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## Scripta Manent

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## **WHO'S WHO IN A COURT: A MULTIMODAL EXPLORATION OF BOOKLETS FOR CHILDREN AND UNDER-18S**

### **Abstract**

Children and under-18s who are called to testify may require specific support and reassurance from adults to face the stressful experience of giving evidence. To help them and their families, in the 1990s British governmental bodies and voluntary organisations joined efforts to publish booklets known as the Child Witness Pack and the Young Witness Pack. This paper presents a study on a corpus of five booklets developed on the example of these two Packs. In particular, the study focuses on the 'Who's who' section, where readers are presented with information on the persons they may encounter in court. The aim of the paper is twofold: first, to explore how the visual and the verbal components of these multimodal texts interact to contribute to knowledge mediation, which must take into account the readers' cognitive development stage and emotional involvement, and second, to investigate the explanatory strategies used to introduce a young audience to legal terms.

**Keywords:** knowledge mediation, legal terminology, multimodal texts, children, explanatory strategies, emotional involvement

## 1 Introduction

Giving evidence in court is a stressful experience for anyone, but the level of stress and anxiety caused by attending court (or giving evidence in a different way) in child and young witnesses may be even higher and require special support. In the 1990s, various governmental bodies in the United Kingdom (Home Office, Lord Chancellor's Department, Crown Prosecution Service, Department of Health, Office for Criminal Justice Reform, Department of Justice Victims of Crime Fund) and the leading children's charity NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) joined efforts and resources to develop the so-called Child Witness Pack, published in 1993, and the Young Witness Pack, published in 1998. These Packs consisted of booklets containing written and visual information, cardboard models of courtrooms, and video recordings in DVD format. Most of these materials were targeted at child and young witnesses and were developed for different age groups (e.g. children aged 5-9 years and young people aged 10-15 years), whereas some were addressed to adults who were expected to be in close contact with child or young witnesses, i.e. parents and carers, and child witness supporters.

The creation of these Packs was underpinned by the idea that children and young people would feel more confident and equipped to give evidence in court if they understood the judicial process and their role in it (Gersch et al., 1999). Therefore, the main aim of the Packs (and of the later materials developed on their example) was to explain the witness's role, rights, and duties in court proceedings, as well as the procedural phases, to child and young witnesses. This required the authors of the booklets to make a conscious effort to be able to mediate legal knowledge effectively – an effort that leaves its traces in the linguistic and visual resources used in the booklets – and make it suitable for an audience that differs from the drafters in two respects. On the one hand, child and young witnesses are at a different stage of cognitive development and are expected to have less experience of the world in general and of the judicial system compared to the authors of the booklets. On the other hand, given their role in the judicial process, they are also expected to feel a strong emotional involvement with the process of giving evidence, while the authors are emotionally detached from it.

After the publication of the 'original' Child and Young Witness Packs, other materials were developed along the same lines to provide practical information and help children, young people, and their families prepare for court. These materials mainly include booklets, which are the subject of this paper, DVDs, videos, and cartoons.<sup>1</sup> This paper presents a corpus-driven study of five booklets developed on the example of the 1990s' Child and Young Witness Packs. Despite its admittedly limited generalisability due to the size of the corpus and the territorial applicability to UK countries only, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of "asymmetric communication" (Cacchiani 2018, p. 119) between experts and young laypersons, i.e. children and under-18s.

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1 See, for instance, Victim Support's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvhpKH0B5T-FUnz4WKKkKbDhA> and NSPCC's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/nspcc>. Last access: 6.2.2020.

## 2 Aims and scope

For children and young people to better understand what they are about to experience, they need to be exposed to legal knowledge that is reformulated and recontextualised (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004) to meet their needs. In recent years, children have rightly received increasing attention as a separate target audience of knowledge mediation with different informative and communicative needs from adults, and this has happened in the field of tourism (Cappelli, 2016; Cappelli & Masi, 2019), arts (Sezzi, 2019), the environment (Bruti & Manca, 2019), science (Diani & Sezzi, 2020), and natural history (Cesiri, 2019). Yet, it is on the legal and institutional domains that the literature has focused most (Diani, 2015, 2018; Diani & Sezzi, 2019; Engberg & Luttermann, 2014; Luttermann & Engberg, 2018; Sorrentino, 2014; Vasta & Trevisan, 2017).

Regardless of the subject field concerned, research on knowledge mediation targeted at children has traditionally followed two main strands of literature. On the one hand, research studies have explored products that fall within ‘infotainment’ or ‘edutainment’, i.e. “a hybrid mix of education and entertainment that relies heavily on visual material, on narrative or game-like formats, and on more informal, less didactic styles of address” (Buckingham & Scanlon, 2005, p. 46), such as Cesiri (2019) and Djonov (2008). On the other hand, other studies have illustrated reconceptualisation and recontextualisation strategies in either print or online texts from a discourse analytical perspective (e.g. Bruti & Manca, 2019; Cappelli, 2016; Cappelli & Masi, 2019; Diani, 2015, 2018; Diani & Sezzi, 2019; Sezzi, 2017, 2019). More recently, an increasing – though still limited – interest in digital texts for children has been witnessed, with studies adopting a multimodal analytical approach to shift the focus from the sole verbal mode to the visual-verbal interplay in websites (e.g. Diani, 2020; Diani & Sezzi, 2020; Vasta & Trevisan, 2017). The combination of verbal and visual modes in texts for children is not particularly surprising if we consider that child-friendly materials “make intense representational use of images” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 16). What is surprising though is the relatively scarce literature available in this field – a gap that this study intends to narrow.

The study presented in this paper follows suit with the latter studies by adopting a multimodal analytical approach but differs from them by applying this approach to a small-scale corpus of booklets rather than webpages. These booklets are considered multimodal texts since they “combine and integrate the meaning-making resources of various semiotic modalities [...] to produce text-specific meanings” (Baldry & Thibault, 2006, p. 20), namely written language and visual resources (e.g. illustrations, speech bubbles). The main aim of the study is to explain how the various semiotic resources employed are integrated to meet the specific needs of children and under-18s and to ensure a successful transfer of knowledge. In particular, the study aims at identifying the type of information provided, the complementary modes used to provide it, and the interplay between them. To carry out a fine-grained multimodal analysis, which could reveal possible similarities and differences in texts that have the same target readers (children and under-18s), concern the same topic (giving evidence in court) and pursue the same communicative purposes (see below), the study concentrates on one section which is featured in all five booklets, i.e. the ‘Who’s who’ section.

As stated above, the booklets analysed in this paper are meant to prepare children and young people to the stressful experience of being a witness. However, considering their

direct involvement in the proceedings, child and young witnesses also need to be reassured that they have done nothing wrong and must be informed of the rights they are entitled to. Therefore, explaining children and teenagers what giving evidence means requires a series of activities, namely familiarising them with the court and the alternative measures they may be entitled to (e.g. the use of screens or TV screens in a remote witness room), providing them with the information necessary to understand their role at court, their rights, and the role of other people in the courtroom (hence the ‘Who’s who’ section), explaining the emotional implications of giving evidence, helping them develop stress-coping skills, empowering them, and promoting their self-esteem and self-confidence.

These observations suggest that the booklets have two main communicative purposes. The first purpose is representational or referential, since the booklets provide practical information on the judicial process, whereas the second is appellative, since the message is meant to elicit a response in the readers by reducing any feelings of anxiety or insecurity arising from the process, and thus to ensure a better gathering of evidence with a lower degree of distress. Given that the possible negative feelings derive from the very fact of being involved in the judicial process, these two purposes, which are pursued simultaneously, are also inextricably intertwined from a linguistic perspective. Despite the importance of the link between the information provided and the emotional reaction induced, due to space constraints the main focus of this paper is on the referential, informative purpose of the booklets obtained through the integration of visual and verbal resources, while the emotional side and reassurance strategies are dealt with elsewhere (Peruzzo, forthcoming).

To understand how specialised knowledge is mediated in the corpus under examination (Section 3), and in particular to describe the booklets’ layout in terms of composition and visual resources (Sections 4.1 and 4.2), we draw on Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2006) theoretical framework for analysing the visual design of images. To delve into the verbal resources (Section 4.3), we follow previous studies on knowledge mediation (Gülich, 2003; Moirand, 2003; Turnbull, 2018; Ciapuscio, 2019) – intended as expert to non-expert communication or “asymmetric communication” (Cacchiani, 2018, p. 119). According to these studies, knowledge mediation operates on two dimensions: cognitive and communicative. In the literature (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004; Ciapuscio, 2003; Gülich, 2003; Turnbull, 2018), cognitive strategies are generally divided into two categories, namely *illustration* (also known as *formulation* or *explanatory strategies*) and *reformulation*. The former strategies are used to introduce new knowledge and “to relate new knowledge to old (perhaps experiential) knowledge” (Turnbull, 2018, p. 204), while the latter are applied to modify or clarify what has already been presented, such as “when the speaker realizes his interlocutor has difficulty in understanding in an ongoing process of constructing meaning together” (Turnbull, 2018, p. 204). The communicative dimension, on the other hand, “refers to the rhetorical devices and strategies that can be adopted to create a positive and trusting relationship with the reader” (Turnbull, 2018, p. 206). Given the type of textual material available in the booklets, the emphasis in this study is on explanatory strategies. The visual and verbal resources are discussed in Section 5, which is followed by conclusions in Section 6.

### 3 Corpus description

Of all the possible aids that can be used to prepare children and young witnesses to give evidence in court, this paper focuses on a corpus made of five booklets produced by or with the support of British governmental bodies (e.g. Office for Criminal Justice Reform, Department of Justice Victims of Crime Fund) or developed by the charity NSPCC. The booklets are available in pdf format and were retrieved from the Internet (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

Details about the booklets included in the corpus

Text no.	Title	Year of publication	Judicial system	Target audience	No. of pages	Total words
1	Going to Court. A booklet for children and young people who are going to be witnesses in court <sup>a</sup>	2017	England and Wales	5-11-year olds	20	2,378
2	Going to court. A booklet for children and young people who are going to be witnesses at Crown, magistrates' or youth court <sup>b</sup>	2008	England and Wales	Children and young people	20	3,747
3	Going to magistrates' court. A booklet for children and young people who are going to be witnesses in court <sup>c</sup>	2011	England and Wales	Children and young people	20	3,299
4	Going to court. A guide for young witnesses <sup>d</sup>	2014	not specified	Young witnesses	27	3,649
5	Being a witness. A booklet for children in criminal proceedings <sup>e</sup>	2005	Scotland	Children and young people	30	2,227

<sup>a</sup> Retrieved from [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/708114/ywp-5-11-eng.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708114/ywp-5-11-eng.pdf)

<sup>b</sup> Retrieved from [https://www.west-midlands.police.uk/\\_flysystem/public-sync/inline-files/court1013.pdf](https://www.west-midlands.police.uk/_flysystem/public-sync/inline-files/court1013.pdf)

<sup>c</sup> Retrieved from [https://west-midlands.police.uk/\\_flysystem/public-sync/inline-files/magcourt-children\\_0.pdf](https://west-midlands.police.uk/_flysystem/public-sync/inline-files/magcourt-children_0.pdf)

<sup>d</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.childline.org.uk/globalassets/info-and-advice/bullying-abuse-and-safety/crime-and-the-law/going-to-court/going-to-court.pdf>

<sup>e</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.mygov.scot/child-witness-criminal-case/being-a-witness-children-in-criminal-proceedings-english.pdf?inline=true>

The first point to note is that the booklets differ in terms of year of publication and territorial applicability. While the former detail does not influence the content of the booklets,<sup>2</sup> the territorial applicability does so because of the differences among the judicial systems and bodies operating in the UK. As shown in Table 1, the first three booklets included in the corpus refer to the judicial system of England and Wales, the fourth does not specify the relevant judicial system but seems generic enough to apply to the UK at large, whereas the last deals with the Scottish judicial system.

<sup>2</sup> The year of publication may have an impact on the content in case of legislative evolution; however, in the booklets under examination no variation that can be attributed to diachronic change has been observed.

Given their communicative purposes, the booklets are quite similar as regards the knowledge to be transferred, i.e. their content (except for the obvious differences due to the judicial systems involved). Although with minor variations, all the texts analysed present the information in almost the same way, i.e. by following the chronological order in which the different phases of the judicial process occur. All the booklets have an introductory section, describe what a witness does and what their duties are, explain what a court is and who the witness may meet there, illustrate what happens in court and what the witness is entitled to (e.g. pre-trial court visit, special measures), outline what happens after the witness has given evidence, and thank the witness for their help. Despite these similarities, there are also some differences. For instance, Texts 1 and 4 contain a glossary, while Texts 1, 3 and 4 contain activities (e.g. mazes, wordsearches, colouring activities). However, space constraints make it impossible to give a full account of the booklets; therefore, the scope of this study is restricted to one of the sections present in all the booklets, which for reasons of convenience we will refer to as the 'Who's who' section.

## 4 'Who's who' section

All the booklets included in the corpus contain a 'Who's who' section meant to describe the persons a witness generally encounters in a court and their job. Despite having a common aim, these sections differ in terms of composition, types of visual resources used, number of persons considered, and amount of information provided, all aspects that contribute to knowledge mediation and are analysed in the sections below.

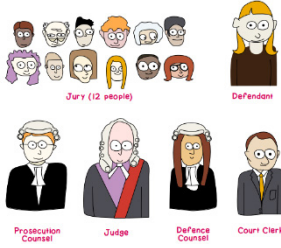
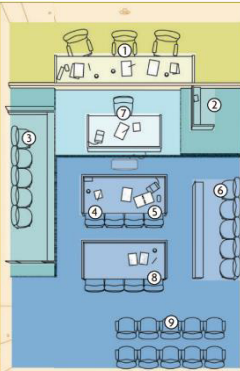
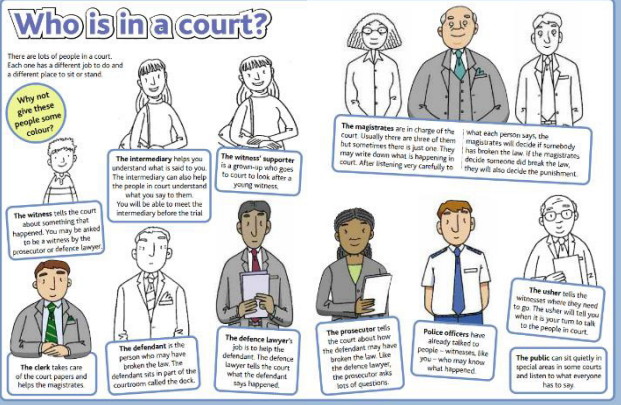
### 4.1 Composition

The most obvious aspect that differentiates the five 'Who's who' sections is composition, which is defined as "the way in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other, the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 176). As stated above, and as emerges from Table 2 below, these booklets are multimodal texts since their meanings "are realized through more than one semiotic code" and "should be looked upon as interacting with and affecting one another" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177). Therefore, here the visual and the verbal modes are not deemed discrete elements but are rather considered in an integrated way. Given that the booklets under examination are static, in the sense that all the visual and verbal elements that make them up "are spatially co-present" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177) and presented simultaneously, the analysis concentrates on so-called "spatial composition" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 177).

At the outset, the spatial composition of the five booklets is significantly different, although some convergence can also be noticed. The first difference is the distribution and length of the 'Who's who' sections. In Text 1, the whole section occupies one page and is organised along the vertical axis. The verbal text is mainly found in the upper part of the page, where we find the heading and an introductory paragraph (see Section 4.3.1 below), while slightly more than half a page is devoted to the visual representation of human figures, each accompanied by a simple caption containing the relevant term, such as *defendant*, *prosecution counsel*, and *judge*.



**Table 2.**  
Spatial composition of the 'Who's who' sections in the corpus

<p>Text 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Who is in a court?</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">There are lots of people in a court and they can be very busy places. There will be people to help you give the best evidence you can. Each person has a different job and a different place to sit or stand.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">◀ ▶</p>
<p>Text 2</p>	<p><b>Who's who in a magistrates' or youth court?</b></p>  <p><b>1 The magistrates</b> The magistrates are in charge of the courtroom. Usually there are three of them. The magistrates wear ordinary clothes, they don't wear wigs or gowns like Crown Court judges. They decide if the defendant broke the law.</p> <p><b>2 The witness</b> The witness tells the court about something that happened. There may be more than one witness at the trial. A young witness usually gives evidence in a TV link room (see top right).</p> <p><b>3 The defendant</b> The defendant is the person who has been accused of breaking the law. He or she will sit in a part of the courtroom called the dock.</p> <p><b>4 The defence lawyer</b> The defence lawyer's job is to show the court that the defendant didn't break the law. The defence lawyer will do this by telling the court what the defendant says happened.</p> <p><b>5 The prosecutor</b> This is the name given to the lawyer who tries to prove that the defendant has broken the law.</p> <p><b>6 The witness supporter</b> Young witnesses are allowed a grown-up family member or friend with them as a supporter at court. Your supporter may be able to sit with you while you are giving evidence but it is up to the magistrate to decide if they can.</p> <p><b>7 The clerk</b> The clerk takes care of the papers needed for the trial.</p> <p><b>8 The usher</b> The usher tells you when it is your turn to be a witness and shows you where to sit and may sit with you in the TV link room. Ask the usher for help if you need anything.</p> <p><b>9 The public</b> A magistrates' court is open to the public. People may sit quietly at the back and listen. The public is not allowed into a youth court.</p> <p><b>How is the youth court different?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a youth court, the magistrates sit at a table</li> <li>• the defendant sits in front of the magistrates</li> <li>• there is no dock.</li> </ul> <p>In a youth court, magistrates deal with people under the age of 18 who may have broken the law. The main differences are:</p> <p>As in a magistrates' court, a young witness usually gives evidence using the TV link. If not, the young witness stands in a witness box or sits in a chat witness box.</p> <p>It is a good idea to ask to visit your youth court before the trial. Youth courts are closed to the public – so tell the usher if your supporter wants to come with you into the courtroom.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">▶ ▶</p>
<p>Text 3</p>	<p><b>Who is in a court?</b></p> <p>There are lots of people in a court. Each one has a different job to do and a different place to sit or stand.</p> <p><b>Why not give these people some colour?</b></p>  <p><b>The intermediary helps you understand what is said to you.</b> The intermediary can also help the people in court understand what you say to them. You will be able to meet the intermediary before the trial.</p> <p><b>The witness supporter</b> is a grown-up who goes to court to look after a young witness.</p> <p><b>The witness</b> tells the court about something that happened. You may be asked to be a witness by the prosecutor or defence lawyer.</p> <p><b>The clerk</b> takes care of the court papers and helps the magistrates.</p> <p><b>The defendant</b> is the person who may have broken the law. The defendant sits in part of a courtroom called the dock.</p> <p><b>The defence lawyer's</b> job is to help the defendant. The defence lawyer helps the court what the defendant says happened.</p> <p><b>The prosecutor</b> tells the court about how the defendant may have broken the law. Like the defence lawyer, the prosecutor asks lots of questions.</p> <p><b>Police officers</b> have already talked to people – witnesses like you – who may know what happened.</p> <p><b>The usher</b> tells the witness where they need to go. The usher will tell you when it is your turn to talk to the people in court.</p> <p><b>The public</b> can sit quietly in special areas in some courts and listen to what everyone has to say.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4 Going to magistrates' court      5 Going to magistrates' court</p>

<p>Text 4</p>	<div data-bbox="555 271 1161 703"> <p><b>Who's who?</b></p> <p>There are lots of different people at court. They have different jobs but they're all there to help to find out the truth.</p> <p>There will be other <b>witnesses</b>, like you. They will tell the court what they saw.</p> <p>The <b>defendant</b> is the person who may have broken the law. The defendant isn't allowed to speak to any witnesses.</p> <p>The <b>jury</b> is a group of people who listen to you and the other witnesses. Together, they decide whether or not they think the defendant broke the law.</p> <p>Their decision – whether the person is 'guilty' or 'not guilty' – is called the 'verdict'.</p> <p>The <b>judge</b> listens carefully to what each person says, then decides what to do about it. If the jury decides the defendant is guilty, it's the judge who decides what punishment they receive.</p> <p>The <b>defence lawyer</b> helps the defendant. They have to tell the court what the defendant says happened.</p> <p>The <b>prosecutor</b> has to tell the court about how the defendant may have broken the law.</p> <p>There are <b>resource staff</b>, who make sure that the court is a safe place to be. They will make sure that the defendant doesn't come near you or speak to you.</p> <p>The <b>court staff</b> will help you find your way around. They will also come and tell you when it's your turn to talk.</p> <p><b>DID YOU KNOW?</b></p> <p>People in court sometimes wear traditional hats. The judge and law enforcement wear special robes or gowns. It's just a kind of tradition that's happened over time. Some judges' wigs are very old and made from horsehair!</p>  </div>
<p>Text 5</p>	<div data-bbox="533 770 1174 1169"> <p><b>who is in the courtroom and what is their job?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The judge and the lawyers are always in the courtroom. Their job is to make sure everything is fair.</li> </ul> <p>Judges have other people to help them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The clerk:</b> This is the person who looks after the judge's papers.</li> <li>• <b>The court officer (sometimes called a mace):</b> This is the person who gets things for the judge and looks after the other people in the court.</li> <li>• <b>The jury:</b> This is a group of people who listen to you and help the court decide if someone has broken the law.</li> <li>• <b>The accused:</b> This is someone who may have broken the law. The accused will be able to see and listen to everything in the courtroom.</li> <li>• <b>The public:</b> Sometimes other people sit in court just to watch. You can tell the judge or lawyer if you don't want other people to be there.</li> <li>• <b>Police or security person:</b> Their job is to make sure everyone behaves.</li> </ul>  </div>

A similar distribution of visual and verbal resources can be noticed in Text 4, whose 'Who's who' section covers a double-page spread. The upper half of the pages is occupied by the verbal text, which is organised in two columns per page and starts with an introductory paragraph. At the end of the upper section we also find a box with a different background, which engages the reader with the catchy heading "Did you know?" and provides information on the typical judges' and lawyers' attire (see Section 4.3.3 below). This box is accompanied by a small illustration of a human figure with a magnifying glass investigating an oversized judge's wig. The lower half is devoted to the visual representation of some of the human figures involved in a trial.

In Text 3, the 'Who's who' section also occupies two pages, but the distribution of visual and verbal resources is different. The heading at the top of the first page is followed by a short introductory paragraph in the top left-hand panel. Immediately below, there is a framed circle inviting the reader to "give these people some colour", since some of the human figures on the two pages are simple line drawings. The remaining space is filled with six half-length portraits per page, each of which has a framed box below containing a definition of the role each figure represents. The bottom right-hand panel on the second page also contains a box without any illustration, which explains what the public is allowed to do in a courtroom.

In Text 5, the section is spread over two pages, but the visual and the verbal modes are kept separate: the first page contains the written text, with the only noticeable graphical element being the banner containing the heading (stretching over the two pages and working as an

integrating device between them). Vice versa, the second page features no verbal element, being wholly occupied by the illustration of a courtroom and some human figures (e.g. the judge, the court officer).

In comparison, Text 2 has a rather different composition. First, the booklet distinguishes between the magistrates' or youth court and the Crown Court and thus contains two 'Who's who' subsections. Each subsection occupies two pages with a similar composition. The verbal text is organised in three columns: two full-length columns are on the left-hand side of the first page of each subsection, while the third one occupies the lower  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the second page and is positioned on the right-hand side. Above the third column, top right of the second page, there is a bird's eye view of the TV link room, from which young witnesses usually give evidence to avoid meeting the defendant in the courtroom. In the first 'Who's who' subsection, the column below the illustration of the TV link room explains what the differences between the magistrates' and the youth court are, while in the second subsection the third column is the continuation of the second one. In both subsections, the space between the second and the third column is occupied by a large illustration depicting, unlike the other texts described so far, the room plan of a typical courtroom, either in a magistrate's/youth court or the Crown Court.

## 4.2 Visual resources

All the booklets under examination take recourse to illustrations in the 'Who's who' section, but as emerges from the description of composition above, these illustrations differ and can be broadly divided into two groups: human figures and courtroom.

### 4.2.1 Human figures

All the booklets except for Text 2 feature human figures, but significant differences can be observed. In Texts 3 and 4 the persons are represented as half-length portraits staring directly at the reader, and the same is true for Text 1, where, however, the jury is illustrated by representing the jurors' heads only. In the three booklets just mentioned, the persons are depicted in a rather simple way, but in Texts 1 and 4 they are more stylized than in Text 3, where the illustrations are slightly more naturalistic. Moreover, in Text 4 all of the human figures are accompanied by a speech bubble saying "I'm an X" (the only exception being the jury, where the pronoun and the verb are in the plural), where X stands for their role.

The most naturalistic illustration is found in Text 5, where the judge, the court officer and other persons are represented inside a courtroom as if performing their role during a hearing. In these four booklets, the different roles are represented also – or rather mainly – by the persons' outfits: for example, the defendant, jurors and the intermediary are in plain clothes, the court clerk in a suit and the judge in a wig and gown.

### 4.2.2 The courtroom

In Text 2, no human figure is represented. The two subsections – "Who's who in a magistrates' court or youth court?" and "Who's who in the Crown Court?" – provide a stylised bird's eye

view of the typical courtroom layout with bar, bench and witness box, where each role is identified by a number corresponding to a caption followed by an explanation.

The fact that the visual resources used in the ‘Who’s who’ subsections in Text 2 differ from those in the other booklets under examination does not mean that they are exclusive to this booklet. Indeed, an illustration representing a courtroom is also found in the same section in Text 5, while a courtroom is represented in the separate section entitled “What is a court?” in Text 1 (with captions, without human figures) and as part of a jigsaw activity in Text 3 (without captions, with human figures). However, what differentiates these illustrations from the visual representation of a courtroom in Text 2 is the frontal perspective rather than the bird’s eye view. By the same token, the fact that the courtroom illustration in Text 2 does not feature any humans does not mean that these figures are completely absent from the booklet. In fact, they are found in all the other sections of the booklet at issue.

### 4.2.3 Colour scheme

As regards the use of colours, all the booklets featuring human subjects have no background. The figures in Texts 1 and 3 use plain, flat colours without shades or nuances and are outlined with a black line. In Text 3, this is particularly relevant because not all the figures are coloured: actually, seven out of twelve figures are left blank and the reader – as an interactive user of the booklet – is invited to colour them. This aspect is also particularly interesting because one of these figures represents the witness as a boy and thus allows a young reader to become part of what is being explained not only through the written text that accompanies the illustrations (see Section 4.3), but also through the illustrations themselves. In line with Kress & van Leeuwen (2006, who in turn draw on Halliday, 1985), it could be said that this is a ‘demand’ image, since – in combination with the textual element accompanying it – it addresses the reader directly with a visual *you*, which is supported also by a verbal *you*, and requires them to do something with it. The fact that the boy smiles (like some other figures represented on these pages; e.g. the intermediary and the magistrates) may have a reassuring function: the reader may form a positive identification with the young witness (and this identification may be stronger in boys than in girls, being the illustrated witness easily recognised as a boy) and establish an emphatic relation with most of the other figures whose role is either to find out the truth or help the witness. The facial expression of the defendant and the defence lawyer, on the other hand, produce a different reaction: they are not smiling and therefore do not generate emphatic solidarity with the reader.

In Text 5 there is also a combination of coloured and colourless elements, all of which are outlined in black. The plain coloured elements are human figures, while the colourless elements represent the furniture inside the courtroom (e.g. the bench, the bar, the jury box). Compared to Texts 1, 3 and 5, Text 4 features a much richer colour scheme: colours are not plain but reproduce different textures, as if the drawings were painted using different techniques, such as markers and pencils. However, what is common to the four booklets depicting persons is that they all represent both female and male figures and that these figures have different prototypical attributes which create visual connections to different ethnicities (skin colour) and social classes (items of clothing).

Text 2 differs not only in terms of what is represented, but also as regards the colours used. The various elements in the courtroom are outlined in black and the courtroom is divided into several sections (e.g. the bench, the witness stand, the clerk’s table) in the shape of plain-colour rectangles. All the sections, save for the witness stand, contain chairs, and a circled number is placed on one of the chairs to create a connection with the relevant numbered explanation provided in the verbal part of the page.

### 4.3 Verbal resources

The textual material included in the ‘Who’s who’ section can be broadly divided into three categories, namely introductory paragraph, explanation of roles, and additional information. These categories are differently distributed in the single booklets under examination, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

Distribution of verbal resources in the five booklets

	Text 1	Text 2 magistrates’ or youth court	Text 2 Crown Court	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5
introductory paragraph	yes		yes	yes	yes	
explanation of roles		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
additional information		yes			yes	

#### 4.3.1 Introductory paragraph

The first observation that can be made based on Table 3 is that one of the booklets (Text 5) features no introductory paragraph, while another booklet (Text 2) contains an introductory paragraph in only one of its two ‘Who’s who’ subsections. A closer look at the content reveals that introductory paragraphs are mostly used to anticipate possible sources of anxiety for child and young witnesses. In Texts 1, 3 and 4, they briefly explain that courts may be busy places with lots of people with different jobs and different places to sit or stand. Unlike Text 3, where the introductory paragraph provides this information in a neutral way, in Texts 1 and 4 it addresses the readers directly using the pronoun *you* and either reminds them that there will be people at court ready to help them give the best evidence they can (Text 1) or focusses on the importance of finding out the truth (Text 4). On the contrary, the introductory paragraph in Text 2 prepares the reader to the “unusual clothes” worn by judges, a type of information that is provided also in the same section in Text 4, but in a separate box devoted to additional information.

### 4.3.2 Explanation of roles

The main part of the ‘Who’s who’ section is obviously dedicated to the explanation of the roles and professional profiles of the persons that a young witness usually encounters at court. However, the number of persons described in each booklet varies from text to text, as indicated in Table 4 below, also depending on the type of court considered. For instance, Text 2 distinguishes between the magistrates’ or youth court and the Crown Court and thus deals with magistrates in one subsection and judges and the jury in the other subsection, while Text 3, which considers the magistrates’ court only, does not contemplate judges and the jury. In Text 5, given the role some professionals perform (e.g. the lawyer and the Witness Service), some profiles are described in the separate section entitled “Who can help you?” and are therefore not analysed here.

**Table 4**

Type and number of persons mentioned and/or explained in the ‘Who’s who’ section

	<b>Text 1</b>	<b>Text 2 magis- trates’ or youth court</b>	<b>Text 2 Crown Court</b>	<b>Text 3</b>	<b>Text 4</b>	<b>Text 5</b>
accused/defendant	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
clerk/court clerk	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes
court officer (macar)						yes
court staff					yes	
defence lawyer/defence counsel/lawyers	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
intermediary				yes		
judge	yes		yes		yes	yes
jury	yes		yes		yes	yes
magistrates		yes		yes		
note-taker			yes			
police officers/police				yes		yes
prosecutor/prosecution counsel	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
public		yes	yes	yes		yes
resource staff					yes	
security person						yes
usher		yes	yes	yes		
witness		yes	yes	yes	yes	
witness’ supporter		yes	yes	yes		
	6	9	11	11	8	9



Table 4 shows that Texts 2 and 3 feature the highest number of persons considered (11), while Text 1 the lowest (6). Another interesting observation emerging from the same table is that Texts 2, 3 and 4 include the witness in their ‘Who’s who’ sections, although more information on the witness’s role is provided elsewhere (e.g. Text 2 provides a definition of *witness* on its very first page and goes into further detail in the section entitled “Why do people go to court?”), while in Texts 1 and 5 the term *witness* does not even appear in this section and the underlying concept is explained in other sections.

Along with a difference in the number of roles, the five booklets also vary in the amount of information provided and the way in which such information is provided. In Text 1 the verbal component only consists in the illustration captions (*defendant, prosecution counsel, judge, defence counsel, court clerk, and jury*), while more information on their roles may be inferred by reading the whole booklet. For this reason, in what follows the discussion is limited to Texts 2-5, where the textual material in the ‘Who’s who’ section is much richer.

To understand how specialised knowledge is mediated in Texts 2-5, we need to draw on previous studies on knowledge mediation (Gülich, 2003; Moirand, 2003; Turnbull, 2018; Ciapuscio, 2019). Following these studies, knowledge mediation operates on the cognitive dimension and the communicative dimension (see Section 2 above). Considering the textual material included in the ‘Who’s who’ section and given that the readers are expected to be unfamiliar with the judicial process and thus to need to be exposed to new knowledge, this study focuses on explanatory strategies (see Section 2 above). These strategies are used in the booklets under examination because the roles and professional profiles are designated by the same lexical units that are used by experts in specialised contexts (i.e. legal terms), but while in symmetric communication in specialised contexts their meaning can be taken for granted, here it must be explained in a simplified way to meet the readers’ needs.

In order to explain the roles specified in Table 4 above, in most cases (40 out of 48) the four booklets resort to the strategy of definition, which is used to introduce new terms and explain their meaning.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as pointed out by Gülich (2003) and Turnbull (2018), the preservation of a minimum of technical language is functional to knowledge mediation: while knowledge is transferred in a style suitable for non-experts (e.g. through the use of colloquial language), the use of terms creates a link between non-experts and a new, specialised situation. Of the remaining eight instances of knowledge mediation through explanation, six can be classified as paraphrases, while two fall within the strategy of denomination.

## Definitions

Given the booklets’ communicative purposes and the target readers’ needs, it can be imagined that the definitions extracted from the corpus do not match the typical patterns used in terminological (and lexicographical) definitions (see, for instance, Sager, 1990), which are

3 Note that Calsamiglia and Van Dijk (2004, p. 379ff.) distinguish between definitions and descriptions, “where definitions are used to explain unknown words, and descriptions to explain unknown things”, but such a distinction is considered irrelevant for the purposes of the present study, since the target readers are expected to be unfamiliar with both the terminology (i.e. the “words” in Calsamiglia and Van Dijk’s view) and the underlying concepts and referents (i.e. the “things”).

generally not meant for asymmetric communication between adults and children or teenagers. A closer look at the definitions in the corpus reveals that in most cases the main cognitive element around which they revolve is the function – or the most relevant activities – carried out by the role/professional profile they refer to. Look at the following examples.

- (1) The clerk takes care of the court papers and helps the magistrates. (Text 3)
- (2) The judge listens carefully to what each person says, then decides what to do about it. If the jury decides the defendant is guilty, it's the judge who decides what punishment they receive. (Text 4)

In (1) and (2), the *definiendum* is followed by the illustration of the main activity performed at court. However, this is not the only way in which definitions are formulated in the corpus. For instance, in (3) and (4) below, the *definiendum* is defined by first introducing a (rather generic) hypernym followed by the function.

- (3) The witness' supporter is a grown-up who goes to court to look after a young witness. (Text 3)
- (4) The clerk: This is the person who looks after the judge's papers. (Text 5)

The function is also at the core of definitions by implication, where the terms are used in explicative contexts (Sager, 1990), such as in (5).

- (5) It is the defence lawyer's job to help the defendant by telling the court what the defendant says happened, and trying to show that they did not break the law. (Text 2)

The corpus also contains some occurrences of definitions making use of generic hypernyms where, however, the function is not the main content. In (6) and (7) below, the emphasis in the first part of the explanation is on the reasons why a person has a certain role, while the second part adds information that is supposed to be relevant to the reader. In (6), directions are given to the witnesses to enable them to identify the place where the defendant will sit, and this type of encyclopaedic information is consistently linked to the type of illustration available on the same page (see Section 4.2.2). The second part of (7), on the contrary, indirectly warns witnesses that the accused will be able to see and listen to everything they may do or say in court.

- (6) The defendant is the person who has been accused of breaking the law. He or she will sit in a part of the courtroom called the dock. (Text 2)
- (7) The accused: This is someone who may have broken the law. The accused will be able to see and listen to everything in the courtroom. (Text 5)

Examples (6) and (7) thus anticipate the experiences that witnesses may find stressful or even traumatic. Another example of definition that implicitly anchors to the possible future readers' experience in court is found in (8), where more information on the way prosecutors perform their function is explained in the second part of the definition.

- (8) The prosecutor tells the court about how the defendant may have broken the law. Like the defence lawyer, the prosecutor asks lots of questions. (Text 3)



Another definition in which apparently accidental information is functional to the readers' needs is (9), which prepares witnesses for the court experience by drawing on their background knowledge. Here information on the magistrates' attire is provided and compared to the judges' typical outfit, thus anticipating what is explained later in the text.

- (9) The magistrates are in charge of the courtroom. Usually there are three of them. The magistrates wear ordinary clothes; they don't wear wigs or gowns like Crown Court judges. They decide if the defendant broke the law. (Text 2)

Examples (6)-(9) anchor the definitions to the possible daunting situation the readers may experience soon and their presupposed background knowledge in an implicit way. However, the corpus also includes definitions which call into play the readers in a more explicit manner. This type of engagement is created either by referring to witnesses – as in (10) – or by using the reader pronoun *you* – as in (11).

- (10) The defendant is the person who may have broken the law. The defendant isn't allowed to speak to any witnesses. (Text 4)
- (11) There are resource staff, who make sure that the court is a safe place to be. They will make sure that the defendant doesn't come near you or speak to you. (Text 4)

While in (10) and (11) the witness is mentioned in the second sentence, where additional – but fundamental, from the reader's perspective – information is provided, in other cases the reader is an essential component of the main part of the definition, such as in (12).

- (12) The intermediary helps you understand what is said to you. The intermediary can also help the people in court understand what you say to them. You will be able to meet the intermediary before the trial. (Text 3)

## Paraphrase

The strategy of paraphrase intended as a form of explanatory reformulation (see, for instance, Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004; Diani & Sezzi, 2019) is much less frequent than that of definition. This strategy is employed when a term may not be unfamiliar to the young readers but needs further elaboration to be fully understood. Indeed, this strategy is only used with reference to two terms, namely *public* (see example (13)) and witness' supporter.

- (13) The public A magistrates' court is open to the public. People may sit quietly at the back and listen. The public is not allowed into a youth court. (Text 2)

Like in the case of definitions, also in paraphrases the reader may be implicitly or explicitly involved in the explanation provided. In (14), the reader's engagement is implicit, since the reference to "everyone" includes the witness as well.

- (14) The public can sit quietly in special areas in some courts and listen to what everyone has to say. (Text 3)

On the contrary, in (15) the reader is engaged in two ways: in the first sentence through the use of "young witnesses", and in the second through the use of the personal pronoun *you* and the possessive adjective *your*.

- (15) The witness' supporter Young witnesses are allowed a grown-up family member or friend with them as a supporter at court. Your supporter may be able to sit with you while you are giving evidence, but it is up to the magistrate to decide if they can. (Text 2)

## Denomination

In the corpus under examination, the recourse to the strategy of denomination, “which consists in introducing new terms to point to specific meanings” (Diani & Sezzi, 2019, p. 207), is not only limited to one booklet (Text 2), but is also applied to one term only (*prosecutor*), as shown in (16).

- (16) The prosecutor This is the name given to the lawyer who tries to prove that the defendant has broken the law. (Text 2)

### 4.3.3 Additional information

As shown in Table 3 above, two booklets also include additional information, which is visually separated from the other textual material through the use of boxes with a different background colour (see Section 4.1). In Text 2, the differences between the youth court and the magistrates' court are explained, but information on child and young witnesses' rights is also provided (e.g. the use of a TV link and the possibility to visit the court with a supporter). On the contrary, the 'Did you know?' box in Text 4 is devoted to judges' and lawyers' traditional attire, which in Text 2 is part of the main text. As in Text 2, the purpose of this piece of information is to prepare the readers for something new, unusual, and maybe frightening, and to reassure them that what they are going to experience is normal (“It's just a kind of uniform like a policeman or nurse might wear.”). Moreover, the text adds some details that may be trivial for adult audiences but appealing to children (“Some judge's wigs are very old and made from horsehair!”).

## 5 Discussion

The booklets under examination are multimodal texts and this emerges also from the analysis of the semiotic resources employed in the 'Who's who' sections. The five booklets analysed make use of similar visual resources (e.g. four booklets contain illustrations of human figures) and verbal resources (e.g. four booklets contain definitions of judicial roles) to pursue common communicative purposes. Despite the complementarity of visual and verbal elements in all the booklets, a more careful analysis reveals a certain degree of variety in terms of composition, choice of elements to be represented through illustrations, verbal knowledge mediation strategies, integration between semiotic resources, and reader engagement.

At a closer look, the two vertically structured texts (Texts 1 and 4) confirm Kress and van Leeuwen's view (2006, p. 186) that “there is usually less connection, less ongoing movement, between the two parts of the composition than in horizontally oriented compositions”. Visually speaking, we can say that “there is a sense of contrast, of opposition between the two”,

and we can also agree that “the upper section tends to make some kind of emotive appeal and to show us ‘what might be’”, while “the lower section tends to be more informative and practical, showing us ‘what is’” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 186). In the upper section of Texts 1 and 4, the emotive appeal is obtained through the use of the personal pronoun *you* in the introductory paragraph and, only for Text 4, also in the definitions (see example (11) above). The ‘what might be’ component is also present in both texts, but is more prominent in Text 4, given the brevity of Text 1. In the lower part of the pages, the illustrations, despite being simple or stylised drawings, connect the possibly new terms (e.g. *defendant*, *prosecutor*) to the readers’ reality. The underlying message seems to be the following: notwithstanding their unfamiliar designations and outfits, the persons you will encounter at court are people after all (and you should not be afraid of them).

The distinction between the verbal and the visual in the two vertically structured texts is clear, but just as clear are the connective elements between the two. In Text 1, the introductory paragraph starts with the sentence “There are lots of people in a court and they can be very busy places” and the lower part of the page depicts a variety of human figures accompanied by the relevant term in the caption. In Text 4, which provides the definitions of the various roles, the connection between the verbal and the visual mode is established through the illustration of some of the figures defined, but here the link is created through speech bubbles rather than captions. Moreover, the vertical positioning of verbal and visual elements in these booklets also convey another meaning: what is in the upper part of the page (the text) plays a “lead role”, while the illustrations play a “subservient role (which, however, is important in its own way, as specification, evidence, practical consequence, and so on)” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 187).

The two-page ‘Who’s who’ sections in Texts 2 and 5 have a horizontal structuring. The right pages are either dominated by illustrations (Text 2) or completely occupied by them (Text 5). Although the illustration in Text 5 depicts a courtroom with some human figures in it and is therefore complementary to the verbal text on the left page, the connection between the written information and the elements that constitute the illustration is not explicit. In the absence of captions or other connective elements, the reader must infer who the judge or the clerk is and is expected to have a sufficient knowledge to identify the various roles without the support of written text.

Though still horizontal, the structuring of the two ‘Who’s who’ subsections in Text 2 is more complex. The outlined illustration is in a semi-central position, deviated towards the right, and represents a courtroom without human figures in it. The connective elements between the verbal text and the illustration consist in circled numbers that identify the prototypical location of a certain role inside a courtroom. In other words, instead of being connected to the illustration of human figures, the terms designating certain roles and the relevant definitions are preceded by a number which indicates the position where the person(s) in that role is ideally found inside a courtroom. While the complementarity of visual and verbal resources in Text 2 is undeniable, the connection here is more explicit than in Text 5 but also more abstract than in Texts 1 and 4.

The ‘Who’s who’ section in Text 3 differs from that in the other booklets for various reasons. First, as stated in Section 4.1, it combines horizontal and vertical structuring. Secondly, it

engages the reader in three different ways. One form of engagement that is found also in Texts 2, 4 and 5 is the more or less explicit inclusion of the witness/reader in the definitions, while the other two forms are exclusive to this booklet and consist in the visual representation of the witness (illustration of a boy) and in a colouring task (see Section 4.2.3), which demand action from the reader. Another difference is observed in the layout of the individual visual elements. Indeed, the twelve half-length portraits accompanied by a description of the relevant role in a framed box have a vertical structure that follows an opposite pattern compared to the other booklets, where illustrations come after the verbal text. The degree of integration and interaction between the verbal and the visual in this text is higher than in Texts 1 and 4, but the three booklets are characterised by a common feature: human figures are presented in a vacuum, against a white background and outside their 'natural' context, i.e. the courtroom (compare with Text 5).

## 6 Conclusions

The study has explored the 'Who's who' sections of five multimodal booklets targeted at children and young people who are about to face the possibly daunting or traumatic experience of giving evidence in a court in the UK. What emerges from the study – though limited due to corpus size and territorial applicability – is that the booklets differ in the way the visual and verbal modes interplay to mediate specialised knowledge but are similar in terms of explanatory strategies employed.

The interaction between the visual and verbal semiotic modes contributes to the transfer of knowledge to an audience with limited background knowledge and at a different stage of cognitive development compared to the authors of the texts. However, such interaction may be more or less direct or explicit and this depends on numerous elements. One such element is – pretty obviously – the presence or absence and the degree of explicitness of devices linking the verbal component to the illustrations (i.e. captions and numbers). As regards the visual-verbal interplay, the illustrations themselves play a crucial role: in order to be understood, some illustrations such as physical spaces depicted from a bird's eye view require more cognitive effort and capacity for abstraction and need a more explicit link to the verbal component of the text compared to plainer illustrations such as human figures portrayed frontally. Eventually, a crucial role is played by the type of composition chosen (vertical, horizontal or mixed), which suggests what aspects (verbal or visual) are to be given prominence and guides the reader through the text.

With regard to the verbal mode, the analysis has shown that all the booklets preserve specialised elements in the form of terms, which in most occurrences are explained by means of definitions, while only in a limited number of cases are clarified through paraphrase or denomination. Considering the communicative purposes of the booklets, which are to mediate knowledge for the benefit of young readers and to try to reduce their feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, it is little wonder that the explanations provided in the booklets are significantly different from those that can be found in other sources of information, such as dictionaries or textbooks. What must also be emphasised here is that, despite the convergence in terms of explanatory strategies used in the five booklets, the analysis suggests that the differences as regards visual-verbal interplay, level of cognitive effort required by the visual and verbal

resources used and amount of information provided point to a much more diversified audience than the one referred to by the expression ‘child and young witnesses’. Put differently, in this study the target audience of the booklets has been treated as a homogeneous group of underage readers who are experiencing the same situation and very likely a similar emotional state. However, what the analysis reveals is that, for instance, the target audience of Text 1, which states “5-11 years” on its cover page, is not the same as the target audience of Text 2, which is meant for “children and young people”, and is not the same as the target audience of Text 4, which addresses “young witnesses”. This is so because Text 1, with its simple, plain-colour illustrations and the minimum of text to read, is for younger children; Text 2, drawing on a higher amount of background knowledge, using complex images, and being the only booklet distinguishing between magistrates’ courts and the Crown Court, is meant for older young people (teenagers); and Text 4, appealing to the readers’ curiosity through the ‘Did you know?’ boxes, using a richer colour scheme and cartoon-like illustrations, is intended for primary school kids. These observations thus lead to two possible conclusions: on the one hand, a more careful consideration of the age group of the target audience may be necessary in the design of a study concerning knowledge mediation for ‘children and under-18s’; on the other, when the exact age group cannot be identified at the outset of such a study (e.g. in this study, only Text 1 specified the age group), the verbal and visual elements of a text and their interplay can reveal who the real intended audience is.

On a different note, it should also be remembered that in the booklets knowledge is transferred not only in a way that suits the readers’ background and experiential knowledge as well as their cognitive development stage, but also by taking into account two more aspects: first, that the reader is part of what is being explained, and second, that what is being explained and what is about to happen may have a considerable emotional impact on the reader. Therefore, in all the booklets analysed the transfer of legal knowledge involves various forms of reader engagement, ranging from explicit formulations that either include the personal pronoun *you* or specifically mention (young) witnesses, to implicit wordings, where a higher level of cognitive effort is required from the readers, who must infer the relationship between the scenario described and their role in it.

In conclusion, notwithstanding the relative abundance of research into knowledge mediation targeted at younger audiences and the contribution of the present study, it is the author’s belief that further investigation is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the impact that the readers’ emotional involvement with what is being explained may have on the transfer of specialised knowledge. In other words, further research is called for to explore the relationship between the readers’ possible negative feelings, the visual resources chosen, and the verbal knowledge mediation strategies adopted in materials produced for a young target audience.

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