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The Perception of Representation in Visual Graphic Language

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Abstract

This paper addresses an interesting field of communication, namely visual graphic language. The principles of this special communication language (visual graphic language) are presented in a case study that highlights graphic visual perception of the subjects regarding some representations explained in this article. This research paper follows the understanding of the proposed representation by the case study subjects, which are illustrated through charts and percentages that explain how they perceived and translated these graphic representations. Future research will focus on the subject's ability to represent themselves new graphic representations, starting with those proposed by the authors of this article.

Keywords: Perception, visual graphic language, graphic comparative study, representation.

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1. Introduction

According to the principles of forms psychology (Gestalt psychology), the perceptual experience is not made up of fragmented and separate sensory elements, and then combined by an associative process, but it is made up of a global whole, organised in a certain structure with a certain meaning. Gestalists highlight that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and deem the meaningful value of objects through their formal and structure intrinsic properties. According to Gestalt psychology, the perception of an object or phenomenon is based on the principle of simplicity that any visual image tends toward the simplest configuration available to the visual sense, under certain specified conditions according to K. Koffka (1935).

On the other hand, you cannot overlook the fact that perception, as a higher form of sensory knowledge, is an expression of personality, mind-sets, habits, prejudices, by processing the information received.

It is also a closeness between the subjective phenomena of visual perception and the theory of aesthetic empathy. Empathy is the ability to design our feelings, emotions and attitudes in lifeless (inanimate) objects. Formal qualities of objects can thus be interpreted as symbols or expressions of our subjectivity.

Any graphical form is at the same time an optical phenomenon and a form of communication, the aesthetic composition obtained should stand out through proportionality, contrast, rhythm, colour, graphics and text.

The perception of a graphic message is influenced by relationship between form and substance (contrast of brightness, colour, saturation, and texture), direction and suggested movement, according to M. Zlate (2006).

The shape, as a positive form and active, must be highlighted through contrast of background: negative and passive. To create the illusion of depth in the two-dimensional space on a sheet of paper, the perspective view is used.

An important part in graphic design is the use of symbols. Humanity has included in the visual language primitive icons (elementary representations of objects) and pictographs (representation of concepts or ideas). Each culture used a complex system of signs and symbols that allowed members of communities to communicate. A certain cultural area can decode and understand a graphic language, but it is limited in content and shape.

The meaning of symbols can vary from one geographical area to another, depending on social status, religion, ethnicity, etc.

2. Surveys

In a world where information has become an essential dimension of existence, the predictability of human behaviour was imposed as a necessity in social research. One way to know the public opinion is through a survey, which appeared from the desire to predict the voting behaviour, but has greatly spread its scope to other areas of society.

The origins of this method of research are related to the American psychologist and sociologist, George Gallup. In 1928, he presented his PhD thesis 'An objective method for determining readers interest in the content of a newspaper'. The views (opinions) in this thesis were implemented during the general elections of 1934 (the idea of studying opinions on representative groups through direct questioning of the public) according to G. Gallup (1981).

Any survey involves four main phases:

- Project phase – research project comprising: establishing ground investigational operationalisation of the subject, building survey, establishing and building up the sample population, budgeting expenses and time needed research.
- The data collection phase – pre-test questionnaire, training of field operators, applying itself questionnaires.
- The phase of the data processing and statistical analysis.
- Research report.

For a survey/poll we need an instrument of questionnaire. Preparing a questionnaire is not as simple as is commonly believed. Pairing the questionnaire with the researched subject involves primarily the operationalisation of the subject, namely finding relevant indicators for what we want to measure. Divide the researched object into dimensions and sub-dimensions that characterise it (to define it), then select from these those we consider the most relevant to what we want to know, and in the final stage, to build indicators to estimate as accurately as possible the dimensions of the researched object. These indicators are represented through questions in the questionnaire (Adir, Pascu & Adir, 2015).

The subjects' responses are centralised in a database. Data processing includes building of new variables or multidimensional indicators. It involves operations of encoding/recoding the responses, sorting the answers and transforming indicators in other indicators.

Data analysis involves validating the test sample and testing the internal consistency of the data, production of descriptive and statistical results (frequencies, average values) or the type of indicators: correlation, association, etc.

Polls are extremely useful for understanding social reality.

Based on the principles that define a survey we intend to apply the concept of graphic visual perception for students to see how they analyse the graphic representation.

3. Case study

The case study was conducted based on the test below, which was answered by 15 students from UPB:

'Choose for each type of logos below, the domain area of some businesses. Check the logo that you consider most expressive for the firm and explain in a few words the connection between the activity and the chosen logo'.

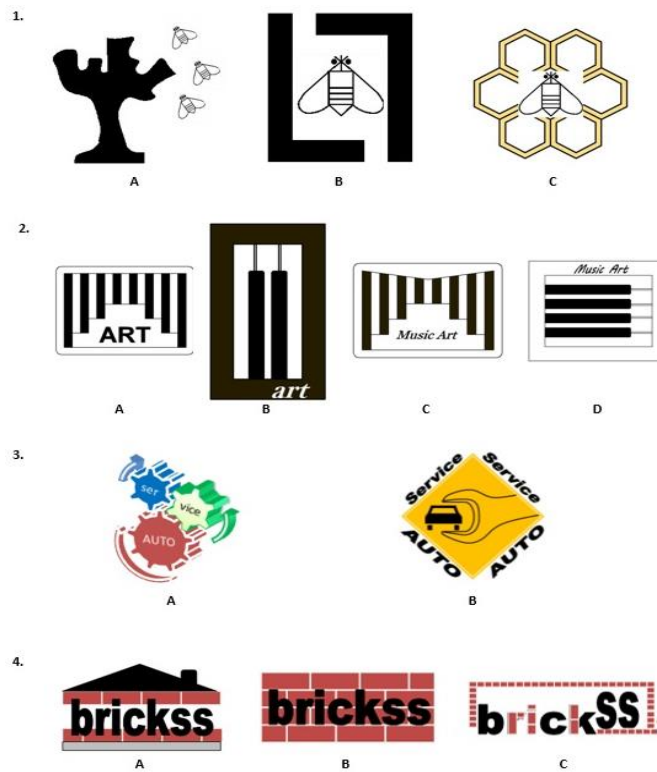


Figure 1. Case study

After analysing the survey data, the following results were obtained:

3.1. Company with honey-bee products

Table 1. Logo honey-bee products

Subjects	A	B	C
1			1
2			1
3		1	
4	1		
5			1
6			
7		1	
8			1
9			1
10		1	
11			
12		1	
13			1
14			1
15	1		
Total	2	4	7



Figure 2. Chart for logo honey-bee products

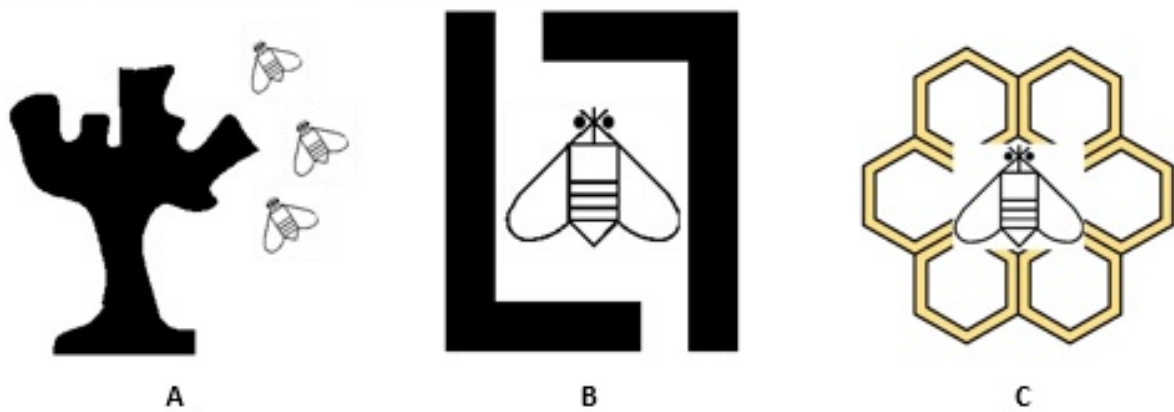


Figure 3. Logos for honey-bee products company

The chart shows that subjects chose the logo for the honey-bee products company as logo C, motivating that it clearly expresses the type of activity, is easily distinguishable and that the honeycomb and the bee represents the company products.

3.2. Company for musical instruments

Table 2. Logo shop for musical instruments

Subjects	A	B	C	D
1		1		
2				1
3		1		
4	1			
5				1
6			1	
7		1		
8				1
9	1			
10		1		
11		1		
12				1
13				1
14			1	
15				1
Total	2	5	2	6

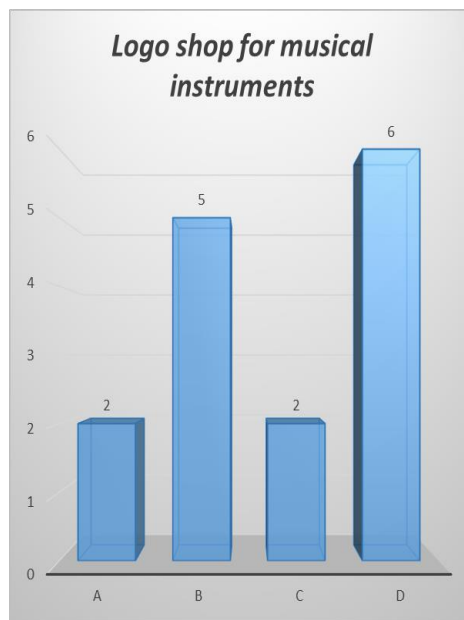


Figure 4. Chart for music instruments shop

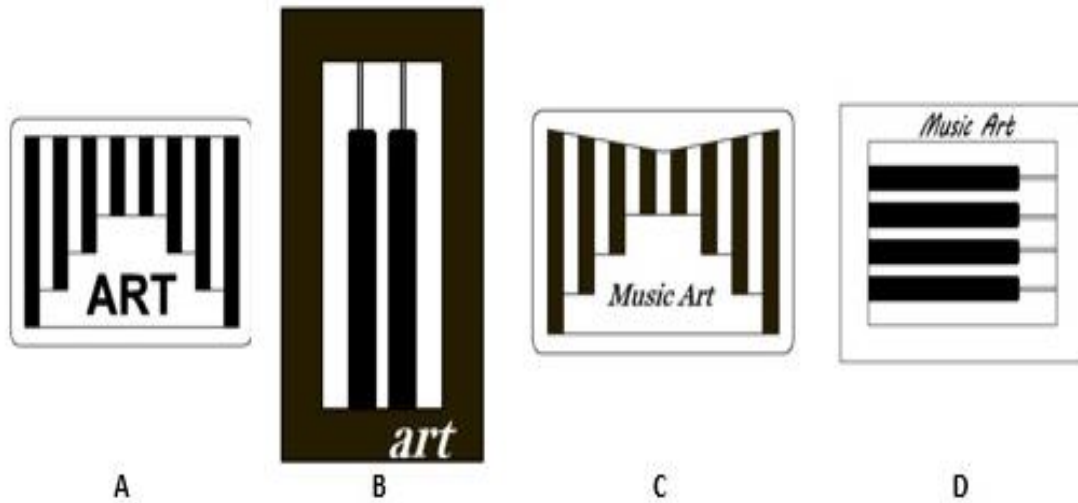


Figure 5. The logos for music instruments shop

After centralising the data, we see that there is very little difference between logo B and logo D. The subjects motivated that logo B inspires quality because of the clear and long lines, and that D logo is concise and clear because it has written 'Music Art' and the piano symbol.

3.3.Auto repairs

Table 3. Logo auto repairs

Subjects	A	B
1		1
2	1	
3		1
4	1	
5		1
6		1
7		1
8	1	
9	1	
10		1
11	1	
12		1
13		1
14	1	
15		1
Total	6	9

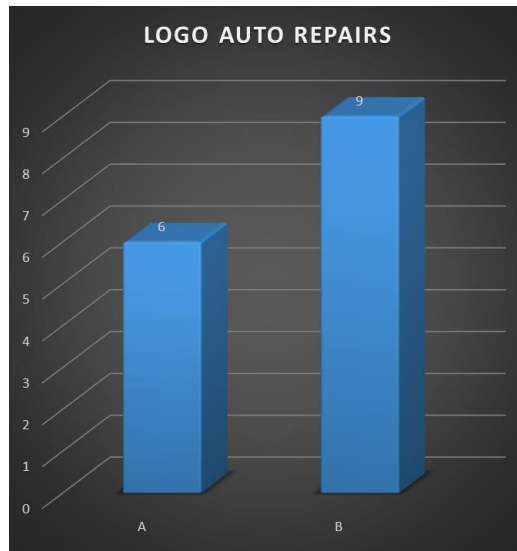


Figure 6. Chart for auto repairs logo



Figure 7. Logos for auto repairs

After analysing the data, we see that students have chosen logo B as representative of a car service, because the tool and the car symbols in the logo indicate that it is a car repairing shop, not just for repair and maintenance of motors or drivetrains as is understood from logo A.

3.4. Construction company

Table 4. Logo for construction company

Subjects	A	B	C
1		1	
2	1		
3			1
4	1		
5		1	
6		1	
7	1		
8	1		
9	1		1
10			1
11		1	
12	1		
13	1		
14	1		
15		1	
Total	8	5	3

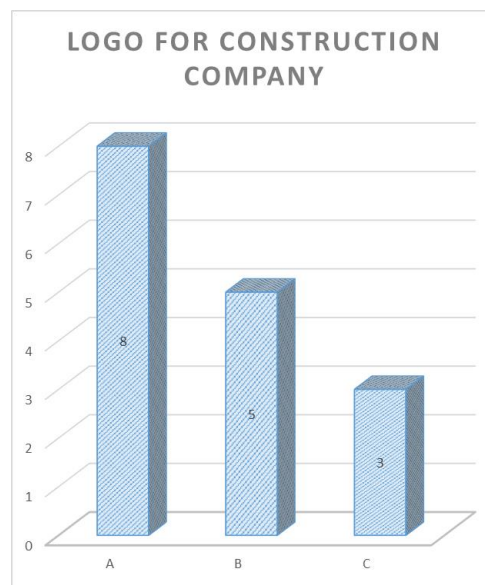


Figure 8. Chart for construction company logo

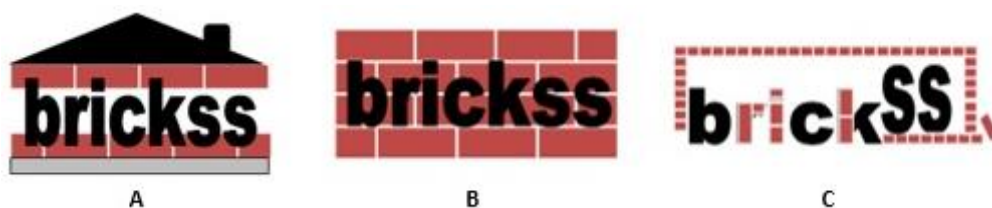


Figure 9. Logos for construction company

In the chart in Figure 9, you can see that the first logo was chosen because the graphical representation is clear, has the shape of a house and inspires stability and incorporates very well the shape of a house.

4. Conclusions

Following the case study, we conclude that the perception of graphical representations is easy when the logos are simple, clear and are known by the subjects, from which they managed to create connections between the things they know and they use every day and the simplified graphic representation of these things.

Representing a logo with many details leads to loss of essence (core), complicating its understanding by the subjects and its representation on a small scale does not allow understanding the desired message being conveyed.

The use of shapes and colours that are not in accordance with the specifics of the company for which the logo is created detracts from understanding it.

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