

**A STUDY ON THE RE-CONSIDERATION OF THE  
DOCUMENTARY FILM TYPES FROM THEIR  
CONTEXTUAL, FUNCTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL  
POINT OF VIEW<sup>1</sup>**

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**Belgesel Filmlerin, Bağlamsal, İşlevsel ve Yapısal Bakış  
Açısı İle  
Yeniden Sınıflandırılması Üzerine Bir Çalışma**

Günümüzün yeni yapılanan toplumsal düzenleri ve iletişimsel ortamları içinde, her kavramın yeniden tanımlanması, konumlandırılması ve sınıflandırılması gereklidir. Ancak, nasıl ki, gitgide karmaşıklaşan yapıları, kurgu ve ifade biçimleri ile sinema filmlerini eskisi gibi kolay bir biçimde belli tür sınıflamalarına sokmak zorlaşmaktaysa, belgesel film türlerinin de eskisinden farklı bir gözle yeniden ele alınması ve farklı ölçütler kullanılarak sınıflanması gerekmektedir. İçerdiği yapısal, bağlamsal ve işlevsel öğeler nedeni ile günümüz iletişim biçimleri arasında özel bir yeri ve önemi bulunan, Belgesel Filmler, sinemanın ilk örneklerinden, günümüz TV programlarına, son yıllarda da yalnızca belgesel izleyicisini hedefleyen TV kanallarına dek genişleyerek yaygınlaştıklarından onların da bu yeni oluşumlar karşısında incelenmesi gereği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmada, son zamanlarda sıkça vurgulanan belgesel film ve sinemanın benzerlikleri ile farklılıkları konusuna değişik bir bakış açısı ile yaklaşılmaya çalışılmış, ayrıca izleyicilerin TV

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programları seçimlerinden yola çıkılarak, ülkemizde nasıl bir belgesel film izleyicisi ile karşı karşıya olduğumuz saptanmaya çalışılmış, belgesel filmin yeni teknik olanaklar ile yapısal, içeriksel ve işlevsel yönlerinin ayrı ayrı ele alınıp farklı oranlarda vurgulanarak nasıl her izleyici tipine uygun bir biçimde yeniden kurgulanabileceği açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır.

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When we look at the TV channels in general we find out that there is much more place for the documentaries than it had been ever before. They are produced intelligently, handled enthusiastically so, these films are watched, respected and easily are addicted to. But there are so many problems, both on the theoretical and practical level. Usually these films are compared to cinema films or misclassified because of their complex natures. They can be used to satisfy the needs of different types of audiences. These films may give pleasure so, they are gap-fillers, and also entertainment material with their magnificent views from all over the world. These are interesting, so, they may serve us as good and sophisticated subjects as well as excellent educational materials. They are highly cultural and social. They may even be competitive enough as to be used in a kind of a puzzle or guessing game style as it is done in BBC. This complexity of the documentaries sometimes may be considered as a kind of handicap or this complexity may be considered as a help to us for selecting the right type of documentary for different types of audience.

The idea of the re-consideration of the documentary types is common in nowadays because

- a) Such a classification is made a very long time ago regardless of today's needs and circumstances. These classifications are heavily on the structural basis of the documentaries neglecting their contextual or functional qualities.
- b) Many new approaches and methods have appeared and frequently being used with the help of the changing and improving technological film making facilities and these brought new types of composing, structuring and transferring of the documentaries.
- c) The possibilities of the co-ordination has developed in national, international and/or supra national fields.

- d) Structuralism, Functionalism, Eclecticism, Hermeneutics, Linguistics, Communication Science, and Criticism are developed and with the help of these new theories and approaches, documentary filmmaking became a new field of application and deep analysis.
- e) Because of the changing cultural structures, a new audience has appeared and thus, new types of documentaries are needed to satisfy the requirements and expectations of this new audience. Documentary filmmaking has the best use of all the possibilities of using the technological, economical and human resources. So, the concept of the re-definition of the documentary and re-classification of the documentary types appeared.

The thing this paper intends to achieve is just to have a look at the structural, conceptual and functional level of documentary to re-classify these qualities.

Compared with the other modern countries, our documentary film making history would be regarded as limited to just a few attempts from the documentary film making point of view. The first appearance of the documentaries in 1885 with the first films seems to be seriously considered only in 1920's just because of the military purposes and these attempts were limited to a few war films made during the world wars. Starting from the 1960's and continuing till today, the attempts are of those people who sacrificed a lot to the field with the help of the sponsors. With the new outlook of the society, new topics and more social and political considerations appeared for the documentary film makers. Thus, new introduction, presentation and practice opportunities appeared. In conclusion, they all affected the product, which is the documentary film itself.

However rich our country is from the point of view of culture, history and nature, it is without doubt that the number of the documentary films made in our country is not enough and it does not appear to be facing the future in a systematic way. For this reason, many ministries, associations, clubs and individuals are working about it and considering the opportunities of the international co-ordinations. Turkey has a rich treasure to make the country to turn into a documentary paradise with the help of these new international co-ordination projects. This paper is an attempt to prepare an outline of the conditions and audience preferences so that the new documentary films are made accordingly.

Although the scarce facilities of the documentary film production in our country, the resources of screening these documentaries are rich. Especially compared with the times when we had a single channel, now with many of the private TV channels, satellite and cable TV possibilities and recent invasion of the computers and internet, we seem to be richer than ever. All these possibilities prepare the background appropriately to make the documentaries to reach to all the levels of the society.

But, under the economical circumstances of the recent years, a product is produced only if there would be a customer for it. A customer who wants it in a certain way, in a certain frequency, and in a certain density. And this customer must be identified before we produce anything for him/her. After the identification of the customer, then comes the identification of the product, such as its type, quality and price, etc. Although, usually documentaries have a unique character preventing them to be used for commercial purposes, nowadays we can see more sponsored documentaries than ever before. The term documentary film connotes with the serious fields such as education, culture, and history but not with entertainment. The private companies, who would like to contribute to their images in the society from those serious points of view, would sponsor the documentary filmmakers to prepare their films.

In such a situation the documentary filmmakers handling the topic would be shaped through the sponsor's image and budget. Willingly or not this shaping affects the documentary itself not structurally or functionally, but ethically.

Although we already had noticed the aesthetic and commercial success of documentaries in cinema, as *Baraka* or *Microcosmos*, mostly, documentary films are consumed by the TV audience. The possibilities of watching documentaries on TV channels are increasing nowadays, thanks to the hundreds of the channels of all kind. Otherwise, the documentary type would be limited to the newsreels in cinemas as it was in the old war days. Although we sometimes can find documentaries in cinemas, TV has a lot to do with the reality of reaching and providing documentaries to the society.

The documentary films of TV channels could be classified basically into two groups as the ones using the documentary films as gap fillers between the main programs and the ones using the documentary films as a goal to reach to their audiences. This second group usually serves as the

hobby channels or intellectual channels of the nations. In some countries, these broadcast usually without advertisements or taking advertisements only on documentary related fields.

In many countries, documentary filmmaking is limited not only by its budget but also by its subject. Most of the subjects of the documentary films are regarded as untouchable since these present an opposition with the current social and/or political aspect of the society and government. As a result, these have the chance of being broadcasted only on certain private channels or not to be broadcasted at all.

In this research regarding the documentaries on TV channels and interpreting the situation in our country the AGB Anatolia evaluation reports are used. One of the greatest research institutions in the world, AGB is measuring the TV audience in 55 countries. Mainly their measurement reports, the other TV channels and cable TV reports are used in this research to see the case of the documentary audience in Turkey. I would like to thank to them for all the help and contribution they provided for my study.

Through its nature, the documentary is audio-visual, conceptual, social, cultural, educational, intertextual, scientific and literary. For some documentaries it is a work of art. For some of them, it is a social questionnaire. The documentary type of films are becoming an inseparable part of the TV channels, so, TV seems to be the vision of the documentary. According to the 1999 AGB TV measurements these are the results.

AGB classified 9 types of TV programs under 34 different titles, and, under these 34 headings, 8870 programs were broadcasted during the whole year 1999. Only 5.73 % of these programs could be classified under the heading of cultural documentary. The other types are considered to be as the following:

Documentary-Cultural: Health/ Service and Education % 1.16,

Documentary-Cultural: History/Literature/Art and Film % 0.84,

Documentary-Cultural: Scholastic / Education % 0.14.

*İLETİŞİM FAKÜLTESİ DERGİSİ/ A Study On The Re-Consideration Of The Documentary Film Types From Their Contextual, Functional and Structural Point of View*

TYPE OF THE PROGRAM	CLASS	NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	%	Total %
CHILDREN CARTOONS	1	511			
CHILDREN-CHILDREN PROGRAMS	1	60	571		
CULTURAL-DOCUMENTARY	2	509		5,73	
CULTURAL-HEALTH/ SERVICE/ EDUCATION	2	103		0,16	
CULTURAL-HISTORY/ LITERATURE/ ART/ FILM	2	75		0,84	
CULTURAL-SCHOLASTIC EDUCATION	2	13	700	0,14	7,89
ENTERTAINMENT-CONCERTS	3	128			
ENTERTAINMENT-EROTIC	3	2			
ENTERTAINMENT-HUMOUR	3	29			
ENTERTAINMENT-MUSIC-ENTERTAINMENT	3	273			
ENTERTAINMENT-TALK SHOW	3	61			
ENTERTAINMENT-THEATRE/ CABARET/ MUSICALS	3	26			
ENTERTAINMENT-TV GAMES	3	41	560	560	
FILMS-FILM FOREIGN	4	2925	2925	2925	32,97
FILMS-FILM TURKISH	4	2423	2423	2423	27,31
MAGAZINES-DAILY	5	27			
MAGAZINES-MAGAZINES	5	68			
MAGAZINES-WEEKLY	5	28			
MAGAZINES-WOMEN	5	40			
MAGAZINES-YOUTH	5	9	172		
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-COMMENT	6	5			
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-ECONOMICS	6	31			
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-MEETING/ DISCUSSION	6	72			

*İLETİŞİM FAKÜLTESİ DERGİSİ: A Study On The Re-Consideration Of The Documentary Film Types From Their Contextual, Functional and Structural Point of View*

TYPE OF THE PROGRAM	CLASS	NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	%	Total %
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-NEWS REPORT	6	53			
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-NEWSCAST	6	275			
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-POLITICS	6	89			
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-REALITY SHOW	6	12			
NEWS/ INFORMATIVE-SPORT NEWS	6	53	590		
RELIGIOUS-RELIGIOUS	7	98	98		
SERIALS-SERIALS FOREIGN	8	184	184		
SERIALS-SERIALS TURKISH	8	286	286		
SPORTS-SPORTING EVENTS	9	274			
SPORTS-SPORTING MAGAZINE	9	24			
SPORTS-STUDIO PROGRAMS	9	63	361		
TOTAL		8870	8870		

*\*Program types and numbers broadcasted in 1999.*

Considering the number of the documentary programs of the 12 TV channels measured by AGB (ATV, BRT, KANAL 6, KANAL 7, KANAL D, KRAL, SHOW, STAR, STV, TGRT, TRT1, TRT2) in 1999, only 509 programs are found out of 8870 total. This number goes up to 700 when we put the other types of documentaries into this classification. Thus the percentage of the documentaries broadcasted reaches up to 7,89%. This percentage seems to be higher than the news-informative programs of 6%, yet, too low when we compare it with the film watching audience percentage of 60,2%.

When we consider the audience profile we see that the participation of the males and females into the watching documentary is equal. 50 % male, 50 % female respectively. The age factor can be summarised as follows. According to these results the documentary audience could be classified easily. These are the members of a little group, mostly educated, middle class, over 45. Usually this is the

definition of the audience that the private cable TV or satellite TV channels are after.

AGE	%
5-11	9
12-14	5
15-19	10
20-34	24
35-44	18
45+	34
TOTAL	100

*\*The percentage of the documentary audience age factor*

The documentary filmmakers and the TV channels arrange their documentaries according the preferences of their target audience and they try to be reachable and interactive all the way. So, the documentaries of these channels are highly popular and satisfactory. Mostly, it is argued that the documentary types of films are educational and so these are appropriate materials for the young people. But, as it can be easily seen from the list of percentages above, the younger the audience is the less they watch the documentaries. This may cause a kind of a paradox for the countries like Turkey in which half of the population is under 18. Then, the question could be presented in a twofold way: the documentary film makers will either wait until this group of audience to grow up and establish their own tastes of documentaries or they will do their best to introduce the documentary type of films as challenging as possible from now on.

In some cases the number of the audience is not that much important. If these people are devoted to documentaries, then, the problems are minimised. In that case, these documentary addicted people consume the entire documentary broadcasted and the goal is reached. In order to analyse this situation, to see how much value the audience gives to the documentaries, all the 1999 programmes are classified from the most watched one to the least watched. According to this list, the audience made his/her first choice of documentary as the 1324<sup>th</sup> preference. Considering the other type of programs, this may be regarded as a very low preference. There is also a difference of preference for the



documentary types. The first historical documentary comes on the 1324<sup>th</sup> and the scholastic education type is left down to the 2443<sup>rd</sup>. One other type of cultural documentary, the health, service and education type occupies the 3214<sup>th</sup> preference. The schedule is very interesting and gives us clues about the importance of documentary in our country from the audience point of view.

It is also easy to see the age and sex differences of the audience. For example, the first choice of males is made in the 1324<sup>th</sup> attempt, while females made their choice as the 1362<sup>nd</sup>. Coming to the 5-14 age group, this choice is made on 1362<sup>nd</sup> preference. For all the three groups the documentary film choices are left to the last rows of the preference list. This kind of a preference list gives us a chance to compare documentary type with the other programs as well as the documentary types with each other.

Apart from the choices they made for the other type of programs, the number of the people joining to these choices is more important than the order of the choice. Considering the number of the audience, we come across with some other facts. Males seem to choose the documentaries in the earlier rows of the list, earlier than the females and 5-14 age group. But the number of the documentary-watching males is less than the members of the other two groups. When we look at the number of the males we see that they reach up to the number of 392.795 at their highest level of watching, but the percentage seems to be low as 2.79%. When we consider the females, the number reaches to 517.687 at their highest participation with the percentage of 3.59 %. The 5-14 age group reaches to the highest level with its 3.79 % but the number of the audience are much less than the others as 158.423. Regarding this high percent of participation, we hope to get larger documentary film audiences in the years to come.

Considering the percentage of the participation, it is hard to summarise the case as the low choice level of the documentaries or as the reluctant preferences. It is low because the preference for the documentary is not high. When we compare the documentaries with the other types of programmes, what we find is as follows.

Audience	First Documentary Choice	Last Documentary Choice	Number of Audience	Percent of Audience
Men	1324	8862	392.795	2,79
Women	1362	8862	517.687	3,59
5-14	1397	8862	158.423	3,79

*\*The table of audience preferences*

- a) The number of the documentaries is less than the other programmes. During the year 1999, in 8870 different programmes of the 12 TV channels, we could find only 700 documentaries.
- b) During the general flow of broadcast of TV, the channels, which do not have any policy of presenting or broadcasting documentaries, have none or few examples. i.e. Channel 6, broadcasted only 3 documentaries during the whole year, just because they don't give importance to this type of programs, and they don't aim that type of audience.
- c) Considering the time the audience watch TV, documentaries took less time than the other programs, such as foreign films. Because of the structure of the documentaries, depending on their policy, the channels spare 5 to 40 minutes for each documentary film, whereas the other programs get much more of that. For example, the films take the chance of being watched at least 80-120 minutes. So, even if it seems that as in the above example the audience watched 20 documentaries equalling 300 minutes and 3 films equalling 360 minutes, the time they spend for the documentaries would be still less than the films.
- d) Documentaries are limited by their types and are expensive to produce. Especially, when the question comes to who is going to watch them, it is not defined perfectly. Thus, sometimes these are repeated in different days and different times of the TV's morning, afternoon and evening schedules. And sometimes through some co-ordinations, the same parts of the documentaries are presented on the different channels. Though it may be assumed to be a boring situation to come across with them again and again, we think, that in this way they have the chance of being watched by most of the audience.

- e) The origin of the documentary film is also important. That is crucial not only from the cultural point of view, but also from the language point of view. Culture could be an important handicap or a motivating factor for the audience. The language of the documentary is also important. It usually depends on who did it. For example, you can come across with some foreign language based documentaries on TRT2 and TRT3. Then it is given in Turkish subtitles way, which could be handled as a kind of handicap for the ones who doesn't know that spoken foreign language and /or who does not bother themselves by reading while watching.
- f) Usually documentaries are used as a kind of filling material among the programs or to be presented at midnight. The documentaries of these channels have never been broadcasted in prime time when everybody watches TV. The following table is useful for us to see the channels and their documentary broadcasting percentage. It is important to note that TRT1 and TRT2 give much more importance to the documentaries than the other channels. The total percentage of the two channels reach up to 64.29% and it is easy to see the governmental support for the documentary films from these figures. These two channels are broadcasting nation-wide and the number of the audience could be more than the other channels.

Channel	Number	Percentage
ATV	33	6,5
BRT	12	2,36
KANAL 6	3	0,59
KANAL 7	55	10,84
KANAL D	18	3,55
KRAL	8	1,57
SHOW	10	1,97
STAR	5	0,98
STV	19	3,74
TGRT	18	3,55
TRT1	135	26,62
TRT2	191	37,67
TOPLAM	507	100

To summarise, not only the economical limitations, but also the limitation of the audience seems to be preventing the documentary filmmaking, broadcasting and viewing. But the channels measured by

AGB are not the only ones, which broadcast documentary films. The major ones, which are not measured by AGB perhaps, have larger percentages. For example, NTV broadcasts any kind of documentaries. The topics may vary from social, historical documentaries to wild nature, travel, and the sectoral types in which the new sectors and their products are introduced. Their documentary broadcasting percentage may be considered as high as 90% or above, apart from their news programmes. Apart from the classical documentary film types, they have also the introductory documentary programs for the institutions such as the army and the police. The documentaries introducing the famous or ordinary people's life style and the others are planned to be shown only in 10 minutes. These short documentaries give importance to the countries, cultures, new products and individuals. Another channel, CNN TÜRK, gives importance to the documentaries too. Introducing the new technological products, new concepts of research, hobbies, new books, antiques and decoration are just a few subjects that are covered by them. Parallel to NTV's policy they broadcast the documentaries in 10 to 15 minutes. Their policy is to give relaxation, information, and education. The programs are originated from foreign countries and translated into Turkish. The Discovery Channel, one of the most favourite among the cable TV audience, gives all its importance to documentaries. New Detectives, Wild Nature, Lonely Planet and many others aim to inform, present, refresh and update the knowledge of the audience and these documentaries are given in a refined way.

NTV, CNN Türk and Discovery channels, use the documentary programs as follows:

- a) In these channels, the documentary percentage is very high - above 90% - and it is equally distributed among the programs. They use the prime time for documentaries, thus each time one chooses one of these channels, it is much more likely to come across with a documentary.
- b) Considering their broadcasting policy, we may say that only 10-20 minutes documentary programs are chosen and these are repeated several times during the same day and the other days.
- c) The documentaries are not divided into parts but they are repeated twice. Thus, not only they provide material to a larger audience, but also these reach to a higher level of documentary percentage.

- d) Except the Discovery Channel, which is all in English, the others broadcast in Turkish and the CD's including these documentaries are sent by the other countries they are co-ordinating with. Sometimes, the verbal native-language could be followed from the background, but these are translated into Turkish.
- e) Taking into consideration the different types of them, these documentaries are not concentrating on a single country or place. They travel the world and they are designed for multilingual, multicultural audiences. In these channels, there is a kind of interaction between the audience and the channels. For example, when the programmers noticed that the audience does not want to watch any more nature and animal documentaries, they did not show it for a while until the desire comes again and now they are increasing the number of this kind of documentaries gradually.
- f) The broadcasters believe that they have already left the times behind in which the audience in the questionnaires ask for more educational programs, requiring more informative programs and they need to comment on the facts but they go and watch magazines or music programs. Now that they know their target audience: middle aged, educated male and female over 45.

Regarding all these, it seems that the channels having much more importance to the documentaries have a larger group of audience. This is reasoned not only because of their different policy towards the documentary broadcasting but also towards the audience profile. It is good to reach to the universal taste.

Identifying the documentary audience type, the re-classification of the documentaries could be handled again. First, from the theoretical point of view, the documentary film making process is accepted to go parallel to the cinema filmmaking. And so are the theories in both fields. First, the exploration documentaries, than, Kino-eye, Grierson's approach, realism, New Realism, Post Realism and the Contemporary Approaches such as French Cinéma Vérité, English Free Cinema, American Direct Cinema. But documentary filmmaking is completely a different thing from cinema filmmaking. When all these theories are reviewed, it is easy to see that they are mainly about how to combine the pictures and images and they have nothing common with the functions of the films. From the early years of the documentary film making to the current days,

documentary films are considered to be the first type of the cinema films but with their new settings, this point of view must be focused on the new properties of the documentary films. All the cinema terminology and theory are transferred to documentary field and no new theories or approaches are brought to this field because it is believed that documentary filmmaking is a part of cinema, a part which gives information without interpretation. But, documentary filmmaking is not the same with cinema. Having all its importance in cinema, the documentary film language has a very different function in documentaries.

Although it struggles to catch the unique and the single one, documentary, also needs to carry what it has to a universal platform and audience. Thus, the language of the documentary is important.

- a) Although the universal audience is targeted on one hand, for the documentary films, it is possible to name a kind of elimination. The elimination of the audience, the elimination of their pleasures, preferences and hobbies as well as their life style and habits, even the language they use could be mentioned. Also, the elimination of the subject of the documentary is important, and the knowledge the audience has on that specific subject of the documentary. It is possible to look for a mutual unseen agreement between the documentary film maker and the documentary film audience: One of the agreed point is that, the documentary should aim to give something extra to the audience, something beyond their level of knowledge but never over their heads. The language of the information is important; it should be given in a certain way as not to offend them as illiterate. The message of it must be comprehensible enough to make them lower their barriers and get the message. If (n) were considered to be the current knowledge of the audience, the documentary would have an informative degree of (n+1) to be successful. The ethics is here in the information part.
- b) The language of presentation is important. As any other film type, the documentary films have two different languages; verbal and non-verbal. It is the verbal language that the documentary is used in its original form. For example, some films are in English, French or Turkish. Although it is mostly desired to reach to the audience in its original form, the documentary needs to be translated into several

languages in order to reach to a larger audience. Ethics is here, in the translation part.

- c) The non-verbal language appears in the form of the composition of the film. The composition language of the documentary is important: because it shows how the documentary handles the event, plot, situation and it is highly stylistic. You can produce many different documentaries having different messages just by using the same raw material. You can form a dramatic structure, a questioning structure, an informative structure or an interpretative structure just by your composition. Ethics is here, in the composition part.
- d) The information gathered in the documentary film needs to be transferred to the audience. The transferring language of the documentary is very important. In some cases, it is full of new concepts, new approaches and applications. So, it is highly inter textual. Cultures, languages, people are all in it. That's why the transferring language must be informative, clear and understandable. Documentary is a unique form in itself but sometimes it requires getting information from the other sources such as medicine, biology, criminology or genetics. Thus, the language of transfer helps everyone to understand the documentary in the best way. The ethics here is in this transfer part.
- e) The visual language of the documentary is important. The language of the single shots and static photographs and how they come together to make up a meaning in the minds of the audience. These technical language tricks, such as close ups, zoom ins, zoom outs, the amount of lights and shadows, low angle, high angle shots, help the audience to understand it better or worse. These are effective in such a way that they may cause the audience to watch the documentary or not to watch it. The ethics is here in the meaning formation part.

Comparing the documentary films with cinema films, we may say that in cinema, we have the characters, event, discourse and society. But in documentary films the elements could be classified in a different way. The subject (topic, theme or context) is one of them. It is structured in a certain way and transferred to the audience outlining a kind of theory. Subject of the documentary requires the interest of the audience. The structure of the documentary reveals the meaning and the informativity of the documentary requires the vision of the audience. The documentaries rely upon the perception of the audience and if the perception is not clear,

than the aims of the documentary could not be reached. This could be shown in the form of a table as below.

CINEMA	LANGUAGE	DOCUMENTAR Y	EMPHASIS AREA
CHARACTERS	<i>PRESENTATION LANGAUGE</i>	SUBJECT	<i>INTEREST</i>
PLOT	<i>COMPOSITION LANGUAGE</i>	STRUCTURE	<i>MEANING</i>
DISCOURSE	<i>TRANSFER LANGUAGE</i>	TRANSFER	<i>INFORMATIVITY</i>
SOCIETY	<i>VISUAL LANGUAGE</i>	THEORY	<i>VISION</i>
AUDIENCE			<i>PERCEPTION</i>

*\* A sample comparison of Cinema Films and Documentary Films*

The functions of the documentary are

- a) aesthetic pleasure, leisure time, enjoyment and relaxation function
- b) cultural and educational function
- c) informative, updating and re-structuring function

It is easy to classify the documentary types according to their topic rather than their function. For example, news documentary, social documentary, and research documentary, educational documentary but in all, we must consider the density factors. Just like the “genres” of the cinema films, in nowadays it is just a mixture of all. For example it may give you an aesthetic pleasure, but also may have an educational and updating function. You may see the murder, love, hate and danger in the few scenes following each other. In this case it is difficult to separate the context from the function. As it is mentioned earlier, using the same raw material it is possible to reach up to the different types of documentaries having the same or different function and context, and each will be a unique one having a unique structure.

The taste and the perception of the viewer of the documentary is very important to its choice, being preferred and watched. To give another example, we may take a documentary about motorcycling or graffiti. The audience may watch it if the topic is interesting for them. But what if these are not the interesting topics, than no one will watch it. There may be some people who are interested in these topics but if the documentary is not prepared in the way to give them what they need, again there is no chance of being watched. For example some part of the audience may



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expect to get information about the applications of it, but not about its history. So, the subject, (topic, theme, context) does not appeal to the audience alone nor the function of it. It is just a part of a long formula. The other parts could be added such as: Interest density, Visual density, Audio density, Language density, Concept density, History density, Information density, Content density, and Interpretation density.

The documentary film watching is considered to be very low when it is compared with the other types of programmes. But what types of documentaries were chosen by this documentary watching audience? To answer the question, the documentaries from the AGB data are taken into consideration regarding the choices of the audience. The documentaries are arranged from the most watched ones to the least watched one and the first 100 of them are classified taking into consideration their subjects. The results are as follows.

*\*The type of the documentaries broadcasted in 1999.*

SUBJECT	GENERAL	REPETITIO N	GENERAL %	TOP 100	MEN'S TOP 100	WOMEN'S TOP 100	5-14 AGES TOP 100
SOCIAL RESEARCH	2	2	0,39	2	2	2	2
SCIENTIFIC	14	17	3,33	2	2	3	1
INDIVIDUAL	36	42	8,25	10	12	11	10
PLANTS	3	0	0,58	1	1	1	1
NATURE	14	20	3,92	4	4	4	4
ANIMAL	26	30	5,89	4	7	8	9
GENERAL	34	43	8,44	12	15	11	12
HOBBY	7	9	1,76	0	0	0	0
INSTITUTION	5	8	1,57	2	3	3	3
CULTURE	31	45	8,84	8	7	7	8
SPECIAL DAYS	8	10	1,96	5	5	5	4
ART	14	18	3,53	2	1	2	3
ADVENTURE EXPLORATIONS	19	28	5,50	8	6	6	8
HISTORICAL	56	69	13,5 5	10	9	9	6
SOCIAL	4	7	1,37	1	1	1	1
COUNTRY	17	17	3,33	7	5	5	7
PLACE	110	144	28,2 9	22	20	22	21
TOTAL	400	509		100	100	100	100

According to these percentages, some considerations about the topic of the documentaries could be made. From the table, it is easy to see that the mostly preferred documentary topics are the ones giving information about the different places of the world. The hobby type of documents are watched the least. The ones about the plants, arts, social and scientific matters are at their lowest rates of preferences. The documentaries about the countries and places have a significance, these may be informing the audience about a city or a region. All the men, women and 5-14 ages preferred this type of documentary much more than the others. The general documentaries and the documentaries giving information about the individuals follow it. Women watch scientific documentaries more than men do. It is interesting to note that the 5-14 age group prefers to watch historical documentaries and the special days documents less than the men and women but adventure and explorations type of documentaries more than them.

As suggested before, re-consideration of the documentaries is crucial, because, classifying them only by meaning, topic, context or function does not imply all the documentary types. What may be regarded as important here, is the way the documentary is introduced to the audience. What kind of density it has in it? What is the percentage of the other density factors included?

In the table below the documentary topics and the different types of density in these films are tried to be given as a schedule to be considered in documentary filmmaking and in defining the documentary film audience. For each documentary filmmaker, this kind of a list may function as an outline to what he will produce. Filling the form, by changing the density percentages of the specific factors, would be resulting in different documentary types for different audiences. Thus, it would be possible to make up or produce just the documentaries the audience requires. The same list could be used by the documentary filmmakers in order to find out what kind of an audience should they bear in mind in the documentary film making process. As the different percentages of each density may result in different documentary types, the different preferences of each individual may result in different audience typologies and expectations. This kind of a table may solve some of the problems. But, as the individuals have different perceptions, tastes and expectations. That's why, both from the point of view of documentary film making and watching the problems may stand still.

*İLETİŞİM FAKÜLTESİ DERGİSİ A Study On The Re-Consideration Of The Documentary Film Types From Their Contextual, Functional and Structural Point of View*

This is meeting the tastes and the requirements of the individuals and as well as meeting the universal standards of documentary film making and watching.

RE-CONSIDERATION OF THE DOCUMENTARIES ON THE STRUCTURAL AND TOPICAL BASE	INTEREST DENSITY	VISUAL DENSITY	AUDIO DENSITY	LANGUAGE DENSITY	CONCEPT DENSITY	HISTORY DENSITY	INFORMATION DENSITY	CONTENT DENSITY	INTERPRETATION DENSITY
SOCIAL RESEARCH									
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH									
INDIVIDUALS									
NATURAL LIFE									
INSTITUTIONS									
CULTURES									
SPECIAL DAYS									
ART									
ADVENTURE EXPLORATIONS									
HISTORICAL									
HOBBIES									
COUNTRIES AND PLACES									

