting was captured using screenshots and catalogued. Every dataset was coded according to its source, publication date, and dominant semiotic characteristics. The coding process facilitated systematic comparison across the dataset.

Data analysis followed the Multimodal Discourse Analysis framework. Linguistic elements, visual composition, colour, typography, layout, symbols, and cultural references were analysed separately before being interpreted as an integrated meaning-making system. Cross-data comparison was conducted to identify recurring patterns and distinctive semiotic strategies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data



General Description

Comparison across the dataset shows consistent patterns. Most greetings combine Islamic symbols, green and gold colour palettes, calligraphic typography, and expressions of forgiveness. Several greetings additionally employ mosque silhouettes, crescent moons, family photographs, and ketupat illustrations. These recurring elements indicate that digital Eid greetings construct meaning through the interaction of multiple semiotic resources rather than through written language alone.

This image displays the main message, "Happy Eid al-Fitr 1 Shawwal 1447 H. Please forgive me,." This message is accompanied by a visual background depicting a mosque with a magnificent golden dome, adorned with crescent-moon and star symbols. Furthermore, there is an image of *ketupat* (rice cake) at the top. Visually, gold, white, and pastel colours dominate this design.

Visual Dominance in Constructing Religious Meaning

Data analysis concludes that visual models play significant roles in constructing and directing religious meaning in digital Eid al-Fitr greetings. The presence of images of a mosque with a golden dome, a crescent moon, and a star serves not only as decorative elements but also as symbols associated with Islamic texts and identity. Within a semiotic framework, these symbols function as iconic signs because of their similarity in form to the object they represent (a mosque as a place of worship for Muslims), and as indexical signs because they direct the audience's interpretation within the context of the Eid al-Fitr celebration. Thus, the presence of these visual elements reinforces the verbal message "Happy Eid al-Fitr," making its meaning more explicit, emotional, and easily recognizable.

The dominance of visual elements is also evident in the strategic arrangement of these elements within the design composition. The placement of the golden-domed mosque at the bottom serves as a visual foundation, emphasizing the spiritual dimension. At the same time, the crescent moon and star symbols are placed at the top to convey a transcendent nuance that underscores the connection between human and Allah SWT.

The gold colour on the mosque dome not only emphasizes its beauty but also carries symbolic meanings of nobility, spiritual victory, and blessings after fasting. The use of gold embodies the values inherent in Indonesian society. In major competitions, the winner receives a gold medal, and gold is also a symbol of wealth, which is considered noble due to its superior value. Thus, the visual elements not only enhance the appearance but also create a complex structure of meaning.

The image above also displays a local cultural symbol. It takes the form of a *ketupat* (rice cake). This demonstrates the integration of global and local culture. *Ketupat* is a traditional dish mandatory during Eid al-Fitr celebrations in Indonesia. This dish is almost always found in people's homes. *Ketupat* is associated with the Javanese concept of *laku papat* (purification) and asking for forgiveness. In this context, *ketupat* not only enhances the image but also represents the values of togetherness, solidarity, and reconciliation. This fusion of universal Islamic symbols and local culture demonstrates that digital Eid al-Fitr greetings represent a space where religious and cultural identities interact and form hybrid meanings.

The dominance of visual elements in this data also illustrates a characteristic of contemporary digital communication: a tendency to prioritize visuals over text. In the fast-paced era of social media, visual elements can quickly capture attention and shape users' initial impressions before they read the text in detail. This finding aligns with research by Liu et al. (2024). They found that in digital text, visual elements are the primary entry point for meaning-making. Thus, visuals serve as a gateway to meaning, shaping how the audience understands the message.

In this context, visuals are no longer considered complementary elements to text but have become central to the construction of meaning itself. Verbal text has become subordinate to visuals because the primary meaning has already been constructed through symbols, colours, and visual composition.

This phenomenon indicates a paradigm shift in communication. Meaning is no longer dominated by language only but by the interaction among modes of multimodal sign systems. Therefore, in Eid al-Fitr greetings, visual elements are central to understanding how religious and cultural messages are produced, disseminated, and consumed in the digital age.

Colour and Aesthetics as Emotional Generators

The use of white and gold against a pastel background demonstrates a semiotic effort to create a specific emotional atmosphere in Eid al-Fitr greetings. White symbolizes purity, purity of heart, and forgiveness, which are central values in Eid al-Fitr celebrations. Gold represents nobility, spiritual victory, and blessings after fasting during the month of Ramadan. Pastel colours, on the other hand, convey a sense of softness, warmth, and calm, a feeling that should be carried throughout the Eid atmosphere. Muslims should be gentle in forgiving those who may have wronged them and should be warm in welcoming everyone.

From a socio-semiotic perspective, colour is not merely an aesthetic element, but a mode with powerful meaning and the ability to shape audience interpretations (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). The creators' colour combinations in this data were not random; they considered psychological and cultural aspects. Gold attracts attention and conveys a sense of exclusivity; white creates a sense of peace; and pastels convey emotional closeness—all three work simultaneously to create an emotional, harmonious, and meaningful visual experience.

These findings support research conducted by Wang et al. (2024). They found that colour perception in visual media directly influences the prediction and interpretation of user emotions, even before the text is cognitively processed. Furthermore, Wang et al.'s research also confirms that colour integration in multimodal analysis can improve the accuracy of sentiment understanding because colour is a strong emotional signal in digital communication. Thus, colour functions not only as a decorative element but also as a key component in conveying emotional meaning.

It demonstrates that in the digital era, religious communication has undergone a functional shift, from simply conveying messages to creating aesthetic experiences. Colour acts as a medium for building emotional engagement with users, so that the message is not only understood rationally but also experienced affectively. This phenomenon confirms that visual aesthetics is a crucial element in strengthening the communicative power of multimodal texts in the digital space.

Furthermore, Liu et al. (2023) found that integrating colour into multimodal analysis can improve the accuracy of sentiment interpretation, as colour serves as a strong emotional signal in digital text.

Thus, the meaning generated by these Eid greetings is not only cognitive, conveyed through verbal text, but also emotional, conveyed through colour composition. It demonstrates that in the digital era, religious communication has shifted from simply conveying messages to creating

aesthetic experiences that can foster deeper emotional engagement with users.

Interaction among Modes in the Production of Meaning

Based on data analysis, it was found that the meaning of Eid al-Fitr greetings is formed through a complex integration of various semiotic modes. language, visual, colour, typographic, and layout elements do not work alone in producing meaning. Simultaneously, these elements produce a complete meaning. In other words, these elements support each other to produce a single meaning.

In the data, the phrase "*Mohon Maaf Lahir Batin*" linguistically conveys a social and religious apology. This message is reinforced by the use of white color, which represents purity, and the mosque symbol, which symbolizes the spiritual dimension of Islam. The interaction among linguistic, colour, and visual elements produces a deeper meaning: a representation of the process of self-purification and spiritual and social reconciliation after fasting. This integration demonstrates that meaning is not additive—simply the sum of individual elements—but rather integrative, where each mode complements and strengthens the interpretation.

Furthermore, the use of calligraphy in the text "Eid al-Fitr" provides a sacred nuance, while the symmetrical layout creates a visual balance that supports readability and aesthetic comfort. All elements work as an organized system, allowing readers to grasp the message quickly, intuitively, and emotionally.

The results of this study align with the intersemiotic complementarity proposed by Jewitt et al. (2020), in which various semiotic modes complement one another in constructing coherent meaning. In the context of digital communication, the interaction between these modes becomes increasingly important because audiences tend to process information quickly and visually. Therefore, multimodal analysis is a crucial approach to understanding the complexity of digital texts, particularly in religious communication practices such as Eid al-Fitr greetings, which no longer rely solely on language but on the integration of various modes within a single communication design.

Social Dimension: Greetings as a Digital Relational Practice

In the era of information technology-based communication, digital Eid greetings increasingly demonstrate a complex and powerful social dimension. Sharing greetings on social media platforms like *WhatsApp*, *Facebook*, and *Instagram* no longer merely conveys individual messages; it also serves as a medium for building and maintaining social relationships. In this context, Eid greetings serve as a symbolic medium that connects individuals across

broader social networks, whether within families, friend circles, or hobby communities.

Unlike conventional practices, which are interpersonal and limited, digital greetings have a collective and public character. A single message can be disseminated quickly to many people, even across geographical boundaries. It demonstrates that Eid greetings are not merely personal but also part of a distributed social communication practice. In this case, the value of *silaturahmi* transforms from physical meetings to digital interactions that maintain the essence of social relationships.

The ease of producing and distributing digital greetings also indicates a shift in users' roles from mere message recipients to producers and distributors (prosumers). Individuals can now easily create greeting designs using simple applications and then share them across various platforms. This phenomenon reflects the development of a participatory culture, in which users not only consume content but also contribute to its production and dissemination.

Furthermore, this practice also demonstrates a performative dimension to digital Eid greetings. Sending greetings not only conveys a message but also serves as a form of self-representation in the digital space. The choice of design, words, and visuals can reflect an individual's identity, values, and even social standing. Thus, Eid greetings become part of the practice of self-presentation within the social media ecosystem.

Furthermore, the interactions that occur through features such as comments, replies, and reactions (emojis) demonstrate the dialogic nature of Eid greetings. Texts are no longer static but are part of a dynamic, ongoing communication process. It reinforces the function of greetings as a means of building emotional closeness and strengthening social relationships.

Thus, Eid al-Fitr greetings in the digital age serve not only as a religious expression but also as a complex and multidimensional social practice. They serve as a medium for connecting individuals within digital social networks, strengthening solidarity, and reproducing cultural values in new forms. This phenomenon confirms that religious communication has undergone a significant transformation, with digital technology playing a crucial role in shaping how humans interact and build social relationships.

Implications for Expanding the Definition of Text

The findings of this study have important implications for understanding the concept of text in linguistics and cultural studies. Traditionally, text has been understood as a collection of words arranged linearly and possessing a specific linguistic structure. However, in the context of contemporary digital communication, this definition is no longer adequate

to account for the complexity of communication practices. Digital Eid al-Fitr greetings demonstrate that texts must now be understood as multimodal constructions involving the interaction of various semiotic modes, such as language, visuals, colour, typography, and layout.

From this perspective, meaning no longer lies solely in verbal elements, but in the overall communication design that integrates various elements simultaneously. Text becomes a semiotic ensemble, a collection of signs that interact to produce a complete meaning. It demands a paradigm shift from a linguistic approach focused on language structure to a more holistic, interdisciplinary approach.

Digital Eid al-Fitr greetings are a concrete example of this transformation. The message "*Mohon Maaf Lahir Batin*" is conveyed not only through the words, but also through the colour white, which symbolizes purity; the symbol of the mosque, which represents spirituality; and the visual composition that creates a religious atmosphere. Thus, meaning results from the orchestration of multiple modes, rather than from a single source.

This implication also impacts research methodology. Traditional approaches that analyze only verbal texts are insufficient to understand phenomena of digital communication. Therefore, approaches such as Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) are needed to examine interactions between modes comprehensively. This approach enables researchers to understand how meaning is produced, distributed, and interpreted in digital contexts.

Furthermore, the broadening of the definition of text is also related to the changing role of users in the communication ecosystem. In the digital era, users are no longer merely readers of texts but also designers and producers of texts. They actively select, combine, and modify various semiotic elements to create messages that align with their goals and identities. It demonstrates that texts are dynamic and contextual, influenced by social and technological practices.

Furthermore, this implication is important for cultural studies, as it demonstrates that texts serve as a medium through which cultural values are represented and negotiated. Digital Eid al-Fitr greetings not only convey religious messages but also reflect cultural identities, digital aesthetics, and the social practices of contemporary society.

Thus, broadening the definition of text is inevitable as digital communication develops. Texts must be understood as complex, dynamic, and contextual multimodal entities. This approach not only enriches linguistic studies but also opens up space for a more in-depth analysis of communication phenomena in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the analysis shows that the 2026 Eid al-Fitr greetings represent a concrete representation of multimodal texts, reflecting a paradigm shift in contemporary digital communication practices. Texts are no longer produced and understood as standalone linguistic entities, but rather as complex semiotic constructions, in which various modes—verbal, visual, colour, typography, and layout—interact simultaneously to shape meaning. The dominance of visuals in the data demonstrates that pictorial elements and religious symbols serve as the primary drivers of interpretation, while verbal text complements and clarifies the visually constructed message.

The use of colour and typography also demonstrates that aesthetic dimensions play a significant role in shaping the audience's emotional experience. Meaning is not only processed cognitively through language but also perceived affectively through strategically designed visual compositions. Furthermore, the interaction between modes confirms that meaning is integrative, not simply the sum of separate elements, but rather the product of a complementary semiotic orchestration.

This phenomenon strengthens the argument that the digital and multimodal turn has brought about fundamental changes in the way humans produce, distribute, and understand text. In the context of religious communication, such as Eid greetings, this transformation not only alters the form of message delivery but also the way religious and cultural values are represented and negotiated in the digital space. Thus, the text becomes more dynamic, participatory, and contextual, while also demanding a more holistic analytical approach to understand the complexity of the meanings it generates.

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