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*Theory and Practice in English Studies*. 2012, vol. 5, iss. 1, pp. [27]-55

ISSN 1805-0859

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/129567>

Access Date: 16. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

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# EXPLORING THE IMAGE OF WOMEN TO PERSUADE IN MULTIMODAL LEAFLETS

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## 1. Introduction

LANGUAGE is subject to variation depending on the user and on the situation in which it is being used. The article will focus on the analysis of authentic products of social interactions (texts), considered in relation to the cultural and social context in which they are negotiated. Moreover, this research will analyse and explain how meanings are made in everyday linguistic interactions (Gentner & Goldin-Meadow 2003: 12).

This article will concentrate on multimodal texts in which women are represented. They are leaflets advertising free excursions; and, therefore, they communicate through the way they select the visual forms and combine them with the written text (Cook 2001: 1; Trappes-Lomax 2004: 133; Woods 2007: 38). This combination creates a multimodal text according to the cultural conventions that surround the text, because every text is always inside a context of culture that determines the principles why a text is created in that way.

Consequently, multimodal texts in Western cultures are different than those texts in Eastern cultures. In this sense, when dealing with a multimodal text, it does not make sense

to analyse each resource (music, image, language, etc.) independently, because all these elements create a whole. As van Leeuwen and Jewitt (2001: 7) highlight: “[...] text analysis can show what representations include and exclude, what they prioritise and make salient, and what differences they construct between different people, places and things.”

The media has the power to shape or to modify people’s ideas, perceptions or attitudes because every image and linguistic choice is not random; but, on the contrary, it is motivated by and created as a result of a complex phenomena, capable of creating a persuasive meaning, as Woods points out (2007: 12): “[...] advertising discourse is painstakingly pre-planned and organized, to a degree scarcely encountered in any other field of communication [...]”

Due to this, it is essential that in the process of making sense of how women are represented, and in the process of interpretation of the ideas and values associated with them in the multimodal texts analysed, readers assume an active role. The way in which the meaning of these texts is decoded depends as much on what the readers bring to them as what the author puts into them. Images are crucial in the process of persuading the reader to accept a particular image of women. As Borchers (2002: 165) highlights: “Like words, images are symbols that are building blocks of persuasive messages. Images communicate in ways that words cannot.”

Consequently, after what has been said in the previous paragraphs, by paying attention to the different linguistic and visual choices found in the multimodal texts under analysis readers can be aware of the manipulation and power of mass media to influence social relations, knowledge and values—in other words, language and power co-exist in a particular manner (Kress 1989: 52). Moreover, the visual characteristics of images, the kind of language and the grammatical structures used to convey meanings can alter or influence the way in which the meaning is perceived or interpreted. In other words, with this analysis, the texts are viewed as “consisting of multiple, interacting textual levels that make their meaning through the constant interplay of

smaller and larger textual units” (Baldry & Thibault 2006: 54). In addition, the different linguistic and visual choices determine the construction and constitution of the social world. For this reason, the following questions are important: Why does communication take place in this way? What social response is expected from the reader?

In order to answer the said questions, Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) has been chosen as the linguistic framework for this article in order to study how language is used in its context (Blackledge 2009: 4; Halliday 1978: 27; Schleppegrell 2012: 21; van Leeuwen 2009: 277). In this way, different recurrent elements in the visual and written language of the leaflets under analysis will be explained by reference to their function in the total linguistic system, because in any text the three functions of language can be observed, i.e., ideational or experiential, interpersonal and textual (they are called representational, interpersonal and compositional when dealing with multimodal texts, see Kress & van Leeuwen 2006), as Nalon makes clear (2000: 214):

Every text is about some doing or happening involving some kind of participant (experiential metafunction); these doings or happenings will appear in a logical sequence (causal, temporal and so on: *logical metafunction*). Beliefs as to the role of the text in the interaction and the position of the listener or addressee with respect to these beliefs and to the speaker or producer (*interpersonal metafunction*) will be mapped onto the text by the latter. Finally, the text will be organised so as to present an informational and thematic structure and to “hang together”: this realises the *textual metafunction* of a text.

Physical properties of texts anchor the text within social circumstances and relations (Barthes 1977). By giving attention to the physical properties of texts, creativity is located in writing within a framework of concrete social forces. Consequently, texts are understood as discourse, following Renkema (2009: 162): “Discourse is seen as the discursive ex-

pansion of constituent relations over the clause or sentence border, and (written) discourse is seen as (half) a dialog, in which an addresser tries to deal with possible remarks and questions of an addressee.” Similarly, Martin and Rose (2007: 1) state that analysing discourse implies:

[...] treating discourse as more than words in clauses; we want to focus on meaning beyond the clause, on semantic resources that lead us from one clause to another as a text unfolds. And it also means that we treat discourse as more than an incidental manifestation of social activity; we want to focus on the social as it is constructed through texts, on the constitutive role of meanings in social life.

SFL will allow us to study the interrelationship between language, text and the contexts in which those texts occur, because it includes a social perspective in the study of language. The notion of meaning potential is essential for SFL, since out of all the possible things people can mean, we choose from the range of potential meanings according to our communicative purpose. SFL studies the potential, i.e., all the possibilities that are available in language and the instance that is chosen to fulfil a particular communicative end (Bloor & Bloor 2004; Eggins 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; Thompson & Muntigl 2008). In other words, SFL tries to understand how language functions in society.

Moreover, this study is framed in social semiotics. Therefore, the relation between form and meaning is never arbitrary, because it is always motivated by the interests of the maker of the text to find the best possible and the most plausible form for the expression of the meaning that he/she wishes to express.

Finally, multimodality is also essential for the analysis presented in this article. Multimodality starts from the position that all modes, like speech and writing, consist of sets of semiotic resources (semiotic resource refers to resources that people draw on and configure in specific moments and places to represent events and relations)

(Jewitt 2009; Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn & Tsatsarelis 2001; O'Halloran & Smith 2011; Ventola & Moya Guijarro 2009). Multimodality pays attention to different ways of expressing meaning, as Baldry and Thibault (2006: 21) make clear:

The term multimodal thus recognises that, from an analytical standpoint, it is important and necessary to distinguish different classes of meaning-making resources rather than group them together as members of some more general class which fails to specify their individual characteristics.

The next section provides an overview of the main objectives and methodology used in this article and offers a brief description of the material used as data in it. This is followed by the results obtained after the general analysis of the texts (section 3.1) and the specific analysis of the three multimodal texts in which women appear in the leaflets advertising free excursions, paying attention to the main visual and linguistic characteristics (section 3.2). The discussion of the leaflets' analysis appears in section 4. Finally, section 5 sums up the main conclusions of the study.

## 2. Objectives and Methodology

### 2.1 Aim

This article aims to present an analysis of how three multimodal texts in which women are represented create meaning in context (Martínez Lirola 2006 and 2008a). In other words, this research intends to explore the way in which different resources combine in these texts in order to create meaning, as Baldry and Thibault (2006: xv) point out, multimodality “[...] is a useful yardstick for measuring and assessing the diversity of ways in which texts and their associated meaning-making practices are the results of the ways in which semiotic resources of various kinds work in partnership to create the meanings that we attribute to texts.”

Once the different resources to create meaning in the three texts are analysed, this article will refer to the relationship between texts and society and to how this has an effect in the way readers perceive these texts because the study of multimodal resources must always go in conjunction with the study of the context in which the texts are produced and analysed, in Baldry and Thibault's words (2006: 3): "The important point is that texts are embedded in, and *help to constitute*, the contexts in which they function. Texts are thus inseparable parts of meaning-making activities in which they take part." In this sense, it is acknowledged that meaning-making in these multimodal texts is characterized in terms of different functions (O'Toole 1994, 2011; Baldry 2000; Baldry & Thibault 2006; Kress & van Leeuwen 2006; Thibault 2000).

## 2.2 Context

The corpus of examples belongs to leaflets given out by different selling companies in Alicante (Spain), a very touristic place on the Mediterranean Sea. These leaflets are given out at the beach from time to time, in order to persuade local people and tourists to go on a free excursion to a town not far from the capital. Transportation and food are for free; but, once the excursion is started, people are persuaded to buy all sorts of things: leather jackets, shoes, wine, kitchen utensils, mattresses, machines useful for improving health, etc.

The intended readership of these leaflets is both men and women, and the people who went on the excursions were mainly retired couples (55%), widowed women (35%), and single people or middle-aged couples (10%). The fact of representing women in the texts used for advertising has a persuasive effect, but there are other kinds of "sales tricks" that are even more important than gender, such as the fact of the excursion being free.

## 2.3 Research Design

The research was started by collecting all the leaflets advertising free excursions that were given out during the first semester 2010 in Alicante (Spain). There were 25 texts in total. Out of all the collected pieces of news, this article will offer a detailed analysis of three of them, which have been selected because they are the only leaflets in which there is a photograph of just one woman on them (it is necessary to take into consideration that the woman in Text 1 is a man who does female impersonations). The purpose of the analysis is to explore how the image of the women that appear in these leaflets is constructed through the visual and linguistic characteristics presented in Tables 1 and 2. For this reason, the study will describe the main verbal and visual characteristics that appear in these texts, and the effect that they have on readers.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 General Analysis of Texts

A general analysis of the collected texts shows that all the elements that compose the text have a communicative function. The analysis will pay attention to the way in which each semiotic resource has evolved to be used with other semiotic resources, which has implications in the way readers decode meaning.

In the general analysis of texts, it is important to refer to the role of headings in the construction of meaning. The headings of the pieces of news normally have a persuasive function, because their purpose is to catch the reader's attention so that he/she reads a specific article, buys a particular product, by taking a look at what appears on the main page. They also intend to influence the reader and to guide his/her ideology. For this reason, there should be a coherent relationship between the heading and the piece of news.



The headings use some creative resources of language that allow them to suggest and imply the main message of the article in a few words. For this reason, the author uses alliteration, homophones, rhythm or the omission of certain words to create a telegraphic style, etc. These resources help the author to guide the reader so that he/she concentrates his/her attention on certain parts of the information. The headings found in the pieces of news under analysis are the following: *Excursión gratis* (“Free excursion”) in Texts 1 and 2 and *Lucía, Pasión Española* (“Lucía, Spanish Passion”) in Text 3.

The image of letters that appears in multimodal texts is a very important element. There are capital letters as a way to highlight the place of the excursion, the fact that it is for free, and the advertising company in all the texts under analysis. As regards colours, there are dark colours in 20% of the leaflets, there are light colours in 40%, and there is a contrast between colours in 40%.

The main linguistic characteristics of the 25 multimodal texts analysed are the following:

- The use of positive adjectives in order to highlight the trip: the most common adjective is free (*gratis*); other examples are fabulous (*fabuloso*), wonderful (*maravillosa*), great (*gran*), etc.
- Some emphatic collocations used in order to persuade are the following: impressive breakfast (*impresionante desayuno*), short commercial demonstration (*breve demostración comercial*), exquisite lunch (*exquisite comida*), wonderful breakfast (*maravilloso desayuno*), great free menu (*gran menú gratis*), the best excursion (*la mejor excursión*), spectacular hotel (*hotel espectacular*), etc. Other emphatic expressions are: top quality food/restaurant (*comida/restaurante de primera calidad*), eat as much as you can (*coma cuanto quiera*), a free gift just for coming (*un regalo gratuito sólo por asistir*).
- There are very few verbs, and the ones used are imperatives: visit (*visite*), enjoy (*disfrute*), see (*vea*), etc.

- Use of some focusing adverbs in order to highlight: more/most colourful streets (*más-calles más coloridas*), we will visit all the nice places (*visitaremos todos los lugares más bonitos*), all for free (*todo gratis*).

Apart from referring to the main linguistic characteristics, the visuals are also important because there are photographs of places in 72% of the texts analysed, which is not surprising, taking into consideration that these leaflets try to persuade readers to go on a free trip in order to visit a place not far from Alicante and to buy some products. 2% show things, and 26% show people (24% show women, and 2% show men). The fact that women appear in almost one fourth of the texts under analysis is surprising, and that is why this article intends to pay attention to these specific texts.

Given information is what is assumed to be known by the reader, and new information is what adds something that the reader does not yet know (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 179ff). In this sense, new information appears right in the centre of the leaflet in most of the texts, where the image is situated (80%). Moreover, new information appears on the right in 16% of the texts, i.e., in the place of new information in visual grammar. Finally, the picture appears on the left in 4% of the texts analysed, i.e., in the place of known information in visual grammar. The place and time where the trip starts appear at the front of the multimodal text in 56% of the examples, and at the back in 44%.

After the general analysis of the 25 selected leaflets that has been presented in the previous paragraphs, the next section will concentrate on a detailed analysis of the three leaflets in which women are represented. The analysis will pay attention mainly to the compositional metafunction, but the main aspects of the representational and interpersonal metafunctions will also be mentioned. The main characteristic of the written text will also be presented.

### 3.2 Analysis of the Multimodal Texts in which Women are Represented

In general, women hardly ever appear in the media to refer to pieces of news related to immigration, women in politics, women in sports, etc. (see Martínez Lirola 2010a and 2010b). On the contrary, it is common to find women wearing hardly any clothes in magazines or leaflets advertising trips, perfumes, underwear or clothes (Nalon 2000; Martínez Lirola 2008b). As pointed out before, women appear in 24% of the texts collected for this study. The women represented have beautiful bodies and wear nice clothes. In general, those women who are not slim are rejected in advertisements (Varela 2005: 279).

The three leaflets have similarities and differences, as the following detailed analysis of them shows. This analysis will pay attention to the following visual characteristics: the narrative, i.e., the participants represented and how they are joined by vectors (representational metafunction); the relationship between the participants and the viewer (interpersonal metafunction). Following Baldry and Thibault (2006: 37), the following characteristics, which are related to the said metafunction, will also be taken into consideration: the protagonists' body positions (i.e., the people represented are running, falling, bending, etc.), their facial expressions (surprise, pain, glee, etc.), and their interaction with others.

The main analysis will concentrate on the compositional metafunction in order to observe how the multimodal text is created. For this reason, special attention will be paid to the use of colours, the background, the layout, the size of the image, the frames and the information value (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006: 175ff). Besides, the following verbal characteristics will also be analysed in order to understand the multimodal text as a whole: the caption, the text blocks, the collocations, the emphatic expressions and the verbs. In this way, the analysis will point out how each mode of communication has a specific function, a different potential for mean-

ing making, in Kress's words (2010: 1): "Each mode does a specific thing: image shows what takes too long to read, and writing names what would be difficult to show. Colour is used to highlight specific aspects of the overall message. Without that division of semiotic labour, the sign, quite simply, would not work. Writing names and image shows, while colour frames and highlights; each to maximum effect and benefit."

Women are the most salient element in the three multimodal texts. They are wearing a white dress in Texts 1 and 2, which contrasts with the colour of their hair. It is well known that white is the colour of peace and purity. On the contrary, the woman in Text 3 is wearing a black dress with some decorations in white. In this case, the colour of the dress also contrasts with her hair, because she is blonde. It is obvious that the three women wear the traditional Spanish dress for singing and dancing flamenco. The fact that leaflets use these women and their music and dancing to persuade readers to go on the excursions proposed is interesting, because they are directly telling people that they will have a good time with songs and dance.

The name of the company is also part of the visual text: in Text 1, it is *Fisioterapia Tecno-Salud (Techno-Health)* appears next to the heading *Excursión gratis* ("Free Excursion"), right at the top of the page and on the right, i.e., the place of new information. Vectors are very important elements in visual grammar, because their purpose is to join parts of the multimodal text that are connected, as Kress (2010: 109-110) makes clear: "[...] a vector is a term in a theory of visual representation which names the function of connecting depicted entities in images in specific semiotic relations; an adjective is a term in theories of the modes of speech or writing; it names the function, broadly, of 'adding a quality to qualify a noun.'" There is a very clear vector that joins the name of the company at the top of the leaflet with a round symbol at the bottom of the page and on the left pointing out that this is the first company in the sector and that this is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In Text 2, the name of the company *Charly Tours*, appears surrounding the heading “Free Excursion” (*Excursión gratis*), right at the top of the page. The logo on the right points out that the company is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary; and the logo on the left makes clear the name of the company, and just behind it the phrase “the best option” (*la mejor opción*) highlights the importance of the company. There is a vector that joins the logo on the right with a picture pointing out the name of the hotel in which lunch will be served: *Buffet Hotel Rober Palace \*\*\**. In this way, the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary is linked to the buffet in a three star hotel. This covers part of the woman’s dress, which implies that the hotel is given more importance than the woman.

Moreover, there is another vector that joins the logo on the left and on the right with a bigger logo on the left that again tells readers that the company is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This information is highlighted even more because the woman on the right is looking at this part of the text and the top part of the logo is surrounded by the woman’s white dress. This vector continues to the bottom of the page where there is another visual saying that it is possible to fly to Brazil for 8 days for free. This is another way of emphasizing that the company is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and another way to persuade readers to go on this free excursion.

Furthermore, another vector is found joining part of the woman’s dress with the frame of the message related to going to Brazil. In addition, the advertisement about Brazil is at the same level as the advertisement about the buffet, one on the right and the other on the left at the bottom of the page, as a way of emphasizing all the possible things that people coming on the excursion can get for free. A deeper look at the three logos already referred to shows that there is a triangle between the three of them so that the different pieces of information are connected; and, consequently, they are seen symbolically in relationship to the fact that the company is celebrating twenty years of existence.

On the contrary, in Text 3 the name of the company does not appear on the front of the leaflet but only on the back, as the following paragraphs make clear. The back of the three leaflets is similar in structure, because it includes the program of the excursion: the food that is included, the places to visit, the show that will start after lunch, etc. Moreover, it makes the date of the excursion and the time the bus is leaving clear; this information appears at the bottom of the page and on the left in the three leaflets. The name of the company (*Fisioterapia Tecno-Salud*) appears at the bottom of the page but on the right in Texts 1 and 3. In Text 1 there are also two telephone numbers for information and reservations.

Texts 1 and 3 share that the heading—which is “program” (*Programa*) on both of them—is written in capital letters. Moreover, they also share that, at the very end of the bottom of the page, it makes reference to a company’s code (*Hobby Vacaciones CV-M467-V*), and it highlights that it is “all for free,” writing that in capital letters (*Todo gratuito*). Although Texts 1 and 3 are advertised by the same company, the first one has a dark blue background, whereas the third has a nice picture of the beach as a background. It is on a green square in the heading where the word “program” appears, and the very last line of the text where it says that it is “all for free.” The word “program” appears in red, which clearly contrasts with the green, and the phrase “all for free” appears in white letters. In both texts, the rest of the letters specifying what is included in the program appear in yellow.

Text 2 has a different structure because the back of the picture is divided into two parts: at the top part there are different pictures of people in a leather factory. The heading of this leaflet is “Visit to a leather factory” (*Visita a una fábrica de piel*). The second part of this leaflet includes the program, which is similar to the one presented in Texts 1 and 3. The date and time of departure appears at the very bottom on the left, and the telephone number for information and reservations appears in a small black square with white letters on the right in capital letters. The background

of this second part of the leaflet is white and the letters are black, except the reference to food—*Gran Buffet* (“Great Buffet”), which appears in capital letters and in red; the name of the hotel where lunch will take place, *Rober Palace* (in bold type); and the show of *Lola Flores* (in red).

Although this analysis concentrates mainly on the compositional metafunction, as we have said before, we will refer to the interpersonal metafunction in order to refer to the imaginary relation between the image and the viewer. The first woman’s facial expression shows happiness, and she interacts with readers because she is looking directly to the readers’ eyes; therefore, this is an example of a visual demand. On the contrary, the women in Texts 2 and 3 do not look at the reader. The second one looks to the right and the third woman is looking down to her long dress. The second woman is also standing up and moving, as can be observed from the position of her dress. The third woman is also standing, but is static. The facial expression of the women in Texts 2 and 3 is very serious: they are concentrating and do not look at the readers, which means that they do not interact and, consequently, are examples of offer images, because there is no direct contact between the participants represented and the viewer. The photographs in Texts 2 and 3 contrast with the first, in which the woman appears on the right, i.e., in the place of new information. The woman’s body in the second text appears cut; and, although the women represented in Texts 1 and 3 show their whole body, the woman in the third text is bigger and appears on the whole leaflet. The fact that the three women are medium shots and distanced from the viewer does not favour the interaction with the audience, because they are not represented as very close to the readers.

Apart from the analysis already presented, Table 1 offers an outline of the main visual characteristics, and Table 2 concentrates on the linguistic characteristics.

**Table 1**  
**Main Visual Characteristics of the Texts Analysed**

Visual Characteristics	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3
<b>Representational metafunction</b>			
Narrative	The woman is the only participant	The woman is the main participant  There are some smaller participants at the back of the text	The woman is the only participant
Vectors	There are different vectors that join the woman with the written message in the multimodal text (see above)	There are many vectors that join the different visual elements with the woman on the right and with the written messages (see above)	The vectors come from the woman's body, and they join her body with the written message
<b>Compositional metafunction</b>			
Background	Light background, blurred and dark behind the woman represented  There is a contrast with the colour of the image	Light background, blurred  There is not a very strong contrast with the colour of the image	Light background  There is a contrast with the colour of the image
Page layout	The piece of news appears in the whole page of the image	The piece of news appears in the whole page of the image	The piece of news appears in the whole page of the image
Image size	Medium	Medium	Large
Frames	Marked	Marked	Not marked

[Table 1 continues on the next page]



<b>Visual Characteristics</b>	<b>Text 1</b>	<b>Text 2</b>	<b>Text 3</b>
Information value (in the multimodal text)	New and known information: new information appears in the woman represented on the left	New and known information: new information appears in the woman represented on the right	New and known information: new information appears in the woman represented in the centre of the image
Colours	There is a clear contrast between the white of the woman's dress and the black of the background surrounding her  Moreover, this contrast is made even more emphatic because the woman is using a red fan  There is also a contrast between the part of the text where the picture of the woman appears and the rest of the multimodal text	There is a clear contrast between the black of the protagonist's hair and the white dress  The contrast between the woman and the blue of the sea surrounding her is not very marked	There is a clear contrast between the black of the protagonist's dress and her blonde hair
<b>Interpersonal metafunction</b>			
Position of the protagonist's body	The woman is standing  Demand image	The woman is standing  Offer image	The woman is standing  Offer image
Facial expression	The woman in the photograph is looking at the readers and smiling	The woman in the photograph is very serious and looking nowhere	The woman in the photograph is serious and looking down
Size	Medium shot	Medium shot	Medium shot
Distance	Social distance	Social distance	Social distance

**Table 2**  
**Main Verbal Characteristics of the Texts Analysed**

Verbal characteristics	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3
Heading	“Free excursion” ( <i>Excursión gratis</i> )	“Free excursion” ( <i>Excursión gratis</i> )	“Lucía, Spanish Passion” ( <i>Lucía, Pasión Española</i> )
Written text that is not the heading	Medium size, several lines behind the heading, at the top, centre and bottom of the text	Medium size, several lines behind the heading at the top of the text	Medium size, several lines behind the heading, at the bottom of the text
Collocations and emphatic expressions	Unforgettable day ( <i>día inolvidable</i> )  Extraordinary show ( <i>extraordinario espectáculo</i> )  The first company in this sector ( <i>la primera empresa en el sector</i> )  25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary ( <i>25 aniversario</i> )	20 <sup>th</sup> anniversary ( <i>20 aniversario</i> )  Fabulous show ( <i>fabuloso espectáculo</i> )  Possibility of travelling to Brasil for free ( <i>posibilidad de viajar a Brasil gratis</i> )	Unforgettable day ( <i>día inolvidable</i> )  Let yourself be charmed by the show ( <i>déjese cautivar por nuestro espectáculo</i> )  Free excursion to Benidorm ( <i>Excursión gratis a Benidorm</i> )
Verbs	You are invited ( <i>le invitamos</i> )	You are invited ( <i>le invitamos</i> )	Spend an unforgettable day. Let yourself be charmed ( <i>déjese cautivar</i> )

#### 4. Discussion

With respect to the material and the genre under analysis, namely leaflets used to advertise a free excursion in which people will be offered all sorts of products to buy, advertising is accompanied by the process of commodification, because the body of the women represented is used as a vehicle for achieving some economic motives (Nalon 2000). In other words, the women presented in the leaflets are used as an inducement to go on the excursion and to consume the products sold. Consequently, linguistic and visual choices (both conscious and unconscious) are meaningful at all levels (Fowler 1986).

Although the purpose of the texts analysed is to persuade people to go on a free excursion and then to persuade them to buy the products advertised, they use the picture of women as a recurrent persuasive strategy. There are many different visual and linguistic choices available to express meaning. Consequently, the different linguistic and visual choices in the three multimodal texts analysed construct a particular view of the world and a particular view of a social reality or of a social group, in this case of women.

As regards how these texts achieved their aim in persuading through the woman represented, and how successful they were in doing so, it was beneficial that we carried out a survey: it concluded that around 70% of the people who received one of these leaflets actually went on the excursions (75% had received Text 1, 71% had received Text 2, and 65% had received Text 3). All three texts can be considered persuasive, since there was no significant difference between the number of people who went on each trip. However, Text 1 seems to have been the most persuasive of the set, since it attracted more people: *La Pantoja* is a well-known Spanish singer and dancer, and many people are keen on her style (although the person representing herself on stage is not, in reality, a female).

Moreover, Text 1 can be considered more persuasive, due to the fact that there are differences in facial expressions and gaze directions, i.e., the person represented in Text 1 is the only one smiling, looking directly at the reader, and, therefore, making eye contact. In addition, it is also the only one in which a male flamenco dancer appears dressed as a woman, which has the effect of highlighting its persuasive function because it is rather unusual and, therefore, catches people's attention.

The analysis presented in the previous section shows that the texts' creators influence and manipulate the way in which women are represented in the multimodal texts in such a way that the readers' values, attitudes and ideology are affected (Blommaert 2010; Teubert 2010). In van Leeuwen's words (2005: 83) "[...] the interpretation of texts is structured not only by 'what the text says,' but also by contextually specific rules of interpretation [...]"

The different choices found in the multimodal texts analysed highlight the idea of "sexy women," which goes together with certain stereotypes represented in the images: the women are slim; they wear nice clothes; they appear dancing; they look very serious, etc. Stereotypes come together with simplification and reduction, and are normally used to maintain the social and symbolic order that is already established. These choices say much about the reality and the motivation surrounding the text, as Butt (2003: 5) points out: "We can make inferences about a text because we can ask a direct question about its form: What reasons would I have had to make the text *that way myself?*"

Power is a key consideration here, because women are represented as stereotyped, which is quite important in hegemonic struggle and a common habit of ruling groups. Stereotyping plays a crucial role in hegemony, "by endlessly reiterating what amount to caricatures of subordinate groups" (Talbot 2003: 30). Stereotyping involves reduction and simplification of the main characteristics of women. Moreover, hegemony can be observed through discourse (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 30; Hall 1982: 65).

Extensive evidence suggests that gender is a crucial component of people's social world, i.e., the binary distinction female-male (Holmes & Meyerhoff 2003: 9), although, as Coates states (2007: 67): "At any point in time, there will be a range of femininities and masculinities extant in a culture, which differ in terms of class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and age, as well as intersecting in complex ways." The representation of women in the texts analysed shows the masculine view of looking at the body of women. The pleasure of looking becomes a way of controlling the person that is looked at. In this way, women become objects that project masculine fantasies (Gou 2007: 88).

## 5. Conclusions

This article has paid attention to the purpose of the linguistic and visual resources used in the texts in their social context. In this sense, it has revealed how discourse reflects power and manipulation. By paying attention to the way in which language and images are organized in the multimodal texts under analysis, it is evident that these meanings are influenced by the social and cultural context in which they are exchanged, since they want to transmit a specific image of women: one that presents them as stereotyped; one that highlights their capacity to dance and sing—in other words, to make other people have a good time; one that concentrates on their bodies, neglecting other characteristics. These meanings are created by choosing among the different possibilities language offers, since we have to keep in mind that using language is always a semiotic process (Halliday 1978).

Women are the actors, the doers of the action, the participants who persuade us to go on the free excursions in the three texts. They are the participants from whom the vector emanates. Moreover, their facial expressions and gestures are also important for the way the multimodal text is read and are also part of the vectors that guide readers to pay attention to other parts of the text.

The media have to ensure that an equal and non-stereotyped image of women and men in society is transmitted. Moreover, they have to promote and spread the principle of equality between women and men (*Ley Orgánica*, March 2007). However, we observe that this is not the case here, because a man appears in only one of the 25 texts collected.

The different multimodal texts analysed are effective for communication and persuasion because the different resources used in these leaflets to represent women constitute expected patterns, i.e., these women are represented in a positive way and reinforce stereotyped forms of femininity: they are very slim; they wear beautiful dresses, etc. Consequently, these texts that belong to the same genre have the function of highlighting positive aspects of women as a clear strategy to persuade readers to go on the trip and as a way of highlighting that the women represented can make people have a nice time by singing and dancing.

In this sense, the fact that the transportation, the food, and the spectacle offered by these women dancing and singing are provided “for free” is a very clear, persuasive strategy for making the excursion attractive. The detailed analysis of the three texts already presented shows that the different visual and linguistic elements were not chosen at random but because of a clear communicative function. Therefore, the social response that is expected from the reader is to be happy during the day-trip and, in consequence, to be in the mood for buying some of the products that the companies organising the trips sell.

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## Abstract

This article will explore the main strategies used to make meaning in different multimodal texts advertising free excursions in which women are represented. The corpus of examples belongs to leaflets given out by different selling companies in Alicante (Spain), a very touristic place on the Mediterranean Sea.

This article will study the reasons why the text creators/journalists choose some linguistic and visual forms instead of others and the influence of these forms in the creation of meaning. The different linguistic and visual options show the persuasive strategies used by the creators of the texts under analysis in order to persuade readers to go on these free excursions. Moreover, the texts will be compared in order to observe if the projected image of women is similar in them.

The following questions are essential in this article: How are women represented? and What ideas and values are associated with the women represented in the multimodal texts? The analysis will show that the multimodal texts analysed have used women to

persuade readers to go on the free excursions because the women represented are sexy, wear nice clothes and are presented as good dancers and singers, which imply that they will make readers spend a good time on the excursions.

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**EXCURSION GRATIS**

DESDE 1985  
25 AÑOS  
COMPLACIÉNDOS  
CON SU SALUD

Le invitamos a pasar con nosotros un día inolvidable con el:

**EXTRAORDINARIO ESPECTACULO DE TRANSFORMISMO**

**Homenaje a:  
La Pantoja**

Recorrido por todas sus canciones y su vida

De la mano del gran transformista **Fernando Espulso**

25 años de nuestro aniversario 1985-2010

Reservado el derecho de admisión. Exclusiva Excursión para mayores de 30 años de nacionalidad española.

**PROGRAMA: PROGRAMA:**

- Salida en Autocar de lujo. (Viaje asegurado)
- Restaurante propio. 1.ª Calidad.
- Desayuno/Almuerzo: Bocadillo, patatas fritas, vino, agua, zumos e infusiones, café/leche, magdalenas.
- Demostración comercial de productos exclusivos de Telefónica a precios de escándalo.
- Novedades de última generación.
- Comida regional de 1.ª calidad, bebidas incluidas. "Repita cuanto quiera".
- Y al acabar dará comienzo el espectáculo con un precio baile.
- Déjese llevar por la magia de "Homenaje a La Pantoja". Y regreso al punto de partida

**Fisioterapia**  
TECNO-SALUD

PRODUCTOS PARA TAPAS DE SAUD

**INFORMACION Y RESERVAS**

**652 536 273**  
**677 685 291**

HOBBY Y ACTIVIDADES GRATUITAS

**TODO GRATUITO**

Día: **Miércoles**

Horas: **10'30**

Lugar de salida:

Text 1

**EXCURSIÓN**  
**GRATIS**  
 La Mejor opción

**LES INVITAMOS A CELEBRAR CON NOSOTROS NUESTRO 20 ANIVERSARIO**  
**FABULOSO ESPECTÁCULO**  
 La inigualable  
**Lola Flores**

Charly Tours  
 1990 2000  
 20 ANIVERSARIO  
 NEGRADA

8 Días a BRASIL  
 GRATIS

Charly Tours  
 20 años  
 FABULOSO ESPECTÁCULO  
 ROBER PALAS  
 GRATIS

VIJE GRATIS EXCLUSIVO PARA ESPAÑOLES MAYORES DE 60 AÑOS. RESIDENTES Y EXTRANJEROS PRECIO 15€  
 LA EMPRESA ORGANIZADORA SE RESERVA EL DERECHO DE ADMISIÓN

**VISITA A UNA FABRICA DE PIEL**

**SIMPÁTICO DESFILE DE MODELOS EN PIEL**

**DEGUSTACIÓN DE MISTELA DE MISTELA Y GALLETAS**

**LA EXPOSICIÓN DE BOLSOS Y ZAPATOS MÁS GRANDE DE LA ZONA**

**PROGRAMA**

**INCURS:**  
 \*Regreso de avión en el vuelo EUROPA ASISTANCE

**Itinerario:**  
 \*Seguro obligatorio de viajeros

- Salida de los ligures y a las horas indicadas.
- Llegada a nuestras instalaciones donde se les ofrecerá una gran chocolatada **VALOR** para desayunar o descafeinado con leche con valencianas a gusto de nuestros clientes.
- Amena demostración comercial de productos de Robert Group.
- Simpático desfile de piel donde ustedes serán nuestros modelos, con degustación de mistela y galletitas variadas.
- Gran exposición de bolsos y zapatos, una de las más grandes de la zona.
- **GRAN BUFFET** libre y muy variado en el hotel **“Robber Palas”**, invitamos a un momento para celebrar con todos nosotros **20 años** de **“Lola Flores”**, invitamos a un momento para celebrar con todos nosotros **20 años** de **“Lola Flores”**, una especial celebración que será recordado en el tiempo en su recuerdo a sus miles de éxitos.
- Viaje asegurado 100% con Europ Assistance.
- Regreso al mismo punto de partida.

**LUGAR:**

**DÍA:** 30.10

**HORA:**

**INFORMACIÓN Y RESERVAS**  
**TEL: 601 57 21 76**

Text 2

*Lucia*  
Pasión Española

**¡Pase un día inolvidable!  
Déjese cautivar por  
nuestro espectáculo  
EXCURSIÓN GRATIS A  
BENIDORM**  
Playas y Centro Ciudad

**PROGRAMA:**

- Salida en Autocar de lujo.
- Restaurante propio. 1.ª Calidad.
- Desayuno/Almuerzo: Bocadillo, patatas fritas, vino, agua, zumos e infusiones, cafés/leche, magdalenas.
- Demostración comercial de productos exclusivos de Teletienda a precios de escándalo.
- Novedades de última generación.
- Comida regional de 1.ª calidad, bebidas incluidas
- Repita cuanto quiera!
- ¡¡ Comienza el espectáculo!!!  
y al finalizar regresa a casa.

**Fisiotermia**  
PRODUCTOS PARA TERAPIAS DE SALUD  
HOBBY VACACIONES OF 414674

**TODO GRATUITO**

Días: \_\_\_\_\_  
Horas: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lugar de salida: \_\_\_\_\_

Text 3

