

# Energy and its double: a case-study in Critical Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter<sup>1</sup> provides a multimodal analysis of a printed advert campaign focusing on corporate identity. The paper's main goal is to analyse how the interplay between visual and verbal modes of communication constructs complex layers of meaning in Total's 2005 advertising campaign and how different affordances of verbal and visual communication are co-deployed in such a way as to enhance the adverts' main claims. In particular, the paper investigates how these affordances multiply the layers of meaning, creating a polysemous message that can be interpreted in different ways by different groups of stakeholders. The main tenet of this study is that visual and verbal work together to contribute to the adverts' claims and their construction of corporate identity. While foregrounding different aspects of semiotic resources and tapping into different but complementary cultural stereotypes, visual and verbal components create a synergic and integrated means to communicate ideological consensus and 'narcotize' potentially adverse aspects relating to the company's practices. The study builds on work by Vasta (2000, 2001, 2002, 2004) in multimodal analysis and in the field of corporate advertising (2005 and this volume; see also Bortoluzzi & Vasta, 2007): the focus of these studies relates to companies manufacturing or dealing in goods potentially harmful to the environment or to local communities. The article begins by presenting the theoretical background, the framework of analysis and the type of data (the print advertisements of the 2005 Total campaign); this is fol-

lowed by an analysis of the verbal and non-verbal components of the print advertisements. In the final sections, the findings will be interpreted and evaluated.

## 2. THE THEORETICAL STUDIES UNDERLYING THE ANALYSIS

The theoretical framework discussed here is derived from studies on discourse in context and pays particular attention to Critical Discourse Analysis. As Fairclough and Wodak (1997) remark:

CDA [Critical Discourse Analysis] sees discourse - language use in speech and writing - as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them. To put the same point in a different way, discourse is socially *constitutive* as well as socially shaped [...]. Both the ideological loading of particular ways of using language and the relations of power which underlie them are often unclear to people. CDA aims to make more visible these opaque aspects of discourse. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 259).

As Fairclough and Wodak point out, CDA sees itself not as an 'objective' social science, but as a form of intervention in social practice which is engaged and committed (see also Fairclough, 2003: 14-15). It addresses issues of power relations and ideology embedded in language, especially in cases in which social and linguistic conventions make them appear 'natural', 'neutral' and not socially constructed as they are in actual fact (Wodak, 2001: 6). CDA is not a method or a school, but rather, 'it aims to offer a different "mode" or "perspective" of theorizing, analysis and application throughout the whole field.' (van Dijk, 2001: 352). Van Dijk explicitly states:

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and by talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (van Dijk, 2001: 352).

The goal of Critical Discourse Analysis is to empower language users and raise their awareness about the connections between language and socio-cultural context, communicative conventions, power relations and ideology (Fairclough, 1992a, 1992b, 2001, 2003; Blackledge, 2005). In present-day communication, language is usually intermeshed with a variety of other modes of communication, whence the need for what may be called Critical Multimodal Analysis: a combination of the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis integrated with those of multimodal communication. In this study, I adopt some of the tools offered in Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 2006), Baldry (2000), Kress (2003), Iedema (2003), Cheong (2004), Lim (2004), van Leeuwen (2005) and Baldry and Thibault (2006). In their seminal work *Reading Images* Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) write:

[T]he multimodality of written texts has, by and large, been ignored, whether in educational contexts, in linguistic theorizing or in popular common sense. Today, in the age of 'multimedia', it can suddenly be perceived again. (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006: 41).

Iedema highlights 'our human predisposition towards multimodal meaning making' and thus suggests 're-visiting and blurring the traditional boundaries between and roles allocated to language, image, page, layout, document design, and so on.' (Iedema, 2003: 33)

Studies such as Kress and van Leeuwen (2002, 2006), Iedema (2003), Cheong (2004), Lim (2004) and Hagan (2007) are among many recent attempts 'to account for the co-deployment of a combination of semiotic resources' in print media (Lim, 2004: 220). What Lemke has defined as a 'multiplication of meaning' (Lemke, 1998) constitutes both the interest and the complexity of multimodal analysis, still struggling to find a unifying framework of analysis for different semiotic codes interacting in the same text (Lim, 2004).

The view of language and communication informing the studies mentioned above derives, at least in part, from work done in systemic functional grammar (Halliday, 1985/1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004); in the present article, as in some of the studies on multimodality it builds upon, the systemic approach is complemented by aspects derived from the fields of pragmatics and discourse.

More specifically, it builds upon the work done by Vasta (2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005) on the multimodal analysis of advertising texts produced by political and corporate agencies. Vasta (2005 and this volume) analyses recent advertising campaigns of oil companies and shows their need to convey discursively and visually their concern for ethical commitment at the local and global levels, seeking consensus and construing a corporate identity which deviates from the commonly perceived one in order to 'lamine away' any possible negative connotation.

### 3. THE CAMPAIGN CHOSEN FOR THE MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS

The adverts chosen for multimodal analysis are taken from Total's 2005 corporate campaign. The whole campaign, interestingly entitled *Energy doubled*, can still be found as a link in the company's homepage (Total, 2005), together with the 2006 and 2007 campaigns (*Energy doubled, episode 2* and *Energy doubled, episode 3*). The first campaign was considered so successful that the following ones were built on similar principles<sup>2</sup>. The three campaigns include print adverts (published in newspapers and magazines) and TV commercials; they have been translated into different languages and launched in various countries (European countries in 2005 and Europe, China and the Middle East in 2006 and 2007). In an 2005 online interview, Yves-Marie Dalibard (Total's Director of Communication) remarked that the campaign was devised to raise brand awareness: one of the most striking characteristics of the whole campaign is the theme of the 'double', which translates visually into the division of the semiotic space into two separate and related sections. Hence double-spread pages in magazines or two different videos broadcast together by splitting the screen horizontally into two parts (split-screen technique). This 'visual rhyme scheme' is the most salient and

foregrounded characteristic of the adverts and will be discussed at length. (Total, 2005, *The Campaign*). Specifically, I will discuss the series of four print adverts which made up the 2005 campaign in English-language magazines and newspapers (see Figures 1-4). For the sake of simplicity, I will use the term ‘addresser’ to indicate the company which advertises itself through the advert. ‘Addressees’ represent the groups of intended recipients that see and read the advert (stakeholders) negotiating its meanings and possible interpretations. I will also use ‘represented participant’ (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 48) to identify the human participants represented in the images in the adverts.

#### 4. GENERIC STRUCTURE POTENTIAL OF PRINT ADVERTS

The multimodal quality of print adverts has been analysed by Cheong (2004) in terms of a comprehensive and flexible framework identifying the Generic Structure Potential of print adverts and integrating visual and verbal aspects. Cheong’s work is designed to capture ‘the multi-semiotic interaction between visual images and linguistic text in print advertisements’ (ibid.: 164) and proposes a model of Generic Structure Potential which builds on Hasan’s work (1989). Cheong’s analysis focuses on the Ideational metafunction, even though some of the strategies she identifies in the interaction between the visual and linguistic aspects of print adverts also encompass the Interpersonal and Compositional/Textual metafunctions.

Generic Structure Potential (GSP) expresses ‘the total range of optional and obligatory elements’ in a text (Hasan, 1989: 64). Since in the case of print adverts these elements are both visual and linguistic, Cheong proposes the following GSP (non-obligatory elements are in brackets):

**Lead<sup>^</sup>(Display)<sup>^</sup>Emblem<sup>^</sup>(Announcement)<sup>^</sup>(Enhancer)<sup>^</sup>(Tag)<sup>^</sup>(Call-and-Visit Information)<sup>3</sup>**

It can be argued that this model of GSP best refers to those print adverts which tend to be rather prototypical or easily identifiable as adverts. In some cases of text hybridization, one of the two elements which Cheong considers obligatory might not be present. Possible examples of non-prototypical adverts are advertorials which are printed to appear like information articles in magazines, and which might not have any Lead or Emblem. Pictures in specialised magazines can also be non-prototypical adverts: no Emblem might be present, but they do advertise items mentioned in the articles. Leaving aside the case of non-prototypical print adverts, it is interesting to note that the GSP proposed by Cheong shows as obligatory only those components which are visual or mostly visual (the Emblem can be both or either, but the Lead is mainly visual); all this highlights the need for a multi-semiotic analysis of print adverts which shows the close and complex interaction between visual and linguistic components.

The elements of the GSP (as identified by Cheong) that are present in the Total adverts are the following: **Lead<sup>^</sup>Primary Announcements<sup>^</sup>Enhancer<sup>^</sup>Emblem**. In the course of the analysis, I will show, within a systemic-functional framework, how this model captures the interaction of the visual and the linguistic elements.

Focusing on the Ideational metafunction, Cheong identifies four common strategies for meaning-making between the two semiotic codes and relates them to the interaction of the GSP components and their contribution to the interpretation of the adverts:

The Bidirectional Investment of meaning refers to the cross-investment of lexicogrammatical meaning in the linguistic text in the Announcement to the visual image in the Lead and vice-versa. The Contextualization Potential (CP) refers to the degree to which linguistic items in a print advertisement contextualize the meaning of the visual images. In a print advertisement, viewers have an Interpretative Space (IS) within which to create meaning and the wider the IS, the greater the Semantic Effervescence (SE) of the advertisement. (Cheong, 2004: 176)

Whereas these strategies are presented as having an effect at the same level of analysis, it is obvious from the diagram that follows in Cheong's analysis (ibid.: 177), that Bidirectional Investment of meaning is overarching and is located at a higher level with respect to the other three strategies. This impression is confirmed (but never overtly acknowledged by Cheong) by the fact that the three strategies CP, IS and SE are placed on a continuum relating them to the core components of GSP: a low Contextualization Potential of the elements (mainly influenced by Lead and Primary Announcement) corresponds to a wide Interpretative Space and a high Semantic Effervescence. At the other end of the continuum, a high Contextualization Potential corresponds to a narrow Interpretative Space and a low Semantic Effervescence (the Enhancer tends to restrict the range of possible meanings created by the interaction of Lead and Announcements).

In the analysis of the Total adverts, Cheong's categorisations will be used with the proviso that, since some of her conclusions are rather too clear-cut, they might not be applicable to all print adverts as she seems to imply. In particular, the main difficulty in applying her framework in a satisfactory way derives from the fact that the GSP components are identified as mainly visual or mainly verbal and discussed as such in terms of their Ideational meaning (which is the focus of her study). Prototypical print advertisements, however, are inherently both, and subdivision and analysis of the different components do not entirely capture the complexity of the whole composition in context and in its interaction with the readers/users (see Iedema, 2003 and Hagan, 2007). One aspect that Cheong never mentions in her analysis, but is rather important with adverts, is the fact that the Enhancer (bodycopy) is usually overlooked by addressees, while the images and headlines (Lead and Primary Announcement) tend to be overwhelmingly foregrounded and noticed in the interpretation. Additionally, Announcements and Emblem usually have such visual relevance that they can hardly be considered mere 'linguistic components' (see Hagan's study, 2007, about the influence of graphics on cohesion in written language). As will be seen below, in the Total adverts Announcements have such significance in the composition and blend so well with the Lead that they could be interpreted without reading any of the linguistic components apart from the Emblem. The iconic value of the GSP verbal components is never clearly mentioned in Cheong who, instead, carefully analyses the Bidirectional Investment of meaning between visual and linguistic

aspects of adverts. Another problem with Cheong's framework is the assumption that the mainly visual components tend to have a lower Contextualisation Potential than linguistic components; again this is applicable to most print adverts, but not all, as will be shown in the sections that follow.

## 5. IMAGE AND IDENTITY

As defined by van Leeuwen (2005), composition 'is about arranging elements – people, things, abstract shapes, etc. – in or on a semiotic space – for example, a page, a screen, a canvas, a shelf, a square, a city.' (van Leeuwen, 2005: 198). In the Total adverts the composition is divided into two sections which give the impression of parallelism both in terms of visual images and body copy. As an exemplification of the analysis, I will use the first advert in the 2005 campaign referring to it as the 'blue advert' because of its dominant colour (see Figure 1); the findings for the four print adverts will be summarised at the end of each section.

Kress and van Leeuwen identify three interrelated systems that contribute to composition: *information value*, *salience* and *framing* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 18). While the first and third systems will be mentioned in the sections that follow, here I will define and analyse some aspects of the second system.

*Salience* consists in the elements (participants, and representational and interactive syntagms) that 'are made to attract the viewer's attention to different degrees, as realized by such factors as placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrast in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, etc.' (ibid.: 177). Salience results from different variables that interact in complex ways to create a hierarchy of elements attracting the viewer's attention to the composition. Some of these elements are size, sharpness, colour-coding orientation, perspective, etc. (ibid.: 201-203).

The most salient set of characteristics in the whole Total campaign are those construing its 'double' quality where 'double', on a par with the meaning of a person's look-alike, gives the idea of resemblance between various compositional items. The parallelism of the two sections is created by the use of colour, shapes and writing, and becomes a repeated visual rhyme which gives cohesion to the whole campaign (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: Ch 6; van Leeuwen, 2005: 13).

In the blue advert (Figure 1), the 'double' quality is created by the use of colours which are modulated on many different shades of blue, which is dominant, and the more limited use of white (in the light and bodycopy typeface) and black in the composition. Colour modulation is considered one aspect of visual modality (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2002, 2006: 154 *et passim*; van Leeuwen, 2005: 160 *et passim*), which concerns the extent to which there is a commitment to reality on the part of the addresser of the advert and whether this is perceived as such by the addressee (verbally, this would be classified as epistemic modality<sup>4</sup>). The overall effect of fairly saturated colours and a highly modulated image in terms of shading is both 'realistic' (referring to the world in which we live) and 'ideal' (the world in which we would like to live; related in particular to the contrast between bright light and dark patches) (see Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 160; van Leeuwen, 2005: 167).

The effect of parallelism is also foregrounded by the continuing line of the landscape which goes from one section of the advert to the other and by the diagonal vector created by the virtual diagonal line of the white flash of light on the left, the outline of the underwater landscape on the left-hand side, the line of the horizon, the white headline and body copy and the light of the sun in the sky on the right-hand side. This virtual vector, which leads the viewer's attention towards the sun in the top left corner, is reinforced by the vector created by the sunlight reflected on the sea from the bottom left upwards. It is interesting to note that the composition constructs an apparent triangle whose vertices are the light of the torch underwater, the sun and the Total logo: these are the three elements which 'rhyme' in shape and create a salient relation between light, sun and the company. In this visual narrative, a powerful analogy between the metaphorical meaning of light (the enlightenment of knowledge, see section 7 below) and the value of the company is subtly but unequivocally established; it is purposefully not easy to establish which of the vertices is the Actor ('the participant from whom or which the vector departs', Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 59) or what Goals exist ('the participant to whom the action is done, or at whom the action is aimed' *ibid.*: 64), since light comes from the torch, the sun and, metaphorically, from the company represented by the logo.

Visual rhymes and mirror-like images are the common characteristics of all four print adverts. For instance, the 'sand and snow advert' (Figure 2) uses a circular path and the participants dressed in summer and winter clothes as powerful metaphors for research and human development which bring about better living conditions in a natural way. The colours chosen vary from advert to advert, but share saturated realistic colours verging on the hyperreal (see in particular 'the road and field advert' in Figure 3 and the 'wind advert' in Figure 4).

In the next sections, the multimodal texts will be analysed in terms of Given/New and Ideal/Real and a new parallelism will appear between visual composition and language.



Figure 1. The blue advert



Figure 2. The sand and snow advert

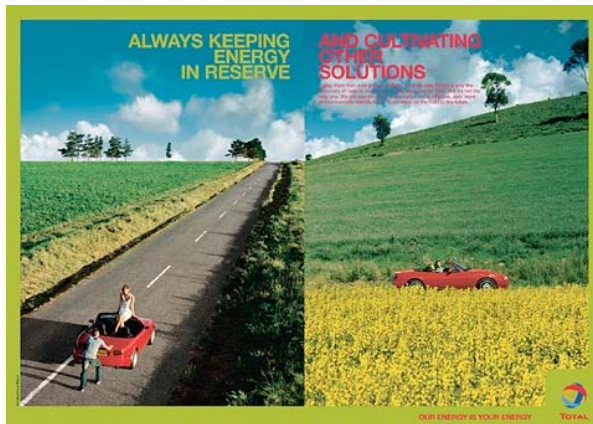


Figure 3 The road and field advert



Figure 4 The wind advert



Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) define 'information value' as:

[t]he placement of elements (participants and syntagms that relate them to each other and to the viewer) [which] endows them with the specific informational values attached to the various 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin.' (ibid.: 177)

In particular, they adapt the categories of Given and New used in systemic functional linguistics by Halliday (1985/1994; see also Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) to the analysis of visual design and note that in Western cultures Given information is usually displayed on the left of the composition, while New information is located on the right (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 179 *et passim*; see also van Leeuwen, 2005: 201 *et passim*). This aspect is particularly salient in all the adverts, in both visual and linguistic terms. Taking the 'blue advert' as a representative example, the picture on the left is metaphorically related to its headline and influences its interpretation: Total openly acknowledges that there is an 'oil issue' and that it is being reviewed. The imperfective process *reviewing* presents the oil issue as an ongoing general concern; the agent/Actor is implied since the verb form is non-finite. In fact, the implied agent/Actor is very clear because it is metaphorically and cohesively represented as the Total 'explorer' who plunges into the depths of a communal problem looking for solutions through science and technology (represented by the light of the deep-sea diver's torch). The depths are both the depths of research and scientific discovery and, in concrete terms, the depths of the oil fields discovered under the seabed. The common problem is presented as Given information and shared knowledge. The inference that the addressee draws from it is that Total is reviewing a problem which exists independently of the company, and that the work being done by Total is for the common good.

The New information is presented on the right as the solution to the problem posited in the left-hand upper quadrant, by the headline, *AND BRINGING NEW SOLUTIONS TO THE SURFACE*. The two headlines are placed in an apparent mirror-like position, but the colour of the type-face is white and, thus, visually cohesive with the sources of light which represent, metaphorically, the light of enquiry, research and discovery. This is foregrounded by the metaphor used in the headline on the right which exploits the semantic field of oil exploration (*bringing to the surface*) but also of scientific discovery and a passage from the unknown (*issue, depth*; the depths of the sea and the blue headline on the left) to the light of knowledge (*solution, surface*; the bright light of sunshine which illuminates the landscape and opens up distant horizons for the participant; white headline on the right). Again, by default, the implicit agent/Actor of the material process is Total. The fact that the agent is not explicitly mentioned further reinforces the involvement of the addressee in processing the meaning of the advert, and cohesively links visual and verbal cues: the triangulation of the round objects represented by the light of the torch, the light of the sun and the Total logo (made up of lines derived from the letter T and forming a globe). It is interesting to note that framing (see below) focuses the addressee's gaze on the Total logo following the line of the Total slogan which contains the key term in the whole advert: energy.

All the Total print adverts achieve the result of explicitly representing the argumentative pattern 'problem – solution', visually and linguistically; otherwise, this tends to be verbally conveyed (Hoey, 1983, 1986, 1994; see also Vasta's analysis of Shell print adverts, 2005). In particular, all the headlines in the print adverts draw attention to the visual metaphor presented in the image and are composed of the two sections of the Problem – Solution argumentation. In two out of four headlines the word 'solution' is explicitly mentioned and in one case (the 'road and field advert' in Figure 3) the 'problem' is visually and humorously presented in the picture of a car which has run out of fuel: the human participants cannot proceed in their quest without the help of Total. The Problem – Solution pattern is powerfully conveyed by a Bidirectional Investment of meaning operating at textual level between the Lead (images) and the Announcements, Enhancer and Emblem, as will be discussed in the following sections.

## 7. REAL AND IDEAL IN IMAGES AND TEXT

Following Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and van Leeuwen (2005), the visual space of a multimodal text can be divided along the horizontal and vertical axes: the top half tends to represent the ontological space of the Ideal and the bottom half that of the Real. These are complementary to the Given / New division: in the blue advert (Figure 1), visual and verbal metaphors combine to show that the oil issue (the depth of the seabed, Real) is broached, and thanks to Total's research (bottom right slogan linked to the logo, Real), the Ideal solution is found and is metaphorically represented by sunlight positioned in the top right corner (the Ideal and New information space). Sunlight is an archetypal metaphor which refers to the power of knowledge, discovery and invention, but also represents the practical solution mentioned in the bodycopy to the energy problem: solar power. The sunrays are vectors that point to how the solution is brought to earth by the reality of the company (globe-shaped logo) to all of us: *OUR ENERGY IS YOUR ENERGY* (slogan). The Total logo and slogan are positioned outside the picture in the bottom right-hand corner of a white frame<sup>5</sup> which surrounds the whole advert and connects, in decoding and interpretative terms, the 'double' images: Total is the agent of the solution to the energy issue and the Real New bringer of knowledge and energy to the world using the power of research and knowledge (light) and Ideal solutions to energy problems (New Ideal).

The human element appears in both pictures in the left hand section, on the imaginary line separating the Ideal (human research and Total) and the Real (at the interchange between the two worlds of Ideal and Real, even though tending towards the Real and pointing at the viewer) and on the left of the Given and New sections. In the case of the deep-sea diver, his light is a 'demand' for the addressees to interact, a call to action (feeling involved in reviewing the energy issue) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006: 116 *et passim*). The vector is the arm stretched out towards the depths of the problem. The other male participant 'offers' the addressee the solution proposed by Total (*ibid.*: 124 *et passim*) looking towards the sun (New and Ideal). The vectors of the sunrays pass diagonally through the white bodycopy and focus the reader's attention on the lit-up coastline and the Total logo. The

visual triangle which has round shapes (torchlight, sun, logo) at the three vertices contains a man in the centre looking at the ideal horizon of light and novelty. The advert collates and conflates the powerful archetypal connotation of the four elements: water, earth, air and fire (the sun and energy). Thus, consensus is visually created on apparently shared and non-controversial values represented by the attractive archetypal images of the sea and the sun in the sky alluding to the company's emotionally charged, quasi-divine quality.

All four print adverts present a clear compositional pattern whereby the problem is visually posed in the Given Real section of the advert and the solution is offered in the New section both in words (headline and bodycopy in the New Ideal section) and picture. The image in the New section often clearly presents the realised solution in the New Ideal section: the sun, the house full of light and warmth in the middle of winter, the clear sky and countryside, the windmill. In Cheong's words (2004), the Bidirectional Investment of meaning between Lead, Announcements, Enhancer and Emblem tends to contribute to a Contextualization Potential and restricts the Interpretative Space within the Problem – Solution pattern.

In the following section, headlines, bodycopy and slogan will be analysed and their close interrelation with the images and the theme of the 'double' will be discussed in terms of the Bidirectional Investment of meaning and Generic Structure Potential components.

## 8. SEEING LANGUAGE AND READING IMAGES

Sub-section 8.1. deals with the analysis of verbal communication in the advert while Sections 8.2. and 8.3. pull the different communicative strands together focusing on the powerful interaction of visual and verbal-communication, and, in particular, on how the interaction between visual and verbal modes contributes to creating inferences and guides interpretation.

### 8.1. THE HEADLINES

As Cheong (2004) remarks in her discussion of the Generic Structure Potential of print adverts, 'the juxtaposition of the linguistic texts and visuals sets up Transitivity processes that invest meaning from the linguistic code to the visual code and vice-versa' (ibid.: 178). As will be shown in the analysis of the Total adverts, the Contextualisation Potential of the Primary Announcements influences the Interpretative Space of the Lead and limits its Semantic Effervescence (and hence its scope for interpretation) within the Problem – Solution pattern.

REVIEWING THE OIL ISSUE IN DEPTH	AND BRINGING NEW SOLUTIONS TO THE SURFACE
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As already mentioned in the previous sections, the headlines (Primary Announcements) are placed as apparent mirror images in different colours: blue for the headline presenting the problem in the Given section; white for the headline providing the solution in the New section. This choice of layout corresponds to the apparent mirror-like quality of the images and clearly refers to the theme of the 'double' used also in the title of the campaign (*energy doubled*). There is also a perfect parallelism in the grammar structure: present participle + object noun phrase + prepositional phrase; in systemic functional terms: Process: Material^Goal^Circumstance (of Manner or of Location).

The non-finite clauses generalise the statements and implicitly refer to the only possible implied subject/agent: *Total / we*. In this way, the company is presented as taking up a generalised problem for society (energy) that concerns everybody, reviewing the oil issue and offering new solutions. The lack of an explicitly mentioned agent (Actor) has the effect of generalising the issue, making it relevant for everybody (thus including the addressee of the advert) and pointing towards the only possible agent explicitly presented in the logo and the bodycopy (*Total*). The Actor seems to be generalised and widely inclusive: the issue is encoded as Given information, shared knowledge and a generalised concern.

The implied subject/Actors of the verbs in the headlines (*Total / we*) is cohesively related to the subjects of all finite clauses in the bodycopy, the slogan and the logo (analysed in the following sections).

In this context, the infinitival verb form is not used to delete or hide the agent, but rather to foreground it implicitly by incorporating its identity into a wider community and by telescoping the problems, interests and aims of one with the other. Should the receiver not read the small print, but only the block capitals, s/he will still perceive *Total* as the default subject of the non-finite clauses. Agency is implicit and easily retrieved. The participants in the advert (the deep-sea diver and the man on the cliff looking out towards the horizon) become representative of the human condition. The participant in the Given section searches for solutions, scientific truth, better living conditions going through the difficulties of deep-sea conditions (dark, cold and inhospitable). The participant in the New section finds the light of ideal solutions, better future life conditions and the light of knowledge. The two participants represent the position, activity and identity of the company but also, ideally, the more general condition of people on the earth (including the receiver of the advert) as presented in a stereotypically positivist way (from darkness to light using science and the power of the human mind). It is also possible to read the advert as intertextually referring to an ideal and Romantic quest for truth and knowledge: the composition of the New section of the advert recalls the famous Romantic painting *The Wanderer* by Caspar David Friedrich (see Appendix 2) (visual intertextuality).

The parallelism of the images is reinforced and foregrounded by the parallelism of the language in the headlines. The verbal processes, contained in the Thematic part (Given), are Material actions used metaphorically as Mental: *Bring* (Material) becomes the Mental Process which means *think of, come up with*, and therefore *reconsider the oil issue*. This ideational metaphor conveys the impression that the action of the company (the implied Actor/Senser) creates ideal solutions

(Goal/Phenomenon given as New information). The Circumstances *in depth / to the surface*, in end-focus, complement the images and telescope the literal and metaphorical meanings (with the literal meaning highlighted by the images). The colours of the headlines mirror and parallel the main metaphor expressed by language and by the pictures: Material and Mental processes are intertwined in a complex metaphor of unearthing solutions (oil) bringing people the light of discovery and clean energy (solar power). Pragmatically, the words ‘oil issue’ and ‘new solutions’ have the implicature that a problem with energy and oil does indeed exist, even though it is never made explicit and only referred to in the bodycopy as the *urgent need to access new energy resources*.

All the headlines of the print adverts have a similar, mirror-like structure and Problem – Solution, Given – New division:

EXPLORING THE WORLD FOR GAS	TO WARM YOUR WINTER
ALWAYS KEEPING ENERGY IN RESERVE	AND CULTIVATING OTHER SOLUTIONS
CONTINUING THE GREAT OIL ADVENTURE	AND BRINGING NEW WINDS OF CHANGE

As can be seen from the headlines, ‘the great oil adventure’ continues and is not challenged in any substantial way, its problematic nature is implied but never explicitly mentioned. The solutions are expressed with metaphors that refer to new sources of energy (solar energy, wind power, other alternative solutions) or new gas and oil fields, blurring the boundaries between renewable and non-renewable energy resources. The dominant claim is about bringing novelty within continuity and tradition: claiming change while maintaining stability.

The analysis of the images and the headlines has so far shown that the company seems to assume for itself an identity related to a task useful for the common and general good of humankind, merging the commonly perceived needs and beliefs of present-day society (meeting energy needs, searching for better living conditions through the power of knowledge) and the ethics and working principles of the company. Since the addressee of the advert is part of humankind and present-day society, the needs and beliefs expressed in the adverts are extended to them. Total construes itself as an ecologically-minded company evoking apparently non-controversial values.

## 8.2. THE BODYCOPY

What follows is the bodycopy (Enhancer) of the blue advert:

Total has been an innovator in oil exploration for forty years. Today, we are drilling to ever greater depths in response to an urgent need to access new energy resources. We have also been preparing the way for the future of solar energy since the 1980s. Through our active involvement in the development of photovoltaic systems, Total is already equipping populations far from electricity networks.

In the bodycopy, verb processes are all expressed in the perfective aspect or continuous tenses:

Present perfect verb clauses: *Total has been*;

Present continuous: *we are drilling*, *Total is already equipping*;;

Present perfect continuous: *We have also been preparing*;

(even the headlines have continuous non-finite clauses: *reviewing*, *bringing*).

All these verbs have *we* / *Total* as explicit or ellipted subject which also refers to the logo on which the whole advert converges. The choices in tense and aspect convey development, change over time and progress from a past which is close to us, through the present towards a transition to the future of the 'Ideal' sunlight of knowledge, research and technology. More specifically, the first three sentences of the bodycopy identify respectively past, present and future time conveying the notions of experience, tradition, continuity of research. Through a relational attributive process Total (Carrier) projects itself as an *innovator* (Attribute) in its specific, traditional field of activity (*for forty years*: from the past to the present).

Temporal deixis (*today*) and continuous present (*we are drilling*) situate in the present one of the solutions to *the oil issue*, namely *to access new energy resources*. Notice that the infinitival clause presents oil as a new energy resource by banking on the linguistic ambiguity of reference in the noun phrase: the actual novelty is drilling new oil fields in previously inaccessible locations, not finding 'new', in the sense of 'alternative', energy sources (see previous section for a similar ambiguity in the headlines). The *oil issue* is overtly acknowledged, but the *solutions* offered as the result of research is *drilling to even greater depths* following the tradition of being an *innovator in oil exploration*. Through a nominalised clause expressing causal enhancement (*in response to an urgent need to access new energy resources*) Total appears to be operating for the progress of humankind and constructs consensus about practices which today are rather problematic in ecological terms but are also central to its activity: the attractive definition of *new energy resources* in the end-focus conflates *oil* (the actual referent) with what follows (*solar energy*). The identity projected as new is based on the traditional and problematic practice of a company forever in search of new oil fields to exploit.

The other future solutions the company offers are linked to the exploitation of solar energy, presented as part of mainstream research conducted by the company since the 1980s (what is really 'new research' is presented as traditional for the oil company). The verbal reference to the sun is powerfully reinforced and foregrounded by the salient image of the sun on the same page (highly contrast-

ing white on the black and dark blue sky). Interestingly, though, this solution does not become generalised for all humankind, but is developed for *populations far from the electricity networks*, which clearly entails no change for the populations who already have non-renewable fuels as energy resources. This entailment is easily lost if the bodycopy is read rather cursorily or not read at all, as often happens with this type of text.

In the bodycopy, all the subjects of the main clauses refer to the company: *Total* or the reader-exclusive *we* (the company). Thanks to the synergic interplay of different semiotic codes drawn upon in the text, however, the first person plural *we* tends to become globally inclusive of humanity as a whole, or, at the very least, inclusive of the addressees of the advert, as overtly stated in the slogan (*our energy is your energy*).

All the verb processes indicate change and the shift from a past tradition and a present need for change to a future of answers, solutions and novelty:

Relational Attributive process: *Total has been an innovator*

Material processes: *we are drilling, we have also been preparing, Total is already equipping*, Even nominalised processes contribute to giving the sense of change and progression: *exploration, involvement, development*. In this specific context, nominalisations, that is processes crystallised into nouns (Hodge and Kress, 1993: 20-23; Fairclough, 2003: 12-13, 143), have the effect of implying the close connection between the activity of the company and the interests of humankind because their effect is one of generalising and abstracting issues, fixing the action in a timeless present and unlimited time span (Fairclough, 2003: 152). To reinforce this impression, noun phrases refer to the semantic field of science and technology, conveying the idea of positive development and creating hybridization of discourses (see below): *innovator response, way, systems, networks, energy*. Adjectives too express a sense of change and inevitable moving towards the future: *urgent need, new energy resources, our active involvement*.

Close analysis of the other bodycopies provided in Appendix 1 confirms and reinforces the above analysis and interpretation. In particular, verbs of movement (my underline) used metaphorically to mean 'forward-looking research, improvement in living conditions and future progress' are the overwhelming majority. Lexical items referring to the semantic field of 'exploration' (my italics) are also highly frequent and foregrounded.

### 8.3. THE SLOGAN AND THE LOGO

#### OUR ENERGY IS YOUR ENERGY

The slogan (Primary Announcement)<sup>6</sup> is an explicit attempt to blur the boundary between the company and the addressee of the advert by using a relational identifying process which takes the form of a foregrounded symmetry, creating a close relationship of similarity between two the elements functioning as Identifier and Identified. This reinforces the parallelisms in the whole advert between the visual and verbal message. But notice that the similarity (visually and verbally) is only apparent, not complete.

The first person deixis (*our*), which in the bodycopy has identified the company but was also extended to society and humankind, clarifies that corporate interests and products match the needs of the addressees of the advert and, as a consequence, of the general public. The slogan establishes a clear identity between addresser and addressees of the advert: if everybody benefits from the company's work, this entails that the company works for the progress of humankind. This intention is clearly confirmed by the comments of the company itself about the advert:

**'The creative concept:**

A baseline:

'Our energy is your energy'

Underlying the commitment of the entire group and the involvement of all its employees.

Signifying responsibility, attentiveness and proximity.' (Total, 2005: *The Creative Concept*)

In the slogan, *our energy* is ambiguous and can mean both 'the energy we put into our exploration and research' and 'the energy that we produce for you'; the message is that Total is not just an 'energy company', but an 'energetic company'.

The message is reinforced by the fact that the gaze of the addressees, attracted by the slogan, continues beyond the writing in block capitals in the white frame towards the vertex of the bottom right-hand quadrant where the Total logo (Emblem) appears. The Total colourful globe (made by curved Ts) visually telescopes the meaning of the advert and represents the projected overlapping of the interests, beliefs and working principles of the company and the world.

## 9. OVERLAPPING DISCOURSES

The Lead and Primary Announcements, following Cheong (2004), visually reinforce the 'double' characteristic of each Total print advert. Human participants on both sides of each advert constitute the Loci of Attention (the most salient and 'attention-arresting features'); the natural environments around these participants make up the Complements to the Locus of Attention. This is a powerful interpersonal visual metaphor foregrounding the importance in nature of the human element by placing it in awe-inspiring and supposedly ecologically sound environments.

As seen in the analysis, the Primary Announcements (headlines and slogan) and the Enhancer (bodycopy) contribute to raising the Contextualization Potential, i.e. the degree to which the meaning of the images is contextualised by the text, and to limiting the Interpretative Space within which meaning is created and hence the Semantic Effervescence (Cheong, 2004). The linguistic components of the advert direct the interpretation towards the Problem – Solution pattern establishing a Bidirectional Investment of meaning whereby the Leads are similarly interpreted as a Problem solved by Total (represented in the Emblem).

Cheong, however, never envisages in her work that the Enhancer is rarely read by the reader of a magazine, while the analyst reads it in detail giving it



more importance than a normal reader would usually do. In the case in which only the Leads and the Emblem are 'noticed' by the magazine reader, the 'double' characteristic of the Total print adverts by itself limits the Semantic Effervescence and Interpretative Space; interestingly enough, without the contribution of the linguistic components, the Total adverts can still be interpreted as an ecological visual narrative developing towards the Emblem (logo) placed in the default position (bottom right). The result is that the company tells an ecological tale (the quest I mentioned before) in two steps: the humans who are the Loci of Attention find their objective in the natural surroundings which are related to the Emblem representing the company. The interpretation slightly shifts from Problem – Solution to Narration if the Contextualization Potential is achieved through visual elements only, but it is still effective in creating consensus towards the company.

In the 'minimalist definition' given in Toolan (2001:6), narrative 'is a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events'. He also underlines that narrative depends on the 'addressee *seeing* it as a narrative' (ibid.: 7). In actual fact, the visual elements of the Total print adverts clearly concur in highlighting the relation between the two pictures and contribute to a unified interpretation of the advert even if the addressee overlooks its verbal components. The binary structure of Problem – Solution becomes 'the quest' of the participants who find their reward with the help of a 'donor' (Total) (see Propp's functions and roles, Propp, 1968). On the other hand, even the Enhancer (bodycopy) can be read as a narrative of the company's achievements (see also Total, 2006, The Campaign).

The video of the 2005 Total campaign, as well as the 2006/2007 video, is also a double narrative achieved by means of the split-screen technique and very limited verbal elements (apart from the repetition of the same line in the soundtrack song)<sup>7</sup>.

#### 10. A UNIFIED MULTIPLICITY OF MESSAGES: ENERGY DOUBLED

As seen in the analysis of the adverts, verbal and visual cues, each with their own different logic and affordances (Kress, 2003) contribute to making meaning perceived as unitary while telescoping a multiplicity of strands and potential interpretations (Iedema, 2003; Lim, 2004). The co-patterning of verbal and visual elements facilitates the process of 'decoding' the print adverts and mutually reinforces its impact on the addressee by leading him/her to process their metaphorical meaning and ultimately the complexity of their messages. The analysis shows how the logic of showing (visual) and the logic of telling (verbal) (Kress, 2003) are both closely interrelated to convey the message in a seemingly uncontroversial manner by appealing to commonly shared needs to solve the energy issue for the interest and progress of humankind. A closer analysis, however, shows that the traditional working principles and beliefs of the oil company surface through language and images, revealing discrepancies between the values conveyed and actual working practices.

The world construed by the adverts (language and images) appeals to one of the main needs of human nature: the desire to improve living conditions moving from a problematic situation to a world of ideal progress. Intertextually, this construed world evokes a traditional 'quest' from the depths of ignorance and dif-

facilities to the enlightenment of knowledge and future development. The means to achieve this end are the positivist and certain values of belief in improvement, research, knowledge, scientific discoveries and technology. Corporate identity is conveyed as based on change, progress and care for humankind (better living conditions and care for the environment). The assumptions underlying the adverts respond to values deeply rooted in our society and are based on beliefs which are endorsed by default in our culture. This world-view is rather traditional and intertextually evokes discourse and images of a positivist era rather than present-day society. The adverts, therefore, appeal to the need for security and reassurance that people have in times of uncertainty and general lack of positive expectations for the future. Consensus is created on the apparently non-controversial value of progress shared by addresser and addressees.

The adverts never mention the underlying, concomitant problems of diminishing resources and pollution implicitly entailed by the need for change, new solutions and renewable energy sources. The images, the headlines, the slogan and the logo make the issue generally uncontroversial and shared between the company, portrayed as ecologically-minded, and the stakeholders; the actual problems are blurred and neutralised, while the solutions coincide with the company's policies and practices. In this sense there is profound homogeneity in the foregrounded parallelism and mirror-like chiasmus of images, headlines and slogan. The visual communication and its logic of showing convey the centrality of concern for nature and the future of humankind, highlighting the narrative quality of the advert as a quest; the verbal communication of the headlines and the slogan contribute, within the logic of telling, to reinforcing the implicature that alternative 'solutions' proposed by Total are positive opportunities for progress (Problem – Solution).

Thus, the 'double' becomes the main theme and stylistic device of the whole campaign. I use 'double' here in the stylistic meaning of 'double identity of one same character' (Fusillo, 1998: 21), in this case, of the same company. *Energy doubled* is conveniently polysemous: it can mean 'twice as much energy', but also 'two kinds of energy' (renewable and non-renewable, oil and alternative sources of energy), and it can mean furthermore, 'we are redoubling our efforts to find solutions to world energy problems'. Visual composition contributes to the perception of a close relationship between, and common interpretation of, the two images, and so do the campaign's videos: the headlines form a chiasmus-like double, and the slogan is a parallelism identifying a double. Even the logo can be considered a visual, telescoped double: Total and the earth. The overt display of the theme of the double/dual identity as central tends to neutralise the effect of revealing the dual identity of the company by presenting it not just as positive but as a real asset for humankind. Overtly showing the contradiction in the identity of the company (producer of highly polluting fuels but seemingly environmentally oriented) and actually displaying it as a shared value prevents any objection, ensures that the double identity becomes shared knowledge and contribute to the fundamental visual and verbal motif of the campaign on it (see also Total, 2005: *Why the campaign?*).

It seems to me, therefore, that the conflicting aspects of the message derive from what Critical Discourse Analysis labels 'hybridization of discourses'<sup>8</sup> (Fair-

clough, 1992a: 222) which tends to be a characteristic of advertising discourse. This specific campaign draws on argumentative discourse and, in particular, on seemingly scientific argumentative discourse: the Problem – Solution information structure is highlighted linguistically and visually, influencing even the visual layout of the pages (also see Vasta's analysis of Shell print adverts, 2005). At the same time, it also construes the narrative of a quest. 'Hortatory discourse' is pervasive and is designed to persuade the reader/user that the solutions presented are the only viable ones (Fairclough, 2003: 96), establishing causal links between problems and solutions (the claim of the advert) or between the 'natural' and apparently 'ideal' ending of the quest, as inevitable.

The conflicting aspects of the company identity, however, cannot be completely deleted in communication and are more apparent in the bodycopies, where the logic of telling (and explaining) takes over from the logic of showing (and appearing). This would confirm the point made by Cheong about the Contextualization Potential, concerning the different affordances of text and image. As the discursual analysis of the bodycopies shows (see section 8.2.), the written language is tale-telling and reveals hybridisation in the promotion of traditional, positivist values: the actual problematic issues at stake 'peer through' language in entailments and implicatures. On the one hand, the interpersonal metafunction of language contributes throughout to the construction of a positive double identity, establishing shared knowledge and values between addresser and addressees of the advert and the sweeping acceptance of generalisations (*we/Total* implicitly becomes everybody); on the other hand, analysis of the ideational metafunction (verb processes, nominalizations, fields of experience, etc) reveals inconsistencies and, as a consequence, contradictions in the construction of identity. It shows the problematic nature of the double identity of an oil company which seems to offer alternative and ecological solutions. The cultural stereotypes into which the company taps to create consensus are slightly different in each case, but the effect is cumulative and coherent because the negative aspects related to the actual practice of the company are 'narcotized' and 'laminated away' in the construal of its identity, confirming the hypothesis set out at the beginning of the paper.

Further scope for research is offered by the 2006 and 2007 campaigns which are based on similar communicative principles, but avoid some of the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic problems incurred by the 2005 Total campaign (see Bortoluzzi & Vasta, 2007). The 2005 European campaign thus remains a fundamental step and a 'rehearsal' for the launch of the corporate identity campaign in China and in the Middle East in the following years.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has adopted a blended approach to multimodal analysis in the attempt to capture the complexity of co-deployed semiotic codes in print advertisements and use tools of investigation from different areas of linguistic and multisemiotic research. Recent developments in multimodal analysis have been used including analytic and interpretative tools offered by research in discourse

and critical discourse analysis; the ultimate aim of such work is to develop an integrated framework through which to describe, interpret and evaluate multimodal texts, starting from a careful and detailed investigation of multisemiotic elements at the microlevel and interpreting and evaluating them within the socio-cultural framework of contexts of production.

The blended approach adopted here will need to be tested and improved in studies on a wider scale (synchronic and diachronic) and involving a variety of genres and text-types. One of the most important issues for further research is testing whether there are consistencies in how visual and verbal elements interact, and have different effects on meaning-making when constructing identity. Another complex question for further research is to what extent the polysemous quality of the message is influenced by the characteristics of the communities of practice; in other words, do different communities of practice interpret differently the interaction between visual and verbal cues in the same corporate campaign?

In higher education, critical multimodal analysis can offer students insights into the complexities of meaning-making and the subtle relation between verbal and visual communication. It also provides new critical tools for reading and interpreting texts which are often passively 'accepted' as innocuous and unavoidably present in our lives, while contributing to 'multimodal competence' (Vasta, 2002). The scope for using critical multimodal analysis is far and wide as is the scope for improvement and further development of this blended approach to multimodal text analysis.

- 1 I would like to thank Nicoletta Vasta (University of Udine) for her comments and suggestions, Anthony Baldry (University of Messina) for offering generous and detailed feedback, Keith Mitchell (University of Edinburgh) for his comments on an early draft of this work. I am also grateful to Giovanni Ferrin (University of Udine in Pordenone) for his technical support.
- 2 Total explicitly writes that they 'capitalise on the first phase of the campaign' (Total, 2006, *The Campaign*).
- 3 Lead and Display: the visual components; Emblem: logo; Announcement: headlines, payoff and slogan; Enhancer: bodycopy; Tag and Call-and-Visit: small print information (Cheong, 2004).
- 4 'The function of epistemic modals is to make judgements about the possibility, etc., that something is or is not the case. Epistemic modality is, that is to say, the modality of propositions, in the strict sense of the term, rather than of actions, states, events, etc.' (Palmer, 1990: 50)
- 5 'Framing' is one of the three interrelated systems of compositions (along with Information value and Salience (see previous sections) posited by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), who write: '[t]he presence or absence of framing devices (realised by elements which create dividing lines, or by actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense.' (ibid.: 177).
- 6 However relevant the slogan (or baseline) can be in a print ad, Cheong (2004) labels it Primary Announcement, like the headlines. This turns out to be quite confusing, since the two components have rather different default functions and collocations in print ads. Additionally, it is not always clear in her analysis where the dividing line between Primary and Secondary Announcements should be drawn.
- 7 see Vasta (this volume) and Boroluzzi and Vasta (2007).
- 8 In present-day use of language there is a tendency to 'give rise to a great variety of mixed or hybrid forms of discourse, in which compromises are effected between them and more traditional non-commodified or non-democratised discourse practices.' (Fairclough, 1992a: 222).

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Accessed 20 April 2008.

## Appendix 1

### Bodycopies:

The blue advert:

Total has been an *innovator* in oil *exploration* for forty years. Today, we are drilling to ever greater depths in response to an urgent need to access new energy resources. We have also been preparing the way for the future of solar energy since the 1980s. Through our *active involvement in the development* of photovoltaic systems, Total is already equipping populations far from electricity networks.

The sand and snow advert:

Meeting energy needs means relying more and more on natural gas. A *pioneer* in the gas industry and a world player in this field today, Total is present every step on the way, from exploring for reserves and bringing them into production, to delivering them to the customers.

The road and field advert:

Today more than ever before mobility rules the day. Which is why the *discovery* of new oil resources is a key objective for Total. But it's not the only one. We are also developing innovative, more effective, ever more environmentally-friendly fuels. To continue on the road to the future.

The wind advert:

With a firm commitment to developing innovative and environmental friendly projects, Total – an international oil and gas group – is also moving forward in the field of renewable energy. We are constantly at work exploring new solutions, including the use of wind power.

## Appendix 2

*The Wanderer* by Caspar David Friedrich

