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## **Instruction and Argumentation in Kodak's Advertising Practice: A Multilevel Analysis of *The Difference***

### **Abstract**

This paper presents research findings on the use of a multilevel analytical method for the exploration of a complex text. The paper begins by describing *The Difference*, an advertising and instructive material of the Kodak Company, in which several semiotic modes, media, texts types and genres are functionally integrated in order to persuasively convey specialized knowledge. A presentation of the main concepts that are employed in the multilevel analysis of this complex text is also provided.

Through the application of the multilevel analysis on *The Difference*, it is explained in detail how the instructive and argumentative discourses are actualized at the multimodal and multimedial intersection of different genres and text types. The last part of the analysis is dedicated to the presentations of the interactive connections that can be established through a multilevel analysis. The possible implications for further applications and the improvement of the method are included in the conclusions of the paper.

Although it is dedicated only to the verbal mode, Virtanen's idea of a multilevel analytical model (1992) has been employed as a starting point in the present analysis. Certainly, the model has been thoroughly expanded because, when exploring complex texts like *The Difference*, such a multilevel analytical model is supposed to include multimodal and multimedial dimensions.

### **1. Introduction**

More and more contemporary texts combine not only discourses, genres and text types, but they are also stretched across several media and modes. This complexity implies that researchers have to simultaneously deal with and conceptualize analytical elements of various types.

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These analytical elements have been created through interrelated semiotic modes, with different media tools and they coexist on different text levels and in different generic structures.

The key research question that arises from a confrontation with such a complexity is related to the feasibility of a multilevel analysis. In this paper, it is argued that in order to provide a reliable explanatory framework, a multilevel analytical approach entails not only the simultaneous employment of different conceptual frameworks but also the employment of those concepts that can be functionally related across various analytical elements. Therefore, several methodological and conceptualizing approaches stemming from different theoretical frameworks are to be orchestrated when the one type of analytical elements has to be related to the other types of existing analytical elements in order to reveal the dynamic meaning making resources that are simultaneously at play in complex texts.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the articulation of several semiotic modes, texts types and genres across media in one of Kodak's advertising and instructive materials called *The Difference*. In *The Difference*, specialized knowledge about film and video as means of information capture and storage is verbally conveyed through a multitude of opinions as renowned directors, directors of photography and producers present their perspectives upon the advantages and disadvantages of the technologies of film and video. By also visually exemplifying the experts' opinions through exemplary excerpts from their work, the material combines the instructive discourse with the argumentative one in a complex multimodal structure across several media.

## **2. Data**

*The Difference* consists of a digital video disc inserted in a booklet.

Both the digital video disc and the booklet contain detailed verbal and visual information about the advantages and disadvantages of using film and video when shooting either in the studio or on location.

In the digital video disc, excerpts from feature films, commercials, documentaries, location coverage, stills from features and from location coverage, and footage from preservation facilities are accompanied by the commentaries of 19 experts from film industry. Several excerpts from their commentaries are printed in the booklet that also

includes stills from their work and short presentations of their professional achievements. Apart from these commentaries and examples, the booklet also contains several other texts which seem to belong to Kodak Company as there are no visual signs of quotations. Through the detailed explanations provided by the renowned experts and the accompanying examples, *The Difference* succeeds to both instruct the potential users and to persuade them to employ either of the above mentioned products. The material existing in *The Difference* is targeted not only at professionals from film business, but also at teachers and students as it is constructed as a multimodal and multimedial instruction and advertising package.

In the following analysis, I will only focus on the booklet and on the main chapter of the digital video disc, namely *The Difference*.

Before presenting the conceptual framework and the analytical focus, it should be mentioned that I have not restricted my multilevel analysis to the booklet and the main chapter of the digital video disc. The analytical work has included all the chapters of the digital video disc. However, in this paper, I have chosen to present my analytical model only on the basis of examples from these parts of *The Difference* due to a couple of reasons. First of all, the length of this paper does not permit a more detailed presentation of my analytical investigation. Secondly, the main chapter of the digital video disc provides the data needed for an integrated discussion of all the possible analytical levels. My primary goal is to succinctly present the possible stages of a multilevel model of analysis that can facilitate further research of complex texts.

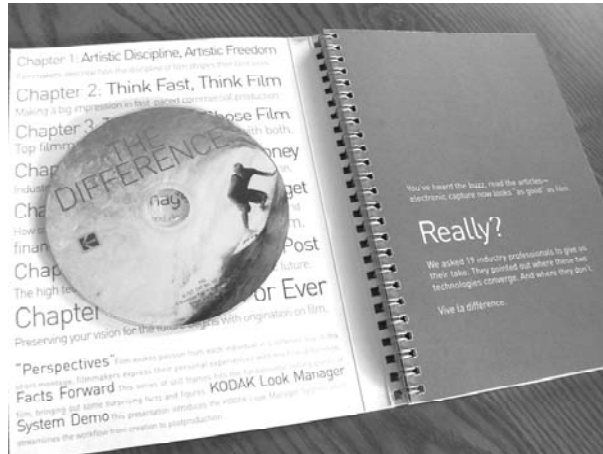


Figure 1. The booklet and the digital video disc of *The Difference*

### 3. Conceptual framework and analytical focus

Due to the fact that several semiotic modes, media, genres and texts are co-present in this instruction package, concepts like **multimodality**, **multimediality**, **multi-genericness** and **multitype text** are going to be discussed and employed in the multilevel analysis.

#### 3.1. Multimodality

In order to provide a descriptive and interpretative framework for the multimodal potential of *The Difference*, I take into account the approach to multimodality proposed by Kress/Van Leeuwen. According to their perspective, meaning making structures are realized in texts through and across several semiotic modes:

We have defined multimodality as the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined (Kress/ Van Leeuwen, 2001:20).

*The Difference* is a multimodal instructive and advertising package in the sense that (spoken and written) language, moving images, sounds and music are functionally integrated in order to persuasively convey instructive information. Without denying the significance of all the semiotic modes and submodes in the meaning making process, I have

chosen to focus in my present analysis on only two of them: the visual and the verbal modes. The choice is once again motivated by the fact that the length of this paper does not permit the detailed presentation of a more fine-grained multimodal analysis. Furthermore, I have assumed that the presentation of the analytical model can also be done on the basis of only these two main modes. Certainly, the present discussion of the roles of the verbal and visual modes can represent a convenient starting point for applying the analytical model to a range of visual and verbal submodes in further research.

In *The Difference*, the visual mode is represented by the excerpts from the experts' testimonials, excerpts from features, commercials, documentaries, location coverage, stills from features and from location coverage, and footage from preservation facilities. The verbal mode is represented by oral words from the testimonial, features, commercials, documentaries, and their written version.

Not only the description of the semiotic modes but also their relationships in complex texts have been in focus in the work of many researchers in multimodality because the various meaning making resources that appear due to these relationships can influence the overall structure of these texts. Following Van Leeuwen (1992, 2005), Maier (2006) and Maier/Kampf/Kasteberg (2007) emphasize the role of multimodal relationships not only in structuring the complex texts but also in positioning the audience and determining the purpose of the whole text.

According to Van Leeuwen (2005:230), images and texts can enter in relations of elaboration and extension while establishing semantic and structural consistency in a multimodal text. In *The Difference*, the two modes enter into a relationship of elaboration when, for example, the verbal presentation of a certain shooting situation is followed by shots showing that situation on location.

But the relation between the two modes is not only a relation of illustration in which the visual mode specifies the information carried by the verbal mode. As mentioned above, the two modes also enter in relations of extension. For example, one of the directors of photography claims that shooting on video excludes the high light levels given by the usage of certain types of lamps: *I wouldn't be able to take a maxi-brute and pound it through the window, it would just explode*. His words are in a relationship of extension through contrast with the accompanying im-

ages from the respective sit com as those images display no explosions or signs of overexposure. The images are meant to extend the meaning of his words through a visual proof of the result of shooting on film.

The relationships of elaboration and extension between the two modes position the target groups of *The Difference* in the roles of multi-modal literate users to whom specialized knowledge can be persuasively mediated across semiotic modes and media.

### 3.2. Multimediality

*The Difference* is not only a multimodal package but also a multimedial one. Jewitt (2004:184) makes a clear demarcation between modes and media when she emphasizes that:

Medium refers to how texts are disseminated, such as printed book, CD-ROM, or computer application. Mode refers any organized, regular means of representation and communication, such as still image, gesture, posture, speech, music, writing, or new configurations of the elements of these.

Taking into consideration Jewitt's statement, it can be claimed that this package makes use of several media. Firstly, physically, the package consists of a printed booklet and a digital video disc. Secondly, embedded in these two media, several other media are either referred to or displayed across semiotic modes. Two main media, namely film and video, are both visually and verbally present in both the printed booklet and in the digital video disc. It should be mentioned that the medium of film is also aurally represented as the specific sound of film running through the camera can be continuously heard while the titles of the digital video disc's chapters are displayed on the screen. The Internet is also referred to in the digital video disc, while the medium of photography is embedded both in the printed booklet and in the digital video disc. Therefore, *The Difference* can be characterized as not only a multimedially produced package, but also as a source of multimedial information.

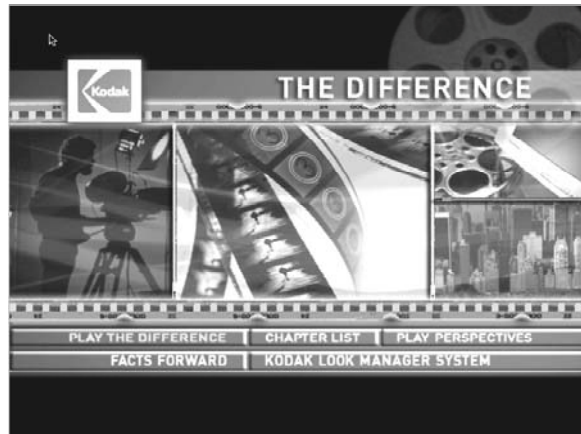


Figure 2. The menu of the digital video disc.

### 3.3. Multi-genericness

Before discussing the multi-generic character of *The Difference*, it should be clarified what conceptual framework has been adopted in order to uncover the genres and the text types embedded in this package. Up to this day, a certain terminological inconsistency has marred the research area of text genres and text types. The definitions of text genre and text type have been interchangeable in the work of many researchers. When defined, the categories of text types and text genres are either too broad or too diffuse or both.

Pilegaard/Frandsen (1996:2) emphasize the advantage of making a distinction between text genres and text types considering that:

Text types may become handy tools for the analysis of text genres of which they form constituent parts as genre-specific sequences and chains.

Since they made their claims, more than 10 years ago, many complex texts and new combinations of text types and text genres have emerged. In many cases, the appropriateness of certain text types to certain text genres is no longer a fundamental issue. In the context of this proliferation, the difficulty of establishing some classification criteria that could have a reasonable predictive value has been enhanced. However, Pilegaard/Frandsen's understanding of text types as constituent parts of text genres is still a valid approach.

The concept of genre adopted in the present analysis stems from systemic functional linguistics. Systemic linguists approach genre from a functional perspective considering that genre is “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity” (Martin, 1984:25). Additionally, as Eggins (1994:36) indicates, “each stage in the genre contributes a part of the overall meanings that must be made for the genre to be accomplished successfully”.

Taking into consideration Pilegaard/Frandsen’s approach and the systemic linguists’ functional perspective upon genre, it can be assumed that the principal criterial aspect that defines a communicative event as a text genre is primarily the presence or the absence of a staged structure. Certainly, both text genres and text types are characterized by specific semantic and linguistic features reflecting shared communicative functions. But, only text genres have to display a staged structure in order to be interpreted as text genres, even if that structure is incomplete. Eggins/Slade (1997: 234) claim that:

There is an underlying abstract structure which speakers recognize and which is potentially open to negotiation at any point. The structure can be derailed, diverted or aborted altogether but more usually it will proceed through the expected stages.

On the other side, Kress/Threadgold draw attention to the fact that “every text carries the traces of many genres” (1988:241).

The multimodal and multimedial package of *The Difference* exhibits traces of a number of genres, among which testimonial, feature film, commercial, documentary, sitcom and printed advertisement could be named. The advertising genre of the testimonial is the main genre in which parts of the other genres are embedded as the experts’ testimonials are accompanied by exemplary excerpts from their work.



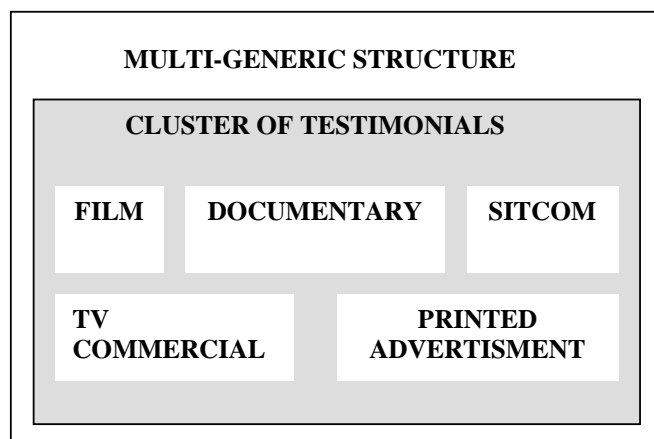


Figure 3. The multi-generic structure of *The Difference*

In spite of incomplete structures, the genres included in *The Difference* can be recognized across several semiotic modes. Some of them, like the feature films or commercials are verbally named by the experts, or their well-known names are visually displayed on the screen. The information conveyed through the verbal mode is also visually accompanied or followed by shots from the respective production. For example, one of the directors says *I just finished a commercial for Honda. The whole idea was to put the audience in the middle of the action.* His words are accompanied by a shot from the commercial. The shot seems to be carefully selected because it visually reflects the persuasive idea of putting the audience in the middle of the action. Other genres, like the sit com can be discerned due to the recognizable structural elements that are included in the package. Certainly, choosing excerpts from extremely popular or renowned productions contributes to the recognition of a certain genre, even if only a few shots are included in the testimonial.

### 3.4. Multitext types

Taking into consideration the above discussion concerning genres and text types, as far as text types are concerned, in *The Difference* there are also included multimodal traces of several text types.

It should be underlined that *The Difference* is not an exception of a rule at all. Hatim/Mason emphasize the fact that however the text

typology is set up, “any real text will display features of more than one type” (Hatim/Mason, 1990:138). Adopting a similar view, Virtanen (1992:300) also considers that the majority of texts consist of several different text types and she distinguishes between “unitype” and “multitype” texts: “multitype texts may consist of a main or frame type of text, and a number of inserted or embedded types”. These multitype texts may also serve different types of discourses.

Virtanen builds her analysis on Werlich’s classification of text types. He distinguishes five text types: description, narration, exposition, argumentation and instruction (Werlich 1976:39). Werlich’s definition of text types is based upon the criterion of the cognitive operation that is reflected in and represented by a certain text. In order to effect a certain cognitive operation, certain linguistic means and a certain type of sentence are employed.

In *The Difference*, sentences signaling all the text types distinguished by Werlich are present:

- Phenomenon registering sentence specific to description: *Our preservation facility is very much like a lot of the studios have today.*
- Action-recording sentence specific to narrative: *I was shooting on Zeiss high speed primes that were wide open*
- Phenomenon identifying/linking sentence specific to exposition: *Video has 1015 lines of resolution. Bim 16 mil has 2500 lines of resolution. 35mil has 5000 lines of resolution.*
- Quality attributing sentence specific to argumentation: *Film cameras don’t tend to depreciate like video cameras.*
- Action-demanding sentence specific to instruction: *You have to do things fast. You have to engage them.*

I rely on the approach proposed by Werlich in my description of the text types existing in *The Difference*, although he defines text types in strictly linguistic terms and my multimodal package stretches across several semiotic modes. It is possible to do this because the dominant semantic load of the instructive and the argumentative text types directly influence the role of the accompanying images.

The shots from different films and commercials are chosen not only in order to make the viewer employ film instead of video when shooting. Those shots are also carefully chosen in order to show how to film

certain things or how certain shooting problems can be solved. Consequently, shots following argumentative sentences have not only an argumentative function but also an instructive one and vice versa. For example, a director of photography explains: *Now, if you're doing a show where you're moving fast and you're doing 20-30 set-ups a day, which is not unusual in the sort of work we're doing these days, think how much time that's taking – 15 minutes per set-up – to mess around with all that stuff, that's a tremendous amount of time, that will cost you many hours of over time or another day of shooting with a crew of 40-50-60 people. It's not faster, it is unbelievably slower.*

His words are accompanied by images from the set that were shot while the video crew was *messing around with all that stuff*, and the film crew was patiently waiting for them to finish.

The close-up shots of the experts talking in front of the camera have a clear argumentative value as some of those experts are well known figures in film business.

Rather rarely, images following, for example, a phenomenon registering sentence can have a predominant descriptive function. It is the case of the shots with preservation facilities following the sentence: *Our preservation facility is very much like a lot of the studios have today.*

#### **4. Multilevel model of analysis**

My analytical approach in this paper stems from Virtanen's multilevel analytical model according to which the discourse types connected with certain discourse functions affect the whole strategy of a text. Virtanen (1992:302) explains that "the text type of a particular text need not agree with its discourse type".

As far as *The Difference* is concerned, apart from being a multitype text, the text is also characterized by specific discourses. As mentioned before, several recognizable elements of all the 5 text types defined by Werlich are present in *The Difference*. All of them serve the two discourses: the argumentative one and the instructive one. Virtanen (1992:302) considers that "in the instance of various blends of different text types, a common discourse type is recognizable". In *The Difference*, there are two recognizable discourses across modes and media.

Due to the persuasive function of *The Difference* as an advertising material, both in the booklet and in the digital video disc, one of the discourse types that surfaces in the form of different text types is the argumentative one. In connection with the argumentative discourse type, Virtanen (1992:302) also highlights that it “is typically exposed through a range of different text types”.

However, apart from the argumentative discourse type, the instructive discourse type also pervades the existing text types at the level of both media. In *The Difference*, in spite of the fact that the argumentative discourse is coded in the generic frame of the testimonial, the instructive text discourse traits are definitely given more prominence than expected. Certainly, it is expected to have instructive elements in a testimonial, but here, the amount of instructive elements almost overshadows the persuasive purpose that characterizes the argumentative discourse. Although all text types are represented, all the textual fragments are both verbally and visually marked by the instructive purpose. Werlich (1976: 126) refers to this versatility of the instructive element when he affirms that “the instructive intention frequently manifests itself in a combination of useful comment with useful information conveyed through any of the non-instructive text forms”.

The versatility of the instructive and the argumentative elements is fully exploited in *The Difference* as the instructive information and the persuasive argumentation is carried across text types and media by both the visual and the verbal mode. The shots and stills from different films, documentaries or sitcoms not only visually display the achievements of the experts in a persuasive way, but they also complement the detailed instructive discourse carried by the verbal mode. In the same time, the instructive effect those shots and stills that witness highly professional expertise is complemented by the verbal arguments. For example, a narrative sentence like *I was shooting on Zeiss high speed primes that were wide open* uttered by a famous director of photography and accompanied by some film shots have a clearly instructive purpose. The combination of the narrative sentence and the following shots has an instructive character because the process through which a certain effect has been achieved is explained and the result is also displayed for closer examination. Even the names of chapters in the booklet or in the digital video disc indicate this mixture of the instructive and the argumentative elements. For example: in a title like *Freedom or frustration*

–*make sure you have options*, the argumentative strategy of polarization is combined with an instructive imperative. In a title like *Feel it or forget it- why image is really everything*, the argumentative strategy of polarization is realized through the instructive imperative.

This discursive complexity of the multimodal and multimedial package of *The Difference*, influences the overall generic structure of the testimonial and it is the main cause of the package's generic novelty. Halmari/Virtanen (2005:230) claim that it is the intention of wrapping persuasion in implicit forms that cause the appearance of new generic variants:

When one genre is used heavily for persuasive purposes, persuasion becomes explicit and loses some of its power. Hence, the linguistic markers of persuasion need to change in order for persuasion to be more implicit. When the linguistic markers change, the genre itself starts to resemble something else – it is no longer a prototypical example of the established genre.

In this complex text, due to the multimodal and multimedial nature of the specialized knowledge that has to be conveyed, the persuasive purpose combined with the instructive one causes the appearance of new generic configurations across semiotic modes and media.

#### **4.1. Integrative Connections**

The overall semantic and formal coherence of this complex text is created through a continuous multimodal and multimedial integration of the discursive traits at the level of various genres and text types.

The multi-generic character of this package is displayed both across modes and media. For example, excerpts of the testimonial can be both read in the booklet and viewed/heard on the digital video disc.

The instructive and argumentative textual elements are not confined to the affordances of a single semiotic mode or media either. As mentioned before, knowledge is verbally conveyed and visually displayed in such a way as to convey both its instructive and argumentative traits in both the digital video disc and the booklet. The instructive trait of the written text in the booklet is visually coded through different means of page design from choice of font-types and their size to layout. For example, the lines under certain quotes and the hand writing like types of font are borrowed from traditional school copybooks. Verbally, knowl-

edge is conveyed in such a way as to reflect its instructive character through examples and imperatives like: *consider the total cost of production*. The argumentative character is verbally strengthened by the multitude of opinions which is visualized in the booklet through the usage of different font-types for the words of different experts. The display of Kodak's logo, the names of the experts and their professional membership is also a visual sign of the argumentative trait in both media. The argumentative strategy of polarization is both visually and verbally conveyed in almost all the titles of the booklet and of the digital video disc. For example: "*freedom or frustration*", "*for now, forever*".

The multimodal and multimedial integration functions at all the levels of the text. First of all, the two media are visually connected through the repetition of the company's logo and the photo which is displayed both on the cover of the booklet and on the surface of the disc. Furthermore, the names and the professions of the experts and the names of chapters of the digital video disc are visibly in similar ways both in the booklet and the digital video disc. Verbally, the connection between the two media is also represented by repetition through the experts' words as parts of their opinions that can be heard on the digital video disc are also reproduced in the booklet.

Consequently, it can be argued that the relationship between several semiotic modes, media and textual organization is a complex one in texts like *The Difference*.

Kress (2001) has often drawn attention to the demise of old textual organizations due to new media. Furthermore, he underlines the fact that not only the appearance of new media, but also the new usage of existing media influences the new multimodal textual organizations. For example, according to him, the contemporary science textbook is no longer "the guarantor of knowledge". The book functions as "a packaged resource kit" because the relevant element is no longer the book itself, nor its chapters" but "the unit of work" (Kress, 2001:65). Kress (2001:66) also acknowledges the fact that "the newer book is in line with other organizations of semiotic materials".

When analyzing the distinguishing features of contemporary instruction manuals, Kastberg (2002:34) also underlines the fact that "the user of the manual is more than just a reader".

In the case of *The Difference*, it is obvious that the two media, namely the booklet and the digital video disc, are multimodally integrated on the basis of this new concept of “a packaged resource kit”. It is also obvious that the consumer is not just supposed to read the booklet and see the digital video disc, the consumer is supposed to use this multimodal “packaged resource kit” in different ways when needed. The relationship between the two media in this package clearly illustrates the shift from the old way of conveying knowledge through the medium of the book to the new ways of making knowledge available through more than one medium at a time.

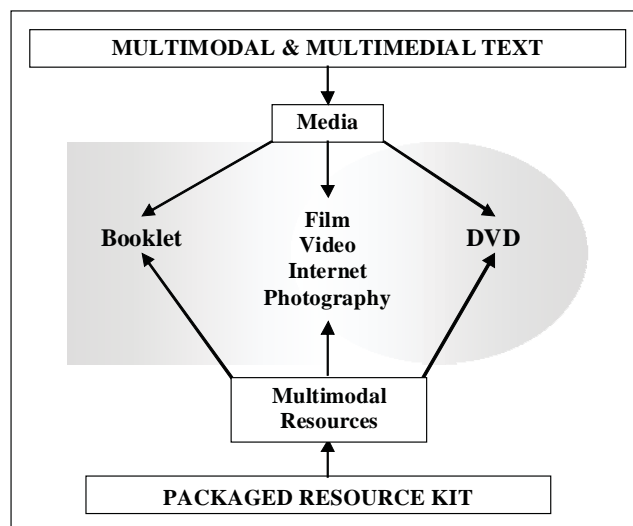


Figure 4. *The Difference* as a packaged resource kit

The new textual organization of *The Difference* also influences the relationships of the two main discourses across the media. As already shown, *The Difference* is characterized by a mixture of instructive and argumentative discourses through which specialized knowledge is conveyed across various modes and media.

The instructive discourse is strengthened in this advertising material by the fact that, although the 19 experts express their personal perspectives, the subjective opinions of individuals gain in this cluster of testimonials the status of objective arguments. This is possible first of all

because there are communicated several similar opinions across several media and modes, and all these opinions belong to highly respected experts with well known achievements. Visually, not only the logo of Kodak, but also the names of the experts' professions and their professional membership reinforce the highly professional status of their opinions. Their subjective opinions also gain the status of objective arguments because, both visually and verbally, it is made clear that these opinions are shared by a larger group of professionals. The fact that their point of view is shared by their film team members is continually signaled both verbally through the plural form of expression, and visually through the excerpts from their various productions.

Consequently, the multimodal way in which the opinions are conveyed, and the generic and media context in which these opinions appear, clearly signal a continuous shift from subjective opinion to objective argument that has to be taken into consideration and followed. This shift influences the character of the whole text.

## 5. Conclusion

Through a multilevel analysis, it has been shown in this paper how the semiotic potentials of several modes and media can be functionally orchestrated in novel generic combinations in order to persuasively convey specialized knowledge through several text types that actualize two main discourse types, namely the instructive and the argumentative ones.

The multilevel approach has made possible to reveal the relationships that can appear between instruction and argumentation in complex texts. Being an advertising material structured as a cluster of testimonials, the predominant discourse type of *The Difference* should have been the argumentative one. However, it has been demonstrated through the multilevel analysis that the instructive discourse is also strongly represented across semiotic modes, media and text types in an effort to conceal the persuasive purpose in an instructive package that can be used both by professionals, and teachers and students.

In order to reach further levels of analytical delicacy, the present multilevel approach could be extended in order to address the affordances of all the semiotic modes, or it could be focused on the integrative connections existing inside a single medium. Obviously, the present multi-



level analysis could be adopted and refined for the exploration of other types of complex texts in order to follow the continuous appearance of new generic configurations. Furthermore, it could be employed in order to detect the future consequences of the employment of multimodal and multimedial integrative connections for the communication of specialized knowledge in various discursive contexts.

As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, it is obvious that more and more often we are confronted with complex texts which are difficult to explore with analytical models that address only a genre, a discourse or a mode.

As Van Leeuwen (2005) has multimodally readdressed the genre of service encounters that has been linguistically explored by Hasan (1979), we have to address and/or readdress new and/or well known genres and modes appearing in novel combinations. It is necessary to do that in order to refine or devise the conceptual frameworks and multilevel analytical models that can describe and interpret the complex changes that currently occur in contemporary texts.

### **Acknowledgements**

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