The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue –

an Institutional Representation at

the European and National level

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Abstract: Humanity has always encapsulated the paradigm of communication within its existence. Thus, interaction has always placed man on a twofold interweaving nature: a partial or even a total exposure through an icon textual signifier and a sort of mystery through a discursive signified. Our paper is a "journey" through the world of icon textual interferences, which guides our steps to one main destination, that of mapping the relationship between the signifier and the signified within non-artistic communication. Having as theoretical background M.A.K. Halliday's theory on functional grammar (1994) and the social semiotic perspective on colours (Kress, van Leeuwen [1996] 2006), we will analyze the elements that the identity relationship envisages within the logo of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and within the Romanian national campaign PUZZLE.

Keywords: communication, colours, letters, EYID, PUZZLE, European Union.

1. Beyond the Romanian national strategy on European objectives

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was established as a European platform[1] through the Decision no.1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and Council, issued on December, 18th 2006. Within this decision, there were established the EU's strategic priorities for 2008, together with the specific objectives of the platform (art.2, al.2) and the elements of visual identity (Annex, art.C, al.c). The European platform has a threefold objective:

- to promote dialogue as an ideal tool for establishing communication between the member-states of the European Union, between communities or persons having different spiritual models and beliefs;

- to emphasize the intercultural dialogue as an opportunity which contributes and brings benefits in a dynamic and diverse society, not only within the European community but also in other parts of the world;

- to stress upon the cultural diversity as a major factor in defining the heritage and the style of life of the citizens of the member-states of the EU.

- These objectives were conveyed through the National Strategies issued by national coordination bodies. For Romania, the national strategy was projected through the PUZZLE national platform, which presented the following priorities:

- intensifying the dialogue between different social groups;

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[1] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_412/l_41220061230en00440050.pdf

- involving people of different nationalities living in Romania in projects of European interest;

- encouraging youth to take active part within the European public debate and dialogue;

- stimulating the reflection upon the *hard core* (centrum, nucleus) of intercultural dialogue, as a concept.

The legal frame for the national strategy[2] was designed by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Consultancy Center for European Cultural Programme, the national coordination body for the European Year.

2. Beyond the meaning of colours within social representations

The first element to which a stakeholder comes in contact with, when referring to an institution or an organization, is the logo. There should be made a clear-cut distinction (Popescu 2005: 168) between the logo (the plastic-linguistic component which bears expressive functions) and the brand (a set of material, moral, psychological, social or cultural values that mould an identity).

We are of the opinion that going beyond a logo and a brand means a twofold analysis of the concept of transitivity provided by two theories:

- on the one hand, functional grammar (Halliday 1994). Transitivity does not mean a mere grammatical identification of a direct object within the syntax of a sentence. Transitivity is focused on the way in which the individual or an institution positions him/her/itself in relation with the outer and inner world, the underlining concept being experience: external experience with the society and internal experience represented through consciousness and imagination. Starting from these two types of experiences, representation is formed of six processes which are assigned a colour:

Process	The way in which the message is built	Non-artistic signifier
Relational (major process)	To have an identity To symbolize	Yellow (primary colour)
Material (major process)	To do To take action To create/change	Red (primary colour)
Mental (major process)	To see To feel To think	Blue (primary colour)
Behavioural (between material & mental processes)	Psychological levels of the individual	Violet (combination of red & blue)
Verbal (between mental & relational processes)	The individual's means of expression	Green (combination of blue & yellow)
Existential (between material & relational processes)	The individual's layers of existence	Orange (combination between red & yellow)

- on the other hand, social semiotics. It refers to "(…) the manner in which a given society organizes the production, distribution, and reception of all sorts of signs" (Alter 1990: 13). According to Gunther Kress (1996, 2001), Theo van

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[2] http://www.dialog2008.ro/documente&cat=3

Leeuwen (1999, 2005) or Rick Iedema (2001), social semiotics is the theoretical background which makes a plea for a "melting" of disciplinary boundaries through multimodality. Focused on a critical analysis of the representation mechanisms through visual semiotic resources, social semiotics has a twofold objective: (1) an embedding of the texts into co(n)texts; (2) an interpretation of the ideological implications beyond the economic, political, cultural, and social tendencies where the semiotic systems (represented participants, interactive participants, composition, multimodality) are visually maneuvered. Within the theories on images, there have been mentioned two rather controversial concepts[3], namely transitivity (Adam, Bonhomme [1997] 2005: 92) and iconology (Peirce, CP 8.328) which rely on an analogy with the object from reality. Be they (im)perfectly analogous to reality, the human, concrete, or abstract participants bear some information value, salience, and framing (Kress, van Leeuwen [1996] 2006 : 177) at the level of composition.

Colours constitute the abstract participant which can be organized as dots, lines, splashes, or blocks which could be embodied into objects in order to get a definite shape. Colours are semiotic resources because "they arise from the interests of the sign makers" (Kress, van Leeuwen 2002: 345).

Before analyzing the two logos, we consider that it is necessary to mention a universal interpretation of the six signifiers (yellow, red, blue, violet, green, and orange) that form the clauses of representations which govern our existence.

Yellow is the colour of light and of life which can never become dark (Chevalier, Gheerbrant [1969] 2009: 81-84). Kress and van Leeuwen ([1996] 2006: 233) consider that light together with darkness are two fundamental experiences. Associated to the relational process, yellow has a twofold saturation: (1) the softest hues correspond to the social identity of an institution (This is the European Union. It is formed of 27 member states.); (2) the most intense hues correspond to our ability of decoding a metaphorical representation ("EU is our home").

Associated to a material process, **red** stands for the vitality and the power of knowledge, for the unknown reigning within the primordial layers of existential interactions (*Idem*, 171-174) because, after all, accomplishments and achievements cannot be produced in isolation. But we are not mere robots.

Associated to a mental process, **blue** represents our physical and mental power which provides endless possibilities of identifiers (visual or audio constructs). We are producers ('the metaphorical bearers of red') and we perceive ('the metaphorical bearers of blue'), but we embody our feelings or deeds within the framework of some behavioural acts. We always perceive in connection to the other, the *so close* and *yet far* states of being related to one another.

The dominating colour is **violet**, the colour of measure, emphasizing the balance between spirit and mind, love and wisdom.

The difference between human beings and animals lies within our capacity of uttering words. Associated to the verbal process, **green** is the 'human' colour which gives birth to life, representing the seed.

In order to fulfil all these actions, we need to be in the world. This is actually the role of an existential process which simply pinpoints to a location in time and space. **Orange**, the colour of the spirit's balance, is the signifier of harmony which finds a home in the heart of the individual, making communication possible.

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[3] Umberto Eco ([1976] 1979: 191) mentions that there are some naïve notions on iconic signs that should be challenged: (1) the so-called iconic sign has the same properties as its object; (2) the so-called iconic sign is similar to its object; (3) the so-called iconic sign is analogous to its object; (4) the so-called iconic sign is motivated by its object; (5) the so-called iconic signs are arbitrarily coded.

2.1. Beyond the EYID logo

The first colour which appears in the video of creating the logo[4] of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is **Red**. According to the functional perspective, this colour stands for *taking action, creating, changing*, and thus projecting on the internal experience of the individual, within his/ her consciousness and imagination a starting point for the analysis of the interaction and the experience. Moreover, this colour provides strong basis for the conveying of the first objective – promoting the dialogue, mainly promoting the initiative, the first layers of knowledge inside each of us.

The second colour of the logo is **blue**. Starting from the multitude of identifiers, mainly the member-states, various constructs occur and the message gets across from central policies to local and national levels. The specific verbs are related to the mental process – we all *see, think* and *feel*, but we always wonder how others do *see* or *think* or *feel*, thus a relative melting of the *so close* and *yet far* levels occurs from the first individual level up to the collective filter of selves.

The third colour which appears is **green**. The value, from a social semiotic perspective, stands for the individual's means of expression, having its basis within a symbolic game of opportunities. The balance between the individuality of a dialogue and/ or the individuality of a communicative action is similar to the one between the effect and affect of an identity relationship.

The last colour used in the composition of the EYID logo is **yellow**. The way in which the message is built through this colour foregrounds the connection between the objectives of the two European platforms, namely *to have an identity*. The process encapsulated within is a relational one, thus bearing the metamorphosis of the objectives: "promoting dialogue as an ideal tool" turns into "raising awareness of the importance…"; "dynamic and diverse society" into "personal, social and economic development".

As we have mentioned above, there is a chronology in presenting the EYID colours: red, blue, green, and yellow. Another important element that should be taken into account is the curved form of the line which seems to soften the rigidity and perfect symmetry that a straight line might imply. Thus the significance of these four curved lines is that of peace and relaxation, providing the frame of a communication process.

1ˢᵗ colour – Red   *2ⁿᵈ colour – Blue*   *3ʳᵈ colour – Green*   *4ᵗʰ colour - Yellow*
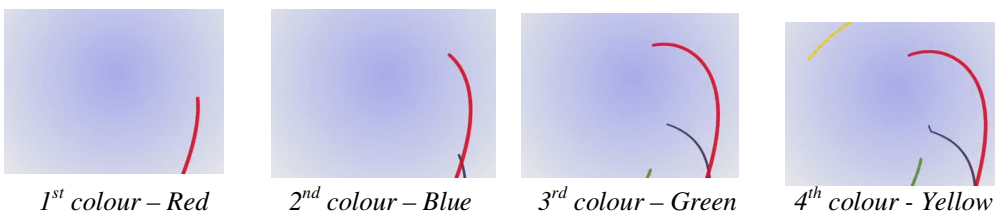
The four lines do not interweave until the motto of the European Union, namely "United in diversity", is provided to the viewers under all the linguistic identities of the 27 member-states. It is only at the end that all the colours appear all at once and the Blue and Yellow are united. Thus the mental is linked with the relational processes and the verbs *to have an identity* and *to symbolize* support the verbs *to see, to feel* and *to think*. The following colours that blend are blue and green, so the individual's means of expression are introduced in the process of creating the dialogue. It is only after the mental, relational and expression layers have been revealed that the first colour, *red*, takes the first place again, uniting the material process with the others, thus giving substance and concrete identity to the abstract processes conveyed so far.

The first colours that mold into human appearance are blue and green. Our physical and mental power provides endless possibilities of identifiers (blue) and the individual's means of expression has its basis within a symbolic game of opportunities (green). The colours that initiate the connections are red and yellow, namely the first and the last colours which appear within the logo, thus the beginning and the end, creating three human-like shapes which are represented participants within an intercultural dialogue at the local, national and European level.

3. Beyond the denotation and connotation of the PUZZLE logo

The word PUZZLE, within the logo[5] of national campaign produced by the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Consultancy Center for European Cultural Programme, stands for the following:

P – **P**elerinaj – Culturi în dialog

P – ***P****ilgrimage – Cultures in dialogue*

U – Istoria – Pelerin spre centr**u**

U – History – *Pilgrim towards the centr**u**m*

Z – Istoria – Identităţi în dialog – (litera "z" este un indice pentru Reţeaua Mu**z**eelor din România)

Z – *History – Identities in dialogue* – (the letter "z" stands for the Network of Museums in Romania)

Z – Povestea vecinilor – La taifas cu "ceilalţi" (litera "z" este un indice al Muzeului Ţăranului Român)

Z – *The story of our neighbours – Chatting with others* (the letters "z" stands for the Museum of the Romanian Peasant)

L – Memoria – Dialogul omului cu Pământul

L – *Living memory – Man in dialogue with the Earth*

E – Muzica – Caffée Festival

E – *Music – Caffée Festival*.

All the events attached to each letter were conceived as puzzles. The grammar, being visualized as a set of options[6], allows the use of the word as an instrument of defining the national campaign by synthesizing the elements of the national strategy.

The following pictures illustrate the connectors projected through the chosen words, as each sentence plays the role of a title and the letter that each title stands for, presents a specific visual identity.

The metaphor of the puzzle within this logo is very suggestive. Just like a common game of puzzle raises interest, curiosity and perseverance in the mind of people of different ages ever since the beginning, when one sees the amount of pieces which are meant to be put together to give shape to something new, till the moment the final product is ready, the PUZZLE Campaign raised interest, curiosity and perseverance in the minds of a large number of people[7], embodying the European syntagm "unity in diversity".

If we are to go beyond the denotation of each letter that forms the name of the PUZZLE Campaign, we discover the existence of a major paradigm, namely DIALOGUE. Each letter is a representation of the country's institution, or the history, the tradition and/or the culture of the country.

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[6] Christie, F. (1991) What is functional grammar? [In:] *Teaching English Literacy*. 106-107. Available at http://anenglishpage.tripod.com/christie.html

[7] *SHARING DIVERSITY. National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe* - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of a study prepared for the European Commission by the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts) available at http://www.dialog2008.ro/documente&cat=7

It is the dialogue established between different cultures which are all gathered together in order to create the *unity in diversity*. Each culture which is a participant within the process of communication is a step forward towards the final destination, similar to the Pilgrimage into a reality each individual lives in.

Letter P signifies the institution of crafts. Taking into consideration the three levels of analyses implied by the functional grammar, namely experience, interaction and the message-building process, the visual identity within letter "P" reflects the interaction through the sender's projection of a sculptured letter, which activates the receiver's cultural memory about Brâncuşi, in the case of Romanians, and/or about crafts handed down from generation to generation, turning the message "cultures in dialogue" into the framework of a European intercultural dialogue, where each of the 27 EU countries might identify itself.

Secondly, the letter U in the name of the Campaign stands for the pilgrim whose main objective when (s)he left his/ her place was that of reaching the centrum. The existential process implies a (mental) change of the temporal and spatial location that every pilgrim has to undergo in order to search for his/ her own identity. The metaphorical representation of the bread as a perceived element stands for the food for thought that the pilgrim needs within his travel towards the centrum. The mere change of location that might have come into our minds is actually a mental metamorphosis which is built on accepting the other. This interpretation reflects one of the major objectives of the national strategy, namely "to prove the need of a cultural cooperation within the European community".

Going further within our analysis of letter-denotation in the name of the campaign, we reach the letter Z, which, although the last letter of the alphabet, encapsulates the whole history from the beginning till the end and after; the history of all the entities brought together by one unique power – dialogue. From a visual point of view, this letter is the only one which presents all the colours mentioned by M.A.K. Halliday, but the purpose of the national coordination body was to organize a dialogue between the minority communities from Romania. Within the campaign, this letter stands for an institution which promotes acceptance, as the motto ("united in diversity") of the European Union suggests.

The presence of the second Z emphasizes upon the importance of diverse historical entities in a state of dialogue. The letter presents a specific visual structure. Thus the embroidery stands for the life experience of the individual (*what happens*), the texture stands for the message which the individual wants to transmit, all within the act of interpersonal communication. The different types of meaning projected through these two grammatical structures embody two major concepts: self portrayal and alterity. The major core of the dialogue paradigm here is the discourse of acceptance – one portrays *the self* and the portrayed self becomes *the alter ego* within the dimension of the community and of the society. The choice of words within the construct of the sentences proves the intentionality of the act of dialogue – hi*story*, the *story* of our neighbours; identities in *dialogue – talking* with *others*.

The last two letters within the word are important as well. The L, standing for the living memory, the dialogue of man with the Earth, is another sign of communion in dialogue. The spiritual womb of the human being is his/ her memory. It is this very capacity of human beings to recall things that provides him/ her with a feeling of belonging. The visual representation of L letter connotes the relation of the individual with the earth, the wood which craftsmen mould so as to make the dialogue between generations possible. Three main processes are encapsulated within the interpretation of the craftsman and his creation: existential – his connection with some spatial and temporal dimensions; relational – his social position as a craftsman who lives through his products; behavioural – particularities of a certain place, thus promoting some community values.

The last letter (E) of the acronym PUZZLE encapsulates a special kind of signification as it stands for that particular and unique magic, namely the music, the universal language which unites cultures, people. Music is the universal language, one that does not require translation or tools for shifting the meaning from one identity to another. As a means of representing an institution, it stands for creativity and free expression of selves.

Our analysis proved that colours and letters are important semiotic resources within the representation of an abstract concept, such as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Going beyond the logos of these institutional representations at the European and national level, we can draw the following conclusions:

- the "unity in diversity" syntagm has a multimodal representation through the embodiment of signifying colours within the contours of Europeans;
- the interweaving of colours (the EYID logo) and the metaphorical representations of the letters and some culturally-bound signs (the PUZZLE logo) emphasize the dynamics that an intercultural dialogue and the other-acceptance process bring forth.

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