

MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO THE IMAGE OF IMPOVERISHED: A VISUAL ANALYSIS OF COVERS IN A SAMPLE FROM INTERMÓN OXFAM MAGAZINES

Aproximación multimodal a la imagen de las/os empobrecidas/os: análisis multimodal de las portadas en una muestra de las revistas de Intermón Oxfam

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ABSTRACT

This article intends to approach the way NGOs represent the population in poor and rich countries¹ and their own representation as NGOs of Development. Our corpus consists of all the issues from the Intermón Oxfam's magazine called Revista IO published in 2012. We will offer a detailed analysis of the covers because this is the first page seen by the readers and because this is the way in which the NGO introduces itself. Critical discourse analysis, specifically the model proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar will be used in order to provide a detailed analysis of the covers and to observe the main visual characteristics used for presenting people from poor countries in a sample from Intermón Oxfam's magazines. After analysing the said covers we conclude that this NGO creates a dichotomy between producers of raw materials and handicrafts, located in poor countries, and consumers of these products, located in rich countries. Thus, the relations between them appear mediated by money and not by universal values such as the equality or social justice.

Key words: Mass media, press; critical discourse analysis; development discourse; visual grammar; NGO; Intermón Oxfam.

RESUMEN

Este artículo pretende ofrecer una aproximación al modo en el que las ONG representan a la población en países ricos y pobres así como a su propia representación como ONG de Desarrollo. Nuestro corpus consiste en todos los números de la publicación Revista IO publicados durante el año 2012 por Intermón Oxfam. Se ofrecerá un análisis detallado de las portadas por ser éstas la primera página que ven los lectores y por tratarse de la parte de la revista en las que la ONG se presenta.

¹ We are going to use the terminology poor and rich countries instead of developed and less developed or countries in the North and in the South because that is the one used by Intermón Oxfam in the magazines under analysis.

El análisis crítico del discurso, y específicamente el modelo propuesto por van Leeuwen (2008) así como la gramática visual de Kress y van Leeuwen (2006) serán empleados con el fin de ofrecer un análisis detallado de dichas portadas y con el objetivo de observar las principales características visuales empleadas para representar a personas de países del Sur y del Norte en una muestra de las revistas publicadas por Intermón Oxfam. Tras el análisis llegamos a la conclusión de que esta ONG crea una dicotomía entre las personas que trabajan con materias primas y artesanías, situadas en países pobres, y los consumidores de esos productos, situados en países ricos. De ahí que las relaciones entre ellos aparezcan mediatizadas por el dinero en lugar de por principios universales como la igualdad o la justicia social.

Palabras clave: Medios de comunicación; prensa; análisis crítico del discurso; discurso del desarrollo; gramática visual; ONG; Intermón Oxfam.

1. Introduction

This article will analyse the nature of the discourse of development in the covers of the Intermón Oxfam²'s magazine called *Revista IO* published in 2012. In order to do so we will use the model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) to observe the visual representation of social actors. We will also concentrate on the model of visual grammar proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to do the analysis. This study will present the way in which people from poor countries, people from rich countries and the NGO Intermón Oxfam under analysis are represented. Our main objective is to observe the way people from poor and rich countries are represented in the covers from a sample of the publication IO published by Intermón Oxfam every four months. Another objective is to understand the image that Intermón Oxfam offers of itself in the said publication. Given these objectives, the main research questions we will try to answer are the following: how are people from the developed and less developed countries represented in the covers from Intermón Oxfam under analysis? Are there similarities or differences in their representation? What are the main visual devices used in order to portray them?

NGOs were created in the second half of the XX century in order to palliate the situations of deficiency that were observed in poor countries. In fact, as an instrument of international cooperation, NGOs have inherited the discourse of development. The discourse of development establishes a global system that gives power to Western countries over poor countries that generates economic, political and cultural transformations (Escobar, 1995, Esteva, 2000). Also, this

² As of October 15, 2013, this NGO has been renamed Oxfam. For this research, we will continue calling it Intermón Oxfam because it is the name found in the journals analyzed.

discourse has marked the way the NGOs have viewed the poor people. For this reason, among others³, the discourse of development is still an important power when defining the present and future of the different cultures of the world. In this sense, we agree with Arturo Escobar (2012, p. 24) when he states that:

“En muchas partes del mundo, el ‘desarrollo’ sigue siendo una importante fuerza social y cultural a la cual enfrentar. Significativas batallas políticas se libran en su nombre, y la vida de muchos y los medios de subsistencia de las personas todavía están en juego en estas batallas”⁴.

Development discourse has gone through several phases. At first, it was felt that developing the economy of the poor countries could develop other aspects of their society. In the first generation of NGOs, these organizations focused on alleviating situations of need and acted on the consequences of underdevelopment. Later, in the second generation of NGOs, they specialized in specific sectors (environment, women, etc.) and gave greater prominence to acting with this the community. Finally, in the third generation of NGOs, they consider the community as the architect of its own development and the NGOS were responsible for assisting the development process⁵. So, today, it is a discourse that postulates a development with a human face to the extent that it aims to develop various aspects of society and not just its economy (CONGDE, 2010).

However, what is more relevant is that these organizations have gained more importance as sources of information in the media. González Luis (2006) points out that there are 66,9% news items where the media use NGOs as sources of information.

³ See ESCOBAR, A. (2012). Beyond Development: Postdevelopment and Transitions towards the Pluriverse, *Revista de Antropología Social*, 21, 23-62.

⁴ “In many parts of the world, ‘development’ remains an important social and cultural force to be confronted. Significant political wars are fought in their name, and many lives and livelihoods of people are still at stake in these wars”.

⁵ See ORTEGA CARPIO, M. L. (1994). *Las ONG y la crisis del desarrollo. Un análisis de la cooperación en Centroamérica*. Madrid: IEPALA Editorial.

It is also outstanding that they are used as primary sources in 28, 9% of the news items and, in 10%, as secondary sources. Similarly, it is significant that according to the survey of the Group of Communication of the Coordinator of NGO of Development in Spain (*Grupo de Comunicación de la Coordinadora de ONG de Desarrollo España*, CONGDE, 2007) 90% of the journalists consider that the stage of relevance and reliability of NGOs as sources of information is good or very good.

Nowadays, NGOs have a high presence in the media and, therefore, they can also contribute to shape the minds of people in rich countries as far as the image of people in poor countries is concerned. Van Dijk (1997) highlights in his studies of Western press that people in Western countries form the image they have of poor countries mainly through the media. In this way, if we establish a process of double mediation in which the NGOs inform the media on the situation of the population in the poor countries and they, at the same time, move that information to the Western countries. Therefore, it is very important to know the image that these organizations project.

For this reason, it is a priority to analyse the texts that NGOs are producing. In this way, if they spread the same conceptions that the development discourse proposes, they will never be able to shape a different image of poor countries and they will continue being subordinated to the relationships of power that the West establishes. Therefore, NGOs will not be a space of subversion of meanings and social practices but another instrument of development to continue perpetuating relationships of inequality.

After this introduction, the article will present the following sections: section two consists of describing the main aspects of the theoretical frameworks used in this article, i.e. van Leeuwen's (2008) approach to CDA and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar; section three will discuss the methodology and objectives of the article. In the next section, we will describe the analysis of the covers of the Intermón Oxfam's magazines published in 2012. Finally, we will present the conclusions we have reached from our analysis

2. Theoretical frameworks: critical discourse analysis and visual grammar

Inside a postdevelopment theory, when analysing the texts of NGOs, we consider that it is necessary to take into consideration the main principles of CDA since this perspective always participates in the social reality because it “ [...] espera contribuir de manera efectiva a la resistencia contra la desigualdad social”⁶ (van Dijk, 2009, p. 149). In this sense, CDA takes a position next to people that have no power with the intention of providing them with an attempt for creating a broader framework of justice and social equality.

Moreover, CDA considers that micro and macro levels of discourse shape a whole, which is unified by the daily experience of individuals and in their social interactions. Van Dijk (2009) has also discussed a dichotomy between immigrants and the autochthonous population in the Western press. In fact, the author has highlighted that there is a tendency in discourse to the positive self-representation and the negative heterorepresentation, i.e., there are differences between we and they (van Dijk, 2009). Therefore, the group that writes the pieces of news has the tendency to highlight their positive aspects and to diminish the negative ones, and the other way round, to highlight the negative aspects of the exogroup (the one that is a minority) and to highlight the negative ones. The positive self-representation in the Western press consists of denying racism and building the image of a tolerant society. Thus, the press can be for or against racism. In a sense, the press can mitigate the reality that shows the presence of racism using, for example, euphemisms or making subtle denials using, for example, words such as illegal when referring to immigrants. These differences between we-they can also be observed in the discourse that NGOs use in their publications because people from poor countries are represented as the others (see section 5).

Visual grammar will be used to analyse the covers of Intermón Oxfam's magazines because they are multimodal texts, i.e., they consist on image and written text; the multimodal text is a unity in which different resources can be observed following Martínez Lirola (2010, p. 82):

⁶ “[...] *expects to contribute to resist social inequality in an effective way*”.

“Un texto multimodal es aquel en el que encontramos diferentes elementos, aquel que utiliza diferentes modos para la comunicación: el lingüístico (la lengua) y el visual (fotografías, diagramas, etc. [...]) Todos los elementos que configuran el texto multimodal cumplen una función comunicativa. Es decir, cada elección lingüística y visual tiene un propósito determinado, una función específica en el discurso. Por esta razón, es necesario comprender cómo se combinan diferentes recursos visuales y lingüísticos para expresar significados”⁷.

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) observe three main aspects when analysing the composition of multimodal texts:

- Information value: the place in which the different elements of information appear. In this sense, these authors establish that information value can be distributed from left to right, from top to bottom and from the centre to the margins.
- Saliency: the most outstanding elements in the page, used in order to catch the readers' attention.
- Framing: the means used to connect or separate the different elements on the page. They can join elements inside a visual composition and inside a written text (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001).

Inside CDA we follow the model proposed by van Leeuwen (2008) because he offers a framework to analyse the main visual strategies used to represent people: social distance considers if people have been represented close or far from the readers; social relation makes reference to the angle with which the different people represented have been picked up and social interaction makes

⁷ “A multimodal text is one in which we find different elements, one that uses different modes of communication: the linguistic (the language) and the visual (photographs, diagrams, etc.. [...]) All the elements that create a multimodal text have a communicative function. In other words, each linguistic and visual choice has a purpose, a specific function in discourse. For this reason, it is necessary to understand how to combine different visual and linguistic resources to express meanings”.

reference to the interaction between the people represented and the readers or to their representation as passive, just to be observed.

3. Objectives, data and methodology

The corpus of examples consists on the covers of the magazine called *Revista IO*, published by the NGO Intermón Oxfam in 2012. These magazines are published every four months in order to inform the NGO's members of the projects the NGO does in rich and poor countries. This NGO was created in 1956 and it joined with Oxfam in 1997. Its main areas of work are fair trade, campaigns to sensitize people in rich countries, emergency aid and development programs. We have chosen the said NGO because it works in poor countries and it gives information of about those to mass media in Spain. This NGO helps with forming the image that people in rich countries have about poor countries. In addition, it is important to study these publications because they also are accessible to the general public since they are available in the internet and in fair trade shops; moreover, they are sent to members' homes. Therefore, they are a means of communication in themselves.

In addition, the publications under analysis can also be consulted by the media in order to get information that later can be shared with public opinion because they are written by people who work for the organization, and therefore they are considered experts. Due to the limitations of this paper we have concentrated only on the covers because they are the first page that readers see and it seems to be a window where the different contents of the magazine are presented. Therefore, our corpus consists of four multimodal covers, whose main characteristics are the presence of photographs encompassing and the representation of people in poor and rich countries and the NGO. All the texts are multimodal, but the pictures are more important than the writing in the covers in order to capture the attention of the reader. The covers selected are a sample of the way the NGO shows the development discourse in rich countries. In this sense, we agree with Arturo Escobar (1995, p. 6) when he states that:

“Thinking of development in terms of discourse makes it possible to maintain the focus on domination-as earlier Marxist analysis, for instance, did-and at the same time to explore more fruitfully the conditions of possibility and the most pervasive effects of development. Discourse analysis creates the possibility of ‘stand[ing] detached from [the development discourse], bracketing its familiarity, in order to analyze the theoretical and practical context with which it has been associated’ (Foucault, 1986, p. 3). It gives us the possibility of singling out ‘development’ as an encompassing cultural space and at the same time of separating ourselves from it by perceiving it in a totally form”.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to analyse the main visual elements used by Intermón Oxfam to represent the images of people in poor and rich countries. To this end, we will apply the principles of critical discourse analysis and visual grammar to the analysis of the images in these magazines. CDA and visual grammar will allow us to de-mystify ideologies and power through the systematic investigation of the data. In this way, language is seen as social practice and the social context of language used is crucial.

As regards the method of analysis, van Leeuwen’s (2008) characterization of social actors is used to portray poor and rich countries. Also, we will observe how Intermón Oxfam is represented itself. Through paying attention to analyses of social distance, social relation and social interaction we can gain a better understanding of how people are depicted in the photographs and observe how the interpersonal relationships are established (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.138).

The next section consists of the presentation of the analysis and results. This section pays special attention to the features that adopts the discourse of development in these publications primarily by looking at the way they represent the people in poor countries, in rich countries and the NGO.

4. Results and discussion: Analysis of Intermón Oxfam's covers

This section will concentrate on documenting the main visual elements that create the covers of the magazines published by Intermón Oxfam in 2012. We will pay special attention to the most outstanding element in them, and therefore they catch the readers' attention in the first place. There are four covers under analysis. In each case we will present the cover followed by a detailed analysis.

Multimodal text 1. Nº23. Date: December 2011.



Intermón Oxfam's *Revista IO* covers follow a structure that is constantly repeated. At the top of the cover there are normally some small headings in different colours that highlight the main topics that are going to appear in the magazine. At the top there is also information about the magazine number, its periodicity and the date of the magazine. Then, the words "Revista IO" can be observed; they appear in larger font and therefore they are highlighted and below them we find the photograph that takes up the majority of the cover. At the bottom of the cover we can observe the logo of the NGO, placed in the centre.

The most salient elements are the photograph and the acronym "IO", which appears in green, the colour used by this NGO in its logo (in this way it allows the immediate identification between the NGO and publication). It is written in a

larger font than the rest of the written texts that appear on the cover. In this way, the reader's eye fluctuates between the acronym and the photograph.

The acronym "IO" is interesting because it is formed by the initials of the NGO, but moreover, it refers directly to the readers since when reading it, it may be pronounced as I (yo in Spanish and therefore the reader can feel included). In addition, "Intermón" is composed by the prefix "inter", which means between in Latin and "món"⁸ which means "world" in Catalan. This being the case, the name of the NGO seems to appeal to the relationship and unity between all the different cultures in the world.

In addition, Oxfam is an acronym created from Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, which is the organization Intermón associated with in 1997. In this way, Intermón Oxfam appeals to the public from the first page of the magazine. It is important to remember that members receive the magazine at home with the purpose of making them faithful. In this way, the NGO, also, tries to identify with the identity of the different people that support the NGO. In addition, this entity has always emphasized the fact of being understood as a movement that creates citizenship.

If we concentrate on the photograph we can observe two people collecting potatoes in Peru. We get to know this detail thanks to the caption on the next page, which says: "*“Campesinos recogiendo patatas en la comunidad de Acopía, provincia de Acomayo, departamento de Cuzco. Percy Ramírez/IO”*".⁹ The image of the two Peruvians appears in the centre of the page and it is the most salient element. Therefore, the information value of the page is from the centre to the margins: the photograph is the most salient element because it occupies the higher space in the page and it appears highlighted if we compare it with the white colour of the background and the rest of the elements that create the cover are placed in the superior and inferior margins. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p. 196) explain the following: "For something to be presented as Centre means that it is presented as the nucleus of the information to which all the other elements are in some sense subservient".

⁸ The NGO was born in Cataluña.

⁹ "*People picking up potatoes in the community of Acopía, province of Acomayo, department of Cuzco. Percy Ramírez/IO*".

It is curious that the image is not accompanied by any heading, which implies that it can be contextualised without the need for a caption. The caption appears in the following page (note that in the said caption the word used is peasants, “*campesinos*”-with the masculine ending –os in Spanish, but it seems that the people represented in the image are two women). At the top left corner of the page we find the following heading “*Perú. Sembrando esperanzas, cosechando vida*”¹⁰. Once we know the people represented are two Peruvian women, we can join the heading to the image. However, in the cover, there is no graphical resource that is used to connect the two elements. In this sense, it relies on the readers’ background knowledge to associate this heading with the image.

The composition of the photograph employs a vertical axis that divides the page in two parts, the top of the page, the “ideal”, and the bottom of the page, the “real”, following Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, p.186). In this sense, we consider that at the bottom of the photograph, in the section for real information we find the two people that are getting fruits of the land, potatoes, with their effort and work.

Apart from everything said, the two women have been portrayed in a horizontal shot (with as slight low-angle shot to highlight the land), and therefore, it can be considered that there is a shot of equality with the readers (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 139). The fact that the two women had been portrayed in a general shot that gathers the context they belong to can be interpreted as an attempt to place them in their own social and cultural environment. It could be understood as an approach to their daily life.

The people represented are the most outstanding elements because even the background is blurred in order to emphasize them. In addition, one of the woman’s skirt is red and the sun’s light appears on it as a way of highlighting her and, consequently, catching the readers’ attention. Another highlighted element at the bottom of the image is the land since it appears in the foreground. In this way we consider that the image has been taken in a slightly low-angle shot that highlights the land firstly and the two peasants secondly.

¹⁰ *Perú. Sowing hopes, harvesting life.*

In this sense, the photograph tries to establish a relationship between the two women and the land: the idea highlighted is the fact that they are attached to the land, they work it directly with their hands without using any machine and that they are able to survive with their work. In this way, women assume an active role: they are the protagonists of their own development. Moreover, the heading that appears in the cover tells us that women are doing something else apart from working the land: they sow hopes and harvest life.

These ideas that the photograph transmits match with the type of development postulated from the second generation of NGOs. In this way, they try that people from the community working for the NGO become the protagonists and the artifices of their development. One of Intermón Oxfam's goals pays attention to fair trade, which tries to create opportunities for those producers who are disadvantaged in the world market. This cover makes reference to an article in the magazine that speaks about this type of alternative commerce.

Similarly, specialization in a sector, in this case fair trade, is a specific characteristic of the second generation of NGOs¹¹. Moreover, Intermón Oxfam tries to add a gender perspective in their development programmes, which can also be noticed through the presence of women in the cover. Therefore, this NGO is also specialised in trying to palliate the situations of vulnerability that women can suffer facilitating them different things, for example, having access to the land in this case.

The fact that the image is divided in a superior and an inferior shot is also observed due to the presence of different elements (the river and the skyline) that divide the image in the said shot. In this way, in the superior shot we find the context in which women live: a beautiful valley with almost wild nature, where we can find traditional ways of living more attached to the land. In our opinion, this image produces this impression due to the fact of the two women being represented working the land with their own hands, without the help of any machine to help them in their task. In addition, their garments take us to a non-Western context and the readers can easily associate with the robes that are used in some indigenous cultures in Latin America. We need to keep in mind that “[...] las imágenes no son algo externo al individuo pues se crean en

¹¹ This organization also has the characteristics of the third generation of NGOs because, for example, it wants to contribute to the creation of a global citizenship.

la mente del lector y allí se filtra con sus características sociales, etnológicas, etc.”¹², as Martínez Lirola (2008, p.152) explains.

Although women assume an active role, it can be noted that they are portrayed at a certain distance. The cover highlights a far social distance from the public reading the cover, which can create the impression that the human beings represented are foreigners, different to readers (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 138). They do not look at the camera and therefore there is no social interaction with the reader (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 141). They are displayed for the reader. Similarly, they are represented in a generic sense because their facial features cannot be appreciated. In addition, there is a categorization of the people represented by the culture they belong to (it is represented by the way of working the land and by their clothes) and at the same time it is observed an attempt to homogenise them since they are not well distinguished in the image, as van Leeuwen (2008, p. 144) explains: “Cultural categorization is signified by means of Standard attributes, attributes commonly used to categorize these groups”. Moreover, the fact that their dress is non-Western, joined to the features already mentioned, can also contribute to a higher distance from the public that receive this image due to the differences between both cultures.

Multimodal text 2. Nº24. Date: May 2012.



¹² “[...] images are not external to the individual as it is created in the mind of the reader and there is filtered with their social, ethnological, etc. characteristics”.

Multimodal text 2 is a cover with the same structure as multimodal text 1 and therefore the image is not properly contextualised just by looking at it. After reading the caption that appears again in the following page, we can associate the heading “*Guatemala. El derecho a la alimentación*”¹³ with the image that appears in the cover. This says: “*Juana abraza a su hija a la que le han diagnosticado desnutrición crónica. Comunidad de Pamaria, al sur de Guatemala. Pablo Tosco/IO*”¹⁴. The rest of the headings on the cover are on the different actions that the NGO is doing.

If we concentrate on the image, we can observe a woman who holds in her arms a small girl. The caption tells us she is Juana, whose daughter has been diagnosed with chronic malnutrition in Guatemala. As regards information value (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 186), this image shows a superior shot, the “ideal”, and an inferior one, the “real”. In this last section we find a photograph of a form with the weight of the girl, where the hard reality is shown: the girl has an incurable illness due to malnutrition, which is presented by the biomedical knowledge; this will be given maximum credibility by the readers since it is prestigious in society. The weight table contrasts with the heading that accompanies it in the sense that the NGO vindicates its right to feed in Guatemala so that the situations that the graphic shows are not repeated.

As regards the top of the image, we find Juana and her daughter. We consider that ideal information appears in this section since it shows the feelings and sensations that Juana must be feeling due to her daughter’s illness, the sadness she feels for knowing that she suggests and incurable illness. This fact is emphasized because of the graph of weight that is seen in the foreground. The people represented are presented in an oblique position, which is further highlighted by the brown line that seems to be the opening of a door and that contrasts with the white wall that also appears in the image. All these elements are blurred.

The instability that the image transmits and the mother’s lost look seem to be willing to share the confusion and sadness that this mother is feeling at the moment with the readers. We have already said that images are also created in

¹³ “*Guatemala. The right to feed*”

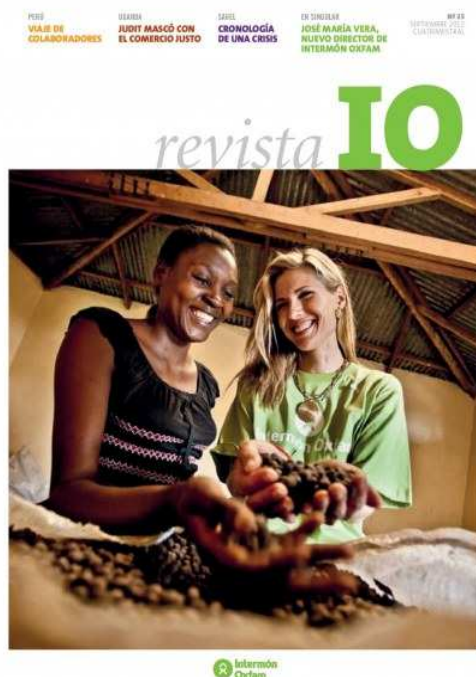
¹⁴ “*Juana hugs her daughter, who has been diagnosed of chronic malnutrition. Community of Pamaria, South of Guatemala. Pablo Tosco/IO*”.

the mind of individuals. In this way, we consider that this photograph may connect Western readers to Christian iconography as it may remind them of certain religious images, such as Rafael's picture *Madona del duque* from 1505.

In this text, people are represented as passive, as victims of a situation of food shortage that this country suffers. They are portrayed as individuals because, although their features are a bit blurred, it is possible to distinguish their faces. Thanks to the caption, we get to know the mother's name, Juana. In this way the problem of not having enough food is personalised, relating to a particular family. It offers the face of the people that need the help of rich countries. However, they are not portrayed in the foreground and they do not directly interact with the readers. Again they appear as passive to be observed by the readers. This can emphasize the fact that they are victims and vulnerable women in a situation that they cannot control.

Their clothes refer to a cultural context different to a Western one and therefore a social distance is created between the reader of the magazine and them. However, this last feature of the photograph can also be interpreted as relating to the intention of Intermón Oxfam of respecting the cultural features of the countries where the NGO works. In this way, it portrays the beneficiaries of their development projects in their own social and cultural context. Moreover, people appear portrayed in a horizontal shot, in such a way that it does not create a situation of superiority between the readers and the people represented in the image (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 139).

González Luis (2006) has pointed out that the dramatic images used by NGOs many times in order to obtain donations have provoked adverse reactions between the receiving public, such as the fatigue of compassion, the loss of credibility in the organization, and the reduction of responsibilities in front of the public opinion. However, we are aware of the difficulties of narrating the dramatic situations NGOs work with without falling into the said dramatism.



Multimodal text 3 shows the same structure as the previous ones. In this cover, the photograph appears in the centre of the page and it is the most salient element. Again the photograph appears with a salient heading that contextualises the visual just by looking at the cover. It is contextualised thanks to the caption on the next page that says. “*Judit Mascó con Agasha Christine, secretaria general de Nyakahita, una de las 13 cooperativas a las que compramos café de comercio justo, en un almacén de grano, en Uganda. Pablo Tosco/IO*”¹⁵. The heading that goes with it is “*Uganda. Judit Mascó con el comercio justo*”¹⁶. In this sense, the cover expresses in a different way, the same idea of the previous cover: it highlights the role of women in the production of raw materials in poorer countries. However, in this case there is an element that makes a significant difference: the presence of the Spanish model Judit Mascó who represents the NGO. She is the protagonist in the information that appears in the magazine, since she is mentioned in the

¹⁵ “*Judit Mascó with Agasha Christine, general secretary of Nyakahita, one of the 13 cooperatives we buy fair trade coffee from, in a bean warehouse in Uganda. Pablo Tosco/IO*”.

¹⁶ “*Uganda. Judit Mascó with fair trade*”.

heading. In the same image we find a representation of a person from a poorer and richer country and the NGO.

If we analyse the image in detail we can observe two patterns of information value following Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, pp. 179-180; p. 186): the horizontal and the vertical. If we concentrate on the vertical shot, the image can be divided between an “ideal” part, the one at the top, and a “real” one, the one at the bottom. In this way, the beans of coffee portrayed in the image represent the real fruit obtained thanks to the work of people in the cooperatives of fair trade, and that is why they appear at the bottom of the image. In this way, it can be observed that fair trade not only makes nice promises but it also implies a tangible result in form of the beans of coffee. We consider that this fact is made more emphatic because the two women represented in the image had the beans of coffee with their hands and they bring them near to the camera.

As regards the top of the image, it shows “ideal” information since we find the smiling and shining faces of the people who are portrayed. In this sense, the image invites us to think that the real and tangible product of the beans of coffee of fair trade produces happiness in the people who cultivate them. Moreover, the women represented are seen with an accomplice attitude and close to each other: Judit Mascó looks at Agasha Christine and Agasha looks at the beans of coffee at the same time. In this way, all the elements in the page are interconnected and the top and the bottom of the page are joined due to the gaze of the women represented. Moreover, the women’s faces are framed by the lines of the roof which contributes to highlighting their faces even more. This line also establishes the division between the “real” and “ideal” part of the information.

As regards the information value of the vertical shot, we consider that, in this image, known information appears on the left, the place where Agasha Christine appears, and new information appears on the right, the place where Judit Mascó is situated. We know Intermón Oxfam works with fair trade cooperatives in poor countries so this information is already known by the readers of the magazine. However, what is novel in this case is that the Spanish model Judit Mascó is cooperating with the NGO. This fact is reinforced by the heading that appears with the photograph “Uganda. Judit Mascó con el

comercio justo”¹⁷ since Judit Mascó is the subject of the phrase. There is an ellipsis of the verb but, if it appeared, the sentence would be as it follows: “Judit Mascó está con el comercio justo”¹⁸ (consequently, fair trade, represented in the image with the beans of coffee and by Agasha Christine) appear in the background.

It can be noted that the model wears a t-shirt with the logo and the colours of Intermón Oxfam, which would even suggest that she works for the organization. In this way, it can be considered that Mascó is a very good representative, a famous face that highlights the help that Intermón Oxfam offers to fair trade cooperatives. But as she does not work for the organisation on a regular basis, she also represents, in a certain way, the population in the richer countries that are committed and that cooperate with NGOs in order to better the life conditions of people who live in poorer countries. The image seems to suggest that people in rich countries can be members of the organization while the people in poor countries are receiving their aid.

The image has been taken in from low-angle in such a way that the social actors represented appear enlarged, as especially with their hands, that appear foregrounded. This is another similarity between this image and the one that appears in multimodal text 1: the raw material is highlighted by appearing in the foreground together with the people who work with it. Although their faces do not look directly at the reader, and therefore there is no direct interaction with this, they have a very close and friendly attitude and the looks are of complicity, attempting to be close also to the readers of the magazine. In addition, women are passive, they are there to be photographed. However, the movement in their hands, very close to the camera lens, creates a certain approach to the public who are going to read this magazine. Social distance is close (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 138). Similarly, there is social interaction with the readers with their gestures (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 141).

It is also outstanding that women are portrayed as individuals since their faces are clearly recognised in the image. In a way, the magazine offers a specific face of people who work for Intermón Oxfam and, in general, to the population in the rich countries (with Judit Mascó) and to the people the organization

¹⁷ *Ibídem.*

¹⁸ “*Judit Mascó is with fair trade*”.

cooperates with (as for example, Agasha Christine). In this way, they are personalized, they appear with their names and surnames, and therefore the projects of the NGO have specific people in charge of them. Moreover, using a public person, as it happens with Judit Mascó, is also a strategy to catch the readers' and the press' attention. In this way, the NGO is associated with the values associated with the model and her presence allows approaching different types of public that, without her would not have been interested by the different causes promoted by the NGO. Similarly, the model is also associated with the values of the NGO.

This strategy of association of public characters and NGOs is becoming quite common. In this case, the trip of the model was covered by the magazine *Yo dona*, and therefore the NGO appeared in at least one magazine. However, this strategy can also have difficulties because not all editors of media accept this strategy.

Finally, it is also important to point out that the image also intends to represent the union between rich and poor countries. The photograph shows complicity between both women and they appear close to the readers of the magazine, in such a way that the photograph suggests that we are all connected by a common destiny. It is necessary to ask ourselves the bases of the said union. In this way, multimodal texts 1 and 3 emphasize productive pieces of work in poor countries. Indirectly, these texts also appeal to the capacity of consumption in the populations in the rich countries where fair trade is promoted. In this sense, the NGO seems to project a division between the poor producers in poor countries and consumers in rich countries, which is also joined to the discourse of development. As Zygmunt Bauman (2005, p. 24) states:

“Ours is a ‘consumer society’ in a similarly profound and fundamental sense in which the society of our predecessors [...] used to deserve the name of a ‘producer society’ in spite of the fact that people have produced since the beginning of the human species and will go on producing until the species’ demise. The reason for calling that older type of modern society a ‘producer

society' was that it engaged its members primarily as producers [...] In its present late-modern, second-modern or post-modern stage, society engages its members [...] in their capacity as consumers. The way present-day society shapes up its members is dictated first and foremost by the need to play the role of the consumer, and the norm our society holds up to its members is that of the ability and willingness to play it”.

The NGO goes deeper into the conception that consumption can be beneficial because it helps poor countries to be developed. Our role and our link with these people are mediatized by consumption and by the mediation of money, and not for example by the belief that all human beings are equal or the necessity of social justice.

In this sense, the idea transmitted by the NGO is that people in poor countries are still producing raw materials and craftsmanship. This refers to the conception of a society that is behind the Western one and therefore it bases its economic growth in work. However, since we live in an interconnected world, the power of Western consumers who lives in a more advanced society is considered essential to “help” those societies. In this way, it appeals to a conscious and solidary citizenship, but it is through consumption that it can help others.

Multimodal text 4. Nº26. Date: December 2012.



The structure of multimodal text 4 continues being similar to the ones already analysed. The main difference is that, instead of a photograph, there are different ones in the centre of the page. We can also observe the word “Gracias”¹⁹ written with the photographs of different people. Inside the letters, this is due to the fact that in this issue of the magazine, the NGO accounts for its actions to its members on the different projects conducted in 2012. In this way, the NGO intends to thank the different people that, with diverse actions, have made possible for them to work on different projects. Therefore, the social actors represented are members, collaborators or voluntary workers of the NGO in rich countries. In this text, again, the images are the most salient element in the cover. However, it is more difficult to specify the information value of each of them since they appear recut and a great part of the context in which the different people are represented is omitted.

It is important to highlight the fact that the different people are represented as individualized people in the foreground, since it intends to highlight the different people that allow that Intermón Oxfam to continue to accomplish its mission. The images are linked to the heading “*Memoria 2011-2012. Qué hemos conseguido*”²⁰ in one of the headings that appear at the top of the page.

In this example, there is not a caption explaining and contextualising the photographs. In this text, we can see clearly the faces of the different people portrayed in the photographs. The only small variation we can find in the visual is in the top right image, where the women represented have been shot from a low-angle. Therefore, their image appears enlarged, but we consider that this is due to the fact that they have tried to portray the logo that they show in their t-shirts and they gather part of the background where the word “Oxfam” can be distinguished and it can be seen part of the logo of the Trailwalker, the solitary race that the NGO celebrates each year.

All other photographs are on an eye level, a shot of equality with the readers of the publication (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 139). The images intend to highlight that the people represented in the visuals are similar to the readers and therefore any reader could also be part of the photographs.

¹⁹ “Thank you”.

²⁰ “Bulletin 2011. What did we get”.

The proximity that is created between the readers can also be observed in the fact that the social actors represented, although they show a passive attitude in front of the camera, they appeal to readers with their looks since they show a positive attitude. Their looks and smiles interact with the readers (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 141).

It is interesting to highlight that in some cases, i.e., the images superior and inferior on the right, the people represented wear Intermón Oxfam t-shirts. It is also of interest that the man who appears in the top left image is placed in an office, which is a context easily associated with Western societies. Finally, it is also significant that the number of men represented is superior to the number of women: there are six men and three women; if we pay attention to the number of photographs, women appear only in two whereas men appear in five.

5. Conclusions

The discourse of development projects a very specific image of the populations of the poor and rich countries and even of the NGOs that follows the said discourse. Consequently, informative publications create and recreate a certain image of them in the reader's mind. As regards Intermón Oxfam, the North is seen as advanced and modern. Moreover, their populations do not devote much time to the production but they are mainly consumers.

Multimodal texts 1 and 3 talk about the benefits fair trade produces to persuade the reader to choose this form of alternative consumption. They appeal to the power that consumers have in society. But, they are mainly citizens that are aware of the problems of the world and they try to offer a solution giving their help to the NGOs. So in multimodal text 4 the organization thanks them directly and displays through images, the different actions that people in rich countries can take to help poor countries (for example, participate in the Trailwalker).

The NGO considers itself as an integral part of the civil society, who is active and solidary at the same time. In this sense, when multimodal text 4 portrays people who have helped the NGO in rich countries, three of them wear the t-shirt of the organization. In addition, the NGO also shows itself as a channel that is able to establish communication between rich and poor countries; this can be seen, for example, in multimodal text 3. The people in rich countries seem to be members of the organization; this is suggested by the fact that they

wear the t-shirt of Intermón Oxfam sometimes. However we have not found any multimodal text showing a photograph of a person of a poor country wearing the t-shirt of the organization.

Poor countries are still victims of situations of shortage and misery. This fact is evident in multimodal text 2. In the case that their inhabitants are represented assuming an active role, this is a productive role of raw materials and craft products, as it is seen in multimodal texts 1 and 3. In this way, the only link that seems to exist between poor and rich countries is a link created by money in the commercial transactions although they are of fair trade. Similarly, Intermón Oxfam shows special interest to portray concrete human beings, for offering a face of the people that cooperate with them (see text 4).

In the same way that van Dijk (2009) establishes the dichotomy we-they talking about immigrants (see section 2), the discourse used by Intermón Oxfam in the magazines under analysis also portrays positive aspects of rich countries and negative aspects of poor countries. For example, in multimodal text 4, the NGO highlights positive aspects of the citizens in rich countries, (they are conscious and joint citizenship) while in multimodal text 2, for example, the NGO gives an image of poor countries rather dramatic. Moreover, in multimodal text 1 the organization provides an image of poor countries being backward in the use of technology. Nevertheless, it is necessary to state that the NGO creates its informative agenda. In this way, Intermón Oxfam needs to inform about the realities with which it works and they are not always pleasant.

Similarly, fair trade is one of its main actions and therefore, it has to talk about this alternative to traditional trade in its magazine. However, the final idea that the readers of this magazine can take with them is that there seems to be no alternatives to capitalism since although this has a human face, as it happens with fair trade, the most primitive economies are going to end up being extinguished to be integrated in the world market.

Consequently, in future articles we will continue deepening in the different ways that the discourse of development places people in the North and in the South, creating a very specific image of them that is moved to public opinion through the media.

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