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A MULTIMODAL INVESTIGATION OF TOURIST TEXTS[1] AND CITYSCAPES

Introduction

Following Stuart Hall's depiction of cross-cultural representation, tourism is where cultural meanings are constructed and transmitted (Hall: 2002). Culture is seen not as a set of things but as a series of practices, according to which the members of a society or of a group interpret their surrounding reality and give it meaning. They give meaning to people, objects and events which are relevant to them (Fodde and Denti 2005). What culture does matters more than what it is. "Meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we belong" (Hall 2002: 3). Meaning is strictly related to how culture is used to define and preserve both identity and difference within and between groups (Woodward 1997: 3). Meaning varies with context, usage and historical circumstances (Hall 2002: 9). We give meaning to things according to the way we use them, we think and feel about them, to what we say about them. Therefore, things don't have one single, fixed and unchanging meaning, albeit some attempt to fix it in the interactive dialogic process between active participants (e.g. writers and readers), sustained by the presence of shared cultural codes. If we take tourism discourse as an example of dialogical process, we can doubtless affirm that tourism is cross-cultural: on the one hand, we find the traveller/tourist who searches for new territories and new spaces, willing to encounter and to discover new worlds, new languages and new discourses. On the other hand, the promoters of tourist destinations prepare themselves for this discovery by showing peculiar aspects and patterns of their cultural identity.

For the process of constructing meaning, we need two systems of representation: a system by which anything is correlated with a set of concepts or mental representations and language. Our concepts are well organised, arranged and classified into the complex relations with one another: a conceptual system. Meaning depends on the relationship between things in the world – real or fictional – and the conceptual system, which can operate as their mental representations (Hall 2002: 17-18). Conceptual maps can be different from one person to another, and that is why people understand and interpret in different ways. But, if people may share the same conceptual maps in general, they will interpret the world in similar ways, and, therefore, will probably belong to the same culture.

To communicate these shared meanings in an efficient and effective way, people need a shared language to represent and exchange meanings and concepts. The shared conceptual map must be translated into a common language in order to link concepts and ideas with written words, spoken sounds or visual images, that is to say signs. Therefore, participants in any meaningful exchange must be able to use the same linguistic code. The expression 'linguistic code' refers to language as a system of representation where its elements – sounds, words, notes, gestures, expressions, images, etc. – signify meaning. Representation is really the relation between things, concepts and signs, which the others can perceive, decode and interpret in the same way as we do.

The participants in this dialogic process must also be able to read visual images in similar ways. Images, as well as words and sounds, allow us to communicate meanings and concepts to other people (ibidem). It might appear, at first sight, that in the case of visual language the relationship between the concept and the sign is simpler, more straightforward than in the case of written or spoken language, where most words do not look nor sound as the things they refer to. Visual signs,

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[1] This study is part of an on-going research devoted to the representation of Sardinia in English tourist discourse.

instead, are iconic signs: "they bear a certain resemblance to the things they refer to" (Hall 2002: 20).

In the study of culture, for example in travel guides and tourist web sites, writers need to be aware that meaning, language and representation are crucial elements. To know how concepts and ideas translate into different languages, and how language references the world, writers and readers need to share the same conceptual map and the same linguistic systems.

Another aspect to be taken into account is the difference with the 'other' which is self-evident in tourism. Without difference, meaning could not exist. Meaning is relational. It depends on the difference between opposites (Hall 2002: 234-235). Tourism discourse, as we stated above, is dialogic and, therefore, only through a dialogue with the 'other' are we able to construct meaning and represent a different culture. And finally, as already underlined, the marking of differences in giving meaning to objects is the basis of culture.

According to Barthes (1985), the photographic image has a special status: it is a message without a code; it is not reality but a perfect reproduction of it. In terms of reliability of messages, pictures aren't supposed to lie. Our sense of sight is considered more reliable than our sense of hearing. Images, colours, brightness, reinforce concepts. But do we consider photographs, images, along with the authenticity of their representation or through the intensity of the feelings which the 'authors' (photographers, designers, etc.) put in their images? Do they mirror 'the truth' or a type of truth? (Hall 2002: 7). Images can also be considered a "re-constructed reality": social distance, visual modality, behaviour, eye contact, are the elements we rely upon. For Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), visual communication is always coded and it is transparent if we know the code. The use of visual modes is not the same everywhere. Modes of communication should be analysed and compared within a specific environment. The dominance of language over images and vice versa has been alternating in time. Today it seems that language has lost its supremacy over the other modes of communication and has become one of them.

This study aims at investigating how cultural meanings are constructed and transmitted in some websites and travel guides on Sardinia. Tourist-tourism texts belong to the genre of specialized discourse, as they include texts produced by tourist professionals.

The issue of specialized discourse has been investigated at length in Italy for the last thirty years[2]. However, most scholarly critical work on tourist texts has belonged until recently mainly to the sociological field. Tourist discourse has always been described almost exclusively by sociologists from both sides of the Atlantic (cfr. Rojek, 1997, Chambers, 1999, Cohen, 2004, in the U.S.A.; Urry, 2002, Boyer-Viallon, 2000, Cogno-Dall'Ara, 1997, in Europe). Some occasional linguistic works on tourist discourse appeared in the United States in the late 1980s (Culler, J., 1988; MacCannell, D., 1989).

In Europe, a considerable number of French, Italian, and Swiss linguists have started a school of thought devoted to the study of language features in French tourist discourse (cfr. Margarito, 2002, Moirand, 1988, Rebeyrolle 2000). In Italy, Maria Grazia Margarito's fundamental research, *L'Italie en stéréotypes. Analyse de textes touristiques* (2002) may be regarded as a similar attempt. Worth mentioning are also M.V. Calvi's work on Spanish tourist discourse (2000)[3], N. Daly and M. Parlati's *The Cultural Object: Maps, Memories, Icons* (2005) and O. Palusci and S. Francesconi's *Translating Tourism Linguistic/cultural representations* (2006).

Tourist guides and websites are two of the four representation modes of tourist discourse, the other being tourist advertising and tourist brochures[4].

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[2] In 1991 M. Gotti gave his first contribution to an overall depiction of both the theoretical investigation since then occurred and the analysis of the various and typical features of specialized discourse. This was followed by two volumes, *Specialized Discourse* (2003) and *Investigating Specialized Discourse* (2005), "The Language of Tourism as Specialized Discourse" in Palusci O. e Francesconi S. (a cura di, 2006).

[3] Cfr. Fodde and Denti (2005).

[4] On advertising and tourism advertising see Denti (2000, 2003, 2005) and Fodde and Denti (2005, in press).

For the purpose of the present paper a corpus of seven tourist guides (*Cadogan Guide, DK Eyewitness, Insight Guide, Landscape Sunflowers, Lonely Planet, Rother, Rough Guide)* and three web sites (http://www.regione.sardegna.it, http://www.esit.net, http://www.hellosardinia.com) on Sardinia has been investigated. This analysis will start by focusing on the relationship between tourism and photography, between these latter two and the photographer/viewer, in order to identify the destination, the object of observation, and the topics chosen to portray it according to a certain culture and people's interests.

The second section will investigate the implications of the notions of image and photography, and in particular the denotative and connotative messages they convey, similarly to language, so as to understand the photographer and the publisher's choices, and the way the reader will decode them.

Given that, visual design, as language and all semiotic modes, has an ideational, an interpersonal and a textual metafunction, as argued by Halliday, the next sections will concentrate on those iconic, formal, typographical and textual features which affect the relationship between the represented and the interactive participants of the message, its structure and communicative purpose, the representation of reality. Modality will be dealt with, with reference to the reliability of messages, colours, contextualization, representation of detail, depth, illumination, and brightness. Moreover, the cross-referentiality between non-textual means of information presentation, such as icons, maps, photographs, which normally enrich both travel guides and web sites, and the text will be analysed. Indeed, in tourist guides maps and texts can be totally separated or cross-referential, while in web sites they are usually interwoven.

In this analysis we have followed in particular Urry (2002), Barthes (1981, 1985), Hall (2002), Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, 2001), Ramm (in Ventola 2000), Halliday (1985).

Photography and tourism

Photography and tourism have developed together, benefiting from one another. According to Urry (2002: 127), "to photograph is in some way to appropriate the object being photographed." And the relationship between the object and the photographer/viewer is a power/knowledge one. Through photography, we look at the world in new, different ways and we create new forms of authority for doing so. We transcribe reality, showing something which exists, which has happened. We miniaturise the real "without revealing either its constructed nature or its ideological content"(Urry 2002: 128). In the past, prominent people were photographed because of their importance and representational power within their culture and society. Today, photographs make what is portrayed prominent (ibidem, Barthes 1981: 34).

Another characteristic of the relationship between photography and tourism is that the former moulds travel. In fact, people stop to take pictures of those landscapes, of those people that they want to have memories of. People can commodify and privatise personal and family memoirs (West 2000: 9 in Urry 2002: 128). Pictures become the tourist's demonstration, proof, of having been there, in those places already seen in brochures, travel guides, before leaving (Urry 2002: 129). Through pictures we identify those places worth going sightseeing and the memories to bring back. Sites become sights.

Images help turn the object/subject into something familiar, secure. We gain a sort of control over the foreign environment. In fact, the photographer, and therefore the viewer, are always seen above an inert and subordinate land or cityscape, dominating it (i.e., *Insight guide* 2001: 150, Fig.1; *Landscape Sunflower guide* 2001: 86) and inviting for a visit.

In the definition of the subject to be photographed and displayed on a travel guide, as well as on a web site, space is divided in terms of signs that signify particular themes, not necessarily linked to historical or geographical processes (Urry 2002: 130). Of course, this choice depends on the target reader and his/her interests, on the publisher's communicative purposes, where tourists go and how

they structure their holidays. Both discourse and representations are influenced. Gender and ethnicity are other variables affecting them: pictures normally address, and at the same time portray, family holidays, romantic or fun holidays where people are mostly white and heterosexual. Of course, the visual never depicts landscapes of waste, poverty, disease, dead animals. A key issue is also the social composition of tourists and of those living in the places visited. The relationship between them is influenced by social and physical relations, discursively revealed by photographers, writers of travel guides, etc. They help build visitor attractions (Urry 2002: 145). This has given rise to themed areas, real or constructed, as real and authentic as possible, close to the tourists' expectations: education, entertainment, increasing popularity of museums, hyper-real historical recreations, sports, art and cultural tourism. The real-space relations of the world are replaced by imaginary-space relations, thanks to the pervasiveness of tourist signs and of the rapid circulation of photographic images.,

Denotation and connotation

A photograph is a set of visual practices in a historical and cultural context (Hall 2002: 79). It is not a transformation of the real object and it is not the real object but an "analogical perfection" (Barthes 1985: 7). We can consider a photograph as an objective representation, a 'legal proof', an objective record with a merely informational value, the 'true image' of the world, or, from a more social and personal point of view, a mixture of emotion and information, where the informational value is filtered through the photographer's perspective (Hall 2002: 80 and ff.); through his/her feelings, through social distance, visual modality, eye contact, behaviour, contextualised in different environments. Therefore, if a photograph is an analogical perfection, we do not need a link or a code between the object and its image. Instead, the other analogical reproductions – drawings, paintings, cinema and theatre – have both the analogical content and style, a further message, whose aesthetic and ideological meaning is linked to the receiver's culture.

According to Barthes (1985), an image incorporates three different messages: a linguistic one, a denotative one and a connotative one. While it is easy to separate the linguistic message from the other two, it is not as simple to break up the two iconic messages, since they are received at the same time. Of course, what matters is the final reciprocal relationship between the three. The linguistic message is almost always present as a title, a caption or an article. It is part of the information given. This aspect will be dealt with later on.

The denotative image could be identified as the literal message, a self-sufficient, radically objective image, deprived of its connotations (i.e., a mask – *Insight guide*: 275, Fig.2). It is the first level of intelligibility. Of course keeping the denotative and the connotative messages separate is very hard, if not impossible, for photographs and even more for paintings or drawings always characterised by a style. Nevertheless, looking at a photograph we apparently have only a denotative message. But we need to consider two points here. The first is that we use language (a code) to conceptualise and to describe the picture, and therefore we come across a second connotative message. Moreover, the picture's objectivity is not absolute, first of all because it is composed, modified and chosen; secondly, because of the several techniques employed, such as the choice of objects and their position as symbols of what the author wants to represent, the background, etc.; and thirdly, because it is perceived, read and associated with a system of signs whose meanings are transparent because shared by both emitter and receiver. Therefore, it might be more appropriate to identify two successive moments: at first sight, the reader perceives the denotative message, through the combination of colours and the techniques employed which attract his/her attention on the image itself. Afterwards, a more thorough eye starts filtering the image endowing it with additional meanings supported by a textual message, if present. Advertising highly exploits this strategy.

In the connotative message, the signifier is separate, isolated from language. Signs come from a cultural code. Different individuals can read the image in different ways, due to the distinctive knowledge within the image: pragmatic, national, cultural, aesthetic (Barthes 1985: 36). As in language the lexicon identifies a set of practices and techniques, each sign of an image relates to a set of attitudes, which can or cannot be present in an individual. The image connotation is made up of signs which come from diverse and codified lexicons. The image language is the cluster of words emitted, codified by the creator, and received, filtered by reasoning. The signs of an image are represented by gestures, colours, expressions. They are endowed with a certain meaning which changes with culture. A picture reading and understanding depends on the reader's knowledge, a sort of language intelligible only to those who have learned its signs (Barthes 1985: 17). Furthermore, "the lens of the camera is, in effect, the eye of the person looking at the print" (Roy Stryker quoted in Stott 1973: 29 in Hall 2002: 83).

Hall (2002: 86) suggests a two-stage representational construction. The first is identified by the photographer's choice and framing of the images he/she wants to show. Through this step, the individuals depicted can directly communicate with the reader. The second part of the process includes the matching of the pictures with the textual information, in line with a certain layout.

The ideational metafunction

The ideational metafunction is the representation of the experiential world outside a particular system of signs; it is the way in which we represent objects and the relations between them (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 43-44). The ideational metafunction identifies representational choices: what features to consider critical in a specific moment and context – e.g., in a printed text linearity of the page, sequential structure of the elements, symmetrical layout, neutral background, equal- or different-size elements, distance between the objects. Equality represents a relationship of similarity, that is, of importance. Are people and landscape linked in a locative way? Gradients of focus, colour saturation, contrast between foreground and background represent different types of relationships.

The participants in a semiotic act can be interactive, when they have an active role in the act of communication, or represented, when they are the subject of communication, the people, places and things portrayed (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 46). There are several ways to identify participants. One is the formal art theory (Arnheim 1974, 1982), where participants are called volumes or masses, and processes are called vectors (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 47). Another is the functional semiotic theory (Halliday), which focuses on semiotic functions rather than on forms, identifying Actor, Goal, and Recipient.

Kress and van Leeuwen distinguish two types of representational patterns: narrative processes and conceptual patterns. They are visual tools for the representation of interactions and conceptual relations between the people, places and things depicted in images.

Narrative processes occur when participants are connected by a vector (an oblique line), which represents transportation and transformation, transitory spatial arrangements. Vectors have the same role in images as action verbs in language: they represent processes, movements, transport or transformation. Participants are represented as doing something for each other, unfolding actions and events. When the action is something done by an Actor to a Goal we identify transactional structures. When the participant is single and no Goal is included, the function is non-transactional, and corresponds to that of an intransitive verb. An example of this type is the picture on page 4 and 5 of the *Insight guide* (Fig.3). We see a pretty girl who is running on some rocks. With her body and left leg she forms a vector, she represents movement, action towards a certain direction. In the map on page 102 of the *Rother guide* the indicated roads are grey but for one in red, which is oblique and crosses the map, attracting our attention and indicating a movement. An imaginary car could be the actor running diagonally along a pictorial space, and sometimes a car or a bicycle is present.

Conceptual patterns, instead, arise when participants are represented in terms of their class, structure, meaning. They denote, therefore, generalized, timeless stable essence. They are divided into classificational processes – when the relationship between the participants is a taxonomy, e.g., a hierarchical order - analytical processes – with a Carrier and one or more Attributes, in a relationship of part to whole -, and symbolic processes – with a Carrier and a Symbolic Attribute, in a relationship of meaning or identity.

The Sardinian map on pages 146-147 of the *Insight guide* is an example of an analytical structure. In this map, the Carrier, the whole, is Sardinia and a number of Attributes is represented by Sardinian regions, its roads, rivers, cities, etc. The man with a mask on page 275 of the *Insight guide* (Fig.2) functions as Carrier and the characteristic clothes, hat, fur, etc., function as Possessive Attributes, as the parts that make up the whole: a Mamuthone. In language this would be translated in a possessive attributive clause (the outfit of … consists of …) (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 49).

Consider pages 32 and 33 of the *DK Eyewitness Travel guide* (Fig.4). This is an example of a conceptual, temporal analytical and symbolic suggestive process. Different sizes of the objects depicted, details tend to be de-emphasised through blending of colours, softening the focus, extreme lighting (in favour of mood and atmosphere). We find the use of geometrical shapes according to the meaning they have in specific social and cultural contexts and the values they embody, of horizontal elongation (from left – what is known – to right – what is new), and of vertical elongation (representing hierarchy). Spatiality is built through the relationship of parts to whole. The time-line, indicating temporality, is a feature in between narrative and analytical processes. We do not find vectors but successive stages with fixed and stable characteristics, treated as if they were things. They are arranged on horizontal and vertical lines, both on topographical (showing spatial relations and relative locations) and topological (representing logical relations) lines.

The interpersonal metafunction

The interpersonal metafunction investigates the relationships between represented participants, the people, places and things depicted, and interactive participants, real people who communicate with each other through images, the producers and the viewers of images. In the social context they regulate, to different degrees and in different ways, what may be said with images, how it should be said, and how images should be interpreted. Sometimes the interaction is direct and immediate (when participants know each other), sometimes it is not - e.g., in photographs in magazines or on the web there is not a face-to-face communication: the viewer only has the picture itself, as it appears. The viewer does not know the producer of the image and finds himself alone with the image. The producer can only create a mental image of the viewer. Similarly, in writing the author can be real when addressing a real reader in the guise of represented participants, or implied, when instructing through the general design of the text. Also the reader can be implied, and the text employs a specific linguistic code (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996).

Photos and drawings have a different communicative purpose. The main aim of photographs is to produce an imaginary relation between the represented and the reader being addressed (identification with the represented – hero), while drawings aim at being considered as objective, factual information (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 122). Images can be naturalistic, detailed, complex, stylized, or conventional.

When in pictures the represented looks straight towards the viewer, his/her eyelines form vectors which work as connecting means. The contact is created on an imaginary level. A particular gesture of the represented could also form vectors and support, strengthen the linkage. The represented directly addresses the viewer, asking him/her to do something (come closer, stay at a distance). Facial expressions and gestures affect it (i.e., a smile reveals social affinity). This also implies, defines, who the viewer is, leaving out the others. Normally the represented participant

looking straight at the viewer is either a human or an animal. Sometimes however a non-human being may be represented as looking at the viewer and therefore anthropomorphized to a certain degree (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 124). On the contrary, when the address is not direct, no contact is perceived. The represented participant becomes the object of the viewer's observation who becomes the subject of the look. In this case, the viewer is not induced into producing a social response but is offered something: information, things to think about, suggestions on archaeological sites or museums to visit, as in the portrayal of an antique vase at a close distance. A long distance (people in the background) decreases the impact of the look. In this case the viewer is not asked to engage in a direct relation with them. Of course, a certain action is suggested. Maps belong to the impersonal type. They offer objective knowledge, lacking emotional involvement and subjectivity [5].

If we consider personal pronouns, the direct look at the viewer realizes a 'you'. The 'I' is either absent or objectified, hidden behind a she/he/they (ibidem), such as the language of advertisements and instructions.

The frame size (i.e., close-up – head and shoulder, medium long shot – full figure, etc.) is another device used to identify the type of relationship together with social distance: close or far from the viewer (both for people and objects). Social relations determine the distance: close personal distance, far personal distance, close social distance, far social distance (more formal and impersonal), public distance (strangers) (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 131). Of course, intercultural interpretations of distance are to be taken into account. Different fields of vision correspond to different meanings: for example, the picture of a head corresponds to intimate distance, head and shoulders to close personal, the upper body of at least four or five people to public distance. These correspond to definitions of size of frame (which derive from the proxemics of everyday face-to-face communication). The duration of a social interaction and context also matter in the same way.

Perspective enables a distinction to be made between two types of images: subjective images, with a central perspective and, therefore, a 'built-in' point of view, and objective images, without a central perspective, and without a 'built-in point of view' (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 136). In this type of relation we weigh the position and predominance of images and texts, which help create an impression of depth, of semantic hierarchy, the system of foreground and background, the position of the viewer within a natural world or facing a continuum of forms which take him/her from the representational to the significational, and from the perceptual to the conceptual (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 139).

The selection of an angle represents the position occupied by the photographer and the viewer, a point of view to express subjective (although socially influenced) attitudes towards the represented. The angle defines a relation of power and involvement: if it is high, the subject is represented as being small and insignificant, and the viewer has the power; if it is low, the represented is powerful; the same eye level indicates equality. An oblique angle, instead, identifies detachment.

Maps have a frontal or perpendicular top-down angle which identifies special and privileged viewer positions which neutralise perspective distortions. Frontal angle means action, maximum involvement, while top-down means power and knowledge.

If we analyse the picture of the old Sardinian woman and of the young tourists on page 2 of the *Insight guide* (Fig.5), the former does not look straight at the viewer, who is not asked a response but offered something (information, things to think about). This oblique angle builds distance, but the smiling face is close to the viewer, originating involvement and emotions, and evokes wisdom, security, patriarchy. The latter, instead, look straight, directly addressing the observer, asking him to do something, maybe to come closer, but are more distant, thereby reducing involvement. On page

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[5] Cfr. primary speech acts as described by Halliday 1985 (See also Austin 1965, Searle 1969, Widdowson, 1979 on speech acts). Primary speech acts offer information (the expected response is agreement), offer goods and services (acceptance), demand information (answer), demand goods and services (undertake what he/she has been asked to do). In images not all four acts are realized. Only offer of information (or through the form of information) and only demand of goods and services help achieve a certain social relation (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 127-129).

277 of the *Insight guide* we see the back of two young tourists who are reading a map, meaning "follow us", but they are also distancing themselves from the world.

When we look at pictures of cityscapes (e.g.,http://www.hellosardinia.com/eng/oristano/or_or.htm or http://www.hellosardinia.com/eng/Cagliari/cagliari_citta_cagliari.htm) distance requires the tourist to stop and identify the final destination, establishing a certain hierarchy. Distance also evokes respect for the environment.

Modality

Is what I see true, factual, real? 'Photographs don't lie', many affirm. The answer remains uncertain. The term modality comes from linguistics and "refers to the truth value or credibility of (linguistically realized) statements about the world" (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 160). In language we have modality markers, such as verbs (may, will, must, etc.), adjectives, and adverbs. Modality is interpersonal: "it *produces* shared truths aligning readers or listeners with some statements and distancing them from others. It serves to create an imaginary 'we'" (ibidem). Modality is important in visual communication too, with reference to the reality of people, places and things depicted. Photographs represent what the eye can normally see, reflect a specific moment in time, and show depth, through the play of shades and lights, a setting and a background. They are concrete and detailed, a naturalistic, unmediated and uncoded representation of reality (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 162). Reality is therefore in the eye of the observer, influenced by social beliefs, after a sort of cultural training, located in a social setting and a history (scientific realism). Today, the main criterion by which we estimate visual realism and therefore modality, is naturalism as conventionally understood (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 163). The relation is between what we normally see in reality and what we see represented, in terms of colours, depth, illumination, brightness, contextualization, representation of details.

If colours are exaggerated, more saturated, the pictures will look more than real, or they will appear to be ethereal, if saturation is lower (lower modality). There is a continuum between full colour saturation and absence of colour (black and white), where only brightness values (darkness or lightness) remain; between full colour differentiation and monochrome; from modulated (with shades) to flat colour. Modality is higher or lower the closer colours get to the standard (natural) blend. Contextualization refers to the presence of a fully articulated and detailed background or its absence: overexposure or underexposure reduce visual details and lower modality. We can have maximum representation of details or abstraction, affected by sharpness of focus and exposure. Modality is also influenced by depth, from absence to deep perspective, and by illumination, from a total play of light, shade and texture to its absence. If we look at the landscape on page 80 of the *Rother guide* (Fig.6), modality is high and longevity, strength and power are conveyed, while the pictures of food on page 48 of the *Lonely Planet* evoke senses through the play of colours, light and details.

The textual metafunction

Pictorial and verbal elements always develop meaning through a process of inter-semiotic layering: transposition, juxtaposition, combination and fusion. Photographs and images can enhance the presentation of a travel guide or web site, replace ethnographic objects or subjects, making the representation more effective by endowing the objects with a real context (Hall 2002: 177).

The structure of the image is never isolated: it communicates at least with the text that accompanies it. Therefore, the overall information depends on both a linguistic structure, made up of words, and a visual structure, made up of lines, colours, and surfaces. They fill separate spaces, contiguous and not homogeneous. They need to be analysed both separately and together, in their

complementarity (Barthes 1985: 6). Some authors think an image is a rudimentary system compared to language, others believe that language cannot fully translate the richness of the image (Barthes 1985: 23).

Newspapers, magazines, advertising, travel guides, web sites, display a layout containing written text, images and other graphic elements which are interactive and which produce a synergy of visual designs (Barthes 1985: 15). Even writing is a form of visual communication. Whereas in the past language had a dominant role in any type of communication, images and music, if present, being subordinate to language, today all three semiotic systems hold the same importance, to the point that sometimes images are more powerful than language. This has given rise to the emergence of a new visual literacy based on both images and visual design. However, when visual media form an alternative to writing, conservative people see them as a potential threat to the dominance of verbal literacy (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 15-16).

Unlike Barthes, Kress and van Leeuwen consider text and image independent of each other, as separately created messages, simply connected (1996: 17). Language and visual communication are two different and independent ways of creating those meanings which constitute our cultures (ibidem). Thus, for example, subjectivity and objectivity can be expressed in language through the use of mental process clauses and nominalization, through perspective in images.

According to Barthes (1985:15), the text is another way of connoting an image and it is a parasitic message: it rationalises the image. It makes the image heavier, burdening it with culture, morality, and imagination. Sometimes the text reinforces the image connotation, at other times it seems to diverge from it, creating a fully new meaning. In a multimodal text we can observe an image carrying one social meaning, and a text carrying a totally different one (contrasting encodings – Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 18). Of course, the connotation may vary along with the choice of words! Since the verbal message has a graphic structure and the iconographic message has an iconic structure, there will never be a complete amalgamation between them but different degrees of it. A caption, for example, has a less connotative effect than the main title or the article, which are also far from the image, the former because of its impact strength, breaking the image content, and the latter because of the position in the layout, which furthers the image content. Whereas, the caption seems to double the image participating to its denotation.

In particular, the title synthesises the content of both the image and the article in a straightforward way, often with the use of rhetorical figures to be more incisive. The caption epitomizes or changes certain concepts or descriptions contained in the image. The article, instead, contains thematic information and offers explanations of how the topic is articulated in its social context.

An image caption usually has the structure of an identifying relational process clause (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 115; Halliday 1985), relating to the image, which is the Token (the participant being identified) and its meaning which is the Value. The caption identifies token and value. For example, on page 205 of the *Insight Guide*, we read the following captions referred to two different pictures: "Below: the abandoned mine of Argentiera in the Nurra" and "A cork oak with its bark stripped down to the red inner bank".

The same meaning of the picture may change according to book, magazine, travel guide or web site title, in which it is inserted.

On pages 84-85 of the *Sunflower Landscape guide* (Fig.7), the image is displayed first and, therefore, the text elaborates and fixes the image statement (anchorage function), also describing and instructing on how to get there. When the verbal text comes first, instead, the image works as a visual aid for it (caption). In comics, "the verbal text extends the image meaning" (Barthes 1985, Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 16).

The first travel books had very few images if any. Today's travel guides have both images and texts but the ratio of images to text depends on the overall strategy of the guide and of course on the target audience. It is essential to be acquainted with certain tourist stereotypes in order to perceive the connotation of names and images (sometimes easier for a foreigner than for a native), as in the

appellative cliché "an India de por acà, an India in the mist of the Western World" (*Insight Guide* 2003: 111) or in the comparison "It could be that the original Sardinians suffered the same faith as the Indians of North America" (ibidem, 21).

The role of the linguistic message is to fix those meanings arising from the image which the reader can decide to keep or to ignore. It eliminates the uncertainty produced by the polysemy of the image and avoids an excessively individual interpretation of that image. In other words, the relative objectivity of a photograph can help to fix the meaning of a text giving it a 'representational legitimacy' (Hall 2002: 87). We could say it leads the reader through the image meanings, in order for him to avoid some and perceive others. The use of foreign words encourages the reader to enter into the conceptual universe (the way of seeing) of the people concerned, partly to acknowledge the insufficiency of translation, partly to accord a voice to the people featured.

Conclusions

Discourse analysis cannot concentrate exclusively on texts: it has to take into account a critical analysis of the visual, since all semiotic modes are employed to get the message across.

A systemic-functional linguistic analysis of the interaction between written text and images predominates among scholars (Hall 2002). There are various ways of realising relations both in pictures and in words. However, we do not have a full correlation across the semiotic modes. These possibilities are determined and limited historically and socially but they are also inherent in the semiotic medium. Both visual and verbal patterns are not alternative means of representing 'the same thing'. They are complementary to each other.

We consider the people and events documented in the pictures simply as evidence of a given moment or a social construction which relies upon the representation the photographer and publisher have chosen. Photographers decide what subjects to portray and what meanings and values to encode in the image content. Personal motivations and feelings influence this choice.

> Understanding a photograph as a body of practices and aesthetic values which follows a paradigmatic structure is helpful in understanding its representational role, for it focuses our attention on the interactions between the conceptions of photographers in constructing their images and the uses to which their photographs are put (Hall 2002: 80).

Once a photographer has taken a picture, social meaning-making does not end there for the publisher picks it and positions it in a page of a travel guide or of a website. Both of them need to know who the reader will be because they need to anticipate his/her perception of it, the way he/she will verbalise this perception through language, his/her knowledge/culture and general values in order to choose those clear signs which will reassure the reader. The assumed educational level of the reader also matters: "those educated in the linguistic and visual genres of objective knowledge and impersonal address may feel patronized", whereas the not-so-well educated, or differently educated, may see communication as more effective and entertaining (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 127).

The web page http://www.esit.net – *A Sea of Tradition* (Fig.8), for example, relies mainly on the image portrayed. It shows beautiful, mysterious, decorative Sardinian masks. However, if the viewer is not a member of the Sardinian culture, if he/she does not know the code, it will become hard for him/her to understand the meaning conveyed by the image of this mask. And the text, in this case, does not add any further information to help comprehend the tourist message.

As we have tried to point out, words enhance the meaning of images and, viceversa, pictures exemplify and represent what the text expresses. The right balance between the two modes of communication creates a powerful synergy essential in effectively conveying the message through. This is the reason why, after investigating the verbal discourse of our corpus from several points of view in previous works, we decided to partially complete our analysis including the language of

images. Throughout the guides and the web sites we find several references to literature and fine arts, to archaeologists and historians, to some themes, rather than to others, along with comparisons with other people and cultures. The quantity and quality of pictures also change according to the communicative purpose. The *Insight guide* is full of images while the *Lonely Planet*, the *Cadogan guide* and the *Rough guide*, for example, are more sober in their layout, especially the latter, although the amount of information given to the addressee is usually consistent. These choices also depend on the type of reader targeted: the *Lonely Planet*, for example, is of a smaller size, quick to read and addressing a young public, while the *Insight guide* deepens topics such as history, politics, the flora and the fauna, accompanied by beautiful photographs. It is definitely for a more educated public, not lacking in interest for erudition. On the contrary, the *Cadogan guide* lies employs a prosaic language style and pictures lack throughout the guide. It follows the traditional layout typical of its brand, more suitable for travellers of a certain age and education than for younger people whose attention is better caught by colours and images.

As for the web sites, the best blend between verbal and visual patterns is found in www.hellosardinia.com, where images fully exploit their connotative power and well amalgamate with words, rendering the site pleasant to read and easy to use.

Images do not simply show the reader his/her real or imaginary destination. They influence our first impression, which often affects the choices we make. They make us wonder about a place and desire it even before reading its description. They are the most immediate tool the writer, the photographer and the publisher have to attract people's attention and, therefore, they hold such a descriptive and persuasive power that our tourism discourse analysis would be partial and deficient if it omitted to critically analyse them.

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