

Cross-National Seminar

Branding Nations, Products, and Sensory Experiences: How is it all Perceived by Customers and Tourists?



Venue: Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol
Time: Friday, October 26th 2018

Organizers:

Šemiotiķš
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CBS CogLab, the FairSpeak Group, the UMAMI Project
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Mission Statement: *The seminar brings together two research environments from the utmost South of Europe (Cyprus and Greece) and one close to the utmost North (Denmark). What unites them is a combined research interest in multimodal communication, national identity and branding, and consumer marketing and research. A key aim is to establish new proactive synergies between these fields in targeting such specific areas of practice and research as place branding, tourism, and food innovation and marketing. The seminar will exemplify the application of this overall agenda to a selection of current topics and types of data as implemented in ongoing research in the respective environments and provide a forum for generating new research ideas and exploring possible areas of common interest and perhaps possible future collaboration.*

09:00: **Welcome**

by George Damaskinidis and Viktor Smith

Presentations by participants from SVC Lab and AUTH SemioLab

09:15: Aspasia Papadima & Evangelos Kourdis

Semiotic Modes in Commercial Communication. A Comparative Analysis of Culinary Shop Signs in Greece and Cyprus

Abstract: This study examines the semiotic modes used in the shop signs of culinary business (restaurants, taverns, rotisseries) in Greece and Cyprus. In this context, we examine, comparatively, shop signs collected from the commercial center of Thessaloniki and Limassol, two European, Mediterranean cities, with a significant culinary tradition and a lively city center. These semiotic modes are represented in a sample which is composed of shop signs whose verbal message constitutes verbo-cultural palimpsest or is written in the local dialect, as well as of shop signs which focus on their iconic visual message using intersemiotic techniques or visual rhetoric to make their message appealing for the consumers. The study proves that the techniques used in shop signs in both cities are not so different and that the choice of the verbal message still remains, for culinary businesses, an important semiotic system to profit even in our days which are dominated by visual iconic signs.

Presentations by participants from SVC Lab

10:00: Eripidides Zantides

The re-design of the logo for Cyprus University of Technology. Challenges, concepts and solution for a new brand identity

Abstract: The Cyprus University of Technology was founded on December 2003 and welcomed its first students on September 2007. Since its establishment, the University has been using for its logo an icon of a fifth century Byzantine mosaic known as the goddess Ktisis (KTICIC), a personification symbolising the creation of the world. The specific image is exposed for public

viewing at the ancient theatre of Curium in Limassol-Cyprus, and is arbitrarily photographed by a number of local companies and institutions as a symbol of their logo and brand strategy as well. Because of issues of copyrights and accessibility, in addition to serious problems of readability and adaptation in various applications, mediums, and sizes, the senate decided to proceed with a refinement, as well as ask for the option to design a new logo for the Cyprus University of Technology. That would differentiate it from the rest and diminish its current graphic design problems. Additionally, the whole idea would contribute to the re-branding actions that the University decided to proceed in 2017. The presentation will build on the reasons that lead to a visual identity change, discuss current trends and aesthetics of University logos, analyse the design and semiotic parameters that should be considered when redefining logotypes, and argue the benefits of a new visual identity and long term branding.

Presentations by participants from AUTH SemioLab

10:45: George Damaskinidis & Loukia Kostopoulou

Intersemiotic translation of subliminal messages in commercial logos

Abstract: Subliminal messages can play a vital role in attracting the consumer in the world of brands. However, subjects can be subliminally influenced only if they are in a corresponding state, in the sense of being in a motivational state congruent with the subliminally presented stimulus. Subliminal messages can be visual or auditory, or a combination of the two. Visual subliminal messages are designed in a way to be unnoticeable at a conscious level, thus bypassing the conscious mind and submitting messages directly to the conscious mind. The ability to persuade consumer instantly is a powerful tool in marketing process and the subliminal persuasion can severely affects markets and control consumer's behavior. We explore consumers' awareness of subliminal messages in advertisements by focusing on semiotics, symbolism and persuasion, as key issues in the translation of advertisements. This framework enables us to understand the hidden message of advertisements and to identify the symbols used to appeal to the audience and how they work. By means of an experimental procedure, participants are exposed to a number of logos of international brands and through a semi-structured questionnaire they will be asked to identify their form, color, logo, brand name or slogan. We aim to identify the interaction between the verbal and non-verbal semiotic elements in logos in terms of how the subliminal messages trigger emotions, how their ideas enrich the aesthetic and functional values of the brand design, how it makes brand design look more innovative and distinguish, how it attracts the consumers, catch their mind and leave an internal impression, and how it achieves a distinctive competitive position among the brand rivals in the market.

11:30: Elli Vazou & George Damaskinidis

Towards a bottom-up methodology for investigating the branding of Greece on the Internet

Abstract: In the realm of travel and tourism industry, destination branding has considerably grown in importance over the years. It represents the core essence and enduring characteristics which comprise a country's personality and make it distinctive and different from all its competitors. In the new digital age, national tourism agencies around the world integrate the Internet and the social media platforms into their brand strategy in order to build brand awareness of their country's attractions as tourism destinations, and allow visitors to share their travel experiences. As experience is the driven force behind a country-image formation, a destination brand is often built in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in a bottom-up approach. Starting from the bottom and moving up to the top, this approach is about putting together/molding the various types of tourism, the destination "goods", the descriptive characteristics of offering, the way attributes add value to visitors' feelings; the imagery of the visitor, their experience and their emotions. At the top of this evolutionary process, we find the complete image of Greece, the so-called "brand essence" of the destination.

LUNCH BREAK

Presentations by participants from CBS

13:00: Fumiko Kano Glückstad

UMAMI: A public-private innovation project under Innovation Fond Denmark for developing a tourist data analytic platform

Abstract: This ongoing public-private innovation project is developing an advanced quantified qualitative method that integrates unsupervised machine learning tools, research on mental representation of destinations and a multiplicity of marketing theories to analyze segment-based characteristics of personal value priorities, attitudes, and behaviours of tourists. Our case study, which involves the major governmental tourism stakeholders, emphasizes the importance of developing a user-friendly data analytic pipeline that carefully considers users' data collection procedures, easy access to the back-office computation algorithms, an interactive output data analysis workflow, and its visualization.

13:45: Carsten Jacob Humlebæk:

Between rebranding the nation and the contingencies of being a successful tourist destination. The case of Spain

Abstract: Spain has traditionally been portrayed as a case of successful rebranding of the nation basically through becoming a modern, developed, and democratic country through the 1980s, but the question is whether that was really first and foremost aimed at foreigners or

whether the Spaniards modernized their country because they wanted it that way themselves. The success story, however, does not reach all realms. Because while Spain effectively has become one of the world's most popular tourist destinations, the 'made-in' brand is not really a success. While different interests in Spain, particularly the government and most firms, aim at increasing the brand value of Spain and diversifying the goals of the hordes of tourists, they find themselves struggling against other interests which are not particularly concerned with this diversification of the tourism. In fact, being a successful tourist destination may actually work against being able to control the flow of branding that any foreigner is likely to receive and perceive about that particular destination.

14:30: Daniel Barratt & Viktor Smith

Investigating cultural influences on natural scene perception

Abstract: In a series of eye-tracking studies, we have tested the hypothesis that Westerners attend more analytically to focal objects in a natural scene, while East Asians attend more holistically to backgrounds and the relations between objects. So far, we have collected and analyzed eye-tracking data for participants in Denmark, Russia, and China.

15:15: Viktor Smith, Daniel Barratt & Kristian Roed Nielsen

Taste the difference – and say it!

Abstract: We presents ongoing research into the use of sensory language for underpinning the marketing and labelling of pre-packed foods and drinks, including locally branded products, and its interplay with non-verbal sensory stimuli (pictures, colours, shapes). Preliminary results will be presented on the generation of innovative sensory language through user-driven innovation in e-store environments (Coop.dk) as well as on consumers' perceptual and behavioural responses to such innovations in simulated e-shopping situations monitored by eye-tracking. The results indicate that the presence of verbal sensory expressions – if appropriately chosen and visually noticed by the consumer – contribute significantly to product expectations in terms of taste and eating experience, and that ordinary consumers may contribute valuable cues to the formulation of comprehensible and appealing sensory descriptions.

16:00: **Wrap up**