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**The Discourse and Ideology of Localized Commercial
Websites: an Analysis from a Social Semiotic
Perspective**

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

In Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, globalization allows companies to move beyond the borders of their current saturated domestic markets. This creates a need for the localization of websites where companies can advertise their products and services to the context of a given culture and language. The present thesis analyzes the communication strategy of localized websites from a social semiotic perspective. Social semiotic theories provide the framework to analyze the semiotic modes and resources that have been used to create meanings in the localized websites analyzed. Furthermore, from a social semiotic perspective, creating meaning is a social action that reflects the ideologies and discourses of the meaning producers. The analysis shows that the visual and linguistic modes of communication have been used to create meanings in these websites using semiotic resources from different cultures in each localized version; these meanings reflect the ideologies and discourses of the companies producing the localized websites.

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The Discourse and Ideology of Localized Commercial Websites: an Analysis from a Social Semiotic Perspective

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overall aims and social significance

In our daily interaction with other human beings we are constantly faced with having to make choices on how best to express our ideas. Generally, these choices come from all the linguistic possibilities that the language we are using for interaction offers us.

Although language is the main resource that humans use to communicate, there are many other resources at our disposal that we can choose from; for instance, gestures, sounds, pictures, colors. All the different ways in which humans make meaning are part of different systems of meaning-making resources that are described by semioticians. As Theo van Leeuwen explains, it is the work of semioticians to put together inventories of the semiotic resources available and to study how they are used as part of different social practices, and how people regulate their use in the context of these social practices (van Leeuwen, 2005). These inventories of resources are grouped into what Kress and van Leeuwen call modes of meaning; that is, color, sounds, framing, and others (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). However, different cultures in different time periods are characterized by different social practices that necessarily call for the use of semiotic resources that are specific to the culture and time frame in question. The question is: what happens during the interaction of two different cultures that have developed different social practices and have their culturally specific semiotic resources related to those social practices? This is precisely the question that frames this thesis. This thesis aims at illustrating how different semiotic resources are used by different cultures at present to create meaning,

Before going further, it is necessary to define the concepts of meaning, discourse, and ideology for the purpose of this thesis. First, it is necessary to note that Semiotics studies systems of signs and their meanings; social semiotics then studies the meaning that different systems of signs have in society. For the purpose of the present research, I will follow the definition of meaning presented by Hodge and Kress (1988: 37) who refer to

this concept as meaning in context. This means that the meaning of signs is the one they acquire in their relationship with the social context they are realized in. This definition relates to my present research about the meanings that products and services acquire in society. Companies associate added values to their products or services and, consequently, customers come to associate the consumption of these products or services with the added value (the social meaning) the company has given them. Here is an example of how the social meanings of products work. The sports company Nike has associated its products with athletic, health conscious, successful people. Therefore, Nike consumers are seen in society as athletic, health conscious, successful people. These characteristics of Nike consumers can be considered the social meaning of Nike's products, people who buy Nike products may be socially perceived as these kind of people.

Very much related to this notion of social meanings, are the definitions of discourse and ideology. From a social semiotics perspective, the creation of social meaning is achieved by means of the articulation and interpretation of the discourse of the social groups that create those meanings. In turn, the discourse of these social groups realizes their ideologies, that is, their system of values. An example of how these three concepts function is to be found in the previous mention of Nike products. The ideology that the company Nike represents is that people who are athletic, and health conscious are also successful people. That is the ideology they realize in the discourse that is presented in the advertising campaigns for Nike products. The semiotic resources used in the discourse of Nike's advertisements realize the ideology of the company and create social meanings for its products.

My project presents an analysis of localization (the industrial process of culturally and linguistically adapting a product, service, or website to the context of a given locale) as a social practice that has been implemented nowadays to aid the global communication of companies with its international customers. As such, localization is part of a major process that has been extensively studied, the process of globalization. Consequently, this project is in a way, a view of the characteristics of the communication that results from

the globalization process. It is an approach to the way globalization shapes communication, and the way communication also shapes globalization. This thesis will look at localized commercial websites to characterize what semiotic resources have been used to achieve communication between companies and its costumers by means of localized commercial websites. I will show how companies localize their websites to address culturally different customers presenting them with the ideology of the company that localizes the website.

1.2 Research Questions

The goal of this thesis is, first, to determine what semiotic modes and semiotic resources multinational companies use to realize their ideologies and discourses when they localize (culturally and linguistically adapt) their websites to enter different world markets. Once that has been determined, the next question is to establish whether the ideologies and discourses multinational companies realize in their localized websites vary according to the market they are addressing.

Based on the answer to this second question, I will be able to address a third issue which has to do with advertising on the internet. Advertising in this media entails that the ads appear in different languages, thus semiotic resources that have diverse cultural origins are used to represent the same product or service in different locales. The question that occurs as a result is, does the use of different semiotic resources in the same context (the Internet) to refer to the same aspect of reality (a product or service) contribute to the diversification of semiotic resources or does it contribute to the semiotic resources of one culture prevailing over the semiotic resources of another?

1.3 Some important definitions

With the aim of providing a possible answer to the previous questions, I will analyze the use of semiotic resources from different cultures in the creation of localized commercial websites that have been developed by multinational companies (those that have taken their business to several countries) to advertise their products and services.

Let's explain the idea of localization that underlies this paper. According to Anthony Pym, localization entails cross-cultural text adaptation in the fields of software, product documentation, web technology, and some international news services (Pym, 2005). Bowker defines the same concept of localization as "the process by means of which a product is culturally and linguistically made appropriate for the target locale where it will be used and sold" (Bowker, 2006). For my research, I have combined elements of both definitions and I consider the *localization of a website* as the process of linguistically and culturally customizing a website for the locale it is intended to address.

According to Pym, a "locale designates both a language variety and a set of cultural preferences" (Pym, 2004). Such a definition might seem very general, but it is in fact specific enough. Pym stresses that locales defy definition, which means that companies identify that there is a locale whenever there is a social group that needs to be addressed by means of specific cultural and linguistic resources in order to incorporate that social group into the pool of customers or potential customers of the products or services the company sells (Pym, 2004). Based on Pym's characterization of *locales*, in this paper locales are referred to as the combination of linguistic and cultural characteristics that distinguish one social group from another to the extent that the use of different linguistic and cultural features is needed in addressing the social group in question.

When a company introduces their products and website to the international market, they decide what locales they will consider and how specific they consider that locale to be. For instance, a company may decide to consider Latin America as only one locale, meaning that the common cultural and linguistic characteristics the countries of the region share make it possible for the company to address them as only one market. However, other companies may find it necessary to address the different Latin-American countries as separate locales, based on the diversity of linguistic and cultural characteristics that exist among these countries.

Further, localization began as a process to market computer software to different linguistic communities (Pym, 2005). As a follow up of this process, companies came up with the idea of developing what I refer to in this paper as *localized commercial websites*, localized versions of their websites for the different locales where they had business interests, website versions developed using the linguistic and culturally specific semiotic resources of the locale the company addresses.

A company like McDonalds is a good example to illustrate the previous definition. McDonalds has developed around 60 websites for 60 different locales that the company has identified as its markets, each website with different layouts, images, and texts. Does having all these different websites mean that McDonalds sends a different or the same advertising message to the locales its websites address? Rephrasing this as my fourth research question, do companies localize their website and by doing so create different social meanings for their products or services for each and every one of the locales they are addressing or, do they create the same social meaning and realize it in the different locales using culturally and linguistically specific semiotic resources from each locale?

1.4 Theoretical framework

In order to answer my research questions, I will analyze the message that is being presented in two localized commercial websites. In developing a methodology for such an analysis, I have reviewed social semiotic theories and I have shown the basic steps followed to localize a website.

Social semiotics is a theoretical framework that analyzes communicative events as they are socially meaningful. I chose this theory based on the fact that creating websites is overall a communication process initiated by an institution to send a message to its potential clients. Localizing websites is a communication process that an institution carries out to reach potential clients that share specific cultural characteristics. As such, social semiotics is useful in analyzing how the meanings of localized websites are

created, as well as determining what those meanings are, and to what extent they are culturally specific.

I will analyze the modes of communication (semiotic modes) and the meaning-making resources (semiotic resources) that have been used in the creation of the meanings of the websites. Through my analysis, I will also show how these meanings created in localized websites are representative of the discourses and ideologies that the company wants to present to its clients. In presenting these ideologies, I will show how localization of websites works as an instrument for the marketization of companies discourses on the internet.

1.5 Thesis Structure

The present thesis is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the contents of the thesis, the aims of the research and discusses the theoretical framework followed for the analysis, as we've seen.

Chapter 2 discusses the literature of this research, namely social semiotics, and the basics of the localization of websites to provide a general understanding of the process from which the object of my analysis, localized websites, results.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology that I follow in the analysis of meaning of localized websites. In addition, in this chapter I explain the reasons for the choices of localized versions of websites that I analyze, and I present the general characteristics of these websites.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the Canadian and Spanish localized websites for McDonald's and Dove's Campaign on Real Beauty, and then discusses the preliminary results of the analysis.

Chapter 5 discusses the results of the analysis in detail, as well as the limitations of the present study. I also present suggestions for future research projects on the use of social semiotics for the analysis of other aspects of the localization process.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Semiotics

Social semiotics is the study of semiotic systems as they are used for communication in society. According to traditional semiotics, a semiotic system is a system of signs that is used to create meaning. For instance, language is the widest studied semiotic system known to man. A simpler semiotic system that is generally used in the literature as an example is the system of traffic lights, where the color green means to continue driving, the color red means to stop, and yellow is used as a transitional color between the two. Analyzing the different semiotic systems from a social perspective involves analyzing how humans make use of signs to make meanings in different social contexts.

However, taking a social approach to the study of semiotics, and carrying on the study of semiotic systems are tasks with a history. These are tasks that have evolved over time into what they are today, and during that evolution several concepts and theories for the study of one semiotic system have been used or adapted to the study of other semiotic systems. What follows is a review of the literature that pertains to the study of semiotic systems, both from a structuralist and from a social point of view.

I will start by presenting a more structuralist approach to the study of language as a semiotic system, since this was the approach first taken to the study of semiotic systems; and I will follow a chronological order. The structuralist approach was taken by Ferdinand de Saussure (1915) and Pierre Peirce and will show what their theories are and how they influenced social semiotics. Next, I will mention the three distinctive Linguistic schools that studied language as a semiotic system from the 1900s to the 1970s. Particularly, the descriptive school and the functional schools have influenced, in my opinion, the current theories in social semiotics.

In chronological order, my presentation will show how from the end of the 20th century to the present, the study of semiotics has been rooted in a social approach. I will present

the social semiotic theories of this more recent period, as well as practical implementations of those theories in the analysis of texts. With this literature review, it is my goal to explain how the social semiotic approach has evolved, influenced by previous linguistic and structural studies, and how the theories of the different authors within the current social semiotics field relate to one another.

2.1.1 Ferdinand de Saussure

In 1915, a few years after the death of Ferdinand de Saussure, *Le Course de Linguistique Generale* was published, thanks to the work of Saussure's students in putting together a compilation of notes taken during the linguist's lessons. The author's goal was mainly to provide a scientific theory for the study of language, seen as the most important and most used semiotic system, or system of signs. Three central aspects are worth mentioning about Saussure's theory of linguistic signs.

First, the author conceived of linguistic signs as bilateral entities that had a signifier and a signified, the signified referring to the meaning that was given to a certain aspect of reality, and the signifier referring to the linguistic element, the word that was used to refer to the aspect of reality. Second, he also believed that there was an arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signifieds of linguistic signs, and that this arbitrary relationship was socially understood by the people that spoke the language in question (Saussure, 1986). As an example, 'table' in English is the linguistic signifier of the signified object 'table'. The relationship between 'table' signifier and 'table' signified is arbitrary and has been agreed upon and undertaken by English speaking people, which means that the Anglophone societies understand this relationship.

The bilateral and arbitrary character of linguistic signs, I believe is relevant to social semiotics in the sense that this arbitrary relationship between the two sides of linguistic signs, signifier and signified, has been socially agreed upon, according to Saussure. Therefore, even if Saussure's approach to the study of language was only structural and not social, he recognized that there was a necessary social agreement for a signifier to be

related to a signified. In other words, Saussure recognized that a social agreement was necessary for a linguistic sign to be meaningful. The current social semiotic theory is based on the fact that semiotic resources (the color green in the street light system of colors) in semiotic systems are meaningful because society recognizes that a certain meaning is associated to a certain semiotic resource.

Third, in his approach to the study of linguistic signs, Saussure established a set of binary oppositions which have been explained in detail by social semioticians Hodge & Kress (1988: 17), and included language as a semiotic system in relation to other semiotic systems and extra semiotic phenomena such as culture, society, and politics. The oppositions also included *langue* (a system of choices from which speakers select what signs to use when they communicate) versus *parole* (where *langue* is realized that is the signs chosen by people from the *langue* system come together in communication). Another binary opposition was synchrony versus diachrony; synchrony refers to the relationships of linguistic signs that coexist in time and diachrony refers to the evolution of linguistic signs over time.

Yet another opposition presented by Saussure was paradigmatic (the paradigmatic plane of choices that speakers have to represent reality using language) versus syntagmatic (the way that linguistic signs are organized in *parole*). Another opposition was value versus signification where value refers to the ideal aspect, to the ideological component so to speak of a linguistic sign and signification refers to the material aspect of the sign. Another opposition was signifier versus signified.

In the next few paragraphs, I will illustrate how these aspects of Saussure's theories have influenced social semiotics.

As Hodge and Kress (1988) explain, Saussure focused on the study of language in terms of system, *langue*, synchronic and paradigmatic frames, and value and signifiers. These choices of conceptual frames have accounted for the major criticisms of Saussure's structural linguistics since he failed to analyze the social component of language.

Saussure did not emphasize a social analysis of language; nevertheless, in agreement with Hodge & Kress (1988) by outlining the opposing concepts to those he studied, Saussure's linguistic theory paved the way for other authors to focus their studies on the social approach that he minimized or didn't really address. Therefore, it can be said that social semiotic directions of study were implicit in Saussure's work (Hawkes, 2003 and Hodge & Kress, 1988).

In Saussure's defense, he acknowledged the existence of a social element with relation to language, which can be seen in his mention of a social agreement regarding the arbitrary relationship between signifiers and signifieds to form linguistic signs. Although, he did not study language from a social perspective, that was not his aim. His aim was to study it from a structuralist approach, and that he did.

Another Saussurean theoretical element that is present in current semiotic trends mentioned above is the concept of binary oppositions of linguistic signs. Briefly, binary oppositions refer to the fact that any given linguistic sign becomes meaningful because it is opposed to another one. For instance, 'dark' is meaningful since it is the opposite of 'light'. Something is dark because it lacks the semantic traits of light, something is dark because it lacks the physical property of reflecting light that something light has. By the same token, something is 'light' because it lacks the characteristics of 'dark'; it lacks the physical property of absorbing light. Consequently, 'light' and 'dark' are opposites and they are meaningful with regards to one another.

In modern approaches to semiotics it is possible to interpret the existence of the notions used to study several semiotic systems using the concept of binary oppositions. For instance, for visual semiotics Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) study the meaning of foregrounding in a visual composition. If the concept of 'foregrounding' in a visual composition is to be seen from the angle of binary oppositions, it is clear that it is based on the binary opposition categories of 'foreground' and 'background'. Any visual element that is emphasized by means of size, contrast, definition is foregrounded, it appears in the

'foreground' of the visual composition, whereas the rest of the elements in the composition appear in the plane of the opposite category, the 'background'.

Other than the notion of binary oppositions itself, there are several Saussurean oppositions that are part of the language system and that underlie the current framework of social semiotics. They are: 'langue' and its opposite 'parole', 'synchrony' and its opposite 'diachrony', 'paradigmatic' and its opposite 'syntagmatic', and 'value' with its opposite 'signification'.

In order to explain the presence of the opposition between 'langue' and 'parole' in current social semiotics, it is necessary to define these two concepts according to Saussure. 'Langue' was seen by Saussure as the system of choices from which speakers selected their 'parole', which were the signs used by speakers to realize their representations of reality. 'System of choices' and 'signs' are concepts that were applied by Barthes (1967) in his rendition of the semiotic systems of fashion, food, and music, as we will see later.

The opposition between 'langue' and 'parole' is important to social semiotics because it paved the way to the existence of a system of choices. Currently, the existence of different kinds of systems of choices, not only the linguistic one, is part of social semiotic theories. One such system is the case of the existence of several semiotic modes from which producers of meaning can select which mode is best suited to express a certain meaning. Systems of choices of meaning-making resources are offered in each semiotic mode. Once a producer of meaning chooses a semiotic mode to express certain meaning, the choice that follows is what semiotic resource from that semiotic mode will be used to express the meaning. For instance, once the teacher has selected a visual diagram (the visual semiotic mode) to introduce new content in his Physics lesson, he/she has to choose what colors to use in the diagram, what size to use for the elements in the diagram, among other choices (what semiotic resources from the visual semiotic mode will be used).

The Saussurean opposition between 'synchrony' and 'diachrony' is present in social semiotics in relation to the studies of social discourse. The synchronic approach to the study of social discourse in social semiotics can be seen in van Leeuwen (2005: 94) where the author mentions the co-existence in time of more than one discourse in society. He exemplifies this by presenting all the different discourses that could be used to talk about the heart, the discourse of physicians with patients, the discourse of an academic journal about the heart, etc.

Also, the synchronic approach is taken by Lemke (1990: 203) who states that the discourses that different social groups use to talk about a certain topic are organized into thematic contexts, a concept that I will also explain later in greater detail. The co-existence of several social discourses in the same period of time is based on the notion of synchrony. By the same token, Saussure's synchronic approach to language meant that he was interested in studying signs within a given period of time without studying their history. Both, synchronic and diachronic approaches were explained in Saussure's theories of Linguistics, though the author chose to study language synchronically. Saussure's use of these approaches for the studies of language led to the current use of these approaches in the study of other social semiotic systems.

A 'diachronic' approach to linguistics means the study of the historic change of a language. For example, a 'diachronic' approach to the study of English can reveal the change over time from the pronoun 'thee' to the pronoun 'you'. In social semiotics, Van Leeuwen (2005) and Kress & Hodge (1988) refer to the changes in discourse and the changes in the meaning of semiotic resources over time. The authors explain how, over time, discourse and semiotic resources change. For example, diachronically changes are to be found in the discourse about women in Western societies where women's discourse has gone from presenting them as submissive and voiceless in the 18th century to presenting women as powerful and independent in contemporary Western societies.

Another opposition present in social semiotics is that of 'paradigmatic' versus 'syntagmatic'. According to Saussure, 'langue' from a synchronic view could be studied

as organized into the paradigmatic versus the syntagmatic axis. That is, the linguistic signs that co-existed together within the same period of time are organized into a paradigmatic axis that represents the system of linguistic choices of speakers, and a syntagmatic axis that represents the grammatical order of linguistic signs in the 'parole' (the realization of langue to represent reality).

In social semiotics, Lemke (1990: 188) speaks of these two axis with regards to the context of communicative situations. The paradigmatic axis represents the choices of what other contexts there could have been for a communicative situation to take place, and the syntagmatic axis represents the organization of the sequential actions that form a communicative practice (Lemke, 1990: 189), such as the practice of saying good morning. Paradigmatically the choices of context where this practice can occur include a family having breakfast, a student arriving to class, or someone arriving to work. Syntagmatically, there are several sequential actions that form this practice; number one, the utterance of the phrase 'Good morning' by person A, and number two, the response to that utterance by person B, which could be 'Good morning', or could be any other choice from the paradigmatic axis such as 'How are you doing?'

I also see the presence of the paradigmatic axis since social groups are presented with a variety of choices of discourses that they can use to realize reality. For instance, a doctor belongs to the social group of physicians, but also belongs to his family as another social group. Depending on the context in which this doctor is communicating, and depending on the social group he is communicating with, the doctor chooses which discourse to use to talk about the heart, following my previous mention of the discourses of the heart that van Leeuwen (2005) discusses.

In terms of the syntagmatic axis, I mentioned Lemke's views about the syntagmatic organization of communicative practices in relation to the communicative practice of saying 'good morning'. Lemke (1990: 188) considers that all communicative practices are formed by a series of actions that are organized as a syntagm one after the other, each with its specific meaning according to the order it occupies. Going back to the example of

the communicative practice of saying 'good morning', when the first person says 'good morning' gets part of its meaning from being the opening line of this communicative practice. The second person's 'good morning' on the other hand, gets its meaning because it occupies the second place in the syntagmatic arrangement of the communicative practice, because of its placement it is a response to the first 'good morning'.

In my opinion, visual discourse could also be seen as syntagmatically organized, as we'll see. In visual discourse, a certain layout can be used to organize discourse syntagmatically using the semiotic resource of 'foregrounding', which I explained earlier. The producer of a visual discourse can foreground the elements that he/she wants to be noticed first.

The last opposition I will refer to is that of 'value' versus 'signification'. Out of these two categories, Saussure studied the 'value' of linguistic signs, this opposition represents the way in which Saussure distinguished between the materiality of a linguistic sign and its ideal component. As an example, the linguistic sign 'beautiful' has a material side which covers certain characteristics and then someone adds the value of 'beautiful'. However, 'beautiful' also has an ideal 'value' which is given by the characteristics that any individual considers an object must have in order to be described as beautiful. This notion that linguistic signs have different values can be considered the prequel to today's concept of ideology in social semiotics, if we understand value as the 'added meaning' that a linguistic sign is perceived to have. In the same line of thought, today's social semiotics considers that the 'added meaning' of a semiotic sign, its value, can represent the ideology of a social group. For example, the color red in a flag can be seen as having the value, the 'added meaning', of communist ideologies.

Having presented the elements of Saussure's theories that I believe permeate today's social semiotic theories, I will now proceed to Peirce's theories and what they have contributed to social semiotics.

2.1.2 C. S. Peirce

Whereas for Saussure, the sign was a bilateral entity, divided into signifier and signified, Peirce considered that signs were formed by a trilogy: the 'object', the 'interpretant', and the 'interpreted' or 'representamen'. The 'object' referred to that aspect of reality that could be interpreted. The 'interpretant' referred to the elements that made it possible for an object to acquire its meaning. The 'interpreted' or 'representamen' referred to that aspect of reality once it had acquired its meaning. (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005: 9). Therefore, in Peirce's theory, the 'object' table has as 'interpretant' having three or four legs, serving to put things on it, and other features that make humans identify this 'object' as what it is, and the 'interpreted' is the table once it has acquired its meaning and can be identified as a table.

Regarding the analysis of signs, Peirce considered two levels, the semiotic and the hermeneutic level. The semiotic level had to do with the internal structure of the process of signification, similar to the way in which modern social semiotics studies the processes through which the meaning of signs (or resources) are created. The hermeneutic level had to do with the interpretive response to the meaning-making process, the response to the semiotic process (Petrilli & Ponzio, 2005).

Once again, Peirce's theories lead to today's theories of social semiotics; in particular his conception of signs relates to Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001: 4) definition of 'discourses': "socially constructed knowledges of reality". The three authors coincide on stating that reality is interpreted, constructed by means of signs. In Peirce's view the object, book, is not such unless it has an 'interpreted' (the object book with its meaning), and an 'interpretant' (the features that allow us to recognize a book, which could be it has a hard cover, it has several pages, it has an author, a title, etc) that allows the object book, an aspect of reality, to receive its meaning. In Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001:4) definition of 'discourses', we can see the presence of the notion of 'interpretant' in the concept of socially constructed (there are specific features related to specific objects that society has agreed upon in order to recognize the object as what it is), society handles the

'interpretant', it determines what features are necessary for an aspect of reality to be recognized as a book. Once these features have been agreed upon, the object book with its socially constructed meaning becomes 'interpreted'.

The theory of two levels for the analysis of signs also underlies today's social semiotics, specifically the existence of a hermeneutic level for such an analysis. The hermeneutic level has to do with the response to the semiotic process, what is also called, the meaning-making process as we have seen. In today's social semiotic theory, there are traits of the existence of a hermeneutic level in the analysis of the social meaning-making process of semiotic resources, labeled in Hodge & Kress' work (1988: 5) as semiotic process. The interpretation of a semiotic process can help understand the ideology of the social group that practices such a process. For instance, the word 'rock' is a linguistic sign which semiotic process varies depending on the ideology of the social group that uses this sign. If 'rock' is used by a rock band, the semiotic process that takes place is giving the word rock a positive meaning in accordance with the ideology of the rock band/ social group that is using the word. However, if the same word is used by a social group that dislikes rock music, this dislike is part of their ideology, and when a member of this second group uses the word 'rock', the semiotic process that takes place gives the word a negative meaning.

I have presented some of the central influences that Saussure's and Peirce's linguistic theories have had in today's social semiotics. However, these are not the only linguistic studies that are reflected in social semiotic theories. I will present another trend in Linguistics that developed around the 1970s and show the influence of parts of the theories of this school in the current social semiotic studies.

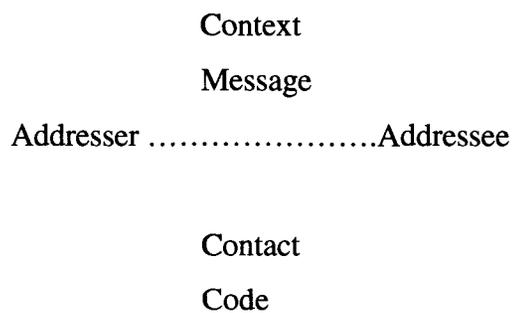
2.1.3 The Prague School of Linguistics

The Prague School or the 'functionalist' school had Jakobson (1962, 1971) as one of its representatives, whose theory I will refer to in detail in the paragraphs to follow since his functional approach together with Halliday's represent one of the major influences in

current social semiotics (van Leeuwen, 2005: 77). 'Functionalism' stressed that language used in communication performs several functions at once. According to Jakobson, there were six functions that language played in communicative acts (Hawkes, 2003).

Jakobson mentioned six functions that language performs simultaneously in every act of communication and that communication was much more than just a message.

Accordingly, he developed a model of communication. His model included the 'addresser' who performed the 'emotive' function of language, the 'context', the 'message', the 'contact', and the 'code' that contributed to the 'referential', 'poetic', 'phatic', and 'metalingual' functions, respectively. Last was the 'addressee' who contributed to the 'conative' function. In order to make this presentation clearer, I will show Jakobson's model of communication.



This model means that the addresser sends a message to the addressee. In order for the latter to receive the message, they both have to be using a common code, a physical channel or contact within the same context. Each of the components of the model is related to one of the functions of communication that Jakobson described.

The emotive function is related to the 'addresser' and it reflects his/her attitude towards the message. This function relates to social semiotics through the concept of modality which I will explain later in detail. For now, I will just say that modality is the way in which producers of meaning express their attitude towards the message they are producing; modality takes different forms depending on the semiotic mode the message is produced in. For example, the producer of a visual message can use the visual semiotic

resource of making an image sharper to express that this image is important to him/her (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).

The conative function is related to the addressee, it has to do with the addressee's response to the message. The addressee is an element that has received attention in social semiotics theory which can be seen in the emphasis on understanding social communication and the creation of meaning as processes that have an effect on the audience of a message. For example, Kress & van Leeuwen (2001), consider that in communication there is a process of articulation of the message, and a process of interpretation of that message¹.

The referential function is related to the context and represents the additional information that addresser and addressee share in order to communicate. The concept of context of situation is the basis of social semiotic theory. In social semiotics the content of a communicative act is analyzed with regards to its social context. It is precisely the emphasis on this social context where communication takes place that distinguishes social semiotics from more structural approaches to the study of semiotic systems. These earlier systems failed to analyze the influence of the context in which communication takes place in communicative acts.

The poetic function is related to the message itself, to the aesthetic characteristics of the message. This function can be seen as reflected in social semiotics because of the aesthetic component of language. Jakobson's view is that the aesthetic component of language is always present through metonymy and metaphor. These two figures of speech are the ones that social semioticians study with regards to changes in language. As new metaphors and metonyms start to be used in language, new meanings are associated with certain linguistic signs, and in time new meanings become part of language.

¹ . Later in this literature review I will refer to Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001) work and these processes will be further explained.

Therefore, following the lead of Jakobson's poetic function the way was paved the way for social semiotics to study the presence of metaphor and metonymy.

The metalingual function refers to the code that addresser and addressee use to communicate, whether it is oral or written and the implications this code can have on the message. The presence of the metalingual function and, specifically, the implications that a communication code can have on a message are approached in social semiotics, among other authors, by Kress et al (2001). Their social semiotic approach is that communication in the classroom is a multimodal process, a process that involves several modes of communication, such as the oral and written communication codes or modes that Jakobson had referred to in his theory. Consequently, Kress et al's (2001) multimodal approach can be seen as an example of the effects that the *indistinctive* use of written or oral codes of communication, presented in Jakobson's theory, can have on the message in a communicative act. In short, a visual message is not the same as an oral message, and they are used for different purposes in the classroom. For example, an oral message can be used to further explain the content that has been introduced using a written message on the board.

The phatic function is centered on the channel or contact used and the ways in which addresser and addressee can use that channel to keep communication going. An example of the phatic function of language is the meaning expressed by questions such as 'It's a nice day, *isn't it?*' I will not analyze this function with relation to social semiotics since there does not seem to be a clear relationship between this concept and social semiotic theory.

I have presented Jakobson's language functions and have indicated the links that I believe exist between Jakobson's theories and social semiotics theories. Jakobson was one representative of a major theoretical framework, that of the Prague School or functional school of Linguistics which has contributed to social semiotics. The major contribution, in my view, is the recognition that language is not restricted to performing a

communicative function, but that there are other functions that are performed simultaneously in any communicative act.

Following the ideas of this functionalist linguistic theory, there is another author who plays a core role in functional theory associated with social semiotics, M. A. K. Halliday. His account of language as a functional system has been extremely influential for the development of social semiotics.

2.1.4 M. A. K. Halliday (1978, 1985)

Halliday (1985) claims that any linguistic text simultaneously performs three metafunctions: the 'ideational' that presents reality, the 'interpersonal' that establishes an interaction between the producer of the text and the reader, and the 'textual' that brings together the representation and communicative acts. Later on, we see the core role of these metafunctions to the analysis of visual texts in Hodge & Kress (1988), Kress & van Leeuwen (1996), Teo (2004) and van Leeuwen (2005), just to mention a few. Halliday's work focuses on finding out the features of language used in the simultaneous performance of these three metafunctions, the same kind of analysis that many of Halliday's followers applied to visual, and other kinds of texts.

Halliday (1978), the same as Jakobson referred to Saussure when presenting the basis of his approach to language studies, which reinforces my belief that Saussure's theory though heavily criticized still led the way to more social perspectives about language. According to Halliday (1978: 1) Saussure stressed the social character of language when he compared linguistics to other sciences. However, Halliday is clear that Saussure focused on the structural view of language as the object of study of Linguistics. He criticizes the fact that Saussure's words 'Language is a social fact' are often quoted out of context and are thus misleading, since Saussure did not intend to view language from a social perspective, he was rather underlining the special character of Linguistics with regards to other sciences. Halliday's interpretation of Saussure also ties in with Hodge & Kress' interpretation that I explained in relation to Saussure's work.

Taking Saussure's quote as a starting point for his debate about the social character of language as a semiotic system, Halliday (1978: 2) explains what his statement 'Language as social semiotic' means. For him, it means that "language is a social fact" (Halliday, 1985: 1). Furthermore, such a statement stresses that children learning a language results from a social process that allows them to learn their mother tongue and to learn other things through that mother tongue. By the same token, when someone is learning a second language as with a first, that person is learning the language and is also learning new things about that culture by means of language. Therefore, as Halliday (1978) maintains, language can be considered a semiotic system with a dual characteristic; it is used to reflect on things (ideational meaning); and it is used to act on things (interpersonal meaning).

Quoting Halliday (1978: 2), "a social reality or a culture is itself an edifice of meanings", so language itself constitutes a distinctive semiotic system that encodes many other semiotic systems. Language is used to describe images, sounds, fashion, food, dancing, walking, interior design, architecture which form themselves separate semiotic systems. Halliday's statement about language in relation to other semiotic systems, I believe, leads the way to the study of other semiotic systems in society by others. Authors like Hodge and Kress (1988), Kress & van Leeuwen (1996), or van Leeuwen (1999) later published their work on social semiotics expanding Halliday's conceptions about the metafunctions of language and used them to study the functioning of other semiotic systems, such as images, music, gestures.

Halliday (1978) explains how language as a socio semiotic system symbolizes society and captures social changes through the metaphoric transformations that take place in the meanings of words. Notice the presence of the concept of metaphoric changes in Halliday's theory, the same idea of metaphoric changes that Jakobson had previously discussed, referring to the way that metaphor supposes a transfer of meaning between domains that were originally unrelated.

The author analyzes language from a social semiotic perspective, as we have seen. Such a perspective, in his view, implies the aim of understanding the meaning-making processes that take place in society, and understanding how language is used to encode those semiotic processes (Halliday, 1978: 10). Applying this social semiotic perspective to other semiotic systems would then mean that the meaning-making processes of society and the encoding processes of the semiotic systems can be revealed by using Halliday's methods of analysis. Exactly this extension of Halliday's approach was one of the most significant impulses for the development of the current analytic methods used by social semioticians. Because of its importance, I will outline Halliday's interpretation of semantic systems in language.

According to this author, as we have seen, the semantic system of language has three functional components or 'metafunctions' that are present every time communication takes place. Communication occurs in different situation types that also influence the way it takes place. This means that an analysis of how humans use the social semiotic system of language to communicate, needs to take into consideration the 'metafunctions' and the situation types that are at play when language is used. Halliday (1985) considers the three metafunctions of language, the 'ideational', 'the interpersonal', and the 'textual' to be represented in the lexicogrammatical structure of language through the concepts of transitivity (ideational), mood and modality (interpersonal), and cohesion as well as theme/rheme (textual). Regarding the context of situation, Halliday (1985) states that it is regulated by three variables that correspond to each of the metafunctions: 'field' (corresponding to the ideational metafunction) describes the activity in which language plays a part, 'tenor' (corresponding to the interpersonal metafunction) describes the role relationships of the participants in the act of communication, and 'mode' (corresponding to the textual metafunction) describes the modes of communication, spoken or written, the participants are adopting.

Halliday's social semiotic account of language and how it functions in communication, relates to Jakobson's (1960) studies about communication and the functions of language, in the sense that both authors emphasize that language performs several functions

simultaneously in communicative events. However, Halliday's analysis is more complete in terms of capturing the social aspect of communication, in contrast to Jakobson's (1960) who explains his functions of language through his model of communication, Halliday's (1978: 13) starting point is the consideration that there is a context of situation that determines the characteristics of communication and that is in turn influenced by the communication itself. The author describes the functions of language relating them to the constructs that make up the context of situation, as I indicated in the previous paragraph. Given the importance that social semiotics places on the social context of situation, it is not surprise, that a social perspective to the study of semiotic modes of communication would be noticeably influenced by Halliday's ideas.

Having examined briefly social semiotics' roots, I can now move on to present several studies focusing on analyzing semiotic systems other than language.

2.2 Social semiotics

2.2.1 Roland Barthes (1967)

I will begin by briefly referring to Barthes's (1967) work, since this author analyzed the communicative essence of diverse semiotic systems, including clothing, food, cars, furniture, cinema, television. This author was a pioneer in studying semiotic resources other than language. Barthes applied Saussure's dichotomies between 'language' and 'speech' in his analysis. He also mentioned the existence of complex semiotic systems that involve more than one sense to make meaning. I will specifically refer to Barthes (1967) analysis of the semiotic system of clothing as an example, and then discuss his view on complex semiotic systems. According to this author, in a fashion magazine, clothes are written about and they are also worn by the models. The author suggests that in such an example the categories of 'language' and 'speech' coincide; the clothes the model wear represent a language at the level of vestimentary communication, and what is written about those clothes represents 'speech' at the level of verbal communication.

From the same example, the author establishes a different distinction between 'language' and 'speech'. When clothes appear in a photograph, the 'language' category needs to be inferred from the photographed piece of clothing, the 'language' would be the fashion generalization that can be made from the clothing arrangements shown in the photograph (Barthes, 1967: 26). If the models are wearing suits and are photographed in an office environment, it could be interpreted that the language of clothing expresses that suits are appropriate clothing for an office. By extension, the individual that is photographed also represents the 'speech' of photographed clothes, since it is a particular realization of the 'language' that can be inferred from the photograph. From the same example of office clothing, the colors that are chosen or the length of women skirts represent a particular speech within the language of clothing. When clothes are worn, 'language' is made by the oppositions of pieces and by the rules that govern the association of pieces (skirts do not go with running shoes), and 'speech' is made by the way people wear their clothes, how clean they are, what size they wear (Barthes, 1967: 27).

It is interesting that Barthes (1967) distinguishes among individual systems according to a categorization that is based on social practices, eating, buying a car, dressing, furnishing a room. However, when it comes to complex systems, he considers them complex because more than one sense is involved in the interpretation of meaning; such systems include the cinema or television where several senses receive the messages simultaneously. For complex systems, Barthes (1967) considers it premature to risk a distinction between 'language' and 'speech', as he did for the systems of eating, dressing, etc.

Nevertheless, I want to briefly review his categorization of semiotic systems and complex semiotic systems. His categorization could be considered contradictory since some social practices, which are the basis for the classification of semiotic systems, could be classified as complex systems. Eating, for instance, is a social practice but it is also a semiotic system that involves more than one sense, so it could also be seen as a complex system or a multimodal system to use Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001) terminology. Food involves taste, smell, and sight, and following the ideas of multimodal semiotics, it is a

multimodal system since all the meanings that can be made with the preparation of a dish (involving taste and smell) combine with the ones that can be made with the presentation of the dish, the way the ingredients are cut or smashed or mixed during the preparation (sight) to create one full meaning for the dish.

In Barthes' (1967 & 1977) work, the existence and possible analysis of several semiotic systems as they are present in society is exemplified, as we have seen. It can be said that his work was inspiring for other authors to follow his lead and theorize about the rules and principles that govern different semiotic systems in society. Among those other authors, I want to refer to the central role of Hodge, Kress, and van Leeuwen for the social semiotics field.

2.2.2 Hodge & Kress (1988)

Hodge & Kress's (1988: 18-46) account of social semiotics includes mainly the following ideas which I will further explain and exemplify below: Meaning is made in a social context as a result of a significant relationship that is established between producers and receivers of meaning. This social context is given by the social groups the producers and receivers belong to (each social group belonging to a logonomic system that constraints its meaning-making behavior and is reflected in the social group's ideology, and realized in the metasigns (register, style)), by the relationships that exist between the participants in the meaning-making process (could be solidarity or power relations), and by the integration of the semiotic, syntagmatic, and paradigmatic planes (this integration can be seen in the realization of the semiotic plane in the discourse of a social group that materializes in the texts that the social group produces).

In 1988, Hodge and Kress published their work, on *Social Semiotics*, with the aim of describing the process through which social meaning is constituted. Once again, the authors take the structuralist linguistic approach of Saussure as a starting point but soon go beyond it and offer a social semiotic approach that distances itself from Saussure's postulates. The roots of their idea of social semiotics are to be found in Voloshinov's

(1973 as cited in Hodge and Kress, 1988: 18-21) critique of Saussure's theories and his more social approach to the study of meaning in which he states that it is impossible to divorce the study of signs from their social environment and the ideology that surrounds the material reality of the sign. Such a statement leads to the new development of the label of social semiotics. In order to address the lack of social component from Saussure's model, the study of meaning is approached from a social perspective by social semiotics. Central is the idea that language is not the only semiotic system analyzed but that all different meaning-making systems are taken from a social perspective within the social semiotic scope.

Hodge & Kress's (1988) work was devoted to everyone interested in finding an explanation to the social process of making meaning. Their theoretical framework comes from Marx's theory of consciousness as an entity that is based on individuals' interactions on one another and on the material world. In today's world these interactions among individuals occur within the framework of "inequalities in the distribution of power". The existence of such inequalities implies that the more powerful groups have to come up with strategies to maintain that power and represent their interests. By the same token, the groups under dominance have to create their strategies to maintain the solidarity relations that exist among them as part of the domination these groups are under. One of the strategies that individuals use to represent the world to their advantage is the category of ideology; social groups create their own ideological complexes, formed by sets of representations of the world that are created by social groups according to their own interests (Hodge & Kress, 1988: 2-4).

So far, I have suggested that Hodge & Kress (1988) discuss the concept of ideology in their theory of social semiotics and I will refer to this concept again when I explain the three aspects these authors consider necessary for the analysis of social contexts.

In sum, Hodge & Kress' theory of social semiotics goes a step further from structural linguistics and Saussurean theories in terms of the process of making meaning. By explaining the existence of logonomic systems and of the category of ideology Hodge &

Kress (1988: 4 & 82) move away from structuralist theories by addressing the social approach to the study of semiotic systems that structuralism lacked. The authors establish that the meaning-making process is socially marked and that it reflects the ideology of the social group the meaning-maker belongs to.

Making meaning is not only seen as a process circumscribed by the social production of a message with a certain meaning; meaning is also made in the social reception of that message. Furthermore, the social approach to semiotics means that all social actions and systems of actions are seen as communicative in nature. Consequently, social semiotics offers the necessary theoretical framework to analyze all kinds of communicative events. In the paragraphs that follow I will present, according to Hodge & Kress (1988), the elements and principles that their approach to social semiotics considers necessary to analyze communicative events.

These authors consider that the production of meaning is given by the interaction of the social (represented in what they call the semiotic plane, where producers and receivers are linked into significant relationships, the plane where meaning is made) and referential (represented in what they call mimetic plane, the plane where the meaning of the object of reality is derived from) dimensions (Hodge & Kress, 1988: 5). To illustrate my interpretation of this interaction between semiotic and mimetic planes in North America, a 'McDonalds' restaurant' in the mimetic plane, in reality refers to a building where this company sells its burgers; when this meaning from the mimetic plane interacts with the social component from the semiotic plane, 'McDonalds restaurants' in North America means places where you can go to get fast food, a place where you can stop while you are driving just to get a quick bite. However, in another social context, Russia, when McDonalds restaurants first opened, the meaning from the mimetic plane was the same as that in North America, but in the interaction with the meaning from the semiotic plane, McDonalds restaurants were seen in Russia at the beginning as family restaurants and people dressed up to eat there.

In the analysis that these authors propose, they state that the smallest unit of meaning is the message. Their interpretation of the components of a message relates them to Saussure's concepts. Hodge & Kress (1988: 5 & 262) explain that the message is formed by signs that are syntagmatically arranged and that are fixed in the message by the interaction between the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic structures. In other words, the meaning of a sign is based on the interaction between the syntagmatic position the sign occupies in the message, and the paradigmatic choice that the sign represents. For instance, in the sentence: "Open the door", the word 'open' is based on the interaction between its paradigmatic side, which is the choice the speaker made by saying 'open' instead of 'close' or other actions that could be applied to the door. Syntagmatically the word 'open' has a verbal meaning in the sentence 'Open the door' as opposed to the meaning it acquires in the sentence 'the door is open'. From the paradigmatic system of choices, a sign acquires its meaning from the affirmation or negation of other signs that are not included in the message; that is, in the case of the previous example 'open' negates the possibility for 'close' to appear in the sentence.

Another two terms from Saussure's theories present in Hodge & Kress' (1988: 24) are those of 'signifier' and 'signified'. The concept of 'signifier' is extended from the referential dimension to actually mean the realization of the semiotic sign in the message and the 'signified' is used to refer to the element of reality the 'signifier' refers to. In a visual composition that represents a face, for example, the 'signified' would be the human face which is the element of reality realized in the message; whereas the 'signifier' would be the specific human face that is presented in the composition. In these authors' use of Saussure's terms, there is then a continuation and expansion from the earlier accounts of the linguistic system into the social theory of semiotics.

As I stated earlier, Hodge & Kress (1988) stress the importance of social context when interpreting the meaning of signs. In terms of this social context, the authors emphasize several aspects that need to be analyzed: first, the social group where the meanings are produced. If meanings are social, then every meaning made by a human being will realize the ideology of the social group that the human being belongs to, so it can be said that

meanings are ultimately produced by social groups. The second aspect is the relationships between the producer of the sign and the audience (ibid: 4). The creation of meaning is also the establishment of a relationship between the individual or social group that produced that meaning and the rest of the members of the social group or the members from other social groups that constitute the audience which receives the meaning that was produced. The third aspect refers to the semiotic, syntagmatic and paradigmatic planes in which the meanings of signs are produced (ibid: 267). These planes characterize the meanings exchanged by participants at the specific point in time they were exchanged, and also characterize the other meanings that participants could have chosen to exchange instead.

The first aspect, the social group where the meanings are produced is characterized by social markers that divide it from others. These markers are called metasigns that include the accent (phonological trait), the style (could be the language register used or the visual arts style of a painting, for instance), and grammatical functions (whether the members of the group speak grammatically correctly or not). These metasigns, according to Hodge and Kress (1988: 82), are the reflection of the ideology of each social group.

The authors add that the ideology of a social group is expressed through a logonomic system that controls the semiotic behavior of the group (Hodge and Kress, 1988: 4-6). In other words, each social group expresses its ideology in accordance with the rules of semiosis (making of meaning) that the social situation imposes on it. For instance, professors greet each other in different manners than those used among students, so using the same logonomic system that constrains the meanings used for greeting, the metasigns used by professors reflect an ideology that separates them from students, since they use metasigns that reflect a different ideology even though the signs are produced in accordance with the same logonomic system, that of greetings.

The previous example of the forms of greeting used by professors and students takes us to the relationships between the producer of the sign and the audience. This relationship can be one of power or solidarity. When people exchange signs, they reflect the

relationships that exist between them (Hodge and Kress, 1988: 3). For example, the signs exchanged between members of the same social group (professors or students) could be a reflection of the solidarity relationship that exists among the members of the group. By the same token, when signs are exchanged between different social groups, professors and students), they reflect the relationships of power that exist between them.

However, relationships of power and solidarity, in my opinion, could also be expressed by members of the same social group, depending on the social interaction that is taking place. If for example, one student visits another student at home, then there will be a relationship of power between the two, because in such a social interaction, the owner of the home is often in a more powerful position with regards to the visitor.

The third aspect that is part of social context is that of the semiotic, syntagmatic, and paradigmatic planes in which the signs are produced. The semiotic plane refers to the significant relationship that is established between producers and receivers of meaning, the syntagmatic plane refers to the organization of those meanings that are exchanged, and the paradigmatic plane, refers to the variety of meanings that participants can choose from when interacting under the constraints of a specific logonomic system (ibid: 263). For each of these planes, the authors explain how the analysis of the plane can be carried out.

The semiotic plane should be looked at using the concept of discourse (ibid: 5). Analyzing discourse in the semiotic plane is recognizing that discourse is the material realization of the significant relationship that is established in this plane. The syntagmatic plane can be looked at using the text (Hodge & Kress, 1988), the place where signs come together into organized strings of messages, so the existence of the syntagmatic plane materializes in texts. For the paradigmatic plane, they suggest that it includes all structures that are material as long as they are known possibilities to express a certain meaning. In other words, texts are the material objects produced in discourse, where discourses refer to the social processes in which texts are embedded.

In sum, Hodge and Kress' work on social semiotics was the beginning of a more comprehensive way of studying the production of meaning, meaning making process that takes place not only when we use language, but also when we use gestures, colors, sounds, paintings, and other means to communicate with one another. Moreover, *Social Semiotics* highlighted the importance and complexities of the social aspects that surround all meaning making processes, no matter which mode of communication they take place in. This was also, to my knowledge, the first major attempt at producing a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of social semiotic processes.

2.2.3. J. L. Lemke (1990)

Another important social semiotician that I will refer to in my outline of this theory is J. Lemke. He presents the principles of social semiotics from another perspective and distinguishes the theory due to its social approach to meaning-making from more formal approaches to semiotics. Once again, Lemke points to the need of common meaning-making ways for us to make sense to one another, for communication to occur. This need Lemke points to is related to the concept of 'maximal understanding' explored by Kress et al. (2001). In both cases, the authors highlight the need for participants in communication to take each other into consideration when they choose the resources they will use to express meaning.

Lemke addresses the possible consequences of sharing meaning-making ways; that is, he considers that if meanings are shared by the participants in communication, then those participants belong to the same social group to the extent that their meanings are shared. Sharing meaning is extremely significant for the process of localization which is the process by which a product or service is introduced from one society into another one, resulting in the two becoming partially the same to the extent that their members share the meanings that are associated with the new product or service.

As part of his social semiotics theory, Lemke (1990) views semiotic practices as the key element for meaning-making in society. He defines semiotic practices as the actions that

are meaningful in a community, the actions that make sense, whether they are speaking, dancing, doing the laundry. There is also another kind of practice that Lemke believes fundamental in social semiotics which is contextualizing practices which means connecting the action, the semiotic practice, with the context in which it takes place.

Lemke does not only refer to contextualizing practices, but also classifies the contexts in which actions take place. The first kind he identifies are syntagmatic contexts, these represent the complex whole into which semiotic practices can be divided. This means that a semiotic practice is subdivided into a sequence of actions; each of those sequential actions is what Lemke calls syntagmatic context. It is important to notice again the syntagmatic notion presented in the early days of the study of linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure, which is followed by Lemke in terms of contexts as opposed to linguistic signs which is the way in which Saussure had referred to the syntagmatic notion in Linguistic theory. Following Lemke, an example of the syntagmatic contexts for the semiotic practice of having breakfast, could be deciding what to eat, followed by preparing it, followed by serving it, and lastly followed by eating.

The paradigmatic notion that had also been introduced by Saussure, the idea that there is an axis for selection, is also discussed in Lemke's theory. He refers to the existence of paradigmatic contexts that interact with the syntagmatic ones. The paradigmatic contexts represent the way the action or semiotic practice might have been carried out. These paradigms have also been presented by the other social semioticians I have mentioned above. The authors I have talked about agree on and discuss the fact that the social practice, or the semiotic resource selected for communication is selected according to the social context in which the communication takes place. In this way, they all imply that there is a whole paradigmatic plane that producers of meaning can choose from.

The idea of selecting a semiotic resource according to the social context where a meaning is made, leads to Lemke's third classification of contexts, which he calls indexical contexts. The idea of association between a meaning and a social context is expressed in his definition of indexical contexts, which is the association of some social contexts with

some actions within given communities. Indexical contexts can be determined by social groups, ethnic groups, nationality, gender, occupation, age, as well as other social categories. Indexical contexts recall Hodge & Kress's (1988) definition of metasigns and logonomic groups, since they believed metasigns were markers that reflected the ideology of the social group, which was constrained by the logonomic system they belonged to. As a consequence, actions such as applying make-up which are carried out by women, for instance, will belong to the same indexical context, and will be realized by similar metasigns. Maybe all women will apply lipstick, and that makes women the social context for applying make-up, but the metasigns that realize that action are only similar since not all of them will apply the same color, the metasign of color will vary depending on a different stratification of the major social group all women belong to because they share the same gender. This stratification is what will further represent women's ideology.

A special case of indexical contexts that Lemke refers to is that of thematic contexts, which means that everything we say or do is thematically related to something that has been said or done in the past. In my opinion, the concept of indexical contexts is just another way of referring to the concept of intertextuality, which means that all texts produced have commonalities with previously produced texts.

The concept of semiotic practices presented above is related to two other concepts that Lemke talks about the concepts of processes and communities. This relationship as Lemke points out can be interpreted as follows: social communities function due to the life-processes that take place in them; these processes form meaningful patterns that constitute semiotic practices. As an example, the Canadian social community functions according to its life-processes, which include among others, celebrating Christmas, this process includes the semiotic practices of hanging Christmas lights outside the houses, setting up the Christmas tree, writing Christmas cards, etc. These semiotic practices I just mentioned are socially meaningful since those who follow them are seen in society as people who care about the celebration of this holiday and are the group to which the practices are meaningful.

Lemke (1990) not only analyzes communities as semiotic entities, but also as biological entities. From this analysis, he looks at the semiotic process from a social and from a biological perspective, which is a feature of semiotics that is hinted at by Kress et al (2001: 42) in their definition of multimodality; some senses are used to make meaning and that meaning is interpreted using different senses. For Lemke, biological processes are combined with semiotic processes in order to make meaning; for instance, when we taste a cup of coffee, the biological sense of taste is used in combination with the semiotic process of recognizing the characteristics that one has socially learnt about coffee.

The other three key concepts that Lemke (1990) refers to in his theory are those of semiotic resources, semiotic formations, and semiotic texts. Semiotic resources represent the possible ways in which meaning can be made; semiotic formations represent the meaningful action patterns that have been taken in a community using semiotic resources; and semiotic texts represent the way social life has been lived; they are the basis for studying the semiotic systems of communities. In order to get a better understanding of these concepts, I suggest equating them to similar concepts within the linguistic system, since it had been further studied. In doing so, semiotic resources would be the equivalent of linguistic signs; semiotic formations would be the equivalent of sentences, and semiotic texts would be the equivalent of linguistic texts.

The same way linguistic texts are analyzed in search of their meaning, so semiotic texts can be analyzed. In Lemke's (1990) opinion, such an analysis needs to include two perspectives: the dynamic one that refers to the way a semiotic text would be experienced by someone that is being part of it, and the synoptic perspective which is the one of someone that is analyzing the semiotic text after it has taken place or outside it. The author emphasizes the importance of combining both perspectives when carrying out semiotic research.

Lemke (1990), the same as the authors previously discussed, takes a functional approach to semiotic systems. He presents five functions that semiotic systems perform, which are related to Halliday's (1978) ideational, logical, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. The five functions that Lemke proposes are the following:

1. Making representations: An action can be performed in order to represent another action. This representation can occur using semiotic resources for the representation that differ from the ones used for performing the original action.
2. Making spatial, structural, sequential, causal, among other kinds of relations between objects, events, processes, etc.
3. Making interactions that elicit or can elicit several responses (this is related to Halliday's concept of mood).
4. Expressing a point of view towards one's actions (relates to Halliday's modality and to his interpersonal metafunction and has also been studied by Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996).
5. Organizing actions into coherent wholes, and distinguishing the different degrees to which actions are related to one another (relates to Halliday's textual function).

2.2.4 Michael O'Toole (1994)

Other authors should also be recognized for their study of semiotic systems other than language. Among them, Michael O'Toole (1994) published his insights about the semiotic study of paintings, sculpture, and architecture. His approach is a functional one, in alignment with Halliday's systemic functional approach to Linguistics, as is Hodge & Kress's and Lemke's for the most part. The author presents individual ways of analysis that are specific to each of the art forms mentioned, painting, sculpture, and architecture.

O'Toole's theory is explained by means of examples from painting, sculpture, and architecture that are analyzed using the systemic functional approach he proposes. His approach divides the piece of art into areas and analyzes the functions that are performed in each area. It is not my intention to present and explain all the concepts he presents; it

will suffice to stress the author's work regarding the study of several semiotic modes. It is also important to relate his work to other functional approaches to semiotic systems, such as Halliday's as I mentioned before and Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) do as I will show later. Another aspect of his theory that is important is that he does not analyze the compositions only as a whole, but he also focuses on specific units that form each kind of composition (for instance architectural compositions are analyzed into the units of building, floor, room, and element (O'Toole, 1994: 86))².

I will however refer to his functional conception in general. The author conceives of the existence of three functions that the art forms perform in expressing their meaning, as Halliday does for language. The first function he calls the representational function for painting and sculpture, and the experiential function for architecture. This function is the one that has to do with the content of the composition. The second is the modal function for painting and sculpture, and for architecture it is called interpersonal. This is the function that relates to the relationship between the author and the viewer of the composition. The third function is the compositional one for painting and sculpture, and it is called the textual function for architecture. It relates to the composition as a whole, to how the choices made for the expression of the other two functions come together and create the meaning of the whole composition.

From this brief presentation of O'Toole's definitions, Halliday's influence in the concepts he uses is clear. His work is an example of how a functional approach to semiotics can function for the analysis of various semiotic systems and along with Hodge & Kress was a pioneer in doing so.

2.2.5 Gunther Kress & Theo van Leeuwen

² For more details on this approach, I suggest consulting O'Toole's concept charts that appear in O'Toole, 1994: 24, 36, 86.

One of the most important contributions to the study of meaning-making is the continuation of Kress' work, this time in cooperation with Theo van Leeuwen. This was published in 1996, under the title *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design* (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Here, the authors focused on visual communication, its importance, and its parallels with verbal communication in terms of the concepts of parole as the realization of the semantic potential of signs (langue), and also in terms of the concepts of metafunctions.

Kress & van Leeuwen (1996: 33) define the different systems of representing meaning that there are in society using the term 'modes of representation' and by outlining the features of these modes they describe what they call the 'semiotic landscape'. Briefly the description of this semiotic landscape is as follows: each mode of representation has different potentials for realizing meaning, that is, not all meanings that can be represented in writing can also be represented in visual texts. In addition, all modes of communication have an evolving history depending on the uses to which they are put; modes of communication are always interacting in serving the overall purpose of communication.

All semiotic modes in their interaction function as a communication system (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). In describing the functions that these modes perform, the authors use the same functions that Halliday (1985) had described for the semiotic system of language and apply them to the visual mode of communication. The ideational function refers to the representation of meaning, the interpersonal to the relationships between the producer and receiver of the message, and the textual to the coherence of signs within a text and their coherence with the social context the text has been produced in, as we have seen in O'Toole.

The ideational function can be said to be realized in the form of what Kress & van Leeuwen (1996: 41) describe as 'narrative representations'. In other words, 'narrative representations' are the semiotic concept that allows for the design of social actions, the description of how social actions take place. In order to identify the components of a

social action, 'narrative representations' can be divided into different components: participants, processes, and circumstances; these concepts applied to visual compositions derive from the Hallidyan approach to language.

Participants in visual compositions are any and all the elements in the visual composition. They can be interactive (this means they participate in the act of communication) or represented (those about whom the image is produced). Participants may be connected to one another through the use of vectors that in visual texts are the equivalent of processes in written language. There can be three types of participants: the actor (this participant is more salient, better defined in the image and the vector departs from this participant), the goal, and the recipient.

Processes in visual compositions are classified by Kress & van Leeuwen, based on their work together in 1990, into conceptual (without vectors) or presentational (narrative, with vectors). Within the narrative processes there is another classification based on the kinds of vectors and the number and kinds of participants that are involved in them.

In the case of narrative images, there is what Kress & van Leeuwen (1996: 69) describe as secondary participants, which they name circumstances. These can be classified into locative circumstances (they relate other participants to the setting), circumstances of means (these are tools that are used in the action processes, they can even be vectors), and circumstances of accompaniment (these are present when there are no vectors to relate the participants).

Once again, the concept of modality as a means to shape reality that was explored by Hodge & Kress (1988: 121) is revisited, this time with a focus on visual compositions. Hodge & Kress (1988) talked about modality as a resource that powerful social groups used to shape reality into a discourse representative of the ideologies that could keep them in power. For instance, the political discourse in the 1800s was one that characterized women as incapable of understanding politics and prohibited them from voting, thus supporting the ideology and strengthening the male power in a male

dominated society. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996: 159) analyze the concept of modality as the means that producers of meaning can use to express their attitude towards the text they are creating. The attitude expressed is usually representative of the ideology of the social group that produces the meaning.

The authors state that modality in visual compositions can be expressed using the visual semiotic resources of contrast, sharpness, and colors displayed in the composition. Before them, O'Toole (1994) had also studied modality in visual compositions in terms of the positioning of participants within the compositions (for example if one participant is sitting down his/her position is less powerful than one that is standing up and looking at him/her). Visual modality is looked at in Kress and van Leeuwen's work by analyzing what elements the producer has placed in the foreground of the composition in order to emphasize their importance. An example of modality shaping reality to express an ideology can be seen for example in advertising campaigns for army recruiting in the US. The predominant colors used are blue, red, and white which bring to mind the colors of the American flag for the receivers of the image. These colors in turn reflect the ideology of patriotism and nationalism that US army recruiters emphasize in their campaigns.

The meaning of a composition as a whole is also analyzed by Kress and van Leeuwen, as a complex of relationships among the narrative representations, the concepts that appear in the composition, and the relationship between the positions that has been designed for the viewer of the image. The interaction of these elements is what determines the meaning of a composition as a whole. In order to analyze how the interaction of these elements takes place in multimodal texts, the authors suggest looking at three aspects. Number one is the information value of the elements in an image, which depends on the placement of the elements, and on their visual or textual nature. Aspect two is salience which refers to differences in sharpness, relative size, and placement in the background or foreground of visual and textual elements. Aspect three is framing which refers to the presence or absence of lines that divide and group the elements in the image (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996: 214).

As an extension of their analysis of compositions as a whole, the authors look at the concept of multimodality. This concept is what characterizes what the authors define as multimodal or composite texts, which are those texts that are created using several modes of communication. For instance, a scene from a film combines sound, language and visual elements in a single multimodal text.

Briefly comparing the work of Hodge & Kress in 1988 and the work of Kress & van Leeuwen in 1996, I would say the second publication is much more specific in terms of the kinds of compositions it targets with its methods of analysis. In addition, the first publication is more of a theoretical framework for the area of social semiotics, though the authors present part of their theories using examples. In general, the framework of analysis of the first publication focuses more on the analysis of texts from the point of view of the producer, and the social constraints that determine the production of meaning. The theoretical framework of the second publication focuses on the receiver's end of a text. As I said, in 1988 the focus was to study the logonomic systems and ideological basis that were underlying the production of a text and thus were reflected in the final product. However, in 1996, the focus was more on presenting ways to analyze the effects of visual and textual compositions in their receivers; the focus was to provide methods of analysis for the viewer of a visual text, or a visual/ textually combined text to better grasp its message.

Having discussed some of the theories of social semiotics, I will examine the direction in which these theories have evolved. Mainly, social semiotic theories have moved from studying individual semiotic modes (Barthes', 1977, Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) to a growing interest in the use of several modes of communication in the same composition, known in the theory as a multimodal composition.

2.2.6 Kress et al (2001)

Based on the conception that communication is multimodal in nature, and that the teaching-learning process is an instance of communication, Gunther Kress, Carey Jewitt,

John Ogborn, and Tsatsarelis Charalampos published in 2001 their book *Multimodal Teaching and Learning: the rhetorics of the science classroom*, which illustrated their theories about the use of multimodality in teaching science. The most relevant characteristic of their approach is that they considered all the modes of communication present in the classroom to be of equivalent importance and that meaning is created by all these modes together (Kress et al, 2001).

In discussing this multimodality of communication, the authors cover the fact that meaning is made through the relationship established between the participants in the process of communication. In addition, they specify that this meaning-making relationship should be characterized by what they call 'maximal understanding', participants try to make their messages as understandable as possible (Kress et al, 2001: 11).

Nevertheless, there are times when participants that are in a position of power do not follow the 'maximal understanding' principle in order to make the understanding of a message more difficult for other less powerful participants. The fact that some participants in communication are more powerful than others, can be explained in some cases due to the lack of knowledge they have about the semiotic system that the more powerful participants use to represent their message (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). For example, a sculptor is someone with knowledge of the system of representation of sculpture that not all possible receivers of his/ her message will be able to understand. Therefore, a sculptor is in a position of power with regards to some of the receivers of his/her message.

Rather than outlining the contents of the Kress et al's publication (2001), I will present the connections that there are between the authors' approach to multimodal teaching and learning and other multimodal theories that I have discussed and will discuss in this section and that relate to my analysis.

The first connection is the authors' implementation of the Hallidayan metafunctions of language to their multimodal analysis of classroom communication. They understand that for communication to take place effectively, the three ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions have to be performed (Kress et al, 2001). As a result, they adapt Halliday's terminology and analyze multimodal communication in the classroom in the light of Halliday's linguistic metafunctions continuing to extend Halliday's linguistic concepts in their multimodal analysis.

Referring back to Hodge & Kress (1988) and adding that by reflecting the interest of the producer, the selection of a sign to express certain meaning also reflects the producer's ideology and that of the social group the producer belongs to. By extension, the selection of a sign also reflects the relationship, whether it is a power or solidarity relationship that exists between the producer and the receiver of the sign. This process of selecting a sign to represent what the individual wants to emphasize about an object of reality is what Kress et al (2001) call 'representation' (referring to a property as a mansion to emphasize that it is extremely large), which is closely related to what they call the process of 'communication'.

Kress et al (2001: 136) present the concept of metaphor creation as a multimodal process that can transform the semiotic resources available for representation in a culture. Two elements should be taken into consideration regarding this concept. The role of the audience is part of this definition in the way the authors explain the multimodal nature of creating a metaphor.

For example, "her sky blue eyes" a metaphor has been created by equating the blue of the sky to the color of someone's eyes. First, in order for the metaphor to be created, to acquire its meaning, the producer and the receiver of this message have had to have seen the blue of the sky. Second, in the production of the phrase, oral speech and the sense of sight are involved. Third, for the phrase to be meaningful, in its reception the sense of listening and the sense of sight are involved. Summarizing the creation of this metaphor is based on an experience, the blue color of the sky. Therefore, as a result of new

experiences, new metaphors can be created. Furthermore, this metaphor creation process is multimodal since the senses, the semiotic modes involved in the creation of the metaphor are not the same as the ones involved in its reception; thus Kress et al (2001: 136) show the audience as an active receiver in the communication process, with the audience involved in the meaning-creation process.

One last connection regarding the process of metaphor creation is the one between the work of Kress et al (2001) and the work of van Leeuwen (2005). Based on the example in the previous paragraph, it can be said that new experiences prompt the creation of new metaphors. Consequently, the creation of new metaphors implies that there are new semiotic resources that can be used to express meaning within a given semiotic mode. In their work, Kress et al (2001: 137) and van Leeuwen (2005: 29) all agree in characterizing the concept of metaphors as a means of transformation of semiotic resources.

In sum, Kress et al (2001) intended to describe the teaching and learning processes that take place in a science classroom. Their work shows the value of the theoretical framework of social semiotics to analyze such complex processes as the teacher-student interaction in the learning process. They show the effectiveness of this process when several semiotic modes are used at the same time to communicate. They illustrate the environment of the multimodal classroom as an example of how in our world modes of communication other than language are gaining in importance. Lastly, they show how different semiotic modes interact in communication by means of multimodality.

2.2.7 Kress & van Leeuwen (2001)

The concept of multimodality is further analyzed in another publication where Kress and van Leeuwen worked together in taking the multimodal perspective a step further and exploring it from a slightly different angle. This time, they aimed at signaling out the common semiotic resources that different semiotic modes of communication share, though they are realized differently in each mode, according to Kress & van Leeuwen.

Nowadays, due to the use of digitisation, the concept of multimodality, and the multimodal approach to the study of making meaning have gained in relevance since texts are now generally managed by a multi-skilled person that is faced with the decision of what semiotic modes best suit the expression of a certain meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

Generally, the concept of multimodality has been studied with regards to the combination of meanings that are made using different semiotic modes, as we've seen. The resulting compound of these meanings appearing together in the same semiotic composition becomes a multimodal piece where all modes of communication contribute to the creation of a unique meaning (this is the way the concept has been put to use by Kress & van Leeuwen (1996), Riley (2003), Williamson (2005) and Engebretsen (2006) in studies that I will refer to later). However, a different way to study multimodality is to determine the commonalities that the different semiotic modes share for producing meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). For example, one common trait that is realized in different ways throughout different modes of communication is 'framing'; in magazines it is realized in terms of the layout of the written pieces, in paintings it is realized by means of the lines that the elements in the painting create, in an office building it is realized by means of the layout of the cubicles, and in an oral text or time-based text, it is realized by means of the separation between phrases (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

In their endeavor to determine the common traits of the different modes of communication, Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) assume the position that meaning is made mainly in four strata (following Halliday's terminology). The four strata are discourse, design, production, and distribution, and it is important to add that they are based in the practical actions that lead to the creation of a new product or text, the same approach is later followed by Engebretsen (2006) and Riley (2003).

The first stratum, discourses, is defined as "socially constructed knowledges of some aspect of reality. 'Socially constructed' means that they have been developed in specific

social contexts and in ways which are relevant to specific social actors” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001: 4). This definition of discourses relates to Hodge & Kress’s (1988) idea that the ideology of social groups is reflected in their discourses, since Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) point out that a discourse is developed taking into account the interests of specific social actors. In addition, this definition is also in alignment with Lemke's (1990) emphasis on social contexts when the author describes how certain communicative practices take place in certain contexts.

The second stratum, design, is the midpoint between content and expression. It is the point where the decision is made of what is the best semiotic mode to express the content that appears in reality, without forgetting how this content will be received by the potential audience (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Two aspects should be highlighted about this definition, its emphasis on the active role of the audience in receiving the content of a message, and the fact that there is recognition that there are semiotic modes that can express a certain meaning better than others. The active role of the audience had been addressed by them in their analysis of multimodal communication, but the use of certain semiotic modes to express certain meanings is a different way of looking at meaning-making which will affect the following stratum of this process.

The third stratum is production, this is when the expression is organized, and this is when the semiotic artifact is produced (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). It is in the production of meaning when the discourse of a social group and the design, the idea, of how to express that discourse come together into a final product. Production, as the authors also highlight, is a stratum that produces a tangible result. There is an extra step necessary where meaning is created, which is the fourth stratum, distribution.

Distribution allows for the further stratification of expression (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). I understand that at this stratum, the meanings of a social discourse, that were thought to be expressed in a certain social context using a specific semiotic mode, and that have come together in a tangible production, are received by the audience, and have

an effect on it. But the meaning-making process is not over until meanings have been interpreted by the audience, which this stage accounts for.

The authors emphasize that the four strata are meaningless without the interpretation stage. For them, every act of communication is incomplete if it is not interpreted by someone; this statement is consistent with the social semiotic perspective, and with Jakobson's model of communication that includes the addressee as an active participant, as well as with Halliday's (1978) view of language which implies the existence of the interpretation stage mainly in his interpersonal metafunction explaining the relationship between the participants in the communication act.

Summarizing, Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001) multimodal theory of communication is one that characterizes semiotic production in terms of articulation and interpretation, where semiotic resources (semiotic modes) are put to use in different media (material resources) to produce discourses. This consideration about a multimodal theory of communication is in accordance with the fact that social semiotics theory includes the extra-semiotic phenomena mentioned and left out by Saussure in his studies. Such phenomena are now studied as part of the meaning-making process.

For Kress & van Leeuwen (2001), the meaning-making process is not circumscribed to communicative events. The authors refer to the need for a social study of a multimodal world to pay attention to what they call 'practically-lived texts'. These texts can include any activity carried out during a day; it could be anything from eating habits to traveling routines. A practically-lived text (part of everyday practices) could be eating habits of a family, if they eat healthy foods; this is part of their ideology which they will reflect in their everyday discourse, design, production, and distribution of meaning.

Another example is a person whose ideology leads him/her not to care about protocols. This person in his/her practically-lived texts will reflect this ideology, his/her way of dressing will be informal, when having guests over for dinner, he/she will behave informally. In addition, this person will articulate these practically-lived texts in the

decoration of his/her home, for instance, such an informal decoration would be what Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) call externally evident signs. On the other hand, these practically-lived texts will be interpreted, in my example by friends visiting the house of this person. Resulting from this interpretation, there are internal signs recognized by the interpreter (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), which in my example would be the friends recognizing in the informal decoration, that the owner of the house does not care about protocol.

In the description of a multimodal world, semiotics needs to take into account the meaning-making forms that are based in the physiology of humans or those that are made from culturally drawn materials, or the meaning-making forms that derive from humans as social actors. This means that social semiotics needs to view everything that goes on in the world from natural phenomenon such as the change of seasons, to colours, to human actions as a meaningful event, or to be more specific as an event with a meaning potential. Now the world is presented as a reality with which humans make meaning in their daily interaction, then what is left to decide is which meanings to make using what materials depending on the context. In other words, what is left to do is devising the discursive practices based on the context of situation in which they take place.

Discursive practices are not and cannot be static because they are subjected to social interaction which makes them "productive and transformative" in nature, according to Kress & van Leeuwen (2001: 32). They are productive as long as they are used to produce meanings but they are also transformative because in the constant production of meaning and with the constant social influence, new modes and media of realizing meaning appear, thus transforming the previously existing discursive practice.

There is yet another concept that influences the changes of discourse which is that of ideology; in Kress & van Leeuwen's view, ideology allows us to connect the changes in discourse with the changes in economic practices. In my previous example of the informal decoration of a home, I showed how an ideology can be expressed and interpreted. However, the existence of new realities brings about interpretations for those

realities that may result in the formation of new ideologies that will be expressed and interpreted. For instance, if organic foods are introduced in the market, the discursive practices that have to do with food will change to accommodate the means to realize the meanings (for instance the benefits) that eating organic food represent. This change will be mediated by ideology; in this case the ideology related to organic foods has appeared in society and will be expressed by social groups who consider organic foods healthier and more nutritious.

Finally, I want to stress the authors' new angle of looking at multimodality which is that they call attention to the existence of common semiotic resources across different modes of communication. As a brief example, they analyze the semiotic resource of framing and how it can be used in paintings or the layout of buildings to separate the elements of a semiotic composition. Another contribution of their work is the vision of everyday activities as meaning-making events. Yet another important idea that these authors present is the significance of ideology as a connector between discursive practices and economic changes.

2.2.8 Theo van Leeuwen (2005)

Going on to the work of Van Leeuwen (2005), we see that the work of Kress and van Leeuwen is further developed by this author in his book entitled *Introduction to Social Semiotics*. This work is of extreme relevance to the Social Semiotics field, since it combines and expands the work of Hodge and Kress in 1988 and the later work of Kress and van Leeuwen himself in 1996 and 2001. In this 2005 publication, the author analyzes the semiotic process of text production and publication by outlining the Semantic Principles that underlie such an analysis. These principles include semiotic resources, their potential and manners of innovation; semiotic rules and their categories (impersonal authority, conformity, role models, and expertise); and the functionality principle (the functions that a text performs) which can be analyzed in texts based on Halliday's three metafunctions of language, with their respective visual applications, or the functionality

of objects which refers to their function in structure, their function in society, or the degree of functionality they offer to users (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Semiotic resources in van Leeuwen's (2005: 3) terms refer to the different means that the modes of communication (visual, verbal, dressing, eating, decorating) offer human beings to express different meanings. Each semiotic resource has what the author calls its semiotic potential, based on the characteristics of how the resource has been, is, and can be used to express meaning (van Leeuwen, 2005: 4). Van Leeuwen (2005) himself points to the relationship that there is between the concept of semiotic potential and the Hallidyan 'meaning potential' (the signifying potential of linguistic signifiers). One of the ways of describing the semiotic potential of semiotic resources according to van Leeuwen (2005) is by creating semiotic inventories (collections of examples of how a specific semiotic resource has been used in different modes of communication). As examples, the author presents inventories for the semiotic resource of framing (separation between the elements of a visual composition, as it had been introduced by Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) as it has been used in magazines (*Growing Up Female* (Abigail Heyman, 1974), Shower Advertisement (*House Beautiful*, September, 1998: 34) and others shown in van Leeuwen, 2005: 7-11), and in the layout of schools and office buildings (as shown in van Leeuwen, 2005: 15 & 18).

Further, in relation to semiotic resources, van Leeuwen (2005) also examines their ways of innovation. Since semiotic resources are used in a social context, they are constantly subject to change; two of the main means of semiotic transformation of semiotic resources, according to van Leeuwen (2005) are experiential metaphor and connotation. Experiential metaphors are those physically or culturally mediated experiences allowing human beings to make sense of the comparison that the metaphor presents them with (van Leeuwen, 2005: 30). Consequently, it can be said that new experiences would eventually be reflected in the creation of new metaphors. For example, someone can understand the metaphor 'my feet are ice cold' as long as they have had the physical experience of how cold ice is.

Connotation, the other way of semiotic innovation discussed by van Leeuwen (2005) based on Barthes' (1977) definition refers to meanings that are shared by human beings that are knowledgeable of the same culture. Thus taken, 'connotations' are not innovative in nature; however, as the world becomes more global and more things are imported such as ways of dressing or food recipes, connotations go from one culture to another providing innovative meanings for semiotic resources³.

The second semiotic principle presented by van Leeuwen (2005: 47-68) is that of semiotic rules, which can be 'lexicon' rules (what signifiers are to be used for which signifieds) and 'grammar' rules (how signs are organized in the creation of messages). As part of these semiotic rules he first describes the 'lexicon' rule of 'arbitrariness', a concept that differs from the way Saussure used it. Saussure explained that there is no reason why a signifier is associated with a certain signified. Van Leeuwen acknowledges that some signs like ID numbers are arbitrary, but for most semiotic resources or its synonym term, signs, the association between signifier and signified is culturally, socially, and personally determined by the cultural background, the social context, and the personal interests that surround the production of each semiotic resource. The second rule which is a 'grammar' rule is that of double articulation which refers to the capacity of any semiotic system to be articulated at two levels, the easier example is the way in which in language, words are articulated by sounds, and messages are articulated by words.

Other types of semiotic rules are presented by van Leeuwen (2005: 47-68), which govern semiotic systems and are subject to change:

1. Personal authority: exercised by people in positions of power who don't think it is necessary to justify their actions, an example is the rules of fashion.

³ This definition of 'connotation' is present in the localization process as long as it facilitates the globalization of products (computer programs, for example) and services (internet shopping practices such as e-bay).

2. Impersonal authority: This kind of authority can be realized in the form of the written word or in the form of tradition.
3. Conformity: As opposed to 'tradition' which determines what the social group has always done, 'conformity' determines what the social group is doing at the moment.
4. Role models: It refers to the exercise of social control coming from high status people, the mass media, the parents, etc.
5. Expertise: This rule relates to the rule of role models, since it dictates that things are to be done in a certain way because some expert says so.

In terms of functionalism, the third principle, van Leeuwen (2005: 69-90) presents the functional perspectives in Architecture (the function of the building or house is what matters, ornamentation is not important) Anthropology and Sociology (the activities of individuals (seen as parts of a whole) function to maintain the unity or cohesion of society (seen as a whole)), Linguistics, and Semiotics (the Hallidayan concepts of functional grammar and functional linguistics). Last, he presents his approach to functionalism by showing a functional analysis of a baby's toy, the pram rattle. He analyzes the ideational and interpersonal meaning potentials of the toy. A third aspect he looks at is the rules of use of this toy. He suggests that under the functionality principle, the contextually specific rules that govern the interpretation of a meaning expressed by an object should be considered; in his example, the rules of use of the pram rattle are analyzed (79-87).

In addition to describing the semiotic principles discussed by van Leeuwen (2005), another approach to analysis taken by this author and previously explored by him and Kress in 1996 is the social environment in which texts are produced and published (note that text here is a generic term that refers to the production of a written text, an image, an object and their presentation to society).

In order to view things from a social angle, van Leeuwen presents the different dimensions that a social semiotic analysis should include. These dimensions are

discourse, understood as the socially constructed knowledge of some aspect of reality (a definition that he and Kress had adopted in Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001:4). Discourse also refers to the use of semiotic resources to represent the world, the use of semiotic resources to socially construct some aspect of reality. The other dimension is *genre* which refers to the specific use of semiotic resources for enacting specific communicative interactions (such as the use of narrative written texts in the literary genre of a novel).

The third dimension is *style* which refers to the way people perform genres using semiotic resources, thus expressing their identities and values. The concept of styles as reflective of identity and value had been introduced by Hodge & Kress (1988) when they maintained that each social group had certain metasigns reflective of their style and that they used these metasigns to express their ideologies.

The fourth dimension is *modality* which refers to the use of semiotic resources for the creation of truth or reality values pertaining to a social group. A simple example of modality at work can be seen in a linguistic text to advertise a pharmaceutical drug for headaches. To illustrate, consider the name of the drug is 'Remedy'. The advertiser will tend to create a truth value related to the drug to encourage people to buy it. Such a value can be created with the slogan 'Remedy will eliminate your headache'. However the reality value associated to the drug is that 'Remedy' may or may not eliminate someone's headache.

Other than those four dimensions of semiotic analysis, van Leeuwen stresses the need for this kind of analysis to take into consideration multimodal cohesion, rhythm, composition, information linking, and dialogue, which in the author's opinion, are the ways to create a cohesive multimodal text and communicative event (van Leeuwen, 2005).

Rhythm is the concept that defines composition in time, the way of achieving cohesion in multimodal texts that unfold over time. In order to illustrate this concept van Leeuwen (2005) presents the different ways in which rhythm divides time unfolding events. The

smallest divisions are measures and pulses. The compound of seven or eight measures at a time forms what van Leeuwen defines as phrases. A third level of rhythmic organization is to be found in groups of seven or eight phrases into moves that are observable in communicative acts since there is a longer pause, a gesture, a change in the pitch of the voice between one move and the next one.

Layout is the concept that defines composition in space and it refers to the articulation of semiotic modes in space, from a picture to a city (van Leeuwen, 2005: 181). Layout can be characterized in terms of the 'weight' of an element in a composition which is given by its 'saliency'.

Another aspect to take into account in the layout is the notion of given and new, which van Leeuwen (2005) analyzes in terms of new information to the right of the composition and given information appearing to the left of the composition. This given-new/ left-right relationship is in accordance with the direction in which Western societies write. In my opinion, the same correlation can be applied to compositions from other cultures, depending on the direction in which they write.

The notion of given and new can be considered to be a polarized element in the layout of a text, since the terms refer to elements that represent different information. The same kind of polarization is present in the concepts of ideal information versus real. Given the position of the mind in the human body, subjective information representing wishes, unreal situations are generally located in the upper half of a composition whereas real, objective information is located on the bottom half of the composition (van Leeuwen, 2005: 201)

Van Leeuwen (2005) explicitly discusses the principles of multimodality for multimodal texts and communicative events. In previous publications, for instance in Kress & van Leeuwen (2001), it had already been acknowledged that communicative events are multimodal in essence. However, the discussion of multimodality factors had been held referring only to multimodal texts. In this publication, the author discusses

communicative events explicitly and in full detail when he refers to multimodality in dialogues, in terms of their multimodal cohesion which is achieved by means of combining linguistic elements with gestures and voice inflections in this kind of communication (van Leeuwen, 2005: 248-268).

As already suggested, van Leeuwen (2005) brings together the social semiotic theories that preceded this publication, including an overview of the author's previous work and showing the influence of previous publications in the concepts presented in this one. In addition, his work is of great practical significance to the theoretical social semiotic field because it exemplifies the implementation of the theory he presents in the analysis of several semiotic modes of communication, namely advertisements of magazines, the layout of buildings, representation of diagrams, dialogue, etc.

The author presents a complete review of social semiotic studies and is able to capture the details and theoretical framework of the social semiotic field in a manner that facilitates the use of these theories in the analysis of everyday meaning-making practices. In sum, he first presents the principles under which meaning is made in society. Next, he presents the dimensions that need to be considered to analyze the use of the meaning-making principles in a communicative situation. Last, he presents the elements that make the meanings created in all multimodal communicative situations come together cohesively.

In the next section, I will move on to present other studies of the social semiotics field.

2.3 Multimodal theories in practice

What follows is a review of the publications of several authors that have been working in Social Semiotics. It is noticeable that the work of these authors is based in its entirety on the theories presented above. Before I look at these authors, I should say that I agree with the statement that all acts of communication are multimodal in nature, and all acts of communication take place in a social context that needs to be taken into account when

communication is to be analyzed. Consequently, I consider Multimodal Semiotics a form of Social Semiotics analysis, the former terminology reflects the evolution of the theoretical framework of the latter into a more comprehensive approach to the study of all forms of communicative acts in society.

2.3.1 Howard Riley (2003)

Another interesting approach to the study of multimodality and very useful for my present research is that of Riley (2003). He studies the multimodal meaning of consumption objects stating that the different modes of meaning-making of these objects are to be found in the design selections of materials to produce the goods, processes, packaging and distribution to get the goods on the market, and display and publicity systems used to guarantee what he terms the reception of the goods. The combination of all these design selections as a means of realization is called medium in Riley's work.

The author also takes on Halliday's concepts of field, tenor, and mode as they can be applied to design, and specifies that the Hallidyan concept of mode applied to a social semiotics of design is to be seen as the how of expressing the realization of meaning. For instance, where and how hot dogs (the goods) are displayed and sold, how the design of the package (the concept of design) is developed, and how the ingredients (the materials) are manipulated to produce the hot dogs (goods) are, according to Riley (2003: 3), modes of communication that give way to multimodal communication with the consumers of hot dogs (the goods) by means of creating a social meaning for the hot dogs (consumption goods) produced. Consequently, according to Riley's theory, hot dogs prepared with fresh buns, mustard, ketchup, wrapped in white paper and sold in a baseball game acquire their social meaning depending on the ingredients and presentation that have been used to prepare them. For instance, one of the social meanings that hot dogs acquire is that of food that is easy to prepare and is typically consumed in baseball games.

In order to illustrate his model of how multimodality works and how social semiotics can be applied to design in order to decipher the social meanings of consumption goods,

Riley (2003: 4-6) analyzes the case of IMac and Dell computers. The author analyzes the modes of expressions chosen in the different stages of production of the products which he names discourse, conception, inception, and reception. In broad terms, the author compares the design, packaging, and functional characteristics of both computers, where IMac is a more sophisticated product geared to computer experts and Dell is a product geared to everyday computer users, people who do not work with things such as graphic design.

At the end, he briefly mentions what the social meaning of each computer is, thanks to the combination of modes of communication chosen at each stage of production. In other words, he explains that IMac computers have higher social value and prestige than Dell computers which has been achieved by the multimodal combination of modes of expressing meaning chosen at each of the production stages (Riley, 2003). One flaw of the study is that the author fails to provide conclusions or recommendations for the application of this approach.

2.3.2 Rick Iedema (2003)

The purpose of discussing this article of Iedema is showing its relation to the concept of multimodality as it had been discussed by Kress & van Leeuwen (2001). Furthermore, Iedema (2003) presents his concept of resemiotization of semiotic resources, which is a concept that can be taken into account to expand the reach of the present research, but I will turn to this issue in the conclusions.

According to Iedema (2003), multimodality implies that language is no longer the most important meaning-making resource and the existing boundaries among the modes of communication are not so well defined anymore. Under this approach, the author states that a multimodal hypothesis implies that all communicative practices are multimodal, and thus the article understands that all texts are multimodal and are described in that way. Iedema (2003: 40) understands multimodality as the concept that enables the description of a “practice of representation” in all its complexity, meaning for instance

the description of oral speech including gestures, stance, and tone of the voice as meaning-makers that act together with language.

Another concept that Iedema (2003: 41) discusses and that derives from a multimodal and dynamic approach to semiosis is the concept of resemiotization. This concept refers to the transferability of semiotic resources from one semiotic mode to another. In order to explain it I will refer back to Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001) example of the semiotic resource of framing. Without giving a definition, these two authors had referred to multimodality in terms of the ability to use the same semiotic resource with different manifestations in different semiotic modes, which relates to Iedema's resemiotization. In Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001) example, framing, the separation of elements in a meaning composition, could be used in advertising or video sequences. In the example, framing in advertising refers to the separation of an image from a written text by means of lines. The same framing resource can be seen in video sequences in the cuts from one scene to the next one.

In sum, Iedema's article highlights the importance of multimodal analysis for social practices. It also states that such an analysis needs the compliment of a dynamic view of semiosis. This dynamic view summarized by the resemiotization concept also addresses the changes in social semiotic resources that van Leeuwen (2005) had discussed in his theory. When semiotic resources are transferred from one semiotic mode to another one, the need to adapt and realize the semiotic resource in a different semiotic mode brings about semiotic changes. It is also in uncovering such semiotic changes that a multimodal approach is useful (Iedema, 2003).

I believe Iedema's (2003) study of multimodality and his introduction of the resemiotization concept are extremely useful for social semiotics. Resemiotization adds new meaning and expands the uses of the concept of multimodality by stating that semiotic resources can be transferred from one semiotic mode to another. This addition of resemiotization brings out clearly that a multimodal approach is the key to understanding the communication process in all its intricate components in our current global world

where language is no longer the most important semiotic mode, and where the semiotic mode's differences are increasingly less distinguishable when we put them to use in our social semiotic practices.

2.3.3 Machin & Thornborrow (2003)

This is one article that deals with the concept of discourse and the way it is marketed around the world by large multinational companies. This study is particularly relevant for my present research since it refers to the marketization of discourse with which my study is concerned; specifically, it refers to women discourse. This process of marketization is carried out, in this case, by the localized versions of the *Cosmopolitan* magazine (Machin & Thornborrow, 2003). The same marketization process I believe takes place when multinational companies' websites are localized to address consumers in several markets around the world which I will illustrate in my analysis.

The study itself analyzed all the November 2001 issues of *Cosmopolitan* that are published in 44 different languages, in order to uncover how the discourses of women at work and women's sexuality were displayed in the different versions. Theoretically, Machin & Thornborrow, used multimodal discourse analysis to show how women's discourse related to the *Cosmopolitan* brand is distributed by the localized versions of the magazine. They base their analysis on Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001: 4) definition of discourse as the realization of social practices using different semiotic modes. The result of their analysis comes from the use of visual and verbal modality, and the textual construction of agency (following Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) to display the *Cosmo* brand, that is the values held by the *Cosmo* magazine which are independence, fun, and power (Machin and Thornborrow, 2003).

In articles about sex and work appearing in *Cosmo* magazines around the world, Machin & Thornborrow (2003) identify how the agency of women is constructed by presenting women as powerful and capable of getting what they want, but at the same time women are portrayed as naïve and needing to please their male counterparts.

As I already stated, this article is of extreme relevance to the present research since my endeavor is similar, in that I will illustrate how social semiotic theories can be used to unveil the branding process that takes place through the localization of multinational companies' websites.

2.3.4 Martin Kaltenbacher (2004)

Kaltenbacher (2004) summarizes the evolution of the social semiotics field and establishes links between this field and the current situation of the language industry. He explains how those working in multimodality came out of the Systemic Functional Linguistics stream initiated with Halliday (1961, 1975, 1978), whose work and connections to Social Semiotics I have already discussed. He goes on to present the main concepts of Kress, van Leeuwen's, and O'Toole's works regarding the semiotics of images, which I have also presented above.

The main two questions that Kaltenbacher (2004) addresses regarding multimodality are: the hierarchies of communication modes and the changing functions of modes. According to the author, in a multimodal composition, it is necessary to categorize the modes of communication into primary, secondary, and tertiary modes according to their salience in the composition. However, as Kaltenbacher (2004) points out and I agree, the classification of the modes as primary, secondary, etc varies depending on the multimodal composition in question. For instance, in a children's book aimed at introducing animals to toddlers, visual may be the primary mode representing pictures of the animals with written language as a secondary mode, when the names of the animals appear written under the picture of the animal, intended for parents to read the names to the toddler. In the same kind of publication, a children's book related to animals that is intended for an older audience, written language may be considered the primary mode, with the visual one being the secondary mode if small illustrations of the animals appear as a supporting explanation for the information provided by means of the written language.

The second question addressed by Kaltenbacher (2004), that of the changing functions of mode refers to the change or disappearance over time of the meaning-potential of a mode. As an example to explain this notion of change, the existing movement from communication at the printed page level to communication at the level of screen, is a change that has been specifically addressed by Kress et al (2001: 136-139). To exemplify this we can consider the case of distance education, where students rather than accessing most materials in print, given to them by professors have to interact with websites designed for them to access their course materials. Therefore, written language as a mode of communication has suffered a change because it is now being used in a new media, the screen media which for instance offers the possibility of presenting flashing written texts, which offers written language an added meaning-making resource that is not present in the printed page media.

The author mentions the semiotic modes that have been investigated, such as visual, architectural, acoustic, color, gesture, and other combinations of modes (Kaltenbacher, 2004: 196). He also presents an inventory of fields where multimodal research has been taken, speech synthesis and automation, medicine, hypertext design, education, entertainment industry (he mentions the subtitling of movies, which I can link to the translation stage of the localization process). One that is important for this research is multimodality in hypertext design. Kaltenbacher mentions Lemke's work in hypertext semantics, which basically states that the users of websites create their own meanings as they navigate through the website, users create their own hypertext.⁴

⁴ Before I move on to review the work of other authors, I would like to make clear that in this research I will not include Lemke's or other authors' work in hypertext semantics, even if I recognize the relevance of this concept for multimodal semiotic studies. The reason behind my decision is mere space and research constraint. My present analysis of websites is limited to the interaction between a user and the home page of a website, and does not include a hypertextual analysis which would mean carrying out a different research with different research questions to be answered.

2.3.5 Peter Teo

One of the ways in which Kress & van Leeuwen's theory of semiotic analysis can be applied is to be found in Teo's (2004) semiotic deconstruction of three national campaign posters from Singapore. Teo analyzes the ideational (participants, processes and circumstances) and interpersonal (angle from which the photo is taken, layout of the elements in the visual composition) dimensions of the posters in order to uncover the ideological framework that lies beneath the surface of the images and texts presented in the posters.

The author applies Kress & van Leeuwen's (1996) ideas to a specific kind of text, posters, which is unique in that its advertising message is expressed by means of the interaction of visual and textual elements (Teo, 2004), in other words, a poster expresses its message by means of a multimodal construction of visual and textual elements. Teo (2004) focuses the analysis of posters on determining the effectiveness of visual and textual elements separately in delivering their message, and how the visual and textual elements contrast and offer different messages to each other.

The key to this study and the reason for the use of multimodal analysis in this article, in Teo's (2004) view, is to be able to deconstruct the ideologies that the posters analyzed portray (Teo, 2004). In deciphering these ideologies, the author uncovers a series of contradictions in the way the interconnected textual and visual images present the ideological framework in the posters. The author shows how the meanings made by the visual images differ from the meanings made with the textual elements.

Teo's article from 2004 is a successful example of uncovering the ideological background of visual compositions.

2.3.6 Williamson (2005)

Another author who stresses the relevance of a multimodal study of discourse is Williamson (2005). He begins by mentioning the main trends of multimodal studies, in Northern Europe: Bunt & Beun (2001) and Granstrom (2002). He also mentions Anthony Baldry's project with four Italian universities with Paul Thibault's support (2000). The third trend is the current interest on multimodality in Australia based on Halliday's work. The fourth trend is the one from the U.S. with the work of Charles Goodwin and Sigrid Norris' studies on conversation (Williamson, 2005). However, Williamson focuses on the multimodal studies of discourse developed by the British trend (Kress, van Leeuwen, and Jewitt), which he defines using van Leeuwen's approach of discourse as "socially constructed knowledges of some aspect of reality" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001: 4).

Seen from a multimodal perspective, Williamson (2005) states that discourses reveal their place in time and space not only because they are expressed by means of several modes of communication, but also because they come in contact with previous discourses. Once again, this author refers to Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) strata of discourse, design, production, and distribution. Finally, his concluding remarks emphasize the value of a multimodal theory to achieve a critical analysis of discourse (Williamson, 2005: 1,2).

2.3.7 Martin Engebretsen (2006)

Having presented Riley's (2003) multimodal semiotics approach to the study of design, I will refer to another study that also explains the four stages of producing consumption goods. In 2006, Martin Engebretsen, followed Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) four strata for media-web communication: discourse, design, production, and distribution in his analysis of media-web texts that combine written and video modes of communication. When the video and written modes of communication are integrated into a multimodal text, they need to be adapted to the medium where the multimodal text will be presented, in this case, the web media (Engebretsen, 2006: 7).

The author discusses how, for instance, the narrative characteristics of written texts, such as presenting information sequentially, could be substituted with spatial organization in media-web texts. By using a certain layout in the visual composition, like displaying elements from right to left for Western website users, the producers of meaning can suggest following a narrative sequence of information from right to left. In addition, websites provide users with dynamic texts that give them the choice of whether to interact with the text or not. An example is that long TV video sequences that are intended to seduce the users, when inserted into websites are adapted to media video sequences that are shorter and give users the control of how long and when to watch them. (Engebresten, 2006: 10-13).

The most useful information from Engebresten's (2006) work for the present paper are the perspectives that he follows to discuss the integration of multimodal written and video texts in a multimodal web media. Those perspectives are 'distribution of content', 'visual coordination', and 'sequencing'. For distribution of content, the distinction is that written modes of communication serve to express meanings related to how, why, and more abstract ideas, whereas video serves the purpose of adding details and aesthetic meanings. Therefore, integration is generally achieved when the written text accounts for the video images and the images present the context of situation the written text refers to (Engebresten, 2006: 9).

The second perspective discussed by Engebresten is 'visual-coordination'. In order for users to achieve 'visual-coordination' and provide orientation to the readers, it is necessary that the design of the web page follows the conventional organization of left-right, upper-lower, and center-periphery. The author also discusses the element of 'continuity' between educational multimodal written and video texts in order to achieve 'visual-coordination'. This means that written and video contents are positioned in such a way in the web page that one points the user to the existence of the other; for instance, the video is close to the most relevant verbal content of the website (Engebresten, 2006: 11).

The third perspective discussed by the author is that of 'sequencing'. The main points to remember with regards to sequencing are that the transition from one mode to another, written to video should be kept as smooth as possible, and the user should be given proper instructions as to where to go next. For instance, an introductory text before a video sequence, or the use of brackets around the word video, are elements that can ensure the proper sequencing of information that is presented to the user of a multimodal written and video web text (Engebresten, 2006: 10).

2.4 Concluding Remarks

In this section I have presented the development of social semiotic theory and how it is related to previous linguistic theories in many of the concepts it presents, such as those of paradigmatic and syntagmatic planes, langue and parole, and the idea that reality is realized by means of semiotic systems and represented by multifunctions. I have also presented several practical studies carried out using social semiotics as a theoretical framework. In these studies we have seen the prevalence in social semiotic analysis of the theories I presented in this section.

Having reviewed several authors on social semiotics, I will briefly in the next few paragraphs highlight the concepts that constitute the theoretical framework of social semiotics, especially as they apply to my analysis.

Social semiotic theory in broad terms is an approach to the study of communication, to the study of how and what meanings are made by humans. In terms of what humans use to make meaning, the theory states that there are several social semiotic systems which are combined simultaneously and relate to the five senses (visual, aural, taste, touch, smell), and also the linguistic system. Smaller divisions of social semiotic systems are also pertinent, based on the social practice where the system is put into practice. For instance, surfing the internet is a social practice of our days that could combine the visual (colors, images, the font used for the written language), the aural (if there is any

background sound for the website), the touch system (in case a person is using a touch screen).

The fact that social semiotic systems are combined simultaneously is explained by the concept of multimodality. This concept refers to the use of more than one semiotic resource in a particular meaning-making social practice, such as the example explained above, using the Internet. There is also another implication of the concept of multimodality which is that the semiotic resources that form the semiotic systems are transferable from one system to another (Iedema, 2003; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). An example is the use of framing (the separation of elements in a meaning-making composition) in the social semiotic systems of painting, advertising, and speaking.

Looking at how humans make meaning using semiotic systems, the first aspect to consider is that humans do so within a given social context. Since meaning is made socially, the social context where meaning is made has an influence on the semiotic resources that are chosen to express meaning. From a social semiotic perspective, certain semiotic resources will be used in certain social contexts to express a given meaning. A simple everyday example is the semiotic resource used for a greeting in the social context of a letter. If the letter is written to a friend, the social context dictates that the greeting could be something familiar like the use of “Dear Mary” where these two linguistic signs (semiotic resources) were chosen according to the context. If the context is a cover letter, it dictates that a more formal greeting is necessary; therefore the semiotic resources chosen from the linguistic semiotic system will reflect this formality, the resources chosen could be “To Whom it May Concern”.

The second aspect to consider is ideology. Social semiotics conceives the representation of reality through semiotic resources. In addition, the semiotic resources chosen to represent reality show the ideology of the meaning producer, according to social semiotics. For instance, in the case of a women's magazine that portrays women as beautiful and powerful, it can be said that the ideology of the meaning producers, the editors of the magazine is that women that read the magazine, women that live their lives

the way it is portrayed in the magazine, women that use the beauty products the magazine advertises, are beautiful women, and therefore powerful. In short, the ideology of the magazine can be interpreted as beauty being the way to social power (Machin & Thornborrow, 2003).

The third aspect that social semiotics looks at is the process of communication as one that is completed with the reaction from the meaning-receivers. The audience or meaning-receivers are seen as having an active role in the meaning-making process. Following on the example from the previous paragraph, when the female social group that buys the magazine in the example starts buying the beauty products advertised, and starts caring about their physical appearance as a means to attain social power, then the process of communication between meaning producers and meaning receivers has been successful.

Having discussed the theoretical framework of social semiotics, we can now move on to localization and examine the ways in which it relates to social semiotics.

2.5 Localization

2.5.1 What is Localization?

Localization is the process that companies use to introduce their products or services into new markets or locales. This very simple definition sets out the idea that something is localized to address a specific audience, a specific locale. The term localization began to be used in business circles to refer to an alternative process to globalization. The negative effects of globalization, the increased control of multinational companies, the increased power of governance of the World Trade Organization and of the International Monetary Fund, seemed to have an answer in the localization process. Localization meant addressing the 'local' and not the 'global' community (Roddick, 2000). 'Local' was defined as the nation state, part of the nation state, or a regional grouping, depending on the context (Roddick, 2000: 27). 'Locales' are defined by Pym (2004), as I will explain

later, as audiences that have such specific cultural and linguistic characteristics that they need to be addressed using those characteristics.

Regarding what is localized, there are several examples in our everyday life; the Microsoft Office software that we use in our computer has been localized for users that speak a variety of languages, the search engine we use to surf the internet, Google or Yahoo, has been localized in several languages too, the instructions manual of our TV has been localized in more than one language.

In this section I will discuss some theoretical and practical approaches to the process of localization. Theoretically, localization is a very young field of studies, and even practically the process started to be implemented during the nineties to create localized versions of mainly software. There are several characteristics of this process that are crucial to understand. Based on some of the literature I have reviewed on the subject (Forssell, 2001 Argos Translations; Dohler 1997; Lee, 2005; and Balance, 2006; Maroto Ortiz-Sotomayor (2005) I will first present my own understanding of the process and then discuss the literature.

Localization is part of a larger group of processes that are carried out when a company decides to expand its business internationally. These processes are globalization, internationalization, localization, and translation (known as GILT in the language industry), which definitions I will present later. The order of presentation of these processes shows the way they are integrated with one another. If a company that produces shoes wants to expand its business into Japan, for instance, it is necessary that they translate all their advertising campaigns whether they are in printed or electronic formats, any instructions that they include with the shoes on how to clean them or the materials they are made out of, sometimes even the name of certain shoes needs to be translated because they may not be appealing for the Japanese customers.

Rather than translating, such a shoe company would need to localize their shoes. This implies studying the Japanese market to find out what kind of shoes will sell better there,

what kind of advertising will be more effective, and in relation to translation the company has to determine all the documentation that needs to be translated and what images to use accompanying the texts that are translated. This process of localization is easier if it has been preceded by an internationalization process. This means that the company has identified what steps need to be taken to localize their shoes in any market, what documents need to be translated, as part of their advertising campaigns. The company has taken into account when preparing the campaigns that some images or texts might need to be changed, and they have made technological and administrative arrangements that facilitate any localization process of their shoes. Finally, the actions that are taken during the internationalization, localization and translation processes are the ones that form a company's globalization process.

The process of localization itself, which is the one I am studying in this paper, I see as formed by three major components: a business component, a technology component, and a cultural component. The business component of localization includes managing the localization project, determining its extension, costs, personnel, qualifications of the personnel, necessary technology, establishing quality control guidelines and deadlines for the different stages that form the project, among other details that may vary depending on the project itself. The technology component depends on the kind of localization project, on what will be localized, whether it is software localization, web localization, localization of a magazine or localization of shoes in a new market; those kinds of localization determine what kind of computer programs are necessary, whether graphic images or sound are necessary, whether different materials are necessary in the case of shoes (in a tropical climate a shoe company does not need to produce their line of boots, for instance). The cultural component has to do with what images and language are appropriate for the locale; for example, Ford introduced its new 2005 Ford F-150 Lobo edition in Mexico using a popular Mexican actor in the advertising campaign, so that the product would appeal to the public in the same way it appealed to the American public (Balance, 2006). That kind of decision is made as part of the cultural adaptation component of localization.

The present paper suggests the use of social semiotic theories to analyze the localization process. Although, this paper will only discuss the cultural component of localization, I would like to explain how social semiotics can be applied to analyzing the different components of localization. In terms of business, localization means there is a team of people working together in carrying out a project for a client. Consequently, social semiotics would be very useful in analyzing the power relationships between the client and the localization company, and also how power relationships influence the work of the different members of the localization team. As a brief example, the project manager is the person with most power in the localization team, he/she establishes the deadlines, approves the quality standards; nevertheless, the technology people might constrain the work of the project manager if there is some demand that is technologically impossible to carry out. The translators are constrained by the technology people, because they receive specific strings of text to translate using specific spaces. If the translated text does not fit the space that was technologically provided, a negotiation between translator and technician is necessary. In addition such a negotiation is still under the powerful influence of the project manager and the client's requirements. Social semiotics provides a methodology for the analysis of the communication scheme in a localization project that can be useful in uncovering the power relationships that are at play in a localization project.

In terms of technology, social semiotics can help explain how technology decisions that show in the final localized product influence the meanings that are created with such a product. For instance, Dove's localized website for Spain presents in its homepage (http://www.dove.com.es/es_es/es_es/index.html) a video of women that are laughing and having fun. The video does not have sound; this is a technology decision, not to include the sound. It could be seen as beneficial, because the user of the website might wonder what the women are saying to each other, what they are laughing about or it could be seen as diminishing for the website because it does not provide the user with the complete experience of what was happening in the video. Other technological decisions may include the requirement of certain software for a user to enter a website, like some websites require flash to be installed in the computer. Such a decision may influence the

amount of users that the website will have. A social semiotic approach to analyze such technological decisions can shed some light on the implications that they have in the final localized product and in the communication that companies want to establish with their customers through the process of localization.

In terms of the cultural component, cultural adaptation, which is what I will analyze in this thesis, the localization team has to decide what resources to use in order to communicate with the receivers of the localized product, that is, with their audience. If we analyze the case of a pair of shoes that has been localized for use in a new commercial locale, from a social semiotic perspective it is possible to identify the meanings that have been created with the design, the materials, the packaging of the shoes. Seeing design, materials, and packaging as semiotic resources that create meanings, it is understandable how some brands of shoes are perceived as comfortable whereas others are perceived as elegant or classic.

In this particular paper, my aim is to show how companies that are localizing their websites for the purpose of web advertising use specific semiotic resources in order to create meanings that socially and culturally relate to the users of the website and that maintain the meanings that are associated to the company's brand name (in social semiotics terminology these meanings are referred to as ideology).

In this section, my aim is to show some of the basics of the theoretical approaches that have been taken to analyze the localization process. My purpose is also to outline how the process takes place, based on research that has been published about it. The localization process is pertinent to the present research because the websites I analyze result from it. Taking into account my previous rendition of social semiotic theory as it relates to the analysis of the localization process, my aim will be to illustrate how different semiotic resources that are culturally and linguistically marked are used at the two ends of the localization of multinational companies' websites to represent the meanings of the brand the companies own. Having said that, what follows is not a full account of the theory of localization, but an introduction to it that will allow a general understanding of the

transfer of branding features that takes place as a result of the localization of multinational companies' websites.

2.5.2 Definitions of localization and related processes

In 2004, Bert Esselink & Pierre Cadieux⁵ published a paper addressing the need to come to an agreement about the definition of the terms globalization, internationalization, localization, translation. As the authors point out, the terms translation and globalization are not the most troublesome, since people do understand what they refer to. However, for localization and internationalization, the definitions are scattered (Cadieux & Esselink, 2004).

In their definition of 'locale', they converge with Pym's (2004), whose definition I will show later, in referring to a locale as a group of people that share linguistic and cultural characteristics. Nevertheless, they go a step further than Pym and specify that the people do not necessarily need to be in the same place (Cadieux & Esselink, 2004).

The term internationalization resulted from the implementation of several localization efforts for the same product at the same time. Internationalization refers to the necessary steps taken prior to localization that facilitate this process (Cadieux & Esselink, 2004). This relates to Pym's (2004) theories in his description of the internationalization process when he specifies that it is the process carried out prior to localization in order to facilitate it.

In terms of the definition of globalization, Cadieux & Esselink (2004) refer to the several contexts and consequently several meanings that this word has, even within the industry. They propose that globalization, for the language industry should refer to the adaptation of a thing to N number of locales. In other words, globalization refers to N number of localizations (Cadieux & Esselink, 2004). This definition not only captures the essence of the globalization process in this context, but also shows the specific relation between

⁵ This article was reviewed online and does not have page numbers.

localization and globalization where globalization is achieved by means of several localization processes, as opposed to the original use of the term in business circles where it was understood as a process that could solve the culturally imposing nature of globalization.

The fourth and last term is translation which they define as referring to “the specifically linguistic operations, performed by human or machine, that actually replaces the expressions in one natural language into those of another” (Cadieux & Esselink, 2004). Such a definition of translation is reflective of the limitations that translators face when they take part in the localization process. Translators are in charge of replacing one string of language with one from a different language, constrained by the space and technological requirements of localization, which limits any consideration that translators have for the cultural implications of language use.

We have seen very briefly, according to Cadieux and Esselink (2004), the relationships existing among the four core terms of the language industry at present: globalization, internationalization, localization, and translation. Next, I will turn to the theoretical approaches to localization taken by Anthony Pym (2004) and by O’Hagan and Ashworth (2002).

2.5.3 Localization and the distribution of texts

There are central aspects of Pym’s (2004) approach that I would like to highlight in this review including his definitions for the terms localization, internationalization, and globalization. The author establishes the distinction among these three processes based on the Localization Industry Standards Association. As I have already mentioned, according to these definitions any company that wants to go global needs to internationalize its products (make the product general, for example using UNIX codes instead of ASCII codes in software production so that more characters can be used in the interface of the program), and then localize the products (culturally and linguistically adapt a product to

suit a specific locale, for example setting up the date in a software program according to the format used in the language spoken where the program will be used) (Pym, 2004).

Wisely, Pym (2004) revises the definitions presented by LISA and extends those of localization in order to refer not just to the language and cultural adaptation of products, but to the adaptation of texts to refer to the localization of services, linguistic texts, websites, etc. The author also extends the definition of internationalization, and uses it to refer to the compilation of multilingual terminology databases, to the use of controlled input languages in automatic translation software, to the meaning disambiguation of locale-specific items, such as the adaptation of film scripts used for dubbing, to the development of one presentation format for the websites of multinational companies (Pym, 2004: 33). The latter case of internationalization is directly related to the present research.

It is important to stress that Pym's definitions are based on the tasks that the localization process encompasses. Even though his definitions generalize the process so that they do not restrict localization to products only, they do not specify what the cultural and linguistic adaptation is based on.

2.5.4 Localization and Translation-Mediated Communication

The above mentioned flaw in Pym's theory is solved by a more theoretical set of definitions of localization and its related terms, globalization, internationalization, and translation presented by O'Hagan and Ashworth (2002).

The concept of Computer-Mediated Communication means according to them (ibid: 2) that the computer is the vehicle for communication that, both, allows it and constrains it. Based on this concept, the authors came up with the term TMC, where translation is seen as the means that enables and culturally defines communication. Within the theoretical framework of this concept, the authors present the following definitions of globalization, localization, and internationalization.

Globalization is defined as “a process to enable the message to be adaptable to the condition that may be imposed by Receivers who do not share the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds as the Sender.” (ibid: 66).

Localization is defined as “a process to facilitate globalization by addressing linguistic and cultural barriers specific to the Receiver who does not share the same linguistic and cultural background as the Sender.” (ibid: 66)

Internationalization is defined as “the process of making the message more amenable to the subsequent translation into the receiver’s language. (Ibid: 32).

Their definitions of these terms are constructed based on the relationship of one process with the other. In other words, internationalization enables localization which enables globalization. Theoretically, the definitions are based on the linguistic and cultural differences between Receiver and Sender. It is significant how this theoretical approach stresses the importance of the Receiver as the one whose language and culture determines what kind of adaptations the message needs. In that respect, the approach relates to social semiotics which also considers the active role of the receiver of a message in its interpretation, in theories presented by Kress et al (2001), Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) and van Leeuwen (2005) who considered the audience as active participant in the creation of meaning.

Having presented several definitions for the terms that relate to the localization process, I will refer to the classification of the localization process which is based on what is being localized; the consensus from this angle is to classify localization mainly into web localization (this mainly refers to websites) and software localization (O’Hagan & Ashworth, 2002; Esselink, 200; Pym, 2004). In the paragraphs that follow I will present relevant theories about the localization process⁶.

⁶ I have chosen not to include details about the software localization process, since it is not part of the analysis that I will present in this research.

2.5.5 Implementing web localization

In terms of applications, I will refer to John Yunker's (2003) description of web localization.

To start with, it is important to point out this author's distinction between the 'locale' for software localization and the 'locale' for website localization. For software localization, a 'locale' can be the combination of language and geographic region where the software will be used (Canadian French for example); however for website localization, a 'locale' can be just the language in which the website has been localized. However, this distinction is not entirely inclusive because a website also has the potential to be localized for a 'locale' that combines a language and a geographic region. For example, in Canada, government websites are localized in Canadian French, combining the geographical region of Canada where French is spoken, which variant of French is somewhat different to the French spoken in France or in some areas of the Caribbean.

As I mentioned earlier, this author's approach to localization is a practical one. Nevertheless, he refers to the fact that not all languages are localized equally. For example, English is a language that is localized more extensively than Spanish. This is a theoretical concept explained in terms of 'asymmetries' in localization by Anthony Pym, whose theory I will present later.

In line with his practical view, Yunker (2003) introduces the concept of workflow which refers to the steps that need to be followed in undertaking web globalization, which is the development and management of global websites. This workflow includes in its main stages: internationalization, localization, translation, content management, and review, improvement and expansion. For the purpose of my work, I will refer to the steps the author sees are necessary for the localization process of every website. They are:

1. Translation: test prospective translators, create translation workflow, implement any computer-aided translation tools, and create detailed instructions for translators to follow.
2. Editing: test prospective editors; create detailed instructions for editors to follow.
3. Graphics/ design localization: text design for cultural appropriateness and effectiveness, develop global gateway, test usability of localized site.
4. In country review of translation.
5. Assembly of target web pages and staging of finished web pages for testing.
6. Functionality and usability testing of staged web site (both in-house and in-country testing). (Yunker, 2003:123)

These stages of the workflow are a continuous cycle that allows for the creation of succeeding several versions of the same website, what Yunker (2003) calls generations of websites⁷.

Also relevant to my research in this approach is the author's classification of web localization into three general localization strategies, based on the extent to which the contents of websites may be localized (Yunker, 2003: 129 and 130). The first strategy is carrying out a *comprehensive localization*, which means creating a website that gives the users an equivalent experience to the one users of the source website have, such as the case of Yahoo's website localization into other languages. The second strategy is carrying out an *incremental localization*, which means that only some links within the website are localized, this kind of approach is less expensive than a full one, and gives the companies the opportunity to get to know the market better before they invest in a full approach to localization, this kind of approach is decided upon as part of the project management cycle of localization. The third strategy is *customized localization*; which is taken when the globalization project affects the design of the website so much that the company decides to redesign everything.

⁷ Based on O'Hagan & Ashworth's (2002) theory of web localization, which considers the existence of this practical side to localization, I will explain later what cultural changes need to be made in the localization of a website.

After briefly discussing a practical description of web localization processes, we can now focus on key theoretical approaches taken in relation to localization.

2.5.6 Theoretical approaches to Localization

2.5.6.1 Asymmetries and distribution in localization

Anthony Pym (2004) analyzes localization, and mainly software localization, based on the idea that this process occurs because there is a need for the distribution of texts. What is meant by the distribution of texts is that there are products, services, websites and media materials that need to reach and address culturally and linguistically varied audiences. The means for those texts to reach and address the different audiences is by localizing them. From the concept of distribution, Pym is able to classify the types of 'locales' (seems to be what in social semiotics is called receivers of the message) for which texts need to be distributed. Consequently, he also classifies the process of localization based on the extent of adaptation that is needed to reach and address the different 'locales'.

Pym (2004: 7) states that the borders of locales are defined by the resistance that a cultural or social environment poses to receiving a certain text, so that the text needs to be localized to address those users. This distinction among 'locales' is interesting and worth mentioning since it defines a 'locale' as a group of receivers of localized texts. It can be said that 'locales' are formed by people that have certain cultural and linguistic knowledge in common. Hence, the relevance of the audience in the process of localization is stressed once again.

Following this definition of 'locales' as groups of receivers of a localized text, 'locales' can be classified into different aspects (Pym, 2004: 9):

1. Participative: He uses the example of a localized job posting which receivers can respond to prior to the deadline; those receivers form a participative 'locale'.

2. **Observational:** For the same advertisement, some receivers cannot respond to the deadline because they are not in that area of business or the deadline has passed, those receivers form an observational 'locale'.
3. **Excluded:** Some receivers are not invited to know the content of the advertisement since their languages are not the ones used in the localization; those receivers form the excluded 'locale'.

Depending on the kind of 'locale' a text will address, the localization process can be classified into:

Complete localization or adapted versions Pym's (2004: 9): All content and examples used are from the new 'locale'. The author mentions the example of the Microsoft Office package; in this case, the Spanish version of the original software is a complete localization.

Partial localization: small markets receive products that have been enabled for them in that language, but only the most popular programs are localized. With the same example of the Microsoft package, if only Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point were localized into Spanish, that would be an example of a partial localization.

Enabled software: cases where the interface of given software remains in English but the program can be made to work in other languages. An example of enabled software could be if only the language settings in Microsoft Word were activated in Spanish and the rest of the program remained in English.

There are a few other core aspects of Pym's theory that I would like to explain. The first one is his analysis of the distribution of texts. Distribution, in relation to localization, and according to Pym (2004) is what determines the existence of a localization process. Localization derives from the need to distribute a text to a 'locale' that resists the text's distribution due to its linguistic and cultural characteristics; therefore, the text needs to be

localized to suit the needs of its receivers. The concept of distribution seen from a multimodal perspective reinforces the active role of the receivers in the localization/communication process that takes place. According to Kress & van Leeuwen (2001), distribution is the stage that enables the interpretation of a text; through distribution the text is received and people can interpret its meaning thus completing the meaning-creation process as it is understood from a multimodal semiotic perspective.

The other aspect that I would like to refer to from Pym's (2004) theory is the existence of asymmetries in localization. The localization process takes place, according to Pym, because there is a need for the distribution of texts. Based on this statement, he concludes that localization is an asymmetrical process, because not all texts are distributed and localized equally. The main asymmetry of the process is given by the difference of the size of 'locales'; larger locales distribute more texts than smaller 'locales'. In sum, the larger the 'locale', the more localizations it will produce, and the less it will receive. This analysis from distribution, on a positive note, also means that localization allows for smaller 'locales' to produce and distribute their texts to larger locales. Unfortunately, as Pym recognizes this movement of texts from smaller to larger locales is not significant as of today, given the disadvantageous economic situation of smaller locales.

The concept of asymmetries in localization is very relevant for my research because I will analyze the localization process using social semiotics to show how social semiotic resources from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds are used to produce the meaning of a brand that a company wants to maintain in all the localized versions of its website. Following a multimodal perspective, as presented by Kress & van Leeuwen (2001) and Iedema (2003), I expect to find that semiotic resources from one 'locale' have been transferred to another in the localization process. Taking into account the asymmetries in localization, I expect that the semiotic resources from the dominant, larger 'locale' would be transferred to the less dominant, smaller one in the localization of a company's website. For instance, the use of certain colors would be transferred from the larger locale to the smaller locale.

2.5.6.2 Localization and Communication

In 2002, O'Hagan and Ashworth address the changes that have taken place in the professions of translation and interpreting due to the fast pace development of communication technologies. Localization and globalization are two of the processes they refer to within the area of communications in a digital world. They analyze localization as a translation-mediated communication process (TMC, a term that I explained earlier in this section. The authors agree with Lockwood (1999) who sees web localization as a result of the tremendous impact of the Internet on the current demands that translators face.

They argue that web localization is quite distinct from traditional translation practices that only involved working with text. Localization, according to these authors, involves working with what they refer to, based on Gile's (1995) terminology, as 'content' and 'package'. 'Content' can be interpreted as the written text of a website, whereas 'package' can be interpreted as the rest of the elements that form the website, including the font used to display the written text. In social semiotic terminology, 'content' would refer to the linguistic mode of communication, whereas 'package' would refer to other semiotic modes of communication, the visual elements of a website, the audio elements, etc. Both, 'content' and 'package', form and influence the message of web localized website (O'Hagan & Ashworth, 2002). Based on my review of social semiotic concepts, I believe a better terminology to refer to 'content' and 'package' for my research purposes is that of 'multimodal message'; that is, a message that is created using multiple modes of communication.

But to return to O'Hagan & Ashworth (2002), they refer to the culturalization of what I call multimodal message in web localization. According to them, new dimensions have been introduced to translation by localization; therefore they talk about localization as the culturalization of the message (ibid, 2002: 71). I would like to extend this notion and refer to web localization as the culturalization of the multimodal messages, the cultural adaptation of a message that has been created using multiple semiotic modes. The authors

go on to present the aspects involved in the culturalization of web localization, which I outline below.

1. **Character encoding:** Analog and digital media differ in their ability to encode the written characters of a language. Some languages require double-byte character sets in order for its characters to be represented digitally. While this issue is technologically resolved, culturally it means that some languages might need to be represented with slight differences in the shape of characters (Asian languages for example), which is a culturally charged issue that may hamper the localization process.
2. **Design and usability:** These two features of a website may vary according to the receiving 'locale'. The authors give as an example the payment methods in Japanese websites which are adapted to include credit cards and cash on delivery payments.
3. **Branding:** Some brand names might need to be changed in a web localization project, since they may be considered offensive for the receiving 'locale'.
4. **Graphical presentations:** Some icons used in websites that represent gestures and the like, need to be studied for the localization process since they may be offensive or misdirecting for the receiving 'locale'. With regards to these companies, they either adapt a centralized model (it follows a uniform style and varies very little from one regionally localized website to the next) or a decentralized model (it follows different models for each regionally localized website, which end up having very little in common).

The culturalization of web localization is something that can and will be studied in my research within the social semiotic framework. I will show what different semiotic resources are used to culturalize the multimodal message of a localized company website, while still maintaining the message of the brand, in other words, the ideology the company represents.

In sum, O'Hagan & Ashworth's (2002) work is a useful theoretical approach to the localization process. Their approach analyzes localization as a new environment where translators face new challenges for their work. Furthermore, their key theoretical achievement, in my view, is their treatment of web localization as a culturally mediated communication process.

Having looked at several definitions for localization, internationalization, and globalization as the processes that are related to localization, we can now move on to the relationship between localization and social semiotics.

2.5.7 Localization and Social Semiotics

Localization, and web localization in particular, the object of my research is overall a communication process. On the one hand, it is no different from other communication processes, in that it is multimodal in nature; which means that several modes of communication intervene in the transfer of a multimodal message from one language to the other. On the other hand, it is a special kind of communication process, since it takes place between two languages, between two cultures.

Social semiotics and multimodality, as we've seen, is a theory that looks at the meaning-making process as it enables human communication in everyday life. Its theoretical framework is one that highlights the multimodal nature of communication, and provides a conceptual framework to analyze such a nature. Therefore, it will be extremely useful in the analysis of the multimodal communication process of localization.

Furthermore, social semiotics is a theory that takes into account that semiotic resources, those resources used to make meaning, are social in nature. This social nature means that they realize social meanings (meanings that are relevant for a given social group) that may differ from one society to another and from one culture to another. It also means that given the multimodal nature of communication, these resources are potentially transferable from one culture to another, if communication takes place between different

cultures. Also, this theory provides the conceptual framework to analyze the semiotic resources that are used to realize different social meanings. Consequently, social semiotics is particularly useful in presenting what semiotic resources are used in localized websites to represent what social meanings.

In order to exemplify the relationship between localization and core concepts of social semiotic theory, I will now present the four strata in which meaning is created, as explained by social semioticians Kress & van Leeuwen (2001). Instead of presenting the definitions of each stratum, which was already mentioned in the Social Semiotics section, I will explain how each of these strata is materialized in the localization process of a Mexican food product into a North American context, this product is Mexican tacos.

The first stratum in which meaning is made involves discourses, which are “socially constructed knowledges of some aspect of reality. ‘Socially constructed’ means that they have been developed in specific social contexts and in ways which are relevant to specific social actors” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001: 4). In a localization process geared to advertising a product that will be introduced into a new market, the first step is to determine what discourses surrounds the product, what is the social context in which it was developed and to what actors this product is relevant. For instance, going back to my previous example of Mexican tacos, they are going to be introduced into the Canadian market, the social context of the tortilla from which tacos are made in Mexico dates from 3000 BC, the tortilla is perceived as a national food, very versatile used as a wrapper or even as an eating utensil, and used for meals that are fast to prepare (http://whatscookingamerica.net/History/Tortilla_Taco_history.htm) Specifically, for the company that is going to localize Tacos into Canada, the discourse of Tacos’ versatility is extremely relevant since it helps the company emphasize the variety of flavours that can be mixed with tortillas, which use can be expanded from the Tacos onwards to wraps, quesadillas, etc.

The second stratum is design, which is the midpoint between content and expression. It is the point where the decision is made about what is the best semantic mode to express the

content that appears in a given situation, without forgetting how this content will be received by the potential audience (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). In the case of Tacos again, this product itself is the design that the company has decided to use in the introduction of Mexican tortillas into the Canadian market. The reasons behind this decision could be diverse, the fact that Tacos can be loaded with a tremendous variety of ingredients, thus providing for a higher number of potential customers, for example. In this particular case, a chef could be considered the designer, since he is the one that writes the guidelines to prepare the tortilla recipes, deciding what ingredients the Tacos will contain, for this particular instance.

The third stratum is production; at this stratum expression is organized and this is when the semiotic artifact is produced (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Sometimes, as with the Tacos example, the designer and the producer can be the same person. If the recipe for Tacos is outlined in Mexico and produced in Canada, then the Mexican chef acted as the designer of the semiotic meaning of a Taco, which could be spicy, simple, and healthy, depending on the ingredients selected and the time it takes to make it. In turn, the Canadian chef that prepares the Taco acts as the producer of the meaning, the one that materializes it. However, if the Canadian chef designs a new Taco recipe and prepares it himself, then he has acted as both the designer and producer of whatever semiotic meaning he wants to express with his new Taco recipe. It could be that the Canadian chef wants to give Tacos a meaning of elegance and sophistication, and so changes the presentation or some of the ingredients in the recipe.

The fourth stratum is distribution, where expression is further stratified (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The Canadian chef that prepares the Tacos needs the waiters to serve them at the table, or to give them to the client if they are passing through a drive in. These actions of dishing up Tacos for clients that are sitting in a restaurant, versus clients picking them up at the drive in are part of the distribution of the product. Even if Tacos are made at home by a mother acting as a producer of someone else's design (a Taco recipe designed and produced in a cooking show), then by serving home made Tacos for dinner, the mother adds semiotic meaning to the dish. In this case it could be interpreted

as Tacos are not only a meal that is eaten for lunch or outside the home, it can be a family meal, it can be presented slightly different by garnishing the dish, or serving it with a specific drink.

I have presented some core concepts and descriptions of the process of localization and have exemplified the relationship that exists between this process and the social semiotic theories I had presented at the beginning of my literature review.

This literature review, as a whole, has focused primarily on the social semiotics field and the development of its theoretical framework into the current trend of multimodal semiotics. In addition, I have provided basic theoretical and practical information from the developing field of Localization to give my readers a basic understanding of what localization entails. In the next section, based on the theories that I have reviewed, I will present the methodology to be implemented in the analysis of the meaning of localized websites.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data

3.1 Methodological Framework

To design a methodological framework to carry out the semiotic analysis of localized websites, I will rely on the concepts from the social semiotics field discussed earlier.

As I have shown in my literature review, social semiotics has been tremendously influenced by functional approaches to linguistics. Consequently, there are many examples of social semiotic analysis in the literature that follow a Hallidayan functional approach; such is the case of Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) and Teo (2004), as examples. In recent years, social semiotic analysis of communicative events (understood here as any social activity that is meaningful to a society (Lemke, 1990)) have recurrently been carried out following a multimodal perspective, that is, taking into account the different semiotic modes that are used in the same communicative event to create the meanings desired. Some examples of multimodal approaches in the literature are Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001), van Leeuwen (2005), Machin & Thornborrow (2003), among others as we've seen. This multimodal approach is the one I will take to the analysis of localized websites.

In the present paper, I will analyze a communicative event in which the social use is daily increasing, advertising on the Internet, which can take the form of spam e-mail messages, pop-up windows, or websites to mention the forms that are mostly used. I consider internet advertising as a communicative event as long as it is one of the forms that companies use to communicate with their clients, to inform their clients about their products and services. In this research, I will follow a multimodal semiotic approach to analyze websites that are devoted to advertise the products and services of two companies on the internet. Internet advertising in the present world of business which is marked by globalization, takes place in many languages and results from the process that I have described in my literature review, localization.

In terms of localization, for the purpose of the present research, I will describe the websites based on which of Yunker's (2003) three localization strategies has been used. The analysis of a website where, according to Yunker (2003), comprehensive localization has been implemented will be more extensive than the analysis where an incremental localization has been implemented.

In terms of social semiotics, using Kress & van Leeuwen (1996 & 2001) and van Leeuwen's (2005) terminology and approach, the dimension of semiotic analysis that I want to explore is discourse; I intend to show how the discourses of multinational companies are globally marketed through the process of website localization. I will analyze the home page of two multinational companies in their localized Canadian and Spanish versions. In order to carry out this analysis, I will look at the semiotic modes that have been used in the creation of the websites, and will show what semiotic resources have been used for such creation. I will also look at the multimodal nature of the websites in Kress & van Leeuwen's (2001) sense that stresses the use of several modes of communication to realize a common aspect of reality. In other words, I will look at the way different semiotic resources with different cultural origins from different semiotic modes have been used to create the common discourse of a multinational company that localized its website.

Another concept from social semiotics that I will consider is ideology, since the discourse of a multinational company is also the realization of ideological constructs that belong to the social environment where the multinational company is based. Therefore, I see the localization process as one that enables the distribution of discourse and ideologies across cultures. A social semiotic analysis of localized websites can illustrate this distribution of ideologies.

3.2 Discourse, Semiotic Modes, and Semiotic Resources

I have already discussed in my Literature Review, the existence of several semiotic modes that are formed by semiotic resources used to realize meaning (Hodge & Kress,

1988; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Kress et al, 2001; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; van Leeuwen, 2005). From this set, I will focus on the semiotic modes of communication used in the localized websites I will analyze, whether these modes are linguistic or non-linguistic; non-linguistic refers here to modes of communication that correspond to the five senses: smell, touch, sight, hearing, and taste. I will analyze which semiotic resources from those modes of communication have been used to realize meaning.

3.3 Discourse, Semiotic Modes, Semiotic Resources & Ideology

In their social semiotics approach, Hodge & Kress (1988) state that the discourse of social groups realizes the ideology of those social groups. Therefore, by analyzing the discourses that are present in the localized websites, I will also be showing their ideological basis. This ideological basis is realized in the localized websites, thus it can be potentially transferred from one culture into another.

Overall, the analysis of which discourses, semiotic modes and semiotic resources are present in the original and localized websites will lead to the understanding of the ideologies that are potentially transferred by means of website localization from one meaning-producing culture to another one. My point is that localized websites are a form of communication by means of which companies present their discourse to their clients. These companies are originally based in a socio-cultural environment and are representative of ideologies that are related to such an environment. When the websites of the companies are localized, despite apparent differences in the semiotic modes and semiotic resources that are used in the various localized versions, the discourse of the company along with its ideological basis are still presented to the various locales the company addresses by means of its websites.

3.4 Data

As I have mentioned before, I will present the analysis of four localized websites in total, two localized versions of two different websites. I have decided to focus on the analysis

of localized commercial websites which are the ones specifically used for advertising on the internet. In order to show the wide applicability of social semiotic methodology to explain the underlying discourse and ideology of a company when they are realized in the websites, I have selected companies that belong to different commercial environments. I have chosen the fast food industry and the beauty industry, as these are industries that are commonly known due to their constant presence in our everyday life: from the moment we wash our face in the morning to the moment we have dinner at night, we are in contact with these two industries. In order to carry out a detailed analysis, and given the space constraints of the present research, I have decided to focus my attention on the homepage of each of the websites I will look at. In my opinion, the homepage of a website is the one that presents its contents and its discourse presents the ideologies that are further developed in the linking websites. Therefore, homepages will be the object of my analysis in testing my hypothesis that the discourse of multinational companies is marketed by means of the localization process.

After selecting the industries I was going to analyze, I decided that from the food industry I would choose McDonald's and from the beauty industry I would choose Dove. Both selections were based on personal choices. McDonald's was selected because having lived in Cuba most of my life I had not been exposed to this consortium until very recently, and I am amazed by the expansion of this company. As a very short example, there are even children's rhymes that talk about the company: "Welcome to McDonald's! May I take your order? Big Mac, curly fries, apple pie. Rock, paper, scissors, shoot!". From the beauty industry, I decided that I would choose Dove, the reason behind this choice is the company's interest in changing beauty stereotypes with its 'Campaign for Real Beauty'. It is part of my own ideology that the beauty industry has created beauty stereotypes that are unrealistic and that have physically and mentally affected many women. Therefore, I thought this research would be a good opportunity for me to express my agreement with Dove's endeavor to change beauty stereotypes.

Another decision in the selection of my data was what locales to analyze. I have chosen the Spanish and Canadian locales. First, I chose these two locales because the languages

used in this localization projects, English and Spanish, are the two languages I speak and this contributes to the quality of the analysis. From the English speaking locales, I have chosen Canada because it is the country where I live now and I can relate to the cultural components presented in the Canadian localized websites. Having chosen Canada, I determined that the localization process carried out had been a comprehensive one. Consequently, my choices for the Spanish speaking locales were narrowed to finding a localized website that had been created using comprehensive localization, so that it could be comparable to the website from the English speaking locale I had chosen. Finally, I chose the website from Spain, which was the most comparable in terms of comprehensive localization from the Spanish speaking locales in the localized websites of the companies I had selected.

Chapter 4: Analysis

4.1 Localization process

As I explained in the Methodology section, I will first classify the localization process under study here and then go on with my social semiotic analysis for each of the two localization cases¹.

In both, McDonald's and Dove's websites, the kind of localization that is apparent, according to Yunker's (2003) classification is comprehensive localization. Having contacted both corporations they informed me that the localization of their websites takes place in the country or 'locale' they are addressing. Both companies hire a localization team that deals with the creation of the companies' websites for the locale the company is addressing. Therefore, it is to be expected that the website created by the respective localization teams of McDonald's and Dove will be devoted to provide a similar experience for all customers of the company in the different locales it operates, which means that the localization process carried out will be comprehensive.

I have divided this Analysis into four major parts; each of them deals with one of the localized homepages. I will present McDonald's Canada, McDonald's Spain, Dove's campaign for real beauty Canada, and Dove's campaign for real beauty Spain, in that order.

For each of the websites, I will refer to the semiotic modes that have been used to create meanings. Next, I will refer to the semiotic resources from those semiotic modes that have been used to create meanings. Then, I will present, based on the meanings that have been created in the website, the ideologies the websites present in the form of the discourses they realize. In order to present the contents of the websites, I will make use of a semiotic resource that I had mentioned in the literature review which is framing. It consists of the separation of elements in a composition that is achieved by means of using

¹ Annex 1 includes images of the websites analyzed.

a different color palate, using dividing lines, or using a separation between elements. The use of this framing resource divides a visual composition in what I will refer to as frames, so I will explain the content of the websites divided into the frames that form them.

The other two terms that I will use throughout the analysis are 'designers' and 'users'. 'Designers' refers to the localization teams that designed the websites whereas 'users' refers to the audience that accesses the website online.

Having outlined the terminology and layout of my analysis, I will proceed to analyze McDonald's Canada homepage.

4.2 Analysis of McDonald's Canada (<http://www.mcdonalds.ca/en/index.aspx>)

In the localized Canadian version of McDonald's website, there are two semiotic modes that have been used: the visual semiotic mode and the language semiotic mode

In terms of framing (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996: 218 & van Leeuwen, 2005) explain that the elements in a visual composition, in this case the elements of the website's homepage, have been arranged in separate areas that are distinguished by dividing lines or by empty spaces between one and the other. Based on this semiotic resource, I will organize the presentation of my analysis of websites' homepages.

I will also show throughout the presentation that the information in McDonald's website is organized into three major areas. On the top of the page, the content is oriented to welcome the user to the website and invite him/her to navigate the website. In the center area of the page, the information is about McDonald's offers and new products in the menu. On the bottom area, the content gives more detailed information to the user about specific aspects of the company.

Top left corner.

From the visual point of view, there is the McDonald's icon, the Golden Arches. Since this is McDonald's website for Canada, there is a little maple leaf in the center of the icon that personalizes it. Together with this visual element, there is a linguistic component: the text "Welcome to McDonald's Canada". The font for 'McDonald's Canada' is bigger than that of 'Welcome to'. In terms of color, the McDonald's icon is integrated with the text by using the same shades of red and yellow combined. Another element that I would like to point out is that when the user enters the website, the McDonald's icon that is framed in a red square, slowly descends into the user's view.

From a multimodal perspective, the elements that I have outlined can be said to have been displayed together to welcome the user to the website. Visually, the elements are combined by using the same colors and separating them from the rest of the composition using a slight separation between this area and the rest of the home page. The welcoming effect is achieved by means of the slow descent of McDonald's icon into view and, linguistically, by the use of the word Welcome. Also, the elements in this corner of the home page work together to inform the reader that this is McDonald's website for Canada. From a visual point of view, this is done by inserting the maple leaf into the center of McDonald's golden arches. From a linguistic and also visual point of view, this is done by the text 'McDonald's Canada' which has been typed using a larger font and different font in comparison to the fonts used in the rest of the website.

Top right corner

In the top right corner of the page, there is another group of linguistic and visual elements combined. Visually, there is the face of McDonald's character, smiling and with his gaze directed at the user of the website. Next to it, there are three lines of text. The first one is the current date typed in small black font, the second line is the word 'Français', and the third line is the text 'Search our site' which is typed using a larger font in comparison to

the rest of the text. The second and third line are the same red tone that was used in the text 'Welcome to McDonald's Canada'.

In this area of the website, from a multimodal perspective, the visual icon that McDonald's character represents is used to create a welcoming, pleasing feeling for users. The character is smiling and looking directly at the users, this combines with the linguistic elements to invite the user of the website to interact with it, to take an active role and further search the rest of the pages that form the whole website. The linguistic elements in this are, as I mentioned, three. The date is in a different color, black, which in my opinion, distinguishes it from the rest of the texts, because the user is not expected to do anything with this text, it just adds information to the user stating this is a website that is updated, that always follows the current trend. With the rest of the textual elements, they are the same red tone; then there is the 'Welcome to McDonalds' text in the top left corner which creates a continuation from one area to the next. Also, when the user moves his/her mouse to the textual elements in the top right corner; these are underlined, which in the context of the internet means that these texts open other pages within the website. The smiling welcoming McDonald's character can be interpreted as someone that will guide the users during their visit to the website

The invitation to search the website is also achieved in two different ways by the texts. The word 'Français' is in smaller letters and directly over the words 'our site'. This can be seen as meaning our site is also in French and by clicking this link McDonald's character will show the user the way to the French version. The text that leads to the following link also relates to McDonald's character as this character can be seen inviting the users to join him in navigating the website; this meaning is reinforced if the user clicks on the link, the McDonalds character also appears in the other page that comes up. However, I will not go in details about the webpage that appears when the user clicks on the link, as it is my intention to focus this analysis on McDonald's homepage. From a linguistic point of view, the invitation to take action and click on the link is reinforced by the use of the imperative in the text 'Search our site'. In the same text, the use of the word 'our' reinforces the welcoming friendly meaning achieved by McDonald's character smile and

gaze. 'Our' is a personal pronoun that can be interpreted as inclusive of the user, so the user can feel he/she is part of McDonald's world and thus can become interested in knowing more about it.

Center of the page

In the center of the page, there are several elements that present new information to the user of the page. According to Kress & van Leeuwen (1996), the elements that are in the center of a visual composition can be used to present new and important information, as it is the case in McDonald's Canada homepage. The center of the page displays new products and offers that McDonald's restaurants have.

The first element, in the center, I would like to refer to is the text 'value picks'. The text refers to the Value Picks menu that the company has introduced. The meaning of the word value in this context means that McDonald's products are inexpensive considering their quality. The meaning of the word 'picks' adds that there is a choice for these inexpensive products.

Visually, this text has the larger size in the composition which highlights its importance and attracts the attention of the users. Also, the colours of the words 'value' and 'pick' are an element that bring cohesiveness to the composition. The word 'value' is a very cheerful red tone which pops out against the yellow background where it is located, and attracts the attention of the users. In addition, the tone of red of this word is the same tone of other elements in the composition. 'Value' has the same red tone used in the maple leaf icon in the golden arches to the right, it is the same red tone of the background in the center of the page, which leads the reader to read the information that appears there, and it is the same red of the word 'new' that appears in a separately framed area towards the center right of the page. On the other hand, the color white used in the word 'picks' ties it in with the information that appears in the center right area, and ties it in with the information presented in a white text that appears against the red background I mentioned

previously. As a whole, the text 'value picks' is used to introduce a choice of inexpensive quality products to the user, and also is the cohesive element that unites all the meanings that are made in the center of the page. Furthermore, based in its position, it can be said that it is the main point that McDonald's corporation is getting across to the users of the website, McDonald's is a place to get quality inexpensive food.

Right in the center of the page, on a bright red background, there is a text in white letters, which further informs the user about the 'picks' that are mentioned in the 'value picks' text that I analyzed previously. As I explained before, in order to relate the 'picks' to this information, the same color white is used in both texts. The text reads: '9 items* at \$1.39 each plus tax and meals+ at \$3.99 each plus tax, everyday.' There are several elements in this text that should be looked at as they not only inform the user of the website, but reinforce the meanings of other texts that appear in the center of the website. The first element is the number '9'. Instead of using the word 'nine', the use of the number is visually easier to remember for the user. The second element that is relevant is the use of the word 'items' versus the word 'meals', so this gives the reader information that there is a difference, there are items to pick from, but there are also meals to pick from. Another element is the use of the symbols '*' and '+'. These symbols are used again in another text in the website, so they are the elements that direct the user to read the information that appears in that other text. Besides, the word 'everyday' at the end of the text indicates that these offers are available for users at McDonald's restaurants always; it is not just something temporary. Also, the layout of this text facilitates the user's access to the information since the price of the items appears on the first line, and the price of the meals appears on a second line below.

More information is given to users of the website in another text that appears at the bottom of the center area, and is closely related to the text just analyzed. It reads: '*At participating McDonald's restaurants in Canada. Some items not available in all restaurants. +Meals include choice of one value picks menu sandwich, medium fries, and a medium softdrink.' It is typed in very small black font, and there are two lines of text that appear in the form of a footnote. The use of the color black I see as related to the use

of the same color in the date that appears on the top right corner of the page. The color is used in the texts that give additional information to the users of the website. Also, in the segment of text that I am referring to now, it is noticeable that the font used is very small, which means that this is not the information that the designers of the website want the users to focus on, it is just additional explanatory information.

In terms of the layout, the text mirrors the white text that introduced the items and meals that McDonald's restaurants offer; the first line refers to the items, and the second one to the meals. The first line of this text: '*At participating McDonald's restaurants in Canada. Some items not available in all restaurants.' refers back to the items line in the text in white fonts that I already analyzed. It further explains the menu of items that McDonalds offers. Also, given the content of this text, the use of the small font is justifiable, since it introduces a negative note to the information given before. It explains that not all items can be purchased in all McDonald's restaurants, contrary to what is inferred from the information previously introduced; therefore it makes sense that a small font is used so that the user of the website does not notice this information at first sight. The second line: '+Meals include choice of one value picks menu sandwich, medium fries, and a medium softdrink.' is again more information about the meals menu at McDonalds and what it includes, and the relationship between this line and the meals information in the previously analyzed white text is achieved with the use of the symbol '+'.

Another text that I want to refer to is located in between the white and black texts that offer information about McDobald's products: 'It's got people talking.'. This text is also typed in white letters, which means it relates to McDonald's picks. The overall meaning of this text will be clearer once I have presented the elements that appear to its right and are related to it. The color white used in this text ties it to the background color used in the bubble that appears to the right connected to it and that contains an image that further explains the meaning of the text. The text is formed by two lines. The first one in larger italics font reads: 'It's got people talking.' The use of italics font gives more movement to the text and reinforces the meaning of continuous action that is linguistically expressed

with the use of the grammatical verb ending -ing. The word 'It' relates to the visual image that appears in the bubble to the right. Also, the use of the word 'people' gives a sense of generality, a sense that everybody has something to do with this element that is shown in the bubble, it encourages the user to take action because if people know and the user of the website does not know, the logical reaction is to want to get involved.

More information related to 'it' and to the 'value picks' is given in the second line of the text which reads: 'Visit McDonald's to see the entire value picks lineup*!' First, this text is in white, which relates to the bubble in the right and to the 'value picks menu' that have the same color. Second, it appears in smaller font than the text above it, meaning that this is additional information that is of less relevance than the previous line. The use of the imperative in the verb 'visit' invites the reader to take action, in relation to the line above, visiting McDonald's is the action that needs to be taken in order to know more about what people are talking about. There are also other words used in this text that reinforce the meaning of choice that is given by the word 'picks' which was introduced in a large font in the top center of the page, and with the white font and background has been related to these other texts and images that offer more information about it. In the text I am analyzing now, the words 'value picks' are used for a second time, remember they appeared on the top center of the page, this repetition is an element that contributes to the cohesion of the composition. The words 'entire' and 'lineup' imply the existence of more than one choice in the 'value picks' menu, thus reinforcing the fact that there is an inexpensive choice of quality food at McDonald's. There is also the use of the symbol '*' which relates this text to the additional information that appears below in black font, and that I already analyzed.

Now, I will move on to analyze the image that is framed within a bubble towards the center right of the page. The image is that of a McDonald's sandwich. Inside the bubble there is the picture of the sandwich against a white background and two texts. The white background within the bubble relates its content to all the other white texts that appear in the center of the website and that offer information about it, but specially to the texts 'picks', and by extension it also relates it to 'Visit McDonalds to see the entire value picks

lineup*!', and '9 items* at \$1.39 each plus tax', and '*At participating McDonald's restaurants in Canada. Some items not available at all restaurants.' because of the use of the symbol '*'. The image of the sandwich is imposed with the text 'Junior Chicken' which explains what the image represents. There is another text in large red font above the image of the sandwich and inside the bubble that reads 'new!'. The use of the sign '!' implies that this is an exciting piece of information. The bright red colour used in this text relates it to the text 'value' which has the same colour. So in this bubble the red and white of the text 'value picks' are combined and illustrate what 'value picks are'. The bubble gives the user of the website a visual image of the value they can get at McDonald's restaurants and introduces a new product within the 'items' that McDonald's users can get at the restaurants.

Overall, the elements in the center of the page are separated, but they all relate together by means of the use of colour and textual elements. The elements presented in the center of the page all contribute to providing new and important information to the users of the website.

Bottom of the page

The elements at the bottom of the page are separated by blank spaces and by square frames. In order to make their presentation easier, I will analyze each of the groups of visual and textual elements separately and will talk about them in general at the end.

The background of this area is a bright red that is different from the one in the center of the page because it is a little deeper. Therefore, it can be said that the framing effect has been achieved by using two different shades of the same color, and also by creating a line between the two areas that the designers of the website wanted to disconnect. Besides, the color white is used in the texts that appear in this area of the website. This repetition of color can be interpreted as a cohesive element that relates this area of the website to the top and center areas.

The elements in this bottom area are separated into two distinctive lines, in the line above; there are three distinctive groups of elements that are separated by a large white '/' symbol. All the groups of elements that appear in this upper line are designed so that if the user clicks on them, he/she gets redirected to a link within the website.

In this upper line, the first group of elements that appears to the left is formed by two lines of text: 'News' and 'Click here for recent news'. The text 'News' is all in capital letters and in a large font, meaning that it is the main element in the group, it is the element that was designed to catch the eye of the user first. The text that appears below is supporting and expanding the meaning of 'News', it gives more information to the reader about what news he/she can see in the linking page. According to the text in the second line, the news that appear in the linking page are 'recent', and the text also interacts with the user by means of the imperative 'Click here...', which gives instructions to the user on what to do to access those news.

The second group of elements that appears in the upper line is a white frame that contains a picture of one of McDonald's restaurants where a text has been superimposed. In terms of the image in this group of elements, I believe it is framed because by including a picture of the restaurant, the designers could show not only the building, but also its surroundings. The surroundings are an important element in this picture because it can be seen that the restaurant is located in what looks like an isolated area next to a road, or in an area where there are no houses or other restaurants. This idea that the restaurant can be anywhere, even in places where there is nothing else has to do with McDonald's promotion that its restaurants are ideal for driving to when people are hungry in the middle of a long trip from one city to another. The same idea of a McDonald's restaurant being anywhere is reinforced by the text 'Restaurant locator', the word locator could be seen as the need for some sort of device or map to locate a McDonald's because it doesn't matter where, there could be one that the user does not know of. This second group of elements is also informative for the user; in this case it offers geographic information.

The third group of elements is formed by three images and a text. Once again the meaning of the images and the meaning of the text are interrelated. The images show strawberries, and a glass of yogurt with cereal, these are all foods that are considered to be nutritious and non-fattening. The text that appears with these images reads 'Nutrition Calculator'. The meaning of the word 'nutrition' is illustrated by the images that accompany the text. In the case of the word 'calculator', it implies that there are several elements that need to be added, multiplied, divided or subtracted, and this meaning is illustrated in the image because there is more than one food group that is present in the image. This group of visual and textual elements is used to introduce McDonald's corporation concern about healthy eating, it offers the users a tool that is only one click away and can help them figure out how many calories they are taking in when they go to McDonald's restaurants.

In the lower line of groups of elements that appears towards the bottom of the page, there are four groups separated by defined black frames. The presentation of the groups of elements resembles McDonald's presentation of menus at its restaurants, including numbers that are placed on the top left corner of each frame, resembling the numbered orders of McDonald's menu. There are four of these framed groups of elements, each of them represents a link to other pages within McDonald's Canada website. When the user of the website positions the mouse on one of the frames, a menu of options appears to show the different links that can be accessed by clicking on them. The presentation of these links as if they were part of a menu implies that the user will have a choice, and in fact a choice appears when the mouse is positioned over each of the frames.

The first frame of visual and textual elements, marked number 1, is used to present one type of McDonald's food. Textually the words used are "Our food". By using the word 'our' the user of the website is included in the possession of food, the word 'our' can be read as mine and yours. Besides, when the mouse is positioned over this frame, there is another frame of words that appears. In terms of the words included in this frame behind the frame, it is important to notice the repetition of the pronoun 'our' which again includes the user of the website. Also noticeable is the use of the word 'story' in combination with

some of the ingredients of McDonald's foods, 'egg, beef, and potato'. The use of 'story' here implies that these are special ingredients, they have a story behind them that is important enough for McDonald's corporation to tell it to their clients. There are other words used in this frame behind the frame that stress the meaning of health and freshness concerns that McDonald's corporation intends to get through to the users of the website; those words are: 'commitment, freshness, quality, deli sandwiches, safety, and nutrition'. At the bottom of the frame, there is a text that reads: Smiles.....Free. This addition creates the meaning that McDonald's corporation is devoted to good service and to creating a nice and pleasant experience for its customers.

Visually, the image of one of McDonald's salads appears to illustrate the healthy, fresh food meaning that is expressed in relation to McDonald's foods, also the salad includes a variety of ingredients that add to the meaning of variety expressed in the mention of several of the ingredients used at McDonald's that appear in the text that is triggered when the mouse is located on this frame.

The second frame, marked number 2 is the link for users to access the Careers page of McDonald's Canada website. The visual image presented is two of McDonald's meals in alignment forming a path. At the bottom of this image, there is a text that reads 'Careers'. In relation to this text, the image can be seen to show the meaning of the text, a career path at McDonald's. The hamburgers in the image form a career path for users of the website to explore. The text that comes up when the mouse is positioned over this image, provides the reader with essential information to be able to choose which of the options to click and open a website with more details. All the options given contain textual meanings that are related to the overall theme 'Careers', they include the mention of 'benefits' that McDonald's employees get, 'opportunities' that the company offers its employees, as well as training that the company offers. The same as in the previous frame that I analyzed, at the bottom of the list of choices that appears, there is the text 'Smiles.....Free', which not only relates this frame to the rest of them, but also relates it to the text and image of a 'career' at McDonald's which can be interpreted as the smiles of satisfaction of those who have chosen a career with McDonald's.

The third frame, marked with number 3, presents the visual image of one of McDonald's cardboard containers full with fries. This image is accompanied by the text 'About Us'. This text tells the user that by clicking on this link, he/she will find more information about the company. Also, the use of the word 'Us' as opposed to 'McDonald's' or 'the company' can be interpreted as another means of including the user of the website. In addition, the use of this word is in alignment with all the other times where it has been used in the page. Throughout the textual elements of the website, the pronoun 'us' has been used to refer to McDonald's, which reinforces the welcoming of the user to the website, and is meant to be inclusive of the user. From a visual point of view, I believe the image of the fries' container represents the people that work at McDonald's. The container represents the company by means of the colour scheme it has, and by means of the Golden Arches symbol that appears in its front part. The contents of the container, the fries, I believe represent the people that are part of McDonald's corporation. Thus the text 'About Us' is illustrated. It could have been illustrated using a portrait of a group of the company's employees. However, such an image would have been out of place with regards to the rest of the visual composition in this line of frames, which is visually formed by images of McDonald's food products.

The fourth frame, marked with number 4, offers more information to the users of the website. The text that appears in this frame reads 'Community commitment'. The meaning of 'community' which implies unity, diversity and more than one is stressed by the image of one of McDonald's meals which includes more than one dish: fries, chicken nuggets, and a drink that are presented in a tight group in the frame. The menu options that appear when the mouse is positioned in this frame include words that relate to the overall theme of 'Community Commitment'. Some of these words include: 'charities', 'community programs', 'animal welfare', 'environment', and 'social responsibility'.

At the very bottom of the page, there is another line in very small black font that gives the user the possibility of linking to some other pages in the website that can provide additional information about McDonald's. These options are separated by the symbol '/',

they are: '[Contact Us](#) / [Privacy](#) / [Legal](#) / [Help](#) / [Français](#)' and they are accompanied by '© 2006 McDonald's'. This bit that reads 'McDonalds' means that the information that appears in this website belongs to McDonald's corporation. The rest of the texts that appear in this area are links that the users of the website can follow to ultimately learn more about the corporation, but they are different from the links that are above them because they do not offer a menu choice of links for the users to select what link to follow.

In sum, I have analyzed McDonald's Canada website dividing it according to the framing of the elements that appear in it. For each of the major areas that I have presented, top, center, and bottom, I have described the visual and textual elements that appear in them, and how the meanings have been created using the visual and linguistic modes of communication. As part of the visual mode of communication, the semiotic resources colour and layout have been consistently used to bring cohesion and coherence to the meanings presented in the website and to relate the different areas that I have described. In terms of the linguistic mode of communication, the inclusive pronoun 'we' has been used in its forms 'us' and 'our' throughout the page. In addition, the imperative mode has been used by the designers of the website to give instructions to its users. These two linguistic resources create an interactive relationship between the users of the website and its designers.

Following social semiotic theory, the meanings that have been created by McDonald's Canada website designers using visual and linguistic resources cohesively and coherently represent the company's ideology and beliefs. They can be summarized as follows:

1. McDonald's is a restaurant chain that offers a variety of inexpensive quality foods.
2. McDonald's is a corporation that is conscious about people's nutrition.
3. McDonald's is a corporation that cares about the quality and freshness of the ingredients it uses in its foods.

4. McDonald's is a corporation that offers promising and beneficial careers to its employees.
5. McDonald's employees are happy to be part of the company, and this is reflected in the services they offer at the restaurants.
6. McDonald's is a corporation that is active within several communities.
7. McDonald's restaurants can be found everywhere.

Having analyzed the localized version of McDonald's Canada webpage, I will proceed to analyze the localized version of McDonald's Spain.

4.3 Analysis of McDonald's Spain (<http://www.mcdonalds.es/principal/index2.html>)

Before I analyze the semiotic resources that appear in this website, it is important to notice semiotic modes that are used are the visual and linguistic. Within the visual mode, the mostly used semiotic resources are color, framing, and movement of some of these visual elements. In terms of the color palate that is used in the page, it is mainly yellow, black, red, and white, which are the colors used in McDonald's restaurants. Within the linguistic mode, the use of the informal form of the imperative to give instructions to the user is also significant.

The localized version of McDonald's website in Spain is divided into three major areas, which are defined by means of the semiotic resource of framing, which I explained above. On the top and bottom areas of the page, there is information about McDonald's corporation and its products. On the center area of the page, the content promotes McDonald's offers and children's products.

Top of the page

At the very top of the page, there is a white line with two words in grey type that are located towards the right. The words are 'home' and 'mapa'(map). The words are in very small font and in a corner of the page, which can be seen as the designers' way of including two links that situate the user of the website in the page they are seeing (home)

and show them further information of how the website is organized (mapa). However, because of the position and the size font used to present these links, it can be said that this is not the information that the designers of the website want the users to notice first when they enter the page.

The content on the top area of the page is completed with a line that includes seven different framed groups of elements. The first one of these frames is formed by two images that are alternated. The alternation time of the images is, in my opinion, a semiotic resource that brings cohesion to this website; however, in order to show how it works, it is necessary to present other elements in the page first. Therefore, I will analyze the alternation resource later. The first of the two images that alternate is the symbol of McDonald's Golden Arches that has a text at the bottom: 'I'm loving it'. Combining McDonald's Golden Arches, and the text 'I'm loving it', not only presents McDonald's slogan, but also means that somebody, 'I', loves McDonald's foods. Also the use of the pronoun 'I' when read by the user can be seen as an intention for the user to hear his/her own internal voice talking. The second image that alternates is a yellow hand.

The next element that is framed is a text that reads: '¿qué me tomo hoy?' (what should I have today?) When the mouse is positioned on this text, the image of one of McDonald's hamburgers appears together with the text. The image reinforces the meaning of the text by illustrating one of the dishes that the user of the website can get at McDonald's. Textually, the use of a question instead of a statement indicates that there is hesitation about what to have to eat. If there is hesitation, this also implies that there is vast selection of foods that are tasty, which makes it difficult to choose one. When compared with the link that presents McDonald's foods in McDonald's Canada, it is noticeable that Canada's website shows the user a list of links to choose from, whereas Spain's website only offers the possibility to click on the link and open another page within the website to find out more about the topic in question .

The next group of elements that is framed is a text that reads 'zona infantil' (kid's area). When the mouse is positioned over the text, the image of a little girl appears together

with the text. The inclusion of a separate area in the website that is devoted to children means that McDonald's is a corporation that has foods for children, and that its restaurants are places where children will receive special attention. Also, it implies that McDonald's corporation is socially involved with the well-being of children. This meaning is achieved by combining the visual image of the little girl with the meaning of the text 'kid's area'.

The next group of elements that is framed is a text that reads 'nutrición' (nutrition), when the mouse is positioned over this text, the text appears accompanied by a picture of an apple. The visual image of the apple stresses the meaning of the word 'nutrición', since apples are considered to be nutritious. This group of elements leads the reader to another page within the website that has to do with nutrition facts of McDonald's foods. The inclusion of this link in the website means that McDonald's corporation is concerned with offering healthy, nutritious foods to its clients.

The next group of elements that is framed on the top area of the page is a text that reads 'información corporativa' (corporate information) and the image of McDonald's Golden Arches that appears when the mouse is positioned over this text. The visual image of McDonald's Golden Arches illustrates the meaning of the word 'corporativa' (corporate), it tells the user of the website what corporation this information refers to. The meaning of this group of texts is purely informative to give more details about the company to the users of the website, and it also implies that there is some information about McDonald's corporation that is not included in the home page.

The next group of elements framed includes the text 'localiza un restaurante' (locate a restaurant). When the mouse is positioned over the text, the image of one of McDonald's restaurants appears. It is also important to mention the use of the imperative in the textual elements. Not only is the verb 'localiza' conjugated using the imperative, but also it is conjugated using the informal form of the second person pronoun in Spanish, which means that there is a certain degree of familiarity between the person that enunciates the message and the receiver of the message. By using this familiar form, the designers of the

website create a closer relationship with the users. As with the rest of the frames that appear on the top area of the page, the visual element supports the message of the textual elements. In this case the image illustrates the meaning of the word 'restaurant'. The image shows that the restaurant that can be located when the user clicks on this link is one of McDonald's restaurants. As part of the website, the meaning of these visual and textual resources implies that there could be a McDonald's restaurant anywhere, it implies that McDonald's is present all over Spain.

The last of this series of framed group of elements shows the text 'prensa' (News), and the image of a newspaper when the mouse is positioned over this text. The inclusion of these elements in the website implies that McDonald's company is socially recognized and that it appears in the news, regularly enough as to devote a page within the company's website to present those news.

As a whole, as I already mentioned, this series of framed elements is used to provide the reader with informative choices about McDonald's corporation, its products, social commitments, and appearance in the news. In addition the framed texts relate to the text that appears towards the left corner that reads 'I'm loving it'. As the user follows the line to the right, he/she encounters more information about 'it', McDonald's corporation, and this information can be seen as an explanation of why McDonald's slogan implies that someone really loves the corporation.

Center of the page

In the center of the page, there is a big white frame that is divided into smaller frames, resembling the appearance of some restaurants' menus which are only one page divided into squares and showing pictures of the restaurant's dishes. In order to present the analysis of this area of the page in an organized manner, I will refer first to the two frames that appear on the top line of this area. Next, I will refer to the three frames that appear in the center of this area. Last, I will refer to the three frames that appear at the bottom of this area of the page.

Top line

Top Left hand frame

The first frame that appears in this top line is formed by visual and textual elements that appear one after the other, then disappear all together, and appear one by one again. I think the alternation of the elements that is used in this frame, as well as in other frames in the center of the page, and in the frame in the left-hand corner, gives a dynamic meaning to the website, it adds a sense of hectic activity, which related to McDonald's restaurants, means that these are fast-paced places, always loaded with activity.

Aiming at making the presentation easier, I will enumerate the subdivisions that form this frame in order of appearance. First, there are two stripes, one yellow on top and one red at the bottom that appear at the same time and act as background for the corresponding two frames that they form. The selection of colours is meaningful as these are the colours that represent McDonald's. On the yellow frame, there is to the left an image of a white page with a text that reads 'Día Mundial del Niño en McDonald's. 20 de noviembre de 2006' (World Children's Day at McDonald's. November 20, 2006) and is next to the image of a child's hand reaching up to the hand of an adult hand that is tattooed with McDonald's Arches and is dressed with a white and red striped shirt. The visual elements on this white page compliment the meanings of the textual elements. The visual image can be read as showing the hand of a child reaching for the hand of Ronald McDonald's corporation that is offering help. The hand of Ronald McDonald's can be recognized because of the Golden Arches tattooed on it and because of the red and white striped sleeve that is the same kind of print of the Ronald McDonald's character's shirt. This relationship between children and McDonald's corporation that is expressed by the image in the white page is also expressed by the text that accompanies it 'Día Mundial del Niño en McDonald's. 20 de noviembre de 2006'.

Inside the same yellow frame I have been describing, there is a text in black fonts that reads 'EL 20 de noviembre es el Día Mundial del Niño.' (November 20 is World

Children's Day at McDonald's). Visually, the black font resembles the handwriting of a child, which is in alignment with the information that is presented in the frame. It can be said that the informative message presented by this text is further explained by the visual and textual content that appears next to it within the yellow frame.

In the red frame that appears at the bottom of this first frame I am analyzing, there are also two elements, an image and a text. The image has the shape of a little white house with a chimney from where smoke in the form of a heart is coming out. The smoke in the shape of a heart means that there is a lot of love inside this little house, which I will refer to in detail now. The little white house serves as background for the image of a hand that is tattooed with McDonald's Arches and is holding the hand of the little child. Next to this image in white font, there is the text 'Colabora con la Fundación Infantil Ronald McDonald' (cooperate with Ronald McDonald's Children's Foundation).

The message of this text relates to the image since the image of the house represents Ronald McDonald's house. It is also noticeable that the image of the house, and the hands of the child and the hand of Ronald McDonald inside the house are contoured in blue. In my opinion, this contouring has been used as a visual semiotic resource to mean that the children inside Ronald McDonald's house are specific ones; help has been given to them. The image of the hands inside the house is different from the image of the hands in the white page. I see them related, first of all that relationship is visually achieved by the use of the color white as background in both cases, and it further relates the images to the text inside the red frame which is also in white. The meaning that I understand has been created with these three visual and textual resources is that Ronald McDonald's House is offering help to children in need everywhere (represented in the white page image), those children that have received help are part of Ronald McDonald's House, they are not any children in need, but those that have had better luck and are part of McDonald's Foundation (represented with the image of the little white house). In turn, these meanings relate to the white text, because the images represent the children before and after they got involved with McDonald's corporation, they illustrate what happens when people

(that are referred by the informal you in the white text) cooperate with McDonald's House.

The cohesion and coherence of the overall composition presented in this top left corner frame is achieved by means of the consistent use of colors, specifically white to relate the meanings created by the images that appear in the frame. Also, the image of the little white house is positioned so that its roof, and the smoke coming from the chimney are located inside the yellow background, which directs the view of the user of the website to that yellow area. Also, the texts that appear in the yellow and red frames are related by the meanings of the words 'infantil' and 'niño'. The order of appearance of the images and texts that form this top left corner in the center of the whole website is also significant. The fact that the images appear one after the other I believe is used to attract the user's attention to this area of the website. The yellow stripe appears first, followed by the red stripe, then the image of the white page, the black font text that is next to it, then the image of the little white house, and last the white font text that accompanies this image. I think this order means both the way in which the designers of the website wanted the users to read these elements.

Top right hand frame

On the top right corner of the center of the website, there is a frame that I will turn to now. The content of this frame is also promotional, as it was in the top left corner frame. Two texts and six combinations of images and texts successively appear scattered on an earthy looking background in order to promote some of McDonald's new sandwiches. I will analyze each of the texts and combinations of images and texts in order of appearance, since I believe the order of appearance is used not only to catch the user's attention, but also to direct the order in which this composition should be read, as the successive appearance of the elements further explains the meaning of the previously appearing element.

First, I will refer to the earthy background. The meaning of the colour and visual texture used in this background can be explained in relation to the first text that appears inside the frame: 'Cada semana cambia de ruta' (Change your route every week). The background has been used to represent the pathway that travellers follow, and in the first text this look of a pathway is explained by encouraging the users to change their route every week. The text that encourages users to change their route is written using the informal second person pronoun in the imperative mode. This creates, as I mentioned earlier, a certain degree of familiarity between the producer of meaning and the user of the website because not only is the user receiving instructions but those instructions are also given as they would be given to a friend, or an equal.

The meanings of the background used and the first text, receive more explanation when the third element, a combination of image and text, appears below the first text. The image side of this combination is a red road sign shape, red representing one of McDonald's colours. The road sign could have also been yellow, since this is one of McDonald's colours too, but red is perceived as more intense, exciting, adventurous, which are meanings that have more to do with the content that appear inside this frame I am analyzing. On the top side of the road sign there is a text that reads: 'Road to America 2', and below that, inside a separate side of the road sign there is another text: 'El viaje continua...' (The trip continues). The meaning of these two texts in relation to the information that already appeared inside the frame clarifies the location, America, of the earthy road background and the route 'travelers' are following. According to the first text, this is all about a trip to America. Notice that this text that refers to America is in English, in my opinion to maintain its foreignness, and keep the users of the website more interested in the trip. Also, notice that there is a number 2 at the end of this text. This number 2 means that this is the second edition of such a trip; this meaning is reinforced by the text below that explains the trip 'continues'. Further details about this 'trip' are presented to the user by five cards that appear successively towards the right side of the frame.

I will analyze the cards that appear to the right side as a whole, since they all have the same design and are used to represent related meanings. Once the user sees the cards, he/she understands that the 'trip' to America takes place when they try the dishes from McDonald's that are advertised in these five cards. Each of the cards presents a sandwich from a different region in North America. The overall design of the cards is a thin colored frame divided into two smaller squares and a bottom line, the same color as the frame, that is along the bottom of the card. The images in the cards represent three sandwiches (these three cards are the ones that have the colored bottom line), one side dish, and one dessert. The cards that represent the sandwiches appear first and come from the center of the screen, followed by the card that presents the side dish, and then the dessert that both appear from the right-hand side of the screen. I believe this appearances are meaningful since the sandwiches, which are the main meals, come first and from the center of the screen. They are followed by the side dish and the dessert which would generally be presented to customers after the main dish, and are of 'less importance' than the main dish in a meal.

I will now refer to the cards in greater detail. As I said, they are divided into three areas. The left side area informs the user of the place the dish presented in the card comes from. It includes a white background with an image that relates to the place in question and a text with the name of the place. The right side area presents a photograph of the sandwich, side dish, or dessert that is been advertised. I will now look at each of the cards.

The first card that appears presents a sandwich from Canada. On the left hand side appears the image of a yellow maple leaf, Canadian national symbol, and the text Canada. On the right hand side, there is the image of a sandwich that is made with typical Canadian ingredients, corn, and beef, among others (for the user to find out about the ingredients, he/she has to click on the link). The photograph of the sandwich appears on a maple leaf background. It is important to analyze how the sole visual and textual composition that this card represents has created the meaning 'Canadian sandwich'. The meaning created using linguistic elements is clear with the use of the word 'Canada'.

However, the images are related by means of repeating the maple leaf resource on the left and right hand sides, and they are also presented as a whole with the use of the colored contour surrounding the two sides of the card. The word 'Canada' because of Canada's national tree is also related to the maple leaf images, which have become an international icon by which Canada is recognized.

The second card that appears presents a sandwich from New York. On the left hand side, there is a red image of the Statue of Liberty, which is the touristic New York emblem. On the right hand side, there is a photograph of a sandwich made with New York ingredients, tomatoes, onions, olive oil, and fresh herbs (these ingredients can be read if the user of the website opens the link). The background of the sandwich photograph is composed by a bench, baseball bat and a ball, representing baseball which New York is also known for. Once again, the left and right hand sides of the card are related by means of using images that are representative of the place where the sandwich comes from, in this case images related to baseball and the image of the Statue of Liberty. Also, the meaning of the 'New-York' is illustrated with the use of these images.

The third card that appears presents a sandwich from Arizona. On the left hand side, appears the image of a brown eagle, brown does not only represent the color of sand in the dessert, typical of Arizona, but it is also the color of the stripe that appears at the bottom of this card, so the repeated use of brown relates the different areas of this composition. Eagles are birds that are generally found in the area of Arizona, so they are representative of the area. In addition, the user can identify that this card is about Arizona when he/she reads the name on the left hand side, next to the image of the brown eagle. On the right hand side, there is a photograph of a sandwich made with ingredients from Arizona, tomatoes, lettuce, hot pepper (these ingredients can be read if the user of the website opens the link). The background of the sandwich photograph is composed by an earthy surface representing the soil from Arizona. In this card, the left and right hand sides of the card are related by the use of images that are representative of the place where the sandwich comes from, in this case images and text related to the dessert in Arizona, such as the eagle, and the soil background on the sandwich.

The fourth card represents a side dish: 'California Mozzarella Sticks'. In this case, the left hand side of the card is used to inform the user of the website of the name of the dish, which also informs him/her of the origin of the dish 'California'. On the background of the name, there is an image of a man surfing, which is a sport that is practiced in California. On the right hand side, there is a photograph of the mozzarella sticks, on a black background. In my opinion, the image of the sticks illustrates the text where they are presented 'California Mozzarella Sticks', and thus the visual and textual meanings presented in this composition come together.

The fifth card represents a dessert: 'Texas Pecan Sundae'. As with the previous card, the left hand side area informs the user of the website of the name of the product that is being advertised and its origin. Also on this side, there is an image of a red cactus as a background for the text. The image of the cactus relates to the Texas region where the sandwich comes from. On the right hand side, there is an image that shows what the sundae looks like, it illustrates the text: 'Texas Pecan Sundae'.

After the last card appears in this left corner frame, there is a smaller font text that appears at the bottom of the frame, and gives the user of the website details about the conditions of this offer that is being advertised. 'Duración limitada. Del 9/10 al 12/11 de 2006.' (For a limited time. From October 9 to November 12) The fact that this information has been placed at the bottom of the page with a smaller font has to do with the fact that this is not the most relevant information that the designers of the website want the users to see first, as we saw in the English version.

As a whole, on this top right frame of the website the designers have promoted one of McDonald's limited time offers by combining visual and textual elements. The overall meaning of the frame is achieved by means of the narrative semiotic resource of successively introducing the elements of the composition, so that the user of the website follows the 'story' that is created by the meanings of these elements. In addition, the promotion of sandwiches from several areas in North America makes McDonald's restaurants a place where customers can get an international experience by trying some of

the typical ingredients used in different regions in another part of the world. This kind of promotion makes McDonald's restaurants an interesting, ever changing place where there is always a new choice for costumers.

Before I analyze the next line of frames that appears in the center of the website, I want to return to the successive introduction of elements that has been used in this website. The use of this resource is synchronized to present the left and right hand frames on the top line in the center of the website, and it is also synchronized with the alternating 'yellow hand' and 'Golden Arches' elements that appear on the left hand corner of the website. To make my explanation clearer, I will refer to the 'Golden Arches' and to the 'yellow hand' elements on the left hand corner of the website as A1 and A2 respectively; the left hand frame on the top line in the center will be referred to as B; and the right hand frame will be referred to as C.

When A1 appears, the elements inside frames B and C disappear. Then A2 appears and the elements in frames B and C start to appear. Also, the successive appearances of elements in frames B and C are related. First, the elements in frame B disappear, and as they start appearing, the elements in frame C disappear. Then the elements in frame B finish their appearance, and a second or so after, the elements in frame C finish their appearance. As soon as all the elements in frame B and C have appeared, the cycle repeats itself. I believe this resource has been used to guide the users in their reading of the website.

Next, I will analyze the three frames that appear below frames B and C, I will refer to them as frame D for the left frame, frame E for the center frame, and frame F for the right frame respectively.

Center line of the website

Frame D

The content of this frame presents a new toy that children can get when they go to McDonald's. By introducing this toy, McDonald's is presented as a place where children can have fun; the corporation is presented as a company that cares for children, which are meanings that were made in other areas of the website. These meanings are expressed by a combination of visual and linguistic elements. Visually, there are six images of little toys, each of them inside a color bubble; there are also other yellow bubbles around. Linguistically, there are two pieces of text, one towards the top of the frame in a yellow background, and towards the bottom inside one of the floating bubbles, both of the texts are located to the right hand sight of the page. The one towards the top of the frame reads: '¡Los seres más alucinantes han invadido McDonald's! Ven a por ellos, hay 6 diferentes.' (The most hallucinating beings have invaded McDonald's! Come get them, there are six different ones.). The text towards the bottom of the page reads 'IZ', and it is the name of the beings, toys.

The visual elements, the six images of the toys inside the bubbles combined with the bubbles creates a surreal world feeling that is also expressed textually with the words 'hallucinating beings' and 'have invaded'. Also, the shapeless form of the beings is mirrored in their name 'IZ' that has no meaning at all. There are six images of these beings and the text informs the user that there are six of them at McDonald's restaurants. In order to encourage the user of the website to do something about these beings' invasion, the meanings of visual and textual elements combine. Visually the toys' gaze is directed towards the user of the website, while textually the informal form of the imperative is used in the verb 'ven' (come) and then the rest of the text 'a por ellos' (get them) tells the user of the website to go to McDonald's and capture these beings that have 'invaded' the restaurants.

Frame E

The meanings conveyed in this frame are also geared to attract children to go to McDonald's, and so relate to the ones in frame D. The meaning of this visual

composition is to present a link that includes a song about driving safely and wearing seat belts while driving. I will start by presenting the major elements that form part of the composition of this frame and express this overall meaning of educating children in safe driving practices, those elements are the background, the car, the character of Ronald McDonald and the two children sitting in the car, and the text 'Haz Click'.

The background of this composition is a very colorful, full with pastel tones, creating an environment that resembles a dream world. The background creates the perfect setting for the elements that form the composition. The first one I will refer to is the car which is red, like McDonald's representative color and the windshield is formed by McDonald's Golden Arches, thus the meaning that this is McDonald's car is created. In addition, the car is alive, it's happily smiling and has big eyes that are looking towards the user of the website in order to relate to him/her. The plate of the car reads McClick, which relates it to the next element that I will analyze, the poster that reads '!Haz Click!'. They both are related by means of the repetition of the word 'Click'.

The poster '!Haz Click!' (Click here)

This poster is towards the top of the frame. I believe its positioning has to do with the fact that it is the one that introduces the overall topic of this frame, a song that teaches kids about safe driving practices. The way to express this meaning is again by combining visual and linguistic elements. The text invites the users of the website to click on the link by using the imperative informal form of the verb 'hacer'. Also, the text is printed in large fonts that are presented as if they were flowing, showing movement. The text is underlined by a two-way road that is attached in the center by what looks like a car. This image of the road can also be seen as representing a seat belt that is attached in the center. Combining this image with the text shows the user what he/she will find when following the directions given by the text, more about safe driving for children. The poster is also connected to the character of Ronald McDonald and to the two children that are seating in the car. This connection is achieved by means of the vector formed by the pointing hand of Ronald McDonald. Additionally the children are linked to Ronald McDonald by means of the verctor formed by their gaze that is pointing towards this character.

The characters

Ronald McDonald is smiling and inviting the user of the website to click on the link. In order to express these meanings, the designers of the website have used two vectors. One vector is formed by the gaze of McDonald that looks at the user of the website, the other vector is formed by the pointing arm of Ronald McDonald towards the poster 'Haz Click' which gives directions to the user on what to do. The children that are sitting in the car are smiling and looking attentively at Ronald McDonald as if listening carefully to what he has to say. What McDonald has to say has to do with teaching children about safe driving and wearing seat belts. This meaning is visually achieved in the characters of the children because they are wearing their seat belts and they are sitting alone in the car, there are no adults.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my explanation for this frame, the overall meaning is to teach children about safe driving practices and by doing this several meanings are related to McDonald's restaurants. These are restaurants that offer special attention to children, these are restaurants that want to teach children responsible practices, and these are restaurants where children can 'drive through' to get some food with their parents.

Frame F

Frame F shows more information about McDonald's hamburgers and their production process. By including this in the homepage, the corporation shows its concern with offering good quality products. Also, by showing the production process to the users of the website, the company involves its potential clients in what happens behind the scenes of the meals that are served at its restaurants, it shows confidence and the desire to establish a close relationship with its clients. Furthermore, showing the production process also eliminates any myths or doubts about the freshness and cleanliness under which the hamburgers are elaborated. To introduce the user to this link, the designers of the website have used a frame that shows images in motion and they have included a text that is located on top of the page to introduce the subject that appears in this link.

The text that appears in this frame reads: '¿ Te has parado a pensar alguna vez de qué están hechas nuestras hamburguesas?' (Have you ever stopped to think what our hamburgers are made of?) The question does not only introduce the topic of this link 'what our hamburgers are made of'. The use of a question form calls the users' attention in a way that if he/she has never asked that question, now he/she feels the need to know; otherwise, if the user has asked himself/ herself that question already, then he/she will receive an answer by clicking on the link. The text is also written using the informal form of the pronoun you ('te has parado...'), which as I have mentioned before, implies a closer relationship with the user of the website. Also, there is an opposition in the question between the forms of the pronouns 'tú' (you) and 'nosotros' (our). I have pointed out in other texts used in the website, that the use of the pronoun 'we' is inclusive, but also in this case it opposes what 'you' (the user of the website) know about the hamburgers, and what 'we' know about them. This opposition makes the user want to know more in order to become part of the group that is referred to by 'our'. Visually, this text is in red letters on a yellow background, again the colors related to McDonald's restaurants. In addition the two bottom lines 'hechas nuestras hamburguesas' (our hamburgers made of) are printed in a larger font, as they contain the meaning that the designers of the website really want the users to notice.

The visual elements that appear in this frame are in motion. On the top area of the frame, there is a yellow flash of light that is constantly turning. The end points of this element form vectors that connect it with a strip of film that is playing on the bottom side of the frame. The combination of this two visual elements expresses the meaning that the users of the website will get a glimpse (represented with the flash element) at what happens before McDonald's hamburgers get to the table (in the strip of film that is constantly playing, there are four delimited white frames that appear one after the other, and each of them shows one of McDonald's hamburger dishes).

When the users of the website look at this frame, the combination of images and text that is presented to them informs them that by clicking on that link, they will be shown a short film about the production process of McDonald's hamburgers.

The last three frames that I will analyze are those that appear on the bottom in the center of McDonald's Spain website. I will refer to these frames as frame G for the one on the left corner, frame H for the one on the center, and frame I for the one on the right corner.

Frame G

This frame is devoted to children, giving them more details about McDonald's Happy Meal menu. There are two texts in this frame that appear on a yellow background, yellow again representative of McDonald's. The text that appears to the right is inside a white bubble and has multiple colors for every letter; it has the Golden Arches over top and reads 'Happy Meal' in uneven letters. This is the symbol that appears in McDonald's Happy Meals packaging. The name of the meal suggests that people that have it are happy, they are specially prepared for children and the inclusion of the Golden Arches over the name means that they are served at McDonald's restaurants. The text that appears to the right is in purple, a good contrasting color over the yellow background. It reads 'Crea tu propio Happy Meal' (Create your own Happy Meal). In this case, the informal form of the imperative is used to establish a close relationship with the user of the website. Also, the use of the verb 'create' and the words 'your own' gives the user of the website the power on what dishes to select for his/her Happy Meal. The fact that the text 'Happy Meal' is not translated is also significant. By not translating this text, it has become a linguistic sign that McDonald's customers will know what it means; there has been an assumption of shared knowledge between the company and its clients.

Frame H

This frame is used to offer McDonald's customers more information about the nutritious quality of McDonald's meals. This frame uses image and text to express that McDonald's is a company concerned with nutritious healthy eating. It presents the same image than its

counterpart in McDonald's Canada website, one of McDonald's salads which show fresh healthy ingredients such as lettuce and chicken. The text that accompanies this image reads: 'Area de nutrición' (Nutrition area). The meaning of the text relates to the image by means of the word 'nutrition' which is exemplified in the picture of a nutritious McDonald's salad.

Frame I

This frame presents the user of the website with the possibility of knowing more about working at McDonald's. The text used to introduce the general subject that will be presented in this frame reads: 'trabaja con nosotros' (work with us). Once again the informal form of the imperative is used to interact with the user of the website. The users are compelled to join 'us' (McDonald's team) and start a career with the company. The image that accompanies this text, I see it as an illustration of the relaxed and pleasant environment that McDonald's employees work in which makes them satisfied. Satisfaction is the facial expression of the young girl that is presented in the image that I am analyzing. Thus the meanings conveyed by combining image and text in this frame lead the website users to think that McDonald's employees are young, happy, and satisfied people.

Bottom of the page

On the very bottom of the page, there are a few lines of text, printed on very small letters. This text is intended to give the user more details about the website. It identifies the date in which this website was first created, it identifies it as a property of McDonald's corporation, and it gives details about the usability of the website, about the programs that a PC requires in order to show its contents. The text reads: [c] 2004 – McDonald's España/ Página web optimizada para PC, navegadores Internet Explorer 6.0 y superiores y para resoluciones de pantalla 800 x 600 y 1024 x 768/ Requiere plug-in de flash.'

'[c] 2004 – McDonald's España' identifies Spain's franchise of McDonald's as the holder of the copyright rights for this website. 'Página web optimizada para PC, navegadores Internet Explorer 6.0 y superiores y para resoluciones de pantalla 800 x 600 y 1024 x 768' shows that the page has been optimized to be used in PCs, with a given screen resolution. 'Requiere plug-in de flash', this last line shows the users they need the program flash to view the website, and the underlining of the word 'flash' means that by clicking on it, users can access a link to download the program.

The Spanish version of McDonald's website localized for Spain uses the visual and linguistic semiotic modes, evident in semiotic choices such as the informal form of you, the imperative grammatical mode, the inclusive pronoun 'we', and the repetition of words from a linguistic point of view; and using color, successive apparition of visual elements, certain layout of visual elements, the gaze of some of the participants in the visual composition, the size of some fonts used in the composition, and the semiotic resource of framing to represent the discourse of McDonald's Spanish franchise. As a whole, McDonald's Spain website's discourse which expresses the ideology of this McDonald's franchise can be summarized as follows:

- McDonald's is a corporation that sells products that are nutritious.
- McDonald's is a corporation that cares about the quality and freshness of the ingredients it uses in its foods.
- McDonald's restaurants offer a wide variety of foods that are prepared with great care.
- McDonald's is a company that offers special attention to children
- McDonald's restaurants are places where children can have fun.
- McDonald's is a corporation that offers promising and secure careers to its employees.
- McDonald's employees are happy to be part of the company.
- McDonald's is a corporation that is proactive in children's charities.
- McDonald's restaurants can be found everywhere.

As I have shown in the analysis of McDonald's homepages of the localized websites for Canada and Spain, the discourse and ideologies of the companies are present in both websites. Also in both, the main semiotic modes used have been visual and linguistic. These semiotic resources, though somehow similar in terms of the color palate used or the use of the imperative mode to address the user of the website, have been used according to the cultural characteristics of the locale, be it Canada or Spain. For example, the promotions that appear in each website have to do with the products offered by McDonald's in Spain or Canada. In the case of Spain the sandwiches advertised come from America which is a foreign place for the Spanish population and thus they may find it appealing. In both websites McDonald's has been presented as a company that cares for the wellbeing of children, that cares for the future of its employees, that offers hamburgers along with a variety of healthy food choices. In sum, using different semiotic resources the commercial message of McDonald's has been expressed in its Canadian and Spanish localized websites in the same way.

4.4 Analysis of Dove's Campaign on Real Beauty, Canadian and Spanish localized versions.

Having analyzed McDonald's localized websites for Canada and Spain, I will analyze the localized Canadian and Spanish websites of a company from a different industry. I will look at Dove's Canadian and Spanish websites to advertise Dove's Campaign on Real Beauty.

4.4.1 Dove's Campaign on Real Beauty

First of all, it is necessary to mention some information about what the Campaign for Real Beauty is about. This is a campaign that the brand name Dove is funding in order to change women's beauty stereotypes. The goal of changing these stereotypes is impending, according to Dove's website (<http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.ca/supports.asp?url=supports.asp§ion=campaign&id=1560> retrieved on November 13, 2006), since women have distorted beauty

perception that have been created by the beauty industry and have even caused physical illness to some women that want to loose weight in order to fit the beauty stereotype. Dove's mission is to show that women of different sizes, appearances, and ages are all beautiful, because they are unique, confident, and feel good about themselves.

The websites that I will analyze in this section are the localized homepage versions of Canada and Spain's Campaign for Real Beauty websites.

4.4.2 Dove's Campaign on Real Beauty, Canada

(<http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.ca/>)

The overall visual composition of this website in terms of color palate is indicative of Dove's brand, since the colors that represent this brand, white, light and dark blue, are the ones that are mainly used in the website.

As I did for the analysis of McDonald's websites, I will present the information based on the use of the semiotic resource of framing. In the case of the Canadian version, there are five horizontal frames, each of them vertically divided into more frames. These five frames are from top to bottom, the blue stripe that appears on the top area of the page (frame A), the grey area in the center of the page that shows the face of the young lady (Frame B), the white background with the blue texts (Frame C), the white and light blue frames (Frame D), and the light blue stripe at the very bottom of the page (Frame E).

Frame A

Inside this frame there are five different links that the users of the website can click on. By doing so, they can access more information about the campaign and can express their personal opinion about beauty. Visually, this frame is a solid dark blue stripe that includes four white font texts equally spaced and a fifth text of the same color and slightly bigger font that appears towards the right hand corner of the frame. This visual separation has been used in combination with the text of the link in the right hand corner

(campaignforrealbeauty/Dove) to inform the user of the website of what it is they are looking at. The text 'campaignforrealbeauty' tells the reader what the name of this website is, and the word Dove is used as a signature for the content that appears in the website, and particularly in this frame. This meaning of authorship and signature of the ideas presented inside this frame is given by the use of italics in the word *Dove* and the use of a period at the end of the word. In addition the word *Dove* has been separated from the text 'campaignforrealbeauty' which can be seen as a sign for the separation of two different lines of text, interpreted this way, the line 'campaignforrealbeauty' not only represents the title of the website, but also all the actions and contents that relate to this campaign, and 'Dove' represents the creator of the website and the campaign. Dove is also visually represented next to the text 'campaignforrealbeauty', with the light blue dove icon that represents Dove brand name, so the 'authorship' of Dove with relation to this beauty campaign is textually (*Dove*) and visually (the dove icon) represented.

I will now move on to each of the four links that appear to the left separately. The first one towards the far left reads: 'share your views'. In this case, the imperative mode has been used to encourage the user of the website to click on the link, to take action. Besides, the text uses the possessive pronoun 'your' to refer to the user's views. Thus, this text praises the personal opinion of the user of the website, by creating a space for him/her to express his/her views, to 'share' them, which implies that there are others that have already expressed their views on this real beauty campaign. Also, the 'share your views' link is the first one to appear in the website, this gives the user a sense of importance, his/her view is the first thing the designers of the website care about. The next text over reads: 'in the news'. This text implies that this campaign is not just something small, it is a campaign that is being followed by the media. Furthermore, this text informs the reader about the content of the page that opens by clicking on this link.

The third text reads: 'inside the campaign'. This text again is used to reflect the informative nature of this link. By reading this text, the users of the website know that the information this link contains has to do with more details about the campaign, what

actions are taken, where are those actions taken, who is taking those actions in the implementation of Dove's real beauty campaign.

The fourth text reads: 'dove self-esteem fund'. This text informs the user of the website of the existence of a fund managed by Dove to help people with self-esteem problems. After reading this text, the user of the website knows that the page connected to this link will present information about this fund, what it is, how to donate and contribute to it.

Among these four links, it is important to notice, how the textual elements that introduce these links have captured the nature of the page that opens by clicking on them. In the case of the first link, the imperative form of a verb has been used to encourage the user to click on it, and actually this link leads the user of the website to a page where he/she is expected to take action. However, in the other three texts, no verbs have been used, and so these are links to pages that only inform the user of the website, the action the user can take does not involve creating as is the case of the first link, the action the user of the website is expected to take here is reading to receive information.

Looking at it from a different perspective, all the texts that appear in this frame are the same color which contributes to the unity in the content presented. It helps the user of the website recognize what 'views', 'news', 'campaign', and 'fund' the links on the left refer to when they follow the same color font to the right and read 'campaignforrealbeauty/Dove'. Additionally, enlarging the font in the texts that appear on the right, the designers of the website have placed more emphasis in this text because it is the one that encompasses all the social meanings that are related to this campaign for real beauty and to its 'author', Dove. In a nutshell, those meanings indicate that there is a need to promote real beauty and that Dove is promoting it. Women who use Dove beauty products believe in real, natural beauty and defy the beauty stereotypes created by other beauty industry products in their advertising campaigns.

In general, the content that appears in this frame is informative for the user to know more about the real beauty campaign, and get involved in it.

Frame B (center of the page)

This area presents a combination of image and text that expresses Dove's concern with real beauty and with the beauty stereotypes that the beauty industry has imposed on women. The content of the frame presents the shortcut to a video to show women how supermodels are transformed from real women into what they look like in advertising campaigns.

The background color of the composition is a grayish blue tone. It is a color that is complementary to the blue tones that appear in the rest of the composition. Furthermore, it is not a solid grey, it has different shades, and it has a faux finish look. By using this finish, the designers of the website have created a background that adds movement to the entire composition. Movement is a very powerful compliment to the changes that this visual and textual composition refers to; that become apparent after analyzing the rest of the elements in this frame.

The visual elements that are used are the picture of a supermodel, the color palate selected for the frame, and the fonts selected to print the different texts that are part of the frame. First, in terms of the image of the supermodel, her face is divided in half. The left half presents her wearing makeup, with her hair done; it presents her 'picture perfect'. The right side of her face shows what the model really looks like without the makeup and the enhancements that prepare her for a photo-shoot. Taking into account the way in which the before and after pictures appear in magazines, left for the before picture and right for the after picture, it could appear that this picture has been inverted and shows the after shot to the left and the before shot to the right. However, I believe this picture is used to illustrate Dove's ideal of beauty, which would mean that the left side would be the before picture (showing the beauty stereotype that needs to be changed), and the right side would be the after picture (showing the real beauty of a woman, her natural complexion which makes her unique). It is also important to notice that the gaze of the model is directed at the user of the website, which is a visual element that establishes an

immediate connection with the user of the website. The gaze of the supermodel invites the user to view the video of her transformation. This invitation, as well as the implications of this model's look on Dove's ideologies about beauty stereotypes are not only illustrated by the photograph of the supermodel, they are also expressed by means of the texts that appear inside frame B.

There are several texts that are part of this frame, but I will start by analyzing the one that appears in the middle of the visual composition that is presented in this frame. The text is a block of six lines that are aligned to the left, so that the end of the lines form vectors that point at the image of the model, thus directing the view of the user of the website towards that area. Also, from all the texts in this frame, this is the one closer to the supermodel's image, in that way the image gives the user of the website a preview of what the text is referring to. In terms of the colors used for the text, the headline is black, printed in an elegant, italic, slightly larger size with respects to the rest of the text. That way the headline is differentiated from the rest of the text. Also, the fonts used give the headline a sense of mobility and dynamism that relate to its meaning and to the content of the rest of the text. The headline reads: 'evolution'. Evolution is a word that implies transformation, movement, dynamism, which are meanings that are in alignment with the visual appearance of the headline. In addition, the word evolution in relation to the image of the supermodel before and after half face picture expresses Dove's view that the evolution of beauty should be going from what supermodels look like in photo shoots to what they look like in real life, which should be beauty's evolution according to Dove, and not the other way around.

The rest of the text reads: 'Dove Self Esteem Fund' is proud to present this powerful 1 minute short film revealing the illusions behind the "beauty" we see everyday in the media. It's a little reminder that even supermodels don't look like supermodels.' The overall meaning of the text is to give the user of the website an introduction to the content of the video presented by this composition. Also, there are several words in the text that add more specific and implicit meanings to the composition. 'Dove Self Esteem Fund' is identified as the creator of the video. The use of the words 'proud', 'powerful' tell the

user of the website how Dove feels about this video. The word 'powerful' also relates to the words 'revealing' and 'illusions', the video is made powerful because it shows the truth about the beauty industry, it is made powerful because it reveals how beauty is fabricated by the media. The text also shows how the Fund feels about fabricated beauty by presenting the word beauty between quotations, this shows that the Fund does not consider the beauty shown in the media to be real beauty or to contribute to women's self esteem. In addition, the word 'we' includes the user of the website in the same group as Dove's Fund members, so it presupposes the attitude of the user towards beauty is the same as the members' attitude, to defend natural beauty as the only way to boost self esteem.

The last sentence of the text: 'It's a little reminder that even supermodels don't look like supermodels' relates the "beauty" presented by the media to supermodels specifically. It further expresses Dove's belief that beauty is presented by supermodel stereotypes that are not real, therefore self esteem should not be equated to beauty as presented by these stereotypes. This sentence also explains the content presented in the photograph of the young lady. This text together with the photo explain to the reader, this is a supermodel, her face's left half shows how she looks in the media, and her face's right half shows how she looks in real life, and this is the transformation that the video will present.

On the top area of the frame, there are five pieces of text. The first one is printed in slightly bigger font compared to the others and it is in black, which also separate it from the other texts printed in blue. The text reads: 'click to play'. It introduces the main topic of this frame, which is to present a video. Besides, the imperative mode is used in the word 'click' to give directions to the user on what to do. The four texts that appear next to this first one are complementary to it. They are choices that the user has to play the video. In order to introduce these selections, the designers of the website have chosen a visual element, a white arrow pointing towards these four texts. Also, in order to distinguish among the four of them, black thin bars have been introduced in between each of the texts. The possible selections for the user to play the video are: 'full screen', 'high', 'low', 'download'.

On the bottom of the frame, there is another combination of visual and textual elements used to present the user of the website with another video by Dove. The visual element used ties in with the one used to introduce the playing selections for the previous video. It is a grey arrow that points to the text presenting the video. The text reads: 'Watch another Dove film'. Again, the imperative is used to give instructions to the user on what to do and to explain what will appear if they click on this link. The text is printed in blue font, which relates it to the selections given by the blue four texts that appear on the top area of the page. Therefore, the user can expect to be presented with playing selections when clicking on this link.

In sum, frame B combines image and text to present the platform of Dove's campaign for real beauty, changing the beauty stereotypes that have been created by the media and that are affecting women's self esteem making them believe they have to fit these stereotypes in order to be beautiful. Dove's platform is to boost women's self esteem by showing them that real beauty is natural beauty.

Frame C

The content in this frame is a continuation of the one presented in frame B. The content in frame C gives the users tools to take an active part in this campaign, if they agree with the belief that beauty is fabricated by the media, and that this affects self-esteem, which is essentially the message presented in frame B. The tools are presented using texts and one of the tools is illustrated by means of an image-text combination. The actions that users can take to join the campaign are further exemplified in Frame D, but I will refer to those examples in the next section.

There are five texts that appear in frame C. They are separated at equal distances one from another, they are all typed using the same font, and they are all blue on a white background. These similarities in presentation mean that the contents of all five texts are

equally important. Each of these texts represents a link that the users of the website can follow, and each of them summarizes the content of the link they present to the user.

The five texts read:

1. Join a Real Beauty Workshop.
2. Ideas for moms and mentors
3. Ideas for educators
4. Share this film with a friend
5. Download tools and resources

There is a lack of parallelism in the enunciation of these texts, some of them are instructions (given in the imperative mood) and some of them are headlines (presented using nouns). Texts 1, 4, and 5 use the imperative mood to encourage users to take action, by clicking on the link users are potentially joining a workshop, or sharing the film, or downloading the resources. Just by clicking on the link, users are taking some action to change beauty stereotypes. In the case of texts 2 and 3, they are presented using more of a headline structure than a command structure. This may be because they are written for people that are already somehow involved in this campaign for educating people about beauty. The expected user of links 2 and 3 are 'moms', 'mentors', and 'educators', it is a public that has to deal with shaping people's perspective about beauty. I say this because a mom, for instance, is faced with having to explain to her teenage daughter that she is not 'fat' or 'ugly' just because she does not fill a beauty stereotype. So in this way, the user that is expected to click on texts 2 or 3 is already involved with the campaign, all they need is more ideas on how to deal with situations, but they do not need encouragement to take action. It is important to bear in mind that this way of analyzing the texts is theoretical because in practice any user of the website could click on any of the links.

Next to this list of links, there is a sub-frame within frame C that contains an image to the left and a text to the right. This frame presents one of the tools that the user of the website can download. The user is informed of this fact by means of the text that appears on the

top right corner of this frame, it reads: 'featured tools' and it is typed using a bigger font than the rest of the textual elements that appear inside this frame. This difference in the size of the font tells the user of the website, this is the headline of the content in this frame. Immediately below this text, there is another one that reads: '*True you workbook*' and appears in italics. The italics are used because this is the name of the tool the link introduces, which is specifically a written publication. The title explains that it is a workbook and that it will deal with ways of defining one's personality. More information about the contents of the workbook is offered to the user in the bit of text that appears below the title in a smaller font: 'Learn more about this activity guide here'. The use of the smaller font in this case adds to the explanatory meaning of this text. Also, the text encourages the user of the website to try this tool by using the imperative mode in the verb 'learn'. The word 'learn' is followed by 'more', which follows the meaning of the previous two texts where some information about the tool has already been given to the user of the website. Last, this text further defines the nature of this tool by referring to it as 'this activity guide'.

Next to the text that presents the activity guide, there is an image of the cover of the workbook. The pink color on the background of the cover is used, in my opinion, to relate the book to its users, women. The pink background is full of floating bubbles where images of female faces are shown. The faces are from girls from different ages, and one of them shows a mom with her daughter. This way the cover of the book represents its potential users.

As I have explained, frame C presents the activities of the campaign in a nutshell. It shows that there are workshops to teach people about real beauty, it shows that mothers and mentors have an active role in changing the current perception of beauty, and it shows one of the tools that are described, an activity guide specifically.

Frame D

Frame D is formed by two smaller frames, which I will refer to as D1 and D2. Frames D1 and D2 are similar in appearance. They both show a picture to the left of the frame, a light blue stripe on the top area of the frames, and a text on small dark blue print below the top stripe. In both cases, the image illustrates what the text is talking about. The text that appears inside the light blue stripe of each frame is used to introduce the product the frame will refer to, and the rest of the text is included to further explain the product that has been introduced. The similarity in appearance of these two frames contributes to the cohesion in frame D. In addition, it is an element that shows the reader the information included in these two frames is of equal importance. As a matter of fact, D1 and D2 look different to the right hand frame that presents the 'true you workbook'. If the content of D1 and D2 is compared to the right hand frame, the content in the latter is more important, thus the difference in appearance. The right hand frame content presents a 'featured tool', whereas D1 and D2 present other tools that the campaign is promoting.

Frame D1

The text that appears on the top light blue stripe reads: 'FREE! Through her eyes calendar'. This text tells the user of the website the product presented is a calendar. Two aspects are highlighted about the calendar. First, it is 'free', so capital letters have been used for this text. Second, it has been created by a female, 'her eyes'. The use of 'her' in the text is illustrated by the image that appears to the left. The image shows what looks like the front page of the calendar. It is the picture of a young girl on a light blue background, a color related to Dove, and also to denote Dove's signature in the calendar, the dark blue dove icon appears on the left hand side on top of the girl's picture.

There is another text that forms part of frame D1, it reads: 'go behind the lens to see the making of the calendar'. As I said before, this explanatory text promises the user more details about the calendar, the product promoted in this frame. As in the rest of the website, the imperative mode is used, 'go', to encourage the user to click on the link. Another detail that is given about the calendar refers to its contents, by using the metonymy 'the lens', the designers of the website refer to a part of the whole object, the

camera, with which the calendar have been produced. Also, the purpose of clicking on this link is shown to the user by introducing the text 'to see the making of this calendar'.

At the very bottom of the frame, there is another word that represents the link the users have to click on. The word is 'more' and is preceded by a littler arrow. The word 'more' with the arrow next to it show the user the way to follow if they are interested in knowing more about this calendar created by Dove.

The creation of the calendar that has been introduced in Frame D1 is another example of the actions that Dove has taken to promote real beauty.

Frame D2

The content of this frame is summarized in the text that appears in the light blue stripe on the top area of the page. The text reads: 'Dove Real Beauty Workshops for Girls'. This text explains that the tool presented here to change the current perception of beauty is the organization of workshops. More details are given about them and that they are coordinated by Dove, that they are geared to discussing what real beauty is about, and they are specifically devoted to girls.

The text that appears below the light blue stripe further explains the purpose, places, and characteristics of the audience that is expected to attend them. It reads: 'Interactive workshops on Real Beauty held across Canada for girls aged 8-12 and their female mentors.' First, the text tells the user of the website these workshops are 'interactive'. In addition, the text informs users that the topic of the workshops is 'real beauty', that they take place 'across Canada', and that the audience is girls and their female mentors, thus describing the audience as only female of all ages and in all locations.

The audience is also represented in the image that appears on the left hand side of the frame. It is the image of a girl and a woman that is older than her, but they look very much alike, so the image represents a girl and her mom, the kind of audience that is expected to attend these workshops. The mother and daughter are both smiling, wearing a

white T-shirt representative of Dove, and they connect to the users of the website because their gaze is directed to them.

At the very bottom of the frame, there is a text that reads: 'More'. As I explained in the case of Frame D1, this text is inserted to show the user where to click, to direct her on the direction to follow in order to learn more about the workshops.

It is noticeable in frame D that the campaign on real beauty is essentially for women. Female mentors and girls are the expected audience at these workshops, and the calendar has been created by girls. In other words, for Dove the perception of beauty that matters is women's perception of beauty because nowhere in this frame or in the rest of the website is there any mention of men's perception of beauty, or any direct evidence that tells the users this is not only for women but for society as a whole to change the perception of beauty. The audience involved and expected to be involved with this campaign is female.

Frame E

Frame E is formed by a narrow light blue stripe that includes 6 pieces of text. The first one is different to the rest in content and so it has been distanced from the rest in the layout, and it is typed using a slightly bigger font. It reads: 'invite a friend' and is preceded by an arrow. As I explained in frames D1 and D2, the presence of the arrow indicates that this is a link that users can click on. The function of this link is explained in the text, 'invite a friend', and the imperative mode is again used to encourage the user to take this action. This text appears on the left hand side, away from the others in this frame, since the others are related to information about Dove's company.

The rest of the texts in this frame read: 'privacy policy', 'terms of use', 'contact us', 'dove.ca', '[c] Unilever Canada Inc. 2006'. These are links that typically appear on a website, they refer to the privacy the company offers users of the website, the terms the user needs to agree upon to use this website, how to communicate with the company

(which is personalized by means of the pronoun 'us' to make it closer to the user). Additionally, for this website, there is the name of the company 'dove' followed by '.ca' which tells the user this is a Canadian website, and then there is the name of another company 'Unilever Canada Inc.' which tells the user that Dove Canada is part of a larger corporation 'Unilever Canada Inc.'. Last, the use of the number '2006' situates the content of this website as updated for the current year.

As a whole, Dove's campaign for real beauty website, in its Canadian version is organized so that the main content of the website appears in the center of the page. The video that is promoted in the center of the page presents the main platform of the campaign for real beauty that the website is promoting. In addition, the resources and tools that are promoted immediately below the video show the actions that the campaign is taking to achieve its goals. Even though I only deal with the analysis of the homepage, I refer to the contents of the video since it is advertised in this homepage.

The meanings expressed in this website have been created using a combination of semiotic resources that are part of the linguistic and visual modes of communication, the main resources used have been, linguistically, the imperative mode and explanatory utterances, and the use of the pronouns 'us', 'we', and 'you'; visually, the resources include the color palette and the Dove icon to represent this company, the gaze of the people photographed directed at the user of the website, and the smiles of some of them used to establish a close relationship with the users, and the 'before and after' image that presents the ideological basis of this real beauty campaign. It is important to bear in mind that this analysis only refers to the homepage.

From a social semiotics perspective, the meanings expressed in the website constitute the discourse of Dove's corporation which reflects the ideology the company is promoting. Dove's discourse as it has been presented in this website can be summarized as follows:

- There are beauty stereotypes in our societies.
- These beauty stereotypes represent what a beautiful woman should look like.

- These beauty stereotypes are fake; they have been fabricated by the media and the beauty industry.
- These beauty stereotypes have affected women's self esteem
- Dove is a corporation that defies these stereotypes.
- Dove is a corporation that has its own conceptions of what real beauty is, and they differ from the current beauty stereotypes.
- Dove is working to change the existing beauty stereotypes.
- Dove's campaign is devoted to teaching women Dove's conception of what beauty should be, and to boost women's self esteem.

4.5 Analysis of *Por la belleza real*

(<http://www.porlabeledzreal.com/splash.asp?theme=>)

This is the localized version for Spain of Dove's website devoted to promote Dove's campaign for real beauty. In terms of layout, this website is similar to the Canadian version of the website, although it does not include as many frames. On the top area, there is a dark blue strip that presents several links that the users of the website can open to obtain more information about this campaign, this stripe I will refer to as frame A. In the center of the website, the space has been used to present the user with the discourse that underlies the website, which is showing the need to change women's perception of beauty, as I will show in this analysis; I will refer to this area as frame B. The bottom area of the website, similar to the Canadian version, presents a light blue stripe with several texts that give more information about the company itself.

Frame A

It is noticeable when comparing the Canadian and Spanish versions of Dove's campaign for real beauty home page that the textual elements that appear in the Spanish website (specifically in frames A and C) have been translated from the English version into Spanish. In this analysis, I will show what resources the Spanish language uses to create similar meanings to the ones created in English.

There are four pieces of text that have been inserted in this dark blue frame, frame A. As I showed in the Canadian version, the different shades of blue are associated with Dove's products, so the use of this color associates the content of the texts with Dove. The first text reads: 'comparte tu opinión' (share your views). The Spanish version uses the imperative mode and the informal possessive pronoun 'tu' (your) to establish a close relationship with the user of the website, like the Canadian one. In addition, the use of the imperative encourages the user of the website to click on the link and take action to join the campaign. This text gives the user of the website a voice with the text 'your views', and it provides him/her with a space where his/her voice will be heard by encouraging the user to 'share' views.

The second text in this frame reads: 'en las noticias' (in the news). Such a text implies that Dove and its campaign have a space in the news. The use of the grammatical structure 'preposition (en) + circumstantial object (las noticias)' is the same grammatical structure that was used in the Canadian version. The meaning that such a grammatical structure adds is that it indicates to the user of the website that this is not the only place where there is information about the campaign; there have also been news about it, which makes this a socially noticeable campaign.

The third text reads: 'sobre la campaña' (inside the campaign). This text also uses the grammatical structure 'preposition (sobre) + circumstantial object (la campaña)' to provide the user of the website with locative information of where to learn more about this campaign. The text informs the user of the website that this link will open a page with exclusive inside information about Dove's campaign.

These three pieces of text provide a place for the user of the website to express his/her opinions about the topic that the website deals with, and provide more information about the topic to the user. More information about what campaign, what news, and what views the user is supposed to share appears on the right hand corner of frame A. On that corner there is a fourth text that reads: 'porlabeledzarea/ Dove'. The location of this text adds to

it a meaning of signature, where Dove is identified as the sponsor of this campaign and responsible for the information provided in the links that appear in the rest of frame A. It is a given that when the user opens the website, she knows that this is Dove's campaign for real beauty homepage that has been localized for Spain. However, visually and textually, the inclusion of the text 'porlabeledzarea/ Dove' on the right hand corner of the website is the indication of what this composition is about and who is responsible for it. The mention of 'Dove' is visually emphasized, as it was also done in the Canadian version, by introducing Dove's light blue icon before the text 'porlabeledzarea/ Dove'.

Frame B

The content of this frame is divided into visual elements on the left hand side, and text on the right hand side. The textual side explains the visual side, and the combination of the two modes is used to create a message that defies beauty stereotypes. There are three combinations of image and text that have been used in this frame. However, only one of them appears at a time when the website is accessed. I will analyze each of the combinations to show how they defy beauty stereotypes and how the meanings have been created using similar resources in the three of them.

This area of the website is an interactive one, where users of the website get to express their own views on beauty. The three possible combinations of image and text include, visually, the image of a woman and textually, a text that allows users of the website to judge the woman's physical appearance and look at the judgment that other users have expressed.

Combination 1

The first combination I will analyze includes, visually, the image of a younger woman and, textually, a selection for the user of a website to judge the appearance of this woman. The woman is smiling, she looks happy, confident, her gaze is directed towards the user of the website; this way the designers of the website establish a close relationship between the character of the woman and what she represents and the user of the website

as we've seen in ads from McDonalds. In addition, the image of the woman is not still, it is constantly alternating with other shoots of the same woman. It is significant that the woman is smiling in all these shots, and her gaze is always directed at the user of the website. The shoots show her face or half her body, and she is wearing a black dress that shows her shoulders; her positions in all the shoots emphasize her full figure. This emphasis is explained because in comparison to models, this woman has a fuller figure, which is why her picture defies the beauty stereotype that slim women are the only beautiful ones. The alternation of images and the attitude the woman shows in the different shoots are geared to relate to the user of the website, and the text that appears next to this image explains the role the user of the website can play in relation to the image.

The text that relates to this image includes three groups of lines. The first line serves as a headline (it is highlighted using a light blue tone and a larger size font than the text that follows), it tells the user what the content in frame B is about. The text reads: 'y tú, ¿qué opinas?' The designers of the website use this text in combination with the gaze of the woman to address the user of the website. They have selected the vocative grammatical construction 'y tú' using the informal pronoun 'you' which entails a level of closeness between the participants in a conversation in the Spanish language. The question ¿qué opinas? places the user of the website in a position where she is compelled to answer. The texts that follow give the user more information on how to answer this question and thus interact with the designers of the website.

The lines that follow are self-explanatory; they give instructions to the user on how to interact with the content in frame B. They are three lines that appear one above the other one, organized as a set of instructions. The first one reads: 'Vota en una de las dos opciones y danos tu opinión.' (Vote for one of the two options and give us your opinion). The other two lines read: 'Haz click en una opción para ver el resultado de la votación.' (Click on one of the two options to see the results of the votes). Consistent with other sites that we have seen, the imperative mode is used to give instructions to the user ('vota' and 'haz click'). Furthermore, the text limits the opinion of the user to two

options, depending on the option the user chooses he/she agrees or not with the beauty stereotypes.

The two options appear below, they read: ‘?Fondona?’ (fat) and ‘?femenina?’ (feminine). The first option identifies what the current beauty stereotypes tell about women that look like the one in the picture, and the second option defies beauty stereotypes. Being consistent with the question form used to address the user of the website in the headline, the designers have chosen the question form in these two lines too, thus directly addressing the user of the website again. The choices are accompanied by a visual element which is a box, this box indicates to the user the place where she is supposed to click according to what was explained in the instructions.

Combinations 2 and 3

Combination 2 presents the image of an older lady, and the texts that accompany the image are the same as in the first combination analyzed except for the two choices the user of the website is given. In this case the choices read: ‘?vieja?’ (old) and ‘?vital?’ (full of life). Therefore, in this case the beauty stereotype that is defied is whether this lady is considered old or full of life based on her physical appearance.

Combination 3 presents the image of a young girl. The texts that accompany the image are the same, except for the two choices which read: ‘?llena de manchas?’ (full of spots) and ‘?llena de encanto?’ (full of charm). In this case the beauty stereotype that is defied is whether this girl should be considered beautiful or not given that she does not have an even skin tone.

In terms of differences among these three combinations, the most relevant one is that the beauty stereotype that is represented by the images and defied by the choices offered to the website user vary from one combination to the other. Combination 1 defies the stereotype of slim beautiful women by showing the picture of a full figure woman and giving the user the choice of calling her fat or feminine. Combination 2 defies the stereotype of young beautiful women by showing the image of an older woman and

giving the user the choice of deciding if she looks old or full of life. Combination 3 represents the stereotype of beautiful women that have flawless skin, and defies the stereotype by asking the user to judge whether the girl in the picture is full of spots or full of charm.

In the three combinations the images are related accordingly to the choices given to the user. Furthermore, the semiotic resources used to establish a close relationship with the user are the same. All the women shown are presented dynamically; they are seen to be as active, charming, happy. This is achieved by using the resource of showing successive images of the women, the women are all posing in sensual positions with their gaze directed at the user of the website, smiling, and dressed so that their image is revealing (their shoulders are showing) without been too revealing. The use of the same texts to invite the user to vote and take a stand in the judgment of these women guarantees that the same semiotic resources of imperative mode, question form, and vocative are used in the three combinations.

As a whole, no matter which of the three combinations appears, this is a frame that is interactive and persuades the user of the website agree with the overall aim of the campaign, defying beauty stereotypes.

Frame C

The last frame that appears in the website is similar to the one at the bottom of the Canadian version. It is a light blue stripe that includes five pieces of text. The first one reads: 'invita a una amiga' (invite a friend). It is devoted to encouraging the user to promote the campaign by telling his/her friends about it. It also implies that the person the user will invite is a female (amiga, female friend in Spanish). This way, the designers of the website assume, and inform their users, that the audience for this campaign is women. Once again, the user is encouraged to take action by means of the verb that has been conjugated using the informal form of the imperative in Spanish.

The other three texts that appear in this frame are for the user to know more about Dove's franchise in Spain, and about Dove as the creator of this website. The texts read: 'política de privacidad' (privacy policy) and 'condiciones de uso' which tells the users what the terms of use are for this website. The next text represents the connection between the designers of the website and the users, it reads: 'contáctenos' (contact us). The imperative mode is used to encourage the reader to take this action, establish contact, and the pronoun 'nos' is used to refer to Dove as a group of people, it personalizes the company.

To stress that Dove is responsible for the content presented in this website, there is a last piece of text on the right corner of frame C, and it reads: 'dove.es'. Thus, the designers of the website ensure that the user knows this website was created by and represents Dove's Spanish franchise.

In sum, the analysis of Dove's campaign for real beauty home page as it has been localized in its Spanish version makes use of the visual and linguistic modes of communication in order to present the discourse and ideology of Dove's franchise in Spain, much as they did in the Canadian website.

- Our societies recognize certain beauty stereotypes.
- Based on these stereotypes, people judge what a beautiful woman should look like.
- These beauty stereotypes have got to the point of affecting women's self esteem. Therefore, they should be changed.
- Dove is a company different to others in the beauty industry, it defies these stereotypes.
- Dove has its own conceptions of what real beauty which differ from the current beauty stereotypes.
- In an attempt to change the existing beauty stereotypes, Dove has initiated a campaign for real beauty.
- Dove's campaign is devoted to showing women Dove's conception of what beauty should be.

- Dove's conception of what real beauty is recognizes that women are beautiful in whatever shape or size, thus it boosts women's self esteem.

As I explained in the case of McDonald's websites, I believe Dove's intention of marketing its products by means of this campaign for real beauty is present in the Canadian and Spanish localized versions of its websites. By means of this message of caring for real beauty that they present to the users of their websites, Dove distinguishes itself and its name from the rest of the companies that work in the beauty industry, as one that cares for real women and understands that unrealistic beauty stereotypes only have a negative influence on women's self esteem. In these two websites I have analyzed the semiotic modes used are a combination of the visual and linguistic modes.

The semiotic resources used are a similar color palate, similar linguistic means to address the users of the website and to relate to them, a similar layout, but these semiotic resources are still culturally different in both websites. In the way the users of the website are addressed, in the way the users of the websites are invited to get involved with the company. The Spanish websites present a more familiar language than the English ones. In the case of Dove the Spanish website is more judgmental of women's appearance than the English one. In the case of the English version of McDonald's, there is more emphasis in eating healthy than in the Spanish one. Despite these differences, as I have said, Dove's message is still realized similarly in the Canadian and Spanish localized versions of Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty websites.

In this section, I have analyzed the Canadian and Spanish localized versions of McDonald's and Dove's campaign for real beauty homepages. My analysis has looked at what semiotic modes of communication have been used in the creation of these websites. I have also identified the semiotic resources that have been used in each mode of communication. I have explained, in my opinion, what meanings have been created from a multimodal perspective. I have also shown what discourse and ideology have been presented in each website.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

In this section I will summarize the results of the analysis of the websites in terms of the semiotic modes and semiotic resources that were used in all the websites analyzed. Then, I will look at the results of the analysis in relation to the discourses and ideologies that the localized websites analyzed present. Next, I will discuss whether some semiotic resources have been transferred from one culture to another. Finally, I will outline the limitations of the present study and other possibilities for further research that derive from this paper.

5. 1 Why localization and social semiotics?

Within the theoretical framework of localization that I have discussed in this paper, we have seen that localization is a process that results from the need to distribute texts, according to Anthony Pym (2004). In this respect, the social semiotic analysis of websites that I have presented characterizes the distribution of localized texts. In this paper, social semiotics explains what meanings are distributed by means of web localization of commercial websites. It is important to remember that localization implies the cultural and linguistic adaptation of a product or a website in order to address a specific group of consumers. With the social semiotic analysis of websites, I have shown that the cultural and linguistic adaptation does not necessarily mean that the meanings distributed as a result of web localization vary from one locale to another.

From a social semiotic perspective, it can be seen how the meanings distributed in a web localization process are reflective of the ideology and, hence, the discourse of the entity that initiates the localization. In other words, in the analysis of localized websites that I have carried out, I have shown how the visual and linguistic semiotic resources of the Canadian and Spanish cultures have been used to create the meanings that express McDonald's and Dove's ideologies and discourses. What this suggests is that the companies that localize their websites are distributing or marketing (in business terms) the ideologies that underpin their discourses.

McDonald's ideology, as well as Dove's is expressed in the discourses that underpin their websites. This message in discourses can be summarized as follows: McDonald's is an organization that is involved in the community, an organization that cares about children and their well being. It portrays itself as an organization that offers fast, fresh, varied meals and that provides its customers with healthy choices. Therefore, by being one of McDonald's customers, people are not only buying a good quality meal, but they are also getting involved in charities for children. Ultimately, the concern for children becomes a marketing tool that the company uses.

Dove's ideology can also be seen in the discourses presented in its websites. People, especially women, should care about beauty. However, in our societies there is a misconception of the way beautiful women should look. Dove is a company that is trying to change the existing beauty stereotypes because they are unreal and detrimental for women's self-esteem. Consequently, women that buy Dove's products share Dove's views about beauty. Once again, the concern for real beauty becomes a marketing tool for the company's products. For instance, Dove's firming lotion advertisement goes along the lines of 'Firming lotion for real curves'.

Nevertheless, if localization is ultimately a marketing tool, why is it necessary for a company to localize its website and how can social semiotics contribute to explaining this need? The answer to this question is related to the second theoretical framework that I discussed in localization: translation mediated communication. Localization is an example of translation mediated communication since companies "translate"¹ their message for the locales they want to address. Seen as a communication process, web localization is a very peculiar one, since it is not only translation mediated, but is also a communication process with a specific purpose, advertising the brand name of a company. A social semiotic analysis can unveil the way meanings are made in this particular communication process. The results of such an analysis can be useful for

¹ . Notice that I have used the word translation in quotation marks because I am using translation to describe the linguistic and cultural adaptation that takes place in localization, instead of using the term in its classic sense.

companies, localizers and website designers undertaking localization for the first time, since they can benefit from an understanding of how to create localized meanings.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Semiotic modes and semiotic resources

In the four websites analyzed, the semiotic modes used are consistently a combination of visual and linguistic elements.

As part of the visual semiotic mode, the semiotic resources that were used repeatedly in the four websites can be summarized as follows:

- The color palate used in each of the websites analyzed is related to each of the companies the websites belonged to. The colors used are socially recognized as colors that represent the companies on these websites. Mainly red and yellow were used for McDonald's websites and different shades of blue were used for Dove's websites.
- The gaze of the participants photographed in the websites was directed at the user of the websites. With the use of this resource, the designers of the website aimed at addressing the user of the website as an equal. If the participants had been looking up at the user, it could be considered that the user was in a powerful position. If the participants had been looking down to the user, they would have been in a powerful position.
- The successive appearance of images is another resource that has been used in the websites analyzed. This resource has been used to create a dynamic feeling for the user as she is navigating the website, to show liveliness and movement in the images.

- The insertion of icons that represent the company was used in both websites to reinforce the signature of the contents that were presented to the users.

Linguistically, the semiotic resources that have been used consistently in the websites analyzed can be summarized as follows:

- The imperative mode was used to introduce the links in the websites. By doing this, the designers of the websites directly addressed the users and gave them instructions on what action to take to learn more about the contents presented in the website. Also, the use of the imperative may be seen as evidence for an attempt at a certain familiarity between the participants in the dialogue, or in this case, between the designer and the user of the website.
- Another resource that has been used is the repetition of words. This resource has been used when the designers of the website wanted to relate the content of one frame to the content of another frame within the same website.
- Yet another linguistic resource used in both cases was what is known in linguistics as thematic formations, meaning that words that relate to the same theme, to the companies' ideologies in this case were used throughout the websites to create a cohesive and coherent whole. In the case of McDonald's, words relating to prices, quality, ingredients, variety, charities for children were used. In the case of Dove, words relating to beauty, self-esteem, being natural, and education about beauty were used.

1.2.2 Discourses and Ideologies

In relation to my research questions, the results of the analysis are summarized in the following paragraphs.

At this point it is necessary to go back to the definitions of discourses and ideologies. Ideologies are the values with which human beings characterize the world. Depending on their ideologies, people belong to different social groups. In contemporary consumer societies, companies associate their products and services with certain ideologies; this way people that relate to the ideologies of a certain company, become customers of the company, and thus form their social group. In social semiotic terms, these ideologies are expressed by means of the discourse of the company.

However, ideology and discourses are abstract notions that are realized in the texts the company creates. Here texts is understood as a general term to refer to the advertising campaigns of the company, the layout of their stores, the design, price, quality of their products; text means any activity undertaken by the company. For example, Food Basics is a grocery store that offers low priced groceries; the name that has been given to the company (the text that has been created, using social semiotic terminology) indicates that the ideology and discourse of the company is that food should not be expensive because it is a basic product. The realization of this discourse is achieved in the text with the meaning created by the word basics; in relation to food it could be seen as meaning that food is a basic need, and in relation to the prices of food in this grocery chain it means that food prices are not expensive.

In this paper, I have shown how the texts created by McDonald's and Dove, localized commercial websites, have realized the companies' ideologies and discourses. Furthermore, the analysis has shown how that realization has been achieved using culturally specific semiotic resources for the Canadian and Spanish localized versions.

Based on the results of my analysis of websites, it can be said that in the case of McDonald's Canadian and Spanish localized websites the ideologies and discourse that McDonald's corporation presents to its Canadian and Spanish customers do not vary.

In both websites, McDonald's presents itself as a company that offers a variety of good quality foods that are inexpensive. The corporation presents itself as one that is concerned

with healthy eating practices and thus offers healthy choices to its customers. The company presents itself as a fast-paced environment that employees are happy to work in. Most of all, McDonald's websites for Canada and Spain show that this company cares for the well being of children; as proved by the fact that it is involved in several activities and charities to help the children.

In the case of Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty in Canadian and Spanish localized websites, the analysis shows that Dove's discourse and ideologies do not vary when the company addresses its Canadian and Spanish customers. The discourse and ideologies that the company presents in these two localized websites involve overall the company's concern with fabricated beauty stereotypes. Dove presents itself as an organization that is socially committed to change women's perception of beauty in order to show them and the rest of the world that natural means beautiful, as opposed to the current belief that a woman needs to be slim or to fit a profile in order to be considered beautiful. Dove's discourse shows that the company has undertaken this commitment because the current misconception of beauty is affecting women's self esteem. In addition, Dove's concern with real beauty is also part of the company's marketing strategy to promote their beauty line.

On the whole, for the websites that were analyzed, it is certain that these two multinational companies are marketing their ideologies and discourse to Canada and Spain by means of their localized websites for these two countries.

5.2.3 Semiotic resources from different cultures

One of the research questions I wanted to address in this thesis was whether or not the use of different semiotic resources in the same context (the Internet) to refer to the same aspect of reality (a product or service) contribute to the diversification of semiotic resources or to the prevalence of the semiotic resources of one culture in relation to the semiotic resources of another. Based on the results of the analysis, I cannot say that some semiotic resources from one culture are dominant in relation to the semiotic resources of

another. However, in the particular case of McDonald's Spain some semiotic resources of North American culture are introduced into the Spanish culture, such as the promotion for American sandwiches that appeared in the website at the time of analysis.

In McDonald's Spain website, as of November 11, 2006, some of the sandwiches that are typical of several regions in North America were advertised for the Spanish customers. Following Lemke's (1995) idea that any socially meaningful action can be considered a social practice, having a certain kind of a sandwich can be seen as a social practice. Consequently, there are semiotic resources that are related to this social practice. An example of flavors that represent a semiotic resource, in this case from India, is the flavor of curry; or the chilli pepper flavor is a semiotic resource since it is related to Mexico. Therefore, the North American traditional flavors of the sandwiches advertised are semiotic resources that are coming from the North American culture into the Spanish culture as a result of the localization of McDonald's products and services in Spain.

5.3 Concluding remarks and further research opportunities

The present research shows the applicability of social semiotic methodology for the analysis of commercial websites. Using this methodology has proved to be effective in showing how the discourse and ideologies of multimodal companies are marketed in their localized websites. The same methodology could potentially be applied to other kinds of websites, as I will explain further in the paragraphs that follow.

There are several possibilities of extending this kind of research that uses social semiotic theories to analyze the whole process of localization. In terms of analyzing the results of website localization, social semiotic theories can also be useful to look at government localized websites, to look at the localization of search engines, such as Yahoo or Google, or to look at the localization of websites that belong to online companies.

Another possible extension of the present research is to analyze websites that have been localized for different size and language locales, like regional websites of a company versus its country websites, or websites that have been localized for different variants of the same language, like English from Great Britain or English from North America, and see if any cultural differences are noticeable in this localization.

Yet another way to combine localization and social semiotics is to analyze how semiotic resources are used in the different linked pages of a website to maintain the coherence and cohesion of the website as an overall text. Such an analysis could take several forms depending on the order in which the links are opened.

All the possibilities of research that I have mentioned so far relate to the analysis of the result of web localization. This means that social semiotic theories are used to look at localized websites. However, social semiotics can also be useful to study power relations in society. Taking this into account, it would be very interesting to analyze how power relations influence the work of the localization team. Just as an example, the work of a translator in a localization team is constrained by the web designers' specifications of how much space there is to introduce a translated text in a website. Another brief example is that the localization team works according to the requirements specified by the company that pays for the localization service.

As a whole, I believe the present research is a valuable addition to the theoretical analysis of a process which use and presence is constantly evolving in our days, the process of localization. Furthermore, the present thesis is a contribution to the research that has been done in the area of social semiotics since it opens up a new range of possibilities of use for social semiotic theories.

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