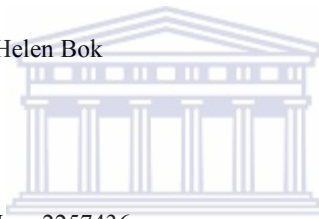


A Multimodal Analysis of Selected National loveLife HIV/AIDS Prevention
Campaign Texts

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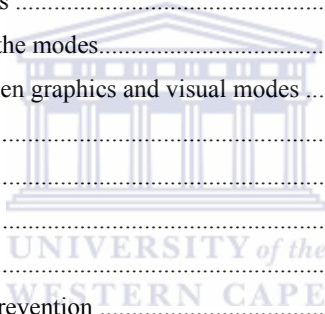
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WESTERN CAPE

Supervisor:
Prof. F. Banda

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“When you are working to combat a disastrous and growing emergency, you should use every tool at your disposal. HIV/AIDS is the worst epidemic humanity has ever faced. It has spread further, faster and with more catastrophic long-term effects than any other disease. Its impact has become a devastating obstacle to development. Broadcast media have tremendous reach and influence, particularly with young people, who represent the future and who are the key to any successful fight against HIV/AIDS. We must seek to engage these powerful organisations as full partners in the fight to halt HIV/AIDS through awareness, prevention and education.”

— Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General

Abstract

A Multimodal Analysis of Selected loveLife HIV/AIDS Prevention Campaign Texts

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This study investigates the ever-changing trends in visual texts and images used during HIV-prevention campaigns in South Africa. The aim is to evaluate and analyse the effect of multimodal texts used in HIV/AIDS campaigns on the understanding and interpretation by the target group, and thus gauge their effectiveness. Using a text-based multimodal approach (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006; Martin and Rose, 2004), the study takes into account variables such as socio-economic status, literacy levels, language and cultural differences of readers to evaluate the efficacy of loveLife campaigns to disseminate the HIV/AIDS prevention message.

This study focuses on the choice of images and words, and whether they cohere to make a meaningful message. The study analyses how the design features, including images, colour and words, impact on the interpretation of the message and also how the design acts as an aid or barrier to the process of decoding the message. The choice of a two-pronged approach combining multimodality and a text-based (discourse) analyses often favoured by those working in systemic functional linguistics is that it enables the researcher to account for social context, economic, linguistic, cultural and behavioural factors that play a role during the decoding phase.

The study concludes that the design features of loveLife texts restrict the message to a narrow urban, Western and formerly-educated middle class adolescent child rather than a broad-based national audience. In most cases, interpretation of the message requires sophisticated intertextual knowledge and schemas of movies, gadgetry, etc. that most black people in urban townships and rural areas do not have. The use of English and complicated linguistic construction-types, abstract images and culturally insensitive

images renders the campaign ineffective to a large portion of the South African youth who, according to research, are more at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

In short, to borrow from Halliday and Hasan (1975), loveLife texts do not always hang together and thus are incoherent to the majority of those that are supposed to understand the message.

The study ends by making a number of suggestions for the improvement of loveLife's campaign material.



I declare that *A Multimodal Analysis of Selected National loveLife HIV/AIDS Prevention Campaign Texts* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Signed:

Full name:

Date:



Key concepts

Sexually transmitted infections (STDs)

Infection

HIV/AIDS

Language

Culture

Beliefs

Barriers

Black

Coloured

Indigenous

loveLife



Acronyms

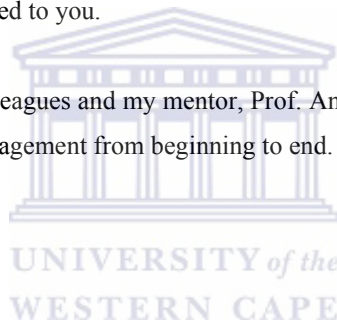
ABC	Abstain, Be faithful, Condomise
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ARVs	Anti-retrovirals
ASA	Advertising Standards Authority
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
MDA	Multimodal Discourse Analysis
MRC	Medical Research Council
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign

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Chapter 1

Background to the problem

1.0 Introduction

The HIV/AIDS epidemic poses a severe threat to sub-Saharan Africa. Among the countries in this region, South Africa ranks first in terms of having the largest number of HIV infections. At the end of 2003 the South African infection figure stood at an estimated 5.2 million (Antenatal Clinic Survey, National Department of Health).

HIV is not only a health-related concern. African socio-economic and socio-cultural dynamics hasten infection and, to a large extent, impede intervention initiatives. Among the specific reasons for the high prevalence rate are unsafe sexual practices, a secretive approach to sexual dialogue, impaired gender-power relations, migrant labour, a high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), high teenage pregnancy rates, commercial sex practices, inequitable health care provision and a mismatch between knowledge of the disease (Centre for Health Systems Research and Development, 2002).

HIV/AIDS has become an illness which has no respect for race, colour or creed. The epidemic has claimed the lives of scores of people, making one shudder to think what effect it is having on the future economy.

In many societies, the family and immediate community traditionally provided young people with information and guidance about sex and sexuality. In some societies, including many throughout the continent of Africa, the provision of information about sex used to be formalised as part of initiation into adult roles. Elsewhere, the provision of information about sex through the family has been more informal, while in some cultures open discussion of sexual matters between parents and children may actually be rare. It is important to recognise these variations on how sex education takes place within the family and community, and how they affect the sexual beliefs and behaviours of young people. In many parts of the developing world, recent and rapid urbanisation and

migration have meant that families and community networks have become more widely dispersed. This may have impacted on sexual socialisation and education as well as on the sexual behaviours and sexuality of young people.

The focus of the current study is on the various HIV/AIDS texts used by loveLife in South Africa. The approach adopted in the study is a text-based approach combining multimodal discourse analysis (Martin and Rose, 2004; Eggins, 2004; Eggins and Slade, 1997; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006) to analyse loveLife billboards and posters, with the view to finding out how these impact on HIV/AIDS message interpretation.

1.1 Aim and objectives

The aim of the study is to do a textual analysis of selected written texts used in loveLife's HIV/AIDS campaigns and posters considering South Africa's cultural and linguistic diversity. Specifically, the study is limited to the following objectives:

1. To do a textual and multimodal analysis of the imagery and verbal texts that constitutes loveLife texts.
2. To investigate how the loveLife messages are constructed for use in HIV prevention campaigns.
3. To offer suggestions on how to improve the composition and dissemination processes of loveLife messages.

1.2 Research question

The research is based on one question, namely:

What role does text design (the interplay of images and graphics) play in the success or failure of the loveLife HIV/AIDS campaigns?

1.3 Justification/significance of the study

This study is motivated by the observation that, despite efforts made by agents, community campaigners, researchers and government to disseminate information on the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the virus continues to wreak havoc in communities. The most

visible campaign has been led by an organisation called loveLife, which has been campaigning using billboards, brochures, posters and even radio and TV advertisements.

Clearly, the prevention strategies in place have been ineffective for various reasons, some of which are the focus of this study. The authors of loveLife billboards, posters, etc., have targeted the youth. However, their messages appear not to be understood by the youth. Therefore, the significance of this study, which examines the loveLife texts used in the campaigns as way to find out why the message does not seem to go through to the target group, cannot be overemphasised.

1.4 Scope and limitation

The study focused on one form of communication, that is, mediated communication, focusing on two modes of communication:

- Graphic (written);
- and visual semiotic (multimodal) texts.

This means that the advertisement found on radio and television is not included in the study. Secondly, the researcher is aware that it would have been desirable to interview the youth about the loveLife texts, at least for triangulation purposes. However, taking the lead from those within Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and text linguistics (cf. Martin and Rose, 2004; Eggins, 2004; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006), it was deemed adequate to utilise text-based and multimodal (discourse) approaches.

1.5 The research problem

Different texts used in HIV/AIDS campaigns could be perceived differently. Strategic communication is not a matter of printing large quantities of information materials such as posters, brochures and putting up large, colourful billboards. It entails designing and implementing advocacy and behaviour change based on proven theories and models that emphasise individual behaviour change, as well as changes in social norms and policies that facilitate and support sustained behaviour change.

Migration is thought to be a key factor in HIV transmission (cf. Lurie 2005). Thus, for example, the cultural norms that maintain social cohesion among people in the Eastern Cape might break down when those people migrate to Cape Town. One result of such a cultural shift could be an increase in the numbers of sexual partners; and consequently an increase in sexually transmitted infections, especially HIV infections.

Migrant labour is one of the more problematic remnants of our apartheid past, especially when considering its impact on HIV transmission. MRC-supported research (cf. Lurie, 2005) shows that the problem is more complex than anticipated. The highly acclaimed film *Yesterday*, produced by Durban film producer Anant Singh, tells the story of a young HIV-positive mother from the Bergville area of KwaZulu-Natal, who was infected by her migrant mineworker husband.

Although this is an all-too-common scenario, it does not tell the whole story. Research undertaken by the South African Medical Research Council (MRC), has found that the direction and spread of the epidemic is not only from returning migrant men to their rural partners, but also from women to their migrant partners (Lurie, 2005).

Historically, it is not difficult to see how migrant labour has played a major role in the spread of HIV in southern Africa. Migrants leave their wives and children in the rural areas and particularly in the past were accommodated in single-sex hostels. They have easy access to sex workers and alcohol and little or no access to condoms. When they go back to visit their rural partners once in a while they help spread the HIV epidemic (Lurie, 2005).

It is clear that a system that separates families for extended periods of time still has a direct link to the growth of HIV/AIDS in our nation (Lurie, 2005).

Moreover, texts, for example newspapers, may pose further barriers as the messages carried in terms of HIV/AIDS are mostly aimed at urban societies, forgetting about rural areas and the cultural beliefs unique to such areas.

Some of the translations found in literature distributed in rural areas are also not up to standard. Once translated, cultural problems may arise. In the Western Cape posters are mostly found in English and Afrikaans, while ignoring Xhosa which is the dominant language spoken amongst the black communities. These communities have limited knowledge of English and Afrikaans therefore such texts may not be understood by everybody.

Besides having access to information, our youth are further disadvantaged in that they need a specific level of literacy to be able to decipher multimodal texts, some of which are far too abstract, while others require ‘technical’ knowledge to understand the content of the material.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: Background to the problem

The topic is introduced by a brief summary of the AIDS epidemic, information on HIV/AIDS and areas that bear reference to the topic. The chapter offers a brief explanation of how the problem is being exacerbated by the hypothesis that South African youth have difficulty in comprehending loveLife texts and billboards. Chapter 1 also refers to cultural differences and beliefs which hamper the successful implementation of prevention strategies.

This chapter also provides a description of the background to the research problem, followed by the aims and objectives of the study, research questions and assumptions. The significance of the study is followed by the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Background to loveLife

This chapter gives detailed information on the origin and background of the HIV/AIDS virus. Emphasis is placed on the difficulties in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and the role of language and culture. The focus of this chapter is on HIV/AIDS campaigns, and linguistic and cultural barriers.

Chapter 3: Theoretical and analytical framework

This chapter places emphasis on the analytical framework adopted for the purposes of this thesis. The focus of this chapter is on the theoretical and analytical framework, combining text-based and multimodal discourse analysis as analytical frameworks of the study.

Chapter 4: Design and methodology

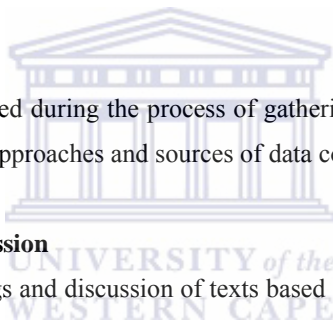
This chapter outlines the methods employed during the process of gathering information for the research. It outlines the methods, approaches and sources of data collected.

Chapter 5: Research findings and discussion

This chapter presents details of the findings and discussion of texts based on a number of themes.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and suggestions for further research

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study based on the analysis discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 also outlines recommendations for information dissemination in the field of multimodal text-based HIV/AIDS prevention measures.



Chapter 2

Literature review, theoretical and analytical frameworks

2.0 Introduction

The literature review is divided into two parts and arranged over two chapters. The literature reviewed in this chapter looks at the pathology of the virus, as well as the impact of socio-cultural and economic factors relating to interpretation of HIV/AIDS texts. Chapter 3 deals with literature related to theoretical and analytical framework, combining systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and multimodal discourse analysis (MDA).

2.1 Background to loveLife campaign

LoveLife's stated objective is "to cut the HIV infection rate among young South Africans by 50% and to establish a new model for effective HIV prevention" (loveLife, 2002a:1). One would expect that loveLife would have completed a comprehensive baseline study of its intended target population along with a well-defined set of indicators against which to measure its impacts when it was established in 1999. According to Parker, surprisingly this was only done nearly three years after the campaign's inception (Parker, 2003).

The loveLife campaign objectives are to:

- i. target the groups at highest risk;
- ii. deal with the broader context of sexual behaviour;
- iii. make condom use a normal part of youth culture;
- iv. sustain education and prevention over many years at a sufficient level of intensity to hold public attention;
- v. let young people make informed choices;
- vi. encourage young people to share responsibility; and
- vii. encourage positive sexuality (*Education and HIV/AIDS: A sourcebook of HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs, 2003*).

Whilst loveLife presents itself as a rigorously researched and evaluated programme, concerns need to be raised about the fact that much of this research is led and framed by loveLife. Whilst this is not in itself unusual, one would expect a critical and reflective point of view to prevail. This is after all an intervention that involves stakeholders far beyond loveLife. Peer reviews should be encouraged and ‘outside’ perspectives welcomed.

The ‘nationally representative’ survey of 12-17 year olds entitled *loveLife’s for us - survey of SA youth 2001* for example, presents an uncritically optimistic view of the programme (Parker, 2003). This survey notes that 62% of youth responded in the affirmative to hearing about loveLife. An attempt is then made to demonstrate that this awareness (whatever “hearing about loveLife” may mean) has translated into action on several fronts. The data is presented in simple frequency table form with little comparative analysis between measures. No comparative reference is made to a similar survey conducted in 2000 and many questions are raised. How did loveLife cause 78% of those who had heard about its campaign to use condoms, 69% to reduce their number of sexual partners, 63% to be more assertive about condom use, and 20% to have more sex? How compelling and powerful is “hearing about loveLife”? (*Sunday Times*, 18 December 2005).

We are all aware that HIV/AIDS interventions are complex and there are many other interventions in South Africa and worldwide that have problems in relation to fundamental models, cost-effectiveness and efficiency. My concern with loveLife is not that things might go wrong along the way. Rather it has to do with the fact that the fundamentals of the campaign and the concerns raised at various levels are swept away beneath bluster of research reports and promotional activities that are, in essence, misleading.

Clearly the response to HIV/AIDS in South Africa needs to be located within a climate of transparency, accountability and critical reflection. South Africans can ill afford that

funds be channelled into culturally dislocated, high-cost interventions that shift attention away from communities and grassroots organisations where the needs are most urgent.

LoveLife receives much of its funding from donor funders, one being the European Union which contributes one third of the programme's funding. However, this funding has since been stopped because of the South African government's perceived 'ambivalent' position towards loveLife (*Sunday Times*, 18 December 2005).

LoveLife combines a media campaign with nationwide adolescent sexual-health services, and community and support programmes for youth. Its programmes are implemented by a consortium of leading South African public health organisations including the Health Systems Trust, the Planned Parenthood Association of South Africa and the Reproductive Health Research Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand in coalition with more than 100 community-based, non-governmental organisations across the country.

The first limitation is that intervention programmes such as loveLife rely heavily on the media to relay their messages. People living in poor areas do not always have access to television, radio or the internet as mediums of communication. Secondly, teenagers mostly access their youth centres for recreational purposes and not for the use of clinical and advice services.

LoveLife's messaging and programmes are only in English. This, unfortunately, has an impact on the large majority of Black teenagers who may not fully comprehend the message as intended. LoveLife also, through its messaging, ignores cultural norms and values.

Billboards adopt an overly explicit sexual approach. Being able to recall a billboard and its text does not imply an understanding of the loveLife brand which, according to loveLife, is expected to be generated through the mental image that the brand creates in the mind of the target audience.

Semiotics provides the foundation according to which our youth can develop an understanding of texts through determining interpretation by the target audience. As will be shown in this study, there clearly exists a limited understanding of loveLife texts, which inhibits the decoding of the intended meanings of the messages displayed on the loveLife posters. In addition, meanings associated with imagery are consistently discrepant, which lead to divergent interpretations of the loveLife texts.

According to Stewart and Shamdasani (1990:9-10), the following issues concerning interpretation of the loveLife 'His & Hers' billboard campaign are causes for concern:

1. Whether there is sufficient understanding of the brand loveLife to enable the target audience to have a context in which to interpret the messages of the billboards.
2. Whether the meanings that the target audiences assign to the messages of the loveLife billboards are as intended and whether these match the intended meaning of shared responsibility.
3. Whether the loveLife billboards are working towards developing a national discourse on issues pertaining to adolescent reproductive health.
4. Whether the sub-brand thejunction is self-evident to the target audience as a helpline dedicated to meeting the needs of adolescents concerning their sexual behaviour.

According to research done by Parker (2003), loveLife publications and posters have painted a very gloomy picture of the control and incidence of HIV/AIDS in South Africa (see 1 below).

It is evident below that a common feature of many of loveLife's publications and publicity materials is the use of unreferenced research findings to construct a sense of urgency in relation to the South African HIV/AIDS epidemic, and to convey the sense that little has been achieved in any previous or parallel interventions. More often than

not, the findings, projections and contexts inferred are inconsistent with research studies available at the time. Examples of such findings are:

1. "...10 million South Africans will die ...":

It is unclear how a baseline of 4 million infections in 1999 could translate into a death rate in excess of 10 million 5-10 years later – just under a quarter of the South African population. No research could be found that confirmed such an alarming estimate. In fact, loveLife's own research report, *The Impending Catastrophe* which was produced in early 2000, contradicts this assertion. It estimates that a maximum of 635 000 persons would die of AIDS in 2010, with cumulative deaths between 2000 and 2010, in the worst case scenario, totalling approximately 5.7 million (loveLife, 2000b).

2. "...the rate of HIV infection increased by 65% ...":

This appears to be a reference to the 1998 antenatal data which showed an increase of 65% over the previous survey for women under the age of 20 years. However, analysis of antenatal data does not lend itself to analysis of trends through simply focusing on year-on-year changes and should be interpreted with caution. As was noted in loveLife's own research, *Impending Catastrophe Revisited*: "The results of any given year should not be considered on their own. A result can occur by chance that can lead to the incorrect perception that the epidemic is much better or worse than it truly is. It is preferable to consider the trends in the epidemic over time" (loveLife, 2001a:36).

3. "More than a third of babies born annually are born to mothers under 18 years of age":

It is fairly obvious that total births amongst females under the age of 18, many of whom are not even sexually active, are unlikely to equate to a third of the total births amongst all women of reproductive age over the age of 18 which constitutes a group who are far more likely to be sexually active with a far longer lifetime fertility.

4. “Rape, violence and coercion are common features of adolescent sexual behaviour”:

A number of studies have indeed pointed to the prevalence of rape, violence and coercion as part of adolescent experience of sex. For example, the 1998 South African Demographic Health Survey (DHS) found that 9.7% of 15-19-year-old females had been persuaded to have sex against their will, and 4.9% said that they had been physically forced to do so. Females who had been raped reported that this was typically by an older person – for example, a teacher or older relative. Kelly (2000), in a survey of adolescents and young adults aged 15-30-years-old in six South African communities found that 23% of females and 3% of males had a partner five or more years older than themselves at first sexual intercourse. This noted, reducing rape, coercion and violence is not something that can be achieved through loveLife’s core model of promoting a positive approach to sexuality, which suggests that young people have high levels of self-efficacy and are able to control their exposure to HIV risk. Sexual violence and coercion cannot be simplified as a *behavioural* choice for adolescents. Rather, such experience is related to disempowerment, with perpetrators largely being older and empowered socially.

5. “Condom usage ... almost unchanged at around 10%”:

It is unclear where this statistic was derived from. In 2000, Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation (CADRE) Research Director, Kevin Kelly requested information on the source of this statistic from a researcher attached to the loveLife programme. No reference could be provided. This statistic and assertion recurs in loveLife’s 2002 communication strategy which was published in a recent monitoring report (loveLife, 2003). Kelly (2000) found that last intercourse condom use amongst non-cohabiting youth ranged from 22-79% in six communities; the DHS summary report (1998) found that reported last intercourse condom use was 19.5% for females aged 15-19 years; and Richter (1996) found in a survey of youth in three communities that ‘ever’

condom use was 38% for males and 21% for females, and amongst 'ever' users, 74% of males and 68% of females reported that they had used a condom at last intercourse.

Whilst the above research 'findings' provide some insight into the organisation's perceptions of the research context, it gives the impression that the risk of HIV infection amongst our youth appears to be extraordinarily high and that 50% of South African youth under the age of 15 years could succumb to AIDS. These 'facts' are supported by reports by loveLife. They are:

- "If the epidemic continues unchecked, more than 50% of South Africans under 15 today could die of AIDS – 6 million young people." (loveLife 2001b:9. See also loveLife, 2000c:1)
- "Approximately 40% of South Africa's population is under the age of 15. About 50% of infections occur before the age of 20. If dramatic action is not taken and current infection rates continue, half of all South Africans now under 15 could become infected with HIV." (loveLife, 2002a:1 and 2003a:1)

The fact that 50% of all young South Africans could become infected and succumb to HIV remains unreferenced in loveLife 2001b and 2000c. However, in loveLife's brochures (loveLife, 2002a:1 and 2003a:1), a reference is provided to the loveLife report *Impending Catastrophe Revisited* (loveLife, 2001d) which states: "Approximately 15% of all South African adults aged 20-64 are currently infected and these levels could rise to 20-23% by 2005 and 22-27% by 2010. HIV is a disease that mostly affects younger people, with around half of all adults who acquire HIV becoming infected before they turn 25. Over 50% of these young people will die of AIDS before their 35th birthday." (loveLife, 2001d:6)

LoveLife aimed to achieve a 50% reduction in the rate of new HIV infection among 15-20-year-olds by the end of 2005. LoveLife specifically targets youth between the ages of 12 and 17 years. (Stadler and Hlongwa, 2002). According to loveLife (2001), 60% of South Africans nationally recognise their brand, with 90% of these correctly

identifying the brand with “healthy living and positive lifestyle” (Stadler and Hlongwa, 2002).

According to Stadler and Hlongwa (2002), during the first year of loveLife’s existence, it focused on creating awareness of the loveLife brand and messaging. This was done through a national, multimedia awareness campaign implemented in three phases:

Phase 1: The introduction of a teaser which they referred to as ‘foreplay’. This was designed to create anticipation and curiosity. This was later followed by a campaign which they labelled the ‘reveal campaign’. The latter campaign consisted of the loveLife brand being posted across the ‘foreplay’ billboards.

Phase II: loveLife then increased the number of billboards as well as using mini-bus taxis as advertising agents. They also had brochures and leaflets printed and distributed. This phase introduced the first loveLife television series known as ‘*Jika Jika*’ as well as their toll-free telephone helpline (the thetjunction).

Phase III: This phase marked the introduction of their second television series known as ‘*S’camto*’ and the publication of *The Impending Catastrophe*, which consisted of a comprehensive analysis of data on the AIDS epidemic and statistical predictions to anticipate the epidemic’s impact on a range of sectors. About 1.5 million copies of the publication were printed and distributed free of charge to the public (Stadler and Hlongwa, 2002).

2.2 Sexual culture

Sexual culture can be defined as “the system of meaning, knowledge, beliefs and practices that structure sexuality in different social contexts” (Parker, 1991:79). According to Parker, culture shapes individual sexuality through roles, norms and attitudes. These factors then contribute to the construction of a shared experiential meaning. Sexuality, as an expression of one’s sex, is thus also connected to and expressed through other cultural domains such as marriage, initiation rites, religion, etc.

Condom promotion as a strategy for women has serious limitations for African women (Gupta and Weiss, 2000). Firstly, this strategy assumes that there is both open dialogue about sex and that women are equal partners in sexual relations. Condoms are problematic for most Africans for two reasons:

- i. prevention of conception; and
- ii. the requirement of male compliance.

Due to the disparities in gender power relations, women are unable to enforce contraceptive use (Gupta and Weiss, 2000). Discussion of condoms is also potentially volatile in marriages because it raises issues of infidelity and distrust. For men, when a woman tries to initiate condom use, it signals her desire to be unfaithful. If mentioned as a form of contraceptive, some men interpret it as an affront to their masculinity.

The biggest deterrent to the use of condoms in Africa is the contraceptive effect. The prevention of pregnancy is unacceptable because the primary motivating factor for having sex is procreation, and the extension of the lineage. Childlessness is an unacceptable situation for many African men and women. Children are a testament to men's virility. For women, children not only represent their fecundity but are also the major channel through which they are able to obtain the respected social status of a 'mother'. For the majority of African women, their fertility is the only vehicle through which they can achieve social status. When women provide lineage with more children, they raise the level of production of the household. Lineage survival depends on procreation. For most, and especially women, the desire to have children outweighs the concern of HIV infection.

2.3 Breaking cultural communication barriers

We live in a culturally diverse world. People encounter individuals from different races, religions, and nationalities every day. Anxiety surrounding unfamiliar cultures is often experienced. How does one approach the problems associated with cultural communication barriers?

The desire to communicate is the first step in being effective, no matter what tools you have for cross-cultural communication. A genuine effort to understand another person goes a long way on the path to communication. The existence of diverse cultures in South Africa makes it difficult for campaigners to successfully communicate with the youth. In most instances men feel that they will be lesser a man should they discuss their sexuality with a total stranger or with someone of the opposite sex. Painter (1994) states that men tend to feel that they would lose status if they were less sexually confident, dominant and in charge. Thus, even if they are already HIV positive, they may not know this because of their reluctance to speak to people about their sexual fears and behaviours. Hence, the virus continues to be passed on unabatedly.

Thus, if education and prevention programmes are to be successful in South Africa, it is imperative that we understand and appreciate the traditional African worldview. Health, sickness and sexuality have different meanings in the traditional African context than in the Western world. HIV/AIDS education and prevention programmes have mostly been based on Western principles, without incorporating or understanding the diverse cultural and belief system of Africa into such programmes (Van Dyk, 2000).

Illness is not a random event according to African tradition. Rather, every illness is a product of destiny and has a specific etiology. In order to treat the illness, “it is necessary to identify, uproot, punish, eliminate and neutralise the cause, the intention behind the cause and the agent of the cause and intention” (Van Dyk, 2000:112). Illness, according to cultural beliefs, can be a result of ‘disharmony’ between a person and the ancestors, by a god, spirits, witches and sorcerers, by natural causes, or by a breakdown in relationships between people (Van Dyk, 2000).

2.4 Language and culture in HIV/AIDS campaigns

According to Van Dijk (1996), power abuse not only involves the abuse of physical power, but also, and more crucially, may affect people’s minds. This is more reason for us to investigate cultural norms and values as factors in behaviour change to prevent the

transmission of HIV/AIDS in our youth and adults. Language as a vehicle for culture is a critical ingredient in the dissemination of norms and values in societies.

Van Dijk (1996:16) argues that:

Through special access to, and control over the means of public discourse and communication, dominant groups or institutions may influence the structures of text and talk in such a way that, as a result, the knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies of recipients are – more or less indirectly – affected in the interest of the dominant group.

According to Hymes (1972), elders within communities use their positions within such communities to control information dissemination. They control what is communicated, how it is communicated and when it can be communicated. The media also plays a big role in transferring information in respect of HIV/AIDS prevention in rural and urban areas. Here, according to Van Dijk, access to the mass media is a critical condition for the people's participation in the public definition of their situation. Despite the generally liberal self-definitions of many journalists, lack of media access by certain communities is one of the most conspicuous properties of the symbolic dominance of White and emergent Black elites.

Language as a barrier during HIV/AIDS campaigns can best be described by the following quotation by Voloshinov (1973:102-3):

In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers, i.e. meaning is realised only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the effect of interaction between speaker and listener produced via the material of a particular sound complex (cited in Dant, 1991:6).

2.5 Conflicting HIV/AIDS media coverage

Present media coverage on the Dr Rath Health Foundation/Department of Health/TAC (Treatment Action Campaign) saga can only add more damage and confusion to our youth in terms of their understanding and comprehension of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Controversial vitamin therapist, Dr Matthias Rath, has caused a stir within government

and TAC as, according to TAC, the Rath Health Foundation is allowing people to die as a result of their propaganda that antiretrovirals (ARVs) are toxic and are killing people instead of healing them. The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has now also entered the arena by banning advertisements placed by the Rath Health Foundation. The banning of the advertisements resulted from the publication of pamphlets which the ASA deemed confusing to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Whilst senior government officials condemned the actions of the Rath Health Foundation, the Minister of Health, Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, was seen to endorse the administering of vitamins instead of ARVs to people living with HIV and AIDS. However, it has come to light that the Medicines Control Council is investigating the activities of the Rath Health Foundation, which can only serve as evidence that the Minister of Health, after all, does not fully support the activities of the Rath Health Foundation.

HIV/AIDS information and communication in South Africa

Effective communication of valid and appropriate information is the specific remedy for infection rates attributable to a lack of information, and for many of the social ills associated with misinformation and myths around the epidemic. Information can confer the capacity to act appropriately, whether by protecting oneself from infection or taking steps to influence decision makers. Information constitutes a strong tool for social power to combat the epidemic. While communication is the medium for conveying important HIV/AIDS-related information, as an activity that negates the silence that surrounds HIV/AIDS, it is also the message itself.

Information and communication are at the heart of effective HIV/AIDS programmes. While information is the basic component of safer sex messages, effective prevention relies on overcoming obstacles posed by misinformation and myths about the disease; silence; denial; stigma and discrimination. The communications environment in South Africa is well-resourced. There are four national television stations and a wide range of

radio stations covering all South African languages. Newspapers and magazines also offer considerable potential for communications regarding HIV/AIDS (Parker, 2000a).

Extent and content of HIV/AIDS media coverage in South Africa

It has been argued that the predominantly White-controlled mainstream media prior to 1994 followed the apartheid government's lead and was subject to an inexplicit disregard, not only for gay people, but also for the Black lives which were being affected (Gevisser, 1995; Grundlingh, 2001). It has been argued that in post-apartheid South Africa, government-endorsed silence about the severity of the epidemic is still impacting on the media; now as a result of the need to attract investors to fund economic initiatives (Ng, 2000). However, it is more generally argued that in post-apartheid South Africa, HIV/AIDS has now achieved extensive media coverage. Unfortunately, this is largely in so far as conflict around HIV/AIDS policy has achieved the status of 'high politics'. HIV/AIDS policies have become a political 'hot potato' used to gain political mileage by just about every political player. Media stories with an overtly political angle and which involve conspiracy or controversy have taken precedence.

The South African media reports regularly on the activities of high-profile activist organisations such as TAC which recognises media logic and adopts its tactics. However, there remains little scope for individual journalists within media organisations to follow the example of and take the initiative in laying bare the way in which HIV/AIDS exacerbates social prejudices, economic inequalities, discriminatory practices and political injustices (Soal, 2001).

The above may perhaps be explained by the fact that the relationship between the spread of the disease among Black people and the heritage of apartheid for racial inequality has now become a political football between Black and White political groupings which few journalists have the courage to kick around. Many of those critical of President Thabo Mbeki's flirtation with AIDS 'dissidents' were labelled as being 'anti-government', even 'racist' by government officials. A good example is Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-

Msimang claiming in a press conference at the AIDS 2000 conference in Durban in July that criticism of President Mbeki's handling of the debate was simply the media 'bad-mouthing the Black government' (Cullinan, 2001).

South African press coverage can in fact be said to be distinguished by what Schneider (2001) describes as the very public disagreement and almost complete non-accommodation between senior politicians in the African National Congress (ANC) and a range of non-governmental actors in South Africa. "In a cycle established by early criticism of government around Sarafina II in 1996, public debate on AIDS has been dominated by a series of responses and counter-responses in which actors have competed to set the agenda for AIDS in South Africa" (Schneider, 2001).

In an AIDS media roundtable hosted by *Media Channel.Org*, Smith, a South African journalist, argues that "the media in South Africa should be ashamed of our shocking failures when it comes to reporting AIDS". Cullinan, also a journalist, agrees. She states that South African journalists are far behind some African countries with lower HIV infection rates than South Africa (Cullinan, 2001).

In South Africa, both cultural and educational factors pose an added challenge to writers. Fear of offending traditional cultural beliefs and practices is increased by the racial delineation of notions of 'culture' and a perceived need to protect African cultural traditions from Western influence. It is worth emphasising that a major imperative of the South Africa media today is to sell their newspaper rather than to meet a challenge demanding intervention from all sectors (Galloway, 2001).

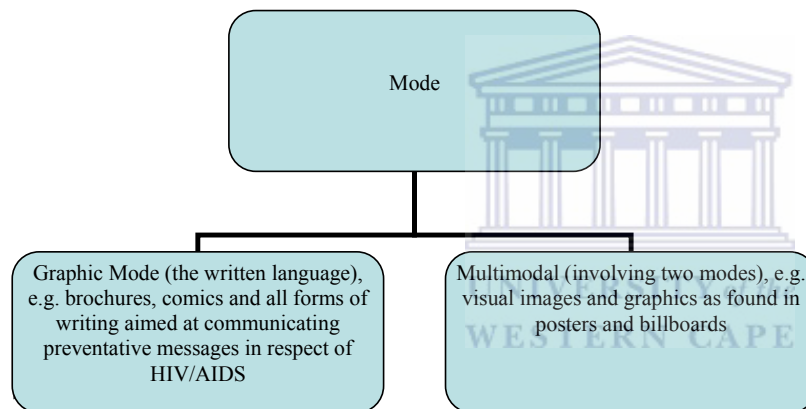
There is undoubtedly considerable potential for the media to contribute more constructively to the conceptualisation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and to be proactive in shaping societal and governmental response to the epidemic. The potential for South African media to achieve this goal needs to be critically examined with a particular objective to develop strategies, policies and programmes which will bring together unified and diverse imperatives.

Chapter 3

Theoretical and analytical framework: multimodality as a mode of communication

3.0 Introduction

According to Martin and Rose (2004), modes of communication are constantly mixing genres, meaning that the mode of communication combines more than one modality in articulating what is going on. What will become evident in this chapter is how these modes – visual and graphic – articulate what actually happens in communication. The following illustration outlines a summary of the modes to be investigated in the study:



Source: Oketch, 2006

The graphic mode involves written words used mainly for record-keeping purposes or alternatively to advertise or promote activities through brochures, newsletters, posters, etc. For the purpose of the study, the analysis will focus mostly on selected graphics found on billboards and posters.

In order to communicate effectively, one cannot limit the act of communication to language alone. Because of this, other modes of communication have been introduced, and the application of two or more modes in a single communicative act has increased (De Vito, 2001). Thus, linguistic modes are increasingly being used with other modes like gestures and visual semiotics in meaning-making and dissemination of information

in the current study area. Multimodality recognises that language is not the only form of communication, but other representational modes are essential and not merely incidental and interesting (Kress and Ogborn, 1998).

3.1 Theoretical and analytical framework

This chapter places emphasis on the analytical framework adopted for the purposes of this thesis. As previously alluded to, this study focuses on a text-based and multimodal discourse analysis of loveLife HIV/AIDS texts and brochures.

To be able to analyse the language use and modes of communication, the study concentrates on two theoretical approaches namely, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA). According to Martin, *et al.* (1997: 2), SFL is very effectively organised as a tool for the analysis and interpretation of texts, spoken or written, and as such, it proved very effective in analysing the metafunctions arising from the interaction between the audience and the campaign. As a theory, SFL concentrates on the relationship between language and other elements and aspects of social life. The approach of SFL to linguistic analysis is oriented to the social character of texts (Fairclough, 2004), which makes it extremely relevant to this study.

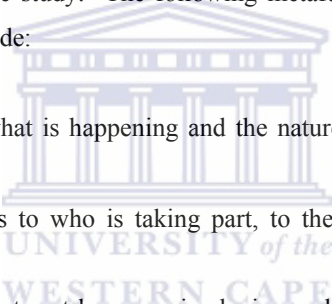
Since power relations and ideological positions form part of language, SFL is used in conjunction with MDA. The aim of this concurrent approach is to ascertain how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggle over power (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2001) and the effect it has on the type of communication.

As indicated in the title of this study, the aim is to approach the analysis of data using multiple models as well as integration of socio-economical, cultural and literacy levels of the target audience. These factors prompted me to employ the method of triangulation as a further framework during the analysis phase.

Outlined below is a comprehensive discussion on each theory.

An interdisciplinary research approach featuring a multimodal analysis will be used which combines aspects of triangulation, SFL and MDA.

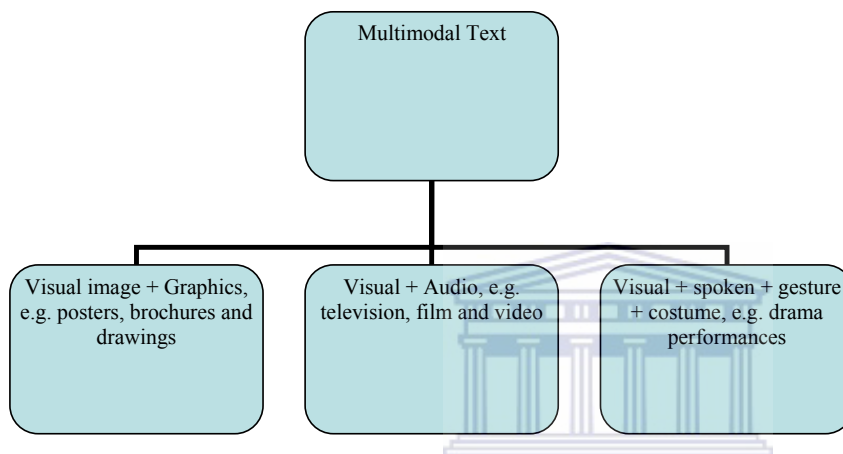
In order to account for linguistic and text-based analyses of text in context, functional linguists developed a construct known as register, which refers to the collective term for various situational and functional aspects of a text. In other words, register is the sum of a text's subject matter, its purpose, its mode (essentially spoken or written), its genre (the type of text it is) and the relationship that exists between its participants (namely, the writer or speaker and the audience) [Ballard, 2001]. The above discourse will be employed during the analysis phase of the study. The following metafunctions found within the cohesive device of register include:

- 
- i. Field (ideation), which refers to what is happening and the nature of the social action that is taking place.
 - ii. Tenor (interpersonal), which refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their status and roles.
 - iii. Mode (textual), which refers to what part language is playing and what it is that the participants are expecting language to do for them in the situation (Halliday, 1985:9-12).

As shown in the next chapter, the coherence of an HIV/AIDS campaign text is dependent on how well these metafunctions are utilised.

The text-based approach described above is combined with multimodal discourse analysis as the texts used for this research are multimodal in nature. This method involves going beyond mere linguistics and individual modes of communication into social semiotics which, as mentioned above, takes into account as many modalities of communication as can be systematically explained.

The following figure outlines the other identified multimodal forms used in meaning making and disseminating information in the current study. This combination of more than two modes is seen by scholars like Jameson (1991) and Harvey (1990) as a feature of ‘postmodernity’ which Fairclough (2004) describes as a cultural facet. He refers to this as ‘new capitalism’.



Multimodal modes as applied to meaning making and information dissemination
Source: Oketch (2006)

The current study focuses on the visual image and graphics, and less on audio and the spoken word.

3.2 Multimodal texts: visual and graphic

One of the important resources for meaning-making and for actualising the recontextualisation process is the combination of different expressive modes (multimodality) in campaigns.

The two most extensively employed expressive modes are the linguistic and the visual ones. The co-deployment of the written language (hence linguistic mode) and the visual representations (hence visual mode) which, used separately, can evoke divergent

interpretations, has as an effect the narrowing down of the alternative legitimate interpretations of a text (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001; Lemke, 1998; Barthes, 1977).

Three theoretical points inform my account of multimodal communication for prevention campaigns. First, material media are socially shaped to become over time meaning-making resources, to articulate the (social and individual/affective) meanings demanded by the requirements of different communities. These we call *modes*. All modes have potential for making meanings differently. The meanings made are not always accessible to 'readers' who are not members of those communities (Oketch, 2006). Modes and meanings are socially and culturally specific. Secondly, the meanings of the modes of language-as-speech or language-as-writing, as of all other modes, are always interwoven with the meanings made with all other modes co-present and 'co-operating' in the communicative context. This interaction in itself produces meaning. Thirdly, what is considered a 'mode' is always contingent: resources of meaning are not static or stable; they are fluid. Modes of representation and communication are constantly transformed by their users in response to the communicative needs of society; new modes are created, existing modes are transformed (Kress, 2001).

Halliday's social semiotic theory of communication (Halliday, 1978) provides the starting point for my exploration of multimodal representation. He argues that in verbal interactions we have at our disposal networks of options (sets of semiotic alternatives) of the meaning potential of a culture, which are realised in sets of options of formal/material means, the *modes* of our multimodal approach. For him, the semantic system of language (his approach focuses on language) reflects the social function of the utterance as representation, as interaction, and as message, which are realised by the lexico-grammar of a language. The principal assumption is that language is the way it is because of the social functions it has evolved to serve: it is organised to serve the interests of those who use it in their social lives. In other words, (our 'other words') language can be understood to be the result of constant social/cultural working on or 'shaping' of a *material medium* (sound in the case of language-as-speech) into a resource for representation, which displays regularities as *mode*, the (material yet socially/culturally shaped) resource (as

signifier-material) for meaning in the constant new making of signs.

We start from the position that all modes (visual, gestural, actional) have, like 'language', been shaped in their social use into (fully or partially) articulated semiotic resources - *modes*. Extending Halliday's theory of language as social semiotic to other modes, we assume that all modes have been developed as networks of interlocking options for making signs. The choices made within these networks of meaning by a sign-maker then are *traces* of a sign-maker's decision making about the expression of the meaning that she or he wishes to make in a given context. This trace is the expression of the sign-maker's *interest* (Halliday, 1985; Kress, 1997). However, when the collocation of modes is incongruent, it leads to signs having no meaning. In other words, it takes on a form of incoherence or nonsensical texts.

In Hallidayan linguistics, meaning is the effect of the interplay of choices made in the ideational, interpersonal, and textual aspects of spoken or written texts. A multimodal perspective equally involves attending to this interplay between these three aspects of meaning in each of the modes in use. This multiplies the complexity of meaning. Each mode of communication interacts with the other and contributes to the other. At times, the meanings realised in two modes may be 'equivalent', often they are complementary; sometimes one repeats information presented in the other; at yet other times, each may refer to quite different aspects of meaning; or the two may be contradictory (Kress, 1988; Lemke, 1998). In short, modes realise (often quite diverse) meanings, and this is shaped further through their intersection or interaction with each other.

The most common type of multimodality found within this study is a combination of visual images and written texts. The focus of the ensuing section is concentrated on the analysis of how language, image and colour work together during the process of attaching meaning to visual images.

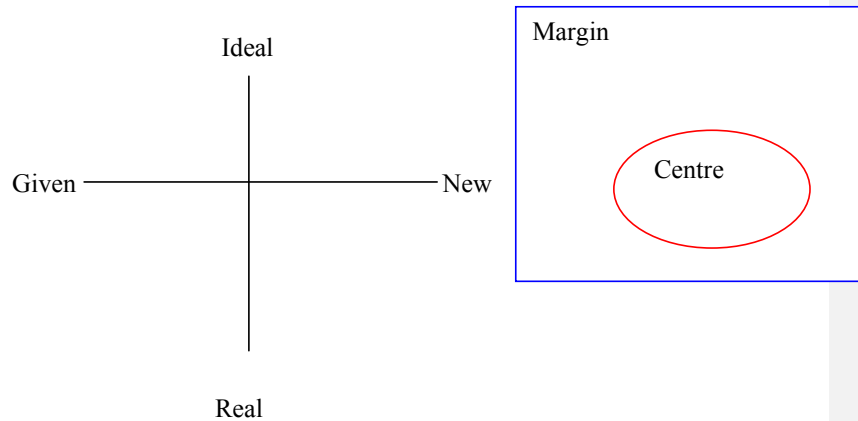
Two types of multimodal texts can be identified where one makes use of both visual and written modes. They are:

- i. real pictures of people; and
- ii. animated illustrations or drawings of people.

The use of a combination of visual images and written texts is by far the most common type of multimodality. Examples include brochures and posters whose meanings, according to Iedema (2003), have to be interpreted by taking into consideration all their semiotic complexity and richness. In fact, if the visual images do not match the written texts, then the potential for the multimodal text to carry a message is reduced.

Multimodality, in this instance, will entail recognising that language is not at all at the centre of all communication. It is an attempt to make the point overtly and decisively that an interest in representational modes other than speech or writing is essential and not merely incidentally interesting (Ogborn, 1998).

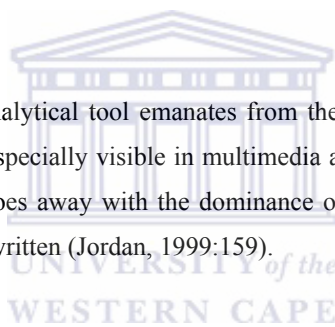
Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) suggest two forms of textual organisation for images, 'polarised' and 'centred', as outlined in the figure below. On the one hand, there is polarisation along horizontal and/or vertical axes. In the case of images that are horizontally polarised, the left-hand side is glossed as 'Given' and the right as 'New'. For vertically polarised images, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2007) suggest the terms 'Ideal' and 'Real', characterising the Ideal as the generalised essence of the information, and the Real as more specific, down-to-earth or practical information. Alternatively, images may be organised around a Centre and Margin principle, with Centre being the nucleus of information on which marginal elements depend (Martin and Rose, 2004).



Textual organisation of images

Source: Martin and Rose, 2004

Finally, the choice to use MDA as an analytical tool emanates from the fact that new styles of meaning making have become especially visible in multimedia and cyberspace design. The new realm of multimedia does away with the dominance of the alphabet, fully integrating the audiovisual with the written (Jordan, 1999:159).



Framing

One concept that is becoming critical to interpretation of texts is the notion of framing (cf. Goffman, 1974). Framing, which forms part of the compositional meaning, can ‘connect’ elements or ‘disconnect’ them. Salience, on the other hand, constitutes the last part of compositional meaning, refers to those elements in a text that are more prominent than others. This effect is achieved by using certain colours instead of others.

Frames give salience to contexts. They are thus of primary importance for realised coordination. A *salient context* may be defined as the set of behavioural beliefs associated with a particular frame. Framing - deciding where an image begins and ends - is as vital to the meaning of an image as composition. There are a whole variety of camera angles which can be selected to frame a shot, and often what is left out is as important as what is

included. What is beyond the picture - for instance, what a model could be looking at - is the source of much ambiguity and enigma. We infer meaning from the relationship between the camera and subject (a close up is intimate, a long shot implies emotional distance or major status difference).

By framing two objects together in the same image, we imply a connection between them, especially if there is a physical link (perhaps through a graphic or colour) between them. If the connection is unusual (juxtaposition), we are forced to consider it more carefully and this may alter our reading of the image.

By isolating an object within the frame - for instance showing a girl staring (as in figure 20 on page 102) against an expanse of nothing but a backdrop - we can make them seem insignificant and lonely. Are characters surrounded by others (trapped? loved?) or do they have space (power? insecurity?)? Are they where they need to be (centred?), or do they have a space into which they are headed?

The important thing to remember about lighting is that shadow is just as important. We see patterns of light and dark - that is how our eyes create images, and we read both light and its absence as equally significant. The whole meaning of an image can be changed if you alter the shadows.

Colour is an important part of a scene in that it creates mood and atmosphere. Whilst still photographers have always spent time connecting subject to background through the use of colour, film-makers are now increasingly using rather stylised techniques. Colour can be created by the objects themselves being a certain colour, or the set being "washed" in a certain colour through the use of coloured lighting, or a coloured filter on a lens. Colours are powerful and complex codes, and we read them according to our culture. They can be technical or symbolic.

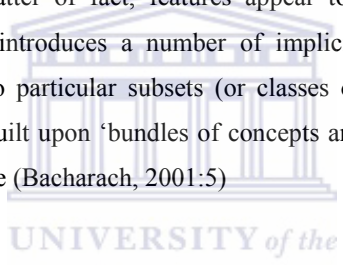
As demonstrated in the next chapter, Figure 16 portrays a good example of this. The photographer used calming colours, which somehow distracts one from paying attention to the actual message in the brochure.

In semiotics, salience refers to the relative importance or prominence of a piece of a sign. The relative salience of a particular sign when considered in the context of others helps an individual to quickly rank large amounts of information by importance and thus give attention to that which is the most important. This process stops an individual from becoming mentally overloaded with data.

Framing is associated with the identification of features and of one or more congruence relationship(s) among features. As a matter of fact, features appear to have certain embedded 'fitting properties', and this introduces a number of implicit or 'natural' associations among features belonging to particular subsets (or classes of conforming features). This suggests that frames are built upon 'bundles of concepts and predicates', which tend to be activated at the same time (Bacharach, 2001:5)

Framing refers to "the process through which individuals or groups make sense of their external environment" (Boettcher, 2004:332). In order to distinguish framing from other related theories, this study will integrate Scheufele's (2000) work to define framing as the subtle changes in the wording of the description of a situation, which might affect how audience members interpret the situation. In his writings, he adds, "Framing influences how audiences think about issues, not by making the issue more salient, but by invoking interpretive schemas that influence the interpretation of incoming information" (Scheufele, 2000:1530). However, Entman (1993:52) suggests that framing involves selection and salience, recognizing that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described".

Field Code Changed
Field Code Changed



Frames define problems, identify causes to the problems, make judgments by evaluating agents and their effects, and suggest remedies by offering treatments for those problems and predicting possible effects. Entman (1993) argues that frames have at least four locations in the communication process: the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. First, communicators consciously or unconsciously make frame-guided judgments that organise their belief systems. In other words, the first location involves the content of frames and their joining together of “textual items (words and images) with the contextual treatment that they receive from framing devices” (D’Angelo, 2002:873). Pan and Kosicki (1993) add that frames are therefore considered to be ontologically separate from the topic.

The second location, the text, contains frames, “which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (Entman, 1993:52). D’Angelo (2002) adds that frames shape levels of reality. They are “powerful discursive cues that can impact cognition (e.g. Rhee, 1997), individual socialization via interpersonal discussions (Gamson, 1992), public opinion formation (Entman, 1991), and group use of media messages to achieve their goals (Gitlin, 1980). As such, “the concept of framing consistently offers a way to describe the power of a communicating text” (Entman, 1993:51).

Kinder and Sanders (1990:74) suggest, in the third location, that frames lead a double life as “internal structures of the mind” and “devices embedded in political discourse”. Individuals, or receivers, use frames as prior knowledge to efficiently process information. These processed frames are part of the commonly invoked frames of a larger culture, the fourth location. The culture is the supply of commonly used frames displayed in social discourse and thinking. Thus, “framing in all four locations includes similar functions: selection and highlighting, and use of the highlighted elements to construct an argument about problems and their causation, evaluation, and/or solution” (Entman, 1993:53).

Salience is elevated when frames highlight pieces of information over others about particular items in communication. Fiske and Taylor (1991) suggest, “an increase in salience enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning and thus process it, and store it in memory (Entman, 1993:53). Kahneman and Tversky (1984) offer an example of the power of framing and how it operates by “selecting and highlighting some features of reality while omitting others” (Entman, 1993:53).

Goffman (1974) defines a frame as a “schemata of interpretation that provides a context for understanding information and enables us to locate, perceive, identify and label” (Hallahan, 1999:211). Frames activate these schemata, enabling them to “direct how an individual recognises and uses framed information” (D’Angelo, 2002:875). A final dimension of framing is cognitive attributes, or the details of attributes in a frame (Ghanem, 1997).

Media’s use of framing can affect the processing of a public’s understanding of information, how issues are discussed, and how the public form assessments (Reese, Gandy, and Grant, 1991). By promoting a particular frame, they can alter perceptions of an issue and swing public opinion (Callaghan and Schnell, 2001). The media, by selectively choosing to cover one or both sides of an issue, interpret, simplify and/or allocate greater coverage to one issue or another, thereby acting as gatekeepers, advocates and interpreters of information (Callaghan and Schnell, 2001).

The other emerging concepts critical to text-based analyses are ‘intertextuality.’

3.3 Text and Intertextuality

Text analysis methodology encompasses a broad variety of approaches to researching texts. These include:

- i. stylistics
- ii. rhetorical moves analysis; and

iii. corpus analysis.

Whilst emphasis is placed on the systematic analysis of authentic data, in most instances of written data, attention is also drawn to the social nature of texts. By paying attention to the social nature of texts, researchers aim to ascertain how writers and speakers employ language and linguistic strategies to achieve certain objectives. By so doing, they are also afforded the opportunity to investigate communication contexts or alternatively what the relationship is between participants.

Intertextuality, on the other hand, subsumes the ways in which the production and reception of a given text depend upon the participants' knowledge of other texts. This knowledge can be applied by a process described in terms of the extent to which one feeds one's current beliefs and goals into the model of the communicative situation.

Extensive mediation is illustrated by the development and use of text types, being classes of texts expected to have certain traits for certain purposes. Mediation is much smaller when people quote from or refer to specific well-known texts, e.g. famous speeches or works of literature. Mediation is extremely slight in activities such as replying, refuting, reporting, summarizing, or evaluating other texts, as we find them especially in conversations.

Intertextuality refers to far more than the 'influences' of writers on each other. For structuralists, language has powers which not only exceed individual control but also determine subjectivity. Structuralists sought to counter what they saw as a deep-rooted bias in literary and aesthetic thought which emphasised the uniqueness of both texts and authors (Sturrock, 1986:87).

The concept of intertextuality reminds us that each text exists in relation to others. In fact, texts owe more to other texts than to their own makers. Michel Foucault declared that:

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands... Its unity is variable and relative (Foucault 1974:23).

Texts are framed by others in many ways. The most obvious are formal frames: a television programme, for instance, may be part of a series and part of a genre (such as a soapie or sitcom). Our understanding of any individual text relates to such framings. Texts provide contexts within which other texts may be created and interpreted. The art historian Ernst Gombrich goes further, arguing that all art, however 'naturalistic', is 'a manipulation of vocabulary' rather than a reflection of the world (Gombrich, 1982:70-78, 100).

In order to make sense of loveLife brochures, posters, billboards or advertisements one needs to know what to look for. Such expectations are established by reference to one's previous experience in looking at related resources in an extended series. Once we know that we are looking for, it is easier to perceive it as intended. Modern visual material makes extensive use of intertextuality in this way. Sometimes there is no direct reference to the product at all. Instant identification of the appropriate interpretative code serves to identify the interpreter of the material as a member of an exclusive club, with each act of interpretation serving to renew one's membership.

Whilst the term 'intertextuality' would normally be used to refer to allusions to other texts, a related kind of allusion is what might be called 'intratextuality' which involves internal relations within the text. Within a single code (e.g. a photographic code) these would be simply syntagmatic relationships (e.g. the relationship of the image of one person to another within the same photograph). However, a text may involve several codes: a newspaper photograph, for instance, may have a caption. Such an example serves to remind us that what we may choose to regard as a discrete 'text' for analysis lacks clearcut boundaries.

The relationships between codes within a genre may shift over time, as William Leiss and his colleagues note:

The growing preponderance of visuals in ads has enhanced the ambiguity of meaning embedded in message structures. Earlier advertising usually states its message quite explicitly through the medium of written text..., but starting in the mid-1920s visual representation became more common, and the relationship between text and visual image became complementary - that is, the text explained the visual (Leiss *et al*, 1990:199).

Gerard Genette proposed the term 'transtextuality' as a more inclusive term than 'intertextuality' (Genette, 1997). He listed five subtypes:

1. *intertextuality*: quotation, plagiarism, allusion;
2. *paratextuality*: the relation between a text and its 'paratext' - that which surrounds the main body of the text - such as titles, headings, prefaces, epigraphs, dedications, acknowledgements, footnotes, illustrations, dust jackets, etc.;
3. *architextuality*: designation of a text as part of a genre or genres (Genette refers to designation by the text itself, but this could also be applied to its framing by readers);
4. *metatextuality*: explicit or implicit critical commentary of one text on another text (metatextuality can be hard to distinguish from the following category);
5. *hypotextuality* (Genette's term was *hypertextuality*): the relation between a text and a preceding 'hypotext' which relates to a text or genre on which it is based but which it transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends (including parody, spoof, sequel, translation).

It may be useful to consider the issue of 'degrees of intertextuality'. Would the 'most intertextual' text be an indistinguishable copy of another text, or would that have gone beyond what it means to be intertextual? Would the 'most intratextual' text be one which approached the impossible goal of referring only to itself? Even if no specific text is referred to, texts are written within genres and use language in ways which their authors have seldom 'invented'. Intertextuality does not seem to be simply a continuum on a

single dimension and there does not seem to be consensus about what dimensions we should be looking for. Intertextuality is not a feature of the text alone but of the 'contract' which reading it forges between its author(s) and reader(s). Since the dominant mode of producing texts seems to involve masking their depths, reflexivity seems to be an important issue. In other words, we need to consider how marked the intertextuality is. Some defining features of intertextuality might include the following:

1. reflexivity: how reflexive (or self-conscious) the use of intertextuality seems to be (if reflexivity is important to what it means to be intertextual, then presumably an indistinguishable copy goes beyond being intertextual);
2. alteration: the alteration of sources (more noticeable alteration presumably making it more reflexively intertextual);
3. explicitness: the specificity and explicitness of reference(s) to other text(s) (e.g. direct quotation, attributed quotation) (is assuming recognition more reflexively intertextual?);
4. criticality to comprehension: how important it would be for the reader to recognise the intertextuality involved;
5. scale of adoption: the overall scale of allusion/incorporation within the text; and
6. structural unboundedness: to what extent the text is presented (or understood) as part of or tied to a larger structure (e.g. as part of a genre, of a series, of a serial, of a magazine, of an exhibition etc.) - factors which are often not under the control of the author of the text (Genette, 1997).

3.4 Semiotics

Semiotics, or semiology, is rooted in the structuralist tradition represented by Levi-Strauss and Barthes. Levi-Strauss (1977) argued for an approach that would treat social systems as if they were languages, while Barthes (1957) continued the work by providing a general theory of culture. These approaches constitute the major theoretical basis for the structuralist view on mass communication and the early semiotic analysis of message systems. Simultaneously the linguistic heritage of these paradigms has also limited the development of semiotics, and has resulted in its partial rejection in the last decades (Connell and Mills, 1985:33). Consequently semiotics has not established itself

as a discipline, but finds its theoretical premises in the domains of linguistics, literature and philosophy (Hodge and Kress, 1988:1).

However, the work of Barthes and his development of semiotics provided the launching pad for the structuralist view on the mass media. A theory of a 'mythic discourse' indebted to Levi-Strauss provided a methodological formalism for analysing the production of social meaning (Connell and Mills, 1985:34). Concerned with extending the general theory of signs to encompass all different signifying systems, semiotics attempted to combine the production of meaning with the concept of ideology (Barthes, 1957; 1967). The ambiguity in the relation between signification and ideology exposes the central weakness in the structuralist methods.

Social semiotics

From semiotics and partly from critical linguistics, a new area of investigation into visual images has emerged: social semiotics. In contrast to semiotics, social semiotics is especially concerned with visual semiosis and language, and it attempts to correct the flaws of its predecessor, semiotics. The new field elaborates on the concept of genre and intertextual analysis of texts, as well as practices of text production and interpretation (Fairclough, 1995b:28; Hodge and Kress, 1998; Kress and van Leeuwen, 1990; 1996/2006). Hodge and Kress, prominent advocates of social semiotics research, admit that even if 'mainstream semiotics' has achievements, it has been justly criticised for its assumptions and practices. Semiotics focuses on codes and structures of semiotic systems, while overlooking the concrete social contexts, and the functions and social uses of semiotic systems.

However, the development in the area of social semiotics has been weak. It could be argued that in the decade of the resurrection of semiotics the premises used and the propositions made by social semiotics have not gained credibility.

Within discourse analysis, discourse is seen as a "manifest cultural and social product in and through which meanings and ideologies are expressed" (Van Dijk, 1985a:5).

The use of text and discourse often overlap each other, even if a clear distinction should be drawn between the two concepts. Discourse is more frequently used in discussions with a sociological basis regarding the role of social structure in the study of discourse. Also, the emphasis of discourse is more on content, function and social significance, and is thus a category that derives from the social domain. Cross reference still occurs between the two concepts (Kress, 1985:27).

The relation between discourse and text “is one of realisation: Discourse finds its expression in text. However, this is never a straightforward relation; any one text may be the expression or realisation of a number of sometimes competing and contradictory discourses” (Kress, 1985:27). One of the discourses might be dominant over the other, and have a clearer expression of ideology. However, texts can also convey different ideologies by different discourses. This can be found, for example, in advertisements (Kress, 1985:39-40).

Social semiotics view the relation between text and discourse in a similar way, but as a legacy of the linguistic tradition discourse has an emphasis on “the social process in which texts are embedded” (Hodge and Kress, 1988:6). This definition of discourse falls close to the first of two put forward by Fairclough, (1995b), which pays attention to verbal interaction and real social situations.

In textual analysis, “Discourses are socially situated forms of knowledge...of reality... as well as a set of related evaluations, purposes, interpretations and legitimisations.” (Source?) The discourses utilise the multimodal resources (modes) which the culture has to “make meanings” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:20). “Unlike traditional linguistics...we see multimodal texts as making meaning in multiple articulations” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001:4).

Textual analysis is concerned with meanings through form, and forms through meaning. It analyses the organisation of the texture of text, but it is primarily conducted on a

linguistic level (Fairclough, 1995b:57). Various sorts of social and cultural phenomena come to expression in the properties of texts and render them “sensitive indicators of sociocultural processes, relations and change” (Fairclough, 1995a:4).

According to Fairclough, (1995b) three categories of questions can be raised in relation to media output:

- i. How are things represented?
- ii. What relations are there between those involved?
- iii. What identities are set up?

The choice of how to represent, how to relate and how to set up and project identities constitutes a choice of meaning, “the selection of options from within the meaning potential” (Fairclough, 1995b:18). The selection is thus not limited to the elements chosen to be included and fore-grounded, but extended to the selection of how relations and identities are constructed. This so-called systemic view of text modified by Fairclough is founded on the language theory of Halliday (1979), and its crucial difference to its predecessor is that the identity function is distinguished from the relational aspect. The modification further provides an advantage in that it sensitises the analysis to elements that are absent from a text (Fairclough, 1992:168).

Any text can conceptually be assigned the three processes or aspects. Even if their internal emphasis can vary, a reasonable working assumption is that “all three are always going on to some degree” (Fairclough, 1995b:55).

Analysing a text can be a daunting task. During the process of analysing visual texts, one needs different tools to dissect such images as tools used for written texts will in most instances not work for visual texts. With images one has to take into account portrayal of the image, its target audience and lastly the intended message. Theorists like Halliday, Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) can be regarded as experts in this field.

Halliday (1978) recognises three functions which are at play during the analysis phase which he refers to as metafunctions. They are ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions as discussed elsewhere.

Kress and van Leeuwen, (1996/2006) took this one step further and extended it to include images, using a different lexicon. For ideation they used 'representational', for inter-personal they used 'interactive' and for textual they used 'compositional'. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), "any image not only represents the world, but also plays a part in some interaction and, with or without accompanying text, constitutes a recognisable kind of text".

According to Jewitt and Oyama (2001), representational meaning is conveyed by the participants (people, places and things) it depicts. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) describe two kinds of patterns that constitute representational meaning. Narrative structures, according to Jewitt and Oyama (2001), relate participants in terms of 'doings' and happenings, of the unfolding of actions, events, or processes of change. Jewitt and Oyama (2001) are also of the opinion that conceptual structures, by contrast, represent participants in terms of their more generalised, stable or timeless essences. One can thus recognise narrative structures by the presence of a vector, which is a line that connects people in an image.

Narrative structures are also realised through actors and goals. Actors are the participants from whom the vector emanates or who themselves form the vector, and goals are the participants to whom the action is done (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001).

Interactive meaning refers to how images portray relations between the viewers and the outside world. These interactive meanings are realised in three ways, namely;

- i. contact;
- ii. distance; and
- iii. point of view.

In images people can be positioned in such a manner that they look directly at the viewer, thereby ‘making contact’ (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001). These types of pictures are referred to as ‘demand’ pictures (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006).

The distance from which a picture is taken plays an important role in viewer image. Close-up shots reflect intimacy, medium-shots reflect social relationship and a long-shot reflects relationships of an impersonal nature (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001).

‘Point of view’ refers to the angle at which the picture was taken. According to Jewitt and Oyama (2001), frontal angles tend to increase involvement. Angles from the side literally put the viewer ‘on the side line’. Involvement is also realised through horizontal angles. Vertical angles, however, relate to power dynamics.

Compositional meaning constitutes the third tool during the analysis phase of visual texts. Information value, framing and salience make up the three segments of this tool. The first segment can be interpreted as the “role of any particular element in the whole which will depend on whether it is placed on the left or on the right, in the centre or the margin or in the upper or the lower part of the picture space or page” (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001).

3.5 Towards a Linguistic and Text-based Approach

During one of the investigations undertaken by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1982), they argue that modern linguistics, more specifically the grammatical structure, was concentrated on only as far as the basic linguistic unit. No consideration was given to the larger units of text in a structural context. Their argument was based on the fact that, to the researchers, having to arrive at the acceptability of grammatical sentences was of a more straightforward nature in relation to larger units (texts). According to De Beaugrande and Dressler (1982:14), specific concentration on ‘text’ dates back to ancient Greece and Rome, to the study of rhetoric. According to Slembrouck (1998), the study of textual linguistics was initiated by exploring the interconnection of sentences in order to

make sense of it. In so doing, the focus was concentrated on the linguistic features responsible for textual cohesion.

According to De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981:3), a text can be defined as:

A communicative occurrence which meets seven standards of textuality.

In the event of any of the seven standards alluded to by De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) not being met, the text will be rendered non-communicative, making it non-textual. These standards are:

Standard	Description of Standard
Cohesion	How the text hangs together to make linguistic sense
Coherence	How the components within the text are mutually accessible and relevant
Intentionality	The receiver's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text instrumental in fulfilling the producer's intentions
Acceptability	The receiver's attitude that the set of occurrences should constitute a cohesive and coherent text, having some use or relevance for the receiver
Informativity	The extent to which the occurrences of the text are expected opposed to the unexpected, or known opposed to the unknown/uncertain
Situationality	Those factors which make a text relevant to a situation/occurrence
Intertextuality	Those factors which make the utilization of one text dependent on knowledge of previously encountered texts

The above approaches used to study structures larger than the sentence are referred to as text linguistics, which, as argued by Kaplan and Grabe (2002:194), when examined from a textual linguistic perspective, can be defined as being a stretch of language having a structure which is constituted linguistically. This constitution is made possible by the internal cohesion as well as coherence between the given textual units.

Cook (1992:15), drawing on the seminal work on cohesion of Halliday and Hasan (1976), alludes to a number of formal links which leads to cohesion in a text. These links are:

Link	Description of Link
Verb Form	The way in which the form of the verb in one sentence can limit and determine the form of a verb in the following sentence
Parallelism	A device which suggests a connection simply because the form of one sentence or clause repeats the form of another
Referring expressions	Words whose meaning can only be discovered by referring to other words or to elements of the context which are clear to both sender and receiver
Repetition and lexical chains	The repetition of a particular word or phrase, or the use of different words to refer to the same concept or entity
Substitution	The substitution of words which appeared in an earlier phrase or sentence
Ellipsis	Omitting parts of sentences on the assumption that an earlier sentence or the context will make the meaning clear
Conjunction	Those words or phrases which explicitly draw attention to the type of relationship which exists between one sentence/clause and another

Notwithstanding the above, text analysts found that linguistic features alone cannot account for textual cohesion. This notion paved the way for a more integrated social approach to textual analysis to be developed. It is important to understand that social approaches have not replaced text linguistics but developed from it, often focusing on more than the formal textual features.

The insights and readings of Halliday form the basis of this approach. Halliday sought to create an approach to linguistics and text analysis that would treat language as a foundation for the building of human experience. His insights and publications formed an approach which came to be known as systemic-functional linguistics (SFL). Halliday's work stresses the fact that language cannot be disassociated from meaning. SFL considers function and semantics as the basis of human language and communicative activity. A key concept in Halliday's approach is the "context of situation" which obtains "through a systematic relationship between social environment on the one hand, and the functional organisation of language on the other" (Halliday, 1985:11). In order to comprehend texts, it is important to understand that these two concepts are found within texts.

The linguistic structures occurring in texts are considered 'natural' because they express the meanings required in a particular context. The 'linguistic structure' of systemic theory is the 'lexicogrammar', which combines syntax, lexicon and morphology. Halliday believes that these three components must be described as one. He argues that "grammar cannot be modelled as new sentences made out of old words, a fixed stock of vocabulary in a never-to-be-repeated combination" (Halliday, 1985b:8).

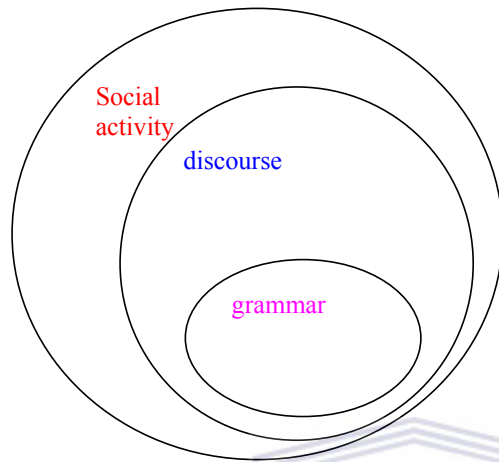
The theory recognises that "any language use serves simultaneously to construct some aspects of experience; to negotiate relationship and to organise the language successfully so that it realises a satisfactory message" (Christie, 2005:11). Thus, the theory of SFL is idiosyncratic in three ways:

- i. all natural languages have metafunctions;
- ii. it attaches significance to the notion of 'system'; and,
- iii. there exists a relationship between language and context.

Metafunctions, according to Halliday, include ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions. Halliday (1977; 2002) refers to these metafunctions as the semantic system. He further explains that ideational metafunctions refer to aspects of grammar which have a bearing on the world and its experiences as well as modality through modal auxiliaries, e.g. (in Yates, 1996:42) modals of obligation (must, need, should); modals of ability and possibility (can, could); modals of epistemic possibility (may, might); modals of volition and prediction (will, shall) and hypothetical modals (would, should). Ideational metafunctions, according to Halliday, have two components, namely, experiential and logical metafunctions. The interpersonal metafunctions refer to the grammatical resources that act as the link between interlocutors with regards to speech-function, exchange structure, involvement and detachment, personal reference, use of pronouns, 'interactive items' showing the position of the speaker (just, whatever, basically, slightly) and discourse markers (words that monitor the interaction, e.g. well, might, good, so, anyway). The textual metafunctions refer to features of grammar that organise language as a message drawing from the resources of theme, information and cohesion which, when put together, render it as a completed whole (Halliday, 1977; 2002; Christie, 2005).

Two general perspectives for looking at the phenomena of discourse exist. They are:

- i. three levels of language: as grammar, as discourse, and as social context (known as **strata** of language); and
- ii. three general functions of language in social contexts: to enact our relationships, to represent our experience, and to organise discourse as meaningful text (known as **metafunctions**) (Martin and Rose, 2004).



In the above illustration grammar, discourse and social activity are symbolised as a series of circles which depicts how discourse is embedded within social activity and how grammar is embedded in discourse. Fairclough (1992:65) states that:

Discursive practice ... contributes to reproducing society (social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it is, yet also contributes to transforming society.

The above statement outlines the role of discourse analysis in the translation of cultural aspects in persuasive advertisements. It can be inferred that society, as defined by Fairclough (1992), has a direct bearing on cultural identity. Discursive practice, like a persuasive advertisement, changes or manipulates the receivers in a society or culture to alter their behaviour.

To sum up, the analytical framework used in this study is text-based multimodal discourse analysis, where text is any passage spoken or written that forms a unified whole (Halliday and Hassan, 1976; 1985). In order for any text to be meaningful, its components have to relate to each other. Text then refers to any passage of coherent language, that is, it is a meaningful passage of language that hangs together. Thus, text is

a semantic unit of meaning which has clauses that are contextual properties that hang together (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). However, multimodal texts also include images. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the clauses and images have to hang together to be deemed coherent.



Chapter 4

Research design and methodology

4.0 Introduction

This chapter elaborates on the actual execution of the study. It details the research paradigm, instruments of data collection and the data collection process. The study is text-based with each poster, brochure or billboard being analysed for cohesion and coherence in terms of text versus image. Youth media HIV prevention campaigns were considered the entry point from which to reflect on youth participation, with a description of the loveLife campaign as an exploratory case study, and the larger context of prevention campaigns as a backdrop. This space is used to explore the effectiveness of the loveLife texts to disseminate HIV/AIDS messages.

4.1 Qualitative research

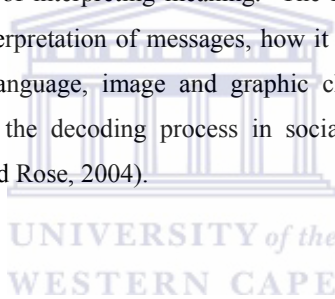
Qualitative research, according to De Vos (1998:241), takes the form of a holistic approach with the aim of understanding social, behavioural as well as the meaning that people attach to their day to day activities. Mason (2001:5) maintains that qualitative research is systematic, rigorous, flexible, contextual and should be strategically conducted.

Qualitative data collection methods play an important role in impact evaluation by providing information useful to understand the processes behind observed results and assess changes in people's perceptions of their well-being.

The qualitative research paradigm is an open approach that can be explored through many methodologies that are sometimes referred to as ambiguous (Potter, 1996). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) explain qualitative research as "converging on issues of how humans articulate and interpret their social and personal interests" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002:19). Scholars agree that qualitative research intends for the target audience to be engaged in a naturalistic, interpretive manner (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Frey, Anderson and Friedman, 1998; Lindlof and Taylor, 2002; Potter, 1996).

While some researchers have focused on the description of qualitative research (Wolcott, 1992), others have suggested that “explicit, systematic methods are used to draw conclusions and to test them carefully (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The data can be found in the words, actions, symbols, and artefacts of the target audience (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002; Miles and Huberman, 1994:2). For this reason, qualitative methods were most appropriate to enable the data to speak for itself, so that the voices of the target audience are represented in the research findings of this study (Wolcott, 1992; Wolcott, 2001).

The research follows a qualitative approach throughout the study as it is a method most suited for awareness campaigns in terms of interpreting meaning. The researcher pays particular attention to the possible misinterpretation of messages, how it affects cultural diversity and particularly whether the language, image and graphic choices used in loveLife texts act as constraints during the decoding process in social contexts (cf, Halliday, 1985; van Dijk, 1991; Martin and Rose, 2004).



4.2 Design and procedure

The research design forms the presentation of the plan, the structure and the strategy of the analysis. This design is used to seek answers to the research question listed in chapter 1 of this study. Huysamen (1993:10) refers to research design as a plan or alternatively a blueprint which acts as a data collection tool to investigate and analyse the research hypothesis.

The study also adopts an exploratory research design as it aims to do a textual analysis using MDA of the relatively little known areas of HIV prevention campaigns and their objectives. To coincide with the key objectives of the study, emphasis was placed on texts and images which were meant to elicit from the South African audience projected responses both consciously and subconsciously. The design and procedure of this study is text-based (cf. De Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981; Kress and van Leeuwen,

1996/2006; Martin and Rose, 2004; van Dijk, 1991; Fairclough, 1997). Therefore the text-based design and procedure used in the study is one favoured by researchers in discourse analysis and multimodality.

The texts were sourced from the various prevention campaigns managed by loveLife. The focus was on one programme which has four campaigns.

The researcher used a purposeful approach in the selection of the texts. Following Omondi (2006), the researcher applied purposive sampling to identify relevant texts for the objectives set out in the study. This purposeful approach enabled the researcher to access the texts that provided the best information for the purposes of this study (cf. Kumar, 1999, Omondi, 2006). The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information thus enabling researchers to target and engage only texts likely to have the required information (Kumar, 1999). This is important because not all loveLife texts have the kind of information required in this study. Thus, the researcher sought those kinds of loveLife texts, that is, the “few ‘rich cases’ ... those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of relating to HIV/AIDS prevention which are central to the purpose of this study, hence the term ‘purposeful’ sampling” (Patton, 1987:52). In this sampling technique, the researcher uses her knowledge of HIV/AIDS campaigns in South Africa to locate the best texts.

This technique was very useful to identify loveLife posters as well as other texts that are relevant to this study.

The texts used were from the following loveLife campaigns from 2005 to 2006:

- i. Love to be there campaign
- ii. Talk about it campaign
- iii. His and Hers campaign
- iv. A loveLife advertisement

From the source at loveLife as well as internet sources, the researcher was able to obtain the following texts that are used in the study:

- i. 12 posters
- ii. 10 billboards
- iii. 1 loveLife advertisement
- iv. 3 brochures

As alluded to above, research material was selected according to three prevention campaigns, one interview and an advertisement – all resource material from the loveLife programme. The following are objectives, as per the loveLife programme, of the prevention campaigns applicable to this study:

“Talk about it”

“Talk about it” is the entry to all the loveLife messages. “Talk about it” was conceived as international research had shown a correlation between open and frank discussion with young people around issues pertaining to sex and a delayed onset of sexual activity (LoveLife, 2001). The use of the word “it”, a neutral word, enables LoveLife to hinge all its messages on this line. “Talk about it” aims to encourage talk about:

- i. Healthy, positive approaches to sex, sexuality and sexual health
- ii. Communicating more openly about sexual expression
- iii. Alternatives to sexual intercourse and choices regarding sexual pleasure
- iv. Sexual rights and exercising those rights
- v. Safer sex options and contraceptive choice
- vi. The concept of a positive lifestyle (LoveLife, 2001:18).

As outlined above, the theme for this particular campaign was adopted as a result of international research, which indicated that the youth had no problems speaking about sex and issues pertaining to sex. As will become evident further in the study, South Africa’s youth are rather unique as two classes of youth exist – one class being westernised (living in the cities) and the other rural (living in outlying areas). Due to

cultural differences, the majority of the so-called target audience would be gagged in terms of speaking openly about sexual issues as a result of their upbringing, both religious and/or cultural. Even amongst rural youth, discussions around sex and related topics are taboo and if spoken about, it is done in whispers out of the earshot of adults. The researcher thus feels that this approach could have been further researched to ascertain its applicability in a South African context. Considering this, it is erroneous to suggest that the word 'it' is neutral.

His and Hers

In an article in the *Sunday Times* (08 July 2001), Judi Fortuin-Nwokedi explains that the loveLife communication campaign is "all about the future: bigger, brighter, better – a future full of promise, choices and many different decisions to make". 'His & Hers', according to Ms Fortuin-Nwokedi, is about two people sharing responsibility, talking, communicating and taking charge of their lives. When it comes to our hearts, talking, babies, condoms, sex and sexuality, the responsibility is his, hers, yours and mine.

Love to be there

The three goals for this campaign, according to loveLife are:

1. Good education – a young person graduating symbolises the top priority for young South Africans today
2. Employment and a career – a young woman pilot depicts achievement against significant odds including gender stereotyping
3. Happy, stable relationships – a small child looking up at her pregnant thirty-something mother depicts the desire of teenagers for the idealised "two parents and a home" stable family life depicted in the accompanying childlike drawing.

The tagline "*love to be there....*" implies that these goals will not be attained unless there are deliberate decisions, actions and behaviour changes on the part of young people to assure their future. It also deliberately implies personal responsibility for one's behaviour and the need for individual initiative in accomplishing life goals.

From the sourced material, the researcher was afforded the opportunity to do multimodal analyses of the selected texts in terms of:

- i. Discourse of blame and stigma
- ii. Inconsistency in co-occurrence of the modes
- iii. Projection of mixed messages between graphics and visual modes
- iv. Semantic overload
- v. Cultural insensitivities
- vi. Abstract modes

For the purpose of this study, data were selected according to the following criteria:

- i. Campaign material that was national
- ii. Campaigns directed at a general target audience or a specific high risk group or both
- iii. Campaigns where the modality of communication (channel selection and mix) was predominantly varied e.g. print, and billboards

In order to render the study as effective as possible, all material sourced for the study was analysed according to:

- i. Grammatical analysis structure?
- ii. Visual design
- iii. Social distance
- iv. Colour
- v. Layout and compositional meaning
- vi. Framing
- vii. Cultural Insensitivities
- viii. Text and intertextuality

4.3 Data analysis: Text-based Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Through the text-based method adopted in this study, the aim was to gain an understanding of the kinds of messages being produced in HIV prevention campaigns. As the impact of the campaign is not something that was measured, the concern was to identify the dominant discourses, including power relations and ideologies underlying messages in the discourses contained in the loveLife texts.

Thus, if we say that the authors of loveLife HIV prevention material is ideological, we mean that the structures and meanings expressed in it, firstly reflect the structures and contents of the specific mental model of this group about this specific programme, but secondly, that this model may be based on general social-cognitive schemata (prejudices) about the target audience, and that such schemata are finally monitored by underlying group-based ideologies.

Hence, an ideological analysis requires a complex description not only of the text, but also of the intricate cognitive representations and strategies used in the production and comprehension of the texts used. Unfortunately, in critical semiotics, in linguistics, discourse analysis, and in mass communication research, such a cognitive analysis is often neglected.

However, it is precisely through a detailed account of social cognitions that we are able to relate discourse and speakers with social structure and culture, that is, through the representations that language users have *about* social structures. These social cognitions also allow us to relate the micro-structures of discursive action and communication with the societal macro-structures of groups and institutions. In other words, models and social cognitions are, so to speak, the interface between text and context (van Dijk, 1985b; 1988a; 1988b).

During data analysis, two theoretical perspectives are brought together with the purpose of doing a multimodal discourse analysis of texts. The first perspective is based on

established theories of reading education that has been traditionally applied to print-based texts and mostly monomodal texts. The second perspective draws on recent innovative research and conceptualisation by others regarding the reading of images and multimodal texts (cf. Halliday, 1994).

LoveLife campaign material comprises content specifically meant to bring about behaviour change in its target audience. Behaviour change, in this instance, would require an approach that considers economical, social as well as literacy levels of its audience. For this reason a multimodal analytical approach for the study is an ideal option to analyse the texts.

In doing a text-based analysis, the researcher considers the fact that interaction between reader and text does not occur without what is traditionally referred to as decoding. Decoding involves using strategies of word recognition, pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, and the recognition of graphic, morphemic and phonemic patterns (cf. Halliday, 1994). For the proficient reader these happen unconsciously. In doing a text-based analysis, the researcher is aware that levels of meaning depend on type of text, which can be enhanced by the reader's background knowledge of the world, of how language works and of how texts work, as well as the recognition of discourses and ideologies. Thus the researcher considers intertextuality and intra-textuality as important aspects in the analysis of the loveLife texts. In this connection, the researcher identifies the different discourses and ideologies underlying them in the analysis of the texts. There are different aspects of previous knowledge that a reader may 'cue' into in the act of reading and these may be cultural knowledge, general knowledge, specific content knowledge, or linguistic knowledge. Both intertextuality and intratextuality are important aspects in the process and in the way a reader 'fills in gaps'. These gaps are those aspects that a reader needs to visualise, infer, predict, conceptualise and imagine as the words of a text will never be able to 'tell' everything. Critical reading is an important part of the reader identifying different discourses and understanding what ideologies are presented.

Table 1 summarises the criteria that informs the analysis of print-based texts in the study. In this regard the multimodal texts are used as guidelines to identify subjective issues in the loveLife texts in terms of meaning-making.

Table 1: <i>Meaning-making in print-based and multimodal texts</i>	
i.	Understanding of wider socio-cultural context.
ii.	Any text is part of a particular 'genre' (e.g. literary, information, media, internet, 'game'/digital).
iii.	Reader adjusts expectations according to text type or purpose.
iv.	Various schemata are activated – background knowledge, knowledge of topic, knowledge of genre.
v.	There is an interaction between reader and text for meaning to be made. Meaning can be made with ideational, interpersonal or textual metafunctions. The reader is 'engaged'.
vi.	Understanding and interpreting at cognitive & affective levels. (e.g. literal, inferential, critical responses, empathising, analogizing).
vii.	Understanding, analysing and critiquing ideologies, points of view, 'positioning'.
viii.	Imagination can be activated.
ix.	Information can be obtained.
x.	There is a specific context, discourse and coherence.
xi.	Skills specific to each type of text need to be activated by the 'reader' or viewer (e.g. aesthetic or efferent; predicting or scanning/skimming).

Adapted from: Reading visual and multimodal texts; how is 'reading' different?
 Maureen Walsh (2003). Senior Lecturer in Literacy Education: Australian Catholic University

The above processes are all part of meaning-making and form the basis for the text-based analysis adopted in this study. Thus, the processing of the loveLife texts will depend on the type of text, its underlying purpose and a determination of the audience's interpretation of purpose. The researcher is aware that there are many differences that occur with different text genres as well as with the wide range of multimodal texts. If meaning-making occurs as a basic process for reading all types of texts, the differences then must be related to the way different modes contribute to the process. Based on this, the following differences (Table 2) are taken into account during the analytical processing of the research material:

Table 2: Differences between reading of print-based and multimodal texts.

Reading print-based texts	Reading multimodal texts
Words: The words ‘tell’ including the discourse, register, vocabulary, linguistic patterns, grammar, chapters, paragraph and sentence structure	Visual images: The images ‘show’ including layout, size, shape, colour, line, angle, position, perspective, screen, frames, icons, links, hyperlinks
Use of senses: visual, some tactile	Use of senses: visual, tactile, hearing, kinesthetic
Interpersonal meaning: developed through verbal ‘voice’ - through use of dialogue, 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd person narrator	Interpersonal meaning: developed through visual ‘voice’ : positioning, angle, perspective – ‘offers’ and ‘demands’
Verbal style: including tone, intonation, humour, irony, sarcasm, word play, developed in the use of ‘words’. Typographical arrangement, formatting, layout, font, punctuation	Visual style: choice of medium, graphics, animation, frames, menu board, hypertext links
Verbal imagery: including description, images, symbolism, metaphor, simile, alliteration [poetic devices with words, sound patterns]	Visual imagery: use of colour, motifs, icons, repetition
Reading pathway: mostly linear and Sequential.	Reading pathway: use of vectors – non-sequential, non-linear. Reader has more choice and opportunity to interact.

Adapted from: Reading visual and multimodal texts: how is ‘reading’ different? Maureen Walsh (2003). Senior Lecturer in Literacy Education: Australian Catholic University

While differences are itemised in Table 2, the researcher is aware that these do not always occur separately as many multimodal texts combine varieties of spoken or written forms. The study also takes into account that particular modes and combinations of modes may influence a reader’s meaning-making process and the kind of text-based analysis (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006; Martin and Rose, 2004).

In the final analysis the text-based approach adopted in this study involves a three-stage method of discourse analysis which includes description of the text, interpretation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes (Fairclough, 1995a: 97). According to Koller (2004:21), texts need to be studied in relation to their conditions of production, reception and distribution which correlate with description, interpretation and explanation respectively.

What it means, in terms of analysing the posters, is that any sentence and any image is read as part of the context. Each one of the images is a text on its own, thus being treated as a semantic unit. This means that each aspect contained on the poster contributes to the coherence and cohesion of the said poster which by itself is a function of the social context that produced it (Halliday, 1985).

4.4 Data coding and analysis

The study employed multimodal discourse analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006; Martin and Rose, 2004; Fairclough, 1995) as an analytical framework with data being coded schematically according to the relationship between various forms of meanings (semiosis) and other elements of social practice of loveLife posters/texts.

Pairing visual images and written texts can be regarded as the most common type of multimodality found in this study. This constitutes a combination of brochures, posters as well as billboards (Iedema, 2003).

The study concentrated on how language and image, which includes design and layout, contribute towards how the target audience attaches meaning to data presented to them. In analysing the multimodal texts, the objective is to ascertain how the combined modes contribute towards the process of making sense of the data.

Text analysis methodology encompasses a broad variety of approaches to researching texts. These include:

- i. stylistics
- ii. rhetorical moves analysis and corpus analysis

When looking at the texts, the focus is on the language and multimodal literacies of the intended message. As mentioned earlier, particular emphasis is placed on whether the designers of loveLife texts demonstrate linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge of the intended audience who in this case are South African youth (both urban and rural).

By using the texts within the study, the researcher wanted to see how far the different aspects of writing would help in describing texts that use pictures as well as words to communicate ideas. At all key stages the researcher focused on the composition, effect as well as the text structure and organisation of the loveLife texts. In this regard, the study also draws on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) based on the fact that SFL explores how the target audience use language in its respective context to perform certain social functions and how language is structured as a semiotic system (Eggins, 1994; Martin and Rose, 2004). The choice to use SFL thus emanated from its theory which states that particular aspects of a given context (such as the topics discussed, the language users and the medium of communication) define the meanings likely to be expressed and the language likely to be used to express those meanings (Chapelle, 1998).

The text-based approach adopted in this study provides the researcher with a wider context to analyse loveLife texts as social practice as well as the unequal power relations embedded in the texts. Large social problems such as inequality, class differences, sexism, racism and dominance are mere examples that not only exist as such, but are articulated in discourses of both verbal and visual communication (van Dyk, 1985b:6-7; van Dyk, 1993b:251-2).

4.4.1 Framing

During the analysis phase of the study, it was important to analyse loveLife texts by looking at them from a 'framing' point of view. This decision was made based on the fact that the constructed nature of visual material has been rendered highly visible during the twentieth century, particularly with the advent and ascendance of still photography, moving pictures, and digital imaging capabilities (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006). Each of these media has dramatically altered the possible contexts of visual media, and generated new paradigms of visibility. While theoretical frameworks for analysing the significance of framing as a conceptual tool of visual analysis predate the modern period, the term itself has acquired additional importance, and become much more widely

disseminated with the development and refinement of the camera and the computer as tools of image production (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006).

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), visual images contain a wealth of information, much of which the viewer processes unconsciously, so it was deemed important for this study to analyse the visual images using the angle of framing. The impulse to read the visual images unconsciously, without delineating their constructive elements, remains embedded in contemporary discourses of the visual images as traces of pre-twentieth discourses that ~~privileged~~ favour textual forms of knowledge over the visual. Therefore, for the sake of the study, the researcher makes a conscious attempt to contextualise and analyse the visual objects as a way to enhance the interaction, interpretation and understanding of the texts involved in the study. This involves paying attention to the formal design elements, the narrative content, context and presentation of complex layers and understanding of a visual image or object. Noting how an image or object is framed enhances the contextual knowledge available to the target audience.

Framing includes both

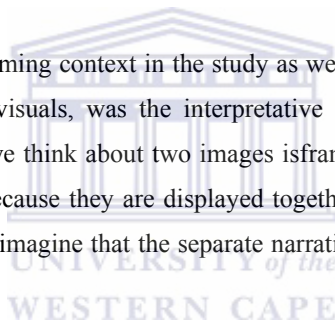
- i. literal presentation and/or representation of an image or object in physical space; and
- ii. accompanying interpretative markers a viewer both perceives and generates.

To frame the visuals in the study on the literal level gave it a physical presence of some kind. Framing in this sense refers to the material presentation or representation of an object or image, and to the actual boundaries that function not only to enclose and contain the object but also to reveal it to us in a certain way. Quite distinct from this physical framing of the images, but related to it, and equally important in analysing how a visual object is framed, is the information provided with or about the loveLife visuals. This aspect of framing gave the study the opportunity to assess and analyse the way in which we develop a specific interpretative meaning for the object or image, that is, it framed our

conceptual understanding of the object found in the campaign material. However, this is never a passive process, even when it is most unconsciously done.

During the analysis phase of the study, cognisance was taken of the range of previous experience of social, cultural and political knowledge the target audience brings to the interaction with a visual object or image and how it will influence the way in which he or she will process information and construct meaning from her or his interaction with it. Accordingly, while many of the audience may be engaged with the same media interaction (whether it is film, video game, website, museum exhibition, graphic novel etc.), individual viewer response will mediate and impact the meanings attributed to the visual image or object and the resulting interpretations generated by the audience.

What became equally important to the framing context in the study as well as one of the analysis considerations of the different visuals, was the interpretative framing of the images. For example, the way in which we think about two images is framed by the fact that they are being displayed together. Because they are displayed together and because they have identical titles, the viewer may imagine that the separate narratives about each image may be partially overlapping.



Chapter 5

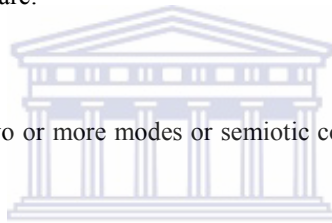
Research findings and discussion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the analysis of data and discussions with regard to the modes of dissemination of information as pertaining to the current study. The chapter further examines the semiotic meanings and the link between the images and graphics employed in multimodal texts.

From the information gathered by the data-collection instruments, the study identified two main modes of communication. They are:

- i. Graphic mode (written)
- ii. Multimodal channel (the use of two or more modes or semiotic codes in a single communicative episode)



From the outset it needs to be said that loveLife is a programme that is based on the premise that the prevention of AIDS is dependent on changes in sexual behaviour. They state that the key to success is open communication about sex and early sexual education (Stadler and Hlongwa, 2002). This is why their campaign is aimed at teenagers. Backed by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, Bill Clinton and the Kaiser Foundation, it is financially able, through high-powered media awareness and education, to provide adolescent-friendly reproductive health services, as well as outreach and support programmes (loveLife, 2001).

5.1 Text and coherence in loveLife billboards

As discussed elsewhere, text is any passage spoken or written that forms a unified whole (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). In order for text to be meaningful, its components have to relate to each other. Text then refers to any passage of coherent language; that is, it is a meaningful passage of language that hangs together. Thus, text is a semantic unit of

meaning which has clauses that are contextual properties that hang together (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). However, multimodal texts also include images. Therefore, in this study, the clauses and images need to hang together to be deemed coherent.

In this idiom, the loveLife figures analysed below are incoherent for several reasons, some of which are discussed here. Effective multimodal texts should communicate a specific, clear, unambiguous and straightforward message. This means that the elements that constitute the text should be accessible and easily understood by the target audience. The problem is that the relationship between the various elements that make up loveLife texts is not always obvious. The reason for this is that some texts tend to be overloaded with graphics and images, while others are underloaded. Figure 1 is a good example of overloading messages on one medium. The brochure clearly contravenes one of Halliday and Hassan's (1976) principles of textual communication described above. In this instance, the brochure lacks cohesion as the linguistic items consisting of texts are not meaningful, neither are they interconnected in sequence. Figure 1 makes it rather difficult for one to connect the information to anything, especially HIV, as a result of the many messages on the brochure.



Figure 1

In order to gain maximum effect during a campaign, in this instance a brochure used in the 'talk about it' loveLife prevention campaign, it is important to ensure that information offered to the audience is coherent. Coherence forms the sub-surface of a text, which

acts as a blueprint for meaningful texts in terms of concepts, relations among items and how this relates to reality. According to De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), texts need to be structured in a logical sequence.



Figure 2

Figure 2 is rather confusing. The information offered does allude to the fact that the intended message concerns HIV. However, the background shadows (people) depict an atmosphere of fun, which is in direct contrast to what the brochure aims to project.



Figure 3

As if that is not enough, the following verbiage also accompanies the three figures. This only serves to add to the amount of information and messages.

Attachment found on brochure

Will you be part of the loveLife generation?

- Depends what you know in the meantime (testing).
- Depends what drives you in the meantime (motivations for teen pregnancy).
- Depends what you do in the meantime (multiple partners).

Figures 1 to 3 are typical examples of incoherent messages. Figure 3 reads: “the power to decide generation - will U b part of it?” This might sound rather straightforward to the more literate urban audience. However, the style, layout and design collectively act as distractions. The text also is loaded with too many messages. Language communication always takes place in the form of texts and domains such as native instruction (Isenberg, 1976:47). The information offered on the actual brochure, combined with the information found on the attachment to the brochure, contravenes the regulative principles of textual communication which requires that a text should be used with a minimum effort, in this instance, the use of plain language which is easy to comprehend. All this is important in order to attain a communicative goal which, if ignored, could lead to a communicative breakdown. The principle of appropriateness is also absent from the text as there seems to be no balance between the many segments of messages in the brochure.

Thus, figures 1 to 3, while interacting with the audience, seem to be communicating from a distance in a rather impersonal fashion. The figures in the background also lend a rather impersonal and insensitive touch to the brochures. This is further supported by the use of animation rather than real pictures to communicate the message of HIV prevention.

Although the brochure presents the field of discourse and the participants as actively involved in the effort to eliminate HIV/AIDS, it presents many messages in one text. The attachment to the brochure causes more confusion for the audience already finding it difficult to comprehend the multiple messages, and which has to decipher and comprehend the text attached to the message.

In the attachment, mixed messages are being sent to the target audience. An example is asking whether they will be part of the loveLife generation, then asking whether they will be part of testing, teen pregnancies or multiple partners. Mention is made in one of the brochures (Figure 2) that the text relates to HIV/AIDS. However, the target audience is teenagers. Sending messages of this nature could be construed as condoning teen pregnancies, multiple partners as well as sexual relations as a whole. The audience is thus presented with a dilemma in which they are not sure whether to refrain from sex or to join the new generation. This dilemma of having to deal with mixed messages presents disorders of discourse, thereby failing to impact positively on people's behaviour change.

The messages are further complicated by the presence of jubilation in the background. It is not clear whether they are happy because they are HIV negative or happy because they are pregnant. This makes the representational meaning doubtful. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), interpersonal meaning in visual texts can be identified through the representation of relations between the viewer and the image. According to van Leeuwen (1996/2006), a number of aspects of interactive meaning are integral to the description of the viewer in terms of image interaction. In figures 1 to 3, the viewer's role is being depicted as invisible and as a detached onlooker. Van Leeuwen (1996/2006) refers to this as an offer, as the represented participants are being depicted as being impersonal in terms of the multiple messages and objects that the viewer has to contemplate.

It is general knowledge that the youth of today are using a tool known as MXIT to communicate with each other. In order to do this, they have developed a cryptic style of communication. On analysing the visuals above, it is apparent that the same cryptic style of communication is being adopted. By so doing, the programme developers have assumed that their target audience will all be familiar with this cryptic style of communication. This assumption discriminates against those youth who do not have the financial means to own a cellphone or have the linguistic level of education to make sense of the communication.

The billboards exemplified in the following visual have a verbal rhetoric in them in conjunction with the visuals, curiously undecipherable to the segment of population which is most severely hurt by HIV's wrath.

The designs of the loveLife billboards follow a kind of house-style: *sans serif* lettering, placed on an arch, as if rising from a horizon, and embellished with a drop shadow.



Figure 4

In the linguistic message, one is drawn to the personification of HIV: that is, “HIV *loves* sleeping around” – a euphemism of promiscuity. The phatic message is ambiguous, and therefore not clear; the charming choice of lexicon does not say anything about the grave dangers. Linguistics aside, the outlines of the apparent footprints depicted appear to be duplicated, as in drop shadows. The soles of feet bear a close resemblance to the Hang Ten™ branded sign, hence if one were wearing a piece of clothing boasting the Hang Ten™ branded sign, one could be taken as being HIV positive.

The feet seem to depict two people engaged in a love-making scene in the proverbial ‘missionary’ position. This assumption thus leads one to formulate the theme of

'sleeping' around. The fact that it is questionable whether the feet positions signify love-making shows that loveLife's attempt to use old-fashioned imagery and symbolism does not work with this modern sample. Hence, an attempt at intertextuality does not work here, as the sample appears to link the picture with 'fashion' - something desirable, something one must do or must have - which is the direct opposite of what the message was intended to achieve.

It is not usual for feet to be displayed as being red as in figure 4. The use of colours in a visual represents a particular mood or feeling. However, it is not clear how loveLife determined the colour choices. What is clear is that it seems to have adopted a Western-centric perspective about what the colours should mean. The implication is that it requires a Western schema for one to understand the symbolic meanings behind the choice of colours. It is worth noting, nevertheless, that the symbolic meanings we attach to particular colours normally change according to context. Whilst red can depict passion, it could also depict danger. Colour can also be described in terms of tone and saturation. Tone refers to the degree of lightness or darkness of a coloured area. Saturation refers to the degree of purity in a colour. The colours used in the billboard send out mixed messages as described below:

Red:

Warmth, urgency, passion, heat, blood, excitement, danger and hostility – the colour red can also promote expectations and quick decision-making.

Purple:

Wealth, royalty, sophistication, intelligence – the colour purple is also used to depict passion and love.

Black:

Death, rebellion, strength and evil – it is also associated with the supernatural as well as suggesting inner strength and determination, as well as power and formality.

The background colours give the billboard a therapeutic effect whereas the white of the clouds gives it a sense of purity, chastity and cleanliness.

Based on the above analysis of the colours used in the billboard, it projects absolute mixed messages, particularly as the background colours dominate. The background tends to be the entry point for the audience, with the billboard taking a secondary position, thus setting the tone in terms of mood.

In the following teen pregnancy billboard, the caption again is arched over what can be first read as a green landscape: “Face it Teen Pregnancy increases risk of HIV.” Again, the colour field, here a yellow-green, translates by association into a silhouette of a pregnant woman, the hills of her pregnant abdomen and breast. The picture, at first glance, depicts a landscape.

On closer inspection, it becomes clearer that the image depicts an abdomen and breast. The fact that this only becomes obvious after closer examination strengthens the argument that the image is far too abstract for the target audience. A further barrier for the audience is the choice of colour. The objective for using billboards in a campaign is to attract the attention of the audience as they walk or drive past the billboard. This particular billboard loses its impact as one would have to pause to read the text in conjunction with the image. The text is placed against a navy blue background and placed inside a purple-shaped background. This is not easy on the eye, making it difficult to read quickly with the added constraint of having to decipher what the image actually depicts. The number of barriers during the decoding phase leaves one thinking how much thought was put into the planning phase of this particular billboard?



Figure 5

At first glance this picture depicts two hills, although the message of HIV comes through in the text. The colour purple is used in many Christian denominations as depicting the time of Lent, meaning the death of Jesus. When one is in one's youth, the idea of death and gloom is furthest from one's mind. Why would loveLife use the colour purple to highlight and attract attention to a text?

Another objective for the image could be to communicate the message that, should a person fall pregnant prematurely it would be difficult for them to successfully conquer these two hills. All of this makes it difficult to relate the words, colours and the imagery, which contributes towards the audience experiencing difficulties in attempting to make meaning of the message.

Yet, while loveLife articulates the critical importance of changing pervasive values and attitudes among adolescents to sex, sexuality and gender relations, an examination of the advertising shows that loveLife's constructions of gender are both narrow and problematic. In fact, it will be argued that women are depicted as either wholly responsible for sexual relations, or they are victims of their own passivity. Men, on the other hand, are either highly sexual beings, or they have simply succumbed to the

direction of their female partners. This is evident in the following textual examples of loveLife billboards:



Figure 6

“I only do it skin on skin”: James, 18 years old.

“I told James to wrap it or zip it”: Zola, 17 years old.

In the above example, Zola appears to be loveLife’s challenge to constructs of women as subordinate to men. This construction, however, replicates discourses of female responsibility and empowerment in which women alone are seen as responsible for sexual behaviour. This construct presents a young woman who has educated herself about sex and contraception. She has also educated herself about how to protect herself from the negative consequences that may come with sex. Alone, this sort of self-education is not negative. However, it becomes the responsibility of Zola not only to educate herself, but also to be responsible for James’ behaviour. It is Zola’s responsibility alone to protect herself against James’ infection. James does not take responsibility and this construct of Zola reinforces notions of women as the keepers of responsibility for sexual behaviour.

The choice of words and ‘word play’ makes it extremely difficult for the target audience to comprehend what the message really is. An example is the ability to understand the

phrase 'wrap it or zip it'. Firstly, understanding this requires a certain competence in English or Western culture. Secondly, the complexity of sentences renders the intended message useless as a result of inability to understand what the meaning of the text is. The reader, as a result of this, thus makes his or her own assumptions according to his or her level of understanding of the written text.

The impact of the above example is two-fold. First, women become responsible for implementing safer sexual behaviours and men are absolved. The second impact, however, is a contribution to discourses of blame and stigma. Anna Strebel (1997) points out that, if women are responsible for stopping the spread of the virus, then "they are also by implication responsible for spreading the virus" (Strebel, 1997). Thus, constructions of women as responsible for transmission of HIV/AIDS also overlap with discourses of blame and stigma, both of which increase women's vulnerability to transmission of HIV and vulnerability for those living with HIV/AIDS. An example of the vulnerability of those living with HIV/AIDS is the incident of Gugu Dlamini, a lesbian who 'came out of the closet' and, at the same time announced her HIV status. Sadly, her honesty and attempt to help others like her cost her life. She was stoned to death by her peers in her community.

Constructs of women as empowered are also dangerous in that they ignore structural inequalities and power differentials. Thus, these constructs render women culpable in situations where there is often little space for them to take action.

In assessing loveLife's constructions of men in the above image, James is constructed as a 'playa' through his statement that he will only 'do it skin on skin'. From his statement, the audience learns that James will not have sex with a condom. This statement indicates that James is irresponsible in his approach to sex, and consequently, irresponsible regarding his own life as well as the lives of his partners. But it requires sophistication in English as well as in Western culture to be able to decipher this message quickly and effectively.

The following billboard (Figure 7) depicts a male and female who, at first glance, merely represents a symbol for a boy and a girl. However, the relationship between ‘his and hers’ is open to interpretation from representing the male and the female organs, to being indicative of sex by depicting two naked people. The loveLife billboards aim to encourage a national discourse on adolescent sexual behaviour. However, this is skewed through obscure and complex messaging. The notion that meanings are not fixed but open to interpretation informed by culture, language and socialisation is once again questionable in this billboard. It is culturally insensitive to openly display sexual organs as depicted in the billboard. This makes the notion that interpretation of loveLife images are informed by culture rather questionable.

To the more learned audience, this billboard provides an apparently simple and straightforward message as it addresses a persistent taboo by making it the viewer’s responsibility to educate themselves about ‘ABC’* and safe sex. Despite the rather uncomplicated design of the billboard, the images and underlying messages, it still remains rather ambiguous. To one viewer, for instance, it might identify an implicit moral message about love or responsible behaviour, while another could question the sexual connotations attached to the billboard.

More immediate messages that tell the target audience the immediate benefits of a health behaviour have been shown to be more effective and appropriate to the target audience. Messages should also be kept simple as well as being void of technical or scientific jargon or symbols.

* abstain, be faithful and condomise



Figure 7

The interpretations or meanings given to a sign are informed through the culture, attitude and emotions that the reader applies to the sign. Therefore the reader is seen to be playing an active role in the generation of the meaning of the text (Tomaselli, 1996:29-30, Fiske, 1990:41).

Signs are strung together in codes which enable a coherent meaning of the sign to be developed when they are linked according to socially agreed rules, emphasising the social dimension of communication. Codes therefore perform a social and communicative function with the meaning being generated only making sense if certain rules are followed in speaking, writing, photographing and so on. Codes are arranged in patterns by the makers of messages which give rise to a text, transmittable by an appropriate media and/or channels of communication. A text has two dimensions: that of the product, and text as the interaction between the reader/viewer/listener (Tomaselli, 1996:31-33; Fiske, 1990:64-65).

The billboard depicted below (Figure 8) is rather abstract in nature. In order to interpret the intended message, the recipient has to be familiar with linguistic symbols as well as have the ability to decode abstract messages. The billboard has very limited information. Evidently, the message on the billboard is not specific enough to capture the audience with its message.



Figure 8

LoveLife, in one of its many reports, reported that its target audience understands the messages of its billboards and duly substantiated this with research undertaken entitled “loveLife Communication – market penetration and message take out”. The research consisted of a random survey of 1000 respondents, 600 young people and 400 parents, which was undertaken in September 2000. The survey indicated a 57.5% awareness of loveLife brand after the first year of the programme (loveLife, 2000:2).



Figure 9

On inspection and analysis of the above billboard (Figure 9), it is quite obvious that the billboard has been flooded with messages which the target audience is expected to decode. Examples of the mixed messages are:

1. What do the hearts depict?
2. What does the puzzle depict?
3. Is the 'puzzle' meant to depict a penis or a condom?

In normal day to day communications, the mention of a puzzle is an indication that a level of coordination and intelligence would be required to decipher the puzzle. At first glance, this billboard signifies one loaded with mixed, complex messages. Having two hearts and a puzzle in one billboard requires the interpretant to solve two mysteries. Cognisance should be taken of the fact that people reading billboards normally only have a few seconds to decode the message of the billboard. They are either walking past or driving past the billboard. As previously indicated in the study, the audience is expected to know that the underlying message relates to HIV prevention, although this is not mentioned anywhere on the billboard.

As a medium, billboards are regarded as advertisements, placed upon structures along major transport routes and at places where people converge. They rely upon colour, pictures and a few words to convey a message. After delivering the message in its desired form or size, the medium is no way responsible for securing reading or attention to the message which is the responsibility of the advertiser (Agnew, 1985:93).

Research undertaken by the University of Alberta found that the effectiveness of a billboard is dependent upon the message style, number of messages, linkage of the product and service being displayed to a brand, the use of illustrations, legibility and copy length and the mixing of media for greater impact (Outdoor Network Australia, 2003:2-15).

Biological symbols are rather complex in nature, especially if one has not had the privilege to either attend school or reach a level of education where biological symbols

are taught to learners. Charles Sanders Peirce provides the following description of the elements of signs: A sign (?representamen) refers to something other than itself. It stands to? somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It is understood by somebody that is it has an effect in the mind of the user – the interpretant. In other words, it is a mental concept produced both by the sign and the user’s experience of the sign. The interpretant is not fixed but may vary within limits according to the experience of the user, the limits of which are defined according to social convention. The variation within them allows for the social and psychological differences between users (Fiske, 1990:42; Hawkes, 1977:126-127).



Figure 10

By assuming that the target audience will be familiar with the biological symbol depicting the human sperm (Figure 10) is a clear indication that the author of the billboard did not take the time or effort to undertake thorough research on the educational or linguistic background of the intended audience. This could also be translated as a contravention of the human rights of the youth in South Africa whom loveLife claims to educate in its prevention campaign. This also clearly strengthens the argument that the unwritten objective of the campaign is targeted at the educated and more elite youth, disadvantaging those who are more at risk of contracting the disease.

The 'puzzle piece' in the visual, on closer inspection, can also be misinterpreted as being a penis, which then misleads the audience to mistakenly interpret the puzzle as being a condom.

In order to avoid misinterpretation of intended messages, it will be useful to question whether the message is appropriate to the medium as well as whether the messages can be conveyed effectively through the medium. The use of positive messages will have a greater impact (Usdin, 1998). The critical step is ensuring that health messages (including images used in support of campaigns, and other print material) are pre-tested. Pre-testing is usually conducted through focus group research. The abstract nature as well as complex nature of the loveLife campaign material makes it questionable whether focus groups were used to pre-test the material prior to going public.

According to Fiske (1990:39), for communication to take place, messages need to be created from signs which stimulate the generation of meaning that relates to the meaning generated in the message in the first place. It is only through sharing the same codes and using the same sign systems that the two meanings generated will approximate one another.

What is clear from the billboard depicted below (Figure 11) is that any intended associations with the intended message are overshadowed by complex, iconic and symbolic representations or "messages". Readers are not readily able to see beyond the represented forms to derive meaning. The image of a baby is, according to society, something peaceful. Associating this with an HIV prevention message requires complex interpretation and understanding, especially when reference to HIV prevention is totally absent in the message.



Figure 11

According to loveLife, the puzzle piece depicted on all the ‘His & Hers’ billboards was aimed at reinforcing the notion of shared responsibility. Once again, interpreting this as expected requires a high level of intelligence and knowledge of the aims and objectives of the different LoveLife campaigns.

A discrepant decoding of messages arises when the interpretant is not able to match what the icon or picture represents. The picture of the baby can be seen as symbolising a girl, a lady or a doll. Messages must be meaningful to the target audiences in the context of their own lives and therefore target audience research is essential. What does the target audience understand about the issues? What are their beliefs and attitudes and what are the barriers to them taking up the healthy behaviour?

5.2 LoveLife’s discourse of blame and stigma

“I wanted to wait, but Abram was inside me before I could say no” - Sandy aged 15

“Sssho... did I rape her? Now that we talk, I understand love is not just sex” - Abram aged 17

This advertisement shows statements from both Abram and Sandy after they have had sex. Sandy is regretful. She states, “I wanted to wait”, but instead of speaking up and telling Abram this, she kept quiet. Conversely, Abram is worried. He is not sure if he forced Sandy to have sex. He questions himself, stating, “Sssho, did I rape her?”

Two questions emanate from the above. Was Sandy raped? If so, whose fault was it? The answers to these questions are unfortunately left to the audience’s interpretation of the text. However, from the text it becomes clear that Sandy was not willing to have sex with Abram. According to Sandy, Abram acted too hastily; the comment being that he was inside her before she could say ‘no’. Further questions emerge out of this comment:

- i. Was Sandy forced into having sex with Abram?
- ii. Was she confused about what was happening?
- iii. Why did she not speak up before they came close to having intercourse?

Sandy does not speak up about her feelings and it is only in the aftermath that it becomes clear that the sex was not consensual. Sandy is portrayed as being the victim of her own silence and passivity, and while the audience does not receive answers to the questions listed above, the negative consequences are made clear by the advertisement. At best, Sandy’s sexual experience was highly negative; at worst the audience is introduced to the possibility that Sandy may have been raped as a result of her passive behaviour.

The possibility exists that the advertisement attempts to empower Sandy in the aftermath of her sexual encounter with Abram. However, because the ‘we’ is not clarified, it once again leaves the interpretation to the audience. This advertisement also virtually erases any discursive space that could begin to explore violence against women experienced in the form of rape. While Sandy describes a non-consensual situation, Abram dismisses it by conflating issues of rape, sex and love. Had Sandy been able to ‘talk about it’ before they even came close to a physical relationship, she would have been able to control and direct the situation accordingly and not put herself in danger of being raped.

While Abram is largely absolved of responsibility, it does seem that loveLife is attempting to portray Abram as a young man who has become more informed about relationships. This is evidenced by his statement: “Now that we talk, I understand love is not just sex”. However, his preceding statement, “Sssho... did I rape her?” largely negates this. Abram is absolved from the possibility that he could have raped Sandy; he is only made to gain greater understanding of how sex fits into a loving relationship. Furthermore, Abram is only able to reach this understanding after this incident. Effectively, the intended message is misplaced and blurred with Abram being depicted as being a victim of ignorance, unaware of what rape is and unaware that what he had committed was rape. The non-consensual sexual act thus loses its impact as emphasis is placed on Abram’s ignorance as to consensual sexual relations. This clearly sends a very explosive message to the youth that it is “okay to have sex if it is not consensual, as long as you can convince someone that your level of ignorance blocked that realisation.”

It is highly negligent, even harmful that loveLife, as an organisation attempting to educate around positive sexuality, conflates an incidence of rape with meanings around love and sex. Not only does this advertisement confuse the issue for young people, it also lends to a normalising of rape and gender-based violence. At the same time, it seems to associate sex of any kind (unless there is ‘love’) with rape or taboo and social stigma, which is one reason why people do not often report sexual abuse and rape (Dube, 1999; Albertyn, 2000).

Women and men have sex for many different reasons, some positive and some negative. However, in framing the motivations of both in such a limited context, loveLife fails to acknowledge gender and sexuality in any kind of complex form.

5.3 loveLife texts as incoherent narratives

The poster below (Figure 12), at first glance sends a very conflicting message, one that points to an advertisement for youth to enrol into an academic institution. There is no indication on the poster that the information being offered refers to HIV infection. This

is another case of underloading. LoveLife assumes that the target audience will understand the hidden message. A question that comes to mind is “Like to be where?” In order to decipher the intended message, the target audience should have rather high levels of understanding as well as good comprehension of English.

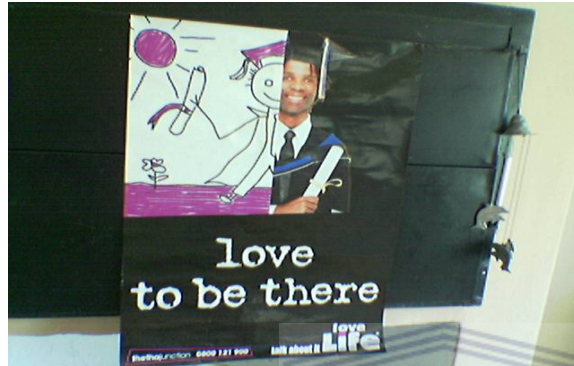


Figure 12

Audiences are positioned in order for them to respond to represented visual images with varying degrees of familiarity. The resultant response will be due to framing. Framing allows the audience to imaginatively bond with the participants thus accepting them as friends.

Any examination of cohesion in a visual must consider the descriptive framework developed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) as a tool for visual analysis. This is based on text as ‘any instance of communication in any mode or in any combination of modes’ (Kress, 2003:48). All elements of the visual composition, including the linguistic items are, therefore, considered to be ‘text’.

Many young people dream of becoming a pilot. Could this not be construed as being an advertisement for youth to strive towards becoming a pilot? Like the previous poster (Figure 13), no information is offered that the hidden message is one of HIV prevention. The message is almost deceptive. HIV mortality is high in rural areas, making heads of households the very youth that loveLife is targeting. In most instances, these children have to leave school at a young age to tend to their siblings. When making use of posters

which require a certain level of comprehension of English, it tends to put them in a disadvantaged position.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996:122), a *demand* has two functions: “In the first place it creates a visual form of direct address. It acknowledges the viewers explicitly, addressing them with a visual ‘you’. The participant’s gaze (and the gesture, if it is present) demands something from the viewer; demands that the viewer enter into some kind of imaginary relation with him or her”. That the person is male and non-Caucasian is interesting, suggesting that the producers wished to add gender and racial meanings not included in the text.



Figure 13

Visual rhetoric vectors

Vectors are “forces generated by the shapes and configurations of visual objects. A vector is characterised by its magnitude, direction, and base of attack. Visual vectors are seen as oriented in both directions unless a special base determines the origin of the vector’s attack and thereby its direction”.

Vectors are used to "visually realise different ways in which objects and their relations can be represented" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006). Vectors act as visual cues to the observer of an image like 'road signs' to connect two separate objects that give the viewer direction as to where to look and what to look at next in a temporal capacity or artifact. The importance lies in the connection that is conveyed by the use of a vector or vectors because they not only act as visual cues in pictures, but are found in everyday images and scenes.

Vectors are connectors that we use in order to tell or interpret a story. When used in a narrative or narrative process, vectors act as a set of visual symbols or characteristics brought together in order to persuade or draw attention to certain aspects of a piece. Direction is established by a given object in the image or simply by a layout of the action. There are many different elements that go into making a vector and therefore may be formed by bodies or limbs or tools 'in action', but there are many other ways to turn represented elements into diagonal lines of action.

Vectors must initiate from single or multiple sources; often this main source is the 'actor' in which the direction of an image originates. The 'goal' is what the vector is drawing attention to, or the intended outcome. Vectors also help one realise the different types of relationships that are represented in images. These three relationships are:

- i. Unidirectional transactional action
- ii. Bidirectional transactional action
- iii. Non-transactional action

In a unidirectional transactional action, a vector is formed that connects an 'actor' and a 'goal'. This vector is normally moving from the body of the 'actor' and is directed toward the 'goal'. For instance, the following image depicts two human beings, with the adult clutching her naked breast whilst at the same time either looking at the child or looking at her breast. A vector would be coming from the clutching hand, showing us that our focus should move from the hand toward the naked swollen stomach. In the second

relationship, bidirectional transactional action, a vector is shot between two subjects that are connected. For instance, if two humans are looking at each other (which would appear to be the case in figure 13), a double-headed vector would be moving between the two of them staring at each other. A relationship is being formed between the two with the aid of the vector which is linking them. In the final relationship type, a non-transactional action, a vector emanates from an 'actor', but does not point at another participant. We cannot assume the child or adult, ('actor') is looking at anything, so the vector emanating from this person is not linked to another participant, making the relationship formed by the vector non-transactional, whether it is the viewer, another point in the image, or within upon itself (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006).

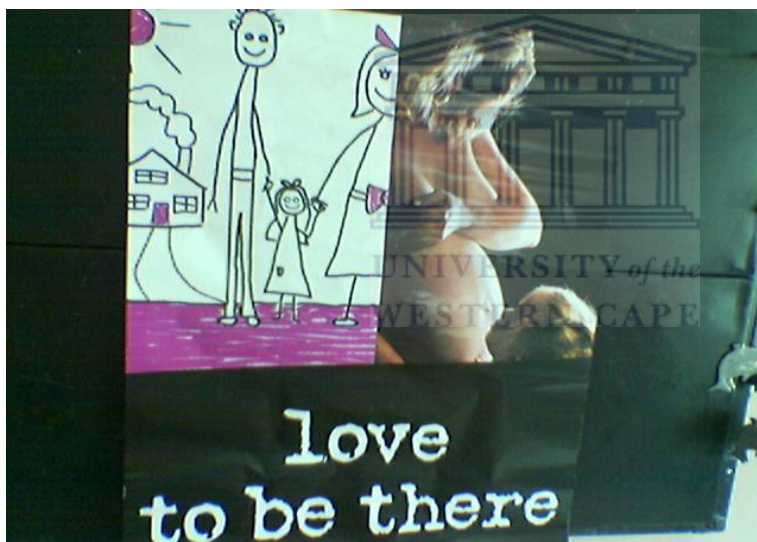


Figure 14

Reading paths are taken through the salient elements of an image. The path begins with the most salient element and moves to other less salient elements. In Figure 14, the audience will proceed from the (pregnant) stomach of the woman. The path will then proceed to the child who is looking up at the 'mother' who is clutching her breast, whereafter attention will be given to the remainder of the visual.

In this instance the audience will be led by vectors. These vectors will have been created by the woman's hand clutching her breast and the overriding image of her being pregnant and naked. Once the audience have gone through the reading path, they will, as a result of the nature of the visual, return their gaze to the naked status of the woman. In the Black culture, showing one's body is not acceptable, although baring one's breasts is a common feature during traditional ceremonies.

This poster (Figure 14) firstly disrespects the cultural values and beliefs of Black communities. It appears as if the lady in the poster is pregnant. Once again, it is culturally incorrect to use an image like this to get the youth to change behaviour. Culturally a woman who is pregnant or has had a baby is no longer regarded as being part of the youth. They have moved on to become adults responsible for the rearing of their young.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2007), commenting on more specifically frontal and medium vertical angles, "The horizontal angle encodes whether or not the image-producer (and hence, willy-nilly, the viewer) is 'involved' with the represented participants or not. The frontal angle says, as it were: 'what you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with'" (1996:143). Simultaneously, the medium vertical angle between the viewer and child indicates equality. The combination of the two angles promotes intense involvement with the child and, by association, with American children. The angles suggest not only that children are equal to adults but that their issues and problems are equally as important.

This poster was thus clearly not well thought out. It is incoherent as there is no indication to assume that the child and mother are related or not. The question that should be asked in this instance is whether the woman and child are related in any way. However, that question aside, it is difficult to envisage a situation in which an adult woman parades herself naked in front of a child, who according to the picture, is at least five years old. Mothers do not normally move around naked when their small children are present – specifically when in a pregnant state!

The picture in Figure 15 (below) coincides well with the graphic text which uses language that is easily understood by the youth in urban areas. However, in areas where English is only taught as a second or, in some instances, a third language, the text would be lost to the youth as they would not comprehend the meaning behind the text.

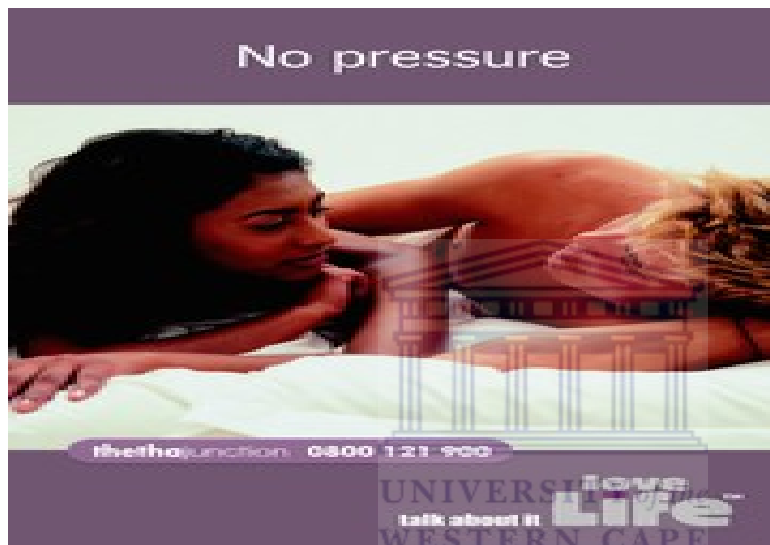


Figure 15

The position of the male in the picture (supposedly naked?) places him in a dominant position as he positions his arm around her and seem to have shed his clothes, while it is not clear whether the female is clothed or not. This lends itself to the assumption that the male is in control of the situation, notwithstanding the fact that the text in the poster suggests otherwise. In terms of words, would the reader interpret the picture as offering sufficient information to comprehend that the phrase “No Pressure” provides adequate additional information about HIV/AIDS prevention?

The visual depicted above (figure 15) can also be defined, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) as being actional. This refers to images in which an action creates a relation between represented participants. In this instance, the one participant,

according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), is referred to as the actor and the other as the goal. The actor is the participant from whom or from which the action originates. On the other hand, the participant to whom the action is directed, or towards whom the action is aimed is known as the goal. Such an image is thus described as transactional.

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), intimate distance or spatial distances are related to emotions of intimacy and distance. They explain that “The relation between the human participants represented in images and the viewer is once again an imaginary relation.” They argue that “people are portrayed as *though* they are friends or as *though* they are strangers” (1996:133).

Figure 16 below is a message packaged in a rather abstract way. Once again, for someone who has not been exposed to the loveLife campaign, the message has absolutely no meaning. It basically asks the reader to ‘talk about it’. There is nothing to talk about if you do not know what loveLife is about or if you cannot understand the meaning behind the message. HIV, in most instances, depicts death and doom. In this case, the poster does not disseminate a meaningful and clear message regarding HIV/AIDS. Packaging a message like this leads to uncertainty regarding the impact of HIV/AIDS.



Figure 16

The above poster can also be classified as being underloaded as it would only make sense to someone who is highly familiar with the prevention campaign and who has the linguistic capability to decipher what the writing on the poster actually signifies. This underloading causes further distance already present due to the nature of the poster.

Figure 17 below depicts two people in a position that the reader has no alternative but to interpret the relationship as romantic – the ideal relationship. However, many teenagers looking at the poster will then be faced with rather mixed messages. LoveLife aims to promote abstinence, yet the message that clearly comes across is that it is okay to have sex. The picture gives no hint as to the marital status of the couple. However, taking into account the target audience of loveLife, one can only assume that the couple is unmarried.



Figure 17

In the above image (figure 17), the vector is creating a relation between the participants which is created as a result of a gaze (a type of vector). Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) refer to this type of interaction as being reactionary. The visual weight allocated to figure 17 is as a result of the focus and distance of the picture. The most salient feature of the image is the couple engaged in a romantic embrace. The image is large and functions in an attention-grabbing way as a symbolic item in the representation of a recognisable social setting.

The visual and message seem to lack consistency in that the couple's attire leave one no other alternative but to believe that they are not sexual strangers. The lady, it would appear, is dressed in an undergarment (spencer), whilst the man is dressed in a garment that resembles a vest worn under a shirt or sweater. These types of clothing become visible only upon shedding the top clothing. Judging from the expressions on their faces, one can suppose that they had already engaged in some form of sexual act or are about to engage in a sexual act. Should this be the case, the caption 'sex, worth waiting for' is a rather ambiguous one, which renders the intended message highly inconsistent.

To further elaborate on the inconsistency of the visual and text, one can also allude to the fact that the choice of colour for the linen also renders the message ambiguous. In most cultures, the use of white linen on a bed symbolises the wedding night as well as the onset of sexual relations. Once again, if this is taken into consideration, the text and image can be regarded as highly inconsistent and ambiguous.



Figure 18

The rationale, according to the Reproductive Health Research Unit (2003), for the above billboard (Figure 18) was to prompt discussion about being tested for HIV and knowing one's status. At first glance, the picture is culturally insensitive. Sexual discussions can be regarded as taboo amongst both urban as well as rural youth. The image gives the

impression that they are already in a compromising position. What would the logic be behind asking the youth to use the images as a starting point to discuss HIV-related issues? On closer examination of the images, one can conclude that the nationality of the couple is male, Black and female White. In both urban as well as rural areas, multiracial relationships still constitute prohibited territory, depending on the level of Westernisation.

Images are given varying levels of salience in an attempt to attract the viewer's attention to different degrees. The principle of salience is applied to this image (figure 18) through the relative choices in colour, size, sharpness and placement. Often, vectors created by the shape and placement of elements help lead the eye from one element to another, in order of decreasing salience.

At first glance, figure 19 (below) depicts a group of people engaging in some form of sexual act. The vectors in this instance are the hands of various races grappling at the buttocks of a Black man (or woman?). The participants appear to be engaging in a sexual act of a transactional nature. Whilst the author's intention is to warn the audience of the danger of multiple partners, the message is lost as a result of the depiction of more than one race engaging in a sexual act. This fact highlights the argument that the author(s) of the posters do not regard culture as very important when selecting scenes to depict messages.

The message being sent to the youth can also be interpreted as having a racial connotation. Although we are fifteen years post democracy, we should not fool ourselves that the apartheid legacy has disappeared forever. In some areas, mostly rural, traces of racism and racial discrimination are still rife. The poster under discussion is thus deceiving as it gives a false impression of reality.



Figure 19

The racial argument aside, there are at least four people in this picture. Only one is White. This picture can thus be construed as helping to peddle the myth or stereotype about promiscuous, sexually insatiable Blacks; more importantly, the image does not mirror the world in a naturalistic sense. On closer examination of the visual, one is led to think the hand positioned on the top left depicts that of a male hand. This leads one to think more along the line of a sexual orgy consisting of four multiracial participants which is made up of two males and two females. Should this assumption be correct, the visual is inconsistent in its objective opposed to what is being portrayed in figure 19. To the audience which is linguistically disadvantaged, it would appear as if the author of this specific visual aimed to promote promiscuity.

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996/2006), images can create particular relations between viewers and the world inside the picture frame. The image in figure 15 thus interacts with the audience and guides the attitude the audience should take towards the picture (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001).

The above image, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), can be referred to as a symbolic structure which they say defines the meaning or identity of participants in a visual. In the above image, the male participant is clearly being stereotyped by the

other participants as being macho due to the fact that he is being depicted as having multiple partners.

The linguistic feature of modality may be used to describe the degree of credibility manifested in a visual text. The use of colour, texture, light and shade in figure 14, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006), gives it high modality, a degree of truthfulness, as well as a high degree of credibility. The composition of figure 19 is clearly designed to reflect a high degree of modality, representing the man as an aspirational figure, making him appear better than real, whilst it is recognisable that he has attained the acceptable age for sexual activity. However, ideologies are also at play when language users engage in the ongoing construction of context as subjective, as well as group-sensitive, interpretations of the social situation.

Another aspect to consider in the analysis of figure 19 is the ideological nature of contextualization. When Whites speak or write about Blacks, meanings and style of such talk may be influenced by racist or anti-racist ideologies. That is, ideologies may influence the ways social attitudes are expressed in discourse structures. The same ideology, however, may influence the way Whites construct themselves and Blacks as participants in settings as well as how they define the interaction, and what knowledge, beliefs or aims are activated during this liaison. These typical context features may in turn show up at all levels of discourse, e.g. in intonation, sentence syntax, lexical selection, topicalisation or implicitness, among many other properties of communication. An example would be a racist ideology about Blacks which may negatively affect the contextual definition of a Black interlocutor by a White author, and that negative impression may in turn influence mechanisms of politeness that are expressed in specific face threatening intonation or lexicalisation. Ideology may thus affect the production of discourse directly, as in the first case, or this may happen indirectly through the prior formation of a biased representation of the social situation, for instance about other participants or the relations between participants, as in the second case.

The girl in the poster below (Figure 20) gazes directly at the audience which gives the impression that she is appealing to the audience for attention. She is thus trying to form some type of imaginary relationship with the audience. Kress and van Leeuwen, (1996/2006) refer to pictures like this as ‘demand’ pictures as they demand attention from the audience. Other pictures that lack this kind of imaginary contact with the audience are referred to as ‘offers’.

In Figure 20 below, it is difficult to link HIV/AIDS to the innocent, appealing face of the girl. There is thus ambiguity in the representational meaning of the visual image. The visual and written text should always convey the message in a clear and concise manner as the audience does not always have the time or literacy level required to analyse the messages.



Figure 20

As a message, “Too smart for just any body” is just *too clever* for an ordinary South African audience. First, there is the word play between ‘anybody’ and ‘any body’. For second language speakers (and perhaps first language speakers), the distinction in meaning between the two will not be immediately apparent (if at all). Second, the

association of a beautiful young face with the HIV/AIDS message is very remote and requires a very sophisticated (read ‘formally educated’) mind.

Visual images that show characters looking directly at, or making eye-contact with the audience, are labelled by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) as ‘demand’ pictures. By contrast, certain images depict characters in a more detached manner, as if they were being viewed as specimens in a display case (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001). Figure 20 was specifically selected in terms of its relative contact between the image and the audience.

Besides the notion that the type of image is rather demanding, it could also be construed as being manipulative in nature. Manipulation not only involves power, but specifically abuse of power; that is, domination. More specifically, manipulation implies the exercise of a form of illegitimate influence by means of discourse: manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated (Chouliaraki, 2005; Martín Rojo and Van Dijk, 1997).

Manipulating people involves manipulating their minds (that is, people’s beliefs), such as the knowledge, opinions and ideologies which in turn control their actions. We have seen, however, that there are many forms of discourse-based mental influence, such as informing, teaching and persuasion, that also shape or change people’s knowledge and opinions (Van Dijk, 1998).

5.4 Shortcomings found in multimodal texts

5.4.1 Western-centric approaches to reading images and graphics

Before analysing gaps in loveLife texts, it should be noted that in general most of the multimodal texts follow the Western traditional reading paths starting from left to right and proceeding from top to bottom. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996/2006) have pointed out that information values are realised by the placement of elements of a composition. This means that the role of a particular element will depend on where it is placed on the page. Following the Roman script of reading from left to right and from top to bottom, certain values have been ascribed to those positions. Therefore the elements placed on the left are presented as ‘given’ meaning: they are presented as something the viewer or

reader already knows and as such they become the agreed point of departure for the message (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001). Elements placed on the right are presented as ‘new’ meaning it is something not yet known to the viewer or the reader, hence the reader or viewer must pay special attention to such elements since they are problematic, contestable and the information is at issue.

Elements on the horizontal axis are either an ‘idealised’ or ‘generalised’ essence of information and are usually the ideologically most salient part. Such elements occupy the top or ‘ideal’ position on the page while those elements that are at the bottom carry ‘down-to-earth information’, thus forming the meaning potential of the text. According to Jewitt and Oyama (2001), the bottom part carries “more specific information (for example, details), more practical oriented information (for example, practical consequences, direction for action), or more real information (for example, photographs as documentary evidence)”. Finally, elements that appear at the centre are seen as holding the ‘marginal’ elements together; in other words, the ‘marginal’ elements are subservient to the central element from where they derive their interpretation depending on the context.

In South Africa, where literacy in formal Western material is still low or non-existent in some communities, it is asking too much to think that the youth will follow these reading paths. Even those Blacks and Coloureds with some formal education might still find the Western approach to discourse adopted by loveLife rather difficult to follow.

5.4.2 Incoherent communication modes

The complexity and richness of multimodal texts demand a thorough description and analysis since they represent reality using different semiotics. In essence the multimodal account should not privilege any one semiotic over the other, although the practice itself may foreground one particular mode (Iedema, 2003). Ideally, visuals should be used to support, emphasise, complement or substitute the written text (De Vito, 2001) and not merely to dress up the brochure or poster.

Like so many image-based visuals, loveLife makes no mention of the programme objectives, but instead promotes a highly abstract connection between the photographer's models and the loveLife brand (Stern and Schroeder, 1994). The programme material makes an appeal to the audience to transfer meaning from the identity of the people in the visuals, that is, their image, lifestyle, and physical appearance. Based on this appeal, it is critical to understand how meaning is visually constructed in the loveLife visuals. As mentioned above, dressing the material with pretty colours definitely does not contribute towards making sense of the intended message.



Figure 21

As discussed in the previous chapter, De Beaugrande and Dresser (1981) and Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that discourse may be briefly defined as an utterance type of natural language which realises a sequence of sentences which satisfies a number of properties. Besides relative correctness of sentences at the syntactic level, the most conspicuous property defining the textual nature of a sequence of sentences expressed by a discourse is the semantic property of coherence.

It is apparent that this poster and most of those discussed above flout rules of semantic coherence. Both discourse analysts and ordinary language users are primarily interested in meaning: what is this text or talk about, what does it mean, and what implications does it have for language users? Part of the answer to such questions is given in text semantics.

One of the important notions studied in text semantics is that of the *local coherence* of the text: how are the subsequent propositions of the text bound together? One of the major conditions of such local coherence of texts is that their propositions refer to facts that are related, for instance, by relations of time, condition, cause, and consequence which formulate interpretation rules for words, sentences, paragraphs, or whole discourses. One important semantic notion used to describe meaning is that of proposition, which may be roughly defined as the conceptual meaning structure of a clause (van Dijk, 1977).

Beyond meaning relations between subsequent sentences, a text also has overall semantic unity. This global coherence is described by what we all intuitively know as themes or topics. Conceptually, topics summarise the text and specify its most important information, which is clearly absent from this brochure. In theoretical terms, such topics can be described as semantic macro-propositions, that is, as propositions that are derived from sequences of propositions in the text; for instance, by macro-rules such as selection, abstraction, and other operations which reduce complex information (van Dijk, 1977).

The above poster (figure 21), like the others discussed elsewhere, is linguistically confusing. More emphasis seems to have gone into colour coding the poster instead of concentrating on a constructive message which can be used to aid the audience in changing behaviours. The question that arises is what needs to be talked about. The visual clearly does not support or complement the written text which, in itself does not make any sense at all. The striking feature that dominates this poster is the colour scheme which is rather girlish, or babyish in nature. Once again, there is no mention of HIV or any reference to a behaviour-change message.

5.4.3 Projection of mixed messages between graphics and visual modes

People tend to identify with what is immediately presented to them. In campaigns that aim to change behaviours, it is important to sensitise the audience by presenting visuals with appropriate texts to them. Failing to do this leads to mixed feelings and a state of confusion as to the actual message and the intention behind the message. The following

poster (figure 22) and others discussed above such as figures 4, 17 and 19 bear witness to this.



Figure 22

The participants in figure 22 convey the representational meaning (experiential) through the narrative structures recognised by the vectors that connect participants (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001). The vectors in this case are the lips of the two participants and their closed eyes depicting a happening that the reader is supposed to recognise as being a romantic encounter between a boy and girl. The couple appear to be sharing a transactive experience, thus offering information in respect of sexuality. As loveLife messages are modelled on sexuality and sexual experiences, the picture does not link well with the HIV/AIDS campaign objectives. The picture does not match with the message of abstinence and it does not have a direct or indirect HIV/AIDS message.

In some of the posters, such as figure 22 and even figure 19, the participants represented in the picture also appear to be much older than the loveLife target audience. The picture therefore seems to be more appropriate for audiences other than those being targeted by loveLife.

5.4.4 Inaccessible multimodal narratives

In order to reach the campaign objective, it is vital for the co-ordinators to make use of simple, clear and to the point messages. The target audience has to, at first glance, be able to make sense of the intended message. Billboards are used for bypassers who do not necessarily have the time to pause at a billboard to decipher the text.

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) argue that visual communication has several resources for constituting and maintaining the interaction between the producer and the viewer of an image. They describe three systems of interactive meaning: contact, social distance and attitude. The system of contact is used to understand the ways in which an image acts on a viewer either by demanding a response or by offering information. The system of distance is used to understand the imaginary relation between represented participants and the viewer and can be considered along a continuum from close up (intimate or personal social distance), to arm's length (social distance), to the public distance of strangers. Macken-Horarik describes two systems within the system of attitude outlined by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006). In an image there is 'a horizontal dimension, which creates viewer involvement (through frontality) or detachment (through obliqueness), and a vertical dimension, which creates a relation of power between viewer and represented participants (hierarchical or solidary)' (Macken-Horarik, 2004:12). In the same way as the clause fulfils three functions simultaneously, so too does an image: "any image must either be a 'demand' or an 'offer' *and* select a certain size of frame *and* select a certain attitude" (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006:148-149).

Kress and van Leeuwen (1996/2006) argue that visual and verbal elements should be considered as contributing to an integrated text. They refer to the spatial composition of a text as an overarching code 'whose rules and meanings provide the multimodal text with the logic of its integration' (2006:177), and discuss composition in terms of three interrelated systems: information value, salience and framing.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006:177) argue that information value refers to the placement

of elements in a composition that 'endows them with the specific informational values attached to the various 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin. It is also suggested, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006:202) that 'viewers of spatial compositions are intuitively able to judge the 'weight' of the various elements of a composition and the greater the weight of an element, the greater its salience'. Salience, or prominence, as discussed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006:202) is the result of a complex interaction of such elements as size, sharpness of focus, colour contrast, placement in the foreground or background and culture specific factors 'such as the appearance of a human figure or a potent cultural symbol'. Framing refers to the ways in which elements in a spatial composition are marked off from or connected to each other by frame lines, changes of colour, visual shapes or empty space.



Figure 23

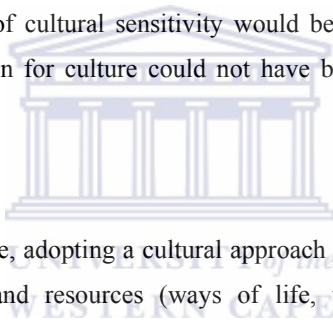
Effective multimodal texts are ones that communicate a specific, clear and straightforward message. This means that the text must make itself easy and accessible to viewers or readers who, in most cases, have no time to spend reading complicated messages.

In terms of multimodality, this text is highly complex. As can be seen in Figure 23, it contains verbal text, visual texts, various frames within frames and a variety of colours.

The image depicts a presentational process (concerning an action or event) of an actional kind (action creating a relation between depicted images).

5.4.5 Cultural insensitivities and linguistic complexities

South Africans are extremely territorial when reference is made to or disrespect is shown towards their cultural convictions. According to Scollon and Scollon (1995), people are often defined by their customs and belief structures. Overstepping cultural boundaries is perceived as a sign of disrespect, be it in urban or rural areas. Residents in areas where culture plays a big role expect visitors and more specifically people intending to disseminate information, to respect and obey the culture relevant to the area. Having said this, one could find in urban areas more than one culture living side by side. In such instances, one would expect that issues of cultural sensitivity would be identified and avoided. As is evident, this consideration for culture could not have been considered prior to the inception of the campaign.



In terms of HIV/AIDS prevention and care, adopting a cultural approach means that any given population's cultural references and resources (ways of life, value systems, traditions and beliefs, and the fundamental human rights) will be considered as key references in building a framework for strategies and project planning. These key references will also serve as the resources and basis for building a relevant response and sustainable action in prevention and care, as well as in impact reduction (UNESCO, 2001).



Figure 24

People are often defined by their “customs, worldview, language, kinship systems, social organisation, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices, which set them apart as a distinctive group” (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:126). Understanding a people’s culture can elevate someone to a stronger position from which she or he can communicate effectively and successfully in social circumstances. The success of an interactive communication relies heavily on this understanding because people attach great value to their way of life even if it is perceived as backward or uncivilised. The best way of reaching people and impacting on their lives is to invest in packaging information that does not antagonise their belief systems and cultural practices, but embraces such practices and uses them as vehicles of change.

Vectors lead the viewer from one element to another. This can be done by concentrating on lines, be they visible or invisible, which are created by a gaze, fingers, arms or an object held in a set direction. In the above poster (Figure 24) the concentration is firstly on the fact that the couple is of a mixed race, whereafter the viewer is led to the green condom held by the lady in the visual. In addition, other vectors - the fact that the couple appear to be naked and very familiar with each other - do attract attention. However, after

a quick glance at these mentioned vectors, the audience's attention or reading path is returned back to the woman, highlighting her as the centre of the image.

The above image (figure 24) is filled with signs of cultural insensitivity. These images, as behavioural change material, were used and displayed widely in both rural and urban areas. Westernised, White youth would not frown on images of this nature displayed in public places. However, to the youth of other African nationalities this would not only be embarrassing, but also a sign of cultural disrespect. The topic of condoms, even after so many years of dominating the news in terms of HIV prevention and safe sex, is still a topic which is treated as taboo in most communities. In any culture, condoms are regarded as being synonymous with sexual intercourse. As discussed earlier in the study, discussions regarding sexual intercourse are not something which youth, including Westernised youth, discuss openly.

The fact that the woman in the image is holding the condom could be perpetuating the cultural stereotype that it is the woman that is responsible for the spread of this dread disease and should thus be held responsible for its prevention and not the man.

The phrase 'One roll-on all women want' has very little meaning to someone with limited comprehension of English. Roll-on, in simple day to day linguistic terms, refers to cosmetics used to prevent sweating. Interpretation of this phrase requires a certain level of linguistic competency. As alluded to above, this puts a large number of the intended audience at a disadvantage in terms of interpretation. In terms of intertextuality, it is doubtful that the majority of Coloured and Black South African youth would be able to connect this phrase to HIV/AIDS prevention.

5.4.6 Overuse of abstract modalities

One would expect that, due to the devastating effect of the HIV pandemic, campaign co-ordinators would take care that billboards and posters are designed as simply as possible, making them accessible and comprehensible to people. By making use of images familiar to the target audience, it is also assumed that people will understand and

comprehend such images. However, what becomes evident is that images are placed and laid out in such a fashion that they require a certain level of literacy to comprehend the messages. If people fail to make connections between image and text, they consciously lose interest in the material, rendering the exercise useless.

Figure 25



The visual (Figure 25) has to be studied closely to begin to understand what the author or artist was trying to depict. Silhouetted in the background is a crowd of people, some cheering, some merely standing idly and two at the back in a surprised pose. It could have multiple meanings, depending on respective interpretations. Once mixed interpretations are possible, the objective of the message gets lost. The message is, as mentioned earlier in the study, difficult to understand. There are too many figures and shadows, which raises questions of whether the brochure still represents an HIV message.

The mediated messages are packaged in abstract signs that viewers and readers cannot understand easily. Even though they use familiar signs and objects, the modes present them out of their context of usage and outside the known schemata of the viewers. In such cases, the viewers' or audiences' frame of interpretation is completely displaced.

5.5 Summary of research findings

Although recent research suggests that stigmatisation and discrimination in South Africa are not as strong as previously thought (Parker, 2004) – and are confined to more isolated cases, rather than found in communities at large – they have been, in many instances, a problem. As mentioned earlier, one of the most severe and widely publicised instances is the case of Gugu Dlamini, who was beaten to death by her husband and others in 1998, after disclosing publicly that she was HIV positive.

The above thus led one to form the opinion that perhaps existing prevention strategies are ineffective due to cultural and language barriers, the primary barrier being cultural beliefs and values unique to our diverse cultures in South Africa. In this sense information dissemination differs from culture to culture, making it extremely difficult for campaigners to get their message across successfully to their target audiences. The authors of loveLife posters have specific messages they wish to convey to target audiences, in this case, the youth. However, in order for their messages to be understood, the youth have to firstly understand the message. Failure to comprehend the message will act as a barrier to implementation.

As indicated above, many of the billboards are in direct contrast to cultural beliefs. An example is depicting a pregnant young lady to influence the youth to practise safe sex. Culturally, when someone falls pregnant, such a person is no longer regarded as falling within the youth category. The woman is instantly regarded as being an adult, and will receive the respect befitting the adult population. Using visuals that are culturally inappropriate leads one to form the opinion that loveLife did not take the time nor make the effort to delve deeper into the effect their posters would have on cultural beliefs.

The language of choice on the billboards and that used in the posters was clearly earmarked for audiences with a sophisticated understanding of English. LoveLife thus regards English as the dominant language, disregarding the youth resident in rural areas who, in most instances, have great difficulty comprehending English. It leads one to conclude that the campaign organisers regard English as a medium of status, aimed at the

fortunate youth who would be able to interpret the message both linguistically as well as in its abstract form.

One of the many campaigns co-ordinated by loveLife used the theme 'Talk about it'. According to loveLife, the use of the word 'it', a neutral word, enables them to hinge all the messages on this line. 'Talk about it' aims to encourage talk about:

- i. Healthy, positive approaches to sex, sexuality and sexual health.
- ii. Communicating more openly about sexual expression.
- iii. Alternatives to sexual intercourse and choices regarding sexual pleasure.
- iv. Sexual rights and exercising those rights.
- v. Safer sex options and contraceptive choice.
- vi. The concept of a positive lifestyle (LoveLife, 2001:18).

LoveLife aims to encourage 'Talk about it' in all elements of social networks with and amongst children, parents, young people, religious organisations and leadership, which are all regarded as interconnected networks. LoveLife acknowledges that 'Talk about it' in itself is not going to bring about sexual behaviour change but that it is the foundation upon which such change can be effected (LoveLife, 2001).

However, as Littlejohn (1999: 80) points out, words such as 'so, and, about, sure' and 'it', do not represent objects. Meaning, in this instance, is not derived through the sign-object relationship but by the sign-sign relationship which is determined by how the communicators have used the signs to convey their messages. The line 'talk about it' on the LoveLife billboards could be described as directing the reader to interpret what they are supposed to talk about in the context of understanding the brand, loveLife, and the messages and graphics that are portrayed in the billboard.

This shows blatant disregard for the diverse cultures and eleven languages used within South Africa. The objectives of the campaign all point to issues around sexuality.

Culturally, this topic is not one that is discussed openly amongst families and youth within rural areas.

Though not very common, South Africa has rural areas where access to resources is either non-existent or where it exists, outdated. Most youth are aware of the loveLife campaign and its objectives. However, messages with either hidden messages or abstract images are lost to those youth who have linguistic constraints.

The use of the icon 'loveLife' on the billboards has contributed towards a high degree of awareness of an entity called loveLife. However, asking youth to recall the loveLife billboards they had seen in the past seven days once again indicated that the interpretation and comprehension of the messages was not successful. The interpretant or mental image generated in the minds of the youth of what the icons symbolised, however, varied from viewing loveLife as an HIV/AIDS programme, teaching about love, sex and safe sex, to others having no idea of what the aims and objectives of loveLife were. The following information taken from research material of interviews (see Littlejohn, 1999) with youth serves to illustrate the observation mentioned above:

AIDS. That AIDS programme (Group discussion, Johannesburg)

Talk about it for AIDS or for having sex, talk about it sex (Male participant, Johannesburg)

I think they teach people about love [13] (Male participant, Pilgrims Rest)

They teach people to use condoms when they have sex (Male participant, Atteridgeville)

Boy: *But I don't know what LoveLife is about*

Girl: *Exactly because you cannot really say what this organisation is for*

Boy[14]: *So the brand loveLife?*

Girl: It does not mean anything to us

Boy: Is loveLife like a condom brand?

Girls: No that is Lovers Plus

(Group Discussion, Johannesburg)

This indicates that being able to recall a billboard does not imply an understanding of the brand which is generated through the mental image that the brand icon creates in the reader's mind. Branding enables the reader to decode the icon and generate an association with the meaning of the brand; in the case of loveLife, 'to talk about it', amongst other associations. Where a low level of awareness exists of the symbolism of the brand icon, it is important for the advertiser to keep the messages simple, predictable and repetitive so that the target audience can then develop an understanding of the product or service. If the underlying meanings of the brand icon are not immediately apparent, or the messages conveyed alongside the brand icon are not interpreted as intended, there is limited attention given to the advertisement or a discrepant decoding of the messages may occur (Tomaselli, 1999:32-33).

According to Lowe (1995:9), perception is the cognitive process that goes hand in hand with stimulation from the environment. Perception plays a big role in terms of self-preservation, which we need to be aware of our surroundings. Kreps (1990:29) regards perception as the process by which people become aware of internal and external messages, followed by interpretation of messages into meanings. Based on this, it becomes evident that misinterpretation of content and context places the audience at a huge disadvantage.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and suggestions for further research

6.0 Introduction

The study set out to investigate the following:

1. To do a textual and multimodal analysis of the imagery and verbal texts that constitutes loveLife texts.
2. To investigate how the loveLife messages are constructed for use in HIV-prevention campaigns.
3. To offer suggestions on how to improve the composition and dissemination processes of loveLife messages.

The study has met all the objectives. Following the above objectives, this chapter offers the conclusion as well as recommendations for a multidisciplinary campaign, which takes into account factors that contribute towards effective dissemination of information.

The chapter is divided into two sections: the conclusion, and a section that offers suggestions for improved communication models during information dissemination with regards to HIV information.

6.1 Text and coherence in loveLife billboards

As discussed earlier in the study, the aim of the study was to explore the relationship between text, image and context. In so doing, the researcher set out to examine the level of coherence in the research material. In so doing, it was found that in most instances, the text, image and tone of the material had either no relation or where some relation existed, it still required further interpretation by the audience. In some instances the level of incoherence rendered the message useless once interpreted – in other words, the messages fell short of being nonsensical.

During the analysis phase of the study it was also found that the authors of the campaign material flouted theoretical specifications for the compilation and design of visuals which

have a specific aim to change behaviour. Following Halliday and Hassan (1976), the major principle of effective communication is to insist on cohesion and coherence in the dissemination of messages. In the case of the material analysed, it tended to lack textual cohesion and coherence. In some cases, the message tended to be meaningless and lacked interconnectedness between the verbal message and the visuals.

6.2 Use of complex language and visuals

The loveLife texts appear designed as information service tools for the formerly educated middle class urban youth rather than resources for interactive discourse practice for all South African youth. It might also be argued and concluded that the campaign emphasises status difference and unequal power relations between those with high level proficiency in English (most of the posters demands this) and speakers of other South African languages. There is also a sense in which the texts are biased against those in rural areas who might not be familiar with the trendy language and visuals depicted in loveLife texts.

In all, there is an incorrect assumption that the target audience of the multimodal texts are all equally competent in the new literacies and that the audience possess sufficient reading skills to indulge in the new literacy practices. Semantically, the authors fall far short of making sense to someone who is either completely illiterate or of average literacy level. A message like 'Love to be there' makes no sense to someone of limited literacy. The target audience first has to consciously interpret the message to reach the level of comprehension. Likewise, another theme used by loveLife is 'HIV loves skin on skin'. Linguistically, this does not make sense. Using metaphoric phrases to lure audiences into a message is not practical if the intention is to get the audience to change behaviour.

6.3 Inconsistencies in co-occurrence of the modes

Images found on the billboards and posters can in far too many instances be compared to semi-pornographic images. This constitutes a gross disrespect for Africa's cultural heritage. The fact that what one can describe as semi-pornographic images are used as

themes in HIV prevention campaigns makes one wonder whether this vitally important aspect was at all honoured.

As alluded to above, the images have to be culturally correct. To pose nude in the presence of young children is certainly not correct, according to African cultures and not even in Western cultures. LoveLife, according to the researcher, failed in its attempt to attract and educate its target audience by simply ignoring cultural sensitivities and their effect on the interpretation of the intended messages.

6.4 Projection of mixed messages between graphics and visual modes

According to Crompton (1997:57), the average person sees roughly between 1 000 and 1 500 different promotional (persuasive) messages per day. Rural South Africans may be confronted with fewer messages, yet the question remains which of them will catch and hold attention, and as Doak (1996:168) argues, "If the patient doesn't look at it, there's no chance for influence".

As alluded to above, the prevention material has, as its target audience, youth from all spheres of life, nationally. This means that the construction of the messages should be of such a nature that it can be accessed, linguistically, by its intended audience. Having mixed messages makes it so much more difficult for the youth having low literacy skills to participate in the programme. This can be considered as some form of discrimination on the basis of language, education and basic respect for our fellow human beings.

6.5 Semantic overload

During the analysis of the material, the researcher found in almost all instances material which had far too much information to decipher at short notice. One must bear in mind that the programme does not only consist of hand-outs. Most of the material accessed for the purpose of this study is in the form of billboards and posters placed in densely populated and strategic places. This requires the audience to quickly read, interpret and internalise the information. Having semantic overload puts the audience at a disadvantage in terms of interpretation and understanding.

Visual communication has several resources for constituting and maintaining the interaction between the producer and the audience. These are contact, social distance and attitude (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006). In order to reach its objective, the visuals should consist of texts that communicate a specific, clear and straightforward message. The verbal text, visual text, variety of colours and various frames within frames found in the material are far too complex both semantically and graphically.

6.6 Abstract modes

In analysing the material, the researcher found repeated evidence of texts that were far too abstract for interpretation by the ordinary man or woman in the street. The level of interpretation required to make sense of the material was way above that of our youth in rural areas where poverty and illiteracy are rife. The impression is gained that the material was specifically pitched at the Westernised, previously model-C school type youth. Interpretation of the material requires a high level of literacy in order to interpret the material successfully. To the less literate person, the material would appear as jargon, rendering it useless information for the target audience.

In conclusion, one would strongly urge the agents of the loveLife campaign to consider gaining a thorough understanding of the experiential, interpersonal and textual resources available to their target audience prior to commencing with their campaigns. A better understanding of their socio-cultural practices and use of modes of communication should be strongly considered as well.

6.7 General conclusion

Rather than contesting the gender inequity that fuels the spread of HIV, the loveLife campaign presents a particular form of heterosexual normativity as most desirable for young South Africans. The campaign sets out the parameters of what are deemed appropriate sexual mores and behaviour, and in spite of its reputation for openness, opts for 'safe' depictions of male and female heterosexuality. The images in the 'Talk about it' series, with the exception of the image of the young woman discussed above, all show

male and female couples in sexual situations. These representations not only fail to challenge the notion that gender identity is fixed and immutable but also cast same-sex desire outside of what constitutes an appropriate 'loveLife', along with unsafe sexual behaviours.

Homosexuality is not all that is omitted from loveLife's representations of young South Africans and their sexuality and same-sex desires. Issues such as sexual violence, cross-generational sex, sex work and sex as a form of exchange remain unspoken. The loveLife campaign ostensibly seeks to create alternative representations of sexuality, while at the same time reproducing already existing norms and stereotypical images. Crucial issues such as how to gain access to treatment if one is HIV positive, discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS and dealing with loss are also invisible. While young people may raise these concerns in the context of loveLife's HIV/AIDS counselling service, as long as they remain out of public view, the campaign is doing little to actively change the social context that determines how the epidemic unfolds. LoveLife's approach carefully depoliticises HIV/AIDS in South Africa, avoiding all mention of the contested terrain of treatment access, and in this way has forged a successful partnership with the state. As Helen Epstein (2003:47) observes:

People like the colourful, frank advertising and the basketball games sponsored by loveLife. But its programs may well be reinforcing the denial that poses so many obstacles to preventing HIV in the first place. A more realistic program to prevent AIDS should pay greater attention to the real circumstances in people's lives that make it hard for them to avoid infection. It should also be more frank about the real human consequences of the disease.

No single awareness and prevention campaign can address and transform the complex range of social issues that shape the course of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, regardless of the approach employed.

It is clear that it is not prevention campaigns alone that need to be critiqued and transformed, but state and civil society approaches to the epidemic. At the same time, the power of representation and of the mass media in affecting how people live and how and

when they die should not be underestimated. The loveLife campaign (and its failings) raises the question of how we can begin to forge new and radical ways to represent, and thereby transform how we see and live our sexuality. This question has particular import in the context of post-apartheid South Africa where sexual violence and homophobia are rife and so many aspects of living with HIV/AIDS remain unspoken.

There have been various criticisms of the effectiveness and appropriateness of a number of public health information initiatives, such as the high budget spent by the government on the ill-fated musical *Sarafina II*. LoveLife, for example, has been criticised for creating divisions within the community and ‘perpetuating [a] gender status quo (through its billboards, its chat shows and workshops)’ (Naidoo, 2003:18). It has also been criticised for its sophisticated messaging, missing the target of reaching the most vulnerable groups by seeming to pitch the campaign at the literate and middle classes (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002). Likewise, peer-education strategies are not fail-safe solutions and have been criticised for reinforcing, rather than challenging, gender roles and relations that contribute to vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (Campbell, 2003, Campbell and MacPhail, 2002). Nonetheless, both *Soul City* and loveLife at the very least are seen as having contributed to the overall creation of public spaces in which to talk about and confront HIV/AIDS.

Communities have their own coping mechanisms through which they communicate HIV/AIDS information and try to influence behaviour change. These involve the care and prevention activities that are culturally appropriate.

Using SFL and analysing texts in socio-cultural contexts as in this study entails taking a cultural approach in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. This also means that any population’s cultural references (ways of life and the fundamental rights of persons) are resources and, as such, should not only be considered as key references in building a framework for strategies, policies and project planning, but also as resources and a basis for building relevant and sustainable action to encourage in-depth and long-term changes in people’s behaviours.

As is evidenced above, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is one of the leading causes of death amongst sub-Saharan people. Despite increasing awareness campaigns like loveLife, our youth still engage in unsafe sexual practices. Research has shown that our youth account for the highest age group infected with this disease.

Different texts used in HIV/AIDS campaigns are perceived differently (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996/2006). Strategic communication is not a matter of printing large quantities of information materials such as posters, brochures and putting up large, colourful billboards. It entails designing and implementing advocacy and behaviour change based on proven theories and models that emphasise individual behaviour change, as well as changes in social norms and policies that facilitate and support sustained behaviour change.

The problem then relates to the effectiveness of the texts, multimodal or otherwise created by loveLife in the campaign against HIV/AIDS.

Despite growing consensus that the community may be the most appropriate level at which to intervene with HIV prevention strategies, there has been little agreement about what constitutes 'community'. While 'community' has been defined in numerous ways by social science researchers, most definitions shared some common components such as geographic location, shared social institutions or interactions, and personal or health characteristics and/or interests of more or less homogeneous groups of people who share common goals or purposes (Haglund, Weisbrod, and Bracht, 1990; Jewkes and Murcott, 1996; Minkler, 1990).

Regardless of how the community is defined or segmented, it should always be borne in mind that communities are themselves part of the larger context of the system or society in which they exist, and are thus subject to influences from outside forces. In this regard, from an SFL and MDA analysis, the problem with loveLife campaigns is that they seem designed for Western communities, and American social contexts in particular.

In fulfilment of the objectives of the study and based on the literature review, the following information serves as suggestions regarding an effective model to be used when planning HIV/AIDS campaigns and more specifically, how to improve communication to the target audience. The ideal communication model would thus include and consider the following key aspects:

6.8 Recommendations

6.8.1 Context of culture and context of situation

Communication constitutes an exchange of meanings which are hinged on a set of symbolic frameworks provided by a specific culture. Agents should be familiar with the fact that texts are understood as constituents of context of situations and that the larger context of culture, meaning and actions are negotiated and interpreted through them. This makes it so important to have a clear understanding of the context of culture and of situation to enable enhancement of communication in, especially rural areas. This is particularly important if the existing frameworks are to be taken as resources instead of challenges.

In the presence of strong cultural practices and structures, alternatives should be identified rather than directly antagonising these practices.

6.8.2 Modes of communication

Of importance in modes of communication is that they are a product of the register feature of context of situation, thus making them central to collective meaning making and negotiation. Agents should endeavour to consider appropriate language choice and discourse practices that can strengthen genuine participation in HIV/AIDS prevention discourse. This would entail ongoing research by loveLife and other agents of change to enable them to identify areas where there is disparity in discursive practices.

6.8.3 Tenor of discourse

The factors discussed under 6.8.1 and 6.8.2 determine how they use language, their lexical choices, order of discourse, use of space, images, graphics, etc. People thus tend to communicate silent messages that can be destructive to the main focus or objectives of the campaign.

Having made suggestions with regards to a communication model, this study also offers the following general comments:

- i. In the event of there being evidence that not all the target audience possess the language of choice, all efforts should be made to expose them to the language prior to commencement of the campaign. By so doing, it will afford them the power to negotiate meanings freely and confidently. Should comprehension of texts act as a barrier, every effort should also be made to have peers interpret these.
- ii. Visual modes such as graphics and drawings are very effective when they relate to issues like sex, condom use and general HIV/AIDS information. Having said this, care should be taken not to use culturally sensitive images and graphics as well as not to be too abstract. In the event of agents making use of multimodal texts, the agents should endeavour to use modes that reinforce rather than contradict the message. This should only be allowed in the event of it having some significance in reinforcing the message.

6.9 Community interventions for HIV prevention

Two theoretical models could be used to guide the implementation of community interventions for HIV prevention. They are:

- i. social marketing (Kennedy and Crosby, 2002), and
- ii. diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 1995)

Use of the social marketing strategies would enable greater penetration and promotion of a message to various segments of a community. The success of social marketing efforts depends on the audience's interpretation of the message and their belief that the message is beneficial.

Diffusion of innovation theory would help explain how a change or innovation is disseminated throughout cultural or social systems (Oldenburg, Hardcastle and Kok, 1997; Rogers, 1995).

As community HIV-intervention strategies become an increasingly promising weapon in our prevention armamentarium, further development of these interventions is an essential public health priority (Kelly, 1999). According to a review by independent public health specialists, the following actions are imperative to guarantee successful information dissemination strategies with regards to preventive measures in terms of HIV/AIDS:

- i. That the establishment of an independent national behavioural surveillance programme linked to biological indicators is fast-tracked. This would help provide a more definitive picture, help monitor the impact of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and improve decision making.
- ii. That donors, government and programmes become more familiar with models of best practice in the utilisation of the mass media for public health so that research is properly applied, especially in the development phase.
- iii. That a study be commissioned to explore the possibilities for 'AIDS Action' at a community level to inform the use of the mass media for both government and civil society.
- iv. That a review be commissioned to establish what is happening in rural and very poor communities to ensure that they do not remain behind in prevention indices and to identify media gaps.

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