

## Teaching Literacy through the Visual Arts: From Filmic to Textual Rhetoric

Artemis Katsiaflaka

Efi Papademetriou & Maria Emmanouilidou

### Abstract

*This paper highlights the role of the integration of moving images, among which the film holds a predominant position, in the development of students' literacy skills. Twenty-one sixth-grade students who attend a state primary school in the city of Thessaloniki, northern Greece participated in the study. The materials used in the study consisted of a semi-structured interview, film trailers, film guides, "The Muppets" film as well as texts and images produced by students during the teaching intervention conducted in the language classroom. The data analysis shows that, in spite of the unfamiliarity of students with visual literacy practices in the classroom, as revealed through the pre-test phase, de-symbolization and interpretation skills of kineikonic information were successfully developed along with transcoding skills from one semiotic mode to another.*

**Keywords:** *moving image, de-symbolization/transcoding skills, visual arts, visualization, visual literacy.*

### Introduction

#### *The new semiotic landscape*

The worldwide transportation of financial capital and information leads to the transformation of the semiotic landscape, alongside the breach of the cultural and political boundaries. Inevitably, the development of the new semiotic field follows as a consequence the social, economic and cultural changes globally (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The prevailing issue under discussion, nowadays, is the transition from the "culture of language" to the "culture of image" (Kress, 2003). The proliferation of images in our culture, makes *visual literacy*, namely the ability to consume, "read", critically appraise and produce visual meanings – a vital skill for students and educators (Thibault & Walbert, 2003; Messaris, 2001). The transition to the "culture of image", with respect to the awareness of the rapid socio-cultural changes affecting us as active members of society, result in the redefinition of the meaning of literacy (Felini, 2008). In the light of these developments, research interest shifts from the old-fashioned notion of literacy merely as "reading" and "writing" in the verbal mode to a broader conception to encompass a range of semiotic modes for meaning-making and communication (Love, 2008).

The variety of semiotic modes applied for meaning-making, breaks the myth of the monopoly of oral and written speech as resources in the representational and communicational landscape (Kress, 2005). In this sense, it becomes evident that language loses its dominance as a resource because of the emergence of other semiotic modes, opening the way to a variety of meaning-making possibilities, albeit their restrictions. (Kress, 2003). The diversity of semiotic modes exploited for representation and communication is what the current scientific research

records as multimodality. This emerging landscape implies the formation of a multimodal learning environment focusing on the familiarization of students with a variety of media and communication resources to enable them to develop skills which enhance the understanding, processing and production of various forms of speech including cultural products of multimodal/multisemiotic nature.

*Semiotic Changes: Transformation and Transduction*

It is quite clear that language, is not considered a unique semiotic mode, in spite of the fact that it has been the focus of systematic studies so far. A great variety of modes can serve the purposes of communication just as well depending on the circumstances. There are instances where the image (visual communication) serves our purposes more effectively than the linguistic mode, whereas in other cases language and image can be used to express the same kind of semantic relations, but in a different way. Last but not least, on certain occasions, language is the only possible way for meaning-making as we do not have access to multiple semiotic resources all the time (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

This means that it is possible to come across “collateral damages” while transferring meaning from one semiotic mode to another in the sense that particular terms and meanings cannot be conveyed through another semiotic mode, or cannot be conveyed successfully. This is related to the fact that each semiotic mode offers a wide range of possibilities, but is also subjected to certain limitations in the construction of meaning, as we have already mentioned (Kress, 2010; Kress, 2008; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Therefore, the question that arises is: How does a concept which is conveyed in a specific mode can be articulated in a new mode/s? For example, when describing a picture in the verbal mode, how is it possible to represent the meanings expressed in the visual mode through the completely different categories of the linguistic mode? In other words, is it possible to produce in oral or written speech the content of an image bearing in mind that the appropriate choice of genre plays a crucial role? Given that images do not consist of “words” and writing does not have “depiction”, the transfer of meaning-material from one mode to another involves a long and complete reshaping and recapturing of the material of the mode of image. This process, which is called *transduction*, presupposes a fundamental reconfiguration of what is represented in the sense that we have to choose the appropriate words that would describe as accurately as possible the content of the image (Kress, 2010).

On the other hand, the rearrangement of meaning-material within the same mode, for example, the translation of a novel from English to Greek, is called *transformation*. The transformation involves no ontological change but re-ordering of the elements in a semiotic object. Although transformation does not involve modal changes, it might be necessary to speak of intra-cultural and cross-cultural change in the sense that “*the affordances of modes derive from the interaction of material of which they are constituted (sound, movement, graphic marks, etc.) and the shaping work which a culture performs on that material for what are often very long periods of time*” (Kress, 2008: 97).

In spite of the fact that the school context is in constant demand for transformational and transductional practices, which are likely to increase rapidly, given the potential of the digital media, there are no particular means offering us the possibilities to comprehend the semiotic work of the students.

From this point of view, the present study attempts to investigate the ability of children to transfer meanings from one semiotic mode to another. In our research we focused more on the understanding of how students will be able to rearticulate specific aspects of the meaning conveyed in a film, in a new semiotic mode/s. This was performed by designing and implementing innovative instructional activities that aim at teaching literacy through

critical analysis, de-symbolization, and transcoding of meanings expressed by the categories of the “kineikonic” mode in the entirely different categories of verbal and/or visual mode.

#### *Research Questions and Hypotheses*

The classroom-based study was guided by four main research questions: (a) What is the students’ degree of familiarity with practices of reading, critical assessment and production of images (static or moving)? (b) Is it possible to eventually produce a textual and/or visual equivalent of the kineikonic mode of the film? (c) In which way do students produce verbal and/or visual texts based on the information that is elicited from the kineikonic mode of communication, maintaining, however, the same semantic content? (d) How do students cope with transformative processes by transferring particular content to the parallel type, for instance, the visual?

These research questions are based on the hypothesis that students will be able to transfer audiovisual meanings to other mode/s, aiming at the maximum degree of content coincidence. This means that students will create texts or pictures, which will actually represent specific meanings of kineikonic mode by using the appropriate categories of the “translating” mode/s.

### **Methodology**

#### *Participants*

Twenty-one sixth-grade students who attend a state primary school in Thessaloniki, Greece participated in the study.

#### *Methods and Material of the Research*

The materials used in the study consisted of: (a) Recording of the teacher’s instruction in the language classroom, in order to investigate the level of adoption of visual literacy practices. (b) A semi-structured interview aiming at the investigation of familiarity of the students with visual means, in our case, the film, inside and outside the classroom. During the semi-structured interview questions about the frequency of watching films and their preferences was the focal point. The next step was to examine the students’ ability to produce oral speech through the description and review of their favorite film. (c) Teaching material consisting of film trailers, cinema flyers, “The Muppets” film, snapshots, as well as verbal and visual texts produced by students at different stages of the teaching intervention.

#### *Research Design*

The overall research study is designed on a *pre-test phase*, an *instructional intervention phase* and a *post-test phase* (see Table 1). In particular, after investigating the familiarity of students with visual means inside and outside the classroom, as well as the level of adoption of visual literacy practices on the part of the teacher in the language classroom (*pre-test phase*), we designed and implemented the *teaching intervention* covering a period of two months. The next section provides a description of the teaching intervention. The *post-test phase* consisted of the comparative analysis of the material produced by students at different stages of the intervention to assess the progressive development in terms of awareness of conventions concerning moving images and, by extension, the students’ ability to transform information from one semiotic mode to another.

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Description</b>
Pre-test phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Familiarity with visual means inside and outside the classroom</li> <li>▪ Level of adoption of visual literacy practices</li> </ul>
Instructional intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designing and implementation of innovative activities for “reading”, critical appraisal, de-symbolization and transcoding of visual messages/images</li> </ul>
Post-test phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comparative analysis of material produced by the students in the different phases of the instructional intervention</li> </ul>

### *Classroom Intervention*

The teaching intervention consisted of a series of eight (8) lesson periods of 90 minutes taught by the researcher and spread evenly for over about two (2) months. It included two stages. The first, namely the *Introductory Stage*, was organized around the following four sub-stages: (a) Introduction to the “reading”<sup>1</sup> process of static images-snapshots from five different films –as many as the students’ working groups. (b) Introduction to the “reading” process of composite texts (film guides) in order to highlight the role of the position of the image/s in a spatial arrangement. (c) Introduction to the “reading” process of moving images by viewing the trailer of the film undertaken by each team in the sub-stage (a). (d) Development of transcoding skills of meanings constructed in the visual (static images-snapshots) or kineikonic mode (trailer) into the verbal code through individual text production (film summaries and reviews), followed by group work.

During each one of these stages, we attempted to engage the children in processes of “reading” still images, utilizing a wide variety of activities (see Table 2). “Cinema” was the thematic unit to be taught, therefore, we used film guides and snapshots of films, as a supportive material for our teaching intervention. Regarding this material, we posed some questions to the students, who then proceeded to the reading of images. Accordingly, we did not aim at guiding their thoughts, since the reading of images is a process which is accomplished in an individual and personal way by each student. The content of the questions was related to the description of the displayed images and elicited the decoding of their meanings, that is to say, the de-symbolization of the images on the basis of their colors, shades, angles, close, long shots and so on, and the naming of each image with a suitable title. Film guides were used as a groundwork, because they present words and pictures simultaneously to intrigue the reader. Furthermore, they help students comprehend that the same information is possibly shown by different semiotic modes, for example, visually and verbally. Then, we read the images and texts of film guides to compare the kind of information that can be collected from these two resources. It is worth mentioning that the above practice was the maiden attempt of the particular students in the process of “reading” images.

With regard to the second stage of the intervention, that is the *Main Stage*, two sub-stages were organized: (a) The viewing of “The Muppets” film and “reading” of the central scenes-images to uncover hidden symbolisms of the film targeted at the development of critical attitude towards it. (b) The production of appropriate texts revolving around the summary and review of the film, the sketching of characters, the articulation of visual narrative on the side of the protagonist and the performance of visual storytelling about the character in the supporting role. These verbal and visual texts would be included in the school newspaper insert in order to inform

students about the film and, therefore, urge them to watch it. Table 2 summarizes the phases of the teaching intervention.

	<b>Sub-phase</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>STAGE A</b>	Reading of static images-snapshots	Static images of the animated film <i>"The Beauty and the Beast"</i>	Description, interpretation and critical appraisal of the images.
	Reading of multimodal texts	Film guides	Individual summaries based on the images of the animated film <i>"The Beauty and the Beast"</i> in writing.  Group work summaries based on the images of the animated film <i>"The Beauty and the Beast"</i> in writing.
	Reading of moving images - development of transcoding skills	Film trailers	Film review based on the images and trailers of the films in writing.
	Viewing of the film	<i>"The Muppets"</i>	Reading, interpreting and critical appraisal of central scenes-snapshots of the films.
<b>STAGE B</b> Textualization - visualization of kineikonic mode	The publication of the school newspaper insert that consisted of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Film summary</li> <li>- Film review</li> <li>- Sketching of characters</li> <li>- Walter recounts</li> <li>- Gary recounts</li> </ul>		

*Data Analysis Variables*

The analysis of a sample of the students' images was carried out on the basis of a range of elements. Thus, the students had the opportunity to transform information both within the same semiotic mode as well as from one semiotic mode to another.

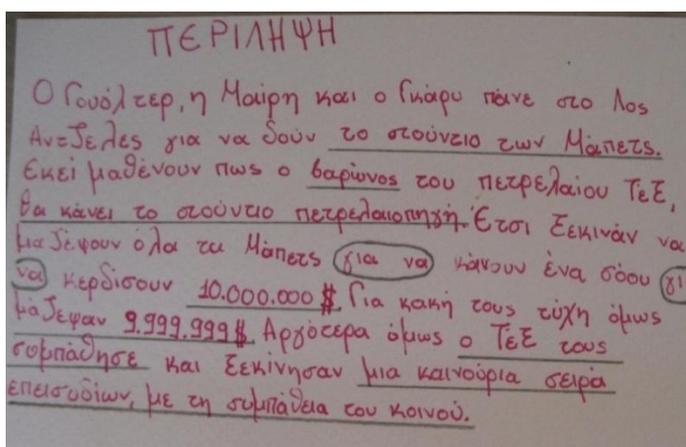
## Results

## Analysis of the students' texts

Group A: "Film summary". After having viewed the film, the students of the first group, were asked to summarize the plot in a succinct and comprehensive manner (see Figure 1). This text conforms to the genre of "recount", as well as to the semiotic logic of speech, since the question that is attempted to be answered through it, is relevant to the following question: "What are the most salient facts/actions and in what sequence do they happen"?

This means that children were trying to re-articulate in writing what was previously represented, through the categories of the kineikonic mode, in the film (movement, sound, frames, scenes etc.). For this reason, students demonstrate the basic facts organized on a *temporal sequence* and *linearly*: **go to Los Angeles to see, they are informed, gather all the Muppets, in order to put on a show, win the prize of 10,000,000\$** (see Appendix A).

Figure 1  
Text 1: "Film Summary"



## Text in English

Walter, Mary and Gary go to Los Angeles to see the Muppet studios. There, they are informed that Tex, the oil tycoon, will convert the studio to an oil well. So they start to gather all the Muppets in order to put on a show and win the prize of 10,000,000\$. However, due to bad luck they collected 9,999,999\$. Later, though, Tex liked them and they started a new series of episodes, which won the approval of the audience.

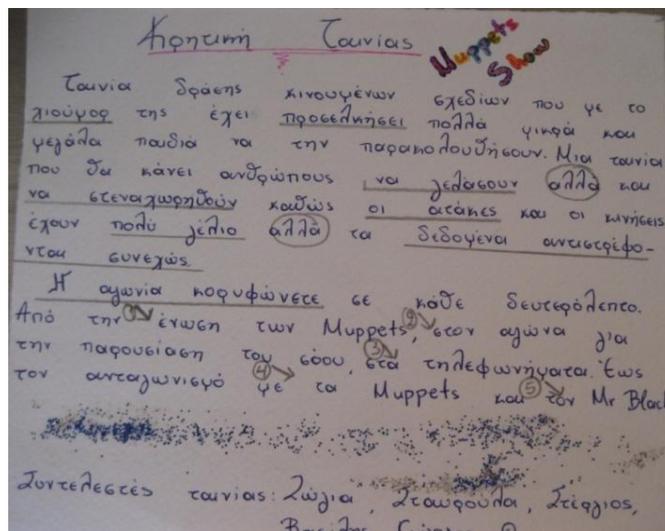
The three main characters are named with accuracy at the beginning of the students' text using their first name. They are related to the other heroes through their actions, represented by verbs, in particular action verbs (for example, *go, do, put on a show, win etc.*). The verbs have grammatical time, indicating the time at which facts/actions happen. Specifically, students use either the *present tense*, to declare facts in progress (in the first half of the text) or the *past tense*, to present the results of the main characters' actions (in the second half of their text).

Additionally, the use of clauses of purpose (**to see, in order to put on a show and win the prize of 10,000,000\$**) is related to the children's attempt to present the characters' goal which is the collection of the required amount in order to rescue the Muppet Studio.

All of the above reinforce the view that the specific options of children are consistent with the conventions of the genre of "recount" and the use of (verbal) mode. In this sense, their options imply a specific way of transcoding of meaning from the mode of the film to the mode of speech. Finally, students give a different ending to the film, compared to what was originally shown, as follows: "**Tex liked them and they started a new series of episodes**". Our assumption is that this is the conclusion that would satisfy them, therefore, they modified the ending on purpose.

**Group B: "Film review"**. In contrast to the first group's text which was an impartial presentation of facts, the second group's text was the "film review" (see Figure 2). This genre required the focus of students on methods of persuasion in addition to the outlining of the plot of the film briefly and concisely.

**Figure 2**  
**Text 2: "Film Review"**



**Text in English**

A *humorous action animated movie which has attracted plenty of young and "older" children to watch it. A film that will make people laugh, but also cry, as their cues and actions are very funny, but the events are continuously reversed.*

*Suspense climaxes every second. From the Muppets' reunion, the race for the preparation of the show and the phone calls up to the competition with the Muppets and Mr. Black.*

Children are of the opinion that the description of emotional situations and behaviors reflect emotional state, which possibly provokes watching the film. This is materialized through the utilization of certain verbs such as, 'laugh' and 'cry' as well as nouns and adjectives, such as, 'humorous', 'cues', 'funny'. The vocabulary that students use, describes the emotional influence of the film on the spectators which is justified by the future tense 'will make people laugh but also cry'. The antithesis of provoked emotions is shown by conjunctions, such as, 'but also' and 'but'. The use of the conjunction 'but' is not a random choice and declares the alternation of the emotions by which spectators will be overwhelmed. Moreover, the conjunction 'but also' connects two starkly opposed

emotional behaviors, the laughter and the cry. Exactly this alternation of the spectators' emotions, which is accomplished by the verbs *'laugh'* and *'cry'*, is a persuasive way through which the creators of the text try to predispose the readers in favour of the film, so that they would like to become part of the magic world of the film and, by extension, the amazing world of Disney.

On the other hand, the reversal of the film flow, which is indicated by the verb *'reversed'* in the phrase *'the events are continuously reversed'*, constitutes the second way that students use to persuade viewers to watch the film. The adverb *'continuously'* intensifies the address to the audience, since it reveals that the reversal of the events will be repetitive and will not happen only once, something which, apparently, renders the movie more attractive and exciting for the viewers. Finally, the continuous reversal of events is reinforced by the sentence *'Suspense climaxes every second'*, which is followed by quoting the most important scenes/snapshots of the film through the use of comma (,), aiming at intensifying the suspense of the viewers.

The synthesis of these features constitutes evidence for the positive evaluation of the film by the producers' of the review, that is, the children themselves. This attitude is expressed by the use of the verb *'attract'* in the present perfect tense, in order to indicate that the film fascinates viewers of all ages. In this way, students try to urge other viewers to watch it, without any hesitation. Among the variety of possibilities provided by the mode of speech, the specific options offered to the creators of the film review, are dictated not only by the genre of film review, but also by the objective of the text and the audience to whom the text is addressed. As a result, whether the (positive) evaluative judgments of the creators will be accepted or rejected by the readers is a factor dependent on the degree of achievement of the purpose of the text, namely, to persuade or discourage the audience to watch the film.

The film review is accompanied by a particularly interesting image (see Figure 3). As we can see this image is divided in two distinct parts by a vertical line. The utmost goal of the creation of this image is to portray the excited and cheerful viewers of "The Muppet Show". Simultaneously, they accept various objects, such as sweets and chocolates, by the Muppets, an element indicative of the cheerful feelings which overwhelm the audience by watching "The Muppet Show".

**Figure 3**  
**Accompanying Image of the Film Review Text**



In this sense, the image on the left is presented as the known information (Given) whereas the image on the right is presented the new information for the "readers" of the picture. In particular, two spectators of the film are portrayed in close shot. Their facial expression shows two people who are excited by the staging of "The Muppet Show". Moreover, they look at us straight in the eyes, thus creating an image of "demand". In other words, the students try to invite the receivers of this image to watch the specific film.

*Group C: "Sketching of characters"*. The presentation of the features and traits of the three main characters, concerning both their external appearance as well as their personality and emotional world, coincides with the textual type of description, which students of Group C use in order to present all the cast in the film (see Figure

4). This means that they adopt specific conventions in order to organize the content of the text, which they strictly comply with.

A variety of adjectives is used to render the features and attributes of the characters. For instance, Walter is presented as *short* with *frisky brown* hair. Also, he is very *loving* and has *pure* feelings. Gary is a *tall, thin, romantic*, and *loving* man (see Appendix B1), whereas Mary is a *beautiful* lady, who is madly *in love with* Gary (see Appendix B2). The options, as far as the presentation of the external features is concerned, indicate the reality, as students rely on what they saw in the film, which they recall while writing of the text. Therefore, this is an objective representation of reality. On the other hand, the options concerning the personality traits of the main characters constitute a subjective representation of reality, in the sense that they are based on what students assume. The “reading” of the characters’ facial expressions, their gestures and their reactions/behavior help students draw some conclusions about them. Undoubtedly, the “reading” of the characters constitutes a decoding/de-symbolization process of the central scenes/snapshots which conceal a symbolic code (see Appendix B3).

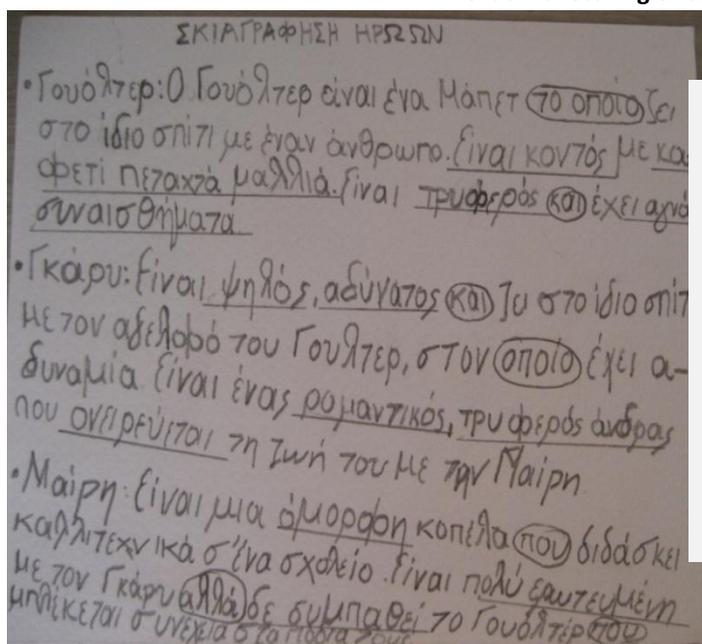
Furthermore, the use of the conjunction ‘*but*’ to outline the character of Mary indicates a conflict of feelings since ‘*she is madly in love with Gary, but she does not like Walter*’. The differentiation between Mary’s facial expression and what she says in the particular scenes, urge students to write the above sentence, thus developing transcoding strategies (see Appendix B3).

Finally, through the relative pronouns ‘*who*’, ‘*which*’, ‘*of whom*’ and the conjunction ‘*and*’, students add to the salience of the protagonists, concerning both their appearance as well as their personality.

In conclusion, it seems that the way the interpersonal meanings are constructed in the different scenes/snapshots, plays a decisive role in how students outline the main characters. The utilization of close shots, the scenes directly addressed to the viewer and the frontal angle of the view of the heroes, are the elements of the film which contribute to the configuration of a familiar and personal relation with the viewer and, therefore, they allow their involvement with the facts of “visual recount”. This involvement becomes obvious through the children’s options in their attempt to “transfer” the characteristics of the main characters from the kineiconic to the verbal mode.

Figure 4

Text 3: “Sketching of Characters”



**Text in English**

**Walter:** Walter is a Muppet .who lives in the same house with a human being. He is **short with frisky brown hair**. He is **very loving and has pure feelings**.

**Gary:** He is a **tall, thin man** and he lives in the same house with his brother Walter, whom he is fond of. He is a **romantic, loving man** who dreams of sharing his life with Mary.

**Mary:** She is a **beautiful lady** who teaches Art in a school. **She is madly in love with Gary, but she does not like Walter**, who is constantly getting in their way.

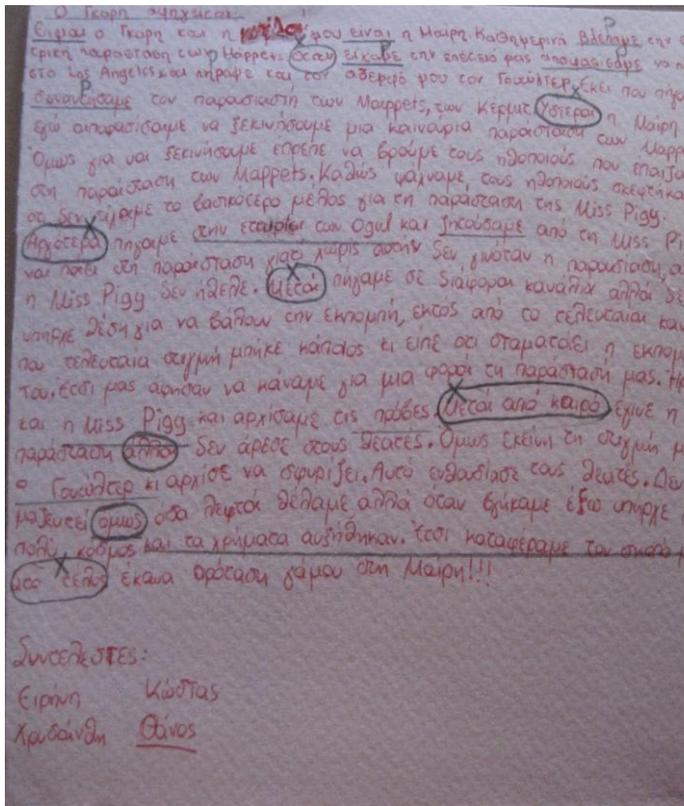
*Group D: "Gary recounts"*. The written version of the visual storytelling relating to Gary (see Figure 5) conforms to the organization of the linguistic mode and the genre of "recount", as well as to the semiotic logic of speech. Students exhibit the basic facts/actions through their organization in a *temporal sequence* and *linearly*. This is indicated by the use of time adjuncts, such as: 'then', 'afterwards', 'after a long time', 'finally', in order to illustrate the transition from one fact/action to another.

The rapid alternation of images in the film, which implies the continuous movement from Given to New information, as well as the conversion of the highly centralized salience of an element in low angle, induce students to choose particular scenes-snapshots from the film in order to facilitate meaning-making during the shift from film to speech, thus causing them to exclude others. Students do not mention some scenes-snapshots although they are significant for the flow of the movie. This is due to the fact that the main actor is not Gary, who is a human being narrating the story, but Walter, who is a Muppet personified. One of the selected scenes, for example, revolves around the curiosity of Walter to see Kermit's office during the tour of the three heroes in the Muppets studio, which finally gives him the chance to obtain useful information for the conversion of the Muppets studio to an oil well, unless the Muppets comply with a term in the contract. The result which stems from the exclusion of some scenes, characterizes the students' text by some kind of conceptual discontinuity between what precedes and what follows [precedes and follows certain events].

With respect to the subject of the verbs, students use the first person singular pronoun at the beginning of the text, signalling Gary's self-introduction, and the first person plural pronoun in order to show Gary's participation in the events along with other heroes. Moreover, the use of past tenses, particularly the Simple Past and Past Continuous, for the recording of events that took place in the past, either once or repeatedly, is a sign of the children's critical ability, since in cinematic language, images are portrayed as present facts. This means that children-spectators perceive the events of the film as if they happened in the Past, determining some temporal limits to the action in the film.

Finally, the use of conjunctions indicating antithesis, for instance, 'however' and 'but' at the end of the text, show the contrast between the expected and the actual outcome of the film. The co-ordinate conjunction 'and' is associated with the addition of new information.

Figure 5  
Text 4: "Gary Recounts"



Text in English

GARY NARRATES...

I'm Gary and my girlfriend is Mary. Every day, we watched 'Muppet Theater'. On our anniversary, we decided to go to Los Angeles and we took my brother, Walter, with us. There, we ran into the presenter of the Muppet show, Kermit. Then Mary and I decided to start a new Muppet show. However, to start the show, we had to find all the actors who used to have a role in The Muppet Show. While we were searching for the actors, it crossed our minds that we had not found the most essential member for the show, Miss Piggy. Later on, we went to Ogul's company and we asked Miss Piggy to go to the show because without her, our presentation would not be complete. However, Miss Piggy did not want to. Afterwards, we visited many television channel offices, but there was no available slot on their timetable for our show, apart from the last one, where at the very last moment someone entered the room and announced that he would quit his show. So, they gave us a chance to present our show ones. Also, Miss Piggy joined us and we started the rehearsals immediately. After a long time, the show eventually took place, but the audience did not like it. But, at that moment, Walter entered the scene and started whistling. His action excited the spectators. However, we did not manage to collect as much money as we wanted, but when we went outside, a lot of people were waiting for us and the amount of money increased. So we reached our goal. Finally, I asked Mary to marry me!!

Group E: "Walter recounts through drawings". The depiction of the central scenes of the movie in drawings by the children of the fifth group also conforms to the semiotic logic of the visual mode (see Figure 6). The first drawing, presents us with the three main characters, namely, Mary, Walter and Gary. However, Walter seems to be the main "participant" that attracts the viewers' attention and this is obvious for three reasons. First, Walter is portrayed in a close shot (in comparison to the two others), so the reading of the specific image is more likely to start with him. Second, Walter is the only character that is presented as a coherent whole (his entire body is portrayed). Third, he is located in the center of the drawing and the two other characters look at him. The colors that stand out in the drawing are vivid and warm. For this reason, this image fills its receivers with pleasant feelings.

The second drawing is a scene in which a bus is portrayed. The bus symbolizes movement and the journey to Hollywood studios. Therefore, the specific picture is highly informative and provides evidence to us concerning their destination and their means of transportation. No "participants" are portrayed in this picture since this is unnecessary on the grounds that we have already been informed of their presence in the first picture.

The third drawing is a scene in which Kermit the frog is depicted in a very active role. In particular, we can discern the electrical fence of Kermit's house and Walter, who is unconscious, because he has touched the electrical fence. In fact, these are two snapshots of the film, incorporated in one picture by the students, who want to highlight the presence of Walter in Kermit's premises, therefore, they locate him in the center of the picture and

even Kermit's hand points at Walter so as to signify the blending of the two snapshots. The creators of this picture use the symbolic code of colors to transfer their messages. For example, the blue color is used for the electrical fence. Generally speaking, the colors that are used are dark, so as to enhance the mystery atmosphere surrounding the premises.

In the last drawing, students want to give us more information through all the potential semiotic modes. This is achieved through the use of the symbolic code of music, namely notes, to indicate something which is really significant in the film, since the "Muppets" incorporates image, music and sound. Something that enhances the significance of this symbolism is the fact that the music played in their show is their means to attain their goal.

Figure 6  
"Walter Recounts through Paintings"



### Discussion

The data analysis shows that although students are not very familiar with visual literacy practices in the classroom, as revealed through the pre-test phase, they manage to develop de-symbolization and interpretation skills of kineikonic information, as well transcoding skills from one semiotic mode to another.

The transfer of meaning from one mode (kineikonic) to another (language/writing) requires the re-articulation of meanings represented through visual categories and conventions of the moving image. As a result, the conventions of the frame, the discontinuous organization and alternating changes or categories of moving images, sound, music, and movement were transferred in conventions and categories of the verbal code (see Table 3). It is obvious that the children attempted to produce in writing and in the appropriate genre, a conceptual equivalent of the kineikonic mode of the film.

**Table 3**  
*Modal Transcodings*

Mode		
Kineikonic	Linguistic	Visual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• movement</li> <li>• sound</li> <li>• dialogues</li> <li>• distance(shot)</li> <li>• angle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vocabulary</li> <li>• grammatical-syntactical categories (<i>nouns, action verbs, tenses, clauses of purpose, temporal sequence of actions and facts in linear arrangement, adjectives, subject of the verbs</i>)</li> <li>• conjunctions (<i>adversative, temporal, connectives</i>)</li> <li>• relative pronouns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• color</li> <li>• size</li> <li>• position</li> <li>• distance</li> <li>• height\</li> <li>• perspective</li> <li>• shape</li> <li>• shades</li> <li>• symbolic code</li> </ul>

The children were asked to answer the following questions: (a) What are the possible options that were developed after the initial assumptions concerning the original film? (b) What needs to be present and what to be excluded in the re-configuration of the kineikonic portrayed? The answer to these questions lies in finding the appropriate words, grammatical and syntactical categories that are inextricably linked with the selection of specific aspects regarding the meaning of the film. Additional options, could absolutely have been made by other transducers. For example, where in the kineikonic mode there was a close shot to ensure the direct address to the viewers and, therefore, their involvement in the events of the film, children are now in the position to make suitable linguistic choices, depending on the opinion they have formed about the characters. For instance, in the text concerning the sketching of the characters, they point out: "She [Mary] is madly in love with Gary, but she does not like Walter" in order to illustrate the intention of the film maker. This means that their options are motivated choices and arrangements of semiotic affordances/resources in the linguistic mode for the creation of newly articulated meanings/signs so as to reflect particular contexts, issues, and goals deriving from the interests of the "authors" and the use of the semiotic code that complies with the requirements of the social environment including the audiences that they are addressed to.

In addition, the processes of interpretation and de-symbolization were conducted in diverse ways by each student and group, demonstrating that meaning-making of each scene-image was the outcome of the reading of the film as a whole in connection with the emotional reactions and preferences, beliefs, social status or prejudices of the viewers. Thus, it constituted a socially and culturally determined process.

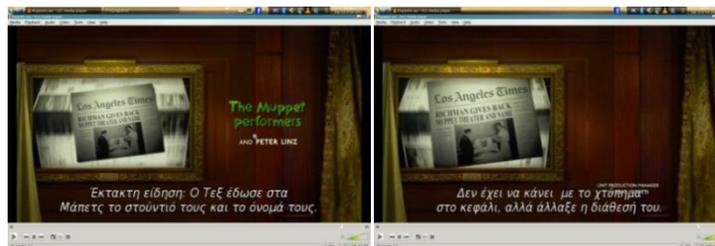
These findings entail a bright prospect for incorporating moving images in educational practices, especially in teaching literacy as an effective tool providing students substantial support both in their preparation as active and critical "readers" of visual stimuli, as well as in the cultural process of textualization.

## References

- Felini, D. (2008). Crossing the bridge: Literacy between school education and contemporary cultures. In J. Flood, S.B. Heath & D. Lapp (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching literacy through the communicative and visual arts* (vol. II). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. (2005). *Thinking about meaning and learning in a world of instability and multiplicity*. Paper presented at the Redesigning Pedagogy: Research, Policy, Practice Conference. National Institute of Education, Singapore.
- Kress, G. (2008). Literacy in a multimodal environment of communication. In J. Flood, S.B. Heath & D. Lapp (Eds.), *Research on Teaching Literacy Through the Communicative and Visual Arts* (vol. II) Lawrence Erlbaum: New York.
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.
- Love, K. (2008). Literacy across the school subjects: A multimodal approach. In L. Unsworth (Ed.), *Multimodal Semiotics: Functional Analysis in Contexts of Education*. Continuum.
- Messaris, P. (2001). *New Literacies in Action, Visual education*. Retrieved April, 24, 2012 [http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit\\_index.asp?HREF=/newliteracies/action/messaris/index.html](http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_index.asp?HREF=/newliteracies/action/messaris/index.html).
- Thibault M. & Walbert D. (2003). Learn NC. Reading images: An introduction to visual literacy Retrieved from <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/675>

<sup>1</sup> At all stages of the intervention where “reading” images (static or moving) was required, the educationally modeled metalanguage formulated by Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) was adopted.

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B



Appendix B1: *He is a romantic, loving man.*





Appendix B2: *Mary: She is madly in love with Gary.*



Appendix B3: She doesn't like Walter

