

# Analysis of a text with visuals using Functions of Language from Roman Jakobson's Speech Event Theory

This pages lists *possibilities*

for relevant issues in analyzing a piece of writing. Caution: Even very short sections of writing may serve more than one function at a time, so writers may be explaining code at the same time they are giving information, for example. Susan N. Smith, [snsmith@email.arizona.edu](mailto:snsmith@email.arizona.edu), ©2008

## CONTEXT AND INFORMATION

What is the real-world situation/context that informs this document? What knowledge is needed to understand the document?

What information is contained in the document? Do the visuals and text match? Do they complement each other?

How is the document organized? How are the visuals and the text organized in relation to each other?

process, narration, comparison/contrast, division/classification, cause/effect, definition, description

How are claims supported? Is the evidence, both text and visuals, relevant, appropriate, or believable in this particular case?

examples, illustrations, facts, statistics, images, drawings, diagrams, precedents, laws, memories, records, expert testimony or opinion, witness testimony

## PLAY WITH FORM, PLAY WITH MEANING

What stylistic variations in form or meaning are present in this document? What is emphasized and what is downplayed?

imagery, repetition, alliteration, rhythm, emphasis

What are relationships between visuals and text? metaphor, analogy, simile; word choice, word order, tone; visual choices

appearance: neatness, page layout, font, paper, images/drawings/diagrams

omission: What is *not* on the page (expected but not there)? How are omissions handled?

surprise: What is unexpectedly included on the page?

## THE WRITER

Who is the writer of this document? Different authors for visuals?

What can you tell about the writer from this text?

race, age, sex, physical characteristics, habits, personality

educational or economic level, religious, political, professional affiliation

ethnicity, country of birth, citizenship, location

experience, perspective, language, needs, values, beliefs

What is the writer's attitude toward this topic?

Toward the reader? Toward opposing views? How can you tell?

## THE READER

Who is the implied reader/audience for this document?

What can you tell about that audience from this text?

race, age, sex, physical characteristics, habits, personality

educational or economic level, religious, political, professional affiliation

ethnicity, country of birth, citizenship, location

experience, perspective, language, needs, values, beliefs

How does this text focus on the reader(s)? How important are visuals?

What is the reader expected to believe? How can you tell?

## KEEPING CONNECTED

How does the writer draw the reader into the text? How does the writer keep the reader engaged in the text? What draws the eye and the mind?

introduction/conclusion, connecting words (because, since, however, first, second, and so on), visuals, lines/spaces, numbers, indentations

questions (Do you follow? Can you hear me now?) and asides

## USING LANGUAGE CODES

What code (vocabulary, way of expressing, format, images, drawings, diagrams) is used in this document? What culture supports and uses this code?

Are unusual terms present? Are they explained? Are unusual visuals present? Are they explained? Are equivalences (*this* means *that*) reasonable?

old/new, paraphrase, summary, explicit/implicit, sentence variety (length, passive/active, complex/simple)