

## CULTURAL VALUE REPRESENTATION IN AVATAR: THE LAST AIRBENDER MOVIE POSTERS: MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the representational meaning and cultural values depicted in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* 2024 movie posters through the lens of Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. While previous studies on *Avatar* have focused on its philosophical themes, cultural representation, and narrative elements, by analyzing visual and textual elements in promotional materials, such as movie posters, in conveying cultural values, this gap will be address in this research. The study was chosen for its strong ties to East Asian cultural traditions, including philosophies, attire, and symbolic representations, making it a compelling subject for exploring cultural narratives in Hollywood media. A qualitative approach was employed, focusing on 7 posters selected from a total of 25, based on narrative representational aspects. Data were gathered from high-resolution movie posters on CineMaterial.com. Findings reveals that the posters embody East Asian cultural values such as harmony, resilience, and spiritual growth, conveyed through traditional attire, martial arts-inspired poses, and culturally significant backdrops. Textual elements like the phrase "Master Your Element" align with visual themes to emphasize personal growth and identity. The representational meaning highlights dynamic interactions among characters and their cultural contexts, offering insights into how multimodal texts function as cultural artifacts. This study concludes that the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* 2024 movie posters effectively combine visual and textual elements to represent East Asian cultural heritage while shaping narrative engagement, demonstrating how multimodal texts convey layered meanings by blending representational meaning with cultural values.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Western movies often draw from their own mythology or folklore, but *Avatar: The Last Airbender* stands out as a Hollywood production that intricately weaves Asian cultural influences into its narrative and aesthetics. Created by Western producers, the series draws heavily on East Asian traditions, philosophies, and martial arts. Its core concept, "bending," is a telekinetic technique rooted in distinct Chinese martial arts forms. The series incorporates cultural motifs such as yin-yang balance, Asian architectural designs, and elements of characters' attire, symbols, and world-building, all of which reflect Asian cultural influences. This creates a richly layered narrative that



resonates with diverse audiences worldwide (Chow, A. R., 2024). Historically, Western views on Asian cultures have historically been shaped by stereotypes and exoticism, portraying them as overly traditional (Sorman, 2023). Films inspired by Asian traditions challenge these biases, revealing the richness and complexity of Asian values and histories and to resists contemporary Western Culture's conservative tendencies.

*Avatar: The Last Airbender* is an anime series created by Michael Dante DiMartino and Bryan Konietzko, originally aired on Nickelodeon from 2005 to 2008. Set in a world where individuals manipulate elements—water, earth, fire, and air—through bending (Chow, A. R., 2024), the story follows Aang, the last Airbender and Avatar, destined to restore balance among the four nations: Water Tribes, Earth Kingdom, Fire Nation, and Air Nomads. After being frozen in ice for a century, Aang is discovered by siblings Katara and Sokka and sets out on a mission to stop the Fire Nation's war. The Netflix live-action adaptation draws heavily on Asian cultures, particularly Chinese traditions, reflecting philosophies like Buddhism that emphasize balance with nature (Anoop, D., 2024).

Culture plays a crucial role in shaping individuals and societies, serving as the spiritual foundation of communities and a key driver of development. It reflects humanity's evolution, influencing values, behaviors, and responses to events. Cultural values, as shared norms and ideals, shape attitudes and determine how people assign significance to emotions, knowledge, stories, and interactions. These values are dynamic, learned over time, and deeply intertwined with history. Understanding and nurturing them is vital for societal harmony and progress. In artistic expressions like films, cultural values shape characters, plots, and themes. DiMartino and Konietzko sought to challenge dominant Western ideologies by drawing inspiration from Eastern culture, creating *Avatar: The Last Airbender* as a multicultural and philosophical experience (Trang N. T., 2024; Woloshyn, 2019; Xin & Jing, 2023).

The research question is how the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* movie posters construct representational meaning and SFL's three meta-functions through their textual phrases and visual elements, and how it could reflect cultural values through the movie posters. This study was chosen for its strong ties to East Asian traditions and symbolism, reflected in the characters' attire, posture, settings, and elemental motifs. Drawing from Chinese philosophies like Taoism and Buddhism, these elements offer a rich foundation for analyzing cultural values. This research focuses on representational meaning within Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), excluding interactive and compositional aspects, while incorporating all three meta-functions from Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG): Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual.

The data of this research is restricted to 7 out of 25 movie posters, chosen based on a specific criterion related to representational meaning, the study highlights how visual representations function as cultural artifacts, enriching narratives in multimodal media (Thi & Trang, 2024). These 7 posters were selected because they prominently feature key characters who played important roles in the movie. Some posters included only background imagery or featured



characters with less narrative significance, which did not align with the focus of this study. By selecting posters with the main characters, the research is able to delve deeper into how visual representations of these figures contribute to the construction of meaning and cultural narratives within the film.

Using the framework of Representational Meaning from MDA developed by Kress and van Leeuwen, the study extends the analysis of communication beyond language by incorporating visuals, gestures, and spatial arrangements into meaning-making (Linh, 2021). As an extension of Halliday's SFL (Chen & Gao, 2013), MDA introduces Visual Grammar, which systematically interprets images by examining semiotic modes—such as text, image, color, vectors, and composition—that collectively construct narratives, cultural values, and meaning (Zhang, 2023). This approach is particularly effective for analyzing visual media like movie posters, which strategically employ these elements to engage audiences, influence interpretations, and convey cultural or thematic nuances (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021; Chen & Gao, 2014).

Previous studies on *Avatar: The Last Airbender* have primarily focused on its philosophical themes, cultural representation, and narrative elements, particularly the interplay of Eastern and Western influences. However, these studies have largely overlooked the role of visual and textual elements in promotional materials, such as movie posters, in conveying cultural values. This research addresses this gap by using Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to analyze how the 2024 movie posters reflect East Asian cultural values. It highlights how multimodal elements in static media create layered cultural narratives, linking visual representation to cultural identity in promotional contexts.

A recent study on district slogans in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara (Syamsurrijal & Arniati, 2024), reveals their cultural significance in daily life and various sectors. Using meta-functions and transitivity analysis, findings show slogans embody material (27%), relational (23%), and behavioral (19%) processes, reflecting ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. Another recent study on Cambridge Textbook (Rabbani, S. M., Saleh, M., & Sutopo, D., 2021) analyzed visual representational and textual ideational meanings, focusing on their participants and processes. Findings revealed shared elements between visuals and texts, though not all clauses aligned. This highlights how visual meaning complements textual narration, visualizing shared participants or processes selectively.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The foundational aspects of visual grammar in multimodal texts, as outlined by Kress and van Leeuwen, integrate the representational meaning from MDA, ideational, interpersonal, and textual meta-functions from SFG to create a cohesive framework for analyzing meaning. Representational meaning focuses on the participants, processes, and circumstances within an image to construct a narrative. Ideational meaning emphasizes the processes of an action and relationship to build meaning. Interpersonal meaning examines the mood, conveying attitudes and



relationships. Finally, textual meaning examines the theme and rheme. Together, these meta-functions, inspired by Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), interact dynamically to create a holistic understanding of how visual and textual elements work in tandem to convey complex narratives, cultural values.

## 2.1 Representational Meaning

Representational meaning, a core component of Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar, which has been divided into narrative and conceptual meaning each focusing on distinct ways images communicate their messages. Narrative meaning explores how images depict participants, processes, and circumstances to convey narratives and ideas. Participants can be people or objects, linked by vectors that indicate interactions or directed actions. Processes are categorized into material (physical actions), mental (thoughts), and relational (states of being). Circumstances provide contextual information such as time, place, or spatial relationships. Conceptual meaning emphasizes static and timeless representations of participants, focusing on classification, identification, and symbolic relationships. It includes classificational, which shows how participants are grouped or categorized. Analytical representation emphasizes part-whole relationships to reveal identity, while symbolic representation conveys meaning through visual metaphors, colours, or settings. Representational meaning, grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), emphasizes how visuals clarify messages and evoke interpretative responses, offering insights into the cultural and symbolic dimensions embedded in media (Salahuddin, 2023).

## 2.2 SFG Meta-Functions

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed by Halliday, proposes three meta-functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. This research applies Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), a grammatical framework within SFL. While SFL is a broader theory of meaning-making, SFG focuses on clause structures, analyzing mood, theme, and processes in verbal and visual texts, linking linguistic forms to their meanings (Sihura, M., 2019).

The ideational meta-function, derived from Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), examines how actions, processes, and relationships are linguistically and visually represented to construct meaning. This meta-function identifies six types of processes: material (actions), mental (emotions), relational (identities), verbal (processes of saying), behavioral (bodily actions linked to emotions), and existential (expressing existence). Each process is tied to a verb within a clause, emphasizing the connection between participants and their environment (Vega & Siahaan, 2021). In multimodal texts such as movie posters, the ideational meta-function explores how elements like poses, attire, and settings visually represent cultural values. This analysis provides insights into how media conveys narratives and constructs identities, emphasizing the cultural significance embedded in visual grammar (Thi & Trang, 2024).



The interpersonal meta-function, derived from Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) addresses how language enacts social relationships and interactions between speakers and listeners. A key aspect of the interpersonal meta-function is mood, analyzed through the Mood element and the Residue. The Mood element, comprising the Subject and the Finite, helps determine the clause's mood. The Finite, uniquely identified in this theory, works with the Subject to achieve this (Banks, D., 2002).

The textual meta-function, as outlined in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), supports ideational and interpersonal meanings by structuring information into exchangeable units, primarily through the THEME system (Wu, J., 2023) that focuses on the organization and flow of information within a text, particularly through the use of theme and rheme. Theme is considered a universal component; every language has a way to indicate what the clause is focused on. Rheme, on the other hand, encompasses everything apart from the Theme, serving as the part of the clause where the Theme is elaborated or expanded upon (Forey, G. 2002). In movie posters, the use of theme and rheme is evident in the strategic placement of text and imagery to emphasize key narratives and cultural messages.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach to analyze the representational meaning in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* movie posters. Qualitative research is ideal for exploring how cultural values are visually constructed, providing an in-depth understanding of the visual elements within their cultural context (Tenny, S., 2022). Data collection involved 25 posters, sourced from CineMaterial.com, a renowned online database. Using Kress and van Leeuwen's representational theory as a reference, 7 posters were chosen from this collection based on their narrative representational elements. The analysis begins with Halliday's SFG textual theory to examine the textual elements within the visuals, primarily focusing on ideational (processes), interpersonal (mood), and textual (theme and rheme) meta-functions, given the limited presence of text. Subsequently, the representational meaning framework is applied to identify the participants, processes, and circumstances depicted in the visuals. This analysis explores how Asian cultural values are conveyed through visual elements such as attire, poses, and settings, emphasizing their role as cultural artifacts with layered meanings.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Kress and van Leeuwen's representational meaning framework, visual elements in movie posters convey cultural values through participants, processes, and circumstances. Participants reflect cultural heritage through their attire and poses, while processes, such as bending techniques, symbolize mastery and growth. Circumstances, including elemental backdrops, highlight cultural diversity. Supported by Halliday's SFG textual theory, this study examines textual elements within visuals, focusing on the ideational, interpersonal, and textual





meta-functions. Together, these components strategically employ imagery to represent East Asian traditions, showcasing how visual and textual elements work in harmony to convey layered cultural meanings.

#### 4.1 Verbal Analysis

Since the textual elements remain consistent across all seven *Avatar: The Last Airbender* movie posters, the researcher will focus on analyzing three key phrases, that is 'Master Your Element', 'Avatar: The Last Airbender' and 'A Netflix Series' which represent the textual elements in all the posters. Because the available text is limited, the researcher will begin by conducting an in-depth analysis of these three phrases. Following this, the researcher will analyze the representational meaning in the visual elements of the posters and examine how the textual and representational meanings resonate with each other.

4.1.1 Table 1 phrase 'Master Your Element'

	Master	Your Elements
Interpersonal	Predicator	Complement
	Residue	
Textual	Theme	Rheme
Ideational	Process: Material	Goal

From the table 4.1.1 above, the phrase 'Master Your Elements,' based on interpersonal analysis there is no specific mood because there is no subject as mood is determined by the presence of a subject and a finite verb, without a subject, no specific mood is established. In the textual analysis, the word 'Master' is the theme and 'Your Element' is the rheme. Based on ideational meaning, 'Master' is a material process as it involved a physical action mastering a certain element from the Avatar world, 'Your Element' is the goal, but there is no specific actor because there is no subject in the phrase.

4.1.2 Table 2 'Avatar The Last Airbender'

	Avatar	The	Last Airbender
Interpersonal	Subject	Finite	Adjunct
		Mood	Residue
Textual	Theme	Rheme	
Ideational	Carrier	Process: Relational	Attribute

From the table 4.1.2 above, the phrase 'Avatar The Last Airbender', based on interpersonal analysis 'Avatar' is the subject and 'The' is the finite both function as mood while 'Your Element' is the adjunct as the residue. The textual analysis 'Avatar' is the theme and 'The Last Airbender'



is the rheme. In the ideational analysis, the ‘Avatar’ is the carrier, ‘The’ is the relational process and the attribute is ‘Last Airbender.’

#### 4.1.3 Table 3 ‘A Netflix Series’

A		Netflix Series
Interpersonal	Particle	Complement
		Residue
Textual		Rheme
Ideational	Process: Relational	Attribute

From the table 4.1.3 above, the phrase ‘A Netflix Series’, based on interpersonal analysis ‘A’ is the particle while ‘Netflix Series’ is the complement both function as the residue. The textual analysis ‘A’ and the ‘Netflix Series’ is the rheme. In ideational analysis, because there is no subject, ‘A’ is the relational process and the attribute is the ‘Netflix Series.’

## 4.2 Visual Analysis

Based on the table of phrases above, the researcher will proceed to analyze the representational meaning in all seven data points provided. The analysis will focus on how the textual and visual elements interact and resonate with each other to construct a cohesive and meaningful narrative across the posters.



**Figure 1. Aang**  
 (Source: CineMaterial Poster Gallery)

In the figure 1 above, Aang represents as the vector. The term *Avatar* in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* connects to Table 4.1.2, as the phrase emphasizes Aang’s role as the Avatar and highlights that he is the last Airbender within the timeline depicted by the vector. Aang is seen wearing orange monk-like attire that reflects his Air Nomad heritage, along with a shaved head and a blue arrow tattoo, while holding a staff, symbolizing his identity as an Airbender. His



expression is often calm yet focused, reflecting his inner conflict and growth as the Avatar. Despite his youthful appearance, his posture and expression convey responsibility and leadership. In terms of classification, Aang is not only the protagonist but also a symbolic representation of Air Nomad heritage. His attire, shaved head, and tattoo classify him within a cultural and spiritual tradition rather than merely portraying him as an individual in action.

The vector's pose, with Aang in a ready stance, reflects a material process that aligns with the phrase *Master Your Element* in Table 4.1.1, as it involves physical action, specifically airbending. The swirling air around his staff reinforces his connection to elemental mastery and emphasizes his identity as an Airbender. In terms of the analytical process, the arrow tattoo symbolizes his mastery of airbending and spiritual connection, while the staff serves as an attribute that reinforces his identity.

The circumstances are the mountainous terrain in the background, bathed in warm tones, conveying a world filled with challenges, beauty, and adventure. The warm glow of the sun further emphasizes Aang's connection to his cultural roots, with air bending symbolizing balance and peace. In terms of symbolic process, which connects to the phrase in table 4.1.1 'Master your Elements' suggests that Aang must not only master airbending but also his role as the Avatar. The warm lighting emphasizes his heroic and legendary status, positioning him as a figure of balance and resilience.



**Figure 2. Katara**

(Source: CineMaterial Poster Gallery)

In the figure 2 above, Katara, represents as the vector and as a supporting character in *Avatar: The Last Airbender* wearing a blue traditional Water Tribe attire reflects her cultural roots and heritage as a member of the water tribe. Katara's posture and expression visually signify determination and compassion, aligning with her role as a nurturing yet strong figure. The vector's depiction as a powerful yet caring character underscore themes of unity and support, reflecting established visual conventions in character representation. In terms of classification, Katara is classified as a Water Tribe member, visually distinguished by her traditional blue attire, her hair





loopies and fur-lined clothing further categorize her within the Water Tribe's distinct identity. She is not only a warrior but also a healer, representing the dual nature of waterbenders—both strong and nurturing.

The process is captured through the vector's outstretched arms with flowing water, embodying the fluidity of her movements. The arc of water, shaped elegantly as she bends it, reflects her skill as a Water bender. This is represented as a material process, resonating with the phrase *Master Your Element* in Table 4.1.1, as it involves physical action and mastery. In terms of analytic process, the flowing water in her bending stance is an attribute of her elemental mastery, reinforcing her role as a skilled Water bender, as water itself is her weapon. The icy tundra and igloo-like structures in the background attribute her origins to the Water Tribe's homeland.

The circumstances of the scene include the icy tundra and towering ice mountains in the background, setting a cool tone that reflects the natural environment of the Water Tribe. This environment emphasizes Katara's connection to her surroundings, with water serving both as a symbol of her identity and a tool for her empowerment. In terms of symbolic process, the arc of water she bends symbolizes fluidity, adaptability, and emotional strength, qualities deeply tied to the philosophy of waterbending, while Katara's expression and pose position her as both a protector and a nurturer, reinforcing the idea that waterbender's balance power and care.



Figure 3. Sokka

(Source: CineMaterial Poster Gallery)

In the figure 3 above, Sokka, represents as the vector and a supporting character in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, wearing Water Tribe attire that reflects his practicality and cultural heritage as a member of the Water Tribe. Unlike his sister Katara, Sokka's clothing is simpler, emphasizing his role as a strategist and warrior. The vector's expression, ranging from playful to serious, visually represents a balance between humor and responsibility. His portrayal as a skilled fighter, despite not being a bender, aligns with the broader narrative theme that strength manifests in various forms, emphasizing courage, determination, and intelligence as equally significant as elemental abilities. In terms of classification, Sokka is classified as a Water Tribe warrior, visually



represented by his blue attire that aligns with the Water Tribe's cultural identity. Unlike Katara, Sokka is also classified as a non-bender, distinguishing him from the other main characters who have elemental abilities.

The vector is positioned in a dynamic stance, wielding his boomerang, which reflects a material process that resonates with the phrase *Master Your Element* in Table 4.1.1. This connection emphasizes physical action and mastery, showcasing his readiness for combat and strategic abilities. In terms of analytical process, the boomerang is a key attribute, symbolizing his strategic combat skills and intelligence. The background featuring an Earth Kingdom village attributes him as a protector and ally, highlighting his leadership role in battle.

The circumstances of the scene, featuring an Earth Kingdom village with wooden bamboo housing in the background, highlight the vector's role in protecting the village from the Fire Nation's aggression. In terms of symbolic process, his combat-ready stance represents his bravery and responsibility, showing that strength is not limited to bending and his serious expression conveys determination, shifting away from his usual humorous personality to emphasize his role as a protector.



**Figure 4. Zuko**  
(Source: CineMaterial Poster Gallery)

In the figure 4 above, Zuko is represents as a vector and a pivotal character in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, wearing traditional Fire Nation battle attire that reflects his royal heritage and martial discipline. The distinctive armor and red accents of his clothing emphasize his high status within the Fire Nation and his connection to its militaristic culture. Zuko is positioned in a powerful stance, with his hands outstretched and surrounded by flames, symbolizing his firebending mastery. His portrayal highlights the themes of conflict, honor, and transformation, as he navigates his struggle between loyalty to the Fire Nation and his growing sense of justice and personal growth. Visually, Zuko is classified as a Fire Nation prince, indicated by his regal yet battle-ready attire. The fiery background and Fire Nation architecture further reinforce his association with the nation's militaristic identity, underscoring his noble lineage and martial background.



This dynamic posture reflects a material process, resonating with the phrase *Master Your Element* in Table 4.1.1, as it involves physical action. In the poster, Zuko is bending fire, symbolizing his mastery over the element, commanding and manipulating it with precision and intensity. From an analytic perspective, his scar—though not explicitly emphasized in this image—remains a significant attribute, symbolizing his painful past and inner struggles. The firebending ability, visibly manifested through his outstretched hands, functions both as a weapon and a symbol of his internal conflict, representing the tension between aggression and honor.

The circumstances of the scene, set against a fiery background with traditional Fire Nation architecture, emphasize Zuko's internal and external struggles—his pursuit of honor, redemption, and his identity as a prince of the Fire Nation. The blazing flames highlight his connection to firebending and the destructive potential he wields, underscoring both his conflict and transformation throughout the story. Symbolically, his serious expression and the flames emerging from his hands represent power and control, reinforcing his identity as a skilled firebender.

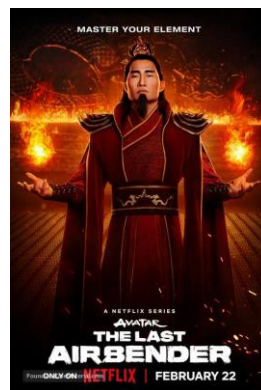


Figure 5. Lord Ozai  
(Source: CineMaterial Poster Gallery)

In the figure 5 above, Lord Ozai, represents as the vector and the main antagonist in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, depicted in red and dark regal Fire Nation attire. His outfit, adorned with intricate gold accents and armor, signifies his supreme authority, power, and dominance over the Fire Nation. The vector's stern expression and commanding posture reflect his ruthless and ambitious nature, reinforcing his role as a tyrant bent on world domination. As the central antagonist, Ozai's portrayal evokes a sense of fear and respect and is designed to emphasize his authoritarian rule and unrelenting pursuit of power. In terms of classification, Lord Ozai is classified as the supreme ruler of the Fire Nation, visually represented by his regal attire with gold embroidery and intricate armor and the presence of the dragon silhouette classifies him within a Chinese mythological, signifying his authoritarian leadership and absolute power. His fire bending ability and the surrounding flames categorize him as a firebender of unparalleled strength, reinforcing his identity as a formidable antagonist.



The vector is positioned in an imposing stance, his hands outstretched, surrounded by flames—a demonstration of his unparalleled fire bending mastery resonating with the phrase *Master Your Element* in Table 4.1.1, as it involves physical action as mastery. This posture reflects a material process, symbolizing his ability to command fire with precision and destructive force, highlighting his dominance as the Fire Lord. In terms of analytical process, the flames surrounding him act as an extension of his power, his stern expression and upright, commanding posture are defining attributes that represent his ruthlessness, ambition, and lack of empathy, further constructing his identity as an authoritarian figure, a feared and powerful figure.

The circumstances in the poster include a fiery background, traditional Fire Nation architecture, and the silhouette of a dragon, all reinforcing his cultural identity. The dragon, a divine symbol traditionally associated with emperors, further emphasizes power and authority. Although Lord Ozai is not an emperor, the dragon signifies his role as the ruler of the Fire Nation. The blazing flames and traditional Fire Nation structures symbolize his reign over a militaristic and expansive empire. In terms of symbolic process, the blazing flames surrounding Ozai symbolize destruction, war, and absolute control, mirroring his ambition to dominate all nations. On the other hand, the dragon silhouette serves as a cultural and symbolic marker of ultimate power and divine rule, positioning Ozai as a god-like figure within his own nation.



Figure 6. Azula  
(Source: CineMaterial Poster Gallery)

In the figure 6 above, Azula, represents as the vector and another pivotal antagonist in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, depicted in traditional Fire Nation battle attire that underscores her royal lineage, precision, and commanding presence. The vector's outfit, featuring sharp angular designs and red accents, emphasizes her status as a Fire Nation princess and a skilled fire bender. The vector's intense expression and calculated posture reflect her ruthless ambition, perfectionism, and control, traits that define her as a formidable opponent. Her portrayal highlights the destructive nature of emotional repression and the pursuit of unattainable ideals. In terms of classification, Azula is classified as a royal and elite firebender, visually marked by her regal yet battle-ready



Fire Nation attire. The fiery surroundings and combat stance categorize her as a dominant and highly skilled firebender, reinforcing her status as a prodigy within the Fire Nation.

The vector is positioned in a dynamic, aggressive stance, her hands poised for fire bending, surrounded by flames—a representation of her unmatched mastery and control over fire. This posture reflects a material process as it captures her precise physical actions and unparalleled fire bending skill which resonates in the table 4.1.1 as it involves action and mastery. In terms of analytical process, Azula's sharp, angular outfit design reflects her precision, discipline, and militaristic mindset. Her fierce gaze and upright posture highlight her confidence, arrogance, and calculated nature, emphasizing her obsession with control and perfectionism.

The circumstances in the poster include a fiery background with traditional Fire Nation architecture and the silhouette of a dragon etched into the scenery. These elements reinforce her royal and cultural identity. The dragon, a recurring motif, symbolizes power, ambition, and dominance, traits central to the vector's character. The blazing flames and the architectural motifs signify her connection to the Fire Nation's imperialist culture and her role as a calculated and relentless figure. In terms of symbolic process, the Fire Nation architecture reinforces her identity as a figure of authority and imperial influence. The dragon motif serves as a recurring symbol of power, ambition, and control, reinforcing Azula's desire for supremacy.



Figure 7. Iroh

(Source: CineMaterial Poster Gallery)

In the figure 7 above, Iroh, represents as the vector and a mentor figure in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. His expression, calm and contemplative, conveys his wisdom, compassion, and inner peace, further highlighting his role as a guide and protector. The vector is depicted wearing traditional Fire Nation robes that reflect his cultural heritage and royal lineage. Unlike the militaristic and rigid attire of other Fire Nation characters, his outfit is softer, warmer in tone, and more relaxed in design, symbolizing his departure from the aggressive norms of his nation and emphasizing his philosophical and nurturing nature. In terms of classification, Iroh is classified as both a firebender and a mentor figure, visually differentiated from other Fire Nation characters



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through his softer attire and peaceful demeanor. Unlike the militaristic and aggressive Fire Nation figures, his warm-toned robes, calm expression, and relaxed stance classify him as a philosopher and spiritual guide rather than a warrior.

Iroh's gentle expression, calm demeanor, and slightly open posture convey his role as a mentor and spiritual guide, emphasizing themes of redemption and understanding. His positioning, standing calmly amidst a fiery environment, reflects a relational process, symbolizing his ability to connect with others with harmony over aggression. This resonates with the phrase *Master Your Element* in Table 4.1.1, this phrase encapsulates Iroh's duality as both a skilled fire bender and a philosopher who has achieved mastery not only over the physical aspect of fire bending but also over the emotional and spiritual balance it requires. In terms of analytical process, Iroh gentle expression and relaxed posture indicate emotional and spiritual mastery, showing that he has transcended traditional Fire Nation ideals of conquest and domination. The presence of fire around him signifies his firebending heritage, but its controlled and non-threatening nature reflects his philosophy of balance and harmony.

The circumstances of the scene, including fiery torches, a serene horizon, and his position on a ship, emphasize Iroh's duality as both a skilled fire bender and a philosopher who values peace. The torches symbolize his Fire Nation roots and his connection to fire bending, while the serene horizon highlights his pursuit of inner tranquility and wisdom. The ship setting reflects his journey—both physical and spiritual—offering a counterbalance to the fiery aggression typically associated with other Fire Nation figures. In terms of symbolic process, the serene horizon behind him contrasts with the fiery elements, visually embodying his duality as both a powerful firebender and a man of wisdom and peace.

### 4.3 Cultural Values

4.3.1 Table 1 Cultural Values on Poster

Poster	Vector
Figure 1 'Aang'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aang's Monk like attire and shaved head</li> <li>- Aang's posture</li> </ul>
Figure 2 'Katara'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Katara's blue traditional Water Tribe attire</li> <li>- Katara's posture</li> </ul>
Figure 3 'Sokka'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sokka's blue traditional Water Tribe attire</li> <li>- Sokka's posture</li> <li>- Sokka's Earth Kingdom Village in the Background</li> </ul>
Figure 4 'Zuko'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Zuko traditional Fire Nation battle attire</li> <li>- The traditional Fire Nation architecture in the background</li> </ul>
Figure 5 'Lord Ozai'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lord Ozai's red and dark regal Fire Nation Attire</li> <li>- The dragon silhouette in the background</li> </ul>
Figure 6 'Azula'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Azula's traditional Fire Nation battle attire</li> <li>- Azula's posture</li> <li>- The dragon silhouette in the background</li> </ul>



Figure 7 ‘Iroh’  
- Iroh’s traditional Fire Nation robe  
- Iroh’s posture

In Table 4.3.1 above, all the vectors from each figure that reflect Asian cultural values are explained, emphasizing the elements within each figure that contribute to this reflection, as supported by insights and findings from relevant articles and journals to strengthen the opinions and analyses presented in this research from the journal ‘Avatar: The Last Airbender’s Real-Life Inspiration For Every Bending Power,’ ‘Cultural Fashion: Katara and Sokkas book 1 robes,’ and ‘Influences on the Avatar franchise,’

In figure 1, the cultural value is found in Aang’s attire and his shaved head which is inspired by Buddhist monks whose attire often consists of simple, traditional robes and shaved heads as part of their monastic life and discipline. Aang’s posture represents a Chinese martial art that resembles Bagua Zhang (Shaw-Williams, H., 2020). Bagua Zhang also emphasizes fluid, circular motion and adaptability, which can be seen in how Aang moves, especially when using his air bending abilities (wiki, A., 2012)

In figure 2, the cultural value is found in Katara’s blue traditional Water Tribe attire that is inspired by a Hunnu Deel robe from a Hun-style Mongolia clothing. Katara’s posture represents a Chinese martial art, that is Tai Chi (Shaw-Williams, H., 2020). Tai Chi focuses on utilizing internal energy, which is similar to the concept of a water bender drawing power from the surrounding water and channeling it through their body (Altaculture, 2020 & Wiki, A., 2012).

In figure 3, the cultural value is found in Sokka’s attire, similar to Katara’s attire, he is seen wearing a blue traditional Water Tribe attire that is inspired by a Hunnu Deel robe from a Hun-style Mongolia clothing. Unlike Katara, though non-bending, Sokka is seen using a Japanese martial art, Tessenjutsu using Boomerang as his weapon in combat. From its background, features one of Earth Kingdom’s village that is inspired from a Japanese architecture house called feudal Japan (Altaculture, 2020 & Wiki, A., 2012).

In figure 4, the cultural value is found in Zuko traditional Fire Nation attire, inspired by an ancient Chinese military uniform, though there are no specific details in which dynasty that is closely tied to. There is a traditional Fire Nation architecture in the background which is a replica of a Chinese Pagoda or Temples inspired from China (Wiki, A., 2012).

In figure 5, the cultural values found in the poster is Lord Ozai’s red and dark regal Fire Nation Attire that is inspired by ChangShan nobility clothing that is used during the Han Dynasty, as seen in the poster that he is wearing a crown, though not an emperor, he is the ruler and lord in the Fire Nation. The presence of the dragon in the background, highlights a cultural significance in the Chinese mythology where they believed that dragons were closely tied to the emperor or the ruler because of its divine authority and wisdom as it represents the emperor as the ‘Son of Heaven’ (Wiki, A., 2012).



In figure 6, the cultural value is found in Azula's traditional Fire Nation battle attire inspired by an ancient Chinese military uniform. Azula's posture represents a Chinese martial art that resembles Northern Shaolin Kung Fu (Shaw-Williams, H., 2020) as its emphasis on powerful strikes, high kicks, and forceful stances, which mirror the fiery energy of fire bending. The dragon motif in the background is a prominent symbol in Chinese mythology, though Azula is not a ruler but from the poster she is seen wearing a crown which means that she is a princess of the Fire Nation, the dragon represents strength and authority aligning with Azula's character as a determined royal figure (Wiki, A., 2012).

In figure 7, the cultural value is found in Iroh traditional Fire Nation robe resembles ChangShan robe from the Han dynasty Chinese clothing, though different from the other fire bender's, Iroh clothing is lean more towards a retired general and a royal member from the Fire Nation. Through Iroh's calm and composed posture, it reflects a worldview in the Taoist and Confucian tradition of East Asia where they prioritize balance and harmony (Wiki, A., 2012).

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (2024) movie posters construct representational meaning by integrating Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) and Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar. Through an analysis of both textual and visual elements, the findings reveal that the posters reflect key Asian cultural values, such as harmony, resilience, and spiritual growth. The interaction between linguistic and visual modes highlights how multimodal texts convey layered meanings, reinforcing cultural identity and narrative engagement.

Textual analysis using SFG's three meta-functions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—shows how key phrases like "Master Your Element" establish themes of mastery and identity. Meanwhile, visual analysis using representational meaning theory reveals that participants' attire, postures, and backgrounds embody cultural heritage and symbolic significance. The posters' use of vectors, material processes, and symbolic elements illustrates how Hollywood representations can incorporate and reinterpret Asian cultural traditions.

Overall, this research highlights the role of movie posters as cultural artifacts that blend textual and visual elements to shape audience perceptions. By constructing representational meaning through multimodal discourse, these posters contribute to the broader discourse on Asian representation in Western media. Future studies could expand on this analysis by exploring interactive and compositional meanings or examining audience reception to gain deeper insights into the impact of such portrayals.



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