



Systemic Functional – Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) of KPG reading comprehension source texts

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NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES

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PhD Thesis:
**‘Investigating the literacy requirements of
reading comprehension test tasks:
the case of the KPG exams in English’**
Supervising Committee:
Prof. Bessie Dendrinos
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Research Context of the Study

- language is conceived as a social phenomenon (Mitsikopoulou 2008)
- candidates are expected to be informed social subjects (Mitsikopoulou 2008)
- communicative performance is discursively defined and multimodal (Dendrinos 2008)
- a variety of discourses, text types and topics (Dendrinos 2008)
- the KPG view of language = a semiotic system in which meanings develop rather than pre-exist (Dendrinos 2008)

Multi- Literacies

- different literacies → discourses = different 'ways of being in the world' (Gee 1996)
- activation of candidates' 'multiliteracies' (Cope and Kalantzis 2000)
- drawing upon consciously or subconsciously attained 'multiple literacies' (Kern 2000)

Multimodality

- multimodality is an “inherent feature” of all aspects of people’s life Matthiessen (2013)
- reconceptualisation of the notion of literacy (Unsworth 2006)
- visual aspects of communication → worthy of inspection (Holsanova 2012)
- semiotic division of labour between modes (van Leeuwen 2008, Kress 2010)
- synergistic functioning of modes – ‘intersemiosis’ (Royce 1998, O’Halloran *et al.* 2012)

The overall aim of the present research

- to provide an account of the literacy requirements of reading test tasks
- What are the kinds of candidates' socially acquired knowledge that contribute to the effective meaning making of the KPG source texts containing multiple semiotic resources?

Key research questions:

- What kinds of literacy requirements are posed by the multimodal source texts of reading comprehension test tasks?
- What kinds of literacy requirements are created by the generic questions that accompany the source texts?

SF Theory: focus on Halliday's metafunctional principal

- a social semiotic theory where meaning depends on context (Halliday 1978)
- the three kinds of meaning are constructed simultaneously by every semiotic resource (Halliday and Hasan 1985, Halliday 2004, Eggins 2004)
 - ❖ ideational metafunction
(i.e., experiential meaning and logical relations)
 - ❖ interpersonal metafunction
 - ❖ textual metafunction

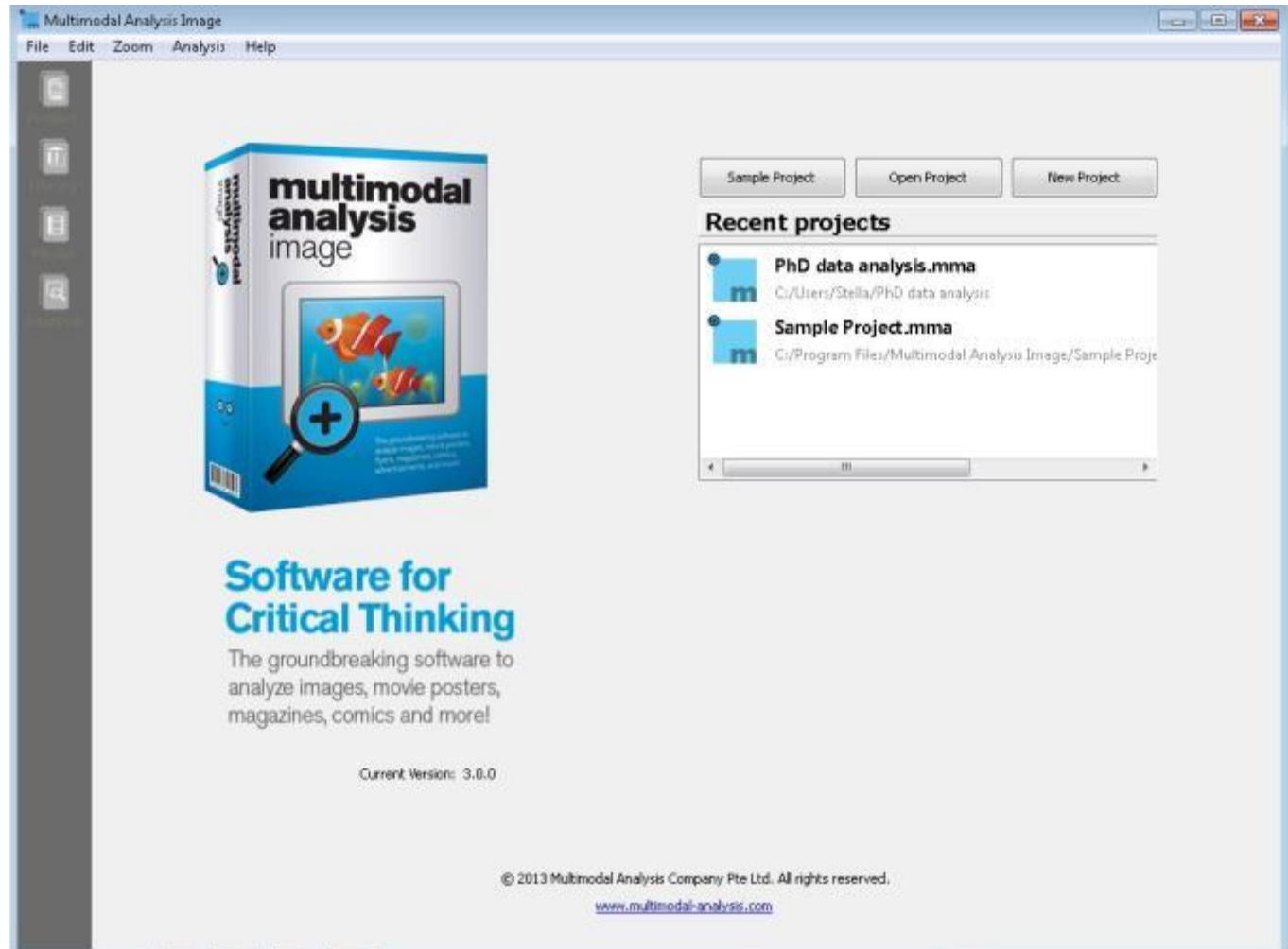
Multimodal Analysis Image (MMA) software (O'Halloran *et al.* 2012)

- + **MMA resource book** (Tan *et al.* 2012)
 - < *the Multimodal Analysis Lab, Interactive Digital Media Institute (IDMI) at the National University of Singapore*
- Aim: to shed light on the new literacy skills needed for the meaning-making process while reading multimodal texts
- a 'wide-ranging tool' suitable for researchers to systematically approach a wide variety of new media texts (O'Halloran *et al.* 2012)

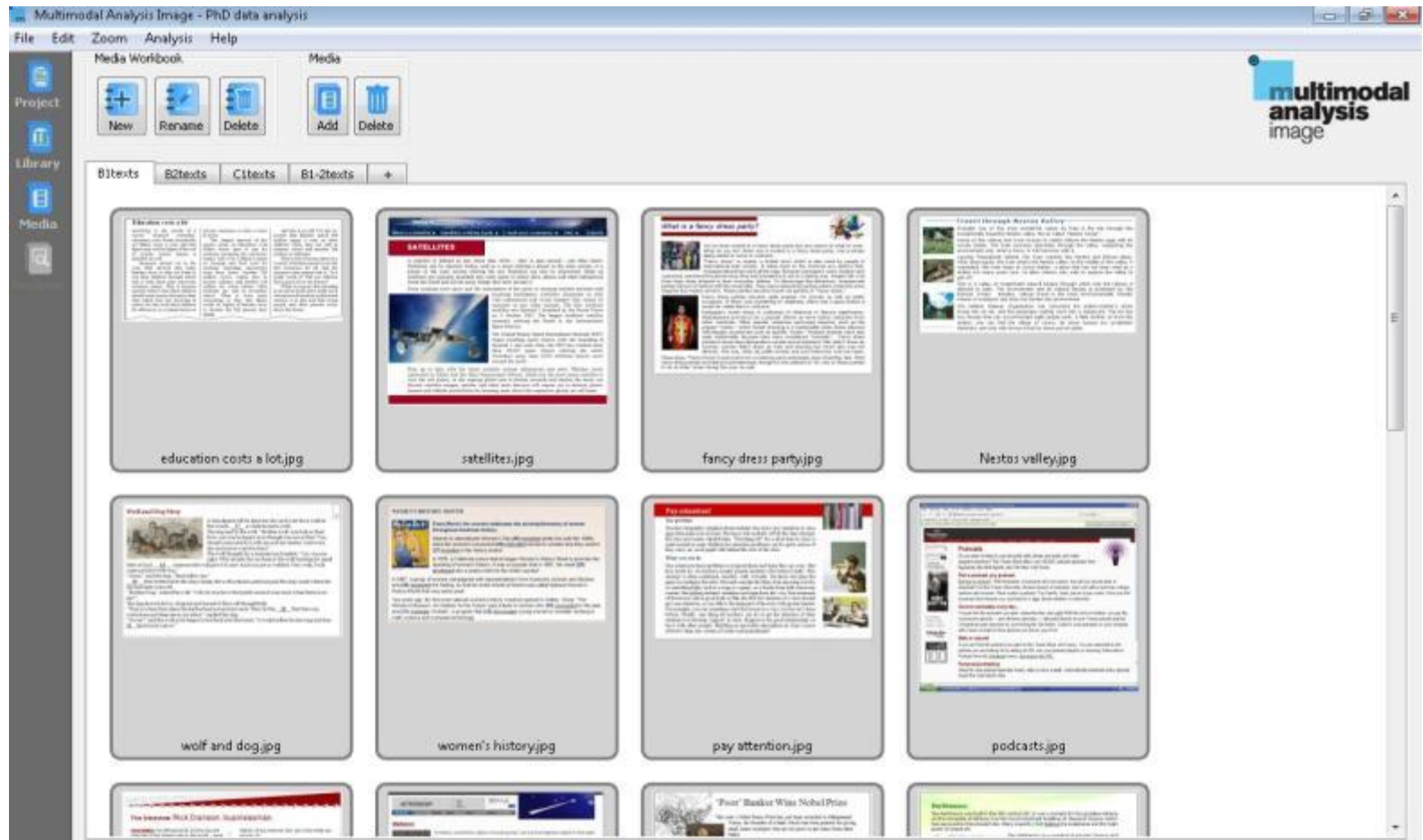
Advantages of Using MMA Software

- interactive software for multimodal analysis (O'Halloran *et al.* 2012)
- systematic identification of the main features, structures and ideas in the data source texts
- understanding of the different features of a variety of text types
- critical analysis of how visual and verbal components work together to create an impact and achieve the purposes of the texts
- enjoyable working environment through its colourful design

Applying MMA Software



MMA media files



MMA Library – System Choices

The screenshot displays the MMA software interface, titled "Multimodal Analysis Image - PhD data analysis". The interface is divided into three main sections: Library browser, System browser, and Properties.

Library browser: This panel shows a "Catalog search index" with a tree view of predefined catalogs. The selected catalog is "MMAImage - Predefined Catalogs", which includes:

- CATALOG - ADVERTISEMENTS
- CATALOG - MOVIE POSTERS
- CATALOG - INFORMATION REPORTS
- CATALOG - NEWS REPORTS
- CATALOG - NEWS FEATURES
- CATALOG - NEWS EDITORIALS
- CATALOG - INFOGRAPHICS (PRINT)

System browser: This panel shows a "System search index" with a list of system choices. The selected system is "VISUAL ELEMENTS (ADS)".

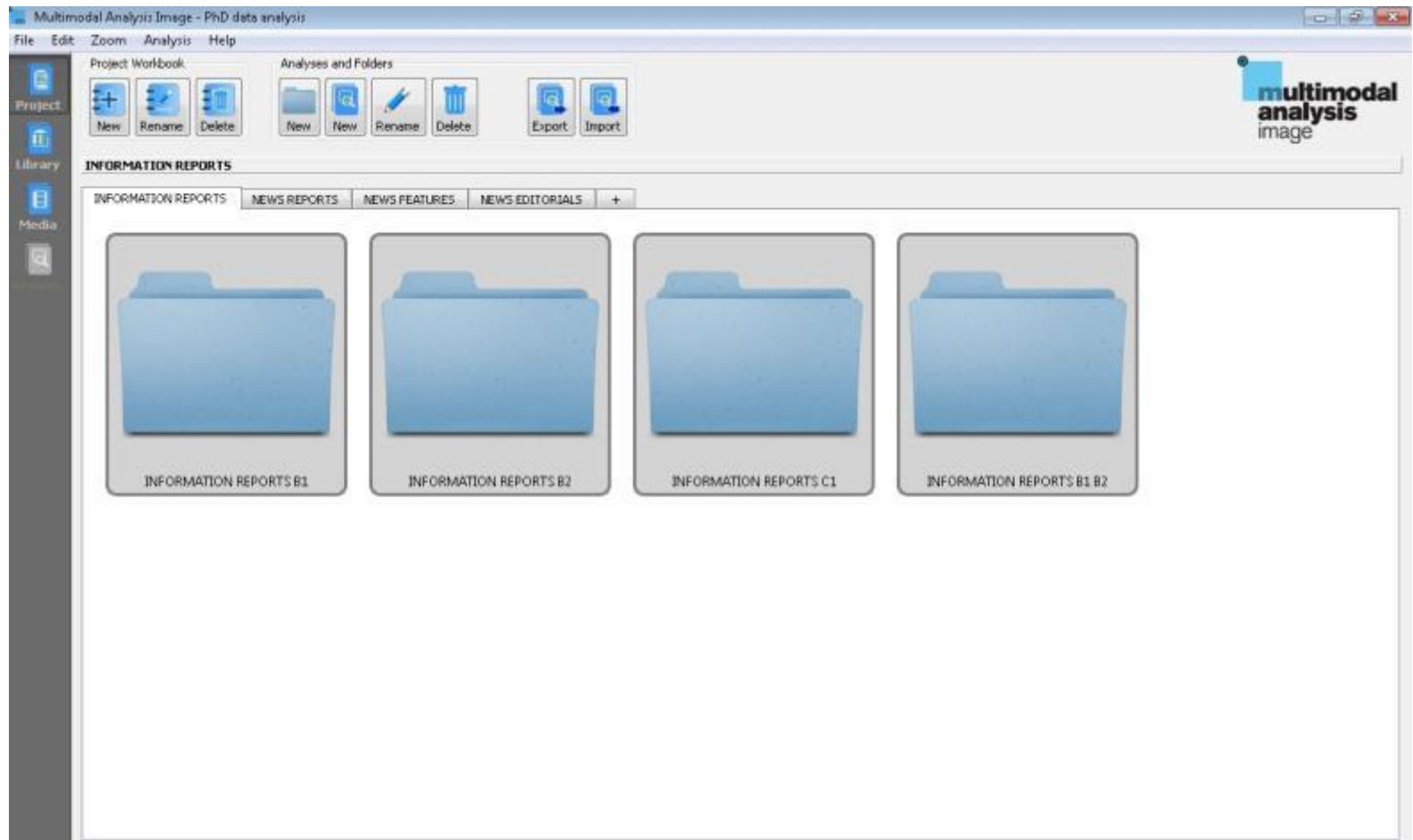
Properties: This panel shows the "Description" for the selected system, which is "CATALOG - NEWS FEATURES". It also includes controls for "Background color", "Background opacity", "Border color", and "Border thickness".

At the bottom of the Properties panel, there are two tabs: "Catalog" and "Analysis". The "Catalog" tab shows "MMAImage" and the "Analysis" tab shows "COMMON HISTO".

Knapp and Watkins (2005) classification of data source texts

GENRE/ LEVEL	B1	B2	C1
(WEB)ARTICLE- COMMENTARY - REVIEW	21	23	28
LEAFLET	4	9	1
BIOGRAPHY / AUTOBIOGRAPHY	1	1	3
STORY/ NARRATIVE	1		
DIARY	1		
INTERVIEW	1	1	1
ENCYCLOPEDIA TEXT	1		2
BLOG ENTRY	1		
REFERENCE WORK		2	
TOTAL:	34	36	35
TOTAL OF ALL KPG TEXTS/ PARTS OF TEXTS DATA: 105			
SUM OF ARTICLES/LEAFLETS	25 MDAs	32 MDAs	29 MDAs
TOTAL OF MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE ANALYSES CONDUCTED: 86			

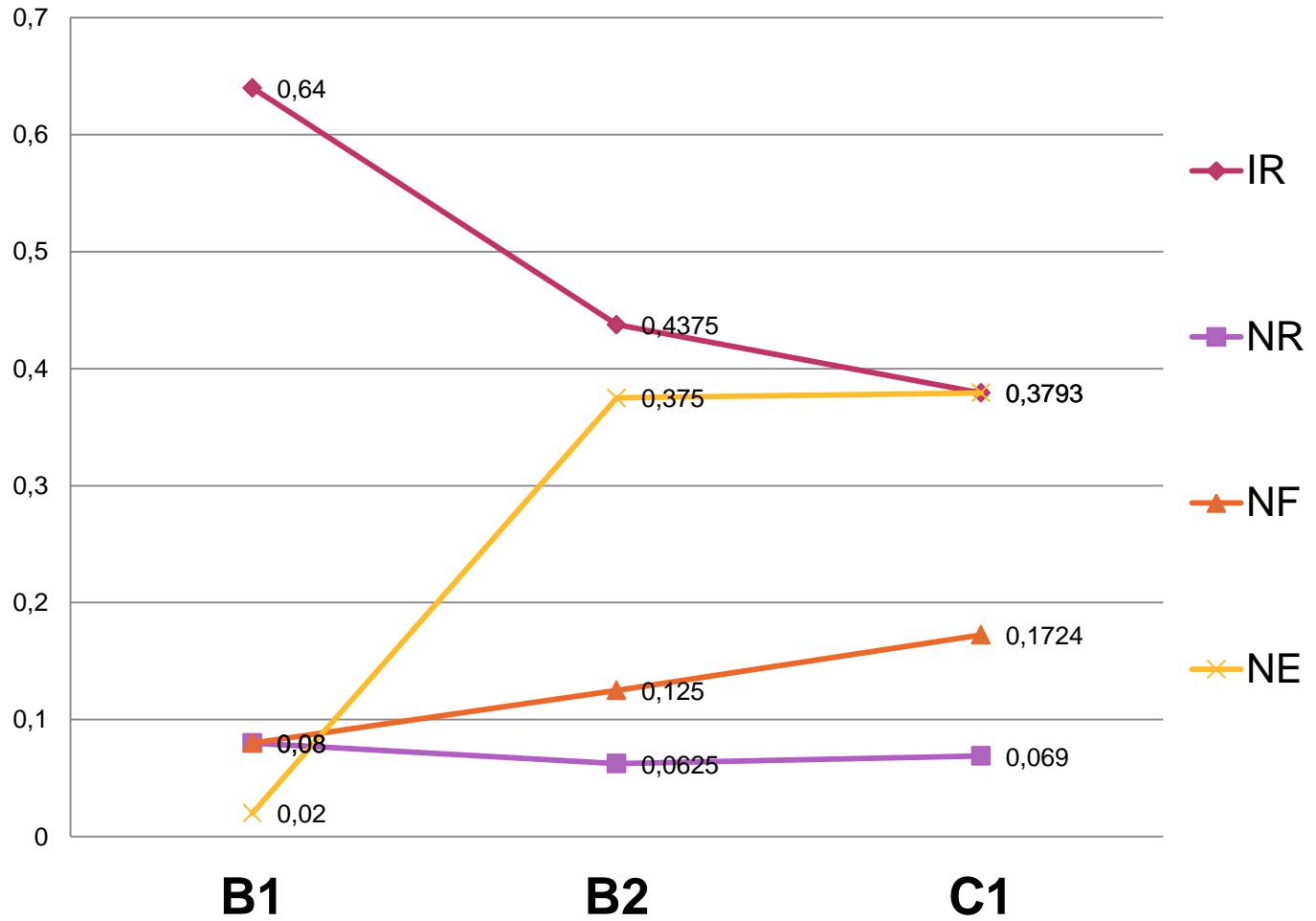
MMA classification of data source texts



Four MMA text-types

- Information Reports (or factsheets) (henceforth **IR**)
- News Reports (event reports, sports news) (henceforth **NR**)
- News Features (special interest stories) (henceforth **NF**)
- News Editorials (opinion reports and commentaries) (henceforth **NE**)

MMA Text-types per level



Using MMA catalogues of system choices for MDA

MMA Variables	No.
MMA System Name Catalogues	12
Verbal System Choice categories	9
Visual System Choice categories	6
Elements of verbal analysis	104
Elements of visual analysis	74
Elements of intersemiosis	5
Total No of elements of MDA	183

1. Design Elements

The screenshot displays the 'Multimodal Analysis Image - PhD data analysis' software interface. The main window shows a news article layout with several design elements highlighted in yellow and labeled with text boxes:

- Lead Paragraph:** A yellow box highlighting the first paragraph of the article.
- Sub-Header:** A yellow box highlighting the sub-headline.
- Headline:** A yellow box highlighting the main headline.
- Main Text:** A yellow box highlighting the main body of text.
- Main Visual Display:** A yellow box highlighting a large image of fresh vegetables (broccoli, carrots, and a lemon) at the bottom of the page.

On the right side of the interface, there are three panels:

- Catalog:** A vertical list of design elements, including 'VERBAL ELEMENTS (TE...', 'VISUAL ELEMENTS (INV...', and 'Free strip'.
- Annotations:** A vertical list of colored bars representing different annotations.
- Selected system choices:** A panel with two radio buttons: 'Main Visual Display' (selected) and 'Focus of Attention'.
- Available system choices:** A panel with two radio buttons: 'Main Visual Display' and 'Focus of Attention'.
- Description:** A panel at the bottom right for describing the elements.

The interface also includes a menu bar (File, Edit, Zoom, Analysis, Help) and a toolbar on the left with various analysis tools.

2. Organisational Structure

The image shows a screenshot of a news article titled "Hard times and a bleak House" featuring a photo of Barack Obama. The article text is annotated with four yellow callout boxes, each containing a red circle icon and a label:

- Topic Extension:** Located at the top left, pointing to the article title.
- Topic Statement:** Located at the top right, pointing to the first sentence of the article.
- Topic Specification:** Located on the right side, pointing to a specific sentence in the second paragraph.
- Topic Elaboration:** Located at the bottom left, pointing to the first paragraph of the article.

The article text is as follows:

Hard times and a bleak House

With such a great victory come hardships from the opposition. Many of Mr Obama's more ardent supporters will be let down—and in some cases they deserve to be. For those who voted for him with their eyes wide open to his limitations, everything now depends on how he governs. Abroad, this 21st-century president will have to grapple with the sort of great-power rivalries last seen in the 19th century to unite his country, tackling its the pitfalls of one-party rule. Rhetoric useful in this; but now is the turn of

Mr Obama begins with several advantages. At 47, he is too young to have been involved in the bitter cultural wars about Vietnam. And by winning support from a big majority of independents, and even from a fair few Republicans, he makes it possible to imagine a return to a more reflective time when political opponents were not regarded as traitors and collaboration was something to be admired.

Oddly, he may be helped by the fact that, in the end, his victory was slightly disappointing. He won around 52% of the popular vote, more than Mr Bush in 2000 and 2004, but not a remarkable number, this was no Roosevelt or Reagan landslide. And though Mr Obama helped his party cement its grip on Congress by gaining a total of 25 seats, his strength in the Senate falls four short of the 60 needed to control voting procedures and pass controversial legislation, without the support of the opposition.

3. Functional Properties (text)

The screenshot displays the 'Multimodal Analysis Image - PhD data analysis' software interface. The main window shows a document titled 'Happiness' with several paragraphs of text. The text is annotated with functional properties, including 'Noun-Phrase', 'Fact', 'Direct Quote', 'Point of View', and 'Indirect Speech'. A 'Catalog' panel on the right lists functional properties such as 'HEADLINE STYLE (NEW)', 'NEWS STYLE (NEWS ET)', 'EDITORIAL STYLE (NE)', and 'REPORTED SPEECH (N)'. A 'Description' panel at the bottom right explains the 'Headline Style' property, stating: 'Headline Style describes the way information is presented in the headline. Headlines in news editorials are often longer than those in news reports or news features.'

Multimodal Analysis Image - PhD data analysis

File Edit Zoom Analysis Help

Happiness

Overlays

Project

Library

Media

Analysis

Noun-Phrase

Fact

I took a five-question happiness quiz, and it turns out I'm very satisfied. No, I wasn't reading *Cosmopolitan* or OKCupid.com. The quiz was part of a study by happiness researcher Ed Diener, a professor of psychology at the University of Illinois.

Everybody, from well-known British economists to philosophers, has been investigating what happiness is. While neuro-scientists try to solve the mystery of which parts of the brain are active when people say they are happy, social science has an easy answer. Just ask!

Most studies on happiness are

Point of View

what makes them happy, it turns out that these subjective tests are quite informative.

economist (J.J. Layard published a book last year called *Happiness*, in which he discusses one of the surprising results of these tests: money doesn't make people happier. The only time people's feeling of well-being rises, as a result of money, is when it takes them out of poverty. Middle-class people who become wealthier don't report feeling any happier.

Direct Quote

If money doesn't make us happy, Layard argues, we should be rethinking our priorities. Most people value happiness above all else, but they live in nations where progress and social welfare are connected with money. Why not value other things that might make us genuinely happy?

You'd think there would be a lot of disagreement among scientists about what makes people happy, but in fact there are a few basic things that everyone agrees upon regarding what leads to happiness. Strong relationships with others and self-esteem are among the most important. On the contrary, one of the biggest mistakes people make is comparing themselves with the Joneses'.

Indirect Speech

Philosopher Joel Kupperman points out in his recent book *Six Myths about the Good Life*, that happiness isn't always the nice thing it is said to be. There are clearly immoral kinds of happiness, like causing pain or taking revenge. Then there's the problem of mistaking pleasure for happiness. Pleasure doesn't last long and it is based on objects external to us (like good food, a good film or winning the lottery). It doesn't contribute to a sense of being happy with who you are. What is more likely to lead to the kind of happiness that builds self-reliance is taking pleasure in our successes.

Catalog

Annotations

Selected system choices

Available system choices

Available system choices

Noun-Phrase

Verb-Phrase

Sentence

Description

Headline Style describes the way information is presented in the headline. Headlines in news editorials are often longer than those in news reports or news features.

4. Elements of Composition

.....Travel through Nestos Valley.....



Probably one of the most wonderful routes by train is the trip through the exceptionally beautiful Nestos valley, the so-called "Nestos Tempi".

So Horizontal (left to right) to Xanthi follows the Nestos river with its
WO visual mode first completely through the valley, respecting the
env harmony with it.



Leaving Thessaloniki behind, the train reaches the Kerkini and Doirani lakes. After Stavroupoli, the train enters the Nestos valley. In the middle of the valley, if requested, the train stops at Livera station -a place that has not been used as a station for many years now- to allow visitors who wish to explore the valley to get off.



This is a valley of magnificent natural beauty through which only the railway is allowed to pass. The environment and its natural beauty is protected by the Ramsar Treaty. Besides, railway travel is the most environmentally friendly means of transport and does not burden the environment.

The Hellenic Railway Organisation has converted the station-master's stone house into an inn, and the passenger waiting room into a restaurant. The inn has two houses that can accommodate eight people each. A little further on from the station, one can find the village of Livera. Its stone houses are completely deserted, and only wild horses tread its stone-paved paths.

.....

5. Elements of Visual Attraction

The image shows a screenshot of a news article titled "Teaching English in Japan" from "Saturday News". The article is by Shoichi Yamashita and Akihiko Kano. A yellow overlay box is positioned over a photograph of a student, listing five visual elements: Size, Sharpness of Focus, Colour Contrast, Lighting, and Foreground. Below the list is a button that says "Use properties to edit". To the right of the article, a vertical sidebar contains a "CATALOG - NEWS REPORT" and a "VISUAL PROMINENCE" section with a color-coded bar. Further right, a legend defines the visual elements: Size (pink), Sharpness of Focus (dark red), Colour Contrast (purple), Lighting (light pink), and Foreground (blue). Below this legend is a section titled "Available system choices" with a list of options: Size, Sharpness of Focus, Contrast between black..., Colour Contrast, Lighting, Foreground, and Background.

Saturday News 15

Teaching English in Japan

by Shoichi Yamashita and Akihiko Kano / Yomiuri Shimbun Staff Writers

Size

Sharpness of Focus

Colour Contrast

Lighting

Foreground

Use properties to edit

On a different day, Tokyo metropolitan Kamata High School was offering an English class to some freshmen who found it difficult to keep up with their regular classes. The teacher was slowly writing on the blackboard sentences in English to review what the students were expected to have learned in middle school. The teacher worked slowly through the teaching materials and reviewed language points in an attempt to keep his students interested in the subject matter. It seems to be quite difficult to teach English only in the language in classes like

CATALOG - NEWS REPORT

ELEM

VISUAL PROMINENCE

Free strip

Size

Sharpness of Focus

Colour Contrast

Lighting

Foreground

Available system choices

Size

Sharpness of Focus

Contrast between black...

Colour Contrast

Lighting

Foreground

Background

6. Visual Reality



7. Typography

The screenshot displays the Adobe InDesign interface. The main workspace shows a text layout with a yellow 'Medical Tourism' header and a red 'News' sub-header. A yellow 'Overlays' panel is open, showing a list of text properties: 'Wide', 'Light', 'Sentence case', 'Big fonts', and 'Square'. The 'Wide' property is selected. A 'Catalog' panel on the right shows a list of 'TYPEFACE DESIGN' and 'TYPEFACE STYLE' options. The text in the layout is as follows:

Medical Tourism

News

Only a few abroad for treatment was mostly for emergency treatment by expensive specialists. Now, cheaper travel and the falling cost of healthcare in some countries have made medical tourism affordable for thousands of people who may not have thought about it seriously in the past. The trend is growing as a result of the increase in demand for cosmetic surgery and the success of some countries in marketing themselves to medical tourists as inexpensive places for treatment. Whether it is cosmetic surgery in Poland or dentistry in India, medical tourism is becoming more and more popular. A comparison between the cost of treatment in Canada or the UK and the cost in other countries sends thousands of people to foreign hospitals and clinics. The long waiting lists in their own country is another reason why people look elsewhere for treatment.

visiting Greece for dental work four years ago. "I was told I had to wait weeks for a visit to a specialist in London and my teeth were aching," she says. "I flew into Greece and was seen by a dentist the same afternoon. And, while the cost of a dental visit in London would have been 110 euro, I was able to have an X-ray and a filling in Greece for a total of 100 euro. It is cheaper, easier and more reliable than going to a dentist in the UK. So, I've been back three times since. I have family in Greece and it's an easy thing to do. My boyfriend needs a bridge and he's going to get it done in Greece as well. I find it works very well for me."

Of course, the cost for a medical tourism trip to Greece has to be taken into account. But as the pressure in domestic health systems in many European countries increases with the ageing population, medical tourism looks like it is going to be a popular choice for more and more people in the future.

8. Interpersonal Relations

Animal Rights and Animal Wrongs

The normally quiet streets of Oxford are occasionally disturbed by two groups of protesters who disagree about a new animal research laboratory that the University is building. One of the groups, Pro-Test, is made up of scientists and students demanding the right to carry out research freely; the other, SPEAK, consists of animal rights campaigners who say that no animal testing should be allowed.

For Mel Broughton, the leader of SPEAK, there is no debate. In his view, all experiments on animals are wrong, cruel and must be stopped. He has been arrested several times, and served three years in prison, although he insists that the SPEAK campaign at Oxford is completely lawful and non-violent.

To his supporters, Broughton is a skilled and passionate leader. Every day, he and his fellow protesters gather outside the site where the new laboratory is being built. The builders work in masks, even though they are protected by the police, and supplies arrive by unmarked lorry so that the companies cannot be identified. The protesters shout abuse, looking a little like animals themselves as they scream in rage at the builders.

The group on the other side of the argument is Pro-Test, headed, perhaps surprisingly, by a 16-year-old schoolboy called Laurie Fyfe. He got the idea after a confrontation with an animal

rights protester, and decided to set up a campaign in favour of scientific research and free speech. Within weeks, his campaign had attracted national attention, and its first big demonstration attracted hundreds of supporters.

For Tipu Aziz, who is professor of neuroscience at Oxford University, and who has joined Pro-



He believes that the laboratory should be built and that scientists should be free to carry out their work openly and without fear. His own work, he says, has helped over 40,000 people.

On such an emotional issue, there is little chance of reasonable discussion, and to many people it is a question of numbers. Most people would think it right to carry out research on one monkey to save 100,000 human beings. On the other hand, they might question using 100,000 monkeys to save one human. In the end it is a question of where you draw the line, and on that point, it may never be possible to reach an agreement.

Our Environment, 3 May 2007

CATALOG - NEWS EDITORIALS

INTERPERSONAL
GAZE-VISUAL ADDRESS
VISUAL POWER
CLOSENESS AND DISTANCE

Free strip

11. Visual-Verbal Relations

Multimodal Analysis Image - PhD data analysis

File Edit Zoom Analysis Help

INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS traveller's code 2

Overlays

Project
Library
Media
Analysis

Catalog Annotations Selected system choices

Repetition
Repetition
Repetition

More tips for green travellers

- ❖ Be interested in local people. 'colourful' characters for you and your camera lives at helping local people.
- ❖ Be generous. People from non-western countries try to pay as little as possible when they go shopping. They bargain till they get the lowest price as if their pride depends on paying two dollars less. But your pride is not the most important thing here. Paying a little more may just make a family meal a little easier.

to come by for local people.

- ❖ Be sensitive to local customs. Think about what sort of clothing is suitable for both men and women. If your choice of clothes risks offending local people, wear something else.
- ❖ Ask difficult questions. Question your hotel or tour operator if you think what they are doing is bad for local people or the environment.
- ❖ Respect local people. Ask before you take pictures of people, even children and respect their wishes. Some people won't mind having their photo taken, but others will.

CATALOG - INFORMATION REPORT

VISUAL-VERB

SIMILARITY

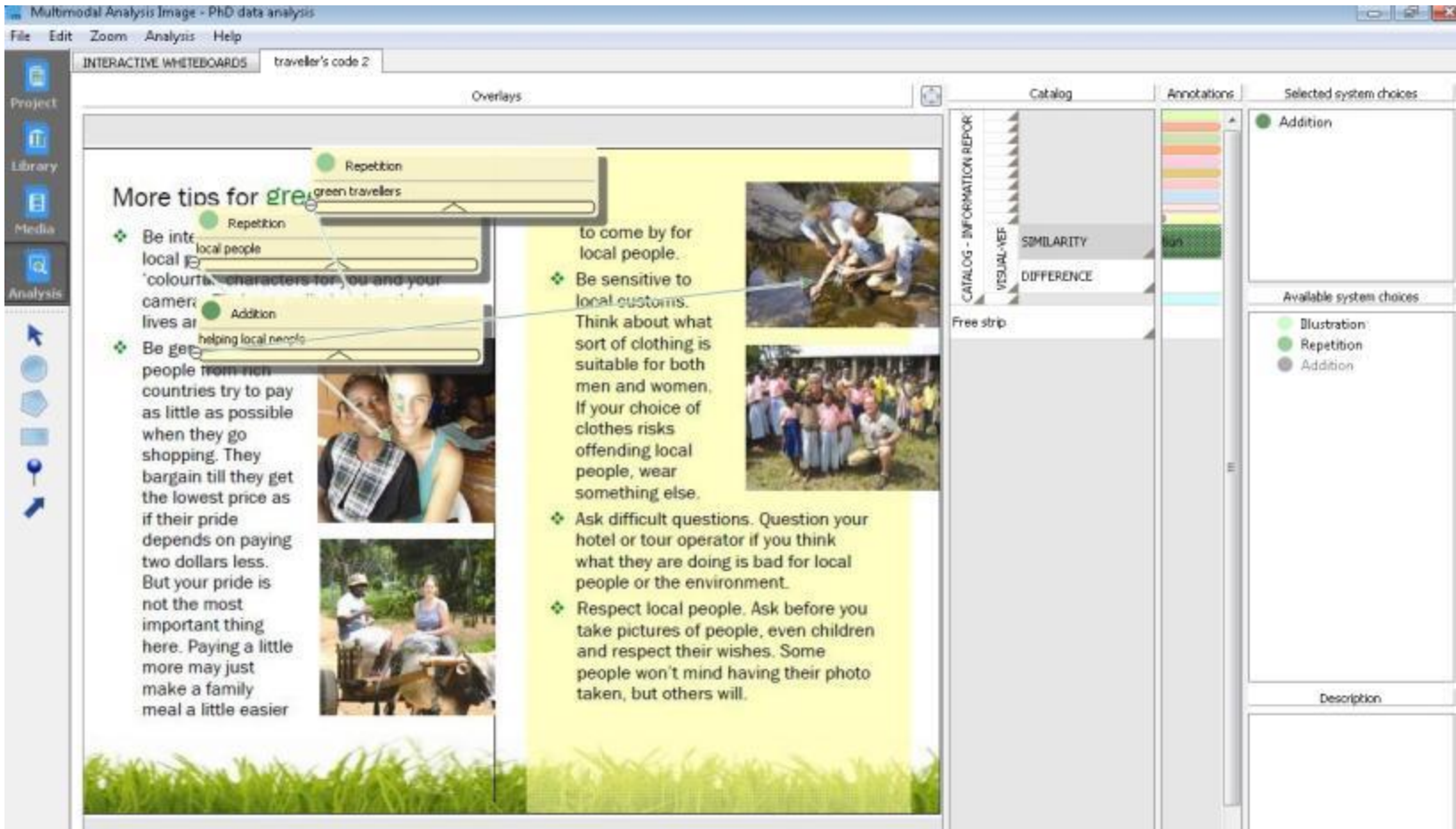
DIFFERENCE

Free strip

Available system choices

- Illustration
- Repetition
- Addition

Description

The screenshot shows a software interface for multimodal analysis. The main window displays a document titled 'More tips for green travellers' with several paragraphs of text and three images. The text includes advice on being interested in local people, being generous, and being sensitive to local customs. The images show a person in a field, two women, and a person on a horse. The interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, Zoom, Analysis, Help), a toolbar with icons for Project, Library, Media, and Analysis, and several panels on the right: 'Catalog' with 'SIMILARITY' and 'DIFFERENCE' options, 'Annotations' with a color-coded list, 'Selected system choices' with a legend for 'Illustration', 'Repetition', and 'Addition', and a 'Description' field. The document content is annotated with yellow boxes and lines, and the word 'Repetition' is highlighted in green.

12. Grammar at Text Level

The screenshot displays the 'Multimodal Analysis Image - PhD data analysis' software interface. The main window shows a text document titled 'Body Language: Racine' with several paragraphs of text. The text is annotated with various grammatical and linguistic features, including:

- Present** (indicated by a red dot)
- Speech** (indicated by a red dot)
- Third-person** (indicated by a green dot)
- Adjectives** (indicated by a green dot)
- Adjectives** (indicated by an orange dot)
- Adjectives** (indicated by a green dot)
- Present** (indicated by a red dot)

The text is also annotated with various linguistic features, including:

- COHESIVE DEVICES (LI)**
- VERBS (INFO-REPORTS)**
- DESCRIBING (INFO-RE)**
- CLASSIFYING & DEFIN.**
- COMPARING & CONTR.**
- PRESENTING INFORMF**
- PERSONAL PRONOUNS**
- TENSE (INFO-REPORTS)**

The interface includes a 'Project' sidebar on the left, a 'Catalog' on the right, and an 'Annotations' panel on the far right. The 'Catalog' panel is titled 'CATALOG - INFORMATION REPORTS' and contains a 'Free strip' section. The 'Annotations' panel shows a list of linguistic features with corresponding colored bars.

VERBAL	VISUAL	INTERSEMIOSIS
The ideational metafunction of the text		
GRAMMAR AT TEXT LEVEL		VISUAL-VERBAL RELATIONS
COHESIVE DEVICES (LINKS)		SIMILARITY
VERBS		DIFFERENCE
DESCRIBING		
CLASSIFYING & DEFINING		
COMPARING & CONTRASTING		
PERSONAL PRONOUNS		
TENSE		
AGENCY & ACTION	AGENCY & ACTION	
PARTICIPANTS	PARTICIPANTS	

VERBAL**VISUAL****INTERSEMIOSIS****The interpersonal metafunction of the text****AGENCY & ACTION****AGENCY & ACTION****PARTICIPANT ROLES****PARTICIPANT ROLES****PROCESSES****PROCESSES****AGENCY TYPE****EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT (TEXT AND IMAGE)****EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT (TEXT AND IMAGE)****EMOTIONAL****EMOTIONAL****EVALUATION****EVALUATION****ESTEEM****ESTEEM****GRAMMAR AT TEXT LEVEL****INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS****PRESENTING INFORMATION****GAZE-VISUAL ADDRESS****VISUAL POWER****CLOSENESS AND DISTANCE****VISUAL REALITY****REALISTIC DETAIL****REALISTIC COLOUR****REALISTIC BACKGROUND**

VERBAL	VISUAL	INTERSEMIOSIS
The textual metafunction of the text		
DESIGN ELEMENTS	DESIGN ELEMENTS	
VERBAL ELEMENTS	VISUAL ELEMENTS	
VERBAL ELEMENTS (IMAGE)	VISUAL-VERBAL ELEMENTS (DRAWING/CARTOON)	
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (TEXT)	NON-LINGUISTIC ELEMENTS (DRAWING/CARTOON)	
FUNCTIONAL STAGES	ELEMENTS OF VISUAL ATTRACTION	
FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES (TEXT)	VISUAL PROMINENCE	
HEADLINE STYLE		
RHETORICAL STYLE		
REPORTED SPEECH		
EDITORIAL STYLE		
ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION		
ARRANGEMENT IN SPACE		
TYPOGRAPHY		
TYPEFACE DESIGN		
TYPEFACE STYLE		

Concluding remarks

- contribution of my work to the development of the MMA software package
- current stage of my PhD work

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**Thank you very much
for your attention!**