

# Initial guides and thresholds of the visual game

Jordi Pericot

**This text analyses the meaning of visual enunciations in regard to the relationship established between them and their users and, consequently, visual proposals are evaluated as acts in a game of language which, besides giving possibilities for consensual understanding of their use, also allows the generation and the comprehension of unpublished facts. In this sense, the study of conceptual relationships between the two planes of the visual enunciation, the plane of observance, referred because of its iconicity to the structures of the real world, and the plane of comprehension, referred to the symbolic object and with a communication access mediated by the understanding of the visual manifestation on reality, allow us to define initial guides of acceptability in the use of visual language.**

Within communicative practice, the audio-visual enunciation is presented to us as gifted with an extraordinary significant flexibility which the narrow thresholds of conventional semantic analysis can only admit with difficulty. Traditionally, semiotic studies on visual communication have emphasised the analysis of contents within a process of codification, that is, based on conventional agreements which establish correspondences between stimuli and meaning and do not sufficiently value the faculty human beings have, as users of images, for constructing and comprehending a practically infinite quantity of audio-visual enunciations, including those which they have never previously considered or even seen.

This constant mutability of the language implies a structural complexity which, as Wittgenstein already warned in the metaphor of the "Ancient City" (1), does not admit its reduction to simple logical structures.

It is evident that, in the same way as in the horizontal and perpendicular streets of the modern suburban development of which Wittgenstein speaks, certain visual discourses are reducible to logical structures. That is to say, visual enunciations with conventional and formal structure, such as a system of traffic signals, in which the informative validity and efficiency come from the fact of being impermeable to the context in which it is carried out, thus inhibiting any kind of interpretation by the user.

In a formal system, the coherence of the system and the proven truth of axioms fix the elements intervening in the line of argument, and the truth of the conclusion demonstrated imposes itself with no possibility of interpretation. But it is not thus in ordinary language where the status of the elements which intervene in a system of argument cannot be fixed nor definitive.

Audio-visual enunciations, as ordinary forms of expression, constitute a language which cannot be reduced to a mathematical logic with no possibility of interpretation. An audio-visual discourse such as a television spot, a film, or a poster, is modeled according to an interactive process of rules, motivations, and interpretations which resist a simple logical ordering.

Moreover, an audio-visual discourse must necessarily involve a certain degree of polisemia and ambiguity which allow it to be interpreted. According to Perelman (2), we must renounce the idea that these expressions have their own meaning, as this is nothing more than a metaphor which has become usual in ordinary language. The intersective complexity and the possibilities of interpretation of the audio-visual discourse are evidenced when we face the impossibility of proceeding to examine it based on a regulated referent which will lead to placing it within logical structures. As Wittgenstein points out, we must substitute the univocality of logical structures by the analogy between different communicative situations which are thus irreducible to the simple univocal mechanisms of logic.

## Pragmatic orientation

Over-all comprehension of audio-visual expressions requires valuing them based on the situational cases which give them meaning. That is, we must unequivocally place ourselves within the framework of pragmatics and put all the emphasis on the meaning which is generated by the relations established between the image and its users, and these

with their context.

Opting for pragmatics allows us to go beyond content analysis, often disappointing, and to reorient the study of image from the point of view of its use based on communicative intentionality and timely inferential interpretation. It also leads us to value communicative motivations, expectations, reactions and conventions of users themselves as ruling principles of communication.

Furthermore, pragmatics gives feasibility to a redefinition of the audio-visual discourse as the accomplishment of an entire communicative act, exactly as the receiver gets it and, insofar as it comprehends the entities which interfere in a process of meaning as a unique whole, pragmatics eases a joint analysis of all inciding sensory codes as interactive parts of a unitary enunciation. In this way we avoid the risk of understanding audio-visual discourse from a verbal or visual partiality.

This option for a pragmatics of image is even more justified if we take into account that almost all general studies on pragmatics have been developed in the field of linguistics and have rarely taken into account an analysis of audio-visual objects.

Following on Ch. Morris's (3) presuppositions, and applying them to visual communication, we can define the "pragmatics of image" as one of the dimensions of semiotics which accounts for origins, uses, and effects of images in the behavioural field in which they appear. The pragmatics of image is thus concerned with the relation existing between visual signs and individuals who use them and, insofar as it concerns the study of meanings derived from the specific use of this image, meaning is equivalent to that which an image is to the individual who uses it intentionally.

From this point of view, the semantics of an image would become subordinate to pragmatics. Wittgenstein manifests this priority of pragmatics when he defines the world as something which does not exist in itself but rather in the interpretation of language: if things do not exist independent of language, but are projections of linguistic structures, then, he argues, the possibility of referring meanings to objects does not exist: semantics must necessarily anchor on pragmatics.

Even if we recognise semantics as being subordinated to pragmatics on the whole, in the case of the audio-visual enunciation this presents specificities which must be taken into account when entering on its analysis.

Visual semantics, insofar as it is about questions referring to the meaning of images, must consider, besides the conventional meaning given them as signs, those which come from their representational condition and which constitute a specificity which makes them different from other sensitive codes. We are obviously referring to the iconic image which, by its analogical reference to a reality, is subject to judgements on truth and falsehood which must be taken into account in a pragmatic analysis. Seen thus, image analysis cannot be limited to a consideration of its meaning resulting in a successful or failed social act, based on which it is accepted into the system of mutual understanding and is thus not subject to the true/false alternative. In the case of the image, it is evident that its analogical referentiality to reality constitutes a specific particularity insofar as it "re-presents" a part of the world.

Now then, images, as elemental expressions and basic and necessary units for the elaboration of a visual discourse, carry out functions which go beyond their recognition and comprehension. The basic function of visual language is that of reconstructing the system of rules which will allow its communicatively competent users to construct visual expressions which, properly structured, will be transformed into other expressions. In a general way, we can say that the images we use in a discourse represent analogical and language conditions which allow the elaboration of situations of comprehension and understanding in their users.

Thus, the effectiveness of a communicative visual act will be conditioned by the degree of competence of its actors, that is, by the degree of interiorisation which they obtain from the system of rules which allow generating and understanding an infinite number of expressions from a few specific and recognisable images.

Being competent means knowing what we know and what can be done with this knowledge. Being visually competent, therefore, means having the capacity for understanding images/signs, knowing how they are used in communication and being able to use them adequately to construct new enunciations. In a competent being, knowing and ability are presupposed: "Knowledge," Wittgenstein (4) points out, "is a deposit and this deposit is a permanent latent power".

This knowledge and power define individuals as visually competent beings. They are competent insofar as they

participate in the way the social collective understands and interprets adequately the communicational intentionality which is evident in the ostensibility of some images, and, moreover, know how and when to apply them within the system of social understanding in question.

Visually competent beings are placed within a system of mutual understanding to be able to give meaning to the arguments which it constructs and comprehend its meanings. Now, the competence to which we refer is not reduced to the simple mechanism of systematic translation of virtual or abstract concepts into concrete visual expressions. Pragmatic competence requires a complex knowledge which goes beyond the applying of rules or systems to penetrate into the generation of previously unknown enunciations. A competence which, as Chomski establishes, can only be acquired in a socio-historical context and can only be exercised in a social, historically formed context. Outside it, there is no possibility of producing visual acts generating meaning.

### **The language game**

It is evident that the evaluation and meaning of an image based on its use leads us to consider acts of language as part of its vital praxis, leaving to a second term the existence of a visual language as a simple application of consensual variants.

If a language works in its usage, then we do not have to question its meanings but rather its multiple and varied uses. There is not really one language, but rather as many languages as we make use of. Languages are thus "life forms", or, as Wittgenstein calls them, simple "language games".

If we refer the Language Game to the interests of visual language, we would say that what is most primary in this kind of language is not the meaning, but rather the use. To understand an image it is not essential to understand its conventional meaning or that which is derived from its iconicity, but rather to know how it works and understand its conditions of use which are marked by the "language game" itself.

Insofar as the conditions of use of an audio-visual expression depend on the language game which gives a basis and meaning to that which is being played, the game, insofar as it establishes a relation between images and the state of things, becomes the "locus of meaning".

Therefore, what we say with images is not a consequence or additional reference to the act of showing them. Images have a meaning insofar as they are an active reference to the rules governing the language game which revolves around the special circumstances of the occasion in which the expression is emitted. Thus, the interpretation of an audio-visual expression is not conceivable (contrary to Sperber and Wilson's (5) hypothesis), just because of the mere fact of showing it or displaying it, but rather as an equivalent of the fact of carrying out an action legitimated by the language game itself.

Moreover, the game, by legitimating the use of audio-visual expressions, allows these to carry out diverse functions in unequal spheres of procedure and practice. Now, although these functions are derived from the discipline of the rules of the game, are neither definitely nor fixedly given to us, but rather are always susceptible to change and innovation. The rules of the language game do not define "play" any more than the image game defines the visual discourse which may be carried out. The language game only makes "playing" possible, and insofar as we "play", we can effect an infinite variety of previously unknown "moves", or, in other words, the visual game allows the construction of an infinite variety of audio-visual enunciations.

This multiplicity of possible audio-visual propositions, generated by the practice of language games, comes from the fact that the game constitutes a scheme of meaning which depends on the life of those who use it and, therefore, is necessarily integrated into the real life scheme of its users.

We quite often tend to attribute a uniform meaning to iconic images, which comes from their analogical relation to the object it "re-presents", and we fall into the trap of a meaning supposedly ideal and invariable in any circumstance. But language and also, evidently, audio-visual language, is not a bank of meaning independent of users' lives: it is, as Wittgenstein says, a plot integrated into our life scheme. A scheme of activity ruled by the rules which make the game possible.

In this sense, the language game is valid and efficient insofar as it integrates into its users' life activities. The language game, and in our case, visual language, is, as Wittgenstein says, a system of wheels: if these wheels mesh with each other and with reality, the language is justified. But even though they mesh with each other, if they do not mesh with

reality, the language is lacking a base.

Thus, to take part in a language game and understand the meaning of the elements in play, it is necessary that the participants be competent as to the norms which rule it. But this condition, although it is necessary, is not enough: comprehending and understanding the social meaning of audio-visual enunciations, insofar as moves in a language game, belong to what Wittgenstein calls "life praxis". In the same way that a child does not learn that books, chairs, etc. exist, but rather how to read a book, how to sit on a chair... we come to be visually competent by experimenting audio-visual objects, seeing paintings and films, or, simply, looking at our surroundings.

### **To play is to understand**

This harmony between the game and the specific circumstances in which it develops allows us to learn the social meaning of images. We learn to use images, we construct discourses and know how to interpret them and, even if we are incapable of stating its rules explicitly, we gradually acquire a knowledge of the rules which govern games. Obviously, a good knowledge of the visual game implies consent and acceptance of some rules even though we cannot state them explicitly and they are subject to as many changes as specific uses made of them. They are rules which never come to light, which remain in the shadows, and precisely because of that they are basic, because, as Wittgenstein says, they are never questioned and are, therefore, beyond any doubt.

The rules for the use of images are given us in audio-visual acts themselves. As in all games, we play without ever having previously established a precise relation of its rules: while we play, says Wittgenstein, we neither notice nor understand them. We apply a rule with no need for understanding other rules. For Wittgenstein, the question "What is learning a rule?" only has one answer: "This". If we ask ourselves "What is mistaking its application?", we will simply answer "This".

In the production or interpretation of a life discourse, we discover, apply, and learn at the same time, even though we may later not be able to state the rules explicitly. If the exceptional case arises of having to outline the rule, we will be aware that, however unable we may be to define the rules, we know how "to play". We are competent at the visual game.

The only thing we can do is define the game as opposed to "that which is not the rules". We know, for example, which audio-visual discourses do not respond to a specific function, even though we do not know the exact rules which govern them. Actually, the problem of rules only appears when we question the rules themselves, as it is the rule that implies the game.

Understanding the game thus requires playing it. To play is to understand. As Wittgenstein says, "to understand the game we must participate". Only from inside the language game can we conceive some thing as something. The act of playing is knowledge of the game: there is no beyond the act. The language game is just played. Any reasoning begins and ends at this point.

Thus "playing" is equivalent to carrying out a series of acts by means of which images become real propositions for producing communicative acts which incide on the social or individual conduct of those to whom it is destined. By the fact of showing and expressing images with a certain meaning and reference, we are carrying out intentional/situational acts which join the receiver and the sender in a situation governed by a mutual knowledge of the rules of the visual game. To play is to settle, by mutual agreement, the consent and meaning of visual enunciations and the prediction of previously unknown and comprehensible visual discourses.

Wittgenstein uses the metaphor of the maze (6) to account for the creative capacity of the language game. In the same way as the path through the aisles of a maze takes us by previously unknown and untrodden ways (or to follow others which, although known and trodden, allow us to go through them in previously unknown ways to reach another objective), we use specific and known images with our audio-visual propositions to arrive at the expression of new things, never before said, but understandable at the same time. This is the greatness of the language game, but it is also one of its greatest difficulties when configuring its rules. In the same way as there are no precise nor fixed rules for the playing of new moves in the same game, neither can we go to pre-established rules which will completely explain the process when "creating" genuine visual enunciations.

Moreover, the diversity of meanings and functions in audio-visual language prevents a consideration of the discourse from the rigidity of constitutive rules and allows, at the same time, a more fluid conception of the act of visual communication. It also answers to the constant appearance of new kinds of social games and to the fact that, in spite of

their genuine nature, we understand them and, through them, we understand each other socially.

### **Conditioners of the visual game**

The possibility of elaborating previously unknown but comprehensible enunciations has, in the case of visual language, specific conditioners which we must take into account when we refer to the visual game. Visual language uses images which, due to their iconic quality, refer to certain structures of the real world and at the same time refer us back to conventionally coded contents.

This double referentiality is, in the first place, what characterises the rules of the visual game. Images, in a similar way to the "tools" mentioned by Wittgenstein (7), can carry out many functions according to their situations, their usage needs, the interest or cultural levels of users; but this plurality of functions must also be seen within the limits of a certain analogy between its uses and that which is imposed by the image's own structure.

For a professional user, tools acquire a structural order based on certain usage criteria. Order may be due to criteria of rapidity, frequency of use, or certain aesthetic canons..., thus, also for communication users, images are given in the first place in a certain order relative to continuity of use which "regularises" them as proper to some functions and not to others. We use some images and not others as the most adequate to a specific communicative act, and, in time, certain regular and continuous uses end up being conventionally assigned to images as if they were "belonging" to and essential to them. Other uses are excluded and, for the same reason, are considered as "not belonging" to them. We thus apply an acceptability guide when formalising a visual discourse.

Moreover, rather like the limits imposed on tools by their own nature, the iconicity of images also imposes certain limits on their use. The analogical identity of images and their "re-presentational" referentiality to a real world also act as an acceptability norm or brake for the production of visual discourse.

These referentialities, which we inevitably find when beginning the visual game, carry out two functions:

- As initial acceptability guides in the use of language and, in this sense, definers and regulators of external rules with which to "play".
- As limiting thresholds for the "locus of meaning" where previously unknown moves or enunciations, not previously considered or seen, become comprehensible.

### **Initial guides**

Initial referentialities of the visual game based on the laws of the world we experience are placed on the two planes which Habermas (8) calls the sensory or observational experience and the communicative or comprehension experience.

The reception of a visual enunciation implies, in a first phase, a sensory, observational experience directed at things and perceptible states. It is the personal experience of a single solitary individual.

To be that which it represents, this experience is subject to specific perceptive rules which make up a pattern external to the expression itself and which allows evaluating the quality of its result.

It is the plane of effective experimental observation which, as a part of perceptive reality, always means knowledge about some specific thing. It is the everyday personal knowledge which we possess about some part of reality. Within this plane, propositions for constructions of meaning are directed towards ambits of pretheoretical knowledge, that is, not to any implicit opinion, but rather to an intuitive knowledge accredited and directed to iconic images which the component subjects themselves signal as being successful.

It is also pretheoretical, insofar as this knowledge on visual expression is not brought about by convention or socialised code but rather by simple analogy between the image and the real object. In this case, the iconic image does not act as a sign but rather "as the thing itself". The thing is "re-presented" by the image and therefore, the perception of it is immediate and needs no specialised learning.

Moreover, the image also refers to the plane of social objects or semantic fields determined by the history of their social use. This plane, that of comprehension, is a part of the conscience of the game and refers us back to the generation of the symbolic with which something is said about reality. It is a categorised knowledge where communicative



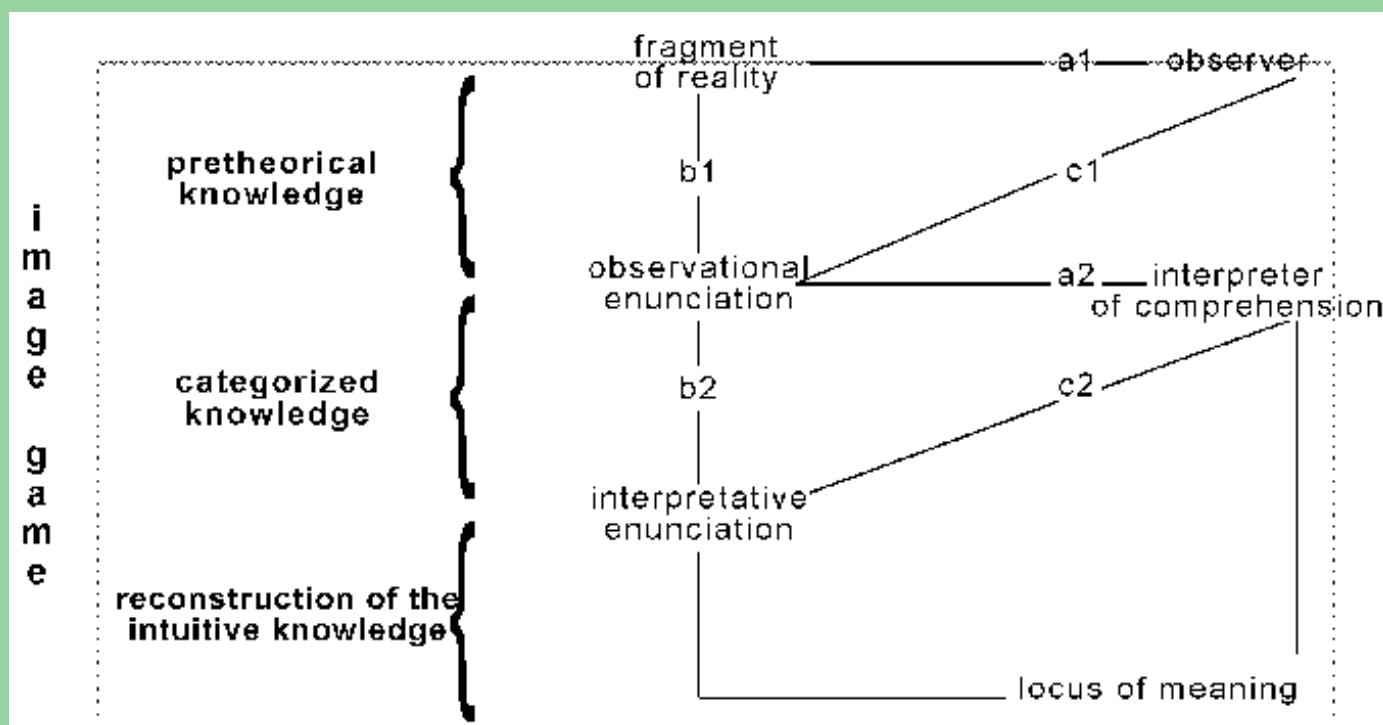
experience is directed towards the meaning of the enunciation and the interpreter tries to understand the meaning from the intersubjective relation with other individuals by means of socially shared symbols. Within these visual referents, images acquire a meaning and become intelligible and believable.

In this way the referential structure of the image is doubly constituted in two planes:

- As a perceptible reality or direct observation "of" reality and "re-presented" by means of iconic images. A world of sensory objects, regulated by general structural criteria based on the "re-presentativity" of the image.
- As a comprehension of the symbolic object, communicative access mediated by the understanding of a visual manifestation "about" reality. A world of definitions, institutions and underlying rules which define the game under discussion. A world of interpretational/intentionality, within the consensual language game.

As we have said, these two knowledges constitute the initial referentialities of the image game: a pretheoretical knowledge, rising from the analogy with "re-presented" reality, and a categorised knowledge coming from the conventional recognition of its use and the causal effects produced or liable to be produced. Both are intimately related by knowledge and, as we will see, always lead to another social reality, unknown and patterned within the thresholds defined by the language game itself.

If we adapt the scheme presented by Habermas (9) to the interest of an audio-visual enunciation, we can say that between the observational plane and the plane of comprehension, a series of conceptual relations is established between its elements:



A): An epistemological and parallel relation between experience and its objects. Thus, in the same way as the cognitive referent of the act of observation is reality (a1), in the act of understanding this referent is situated in reality which conforms symbolic expression, that is, the audio-visual enunciation (a2).

B): A relation, parallel as well, between the expositional relations of an aspect of reality. In the audio-visual enunciation a fragment of reality (b1) is represented, in the same way as the interpretative enunciation manifests a certain semantic content of the audio-visual enunciation (b2).

C): A different but parallel relation is also in operation, between the two acts of communicative intention. Thus, while in the act of observation this intention is expressed by the fact of showing an iconic enunciation (c1), in the plane of comprehension, this is expressed by the propositional content of the interpreted enunciation (c2).

This symmetry in conceptual relations explains that an audio-visual enunciation is not a simple experience of a fragment of reality but rather that from this "experience" we adopt the attitude of "play" which the author adopted when he

produced the audio-visual enunciation and we try to understand the content of the symbolic enunciation.

The observer become interpreter has recourse to the rules according to which the author has "played" a determined language game and tries to infer the meaning of the symbolic audio-visual enunciation. In this sense, the interpreter uses the relations of sense determined by the rules of the game themselves and applies his knowledge within the framework of the system of understanding shared with other observers.

This understanding is primarily based on grasping the initial structures of the "re-presented" structures and of those which are associated to them by similarity and relationship and, later, by an attitude oriented towards structures which generate expressions, transforming them into symbolic products which say something.

### **The possibility of previously unknown moves**

The game, besides the consensual comprehension of its use, also allows the generation of facts previously unknown and previously unseen although desired and expected by the observer. This possibility of audio-visual communication is established at the moment when we can place the audio-visual enunciation within the language game manifest in the enunciation itself. The fact is that we start out from these conditioners to continue. But of what does the knowledge of "how to continue" from this beginning consist?

The fact is that we "know how to continue", Wittgenstein notes, and, besides, we are conscious that some ways of continuing are correct and others erroneous, some adequate and others inadequate... but all this insofar as we continue "playing".

In this process, the interpreter of an audio-visual enunciation is not limited to applying knowledge, but rather "reconstructs the intuitive knowledge he has": he goes beyond the surface of the symbolic enunciation because it is not enough and makes an effort to dive into it to discover the frame of intentionalities which has motivated the interpretative enunciation, always within the framework of the language game.

In this sense, we must differentiate between the "validity" of visual products, based on meeting conditions which apply its analogical and conventional nature, from the "feeling of validity of being recognised" which, according to Habermas (10), consists of "being worthy of being recognised... with the guarantee that under adequate circumstances these visual products can obtain an intersubjective recognition". Here we are not dealing with the "content" which we relate conventionally to a more or less consensual symbolic expression, but rather with the intuitive consciousness which the competent author has of the game "as the possibility of understanding beyond the content of a symbolic expression or of that which, in certain situations, certain authors may have wished to say" (11).

For the game, each object designates with certainty an uncertain object. It is certain when it is expressed unequivocally as to its analogy and conventionality; uncertain when its sense is implicit and is interpretable within the norms proper to the social game to which it refers.

Communication, according to Besnier, always imposes on us interpretation and inference-making which defy any kind of codifying: "when we receive an act of language, the hearer first infers what the speaker has said, what he has said to him (what he has meant to say by the meaning of the words enunciated); then he determines, taking the concept into account, the act of the word under discussion and, at the same time, he can prove that this act apparently violates a conversational maxim and consequently, infers that a second act is indirectly carried out: so that, in the end, the speaker has said that which he did not say (12).

This second act does not fit into the principle of cooperation, as the agreement between individuals is not always acquired from the moment when communication is exchanged between them. This further act would be close to the concept of belonging, proposed by Sperber and Wilson (13), in the sense that it allows the receiver of a communicative act to car 14.

ry out non-demonstrative but rich and precise inferences on the informative intention of the speaker. But, at the same time, he will differ from the latter in the sense that the inferences do not come exclusively from the fact that the receiver knows how to grasp the good hints (ostensible stimuli) nor from the need to be sure of the basis of the speaker's informative intention (principle of cooperation), but rather from the reconstruction of an intuitive knowledge which allows us to continue the game and understand the previously unknown moves which come from it.

Propositions for constructing meaning are not directed towards any opinion implicit in the enunciation, but rather to an

intuitive knowledge accredited and directed to iconic/conventional images which the competent individuals themselves signal as successful. That is, there is no general principle underlying the use of an image which will allow us to refer to and justify this use. There is no external pattern with references to which we can explain the ultimate use which we make of images.

From this we could say that the meaning of an audio-visual discourse, insofar as it is a previously unknown act within a language game, cannot be exclusively attributed to the object to which it refers, nor to a mental entity or to the fact that it responds to some specific rules which define the game and govern its use. A visual enunciation constitutes a new and successful communicative act insofar as it is first defined as a set of real and potential forms, structurally acceptable according to "proper" or regular rules, identified as a traditionally communicative element as well as having the possibility of being identified as an element able to acquire a structural order which can be assigned to it based on the system of mutual understanding which makes the game legal.

From this point of view, a new visual act, to be understood as a previously unknown move, will be successful or understood if, by means of the expression of some ideas it succeeds in uncovering others with which it has a certain link defined by the language game.

To arrive at this link, we transport the acceptance and validity of the facts based on the laws of our experienced world; a world of possibilities where what the observer expects or foresees from the game can be fulfilled.

### **Ambiguous exactness**

From here on, we can say that an audio-visual discourse, insofar as it is a previously unknown act within the language game, cannot be attributed exclusively to the referred object nor to a mental entity. Neither can this be attributed to the fact that it responds to the external rules of the game. References and rules define the visual game, but not its moves. Previously unknown moves or previously unknown enunciations will be possible and recognisable when and if they are constructed within the framework of the rules governing the use of the game and they do not transgress these thresholds.

To produce and understand a new enunciation within the visual game, there are no pre-established rules which could give a complete explanation of its process. We only know that these enunciations will be recognised and meaningful if they remain within the thresholds which mark the game or, as Wittgenstein says, in opposition to that which is not a rule.

The previously unknown use of some visual elements, insofar as they are a move, has no reference or justification in any general principle. The game must bring about situations or ideas which are normally seen in two different reference frameworks (analogical and conventionalised by use) be seen in a new reference framework which will force the interpreter to establish connections between usually disconnected universes and, consequently, accept unexpected novelties. Only the fusion of initial knowledge will define the game for us and, consequently, the thresholds of the "locus of meaning" which make the visual "moves" possible.

Thus, a previously unknown visual enunciation will be acceptable if, within the language game, it is interpreted based on the kind of semantic fusion to which its two initial knowledges oblige. The fusion of these two undisperse and clear knowledges allows the understanding of the game's practice and is the basis for an intuitive knowledge which makes elaborating coherent hypotheses and structural descriptions easier.

For this fusion to be carried out, we need what Wittgenstein calls "a state of somnolence" and which he defines as "seeing and not seeing at the same time" where there is "the fleeting flash of an aspect, half experience, half thought" which prevents the elimination of contradictions so as to be able to discover new syntheses, and thus allows the act of bissociation by which the image's two components, analogical and conventional, are connected.

Generally, an enunciation's acceptability is based on the intuitive idea of "making sense" or "being understandable". We do not choose the way in which we have to use images, the same way as we do not choose whether we react to an object or fact which attracts or repels us. This is what Wittgenstein calls a status of "ambiguous exactness", which gives visual discourse a feeling of indefiniteness which allows exploring, combining, establishing hypotheses, choosing, and, at the same time, searching for a stable value on which to base possible inferences.

This "ambiguous exactness" has to lead to the concretion of a coherent situation, with no contradictions, within the world of possibilities which the fusion of the two accepted planes of the visual game suggests.



A new knowledge which may not be effective, but is possible. The efficiency of this new reality will depend on the propositional attitudes of the person affirming, believing, desiring, foreseeing them... when and if these attitudes come from the rules of the world of our experience and that the behaviours and actions proposed to us correspond to similar behaviours and actions proper to a socially consensual world.

Insofar as the use we make of images, within the visual game, is not derived from an external pattern, we cannot judge the validity of an audio-visual enunciation from referents external to the discourse itself. An enunciation will be valid when and if this, as an act, allows continuing advances in the game begun or, in Wittgenstein's words, when and if this allows "playing the same game".

Thus, the insuperable limit of the game is defined by the rules themselves. A new visual enunciation is therefore acceptable if its users, within the context of the game, can understand it. If they go beyond the limits set by the rules themselves, or if we introduce a change in them, we destroy the game itself and another game will possibly appear, more in consonance with reality. Otherwise, if what we want is to follow on in the same game and the rules are not adequate to reality, we will have to look for new rules which will fit in better.

From this point of view, incorrection in a visual enunciation is not any kind of impediment to carrying out a valid communicative act, as its acceptability as such will depend on the possibility of adapting it to the new rules which govern the new game, within the mutual understanding system.

The visual game has always been connected to the real world and it is the understanding of this reality which allows access to and acceptance of the validity of previously unknown moves, be they proper to the game which generates them or to other games if there is a transgression of the rules.

And insofar as the game can be defined as the possibility of unlimited moves which oblige the spectator to establish previously unknown connections and allow him to create and infer all possible implications, the visual game constantly widens the prevailing mutual understanding system and enriches us by the generation of new image games.

## ENDNOTES

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3 Ch. Morris: *Signos, Lenguaje y Conducta*, Ed. Losada, S.A. Buenos Aires 1962.

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6 J. Wittgenstein, *Investigacions filosòfiques*, Ed. Laia. Barcelona 1983. p.203.

7 J. Wittgenstein, *Investigacions filosòfiques*, Ed. Laia. Barcelona 1983. p.11.

8 J. Habermas, *Teoría de la acción comunicativa: complementos y estudios previos*. Ed. C tedra, S.A. 1989. pgs. 307 & foll.

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10 J. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p.302.

11 J. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p.311.

12 J.M. Besnier, *Pour une communication sans concept*, *Réseaux*, num. 46-47. CNET, Paris 1991. pgs.29-39.

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# FORMATS

f o r m a t s