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- a cura di D. Londei, D.R. Miller, P. Puccini, Gli atti completi delle giornate di studio del CeSLiC del 17-18 GIUGNO 2005:
"**Insegnare le lingue/culture oggi: Il contributo dell'interdisciplinarità**", a http://amsacta.cib.unibo.it/archive/00002055,
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e
- a cura di Miller D.R. e Monti E. (2014) *Selected Papers* di quelli presentati al convegno internazionale CeSLiC del 12-14 dicembre, 2012, dal titolo "**Tradurre Figure / Translating Figurative Language"**, a
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Oggi sono lieta di presentare un nuovo *Occasional Paper*, scritto da una giovanissima studiosa, e sollecitata per Gli *Occasional* dopo la sua brillante tesi magistrale, discussa in marzo di questo stesso anno. La Dott.ssa Mariangela Picciuolo è nata a Napoli nel 1984. Dopo aver conseguito la Laurea in Lingue e Letterature Straniere, curriculum "Intermediazione Linguistica per l'Unione Europea" nel 2010 presso l'Università di Bari, nel 2015 consegue la Laurea Magistrale in "Lingue, Società e Comunicazione" presso l'Università di Bologna con una tesi dal titolo "In Search of a European Identity: a Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the 2014 European Parliament Election Campaign". Attualmente, i suoi interessi convergono sull'analisi multimodale del discorso politico, in

particolar modo nell'ambito istituzionale dell'Unione Europea, nonché sui Multimodal Studies e sul fenomeno della multimodalità in genere. Di recente ha pubblicato : Picciuolo, M. (2015) 'Compte rendu de *Paroles d'auteurs jeunesse. Autour du multiculturalisme et des minorités visibles en France* de M. Bacholle-Bokovic', *Francofonia. Studi e ricerche sulle letterature di lingua francese*, 67 (2), 208-210.

L'articolo che ora pubblichiamo si intitola:

European Identity: a Multimodal Perspective

Il lavoro prende in analisi le retoriche di costruzione dell'identità europea nel discorso istituzionale, assumendo come riferimento il primo video diffuso dal Parlamento Europeo durante la campagna di sensibilizzazione ed informazione per le elezioni europee del 2014. Il corpus indagato in questo articolo è, quindi, multimodale poiché caratterizzato dalla compresenza di diverse risorse semiotiche – visivo, sonoro, verbale – all'interno del testo. L'analisi di un corpus audiovisivo ha, pertanto, implicato la scelta di un quadro teorico-metodologico che garantisse un'analisi appropriata di tutte le componenti semiotiche – verbali e non verbali – che co-occorrono nel testo multimodale. Si è così deciso di seguire l'approccio sistemico-funzionale all'analisi multimodale di Baldry e Thibault (2009) e di integrarlo con l'analisi lessico-grammaticale *corpus-based* di Sinclair (1991).

L'adozione di tale approccio metodologico è da ascrivere alla forte dimensione simbolica che caratterizza la comunicazione politica, ed in particolar modo la comunicazione audiovisiva. In effetti, negli spot politici ed elettorali, come in pubblicità, l'attrazione emotiva dell'acquirente-elettore verso il prodotto-messaggio reclamizzato è, in genere, ottenuta attraverso la stimolazione di due sensi, l'udito e la vista (Lindstrom, 2005). Questo, a sua volta, implica che, nella comunicazione audiovisiva, sono le immagini ed i suoni ad indurre specifici effetti sulle opinioni, i sentimenti ed i valori del pubblico. Si è ritenuto, quindi, che l'integrazione della SF-MDA con l'analisi lessico-grammaticale di Sinclair potesse favorire la decostruzione della dimensione simbolica, veicolata in primis dalla componente visiva ed acustica, attraverso l'analisi dell'interazione tra tutte le componenti semiotiche che co-occorrono nel corpus.

Il lavoro intende quindi offrire un contributo sul piano *tematico* al dibattito sull'identità culturale europea, tramite l'analisi delle pratiche discorsive attraverso cui l'UE incoraggia sentimenti di affiliazione identitaria tra i cittadini dell'Unione. Sul piano *metodologico*,

invece, il saggio ha inteso fornire un ulteriore contributo agli studi multimodali attraverso la proposta di un nuovo approccio pratico basato sull'integrazione dell'analisi lessico-grammaticale *corpus-based* di Sinclair (1991) con l'approccio micro-analitico alla MDA di Baldry e Thibault (2006).

Bibliografia citata:

Baldry, A. and Thibault, P. J. (2006) *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis*, London: Equinox.

Lindstrom, M. (2005), "Broad Sensory Branding", *Journal of Product and Brand Management* 14 (2): 84–87.

Sinclair, J. (1991) *Corpus, concordance, collocation: Describing English language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keywords: European identity, EP elections, multimodality, SF-MDA, corpus-based lexico-grammatical analysis.

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Bologna, li 15 ottobre 2015

European Identity: a Multimodal Perspective

1. Introduction

The question of European *cultural* identity has become of increasing interest in recent years for several reasons. One is that "the political union set out by the Maastricht Treaty […] was not met with enthusiasm by the European peoples, especially the pace of which European integration took place" (Bruhagen, 2006: 18). During the last decades, indeed, the European Union has struggled with an increasing 'democratic deficit'. The democratic deficit of the EU has often been described by observers as a limited popular participation in the process of EU decision-making (*ibidem*) which is largely measured through electoral turnout at European Parliament elections. Turnout at EP elections has fallen consecutively at each election since 1979, and has been under 50% since 1999. In the attempt to increase the popularity of the European Union among its citizens, the EU has adopted a wide range of political instruments, what is generally referred to as 'European identity politics'.[1] The European identity politics focuses particularly on some "European integrational factors [such as] culture, symbols and myths" (Bruhagen, 2006: 38). These elements are generally identified as "the cornerstones in identity-building" (*ibidem*) which actually is the articulation of democratic legitimacy. Therefore, issues of European *identity* and *culture* have gradually replaced those of citizenship and political legitimacy in the official and academic debate.

A growing body of scholarly literature on the emergence of a European identity has increasingly focused on two main dimensions of European identity: a *civic* dimension, which refers to "the degree to which [people] feel that they are citizens of a European political system, whose rules, laws, and rights have an influence on their daily life's "perception of being citizens of a European political system" (Bruter, 2003: 1155); and a *cultural* one, where people's sense of identification with Europe relies mainly on "individuals' perceptions that fellow Europeans are closer to them than non-Europeans […] regardless of the nature of the political system" (*ibidem*: 1155-1156). Consequently, as he himself also notes, this component of identity is mostly driven by shared symbols and images of Europe. Accordingly, there are two contrasting models for the ways in which "a sense of identification with Europe and fellow Europeans" (European Commission, 2012: 36) is fostered:

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[1] To cite some among the most significant: university exchange programmes, the introduction of Euro-symbols such as the flag, anthem, the 'Day of Europe', a common design for national passports, and the European City of Culture.

> […] a "culturalist" model in which […] identification with Europe takes place "top down" or in which identity is internalised and comes about through the exposure to influential discourses and symbols [i.e. through] persuasion and indoctrination; and a "structuralist" model in which […] identification with Europe takes place "from the bottom up" [or] in which an orientation to Europe derives fundamentally from association with other Europeans. (*ibidem*)

Until recently, the "culturalist" model was dominant in research on European identity, and findings from several empirical studies (Bruter, 2003; 2008) have shown that consistent exposure to symbols and influential discourse has a decisive influence on increasing the levels of people's sense of belonging to Europe, particularly in terms of cultural identification. In this respect, a growing body of scholarly literature (particularly Steinbeck, 1995; Shore, 2000; Farrell et al., 2002; Pantel, 2005; Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Inglis and Ott, 2005; Psychogiopoulou, 2007; Sassatelli, 2009; McNamara, 2015) has increasingly focused on the official EU rhetoric and practice of identity-building, and there is general agreement in identifying the common rhetoric of *unity in diversity* as the key to European identity. .

The European narrative of *unity in diversity* is an evolving notion, whose significance has changed in the course of time. Today, the *unity in diversity* rhetoric has generally gained positive connotations, no longer representing diversity – intended as the plurality of historical and cultural traditions which make up the EU – as an obstacle to any further development towards the creation of feelings of belonging and identity to the EU, but as a constitutive element of its own nature. Indeed, as Sassatelli (2009) points out, the *unity in diversity* rhetoric

> has come to be the dominant institutional and academic representation of Europe, as a discursive and symbolic solution to the perceived conflict of having to create a new 'layer' of identity without overcoming, but rather building on, material already solidly appropriated by other such layers, the national one first of all. (Sassatelli, 2009: 2)

However, some authors critically observe "how the motto 'unity in diversity' simply reveals a rhetorical escamotage" (Shore, 2000: 24; cited in Sassatelli, 2009: 7), by which EU institutions promote "a Eurocentric, functionalist, elite definition of culture [as well as] oversimplified, consensual models of culture and identity" (Sassatelli, 2009: 7). In this regard, academic and official accounts – which largely rely on the quantitative analysis of data from Eurobarometer surveys and national opinion polls – generally converge on the idea that the EU rhetoric of *unity in diversity* "is becoming less of a smokescreen and more of an asset" in terms of both "explicitness and publicness" to the extent that, for an increasing number of Europeans, "the constructed character of European narratives" (Sassatelli, 2009: 193) appears self-evident. However, as it would seem from the case study presented in this paper, when

analysing the EU rhetoric at a deeper level of meaning, other more complex and controversial issues appear.

In order to understand how EU rhetoric works to create a common feeling of belonging to Europe, EU discourses and practices will be analysed from within, that is to say not only from a socio-political perspective, but also from a discursive one with a view to finding meanings behind symbols and myths. This study is a synchronic intralinguistic multimodal analysis of selected audiovisual advertisements from the 2014 European Parliament (EP) election campaign that employs lexico-grammatical analysis and Systemic Functional-Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) as research tools. It focuses on the 2014 EP audiovisual election campaign for two main reasons. First, EP elections represent a "symbolic matrix" that connects both levels of people's feeling of belonging to Europe – the *civic* and the *cultural* – to the extent that elections measure citizens' attitudes in an electoral context, but they affect people's European identity more deeply as a result of the political communication carried out during the election campaign. Secondly, given that political communication is grounded in the power of language – both verbal and nonverbal – to produce and communicate significant symbols that have a crucial effect on cultural identity, it follows that investigating symbols and values of the 2014 EP audiovisual election campaign can substantially contribute to explaining how European institutions discursively construct European identity in official discourse. More specifically, my research is based on the following assumptions:

(i) in a Faircloughian sense, language is a social practice determined by historically and ideologically grown social structures – i.e. language as discourse (Fairclough, 1989:17);

(ii) structure and practices have a dialectic relationship to the extent that these sets of historically and ideologically determined conventions which make up language have effects upon social interactions, "and so contributes to social continuity and social change" (*ibidem*);

(iii) at a deeper level, languages and using language – i.e. speech acts – shape social or cultural identities – what Butler refers to as language *performativity* (Butler, 1997);

(iv) language and identity have a dialectic relationship, to the extent that language "manifest 'who we are', and we define reality partly through our language and linguistic behaviour" (Wodak, 2011: 216).

Furthermore, the research model of this study is inspired by Baldry and Thibault's Systemic Functional-Multimodal Discourse Analysis (2009) and Sinclair's lexico-grammatical approach (1991); these are employed to show the extent of the EU's orientation towards the emergence of a European identity and to illustrate the discursive manifestations underlining this orientation. This article illustrates the first case study taken from an original research paper,[2] that is to say the first audiovisual commercial developed by the EP for the 2014 electoral campaign.

2. The corpus and main analytical methodology

Since 2004, the EP Secretary-General has on each occasion mandated the services of the European Parliament to develop a mass information and awareness campaign for forthcoming European elections. As with the previous elections, also for the 2014 European elections the Bureau developed an institutional communications campaign, whose slogan was *This time it's different*.

One way in which the 2014 campaign was certainly different from previous campaigns is that for the 2014 EP elections campaign the European Parliament made use of a wide range of flexible communication tools including social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. According to the research conducted in 2014 by the European Parliamentary Research Services on "Social media in election campaigning", the use of social media in political campaigns across Europe has significantly increased in recent years. While the ultimate effect of this usage remains unclear, many observers stress the key role of social media in increasing levels of citizens political engagement – particularly among young people, who are the most detached from politics and voting – to the extent that individuals' connectivity facilitates the reception of (political) messages at any location, at any time, also encouraging citizens to communicate directly with candidates. This is all achieved "for a fraction of the cost of conventional communication and at much greater speed" (European Parliamentary Research Services, 2014: 5). Among the wide range of social media channels employed during the electoral period, we have focused on the EP YouTube channel as a focal

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[2] Picciuolo, M. (2015*) In Search of a European Identity: a Multimodal Discourse Analysis of the 2014 European Parliament Election Campaign*. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Bologna, Italy. The original paper examines how European institutions construct European identity in official discourse through the analysis of a sample of institutional data – eight out of thirty-nine audiovisual commercials developed by the EP for the 2014 EP electoral campaign.

source of data giving access to the full set of promotional videos conceived and diffused for the 2014 EP electoral campaign.

The 2014 EP audiovisual advertising campaign as stored on the EP official YouTube channel consists of 6 main collections of videos or playlists: (i) *Act. React. Impact.* (ii) *What we do*; (iii) *Towards the elections*; (iv) *Election night*; (v) *After elections*; (vi) *Share your opinion*. The original research paper focused on 8 videos, which have been selected on the basis of a set of common internal and external criteria. To be more precise, as Sinclair (1994) points out:

> [m]any corpus linguists distinguish between two categories of criteria for the classification of texts in corpora. These categories are 1) external criteria which concern the participants, the communicative function, the occasion and the social setting and 2) internal criteria which concern the recurrence of language patterns within the piece of language. (Sinclair 1994, cited in Pearson, 1998: 52)

In this research, external criteria refer to the predominant conative-exhortative function of texts under investigation, whereas internal criteria concern the recurrence of on/off-screen verbatim transcriptions of the verbal component.

As stated above, this study illustrates the first audiovisual commercial broadcast by the EP for the 2014 EP audiovisual electoral campaign. Major findings and some theoretical reflections will then be drawn together in the conclusion.

The main technique used for analysing our audiovisual corpus is Multimodal Discourse Analysis (henceforth MDA) "which extends the study of language per se to the study of language in combination with other resources" (O'Halloran, 2011: 121), such as text, image, music, gesture and space. More particularly this analysis adopts Baldry and Thibault (2009) Systemic Functional approach to MDA (SF-MDA) which combines multimodal text analysis and multimodal transcription. There are two main reasons for choosing this methodology. First, in dealing with TV advertisements, Baldry and Thibault are among the few that have approached dynamic texts from a multimodal perspective. As such, they offer an analytical methodological framework based on the use of matrices in which each column corresponds to the selected communicative modes – i.e. visual frame p/s, visual image, kinesic action and soundtrack – whereas the elements that occur simultaneously are displayed horizontally. They then proceed with the transcription of the selected modes through the use of glossa, providing, for each visual frame, a metafunctional interpretation of phases and subphases. In Halliday's terms, metafunctions relate to "certain basic functions of language"

(Halliday, 1970: 142) that allow language users to accomplish their social ends. These "certain basic functions of language" correspond to three aspects of linguistic meaning: the *experiential* (or ideational) meaning refers to the semiotic choices made in order to represent people/places/things in the world; the *interpersonal* (or orientational) meaning refers to the semiotic resources employed in discourse aiming to create relationship between participants; the *textual* (or organizational) meaning refers to the way in which these meanings are organised in a text. However, as Baldry and Thibault suggest, metafunctional analysis can be applied to modes other than verbal language. For example, gaze can function as a deictic (e.g. a character looking straight at the viewer), used interpersonally to engage the interlocutor. But gaze can also express "textual meaning, serving, in particular, to create phoric (indexical) links to relevant objects in the perceptual purview of interlocutors, either alone or in conjunction with other resources" (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 167).

Furthermore, in Baldry and Thibault's methodology – which combines Halliday's systemic functional linguistics with Hjelmslev's theory of the sign-relation (Hjelmslev, 1953) and Gregory's phasal analysis of literary texts (Gregory, 2002, cited in Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 184) – each multimodal text is treated as a "stratified system" (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 236) in which small-scale units and larger-scale units are related to each other "in the given hierarchy of semiotic relations" (*ibidem*: 144), and all participate in the meaning and the function of the text. Their phasal analysis focuses, on six "scalar levels" – visual transitivity frame, shot, subphase, phase, macrophases and whole text – which function on different "meaning levels" (*ibidem*). As a result, Baldry and Thibault focus on all aspects multimodal data – temporal progression, visual image, kinesic action, verbal components and soundtrack – as facets of a single phenomenon.

However, one of the key objections made to Baldry and Thibault's analysis centres on the greater emphasis they place on the visual dimension rather than on the simultaneous enactment of "multiple resources (e.g. language, image, audio resources, embodied action and 3 dimensional objects) which combine to create meaning" (O'Halloran et al., 2014: 271) in multimodal phenomena. As Jewitt has pointed out, this is partly justified by their attempt to tackle the unfortunate trend in discourse analysis of treating the verbal component as more significant than the other modes (Jewitt, 2009: 35). Nevertheless, Baldry and Thibault's visual focus analysis "necessarily has limitations with regards to capturing […] the inter-semiotic (or 'inter-modal') relations which give rise to semantic expansions in multimodal phenomena" (O'Halloran et al., 2014: 272).

Consequently, we intend to provide a further integration to their micro-analytical model by referring, for the analysis of verbal texts, to Sinclair's (1991) lexicogrammatical approach. In a very similar way to Baldry and Thibault's phasal analysis, according to Sinclair, meaning-making in a text is mostly phrasal, to the extent that "the lexical items that recur within and across different texts cumulatively impact text and intertextual meaning" (Flowerdew and Mahlberg, 2009: 66). Therefore, assuming that language has always a communicative purpose, by analysing its internal organization we intend to "observe the ways in which the meaning potential of lexis is actually activated in discourse in attempts to do things to hearers/readers" (Partington at al., 2013: 5). As a result, "four types of co-occurrence relations in extended lexico-semantic units" (Stubbs, 2001: 64) are investigated: collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody. Before proceeding, however, it is important to stress that when dealing with very short texts, statistically significant co-occurrences of node-words are hard to obtain. More specific attention must be dedicated, therefore, to the lexical, syntactical and semantic relationship between words within each text.

To sum up, the methodological path of this study is as follows. As a general framework, we refer to Fairclough's three-stage model of CDA (Fairclough, 1989), comprising *description* – focusing on the formal properties of the text – *interpretation* – looking at the relationship between the text and the other semiotic resources co-occurring within the same text – and *explanation* – focusing on how identities are constructed in discourse. More particularly, the descriptive stage involves two steps: first, each video will be transcribed making use of the technique adopted by Baldry and Thibault (2006) in their SF-MDA; secondly, the verbal component will be investigated separately from a lexical-grammatical perspective. In the interpretative stage, previous results will be combined from a macro-analytical and multifunctional perspective. Finally – the explanation stage – our main findings and theoretical reflections will be drawn together in the conclusion.

3. *Act. React. Impact.*

3.1 Multimodal transcription

This section includes key findings from the multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial, as shown in the following table.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact*. commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
1 (5,57)		CP: handheld HP: oblique VP: median D: MCS VC: interior of a delivery room, midwives, a newborn child, and his mother VS: newborn child CO: naturalistic VF: near; midwives' supervisory gaze directed to newborn; mother's directed to son; son's directed to his mother	In a delivery room, midwives bring the newborn to his mother.	{RG} [the cry of an infant. V: f]; SI [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p]; SI *begin* V: p; SI Tempo: M	**PHASE 1** EXP: Actors; actions. A mother gives birth to her son. INT: The viewer is positioned as belonging to the depicted world and its shared values. The instrumental music creates an introspective mood, and contrasts the assertiveness of the voice over. TEX: hyperthematic function. The gaze is *phoric* (indexical), and links to other relevant aspects of the physical/abstract perceptual purview of the audience.
2 (3,30)		CP: handheld HP: frontal/oblique VP: median D: MCS VC: a wall dismantled, people, the German flag VS: the wall CO: naturalistic VF: median; people's gaze directed to the wall and to those dismantling it	People dismantle the Berlin wall.	{RG} [people voices. V: p] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *end.* V: p Tempo: M	People dismantle the Berlin wall.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
3 (3,33)		CP: panning HP: oblique/frontal VP: median/low D: MLS/ MCS VC: a gym, young girls gymnasts, a little girl gymnast VS: a little girl gymnast CO: naturalistic VF: median; a little girl gymnast looking forward CR: red	Young girl gymnasts train in a gym in the background, while a little gymnast performs an exercise closer to the camera.	{RG} [hand and foot noise. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *win.* V: p Tempo: M	A young gymnast performs an exercise.
4 (3,77)		CP: stationary HP: oblique/slightly oblique VP: median D: MLS/MCS VC: a man and a young boy, indices of poor living conditions (an open luggage full of things, a car parked at a peripheral lot), a toothbrush, a tie VS: a distinguished man and his young son living in poor conditions CO: naturalistic VF: median; father's gaze directed to son; son gazing into emptiness	A distinguished middle-aged man wakes up his young son. He takes his son out of their car, parked in a periphery of the shot, and then helps him brush his teeth.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *loose.* V: p Tempo: M	A father cares for his young child in spite of the adverse life conditions they face.
5 (3,10)		CP: dolly HP: oblique/frontal VP: median D: VCS/MLS VC: a horse, two old people, a horse-drawn farm wagon, the open countryside VS: two old people ride in a horse-drawn farm wagon in the open countryside CO: naturalistic VF: median; old men looking at the horse	Two old people ride a fast, horse-drawn farm wagon in the open countryside.	{RG} [horse cantering. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *hold on.* V: p Tempo: S	Two old people ride a horse-drawn farm wagon in the open countryside.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
6 (*2*)		CP: dolly HP: slightly oblique VP: median D: MCS VC: a four-wheeled vehicle drives swiftly on an empty road VS: a futuristic four-wheeled vehicle CO: slightly surreal VF: median	A four-wheeled futuristic vehicle drives swiftly on an empty road.	{RG} [wheels on the road. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *move on.* V: p Tempo: M	A four-wheeled futuristic vehicle drives swiftly on an empty road.
7 (*1,76*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: high D: MLS VC: a number of men wearing suits and identification tags, an electronic box with green printing, the Stock Exchange VS: hands and arms movements, screaming voices CO: naturalistic VF: far; people looking at each other	A number of men wearing suits and identification tags have business dealings at the Stock Exchange. They speak loudly and move their hands and arms with frenzy.	{RG} [screaming voices in the background. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *think global.* V: p Tempo: M	The speculators work at the stock market.
8 (*2*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: indices of local traditions (an open-air market, people selling fruit and vegetables, an old woman, simple clothes, a hen) VS: an old woman, simple clothes, a hen CO: naturalistic VF: median; viewer	People work at an open-air market, selling fruit and vegetables in the background, while an old woman in simple clothes holds a hen and says something.	{RG} [voices in the background. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *think local.* V: p Tempo: S	An old woman works at the open-air local market.

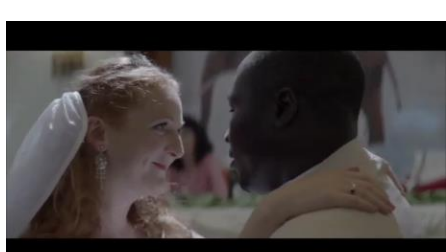*Table 3.1* Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
9 (*3,77*)		CP: handheld/stationary HP: oblique VP: median D: VCS to MLS VC: indices of desperations (black refugees, a boat sailing the open sea at twilight) VS: a boat in the open sea CO: naturalistic VF: far; black men look at the horizon	A number of black people are sailing the open sea at twilight. Some of them dive into the sea still wearing their clothes.	{RG} [seagull singing; wind and water noise in the background. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *dream.* V: p Tempo: S	Migrants seek a way of salvation and throw themselves overboard.
10 (*2,20*)		CP: handheld/ stationary HP: back VP: median D: CS VC: a young man, a cap and a backpack, mountains in the background VS: a blue sky, distant mountains, a cap CO: naturalistic VF: far; background	A young man with a cap and a pink backpack looks towards the distant mountains and the blue sky.	{RG} [birds singing. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *dream.* V: p Tempo: M	A young man observes the breathtaking view.
11 (*3,10*)		CP: handheld/stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MLS/CS VC: a wedding hall, guests sitting at the tables, a white bride and a black bridegroom dancing CO: naturalistic VS: a white bride and a black bridegroom VF: median/near; guest's gaze directed to the couple; the couple getting married look at each other	In a wedding hall, guests are sitting at the tables looking at the couple getting married. They dance and look at each other. She is red-haired and white, while he is black.	{RG} [applauses in the background. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano. V: p] *agree.* V: p Tempo: M	A couple gets married in spite of their ethnic differences.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
12 (*4*)		CP: handheld HP: oblique VP: median D: VCS/MCS VC: a street, armed police, demonstrators, fire CO: naturalistic VS: the fight between demonstrators and the police VF: near; policeman's gaze directed to the demonstrators; the demonstrators look at the policeman	At night, the armed police and robust demonstrators confront each other in the street.	{RG} [a burst and voices in the background. V: pp] [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *disagree.* V: p Tempo: S	The police and the demonstrators fight in the street.
13 (*2,43*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MLS VC: a tanker, the quiet and open sea, the dawn CO: naturalistic VS: the tanker VF: median	A tanker sails the quiet and open sea at dawn.	{RG} [harbor siren. V: p] [keyboard. V: p] *think big.* V: p Tempo: M	A great tanker sails.
14 (*2,44*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a port's quay full of equipment, the city in the background, a sunny day, a young and an old man, a big, freshly caught fish CO: naturalistic VS: the two men and the big fish VF: median; viewer	In a sunny day, a young man and an older one are at the port's quay bringing a big, freshly caught fish in together.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *think small.* V: p Tempo: M	Two man proudly display the fish caught at the local fishing harbor.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
15 (4,93)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MLS VC: seagulls, a landfill site, a crane, a middle-aged man in suit, a sunny day CO: naturalistic VS: the waste mountain and the flock of seagulls VF: median; the middle-aged man looking around him	A sunny day. Seagulls sing and fly around a landfill site while a middle-aged man in suit looks around. In the background, a crane moves on the site.	{RG} [seagulls singing. V: p] [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *change*. V: p Tempo: M	A man walks in the middle of a landfill site full of waste.
16 (2,20)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MLS VC: a flock of sheep, a young men with a shepherd baton, earphones, a road that runs along a plain, a little house, a grey sky CO: naturalistic VS: a young men guiding a flock of sheep VF: median; the shepherd's gaze directed to the flock of sheep	A young man, dressed like many young people today, guides a flock of sheep on an empty road which runs along a plain.	{RG} [sheep bleating. V: p] [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *never change*. V: p Tempo: M	A contemporary young man guides a flock of sheep.
17 (3,34)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: the bright sunlight, a couple of young lovers covered in mud, green trees CO: naturalistic VS: a couple of young lovers covered in mud VF: median; lovers' eyes are closed while kissing	The sun is high. A couple of young lovers covered in mud kiss, keeping their eyes closed. Green trees are in the background.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *love*. V: p Tempo: M	Two young lovers kiss outdoor.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
18 *(3,56)*		CP: panning HP: slightly oblique/oblique VP: median D: MCS/MLS VC: a young boy, a rifle, rubble. CO: naturalistic VS: the armed and screaming young boy VF: median; boy's gaze directed forward	At dawn, a bare-chested young boy with a rifle screams and shoots, walking forward in an indefinitely closed space, full of rubble.	{RG} [the young boy screaming. V: f] [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *hate*. V: p Tempo: M	An angry bare-chested young boy shoots in an indefinitely closed space full of rubble.
19 *(1,54)*		CP: handheld/ stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: an old man in a suit, a stick, a military cap, military decorations and medals on the chest, a kitchen CO: naturalistic VS: the old man VF: median; viewer	An old man in a suit, sits down at the table in his kitchen holding a stick. He wears a military cap and a number of military decorations on his chest. He looks towards the viewer.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *forgive*. V: p Tempo: M	An old man wearing military decorations sits down quietly in his kitchen.
20 *(1,73)*		CP: handheld/ stationary HP: back VP: low D: MLS VC: armed troops, a trench CO: naturalistic VS: the troop VF: median	Armed troops straddle the trench. The camera lies behind them.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *never forget*. V: p Tempo: M	Soldiers of World War II straddle the trench.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
21 (*3*)		CP: handheld/ stationary HP: oblique/back VP: low D: CS/MCS VC: Two old men, an old factory, green trees, a blue sky. CO: naturalistic VS: two men look at the old factory VF: median; men's gaze directed to the old factory	On a sunny day, two old men in the street look towards an old factory. The camera lies behind them.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *look back*. V: p Tempo: M	Two old men look back at their old local factory, now dismantled.
22 (3)	*Transition frame* 	CP: handheld/ stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a hospital corridor, a woman, an infant, patient gowns CO: naturalistic VS: a mother and her newborn child VF: median; mother's gaze directed to her child first; then she looks at the viewer	A woman wears a patient gown and stands in the hospital corridor keeping her newborn child in her arms. She looks at him first; then she turns her gaze towards the camera.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. **Change in rhythm**. V: p] *look ahead*. V: p Tempo: M	**PHASE 2** A mother holds her baby, looking ahead to the camera. EXP: actors' gaze. The attention seems to be focused on viewers' agency. INT: exhortative function of gaze. The viewer is directly mobilised. Assertive mood of voiceover. Dynamic and powerful mood of drums. TEX: Gaze as *deictic* engaging the interlocutor. The gaze is a covariate and cohesive tie across shots.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)
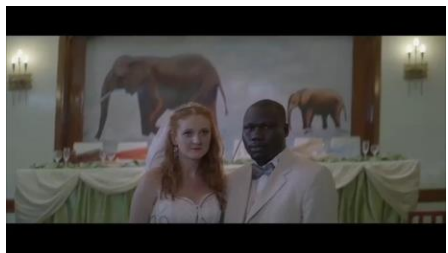
T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
23 (*1*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: an empty wedding hall, a couple getting married CO: naturalistic VS: a couple getting married (she is white while her husband is black) VF: median; viewer	In an empty wedding hall, a couple getting married looks straight into the camera. He is black and she is white.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *we all faces*. V: f Tempo: M	The newly married couple stands in an empty hall and looks straight into the camera.
24 (*2*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: police, demonstrators, fire, batons, a barefaced young men, a bandana CO: naturalistic VS: a barefaced young man, with a bandana lets down his chin, looks ahead VF: median; viewer	In a street, police and demonstrators fight in the background. In the forefront, a young, tattooed man lowers his bandana to show his face, and looks straight into the camera.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] * *many choices*. V: f Tempo: M	A barefaced demonstrator looks straight at the camera, while the police and other demonstrators still fight.
25 (*2*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a car parked in a street, a father in suit and his young son CO: naturalistic VS: a father and his son sit in their car luggage VF: median; viewer	A father and his son sit in their car with luggage, and look straight at the camera.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *and many issues*. V: f Tempo: M	A father and his young boy sit in their car/*home* and look straight at the camera.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
26 (*1*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a girl covered in mud, a waterway and green trees in the background CO: naturalistic VS: a girl covered in mud VF: median; viewer	A girl covered in mud looks at the camera. A waterway and green trees are in the background.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *we all have our own views*. V: f Tempo: M	A young girl covered in mud looks straight at the viewer.
27 (*1,77*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a young man casually dressed with earphones and a shepherd baton in his hands, a plain, a flock of sheep CO: naturalistic VS: a young man and a flock of sheep VF: median; viewer	A young man with earphones, casually dressed, stands in front of the camera and looks at the viewer, with a flock of sheep running behind him on the plains.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *but* (#) *in Europe* (#). V: f Tempo: M	A young man looks straight at the camera, keeping his earphones and a shepherd baton, while a flock of sheep grazes behind him. His gaze is directed to the viewer.
28 (*2,77*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: indices of a career woman (a well-dressed woman wearing glasses, skyscrapers in the background) CO: naturalistic VS: a well-dressed woman VF: median; viewer	A career woman stands in front of the camera, looking at the viewer. Skyscrapers are in the background.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *every opinion gets a fair chance. V*: f Tempo: M	A well-dressed woman looks straight at the camera. Skyscrapers in the background.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
29 (2)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: an old man, old buildings CO: naturalistic VS: an old man looking disappointed (the corners of his mouth are directed downwards) VF: median; viewer	An old man stands in front of the camera. He looks disappointed as the corners of his mouth are directed downwards. There is an old building behind him, but the image is unfocused.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *The decisions of the European Parliament* V: f Tempo: M	An old man looks straight at the camera. He stands before the old local factory.
30 (2)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MLS VC: indices of a large family (youths from different ages stand one beside the other; there is only one older woman), a beautiful red house, a sunny day CO: naturalistic VS: a large family VF: median; viewer	On a sunny day, a group of youths of different ages stand before their beautiful red home.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *are driven by everything that.* V: f Tempo: M	A large young family stands before their home. They hug one another and look straight into the camera.
31 (1)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a young man with beard, wearing a cap and a backpack, mountains, a sunny day CO: naturalistic VS: a young man, mountains VF: median; viewer	On a sunny day, a young man with beard, wearing a shirt, a cap and a backpack, stands before a plateau and looks straight into the camera.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. V: p] *matters to you* (*). V: f Tempo: M	A young man on the summit of a plain looks straight at the camera.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact*. commercial (T= time in seconds)

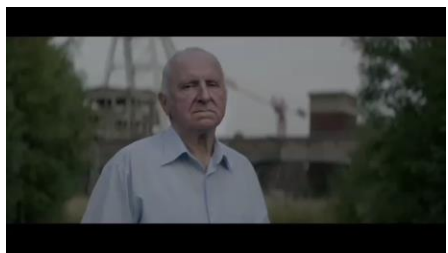| T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
32 (*3,73*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a little girl gymnast, a gym CO: naturalistic VS: a young girl gymnast VF: median; viewer	A little girl gymnast stands in front of the camera looking straight at the viewer. There is an empty gym in the background.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano and drums. Music fades out. V: p] *You* (*) *have the power to decide.* V: f Tempo: M	A little girl is in her gym looking straight at the viewer.
33 (*6,64*)	*Transition frame* 	CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: the word at night, the logo of the 2014 EP elections including a European flag and "European Parliament" written out in full , the electoral slogan CO: sensory VS: the European side of the world, the logo VF: median	The world is shown at night. The European side of the world appears in the foreground. The electoral logo and slogan appear gradually as the speaker pronounces it in words.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano solo. V: p] *European Parliament. Act. React. Impact.*V: f Tempo: M	**PHASE 3a** The world is shown at night. The European continent appears in the foreground. The 2014 EP elections logo gradually fades in, accompanied by the voice of the narrator. EXP: EP electoral logo. INT: the use of imperatives prompts viewers' agency. Moreover, the image of the European side of the world serves as a deictic, enhancing visual and affective proximity with the respondent. TEX: the music fading out and the assertiveness of the voice over signal the end of the commercial.

Table 3.1 Multimodal transcription of the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial (T= time in seconds)

T	VISUAL FRAME	VISUAL IMAGE	KINESIC ACTION	SOUNDTRACK	METAFUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION PHASES AND SUBPHASES
34 (*3,97*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MLS VC: the European Parliament in the background, MEPs voting with arms lifted, a slogan, web references CO: informative VS: references to the website and EP 2014 elections key topic on Twitter VF: median	A low detailed image in the background portrays MEPs while voting, with their harms lifted. A slogan then appears, followed by two references to the EP official website, and the EP topic on Twitter.	{RG} [synthesizer keyboard piano solo. V: pp] Tempo: S	**PHASE 3b** The MEPs vote at the EP in the background. A slogan gradually appears, together with references to the EP official websites and EP elections key topic on Twitter. EXP: MEPs, further slogan, web references. INT: deictic "you" in written text mobilizes the interlocutor. TEX: condensation of the main message of the video. The image functions as a verb, thereby suggesting agency.
35 (*10,44*)		CP: stationary HP: frontal VP: median D: MCS VC: a black background, a slogan, references to the EP official website and EP 2014 elections key topic on Twitter CO: informative VS: references to the EP official website and Twitter hashtag VF: median CR: black and white	The previous image in the background fades out and is replaced by a black background. It has a high contrast with the white fonts used to write the final slogan and references to the EP official website and Twitter key topic.	{RG} [silence] *WT: *The European Parliament and you: www.EUROPARL.EU #EP2014* Tempo: S	**PHASE 3c** The background of the previous frame gradually fades-out. It remains only a black background which contrasts with the white fonts of the writing. EXP: black background, white fonts. INT: as above. TEX: condensation of the main message of the commercial.

3.2 Lexico-grammatical analysis

Through a close reading of the *Act. React. Impact*. text, we can distinguish 2 main parts composed of 5 sentences, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 3.2 Verbal component in the *Act. React. Impact* commercial

Part 1	Sentence 1	Clause 1	Begin. End. // Win. Lose. // Hold on. Move on. // Think global. Think local. // Dream. Wake up. // Agree. Disagree. //Think big. Think small. // Change. Never change. // Love. Hate. // Forgive. Never forget. // Look back. Look ahead.
	Sentence 2	Clause 2	We all face many choices and many issues.
		Clause 3	We all have our own views // **but**, in Europe, every opinion gets a fair chance.
	Sentence 3	Clause 4	The decisions of the European Parliament are driven by everything that matters to you.
		Clause 5	You have the power to decide.
Part 2	Sentence 4	Clause 6	European Parliament.
		Clause 7	Act. React. Impact.
	Sentence 5	Clause 8	[The European Parliament and You: www.europarl.eu #ep2014]

Sentence 1 consists of 11 antonymic pairs of imperatives which belong to two main groups: there are stative verbs – particularly mind verbs, expressing mental states ("think", "agree", "disagree", "forgive") and feelings ("love", "hate") – and action verbs ("begin", "end", "win", "lose", "hold on", "move on", "look", "wake up"). *Sentence 2* is composed of two clauses – an independent clause (*Clause 1*), and a complex one (*Clause 2*) – both starting with the inclusive phrasing "we all". Similarly, in *Sentence 3* there are 2 clauses – a complex one and an independent clause – both characterised by the use of the pronoun "you". In *Sentence 4* there are 2 phrases in which the "European Parliament" first appears together with the slogan for the electoral campaign. Finally, *Sentence 5* consists of non-spoken text.

This sub-categorization shows that the whole text is structured as a funnel, whereby each sentence proceeds with the focalization of the subject – from subject-less imperatives to

the pronouns "we" and "you". Moreover, the *Act. React. Impact.* text has a parallel structure, consisting of two main parts: in *Part 1*, *Sentence 1* and *2* provide a series of lexical, syntactical and semantic antonymic oppositions; these oppositions are then resolved in *Part 2*, particularly in *Clause 3* – through the adversative clause – as well as through the co-occurrence of "European Parliament" and the audience "you", from *Sentence 3* to the end of the text.

This parallel structure became visible through the collocational choices and their accompanying semantic prosodies. More precisely, as noted above, antonymic oppositions in *Part 1* are expressed by the use of imperatives co-occurring in antonymic pairs in *Clause 1* as well as by the co-occurrence of lexical patterns ("choices" and "issues", and "own [views]" and "every [opinion]") in *Clause 2* and *3* which deliver an opposite emotional connotation, although they share the same semantic field. In this respect, there are three key aspects to be considered. First, advertising often makes use of imperatives to prompt an agentive reading since "imperatives have an urgent tonality" and their main function "is to express a call or a prohibition for an action" (Janoschka, 2004: 136). It is no coincidence, in fact, that the same title of the electoral campaign baseline consists of three verbs in the imperative – "Act. React. Impact.".

Secondly, as Janoschka points out (*ibidem*), in web advertising imperatives usually express actions rather than states of mind. In this text, on the contrary, both verbs and nouns mainly refer to thoughts, beliefs and ideas ("matters", "decide", "face", "driven", "choices", "issues", "views", "opinions",). This choice seems to provide recognition of the influence affective and cognitive attitudes towards Europe have on Europeans' behaviour in the EP elections. Moreover, given that EP electoral advertisements have been shown and translated in all EU countries,– although official subtitles are in English – the use of antonyms seems to be an effective discursive strategy, to the extent that "the distinction between contrasting and non-contrasting semantic relations is the most general distinction made by language users" (Murphy, 2003: 175-6, cited in Davies, 2013: 20). In other words, as Davies suggests, "[t]he archetypicality of opposites seems to be found in all languages and hence, as a lexical relation, seems to be universal, although the specific nature of these relations varies across cultures" (Davies, 2013: 20).

Contrasting conditions and states of mind expressed in *Part 1* through lexical and verbal oppositions are resolved in *Part 2*. To express this in greater detail, the subordinate

clause in *Sentence 3* marks a transition point: the adversative conjunction "but" followed by the locative prepositional phrase "in Europe" suggests that within the amalgam of diverse attitudes described in *Part 1* – through the rapid succession of antonymic subject-less verbs, then ascribed to a collective entity referred to through the plural pronoun 'we' – individuality ("every opinion") finds its place in Europe. Moreover, the passive construction in *Clause 4* – "are driven by" – suggests a subordination of the decision-making process of the EU to the audience "you". The object pronoun "you" in *Clause 4* becomes the subject in *Clause 5* and it co-occurs with semantically dense lexical items like "power" and "decide" that further enhance the agency of the audience. Finally, in *Sentence 4* "European Parliament" is followed by three imperatives which make up the slogan of the campaign, whereas in *Sentence 5* it is connected to the audience "you" through the conjunction "and" to suggest the idea of an equal cooperation between European institutions and European citizens.

In the next section we investigate how the verbal component combines with other simultaneously co-occurring semiotic patterns in the text to create multimodal meaningful relationships.

3.3 Multifunctional interpretation

In this section we integrate micro-analytical findings from the lexico-grammatical analysis of the verbal component in the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial into a comprehensive multifunctional interpretation of the same text. As stated previously, our attention focuses only on various semiotic features, according to their relevance to the main purposes of this study.

As shown in Table 3.1, the *Act. React. Impact.* text consists of 3 main phases: *Phase 1* consists of 22 frames, each one depicting a different scenario, although shots are lexically and thematically interrelated, as is shown below; frame 22 marks the first transition point to *Phase 2*, in which almost all actors in *Phase 1* stand in the foreground looking straight at the camera; frame 32 gradually fades out and gives way to *Phase 3* which consists of 3 subphases reporting the slogans of the campaign in different ways, as will be described later.

From a general perspective, the *Act. React. Impact.* text is dominated by a *naturalistic* coding orientation: camera position is generally handheld, providing a high sense of realism, while medium close shots (MCS), generally frontal horizontal perspective (HP) and median vertical perspective (VP), encourages involvement and empathy among viewers, bringing the

audience close to the action and putting them on an equal footing with the actors. Moreover, this case study provides a naturalistic auditory modality, making available to the viewer the real sound of things (a cry, seagulls singing, a harbour siren, voices, water noise, etc.). Natural elements are represented in their real colours, suggesting that the text intends to reflect the real world in which the elections will take place. This naturalistic orientation is further confirmed by looking at the main themes developed. *Act. React. Impact.* revolves around three main topics – living conditions, the economy and the environment: they are visually represented through shots depicting *private* situations – except for frames 2, 7 and 20 concerning archive images from the fall of the Berlin wall, the Stock Exchange and WWII – that strengthen the viewer's empathy with the depicted scenes. As Biocca suggests (Biocca, 2014), viewers' identification with the depicted world of the advertisement "results in the activation of semantic links (feature set) through a process known as *semantic priming* […] a kind of excitatory impulse fanning out from concept and variously activating links to whole networks of related concepts" (Biocca, 2014: 67). Characters in the *Act. React. Impact.* case study represent a broad sample of the EU population since they differ in race, sex, age group, and living conditions. In addition, *naturalistic* signs of clothing, gestures, background, sounds and so on, further strengthen in the viewers' mind a feeling of familiarity with the depicted world of the commercial. This intimate climate is further enhanced by the soundtrack employed. In *Phase 1* the soundtrack consists of three main components: the voice-over of the male speaker, the instrumental synthesised music playing in the background, and the real sounds of things, as noted above. With regard to the voice-over, the male narrator speaks softly and slowly, providing a somewhat mystical mood in *Phase 1*. Moreover, the fast rhythm of syllable succession makes his voice assertive without being aggressive, but leads the viewer's perception of the images depicted according to the emotions conveyed by his mystical voice – i.e. slow paced, assertive, and monologic. His voice overlaps with the synthesised solo piano playing in *Phase 1* and with naturalistic sounds heard in the background. Though auditory isochronism prevails in this case study – i.e. speech, music and sound co-occur simultaneously – the voice-over is more prominent and instrumental music together with naturalistic sounds merely play a supporting role, thus reinforcing textual cohesion. As a result, *Phase 1* serves interpersonally to make the viewer feel like a member of the depicted world of shared values.

Moreover, in *Phase 1* this world is textually mediated through the co-occurrence of oppositional pairs of antonymic concepts, expressed both visually and verbally. In greater

detail, *Phase 1* consists of 22 frames which co-occur in pairs – at an equal pace with the voice-over – to represent contrasting attitudes towards Europe. According to Biocca (2014: 68-9), oppositional linkage is fairly common in discourse, particularly in political discourse, so much so that "an opposition is rhetorically framed *as if* one concept logically necessitated the negation of the other (e.g. communism vs. democracy)".

To some extent, this observation confirms findings from our earlier lexico-grammatical analysis, for two main reasons. First, as noted in section 3.2, the co-occurrence of oppositional links in *Part 1* as well as in *Phase 1* is rhetorically framed in order to represent the full range of contrasting attitudes towards the EU. This promotes viewers' identification with them, to the extent that a wide range of issues concerning the EU are represented. However, more archetypical and abstract oppositional linkages – such as "begin", "end" – are combined with more effectively connoted and contemporary ones – such as "think global", "think local" – in order to strengthen the perception of incompatibility between different attitudes in Europe. This "lost in diversity" is dissolved within the EU, as emphasised in *Part 2* as well as in *Phase 1* by the prominence given by the voice-over to the accented rhythmic units "in Europe" as well as by the co-occurrence of "Europe" with positively connoted words such as "fair" and "chance".

Frame 22 marks a transition point: nearly all the actors appearing in *Phase 1* return in *Phase 2*, standing in front of the camera looking straight at the viewer. Indeed, in *Phase 2* prominence is given to the agent's body rather than to overall actions and particularly to his *gaze*. The actor's gaze provides here a strong intertextual coherence, to the extent that all the characters that appeared previously in different and separate scenarios are brought closer in a rapid succession of frames, in which each one stands in front of the camera looking straight at it. Moreover, contrary to *Phase 1*, where the agent's gaze served as indexes to orient the viewer to other relevant aspects of the physical environment, in *Phase 2* his/her gaze interpersonally functions as an exhortation towards viewers. This visual exhortation culminates in frame 32 when the speaker gives extra prominence to the word "you" and then pauses slightly before pronouncing the rest of the clause. Moreover, the simultaneous entry of drums at the beginning of *Phase 2* marks a shift in the emotional orientation of the text: from a lonely and introspective orientation in *Phase 1* to a more powerful and exhortative one in *Phase 2*. The narrator speaks normally here and his voice is slightly faster, providing a feeling of confidence and assertiveness. The falling melody, the end of the intonational phase and the image slowly fading out in frame 32, signal the end of *Phase 2*.

Phase 3 consists of 3 subphases: in the first one, frame 33 slowly fades in, revealing the image of the European continent at night, upon which the logo of the 2014 EP elections is written. The three nodal words of the electoral slogan appear singly at different times, accompanied by the voice of the speaker who pronounces them; when frame 33 fades out, the blurry image of the MEPs voting at the EP appears in the background, giving prominence to the non-spoken text, which reports a further slogan – "The European Parliament and You" – accompanied by references to the EP official website and to the key topic of the 2014 EP elections on Twitter. It is interesting to note here that the image in frame 34 textually functions as a verb in the phrase "The European Parliament and You", suggesting agency. When the image in the background gradually fades out, only the written text in white fonts on a black background remains. In addition, in this last subphase, the complete absence of music maximizes the verbal component.

3.4 Summary of findings

Our SF-MDA of this case study has deconstructed the *Act. React. Impact.* commercial into its constituent subsets revealing that "the intersemiotic synergism" (Royce, 1998: 25) between several semiotic features co-occurring together within the text – particularly talk, music and sounds – contributes to the configuration of emotive and conative dimensions that are combined in specific discourse patterns. Indeed, it has been shown that both from lexical-grammatical and SF-multimodal perspectives, verbal patterns and imagery are mainly related to the cognitive and affective sphere with a high rate of stative verbs describing state-of-mind and shots mainly depicting "choices" and "issues" of everyday life.

A second fundamental result of our study concerns the way in which the EU legitimizes itself. As described above, the Act. React. Impact. case study has a parallel antonymic structure in which major issues in *Phase 1* are resolved in *Phase 2*. More precisely, *Phase 1* provides a sample of the most common feelings and attitudes towards the EU, thus strengthening viewers' identification. Conversely, in *Phase 2* lexical and syntactical choices emphasize the decisive role played by the EU. Indeed, from a lexical-grammatical perspective, "Europe" co-occurs with positively connoted lexical items enhancing individuality – "every opinion" – and opportunity – "fair chance" – whereas the "European Parliament" appears in a passive construction thus emphasising the active role played by the audience – "you" – in the decision-making process within the EU. The prominence given to individuality in *Phase 2* is further enhanced by isochronous images depicting actors singly

looking straight into the camera; the actors' gaze, in point of fact, has a deep interpersonal meaning, directly exhorting viewers and prompting their agency (Baldry and Thibault, 2006: 167).

To conclude, *Act. React. Impact.* mainly revolves around three key issues: first, the *cultural* (affective) dimension of European identity, to the extent that EU is represented more in terms of shared values and contrasting attitudes rather than of political achievements and goals; secondly, the fear of the loss of *individual agency* in a collectivity – although there is no explicit reference in this case study to national interests; and lastly, a deficit in the legitimacy of the EU, since, as noted above, *Act. React. Impact.* rhetorically emphasizes the safeguarding role of the EU.

4. Conclusion

The case study presented in this research consistently show that the EU rhetoric of *unity in diversity* is discursively performed by constantly shuttling between two different and dichotomous symbolic spaces. On the one hand, unity mainly refers to the "affective" domain of identity; indeed, Europeans are positioned as belonging to a constructed world of shared values and personal issues that is less and less phrased in terms of common national, limited cultures, and increasingly as unity within an ideal human community bound together by a sense of common destiny. According to Kevin Robins (2006), this "has made it possible to expand mental and imaginative horizons beyond ethnic categorization, to include other kinds of difference (such as gender, age or sexual orientation)" (Robins, 2006: 255; cited in Sassatelli, 2009: 194) thus working "towards the de-ethnicization of difference" (Robins, 2006: 255). As shown from the analysis carried out in this paper, indeed, no local particularity is shown in our audiovisual corpus insofar as case studies do not provide us with any visual evidence that different European countries are portrayed. Indeed, neither indoor nor outdoor spaces reproduce any stereotypical images of geographical places or local cultures. Similarly, shots represent common people and the activities of daily life, neither of which can be attributed to any particular European country, but belong rather to a commonly shared contemporary Western world of values. As a result, shots mainly recontextualize social practices in an abstract universe that enhances familiarity with the universe in the commercials and strengthens commonality among Europeans. Furthermore, imagery as well as verbal patterns are mainly related to the affective-emotional sphere with a high rate of stative verbs describing state-of-mind and shots mainly depicting "choices" and "issues" of

everyday life. Consequently, the exhortative force of texts considered in this research mainly lies in viewers' empathetic identification with the world of shared values depicted in the commercials.

However, individuals' contrasting feelings and attitudes towards EU are expressed both verbally and visually through antonymic pairs of semantic concepts in order to suggest the irreconcilability between these sets of value, thereby conveying a message of 'lost in diversity'. The "de-ethnicization" of diversity within the EU rhetoric has, indeed, two important consequences. On the one hand, it contributes to reducing the tension between national and European identities – which is considered to be the primary cause impeding the emergence of a European identity. As a result, the enhancement of diversity in terms of exaltation of individuals' freedom of expression – of ideas, of attitudes, of belief – suggests that prominence is given to individuality within EU, despite the widespread fear that the normative pressure of a supranational collectivity might curtail individual autonomy. On the other hand, the "de-ethnicization" of diversity and the subsequent enhancement of individuality contribute to further strengthen the perception of incompatibility between different attitudes in Europe. In other words, diversity is assumed not to rely on a great but limited number of local cultural traditions, but rather on millions of Europeans, each with his/her own opinions. This, in turn, rhetorically suggests that there can be no choice between a 'frightening' anarchy and the government of the EU, thereby promoting its legitimacy. Indeed, by integrating lexico-grammatical analysis to the SF-MDA of case studies in this research, we found evidence that, from a macro-syntactic perspective, commercials mainly have a parallel antonymic structure in which major issues (both lexically and visually related to individualism) are solved within the "European Union" – which co-occurs with positively connoted lexical patterns suggesting fair government.

Moreover, in terms of method, integrating lexico-grammatical analysis into SF-MDA has proved to be an effective research method for the analysis of case studies in this research. Indeed, in audiovisual advertising, emotional strategies enhance the psychological attraction of the product for the target audience mainly by stimulating two senses – sound and sight (Lindstrom, 2005). This in turn implies that feelings, values and beliefs conveyed by images and sounds have the most influence on the target audience's purchasing decisions. An in-depth analysis of the verbal content, as well as of the combination of the full set of semiotic features co-occurring within a text, therefore, allowed us to better identify meanings behind symbols and myths.

However, multimodal interpretation always presupposes a process of making assumptions about the meaning of a text that, while facilitating the identification of the most salient "foregrounded copatterning of selections" (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 26), nevertheless affects findings in terms of subjectivity. Nonetheless, given that text is a meaning-based interactive event, in Halliday and Hasan's terms (*ibidem*), and that a multimodal analyst is also a participant observer, it is precisely his/her subjective interpretation that actually activates functional meanings in discourse.

This leads us to a final consideration. Although qualitative researchers are participant observers, thereby observing phenomena as well as participating in that phenomena, they are nevertheless 'privileged' participants, since their scientific approach allows them to evaluate data from a higher critical perspective. In contrast, people embedded in society are particularly vulnerable when they are faced with the rhetoric of official institutions and, more generally, with "the fabric of popular consciousness" (Shore, 2000: 20). We should like, therefore, the instruments and findings presented in this paper to contribute to increasing awareness among the audience, thereby encouraging their active reception of official discourses and propaganda. We believe, indeed, that at a time in which the EU asks us to "Act. React. Impact." critical thinking underlies independent and interdependent decision making. Only when this is achieved can we move forward with the work of shaping our society and our future.

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