

UDC 811.111'38:070

DOI <https://doi.org/10.17721/fovia.philologica/2021/2/3>

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To cite this article: Marina, O., Shatilo, D., Shylo, P. (2021). Manifestatsii multymodalnosti v suchasnomu anhlomovnomu khudozhnomu dyskursi [Manifestations of multimodality in contemporary anglophone artistic discourse]. *Folia Philologica*, 2, 23–32, doi: <https://doi.org/10.17721/fovia.philologica/2021/2/3>

MANIFESTATIONS OF MULTIMODALITY IN CONTEMPORARY ANGLOPHONE ARTISTIC DISCOURSE

*This article suggests the analysis of artistic forms as multimodal construals being formed in integration of verbal, visual, and auditory semiotic modes in contemporary Anglophone artistic discourse, namely the Eurovision 2021 Song Contest (Manselkin performance) and the animated movie *The Croods: A New Age*. Multimodality paradigm serves as a predominant theoretical and methodological framework of the research that itself testifies to the topicality of the study. The paper views multimodality as integration and combination of various modes in contemporary Anglophone artistic discourse. The aim of the article is to reveal ways and means of artistic forms construction, as well as their interaction in the discourse under scrutiny. Methods to analyze visual mode of the constructed forms represented by colors in Manselkin performance on the Eurovision stage include computer-assisted methods, namely a special software Image color summarizer. It suggests descriptive statistics for an image, determining the average color saturation and the most representative colors in the image. Further interpretation of the gained results is conducted by means of using thesauri of symbols and psychology, which foster inference of colors' symbolic senses. Then, the findings of the visual mode analysis are combined with the ones received due to componential, textual, interpretative, and stylistic analysis of the verbal mode applied in both case studies. In Manselkin performance verbal mode is represented by the song lyrics featuring metaphors and other stylistic means combined with three consecutive color stages each with its prevailing color scheme as a manifestation of the visual mode. On the one hand, the color images used in Manselkin performance complement and enhance the senses encoded in the verbal component. On the other hand, they restrict possible interpretations of it. Gradual interchange of dominant colors in combination with audio-visual, kinesthetic, and verbal images expresses the persona's implicit attitude towards the world, society, its rules and nature. The research findings show that multimodal forms constructed in the animated movie *The Croods: A New Age* are of paradoxical character. It is revealed in visual and verbal modes. For instance, colors of animals are unnatural, they do not coincide with the animals' natural colors in reality. The same can be stated about the characters' names and behavior. Interaction of visual, auditory, and verbal modes produces paradoxical worlds and characters.*

Key words: multimodality, multimodal form, multimodal construal, paradoxicality, Eurovision Song Contest, animated movie, integration of modes.

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Бібліографічний опис статті: Маріна, О., Шатило, Д., Шило, П. (2021). Маніфестації мультимодальності в сучасному англомовному художньому дискурсі. *Folia Philologica*, 2, 23–32, doi: <https://doi.org/10.17721/fovia.philologica/2021/2/3>

МАНІФЕСТАЦІЇ МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНОСТІ В СУЧАСНОМУ АНГЛОМОВНОМУ ХУДОЖНЬОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

У цій статті пропонується аналіз художніх форм, як мультимодальних конструктів, що формуються у результаті інтеграції вербального, візуального та авдіального семіотичних модусів в сучасному англомовному художньому дискурсі, зокрема в дискурсі пісенного конкурсу Євробачення – 2021 (виступ гурту Maneskin) та в анімаційному фільмі «Сімейка Крудсів: Нова ера» (2020). Теоретико-методологічним підґрунтям дослідження слугує парадигма мультимодальності, що засвідчує його актуальність. У статті мультимодальність розглядається як інтеграція і комбінація різних модусів в сучасному англомовному художньому дискурсі. Метою статті є виявлення способів і засобів конструювання художніх форм, а також їх взаємодії в аналізованому дискурсі. Виступ гурту Maneskin на сцені Євробачення – 2021 у ракурсі візуального модусу конструйованих мультимодальних форм, репрезентованого палітрою кольорів, аналізується за допомогою комп'ютерного програмного забезпечення *Image color summarizer*, що надає статистичний звіт кольорообразів, який включає середній показник насиченості кольорів, домінуючі кольори тощо. Далі інтерпретація отриманих результатів відбувається завдяки методу словникових дефініцій, що дають змогу вивести символічні смисли кольорів. Вербальний модус в обох випадках досліджується із застосуванням компонентного, інтерпретаційно-текстового та стилістичного аналізу.

У виступі гурту Maneskin вербальний модус маніфестовано текстом пісні, в якому функціонують метафори та інші стилістичні засоби, в комбінації з трьома послідовними сценами з різною кольоровою гамою (візуальний модус). З одного боку, візуальні кольорообрази доповнюють та підсилюють смисли, заковдані у вербальному модусі. З іншого – обмежують його можливу інтерпретацію. Поступова зміна домінуючих кольорів у комбінації з аудіовізуальними, кінесичними та вербальними образами виражає імпліцитне ставлення ліричного героя до світу, суспільства та природи.

У дослідженні визначається, що мультимодальні форми, які конструюються в анімаційному фільмі «Сімейка Крудсів: Нова ера» є парадоксальними. Це виявляється у візуальному та вербальному модусах. Наприклад, кольори тварин є неприродними, вони не співпадають з кольорами тварин у реальному світі. Аналогічний стан справ спостерігається з іменами героїв та у їх поведінці. У результаті взаємодії візуального, авдіального та вербального модусів конструюються парадоксальні світи та герої.

Ключові слова: мультимодальність, мультимодальна форма, мультимодальний конструкт, парадоксальність, пісенний конкурс Євробачення, анімаційний фільм, інтеграція модусів.

This article employs multimodality paradigm as a predominant theoretical and methodological framework that itself testifies to the **topicality** of the study. Recent research and publications in the area of multimodality show that multimodal-

ity studies have travelled a way from Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics, social semiotics (1978) to a highly diversified field of research (Wildfeuer et al., 2019). Its heterogeneity is realized, at least, in two perspectives. Firstly, location

of multimodality at the intersection of various disciplines, where its theory and methods are applied along with the field-specific ones, among which are linguistics, media studies, sociology, psychology, digital humanities, computer science, artificial intelligence, etc. Secondly, a wide range of products treated as multimodal and, thus, requiring relevant tools for analysis. Scholars emphasize on linguistics making a perfect and fruitful match with multimodality, referring to it as linguistic multimodality, or multimodal linguistics (Bateman, 2008: 38-57; Wildfeuer et al., 2019: 41-68). In other words, it highlights various instances of multimodal communication essentially involving language.

This article views multimodality as integration and combination of various modes, i.e. culturally and socially shaped semiotic resources, in various types of discourse. Here, contemporary Anglophone artistic discourse is in focus. Namely, we analyze manifestations of multimodality in contemporary song contests and animated movies. The **aim** of the article is to reveal ways and means of artistic forms construction, as well as their interaction in the discourse under scrutiny.

The **results** and **discussion section** of the article suggests the analysis of artistic forms as multimodal construals being formed in integration of a number of semiotic modes, particularly, verbal, visual, and auditory (The Eurovision 2021 Song Contest, and the animated movie *The Croods: A New Age*). On the one hand, each mode has its meaning-making potential, or affordance in multimodal parlance. On the other hand, it is their linking in discourse that fosters multimodal meaning making aimed at creating a certain communicative effect.

Multimodal Forms in the Eurovision 2021 Song Contest. This section of the article analyzes manifestations of multimodality in the Eurovision 2021 Song Contest held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Predominantly, it represents a case study of *Zitti E Buoni* by the Italian band *Maneskin*, the winners of the contest.

The Eurovision Song Contest, which was first held in 1956, is an international song competition organized annually by the European Broadcasting Union (In a nutshell, n.d.). Its performers from across Europe represent literally every genre of popular music and are selected at the national level by each participating country's public broadcasting service (Eurovision song contest, 2021).

From the very beginning the contest was one of the earliest attempts to broadcast a live televised event to a large international market. Contestants were originally evaluated by a jury of representatives from different countries, who awarded points for each performance (Eurovision song contest, 2021).

Nowadays, it is the world's longest running international TV contest, with over 66 years of history. Around 200 million people across Europe and the world watch it on TV every year (Facts & figures, n.d.). These are not only the songs themselves that make this particular song contest so popular and spectacular, but also the whole performance which, in turn, is created by various combinations of semiotic modes, or resources. These modes are both verbal (song lyrics) and non-verbal (including visual, color, and kinesthetic modes), which convey essential symbols, messages, and ideas embodied in every contestant's multimodal performance.

Methods and **techniques** to analyze color schemes, constituting a visual mode of multimodal forms, presented on the stage within the Eurovision song contest 2021 include computer-assisted methods, namely application of a special software *Image color summarizer* (Image color summarizer – RGB and HSV image statistics, n.d.). The latter suggests "descriptive statistics for an image", namely represents the average color saturation, the most representative colors in the image, as well as pixels, and histograms. Further interpretation of the gained results is conducted by means of using thesauri of symbols and psychology, which foster inference of colors' symbolic senses. Then, the findings of the visual mode analysis are combined with the ones received due to componential, textual, interpretative, and stylistic analysis of the verbal mode.

Zitti E Buoni by the Italian band *Maneskin*, the winners of the contest, is, definitely the first example to analyze.

Within the performance three consecutive color stages can be outlined, each with its prevailing color scheme (Eurovision Song Contest, 2021). The software analysis shows that color palette during the first stage (Fig. 1) consists of 50% black and gray, tuna color and 50% gray rose (Fig. 2).

However, since it is mixed with the colors of heliotrope and magenta, it might convey additional meanings of *universal harmony* and *emotional bal-*



Figure 1. The first stage of the Eurovision performance of *Zitti E Buoni* by *Maneskin*






cluster	pixels	name	HEX	RGB	HSV	LCH	Lab	tags
	40.61%	0, 0, 231 vivid blue ΔE=1.7	#1D09EC	29 9 236	245 96 92	31 124 306	31 73 -100	vivid bluebonnet persian pure rich blue indigo
	21.91%	3, 10, 167 cobalt blue ΔE=3.1	#1909A2	25 9 162	246 94 63	20 92 306	20 54 -74	strong cobalt duke midnight new phthalo zaffre blue
	19.48%	3, 7, 100 darkblue ΔE=2.0	#060362	6 3 98	242 97 39	9 65 306	9 38 -52	deep dark arapawa darkblue paua persian blue
	16.35%	1, 2, 3 rich black ΔE=1.2	#040306	4 3 6	248 44 2	1 1 296	1 0 -1	cod rich woodsmoke black grey
	1.65%	139, 150, 231 light phthalo blue ΔE=4.6	#9397E0	147 151 224	237 34 88	65 41 293	65 16 -37	light phthalo blue

Figure 2. Cluster colors of the first stage of the performance of the song sized by number of pixels

ance. It emanates *passion, power* and *energy* of red restrained by introspection and quiet energy of violet (The color magenta, n.d.). In combination with the verbal mode represented by the song lyrics, this color produces a certain impression on the audience, namely constructing the image of *calmness before storm*.

After that, the second stage follows (Fig. 3), bringing the color clusters of 50% of very reddish brown and 50% of deep vivid and crimson red (Fig. 4). In comparison with the previous color clusters, it conveys quite aggressive and domineering, rebellious and resentful energy (*The color red*, n.d.-a).

Interpretation of this visual image of color is supported by the verbal image of the lyrics and non-verbal image of body movements, the way of dancing, to be more precise, which

contributes to the creation of a powerful kines-
thetic image.

Moreover, red represents energy. It stimulates physical energy levels, increases heart rate and blood pressure, as well as prompts the release of adrenalin. It symbolizes action being fast moving and promotes a need for action and movement. Standing for desire, it relates to physical desire in all (The color red, n.d.-a). Crimson tint also indicates a determination to succeed and emits sensuality rather than sexuality (*Color psychology – The Meaning of Colors and Their Traits – Trade Show Best Practices by PRO Expo*, 2017).

This bright red color scheme is used both to convey and reinforce the main themes of the song: *rebel, chaos* and *frenzy*. They are actualized in the verbal layer of images in the lyrics: *Now I'm kicking these doorways, In my house there's no God, I am out*

of my mind, but I'm not like the others etc. (*Måneskin – Zitti E Buoni* (English Translation), n.d.). All these figurative expressions are based on metaphor (with *out of my mind* as a trite metaphor) to convey the idea of dissimilarity from others, readiness to take action, as in *kicking these doorways* – to finally release from stereotypes and live the way one wants it. In this sense, red color, can be also interpreted as a natural power of fire – destructive and unstoppable flux, which is especially relevant if one takes into consideration the genre of the song – rock music. With contempt and disdain for the existing order which is shown in the lines *If you wanna stop me try again, try cutting my head off* (*Måneskin – Zitti E Buoni* (English Translation), n.d.) one's spirit is as subversive as that fire.

Finally, red changes into deep blue (70%) in combination with black gray (30%) (Fig. 6). Dark

blue in the final stage (Fig. 5) balances the overall image of the performance: in general, it is considered to be cool and calm (The color blue, n.d.).

Taking into account the preceding red color and fire it might symbolize, the blue color in this context might be interpreted as a symbol of *extinguished fire*, and, thus, as a sign of *moderation, confidence, power and integrity* (The color blue, n.d.). In combination with the lines from the lyrics *Unfortunately people talk, they talk, they don't know what they talk about* (*Måneskin – Zitti E Buoni* (English Translation), n.d.) it might also symbolize the persona's rather conscious attitude towards people and humility with and acceptance of their true nature. It can also be treated as disappointment as the lines proceed as follows: *Bring me where I float, cause I lack air here* (*Måneskin – Zitti E Buoni* (English Translation), n.d.).

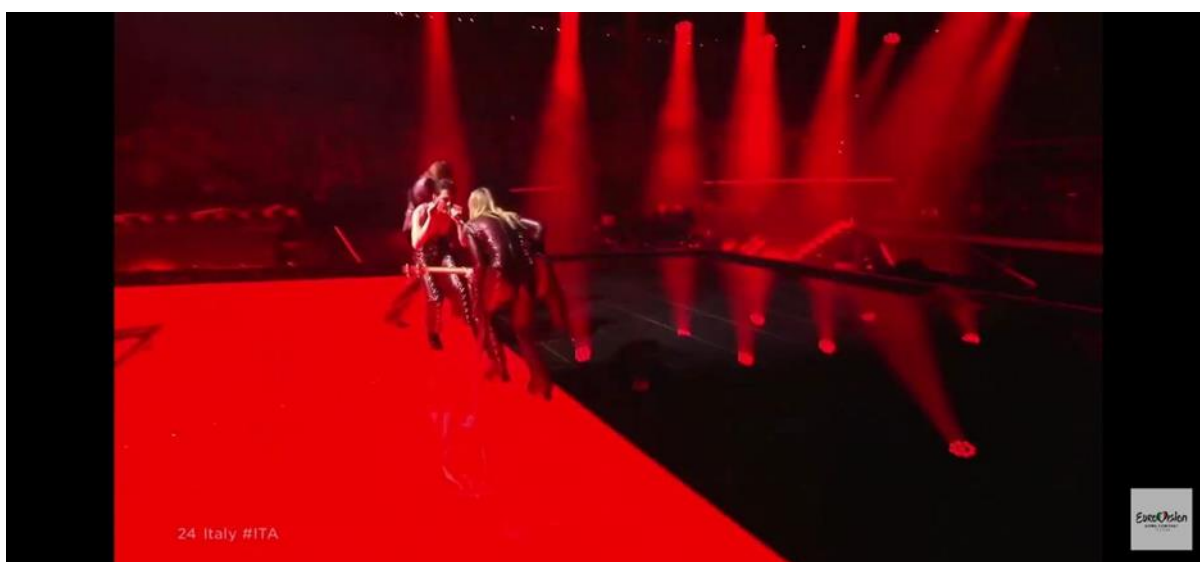


Figure 3. The second stage of the Eurovision performance of *Zitti E Buoni* by *Maneskin*

cluster	pixels	name	HEX	RGB	HSV	LCH	Lab	tags
■	35.04%	8,8,8 grey ΔE=2.0	#0C0505	12 5 5	2 62 5	2 2 22	2 2 1	asphalt banjul cod maire rich black grey
■	20.96%	229,0,0 red ΔE=1.2	#E50004	229 0 4	359 100 90	48 96 39	48 74 61	deep vivid cadmium ku scarlet crimson red
■	18.35%	59,9,16 aubergine ΔE=3.4	#35090F	53 9 15	351 84 21	9 24 18	9 22 7	aubergine sepia black
■	13.83%	89,0,11 deep amaranth ΔE=1.7	#5B060F	91 6 15	354 93 36	17 42 29	17 36 20	deep amaranth reddish brown
■	11.83%	146,0,10 sangria ΔE=2.3	#8F040D	143 4 13	356 97 56	29 64 36	29 52 37	deep dark berry maroon sangria scarlett tamarillo crimson red

Figure 4. Cluster colors of the second stage of the performance of the song sized by number of pixels

Analyzing the verbal image further, the original title of the song *Zitti E Buoni* is literally translated into English *as keep quiet and be good* (Månéskin – Zitti E Buoni (English Translation), n.d.). This phrase is widely used in Italian families for parents to remind their children of the manners they should follow to be well-behaved (Genius | song lyrics & knowledge, n.d.). However, from stylistic perspective, the title might be considered as a case of verbal irony based on antithesis, contradiction, and paradoxicality. Logically, an individual should behave as it is stated in the title. However, the song lyrics proves exactly the opposite, since the title's words are incongruous with the persona's intent and the main message of the song, that is, a call for action and protest.

Manifestations of Multimodality in Animated Movies: A Case Study of *The Croods: A New Age*. Discourse of animated movies is qualified as multimodal as it combines a number of semiotic modes,

among others, visual and acoustic ones. The latter are of mobile character, i.e. both form and content of this or that mode change throughout an animated movie entering into various combinations being involved in meaning-making process. This section of the article analyzes paradoxical multimodal forms constructed in the animated movie *The Croods: A New Age*, which make viewers think outside the box (Семейка Крудс: Новоселье, 2022).

Today, non-stereotypical, deviant, impossible, unexpected or contradictory phenomena constructed in various genres of artistic discourse are viewed as manifestations of cognitive and discursive category of paradoxicality (Marina, 2018). Following the train of thought of this article, we consider different paradoxical forms with their meaning-making power as multimodal construals incorporating different semiotic modes. Here, we focus on visual and verbal modes interaction. Generally, paradox as one of the paradoxicality cate-



Figure 5. The third stage of the Eurovision performance of *Zitti E Buoni*

cluster	pixels	name	HEX	RGB	HSV	LCH	Lab	tags
	31.04%	128, 106, 127 labyrinth ΔE=2.7	#766E83	118 110 131	263 16 51	48 13 306	48 7 -10	fedora labyrinth mamba mobster purplish rum storm topaz waterloo grey
	23.30%	87, 76, 94 chapta and verse ΔE=3.7	#484759	75 71 89	254 20 35	31 12 301	31 6 -10	dark and berlin chapta grape grayish gun mulled powder sapphire verse warlord wine blue indigo
	18.70%	8, 8, 8 grey ΔE=1.3	#070609	7 6 9	257 31 3	2 1 301	2 1 -1	cod rich woodsmoke black grey
	16.70%	175, 168, 188 abbey road ΔE=2.1	#AFA4B7	175 164 183	274 11 72	69 12 312	69 8 -9	abbey chatelle lola magentaish pastel road siesta vision grey purple
	10.26%	238, 232, 235 magnolia ΔE=2.7	#EFE8F1	239 232 241	288 3 94	93 5 319	93 4 -3	amour chelk magnolia prim selago soft solitude tutu lavender peach

Figure 6. Cluster colors of the third stage of the performance of the song sized by number of pixels

gory manifestations is defined as a situation or statement that seems impossible or is difficult to understand because it contains two opposite facts or characteristics (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022).

So, in animated movies paradoxicality is revealed when visual, auditory and/or verbal representation of characters, time and space of the virtual world etc. do not comply with the state of affairs in the real world. What is more, treating this or that form as paradoxical, predominantly, depends on individual perception. In other words, existence of paradoxicality and how striking, as well as evident it is, depends merely on viewers and their brain's ability to be flexible and adaptable. It is worth noting that a variety of paradoxicality manifestations in animated movies stimulates viewers' intellectual activity.

In the animated movie under scrutiny paradoxicality is realized in two main facets, i.e. characters and virtual world constructed in integration of verbal, visual, and auditory modes, represented, among others, by a number of artistic details.

Here, we focus mostly on the visual mode enhanced by sound and script referring to auditory and verbal modes correspondently. The visual mode includes colors, movements, shapes, and behavioral patterns that one can observe in the real world. The auditory mode embraces soundtracks and background noises, as well as characters' intonation. In terms of the verbal mode we consider some characters' names.

The animation is set in prehistoric times. It is aimed at both children and adults. Among others, the movie attracts the audience by bright colors sometimes used in unusual combinations and species. In terms of the visual mode, some animals are of unusual colors. Namely, pigs are green and pink, dogs and birds are blue. Such phenomenon may be seen as paradoxical and can be explained in terms of the Stroop effect. The latter is considered as human tendency to experience difficulty naming a physical color when it is used to spell the name of a different color. The measurement of delay in brain's response is used in clinical psychology to discover brain flexibility as well as in filmmaking to avoid sticking to stereotypes and boring final product (Ruhl, 2020). In other words, viewers have difficulties recognizing a real animal, because unusual coloring activates dissonance in their minds. Children can even not understand which animal was meant to be there or recognize it much later than adults.

In the animated movie Croods' pets are the brightest characters. They are: Belt, three-toed sloth, who has red fur with a peach-toned face, big turquoise eyes, and hangs around Guy's waist with his long arms acting, true to his name, as a belt. Belt loves helping Guy with things and emphasizing certain moments like adding a "*Dun dundaaa homie!*" to intense moments or if something bad is about to happen. Belt is one of a few speaking animals in the movie. His murmuring is difficult to treat as words, but intonation speaks for itself.

Another pet, that is several times bigger, is Chunky, whose breed could be defined as Macawnivore, also known as death cat, a relative of the Saber-Tooth Cat (Fig. 7).

Despite the name of its species, Chunky is very soft and tender. It adores being petted and looks incredibly curious, especially when tries to fit in the lift with the whole family. In the movie we consider the image of this predator as paradoxical because of its size and proportion of head and body. What is more, it serves as a vehicle and belongs to Grug, Eep's father. Its fur is rather colorful, even unnatural, as well as an ability to climb high walls and sound of a racing motorcycle for stunts when Eep is pressing the 'pedals' and riding it as a bike.

One more pet that cannot be forgotten is Douglas, a crocopup that is a reptomammal resembling a cross between a dog and crocodile. Thunk, Eep's brother, makes him his pet. So, this animal does not produce any danger, only looks like a dedicated playful doggy. (Category: Animals | The Croods Wiki | Fandom, 2022)

In order to reveal paradoxicality manifestations in the analyzed movie we should be familiar with the plot. The first prehistoric the Croods family sets off into the world in search of a safer place to call home. Soon they discover an idyllic walled-in paradise that meets all their needs, but their problems are not fully solved, because another family already lives there: the Bettermans. (The Croods: A New Age | Movie Site | Available Now on Digital, 2/23 on 4K Ultra HD, Blu-Ray & DVD, 2020)

The first thing to wonder is the existence of walls in prehistoric times. Moreover, the Bettermans, who built the place seem to know about the advances of modern world, because they do farming, wash dishes, use lifts, suspension bridges, sauna, have shower and even WC. All of that causes dissonance not only for the Croods, but also



Figure 7. Visual Representation of Chunky



Figure 8. Visual Representation of Thunk

for viewers as all of that must have been impossible at that time.

The Crood, who is the most impressed by technologies, is Thunk. He resembles a couch potato as he watches window like TV all the time since he gets into Betterman's home (Fig. 8).

The boy even forgets about Douglas and stares at the window even at night. Once he is not inside anymore, he feels bored and loses the interest to life. The thing that safes him from depression is just a frame, through which he watches the world

being outside. It is called "travel window", and once Thunk has it in his hands, he calms down in his complaints and there is an instrumental sound that shows relief and peacefulness. It resembles one of those sounds that people listen to when meditate these days. Such situation is seen as a funny one, because it is based on incongruity between the existing things and their correlate in the movie. Still, viewers are also given food for thought as every funny moment has to deal with existing social problems.

Conclusions and Prospects for Further Exploration. The analysis of the artistic discourse under study shows high density linking of verbal, visual, and auditory modes of the constructed multimodal forms. Both cases demonstrate enhanced workings of the visual mode represented by colors, namely bright ones, which attract viewers' attention and govern their interpretation of the multimodal forms.

In *Maneskin* performance verbal mode is represented by the song lyrics featuring metaphors and other stylistic means combined with three consecutive color stages each with its prevailing color scheme as a manifestation of the visual mode. On the one hand, the color images used in *Maneskin* performance complement and enhance the senses encoded in the verbal component. On the other hand, they restrict possible interpretations of it. Moreover, gradual interchange of dominant colors contributes to making all audio-visual, kinesthetic, and verbal images more dynamic and this interplay of colors as such also creates the sense of its own.

Namely, it expresses the persona's implicit attitude towards the world, society, its rules and nature, which changes to the end of the song.

In turn, the research findings show that multimodal forms constructed in the animated movie *The Croods: A New Age* are of paradoxical character. It is revealed when visual, auditory and/or verbal representation of characters, time and space of the virtual world in the animated movie do not comply with the state of affairs in the real world. For instance, in the visual mode, colors of animals are unnatural, they do not coincide with the animals' natural colors in reality. The same can be stated about the characters' names and behavior. Interaction of visual, auditory, and verbal modes produces paradoxical worlds and characters.

Further analysis of multimodality manifestations in artistic discourse should focus on kinesthetic mode adding to overall multimodal meaning making, as well as on determining communicative strategies used by the Eurovision Contest producers and directors, as well as animated moviemakers.

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