

Title: Multimodality in corporate codes of ethics: further steps in the research on interconnections between visual and verbal units

Notwithstanding the complexity of the notion of multimodality (e.g. Bednarek & Martin 2010, Kaltenbacher 2004; Jewitt 2009; Kress & van Leeuwen 2006; Kress 2010) - which in the last two decades has raised some issues, and still faces some unanswered questions - it seems unquestionable that the notion implies “the interplay between different representational modes, for instance, between images and written/spoken word” (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001).

The use of more than one semiotic mode in meaning-making, communication, and representation generally, or in a specific situation (Chandler 2011 & Munday) has been sparsely investigated in the field of ESP (e.g. Bateman 2008). Different modes of communication interact within specialised fields and discourses, while discourse communities are (also) defined by their ability to recognise and (re)produce situated language practices, thus implying practitioners to develop genre awareness.

The present contribution aims to underline how multimodal analysis can support, among other things, genre recognition. The study expands multimodal analysis into a genre, i.e. code of ethics, which - to the author’s knowledge - hasn’t been researched from this perspective. Previous stages in the research on codes (Giglioni, 2019) showed visuals are one of the most distinguishing traits for code type’s recognition at a macro-textual level, therefore multimodal analysis seems to particularly suit the study.

The interconnections between visual and verbal units through the application of Martinec and Salway’s model (2005) for image-text relations is under investigation in this study, although the comparative approach of previous research by the same author (Giglioni 2020) is left aside, since Italian typically legalistic codes proved to usually resort less to visuals due to the national legislative scenario.

The corpus under consideration for the present analysis has been extended to thirty codes issued by international companies taken from The Fortune 100 list - a list of the top 100 largest U.S. public and privately held companies published by Fortune - to attempt to identify larger and even more general trends. In fact, despite the fairly wide range of correlations between visual and verbal units previous comparative research detected, a tendency to subordinate images to text in visuals-including codes of ethics was identified. A larger corpus is therefore supposed to validate previous findings and possibly identify industry-related trends.

## References

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