

**AI as Discourse Actor: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Transactional and Interactional Functions in Social Media Video Content**

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**Received:** 21-12-2025

**Revised:** 06-01-2026

**Accepted:** 19-01-2026

**Published:** 01-02-2026

**ABSTRACT**

*The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) within digital media has greatly changed the process of audiovisual communication on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. In this study, transactional and interactional discourses are analyzed in relation to the construction of AI within AI-generated videos using the MCDA method. Specifically, the research explores selected AI-generated videos by focusing on the internal characteristics of the videos and analyzing key frames from each video. It was found that although transactional discourse serves the purpose of showing AI as an orderly system, interactional discourse becomes dominant by the means of multimodal elements which appeal to the emotions of viewers through their cinematic and extremely realistic quality. The use of emotional and other elements allows constructing an image of AI not only as a system but as a creative and emotionally intelligent agent as well. Thus, this study demonstrates the relationship between interactional and transactional discourse and the importance of their interplay for the construction of the image of AI within the context of its normalization. It fills the existing gap in literature which primarily focuses on textual or audience analyses rather than on the internal multimodal features of AI-generated videos themselves.*

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence (AI); Multimodal Discourse Analysis; Transactional Discourse; Interactional Discourse; TikTok; AI-Generated Content; Digital Media

**INTRODUCTION**

The fast rise of artificial intelligence (AI) within digital media has radically changed the essence of audiovisual communication, especially in short-video applications like TikTok and Instagram. AI-produced videos, whether through fabricated film sequences to lifelike human characters, should be seen not only as technical products but also as discourses that simultaneously mirror and reinvent current social meanings. In other words, AI-assisted media content cannot be treated as mere technology but as an ideological battleground where representations are negotiated (Fairclough 20; Kress 2006).

According to Critical Discourse Analysis, discourse is both a social practice and social action that produces and reproduces reality (Fairclough 2013). The advent of AI-based videos enhances the production of discourse by incorporating non-human actors in the creation of meaning. The videos mimic the human capacity for creativity, emotions, and coherent narratives, thus causing the distinction between reality and fiction to become blurred. This blurring is more than aesthetic; it becomes ideological in its effect on how people perceive authenticity and agency within digital spaces (Floridi et al. 2018).

In this ever-changing media environment, TikTok and Instagram can be regarded as some of the most important spaces where AI-generated content is produced and normalized. In this context, visual and emotional appeal, along with algorithmic amplification, become crucial for media content, as interactional types of discourse become dominant on these sites; interactional discourse here refers to discourses focused on interaction, emotions, and alignment with audiences. However, even in such an environment, there remain aspects of transactional discourse in parts of AI-generated videos that explain and describe the workings of AI.

Adopting a theoretical perspective based on multimodal discourse analysis, where meaning is conceived through an interplay between visual, auditory, and written modes (Kress 2006), this research attempts to explore how the meanings associated with technology and its role in society are created through AI videos. In particular, the realism of human characters generated by artificial intelligence, audio effects, and narratives play a key role in producing meaning that cannot be explained in linguistic terms only. This multimodal approach allows AI to be represented as innovative and creative but also threatening.

In addition, the discursive representation of AI technology in the videos also carries larger social meanings. With the emergence of ever more advanced techniques used by AI in generating content, there arise important issues related to trustworthiness and authenticity as well as the future of work in creative fields. These issues cannot be considered separately from the discourse but rather belong to it and affect how the AI technology is understood (Couldry and Mejias 2019). Consequently, the analysis of AI videos using transactional and interactional approaches to discourse can offer valuable insights.

This research will thus attempt to explore the means by which transactional and interactional discourses manifest in videos generated by artificial intelligence on the platforms of TikTok and Instagram, and the roles that they play in building meanings and effectivities through such discourse forms. This is done not by considering any extrinsic reactions from viewers but by concentrating on the intrinsic multimodal aspects of the videos themselves.

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of the research are:

- i. To investigate how transactional discourse is realized in videos created by AI.
- ii. To investigate how interactional discourse is created through multimodal forms like visuals, sounds, and narratives.
- iii. To study how AI is constructed discursively as a tool, creator, and hybrid entity in digital media.
- iv. To study the dynamics between transactional and interactional discourses in video creation by AI.

### **Research Questions**

- i. What are the ways of realizing transactional discourse in AI videos on TikTok and Instagram?
- ii. In what ways does interactional discourse get built with the help of auditory and visual elements in these videos?
- iii. How do these discourses affect one another in shaping the representation of AI?
- iv. What is the role of these discourses in the perception of AI videos?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of discourse within the digital media environment has also brought to the fore the significance of language and semiotics in the construction of social reality. As it relates to CDA, discourse is not only understood to be a linguistic construct but also a social practice in which power and ideology are embedded (Fairclough 2013). It is especially relevant when one considers new technological advancements like artificial intelligence (AI), where new ways of representing information are radically changing the meaning-making process within digital media environments.

One of the important developments in the field of discourse analysis is the emergence of the notion of multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). It acknowledges that meaning is created via the interaction of several different semiotic modes. According to Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), visual communication is based on grammatical structure consisting of composition, salience, and framing. Lampe (2013) builds on this point of view by arguing that the digital age requires analytical methods allowing researchers to take into account the nature of multimodal discourse. As for AI-generated videos, they can serve as a good example demonstrating how the multimodal dimension is essential because meaning is created thanks to visual imagery, AI-produced audio tracks, and soundscapes.

The emergence of AI-produced visuals via methods such as deepfakes and generative models represents another way in which the traditional dichotomy of representation and reality has been blurred. According to Westerlund (2019), the technology underlying deepfakes represents a groundbreaking invention within the sphere of digital media, with the ability to produce highly authentic-looking artificial images posing problems for traditional ideas of authenticity. Likewise, Chesney and Citron (2019) note the importance of such developments from the point of view of potential risk to public trust and the blurring of lines between truth and fabrication. In terms of discourse analysis, however, such technological developments are ideologically motivated in that they play a role in the construction of reality as such.

In terms of the dynamics of platform, there is additional influence exerted by algorithms, which determine the degree of visibility and engagement. According to Gillespie (2014), algorithms play a vital role in the formation of digital discourse, influencing the selection of the content that is promoted. In the case of platforms like TikTok and Instagram, the algorithmic approach tends to favor content that is aesthetically appealing, emotionally compelling, and easy to consume. As stated by Abidin (2020), TikTok creates an environment conducive to the development of Internet celebrity, who relies on performance and affectivity in their communication process. Similarly, Zulli & Zulli (2022) argue that digital culture encourages the circulation and transformation of content, which is facilitated through the process of engagement. This results in interactional discourse becoming predominant.

The concept of transactional discourse versus interactional discourse, developed initially by Brown & Yule in (1983), helps identify the characteristics of the phenomenon. The former type of discourse is concerned with the transfer of information, understanding, and completion of the task. Interactional discourse, on the other hand, is aimed at building up relationships, conveying emotions, and engaging the audience. The two kinds of discourse often merge in AI-generated videos. Thus, there can be certain sections of such videos that are intended to provide some explanation about how AI works (transactional discourse) and simultaneously create dramatic and exciting pictures (interactional discourse).

Moreover, the increasing use of AI in video production prompts us to consider other issues concerning the social and cultural ramifications of technology. According to Floridi et al. (2018), AI systems function within larger socio-technical structures, which affect the values and decisions made by humans. Building upon the ideas of Floridi et al. (2018), Couldry and Mejias (2019) refer to the current digital space as one of “data colonialism,” where human existence is constantly recorded and reshaped through data systems. Within this framework, the use of AI to produce videos can be seen not only as a product but also as an agent of this new mediated world.

Although there is an ever-growing pool of academic writing about the intersection of AI technology, digital media, and discourse, the absence of relevant research into the construction of transactional and interactional discourses in the multimodal context of AI-generated video content is still evident. The majority of current academic studies are concerned with the textual dimensions of the phenomenon, ethical implications, or algorithmic infrastructures that underlie AI content creation rather than the internal construction of meaning within AI-generated videos per se. It is exactly this research gap that will be filled by means of employing multimodal critical discourse analysis to investigate the realization of transactional and interactional discourse in AI-generated content on TikTok and Instagram.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a theoretical foundation of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) to investigate transactional and interactional discourses found in videos generated by AI in TikTok and Instagram. The selection of MCDA is based on its potential to conduct analysis of meaning-making via various semiotic modes, among others, visual, audio, and verbal components. In the context of the MCDA approach, discourse is broader than language. As such, it can be defined as a socially embedded practice employing diverse representational means (Fairclough 2013; Kress 2006).

Specific attention will be paid to the internal composition of the video rather than its reception by audiences, which is essential since such an approach would allow focusing on meaning-making through the employment of various semiotic resources. Furthermore, it would help differentiate between the two discourse types under consideration more clearly.

### **Research Design**

Purposive sampling was used in selecting relevant data. Three videos generated by artificial intelligence were selected from TikTok and Instagram using the following criteria: (1) visible images created using artificial intelligence, (2) containing more than one scene, and (3) employing audiovisual semiotics in meaning construction. The sampling procedure did not involve randomness but was theoretical in nature.

The selected videos constitute a minimal data set for analysis. This approach aligns with CDA since qualitative depth is valued over data quantity. Each video was considered a multimodal text made up of various semiotic resources.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection was carried out using the frame extraction technique in Google Colab. All selected videos were uploaded and processed via OpenCV in order to automatically extract still frames. In particular, one frame in every 30th position was extracted to provide a representation of the entire video while avoiding any unnecessary repetitions. This technique provides an efficient means of generating visual data.

This process may appear to be complex, but its main goal is to provide an effective means of analysis. The frames serve as units of analysis. They give the researcher an opportunity to capture essential moments in the video when meanings are evident. On average, about 5-7 frames were extracted from each video. As such, the total number of frames extracted was about 15-20 frames.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The analysis has been conducted based on the binary framework of transactional and interactional discourse, as described by Brown and Yule in (1983), but modified for application to a multimodal situation.

Transactional discourse involves those parts of the advertisement that communicate information about the process or function of AI. This is represented using neutral images, explanatory sequences, and informative voice-overs.

Interactional discourse, on the other hand, encompasses anything that attempts to connect emotionally with the viewer. This would include dramatic images, AI-created characters, cinematic techniques, and emotionally impactful audio. Each frame was analyzed from several perspectives, which included:

- Description of visuals (representational image, realistic nature, setting)
- Description of audio (tone, music, voice)
- Type of discourse (transactional/interactional)
- Interpretation (what meaning is constructed?)
- Impact of the frame (emotional/social)

Some frames were easier to analyze than others. Meaning was not always evident; rather, it needed to be discerned from mode interactions.

### **Procedure**

The analysis went through several stages. Initially, all videos were watched repeatedly to have an idea of their structure and contents. Further, frames were separated out and coded. Labels for each frame (e.g. V1-F1, V1-F2) were used to ensure consistency.

Following that, descriptions of visual and auditory details were provided. It is a key stage since it helps to focus on objective aspects of the frames without falling into the trap of subjective perception. After that, each frame was classified as transactional or interactional depending on its main communicative role. In the end, interpretations of frames were generated by connecting semiotic codes to discourses. Emphasis was placed on the portrayal of AI as a device, an artist, or a danger and the effect of such portrayals.

### **Rationale of Methodology**

Frame extraction in conjunction with MCDA can be viewed as a methodological approach that facilitates the analysis of audiovisual content in a structured yet adaptable manner. On one hand, this allows for complex materials to be analyzed in manageable chunks while maintaining their multimodal aspect. On the other hand, it complements the critical discourse analysis perspective by focusing on the ways in which discourse constructs reality. Such methodology proves suitable for exploring AI-generated videos because it enables analysis from both transactional and interactional perspectives of discourse. Most importantly, it uncovers the relationships between these perspectives in contemporary digital media.

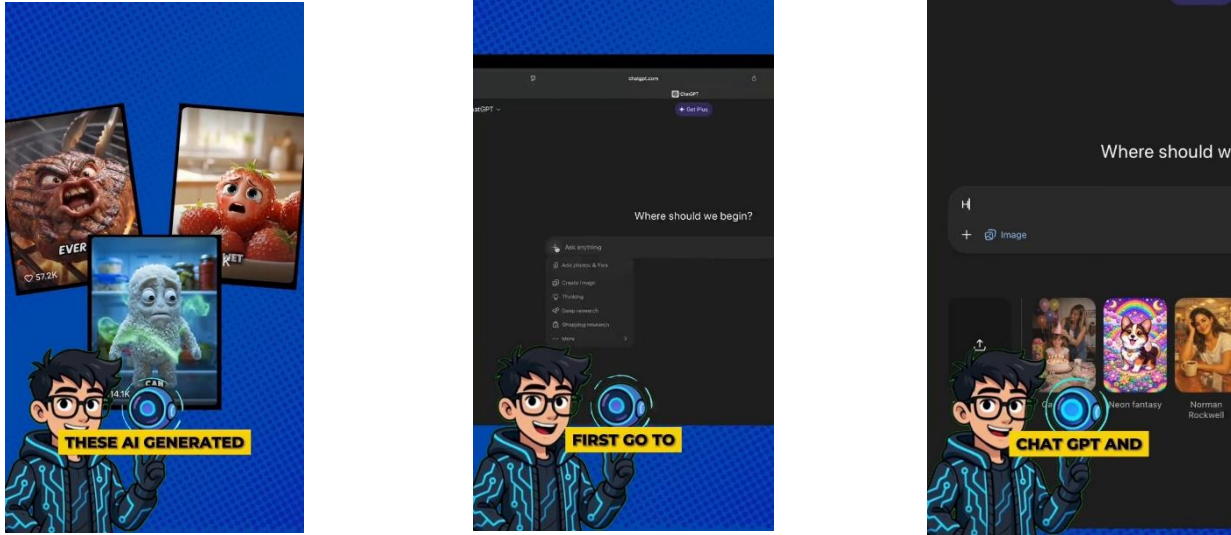
### **DATA ANALYSIS**

In this part, a multimodal critical discourse analysis of selected AI-generated videos on TikTok and Instagram is conducted. This is accomplished through examining how transactional and interactional discourses manifest themselves within the intratextual dimensions of the video clips. The videos are analyzed as multimodal texts, with particular frames (F1, F2, and so forth) serving as the unit of analysis.

**Transactional Discourse: AI as System and Tool**

Transactional discourse is evident in Video 1 (V1) because AI is depicted as a systematic structure and process.

In the Frame V1–F1, the arrangement of the visual interface used for showing the prompt input and the output produced by the AI technology shows that AI is a systematic process.



The visual interface is organized in a linear format. Input results in transformation, which produces the output. Visual excess does not exist. The visual composition is systematic and streamlined. The accompanying audio is also neutral. No modulation takes place. This silence is purposeful. Emotional engagement is avoided. Information is clear.

In Frame V1–F3, the series of transformations in the images also demonstrates this discourse. The consistency of the visual interface emphasizes process. Meaning is unambiguous. Purposeful communication takes place. This is transactional discourse. Information transfer is its main objective. However, this information also operates ideologically by representing AI technology as seamless and easy to use. The technology seems reliable and already part of daily creative processes. In this manner, transactional discourse is not only informative; it is also legitimizing.

**Interactional Discourse: AI as Experience and Affect**

An alternative emerges from Video 2 (V2), where the interactional discourse becomes dominant.



In Frame V2-F2, there is shown a close-up image of a hyper-realistic AI-generated human face. The image is vivid and precise skin, light and facial expression. The look is direct and creates an impression of a kind of engagement with the observer. Moreover, the music becomes intense. Slow and cinematic, it brings emotions to the viewers. Here, the function is not informative. It is emotional.

Frame V2-F3 presents a broader cinematic landscape. Darkness, shadows, slowness these elements all create depth, involvement in what we see. The role of an observer is replaced by that of an actor of what happens in front of our eyes. It is interactional discourse, using emotions, alignment, and sensorially as mechanisms. Crucially, AI is presented as not only the object, but the actor, as a performing entity with its capacity for emotional expression almost like a human one.

### **Hybridization: Blurring Boundaries of Discourse**

Video three (V3) shows an even more complicated picture. Discourses of transactions and interactions are both used, yet their distribution is unequal.

Frame V3-F1 demonstrates a step-by-step process of transforming a human face into a face produced by artificial intelligence. This sequence is coherent and explanatory in nature, therefore reflecting a transactional approach. However, in Frame V3-F3, this process is further intensified on a visual level. Features change quickly, while the degree of realism is increased. At the same time, the soundtrack also changes, becoming harsher. This transition leads to the next stage.



A shift from transactions to affect happens here. It is no longer a matter of explaining something for the audience. On the contrary, emotions become involved. As a result, discursive hybridity appears. Both dimensions - informative and affective - are now used simultaneously, creating layers of meaning. Tension emerges as a consequence. On the one hand, artificial intelligence seems to be comprehensible. On the other hand, it also seems unpredictable.

### **Discursive Construction of AI**

AI is built through various discursive constructs throughout the corpus.

In transactional frames (V1), AI takes the form of:

- controlled
- efficient
- instrumental

In interactional frames (V2), AI gets reframed as:

- expressive
- creative
- human-like

In hybrid frames (V3), AI transforms into:

- unstable
- ambiguous
- potentially disruptive

Such constructions are not arbitrary. They are part of wider social discourse surrounding AI, Progress, Innovation, Risk. By way of multimodal constructs, the videos contribute to the discursive construction of technological significance. Reality is not just reflected by them. It is organized through them.

### **Impact and Interpretation**

The influence of these discourses works at both the emotional and cognitive levels.

Interactive discourse delivers:

- surprise
- wonder
- insecurity

This happens via visuals and sound. The more real the visuals are, the greater the response.

On the other hand, transactional discourse gives:

- insight
- understanding
- the feeling of control

This is crucial. The audience is neither overloaded nor disconnected. Instead, they are put in the middle, the space where they are both informed and influenced. From a critical point of view, this middle ground plays a role in normalizing AI in our daily lives. We get used to it. We can understand it. Even accept it.

### Summary of Analytical Findings

From the analysis, it is clear that, Interactional Discourse plays a crucial role in AI-generated videos, especially through intensification visually and audibly. Transactional Discourse reinforces this process through information meaning results from the combination of multimodality and not unimodal language. AI is discursively produced as a tool, creator, and potential disruption simultaneously.

More significantly, the above-mentioned videos do not just describe AI technologically.

- They shape how it is understood.
- They shape how it is felt.

And by doing so, they participate in the creation of AI in digital culture today.

### CONCLUSION

The current study sought to explore how transactional and interactional discourses are conveyed in videos generated by artificial intelligence algorithms within the context of TikTok and Instagram. The results prove that these videos cannot be seen as mere products of modern technologies. Rather, they represent discursive formations, where visual and verbal meaning construction happens.

Indeed, the videos analyzed include both discursive formations. However, while transactional discourse serves as the foundation for AI-generated videos, providing structured and efficient access to AI systems, interactional discourse dominates. With the help of cinematic shots, the emotional intensity conveyed and the sensory stimulation of viewers, AI algorithms transform into an experience rather than just another informational source. It can even become something close to human in some instances.

It should be noted that such a transformation reflects the recent evolution of online communication, in which the mere provision of information is no longer sufficient to convey meaning. Rather, it should be experienced and engaged with. Nevertheless, the co-presence of both transactional and interactional components results in creating multiple meanings within one video and representing AI as something which is, at the same time, controllable and unpredictable, familiar and alien.

From a critical point of view, these results indicate the role of videos produced with the help of AI in discursively normalizing the presence of AI. These results do not advocate the acceptance of the technology. On the contrary, they imply that AI has become present, integrated into everyday life, and already meaningful. That is how discourse functions.

These restrictions are inherent in the qualitative nature of the research that was performed. A small corpus and a narrow set of videos are limitations that are expected from a multimodal discourse analysis study. In the future, other approaches may be used to extend this study. For example, audience responses or comparison with platforms might work well. To conclude, video clips generated with the help of AI are much more than just representations. Rather, they should be analyzed from multiple angles to understand how meanings are constructed.

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