

ICOM
11



DESIGNING FUTURES

**THE 11TH
INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON
MULTIMODALITY**

Book of abstracts

Online Symposium

Wednesday 27th September 2023

Prelude

The Online Symposium of the 11th International Conference on Multimodality (ICOM-11) operates under the umbrella theme “*Designing Futures*” with a special focus on mapping global and local futures with multimodality. With this focus, we will explore and address issues of specific societies across the world, bringing together keynote speakers and curated panels.

This book of abstracts is arranged in alphabetical order based on the last name of the chair.

ICOM-11 Organising Committee

Chair: Sophia Diamantopoulou

Team members: Henrika Florén, Jiawei Ding, Karen Choi, Ned Barker

Treasurer: Jeff Bezemer

Curator of the Online Symposium

Karen Choi

ICOM-11 website



Table of Contents

Transmission of Memories of Three Latin American Dictatorships (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) from A Critical Multimodal Perspective (Chair: Patricia Baeza Duffy)	3
Contemporary Multimodal Teaching and Learning Practices in Diverse Educational Contexts: Targeting Digital Text Competences (Chair: Eva Wennås Brante)	8
Time and Space in Multimodal Discourse: Examining their Co-patterning and its Implications for Teaching and Learning (Chair: Emilia Djonov).....	13
Multimodal Critical Studies from Latin America: Current Trends in Media, Politics and Education (Chair: Laura Flores).....	17
Towards a Diverse, Equal, and Inclusive Discursive World: A Multimodal Approach to Identity Construction Across Media (Chairs: Jenifer Ho and Esterina Nervino)	22
Multimodal Interaction and Health Discourse (Chair: Lihe Huang).....	27
Multimodality and Future Landscapes: Meaning Making, AI, Education, Assessment, and Ethics (Chair: David Ruttenberg)	34
Uniquely Chinese: Multimodality in Chinese Social Media (Chair: Yiqiong Zhang)	38

Transmission of Memories of Three Latin American Dictatorships (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) from A Critical Multimodal Perspective

(Chair: Patricia Baeza Duffy)

Abstract

Collective memory is a construction of the past shared by the members of a group as part of an identity project (Wertsch, 2021). These memories connect the past and present for social purposes (Jelin, 2010). In recent years, memory studies, which include the mediation and transmission of memories and counter-memories, is an emerging field of research that spans various disciplines, such as film, psychology, history, and linguistics. This panel focuses on the multimodal discursive construction of competing meanings around three Latin American dictatorships (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay) as well as on the different ways in which, through combinations of diverse resources or semiotic modes, discourses and counter-discourses are created expressing meanings that perpetuate or transform the status quo.

In the first paper, Achugar analyzes the memories of resistance to the last Uruguayan dictatorship of women former political prisoners through an audiovisual produced for the transgenerational transmission of collective memory. Secondly, Zullo addresses the ways of reconstructing the dictatorial past in materials intended for children. In particular, she works with a picture book that recovers the history of the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo (Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo) through a fictionalized story between a grandmother, her rescued granddaughter and her great-grandchildren. Thirdly, from an integrated perspective of the Appraisal Model and Critical Multimodal Studies, Baeza delves into the legitimization and delegitimization strategies of actors, events, processes and circumstances around the violation of human rights during the last Chilean dictatorship, in a corpus made up of works by different Chilean artists belonging to the theater, cinema, music and visual creation areas.

All three presentations show a variety of semiotic cultural practices such as picture books, narratives, documentaries, songs, illustrations, testimonies. In brief, the collective contribution of this panel lies on the deepening of the different mechanisms that ensure the transmission of memories through generations regarding the violation of human rights during the dictatorship in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.

Keywords: Multimodal memory construction; Collective memories; Argentina; Chile; Uruguay

References

Wertsch, J.V. (2021). *How nations remember: A narrative approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jelin, E. (2010). The Past in the Present: Memories of State Violence in Contemporary Latin America. En A. Assman y S. Conrad (eds.), *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (pp. 61-78). Palgrave Macmillan.

Presentations

1. **Memories of the resistance of express political women: a case study on the transmission of the memory of the last Uruguayan dictatorship**

Mariana Achugar, University of the Republic

This paper analyzes testimonies of surviving women produced in dialogue with young university students with the purpose of making these buried memories visible and disseminating through audiovisual products to those who did not experience these events or are not informed about them. Within the framework of the *Sujetas Sujetadas: Women and Memory of State Terrorism* project (<https://sujetassujetadas.fic.edu.uy/>), audiovisual shorts were made as a means of disseminating these memories buried in the public space in Uruguay. The collaborative process of production of short audiovisuals for dissemination on social networks and use in education or militancy activities for Human Rights included discussion among political voices, teachers, and students on possible themes and ways to communicate these memories (Achugar, Altuna, de Giorgi, 2022). In this paper, we focus on the multimodal analysis of representations and positionings (Baldry & Thibault, 2010; Bateman & Schmidt, 2012; Krees & Van Leeuwen, 2006; Van Leeuwen, 1996) of one of the videos that records the memories of the resistance, accounting for contributions of women to social memory beyond their stories as victims of state terrorism. The video is a product of the transgenerational dialogue between youth and the women who experienced the events, thus offering a reconstruction of the past in the present that offers an example of transduction and recontextualization to engage contemporary audiences (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). The analysis centers on describing the choices of visual design (type of image, distance and orientation of camera, prominence) and verbal choices in oral testimonies (representation of social actors, transitivity and interpersonal positionings through evaluation resources) that construct a narrative frame of resistance. The findings show that the audio visual of former women political prisoner's testimonies produced by youth construct a multimodal representation that focuses on the resilience and agency of the women as protagonists of history. As Barbara Sutton (2015) says, "these women offer not only stories of suffering and horror, but also provide the opportunity to reflect on visions and strategies to build a present and a future considering the lived past." (p.7).

Keywords: Women's memories; Transgenerational transmission; Multimodal analysis; Uruguayan dictatorship

References

Achugar, M., Altuna, M. y de Giorgi, A. (2022) *Memorias compartidas. La experiencia del proyecto de trayectorias integrales Sujetas sujetadas*. Publicación Unidad de Extensión Académica, FIC, Udelar. Montevideo.

- Baldry, A. y Thibault, P. (2010) *Multimodal Transcription and Text Analysis*. London: Equinox
- Bateman, J. & Schmidt, K. (2012). *Multimodal Film Analysis. How films mean*. London: Routledge.
- Sutton, B. (2015) Terror, testimonio y transmisión: voces de mujeres sobrevivientes de centros clandestinos de detención en Argentina (1976-1983). *Mora* 21:5-23.

2. The task of mother and grandmother of Plaza de Mayo in a story for children from a multimodal perspective

Julia Zullo, University of Buenos Aires

In line with a long-term research project that seeks to identify the characteristics of the intergenerational transmission (Achugar, 2011) of the last Argentine civic-military dictatorship, on this occasion the paper analyzes a child-oriented fictional material from a multimodal perspective. This is *La Abuela de Plaza de Mayo* (text by Nadia Fink and illustrations by Pitu Saá), the eighth release of the Antiprincessas collection from the Chirimbote publishing house that aims to challenge traditional stereotypes about women in literature and history. In this case, we want to reveal from an intersemiotic and multimodal perspective (Hodge, 2017) not only how these generic identities are built -explicitly formulated as alternatives to hegemonic models- but also what representations are raised regarding the last dictatorship and the State terrorism: its causes and consequences in relation to the emergence of the Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo institutions. In addition, the paper will present a comparison with the previous analysis of a fictional material from the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo organization -the microprograms *Así soy yo-* (Zullo, 2019). Finally, it will systematize the points in common and the differences with respect to other materials intended for children. From the methodological point of view, approaching a picture book like this poses the challenge of facing the articulation of -at least- two semiotic modes: the verbal and the visual (Moya Guijarros and Cañamares Torrijos, 2020). This analysis supposes not only the description of the operation of each mode but also of the intermodal integration (Painter, Martin and Unsworth, 2013). Findings show significant but complementary differences in the configuration of the verbal and visual message. While the verbal message mainly expresses ideational meanings aimed at establishing pas/present relationships and causal series, the visual message expresses interpersonal relationships that try to engage the readers/recipients in the understanding in the facts presented by the picture book.

Keywords: Argentine military civic dictatorship; Childhood; Picture book; Intermodal integration

References

- Kress, G. y van Leeuwen, T. ([2006]2021) *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design* (Tercera edición). Londres. Routledge.
- Moya Guijarro, A. y C. Cañamares Torrijos (2020) *Libros-álbum que desafían los estereotipos de género y el concepto de familia tradicional*. Cuenca. Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.

- Painter, C., J. Martin y L. Unsworth (2013) *Reading Visual Narratives: Image Analysis of Children's Picture Books*. Sheffield. Equinox.
- Zullo, J. (2019) "Identidad, memoria y poder. Cuando los nietos de las Abuelas hablan para los niños". *Revista Rétor*, ISSN-e 1853-6034, Vol. 9, Nº. 2, pp. 165-191.

3. Theatre, musical and visual creations as multimodal spaces for memories of the Chilean dictatorship between 1973 and 1990

Patricia Baeza Duffy, The Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

This qualitative study is part of a larger investigation focused on the construction and transmission of competing memories about the Chilean dictatorship that spanned 17 years (1973-1990). Specifically, this work is based on the question: How are human rights violations between 1973 and 1990 represented intersemiotically? The objective is to explore how different Chilean artists evaluate the period and build evidentiality through their works. The theoretical-methodological perspective integrates the *Appraisal* framework and *Critical Multimodal Discourse Studies*. The methodology comprises the following three phases: first, it analyzes the verbal, musical and visual resources; second, it deepens the *evaluative prosodies* formed by the accumulation of semiotic resources. Finally, the functioning of these prosodies as *strategies of legitimation and delegitimation* is analyzed. The corpus is made up of works from each artistic field (theatre, musical and visual creations). The various ways in which creators present the recent Chilean past operate as strategies to legitimize or delegitimize certain memories of human rights violations. The preliminary results show, on the one hand, that the creations are representation options that make visible various forms of human rights violations; and on the other hand, the findings emphasize the ideological positioning of those who pursue the maintenance of hegemonic memories and, at the same time, those who try to transform and resignify politics in Chile. These creators' work recontextualize and re-semiotizes social actors, places, and events, legitimizing solidarity, affective openness, and condemning discrimination and fear. Finally, these artistic creations become highly useful multimodal devices to promote inclusion through the transmission of memories among the different generations.

Keywords: Artistic creations; Multimodal space for memories; Human rights; Dis/legitimization; Resemiotization

References

- Benke, G. & Wodak, R. (2003). The discursive construction of individual memories: How Austrian "Wehrmacht" soldiers remember WWII. In J. Martin & R. Wodak, *Re/reading the Past. Critical and Functional Perspectives on Time and Value*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 115-138.
- Bezemer, J. & Kress, G. (2016). *Multimodality, Learning and Communication. A Social Semiotic Frame*. New York: Routledge.
- Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2021). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.

- Ravelli, L. (2010). *Museum Texts: Communication Frameworks*. London & New York: Routledge.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice. New Tools for critical discourse Analysis*. Oxford: University Press.

Contemporary Multimodal Teaching and Learning Practices in Diverse Educational Contexts: Targeting Digital Text Competences

(Chair: Eva Wennås Brante)

Abstract

In this panel, researchers connected to the TIMDA network (Texts, Information and Multimodality in the Digital Age) present current research conducted in collaboration with teachers and students in primary and secondary schools in Sweden. The presentations serve as examples of, and insight into, the Swedish context where the digitalization of education is under debate. The renewal of the national digitalization strategy is currently under review and is questioned and resisted both by political actors and in media debates. Hence, the presentations also attempt to nuance the debate about whether digital resources have a place in Swedish schools or not.

A common focus in the three presentations is digital text competences, which are predominantly multimodal, and how these can be developed in teaching and learning. How can teachers design teaching that includes multimodal aspects of both subject content and students' work? Another common theme is the cooperation between teachers and researchers to develop teaching practices so that multimodal information and texts are recognized and evaluated. The presentations thereby address didactical and subject-specific issues connected to fundamental changes in what it means to read and write, to learn and to communicate in contemporary societies. Moreover, the research projects pay great attention to developing teaching and learning classrooms in both primary and secondary school classrooms. In so doing, the projects contribute with knowledge and development of both research and practice.

Theoretically, all projects derive from social semiotics but differ slightly in what is accentuated within the field; designs for learning, multiliteracies and socio-material semiotics.

Following the presentations, we would like to discuss findings as well as the similarities and differences in the three research projects outlined above with the audience.

Keywords: Digital text competences; Teaching and learning practices; Multimodality; Literacy

Presentations

1. Teachers' design for and in learning developing assessment practices for digital multimodal meaning-making

Sylvana Sofkova Hashemi, University of Gothenburg

Petra Magnusson, Kristianstad University

Anna Åkerfeldt, Stockholm University

We present the first round of results from an ongoing Swedish research project, Teachers' meta-knowledge, and assessment practices in digital, multimodal learning environments, running from 2022-2024 (DiMLA) that addresses authentic educational, challenges such as curricular demands, teachers' digital competencies, and what is valued as learning, that teachers encounter when they teach about and assess pupils' digital multimodal representations. The project draws on Design Based Research (DBR) (Anderson & Shattuck, 2012), and is informed by multimodal social semiotics (Kress, 2010) and didactic design theoretical perspective (Selander, 2022).

This presentation highlights features in teachers' design for learning and students' design in learning, in year 3 and 6, captured by data material as observations of teaching sequences in class and collection of students' digital representations. In the first intervention (of three) a didactic design theoretical perspective was used in a workshop with teachers to emphasize the teacher's role as a designer. The focus was on teachers' design for learning, i.e. the teachers' choices of content, resources and why these were chosen, concerning aims and objectives as well as what was recognised as learning (Sofkova Hashemi & Spante, 2016).

Preliminary findings show an enhanced focus on multimodal aspects of texts where technology is a focus of experiment and a tool for teaching, demonstrating a discrepancy between content and form and a lack of recognition of students' digital competence. This result is supported by the students' digital representations dominated by verbal writing, seemingly random choice of visual text parts (year 6), and paper and pen practices combined with digital writing and voice recording (year 3).

The preliminary findings confirm the need for continued work to address the challenges identified in the projects initial survey: 1) alignment in teaching and assessing students' digital multimodal meaning-making, 2) teachers' genre knowledge and preparedness for use of digital tools.

Keywords: Design for teaching; Design for learning; Digital representations; Multimodality

References

Anderson, T., & Shattuck, J. (2012). Design-based research: A decade of progress in education research?. *Educational researcher*, 41(1), 16-25.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X11428813>

Kress, G. R. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. Taylor & Francis.

Selander, S. (2022). Designs in and for learning. A theoretical framework. In L. Björklund Boistrup & S. Selander (Eds), *Designs for Research, Teaching and Learning. A Framework for Future Education*.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003096498>

Sofkova Hashemi, S., & Spante, M. (2016). *Den didaktiska designens betydelse: IT-didaktiska modeller och ramvillkor*. [The significance of didactic design: IT-didactic models and frames] I *Kollaborativ undervisning i digital skolmiljö* (pp. 125–135). Gleerups.

2. Designing and teaching reading of multimodal digital texts in secondary school classroom practices

Lisa Molin, University of Gothenburg

Anna-Lena Godhe, Jönköping University and Malmö University

Broader representations and multimodal communication are at the core of many secondary school classroom practices today, for example as students use YouTube, digital textbooks, or other digital resources for their learning. This raises questions of how teaching increasingly may guide students in understanding the meaning-making potential of digital multimodal texts. Practice-centered, collaborative research projects potentially contribute to increase our current knowledge in this matter (McKenney & Reeves, 2014). The aim of this small-scale study is therefore to involve both teachers and researchers to investigate how teaching may integrate aspects of digital multimodal texts within literacy classroom practices. The work was framed by theories of multiliteracies (New London Group, 2000) and a social semiotic perspective on meaning making (Jewitt et al., 2016).

The study took place in 2022-2023 and involved two teachers in two urban, Swedish, secondary schools, their students (n=82) and two researchers. Focus was on the joint design and the actual teaching of lessons. The joint design was guided by instructional models proposing how to integrate aspects of digital multimodal texts in teaching. The data comprises written lesson plans, reflections, and audio recordings from the joint design sessions and video observations from six lessons.

Based on a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), the preliminary findings indicate that the selection of text is crucial when applying various aspects of the instructional models and that students' opportunities to learn relate to their prior experience and knowledge. Potential implications of this study are that the changing nature of texts and literacy need to be taken into consideration and continuously negotiated when integrating aspects of multimodal digital texts in teaching. Moreover, the current needs and experiences of teachers and the students with whom they work need to be considered.

Keywords: Multimodal digital texts; Instruction; Secondary education

References

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 11(4), 589-597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>

- Jewitt, C., Bezemer, J., & O'Halloran, K. (2016). *Introducing multimodality*. Routledge.
- McKenney, S., & Reeves, T. C. (2014). Educational design research. In: Spector, J., Merrill, M., Elen, J., Bishop, M. (Eds.) *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology*. Springer
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3185-5_11
- New London Group (2000). A pedagogy of multiliteracies. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Red.). *Multiliteracies. Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. Routledge.

3. The construction of interactive and multimodal reading in school — a performative, collaborative and dynamic reading

Linnéa Stenliden, Linköping University

Ulrika Christina Bodén, Linköping University

In school, it has always been important to consider what being literate implies and reflect upon possible redefinitions (Walsh, 2010). Currently, it has become essential that students turn into competent readers of not only linear text but also texts in different forms, constructed by both a variety modes and an interactive fluidity as is the case with interactive data visualisations (cf Bodén & Stenliden, 2019; Serafini, 2012). Such information-rich and interactive texts offer possibilities for students to find correlations, draw conclusions and gain insights, but they also generate complexities concerning how to 'read' multimodal information on a screen.

This study aims to explore how 13-15-year old students and data visualisations interact and shape the reading practice. Inspired by Design-Based Research, interventions were designed and conducted in two social science secondary classrooms in Sweden. The emerging interactions between the interactive data visualisations and the students were video captured. A socio-material semiotic approach guides the analyses of how interactions between both the social and material actors (the interactive visualisations, the written text, the teachers, students, etc.) interact in the reading process, as such theoretical underpinning requires a focus on the involvement of all actors' actions. Hence, it is the connections between how these actors are woven together by their actions, producing a reading network, that is central (Latour, 2005).

The results show a reading characterised by being performative, collaborative, and dynamic. A combination of visuals and text supports the reading. However, visuals such as colour, highlighting and movement dominantly attract students' attention, while written text often becomes subordinate and sometimes even 'invisible'. Hence, this paper argues that it is vital for teachers to didactically support students' visual reading skills.

Keywords: Multimodal interactive texts; Visual literacy; Secondary school; Socio-material relations

References

- Bodén, U., & Stenliden, L. (2019). Emerging Visual Literacy through Enactments by Visual Analytics and Students. *Designs for Learning*, 11(1), 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.16993/dfl.108>
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford University Press.
- Serafini, F. (2012). Expanding the four resources model: Reading visual and multi-modal texts. *Pedagogies: An international journal*, 7(2), 150–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2012.656347>
- Walsh, M. (2010). Multimodal literacy: What does it mean for classroom practice? *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 33(3), 211–239. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03651836>

Time and Space in Multimodal Discourse: Examining their Co-patterning and its Implications for Teaching and Learning

(Chair: Emilia Djonov)

Abstract

Time and space are fundamental dimensions in both the design of multimodal texts and all social and semiotic practices, including teaching and learning. Research on multimodality has long acknowledged their role in structuring multimodal discourse (e.g. Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2021) and proposed frameworks for the analysis of time as a resource for orchestrating multimodal interaction and creating rhythm (e.g. Van Leeuwen 2011), of space in filmic texts and built environments, including spaces for learning such as museums (Stenglin, 2009; Ravelli & McMurtrie, 2016), and of both time and space as elements of social practice and their recontextualisation (or, transformation when social practices are represented) in discourse (Van Leeuwen, 2008).

The three papers in this panel extend previous research by examining the co-patterning of time and space, as elements of social practice and/or principles for multimodal design, in three different kinds of multimodal environments, including active learning classrooms in university settings (Wu), English language learning apps for preschoolers (Tan, Djonov & Chik) and audio-visual and transmedia narratives (Tseng & Djonov) with a critical focus on the implications of their co-patterning for teaching and learning.

Keywords: Time and space; Designs for learning

References

- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2021 [1996, 2006]). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design (3rd ed.)*. Routledge.
- Ravelli, L. J., & McMurtrie, R. J. (2016). *Multimodality in the built environment: Spatial discourse analysis*. Routledge.
- Stenglin, M. K. (2009). Space odyssey: towards a social semiotic model of three-dimensional space. *Visual Communication*, 8(1), 35-64.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2011). Rhythm and multimodal semiosis. In S. Dreyfus, S. Hood, & M. Stenglin (Eds.), *Semiotic Margins* (pp. 168-176). Continuum.

Presentations

1. Are “Active Learning Classrooms” really active? A multimodal critical investigation of classroom design and performance in an Australian context

Xiaoqin Wu, Southwest University

This presentation explores the co-patterning of space and time and its implication for pedagogy in the so-called “Active Learning Classrooms” (i.e. built pedagogic environments that are distinguishable by an inclusion of media technology, shared tables and wheeled chairs) in tertiary settings. The emergence of “Active Learning Classrooms” worldwide responds to an institutional promotion of democratic and participatory pedagogy. This ideology is further infused and re-contextualized in the material design of the classroom which foregrounds certain pedagogic styles over others by prescribing spatial-temporal patterns situated within that space. Moving beyond a sole focus on classroom design in previous research (e.g. Roderick, 2021), this presentation provides a practice-based framework (van Leeuwen, 2008; Wu, 2022) to analyze the interaction of body and space in performance. I examine both the design (e.g. layout, furniture and its arrangement, distribution of learning resources) and use of “Active Learning Classrooms” (e.g. teachers’ embodied movement, students’ use of whiteboards for collective writing) in different film studies lessons in an Australian context. A spatial discourse analysis (Ravelli & McMurtrie, 2016) of classroom design reveals that beneath the apparent student power, “Active Learning Classrooms” in fact legitimize a neo-liberal order and the maintenance of educational landscape by commodifying classroom and prioritizing citizenship and employability. An analysis of classroom performance (Wu, 2022) finds that the spatial-temporal patterns prescribed by the classroom design is not deterministic, for teachers and students can subvert the meaning potential and construct their own space dynamically in their performance. These findings demonstrate how a dynamic and interactive perspective on the inter-relationship of time and space engenders a contingent point of view, whereby time-space are seething with emergent properties, but also stabilized by regular patterns.

Keywords: Multimodality; Pedagogy; Design and performance; Neo-liberalism; “Active Learning Classrooms”

References

- Ravelli, L. J., & McMurtrie, R. J. (2015). *Multimodality in the built environment: Spatial discourse analysis*. Routledge.
- Roderick, I. (2021). Recontextualising employability in the active learning classroom. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 42(2), 234-250.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wu, X. Q. (2022). *Space and practice: A multifaceted understanding of the designs and the uses of “Active Learning Classrooms.”* Doctoral thesis, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

2. Space and time in the design of children's apps for learning English: A critical multimodal analysis

Rongle Tan, Macquarie University

Emilia Djonov, Macquarie University

Alice Chik, Macquarie University

Space and time are significant dimensions in the design of learning apps. Although studies of layout templates in software have shown their shaping influence on meaning-making and the representation of knowledge (Djonov & Van Leeuwen, 2013), and the timing of learning activities is identified as a “design parameter” that impacts children’s interaction with learning apps (Falloon, 2013), multimodal studies are yet to systematically examine the co-patterning of space and time in the design of learning apps. Taking a step in this direction, this study adopts a critical multimodal perspective towards software (Djonov & van Leeuwen, 2018) and examines the layout of learning units and temporal control built into learning activities in two of the most popular preschool-level English language and literacy learning apps in China – *iHuman ABC* and *Khan Academy Kids*. Specifically, we compare the multimodal design of similar learning units and activities (e.g. about animals, the alphabet) in the two apps alongside promotional discourses about the apps (on each company’s website, the top 15 most viewed promotional articles about each app published on *WeChat*, and the iOS App Store reviews from 2018 to 2022). Preliminary findings suggest that while *iHuman ABC* adopts an educator-centred approach with a predetermined linear learning path and personalised ‘time summons’ (i.e., timing imposed on others from authoritative persons in certain contexts) (Van Leeuwen, 2008) to control children’s learning pace, *Khan Academy Kids* champions a child-centred approach by offering an open-to-explore layout and resources for children to create their own schedules and manage how they spend their time while interacting with the apps. This study suggests that the spatial and temporal organisation of the apps reflects contrasting cultural values about children as technology users and English language learners and may influence the learning experiences of preschool-aged children in Chinese contexts.

Keywords: Layout; Timing; English learning apps; Critical multimodal discourse analysis

References

- Djonov, E., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2013). Between the grid and composition: Layout in PowerPoint’s design and use. *Semiotica*, 2013(197), 1-34.
- Djonov, E., & van Leeuwen, T. (2018). Social media as semiotic technology and social practice: the case of ResearchGate’s design and its potential to transform social practice. *Social Semiotics*, 28(5), 641-664. doi:10.1080/10350330.2018.1504715
- Falloon, G. (2013). Young students using iPads: App design and content influences on their learning pathways. *Computers & Education*, 68, 505-521. doi:[10.1016/j.compedu.2013.06.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2013.06.006)
- van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.

3. Discourse-semantics of time and space and their instantiation in children's audio-visual narratives

Chiao-I Tseng, University of Gothenburg
Emilia Djonov, Macquarie University

Motivated by the high value attributed to narrative and audio-visual media as vehicles for fostering engagement in learning, and time and space as fundamental dimensions of both multimodal design and cognition, we introduce a novel model for systematically analysing how temporal and spatial discourse-semantic relations co-pattern in audio-visual narratives for children. The model brings together frameworks we have developed for examining space (Tseng, 2017) and time in narrative (Tseng & Djonov, 2022), and will be illustrated through our analyses of segments from children's film and TV shows characterised by complexity in their representation and use of time (e.g. flashback, temporal ellipsis) and space (e.g. disconnected space; implied space). Building on our exploratory study of children's comprehension of time in film (Tseng & Djonov, 2023), we will then consider the multimodal co-instantiation of complex temporal and spatial relations in audio-visual narratives, with a focus on its potential to support or hinder children's narrative comprehension. We conclude with a discussion of the value of the model for the analysis, empirical evaluation, selection and design of audiovisual as well as transmedia (which present the same content in different formats, e.g. comic, interactive or traditional picture book, film) narratives for children.

Keywords: Time, Space; Audiovisual and transmedia narratives; Children's comprehension

References

- Tseng, C. (2017) Analysing narrative space in moving images: A multimodal discourse approach to narrative complexity and transmedial comparison. *Multimodal Communication* 6, 61--82.
- Tseng, C., & Djonov, E. (2022) Children's comprehension of time in audiovisual narratives: A multimodal discourse and empirical approach. *Linguistics and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101144>.

Multimodal Critical Studies from Latin America: Current Trends in Media, Politics and Education

(Chair: Laura Flores)

Abstract

Unquestionably, there are seminal works that have influenced how researchers conduct critical multimodal studies worldwide. Latin American researchers have significantly developed a critical approach towards meaning-making processes that normalize inequality and discrimination in different public settings such as the classroom, a park, or the street. As a result, this critical stance allows us to reconsider the kind of research questions we ask ourselves in our regional contexts (Esposito et al, 2019), while also adapting and revising our empirical frameworks to foreground the uniqueness and particularities of this region. Hence, this panel encompasses four different studies that address current concerns in media, politics, and education, recontextualize multimodal theories to serve Latin American needs, or highlight asymmetrical power and ideological relations in multimodal data from Latin America. First, there is a presentation on the visual representation of “eyes” in public spaces regarded as a discursive multimodal practice that denounces state violence towards citizens after Chile’s social outbreak of October 18, 2019. Second, semiotic landscapes in multilingual educational settings are explored to identify how different cultures and languages are (re)presented and constructed by the school communities. The third presentation focuses on a case study based on a corpus of twenty-first-century doctoral and master theses at the *Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação* (PPGEDU) da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil, in order to explore the ways in which they challenge dominant discourses in the academic context where they are produced. Finally, the last presentation addresses visual and verbal meaning-making in Photo-stories on Instagram by National Geographic *Your Shot* and its recontextualization to EAL classes in a Latin American country. In all, these presentations aim to promote local understandings of the potential of multimodal studies and the culturally appropriate recontextualizations carried out by Latin American researchers in different spaces as a contribution to the current and future challenges in this region.

Keywords: Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies; Latin America; Chilean Social Outbreak; Multimodal Literacies.

Presentations

1. **Eyes in the street: Multimodal discursive practices as a political denouncement**

Giselle Melo-Letelier, The Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso

Carolina Badillo, The University of Wollongong

Laura Flores, State Institute of Teacher Education

Liliana Vasquez-Rocca, The Andrés Bello National University

Gerardo Godoy-Echiburu, The Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso

This presentation aims to examine how the representation of "eyes" in public space, as a semiotic intervention itself as well as exposed to the permanent intervention and even erasure, functions as a multimodal discursive practice. This semiotic practice took place during Chile's social outbreak, which consisted of daily street protests all over the country, for five months, starting on October 18, 2019. In this period, violent police attacks caused eye injuries to 400 people. This study is underpinned by critical multimodal discourse studies (Fairclough, 2013) and social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1988). More specifically, the presentation explores the materiality (Bateman, 2017) of the representations of eyes in their public locations. We start with compositional meanings to later on account for representational and interactive meanings (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). The data was collected by a pedestrian/researcher who took 88 photos. These photos captured eyes in drawings, stencils, embroideries, interventions to statues, walls, pavements, metallic blinds, and signposts in urban public spaces such as streets, sidewalks, parking lots, squares, commercial storefronts, and others. This data has led us to address the following questions: How has the representation of eyes in Chilean public spaces during the social outbreak in 2019-2020 contributed to the formation of a discourse on crimes against humanity in Chile's recent history? Other questions that guide this analysis are: How does the Grammar of Visual Design enable us to unveil the structure of discursive practice in public space and what adaptations are required? The main results of the study show that the role of the representations of eyes during the outbreak in the Chilean urban semiotic landscape is a denouncement of state violence against civilians that points to social-urban awareness and works as a public and collective memory device.

Keywords: Public space; Multimodal critical discourse studies; Visual grammar; Eye representation; Chilean social outbreak

References

- Bateman, J., Wildeuer, J., & Hippala, T. (2017) *Multimodality*. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Routledge.
- Hodge, R. & Kress, G. (1988) *Social Semiotics*. Cornell University Press.
- Kress, G. R., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2020). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. 3ed Routledge.

2. Semiotic landscapes in multilingual educational contexts: A case study

Carolina Pérez-Arredondo, O'Higgins University

Enrique Droguett-Ramírez, O'Higgins University

This study seeks to identify how interculturality is discursively constructed in multicultural schools through Semiotic Landscapes. Particularly, we analyze what discourses are reproduced, maintained, and/or resisted by the school community using their schoolsapes. From a Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies perspective, this research draws on concepts such as interculturality, materiality, and semiotic landscapes to identify the inclusion and exclusion of cultural diversity in multilingual school settings and its impact on children's literacy processes. To this end, we worked with five different schools with a high proportion of international students in Chile to explore their school settings, namely, their classrooms, schoolyard, and common spaces. Furthermore, these schools have a high concentration of Haitian students, whose primary language is Haitian Creole and not Spanish, which hinders not only their learning processes but also their interpersonal relationships within the school community. The corpus consists of 189 photographs taken in December 2022 which were analyzed using Ledin and Machin's framework for multimodal critical discourse analysis (2018, 2019). In particular, we explore the recontextualization processes of different languages and cultures to identify how these are conceptualized and enacted by the school communities and institutional agencies (Walsh, 2010). Preliminary results evidence the tendency of bottom-up social actors (i.e., students and the school community) to include and legitimize the coexistence of different cultures and languages such as Creole and Mapudungun. They also aim to promote certain values such as respect and tolerance as well as certain social practices that are valued in educational contexts (i.e., discipline). This bottom-up approach to creating multicultural and multilingual schoolsapes contrasts with top-down signs that are exclusively monolingual. These are replications of legal directions such as legal protocols but they are not reorganized to fit in the new educational context.

Keywords: Semiotic landscapes; Multilingualism; Immigration; Multimodal Critical Discourse Studies

References

- Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2018). *Doing visual analysis: From theory to practice*. SAGE Publications.
- Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2019). Doing critical discourse studies with multimodality: From metafunctions to materiality. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 16(5), 497–513.
- Walsh, C. (2009). Interculturalidad crítica y educación intercultural. En J. Viaña, L. Tapia y C. Walsh (Eds.), *Construyendo Interculturalidad Crítica* (pp. 75-96). La Paz: Instituto Internacional de Integración del Convenio Andrés Bello.

3. Exploring the semiotic potential of multimodal alternative scholarship

Mariana Mussetta, The National University of Villa María

The academy is witnessing the emergence of certain textualities that constitute a problematization of the fossilized forms of writing (Blanca, 2005, p. 74), of the notion of academicity as a naturalized textual trait (Molinari, 2022), and of the linguistic mode still prevailing overwhelmingly over other forms of expression. Such texts strategically subvert hegemonic generic conventions, and in so doing they can become meta-reflexive, as ostensibly self-conscious texts; iconic, as they often take the form of what they are about; performative, as sometimes the text not only says but at the same time emulates what it says; and primarily multimodal, as they often displace the supremacy of words and are constituted in the combination of diverse semiotic resources (Adó & Mussetta 2020; Mussetta, Adó & Peixoto, 2021). From this perspective, they focus on the visible presence of the process in the text, highlight the voice of the researcher-writer-communicator, and affirm the potential of resemiotization operations. In the tensions between center and periphery, the disruptive character of these texts tends to place them on the margins of the academy, or else they are associated exclusively with artistic/poetic exploration. Yet, the semiotic resources used in the processes of inquiry and academic communication have an impact on the findings (Estima, 2020; Molinari, 2019, Sousanis, 2015). This presentation will focus on a case study based on a corpus of twenty-first-century doctoral and master theses at o Programa de Pós-graduação em Educação (PPGEDU), Faculdade de Educação da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil, in order to explore the ways in which they multimodally exploit their generic conventions to challenge dominant discourses in the academic context where they are produced.

Keywords Alternative Scholarship; Multimodal Academic Writing; Academicity; Meta-reflexivity.

References

- Adó, M. D. L., & Mussetta, M. (2020). Apropriação Transgressiva e Multimodalidade na Pesquisa Acadêmica: propostas de escrita. *Revista Teias*, 21(63), 265-281.
- Molinari, J. (2022). *What makes writing academic: Rethinking theory for practice*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Mussetta, M., Adó, M. D. L., & Peixoto, B. (2021). La escritura académica fuera de sí: la multimodalidad como potencia expansiva. *Revista Educação e Cultura Contemporânea*, 18(54), 382-400.
- Sousanis, N. (2015). *Unflattening*. Harvard University Press.

4. Towards critically understanding and producing multimodal discourse in the EAL context

Cristina Maria Boccia, The National University of Cuyo

Significant changes in how we enact social activities in our culture have led to the appearance of new genres and new multimodal semiotic resources for making meanings (Kress 2010) all at the service of the communicational interests of users. Communicating effectively goes beyond reproducing conventionalized genres,

register, and semantic choices. It requires the deliberate ‘design’ of multimodal texts (Kress 2010) by individual users. This constitutes a literacy challenge for all levels of instruction, including the teaching and learning of English as an additional language (EAL). Explicitly teaching to design effective multimodal texts first involves a critical understanding of multimodal discourse by teachers that can be, in turn, explicitly taught to students. This study analyses 20 photostories, an emerging multimodal genre published on Instagram by National Geographic *Your Shot* and recontextualizes its teaching potential to EAL classes in a local, Latin American context in Mendoza, Argentina. Photostories are brief image nuclear media stories (Caple, 2008) that have enormous applied potential for EAL teaching and learning: they can be adapted to different levels of instruction, varied subject-matter interests or needs and typically construe high-impact cultural values the writer-photographer wishes readers-viewers to align with (Zappavigna, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2021). How these texts construe powerful values by means of interactional visual resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Kress, 2010; Painter, Martin & Unsworth, 2013) and evaluative verbal ones (Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2007; White, 2011) used both independently and collaboratively is the main focus of this paper. The results obtained can be productively applied to the EAL teaching and learning materials that will facilitate EAL students’ critical understanding and production of texts that effectively express communal values that are significant to them.

Keywords: Critical understanding and production of multimodal discourse; Instagram photo-stories; EAL teaching and learning

References

- Caple, Helen. *Intermodal Relations in Image Nuclear News Stories*. In L. Unsworth (Ed.). *Multimodal Texts & Multiliteracies: Semiotic Theory and Practical Pedagogy*. National Conference of the Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics Association. University of New England, Armidale, NSW, 2006.
- Halliday, M. A. K., and Matthiessen, C. *Halliday’s Introduction to Functional Grammar*. 4th ed., Oxon: Routledge, 2014.
- Kress, G. *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. *Reading Images: The grammar of visual design* (2^o ed.). London: Routledge, 2006.

Towards a Diverse, Equal, and Inclusive Discursive World: A Multimodal Approach to Identity Construction Across Media

(Chairs: Jenifer Ho & Esterina Nervino)

Abstract

The discourse we are exposed to frames the way we see the world and vice versa. Recently, the debate on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has been spurring multimodal discourse across different media giving voice to underrepresented communities. In our panel, we explore how affordances across different media enable underrepresented communities through an enlarged semiotic toolkit for identity construction in a globalized world, and how they make creative uses of the resources available to them. From changes in advertising made to cope with corporate pressure and consumer demands to the need for government to ensure inclusion of individual citizens, and new ways of conceptualizing inclusivity, the panel will present a diversified set of examples spanning different social actors and how they negotiate their inclusion into society through multimodal construction of their identities. The panel will also serve as a platform to understand that diversity, equity, and inclusion is not limited to the conventional understanding of the term, but it expands to communities that have to overcome challenges to get equal opportunities. Multimodal contexts and practices addressed in the panel include: 1) corporate discourse about DEI; 2) COVID-19 vaccination video public service advertisements catering for the needs of diverse communities within a society; 3) the livestreaming of wanghong girls and how modern and traditional attributes are hybridized to empower women, but paradoxically reinforcing traditional gender relations; 4) the self-branding and empowerment of online 'non-native' English teachers who have traditionally been marginalized in English language teaching based on dominant language ideologies. The common thread connecting these research contexts is that of DEI, and how identities are multimodally constructed. This panel brings together voices from researchers at different career stages and starts a much-needed conversation on how multimodality can help us make sense of contemporary socio-cultural phenomena such as diversity, equity, and inclusion, and how it can contribute to the kind of social futures we envisage designing.

Keywords: Multimodality; Identity; Diversity; Inclusion; Media

Presentations

1. Towards diverse, equal, and inclusive marketing: a multimodal approach to luxury branding discourse in the social media

Esterina Nervino, City University of Hong Kong

Luxury has always been defined by its properties of exclusivity, uniqueness, high quality, and limited access (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Semantically, these properties are bound together as a privilege for the very few that could afford it and therefore signalling social stratification (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2017). Recently, the sector has been subject to significant social pressures during the Black Lives

Matter (BLM) movement events, which raised consumers' social concerns regarding the role of luxury in spurring the discourse about social inequalities. Following these events, luxury companies had to quickly respond to mitigate reputational damages and, more specifically, address the sector's lack of diversity and inclusion. This study aims at investigating how the events of the BLM movement worked as a catalyst to turn luxury branding discourse into a discourse of brand activism concerning those social issues. The multimodal analysis includes 17 Instagram posts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; 2006) shared by luxury brands in 2020 to support BLM and it expands to an analysis of the posts shared in 2021 to understand the ramification of the derived narratives into other aspects of social inequality within a corpus of 215 Instagram posts. The analysis examines the role of the semiotic resources involved in the meaning-making process such as written text, images, and colour which enable the coexistence of luxury with discourse promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. The findings demonstrate that the brands showed a timing response by supporting the movement through viral discourse built through black screens and hashtags and pledging donations to the cause. With time, what was a crisis management response during the pandemic provided the foundations to revisit communication strategies and values that resonate with consumers and create a favourable image of the brand through disseminating discourse about diversity and inclusion.

Keywords: Diversity; Inclusion; Branding; Multimodality; Marketing

References

- Kapferer, J. N., & Bastien, V. (2012). *The luxury strategy. Break the rules of marketing to build luxury brands*. London and Philadelphia: Kogan Page Limited.
- Kress, G., van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: New York: Arnold; Oxford University Press.
- Kress, G., van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images - the grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.
- Thurlow, C., & Jaworski, A. (2017). Introducing elite discourse: The rhetorics of status, privilege, and power. *Social Semiotics*, 27(3), 243–254.

2. A multimodal social semiotic analysis of Hong Kong's COVID-19 vaccination video public service advertisements: Unveiling the construction of inclusivity and values in Hong Kong

Karen Choi, University College London

Since 2020, people around the world have been affected by the turbulence of the pandemic, COVID-19. To combat the pandemic, the Hong Kong (HK) government has implemented a territory-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme which encourages members of the public to get vaccinated. This is because it is believed that getting vaccinated is the only way to move beyond the pandemic. To promote the Vaccination Programme, the HK government has set up a COVID-19 thematic website and sophisticatedly published a variety of COVID-19 vaccination video public service advertisements (PSAs) via different media platforms, such as television, social media platforms and YouTube channels, to educate and

encourage citizens to get vaccinated. The government has strategically published video PSAs to reach out to different communities within its territory. This showcases that the HK government does not only divide members of the public into different communities but also uses language as a vehicle to build an inclusive territory. This presentation is going to make visible how a message of inclusivity is conveyed through the multimodal construction of cultural values realised in the COVID-19 vaccination video PSAs. First, I am going to map out various COVID-19 vaccination video PSAs to showcase the different strategies used to construe inclusivity within the territory. Then, due to time constraints, I am going to employ Kress's (2010) multimodal social semiotic theory and Burn's (2013) theory of kineikonic mode to analyse the first-ever published COVID-19 vaccination video PSA. Bezemer and Kress's (2015) four principles of recontextualisation will also be used to map out the modes and to understand the interest of the meaning makers as well as to demonstrate how different values are made visible through the orchestration of modes in the video PSA. This presentation concludes that the COVID-19 vaccination video PSA not only educates and persuades citizens in HK to get vaccinated but also unveils the communication strategies that the HK government employs to reach out to specific communities within the territory, that is constructing inclusivity through the use of language and embracing diverse cultural values such as collectivism in traditional Chinese culture and individualism in the Western culture.

Keywords: COVID-19; Public service advertisements; Multimodality; Inclusivity; Culture

References

- Bezemer, J., & Kress, G. (2015). *Multimodality, Learning and Communication: A social semiotic frame*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315687537>
- Burn, A. (2013). The Kineikonic mode: Towards a multimodal approach to moving image media. NCRM Working Paper. NCRM, London, UK (Unpublished).
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. Taylor & Francis.

3. Chinese postfeminism and wanghong Girls' multimodal identity performance in livestreaming

William Feng, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

This study adopts a social semiotic approach to investigate a popular wanghong (micro-celebrity) girl's multimodal identity performance in her livestreaming videos. I consider identity as a set of evaluative attributes that are enacted through one's verbal and nonverbal performance on the one hand, and are shaped by the broader socio-cultural context on the other. The analysis shows the predominance of modern values of individualism, career-orientedness, physical attractiveness, and cheerfulness, but these are entangled with traditional values of filial piety, inferiority, purity, and patriotism. On the one hand, traditional values are often conveyed in the rhetoric of individualistic choices to highlight that the values are embraced as part of her modern identity; on the other hand, modern values are often legitimized or mitigated by traditional values (e.g., making money to fulfill filial piety, and getting her grandfather's support for her dream pursuit). The social semiotic analysis of

the wanghong girl's multimodal performance as resources for identity construction offers a kaleidoscopic view of her fragmented and multifaceted identity as a marketable entity and enriches the understanding of the diversity of postfeminism in different socio-cultural contexts. The hybridization of modern and traditional attributes in Chinese postfeminism contributes to gender equality by empowering women, but paradoxically reinforces traditional gender relations at the same time.

Keywords: Chinese postfeminism; Wanghong girl; Multimodal identity performance; Livestreaming

4. The multimodal construction of the 'non-native' English teacher on digital platforms

Jenifer Ho, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

In the field of English language teaching (ELT), the discourse of 'native' and 'non-native' English teachers have been centred around issues related to expertise in teaching English, pedagogical knowledge, and more recently, there is an increase in attention on equity and social justice (Jenks & Lee, 2020). Alongside the trend of ELT becoming less institutionalised and increasingly moving to online platforms, 'non-native' English teachers teaching in online contexts face a new set of possibilities and challenges with the construction of their 'non-native' English teacher identity (Curran & Jenks, 2022). While teaching English online may sometimes expose them to critical comments which are related to their 'non-native' identity, affordances of the digital media allow them to multimodally (re)construct a discourse of transformation and empowerment, which leads to discourses of 'success'. To date, few studies have focused on the multimodal construction of 'non-native' online English teacher identity, especially in online contexts where teachers and learners coming from different linguacultural backgrounds meet. In this short presentation, I analyse how one 'non-native' English teacher make use of disembodied modes afforded by the medium, such as camera angle, setting, background music, as well as embodied modes such as postures, gestures, and facial expressions in an orchestrated way to construct her 'non-native' English teacher identity as a process of transition and empowerment. Through a multimodal analysis (Kress, 2010) of the videos created by the teacher, the data demonstrates how multimodal resources complement the verbal narrative in a productive way to portray the challenges, pride, and transformation of 'non-native' English teachers. This talk further argues that the enlarged semiotic toolkit of the medium, as well as the affordances of digital platforms enable groups that were previously underrepresented to disseminate their stories and experiences to a global audience.

Keywords: English language teaching; Video; Online teacher identity

References

Curran, N. M., & Jenks, C. (2022). Gig Economy Teaching: On the Importance and Dangers of Self-branding in Online Markets. *Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amac019>

Jenks, C. J., & Lee, J. W. (2020). Native speaker saviorism: a racialized teaching ideology. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 17(3), 186–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15427587.2019.1664904>

Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. Taylor & Francis.

Multimodal Interaction and Health Discourse

(Chair: Lihe Huang)

Abstract

A substantial body of research in multimodality has explored how people naturally interact in different contexts. Authentic interaction in health care settings is mediated by a range of modalities, including speech, facial expression, gaze, gesture, and body movement. Therefore, multimodal interaction in health discourse covers a wide range of scope: it is the case in the diagnostic and treatment process in hospitals, clinics and nursing homes; it is true of the phenomenon of pragmatic compensation in language disorders in all age groups; it is true of power relations and interlocutors' identities in healthcare communication constructed through various modes; and it is, of course, true of interactions between various stakeholders in different healthcare settings, whether they are face-to-face, at a distance or online. Additionally, health discourse should not be studied in isolation, but be linked to the context and the speakers' behaviors based on authentic data from actual language, interactions, and practice.

This panel, therefore, will offer scholars fresh research perspectives on addressing various healthcare issues via an integrated paradigm of multimodal study. The speakers will draw on several approaches, showcasing the importance of understanding the applicability of different methodological and epistemological "takes" on multimodality in the healthcare domain, including multimodal compensation in interviews of older adults with dementia, construction of multimodal corpus of performance of older adults in living experience, visualization of dementia and consequent social interpretations, and dental students' multimodal constructions of older adults' identities. In light of key developments and challenges in the world today, this panel will also discuss possibilities for future multimodal interaction and health discourse research.

Keywords: Health discourse; Language disorders; Multimodal interaction

Presentations

1. Pragmatic impairment and multimodal compensation in older adults with dementia

Yiran Che, Tongji University
Lihe Huang, Tongji University

Compensation emerges when older adults encounter pragmatic impairment. Though theories and experiments are plentiful in pragmatic impairments, discussions about compensation, especially multimodal performance, need further exploration. To fill the gap, this paper first explores the performance of multimodal compensation of Chinese older adults in pragmatic disorders and its corresponding pragmatic functions. This study then distinguishes three types of compensatory performances by giving examples from Multimodal Corpus of Gerontic Discourse constructed by the authors' team: compensation from inter- and intra- personal perspectives, compensation across language levels, and compensation across

semiotic systems and modalities. These performances are on account of interconnection among multiple sensory organs and their neural networks. To further illustrate the mechanism, this study briefly introduces the mechanism of brain adaptation, which is the overall neural mechanism of pragmatic compensation. The exploration of performance and mechanism of multimodal compensation in the interaction of older adults not only verifies and expands brain adaptation and compensation theory, but also may prompt the communicative efficiency of older adults when encountering pragmatic impairments.

Keywords: Pragmatic impairment; Compensation; Multimodality; Neurocognitive mechanism

References

- Huang, Lihe, Yang, Jingjing & Liu, Zhuoya. (2021). Pragmatic compensation for the elders with cognitive impairment: a speech act perspective. *Chinese Journal of Language Policy and Planning* (6): 33-44.
- Perkins, M. (2007). *Pragmatic Impairment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stainton, R. (2011). Pragmatic impairments. *International Review of Pragmatics*, 3(1): 85-97.
- Zhou, Deyu & Huang, Lihe. (2023). Performance and Mechanism of Multimodal Compensation in Pragmatic Impairment. *Modern Foreign Languages*. 46(1): 15-2.

2. Modeling linguistic performance of older adults in living experience: Constructing multimodal corpus of gerontic discourse

Deyu Zhou, Tongji University

Studies on ageing in language serve as an essential perspective for investigating human beings' linguistic performance and cognitive changes. Critical issues of linguistic study of aging include the linguistic features of older adults' communication and its psycholinguistic explanation. With the development of qualitative methods in the study of language and ageing, more researchers realized that corpus-based or corpus-driven studies of language ageing with a designed cohort was important for discovering older adults' language change. The multimodal studies of interaction of discourse, prosody and gesture of both healthy and cognitively-impaired older adults receive a growing number of scholars' attention. This promotes the development of multimodal corpus development of language ageing study.

In this regard, we have started to construct the Multimodal Corpus of Gerontic Discourse (MCGD) in China since 2003, with a cohort study design. Discourses in MCGD now reflect the physiological, psychological, and social health status of today's older adults in different cohorts, and provide references for the ageing studies, on the linguistic and non-linguistic levels, respectively.

This presentation 1) explains the fundamentals of model linguistic performance of older adults in living experience, especially in the "whole person" perspective; 2) systematically explains the idea of designing and modeling method of the MCGD; 3) comprehensively introduces its construction scheme, including data collecting,

data processing, and data inspecting and evaluating; 4) the present information and future development of MCGD; 5) shows our plan in interface studies (with other clinical multimodal data (fMRI, etc.) collected in MCGD.

Keywords: Multimodal corpus; Older adult; Discourse, Speech act, Life span

References

- Baltes, P. B. (1987). Theoretical propositions of life-span developmental psychology: On the dynamics between growth and decline. *Developmental Psychology*, 23(5), 611–626. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.23.5.611>
- Gu, Y. (2009). From real-life situated discourse to video-stream data-mining: An argument for agent-oriented modeling for multimodal corpus compilation. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 14, 433-466. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ijcl.14.4.01gu>
- Leech, G. 1997. Introducing corpus annotation. In R. Garside, et al. (Eds.), *Corpus Annotation*. Addison Wesley Longman Limited. 1-18. ISBN 0582 29837 7
- Searle, J. 1979. *Expression and Meaning: studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511609213>

3. Dental students' constructions of older adults' identities in multimodal life stories and vlogs: A discourse analytic study incorporating membership Categorisation analysis

Ayeshah Syed, The University of Malaya

(Co-researchers: Joanna Yogaraj, David Yoong, Khor Hui Min, Jacob John, Nor Shafina Mohamed Nazari)

This presentation discusses Malaysian dental students' constructions of older adults' identities in three types of discourse data collected during a study in dental education. Amidst Malaysia's aging population, concerns that future dentists may be unprepared to engage with older patients have prompted introduction of various teaching approaches, including service learning and intergenerational engagement. While we aimed to explore life-story documentation as a teaching approach to promote dental students' empathy and soft skills, our data provided the opportunity to examine the students' use of membership categories in their discourse about the older adults. Within Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) (Sacks, 1992; Stokoe, 2012) deployment of social categories can be viewed as demonstration of common-sense knowledge about social and moral organization (Fitzgerald & Houseley, 2015), related to social identities, such as age and gender.

Year 1 and Year 2 dental students (n=17) at a Malaysian university were paired with an older adult (n=8) to complete the life-story documentation task. After interviewing the older adult, the students created a multimodal life story, comprising a visual biography and a narrative write-up. The students also recorded response vlogs. Using discourse analysis, we analysed the data (8 visual biographies, 8 narratives and 17 vlogs), incorporating concepts from MCA to explore the categories deployed explicitly and implicitly by the dental students to describe the

older adults. Occupational and familial categorization were most salient across the data. In the biographies, past occupational identities and achievements were more visually emphasized than personal or current identities. In their vlogs, students often contrasted explicit old age categories against positive characteristics, such as still being active and contributing to society. Overall, the students' construction of the older adults aligned with positive aging discourses, including active aging and healthy aging. This may reflect expectations that dental students should demonstrate positive attitudes towards older adults but could also be seen as unrealistic portrayal of aging, or avoidance of discussing less 'positive' realities of aging such as illness. These insights could inform further training to better prepare dental students to engage with diverse groups of older adults.

Keywords: Life story documentation; Multimodal life stories; Older adult identity; Membership categorization analysis

References

- Fitzgerald, R., & Housley, W. (Eds.). (2015). *Advances in membership categorisation analysis*. Sage.
- Sacks, H. (1992). *Lectures on conversation: Volume I*. Blackwell.
- Stokoe, E. (2012). Moving forward with membership categorization analysis: Methods for systematic analysis. *Discourse studies*, 14(3), 277-303.

4. Visuals of dementia: The social interpretation of a health discourse

Pei Soo Ang, The University of Malaya

This presentation highlights how the visual health communication of dementia published in the Malaysian public domain could communicate or consequent in the social exclusion of people living with dementia. These visuals were analyzed employing the Visual Discourses of Disability framework (ViDD) (Ang and Knox, 2020); it is a visual framework that combines perspectives of critical social semiotics and disability studies. ViDD juxtaposes visuals on the perspectivising-personising cline with the enabling-disabling continuum. For analysis, a total of 432 images were sourced from (1) The Star newspaper, Malaysia's top mainstream English language newspaper (2012-2021); (2) website of Alzheimer's Disease Foundation Malaysia (ADFM), the national non-government organisation advocating for dementia issues (2019- 2021); and (3) website of the Ministry of Health Malaysia, the government body that oversees public health issues (2019-2021). Findings from the visual analyses were also corroborated with representatives of ADFM in a group interview. It was found that there is a predominance of stigmatised images, constructing dementia as a loss and deficit, thus depicting individuals in distanced suffering. Generic representations of people through stock images, somatised images of the hands, as well as abstract representations of brain degeneration and missing puzzle pieces were also prevalent. Images that perspectivise experiences of dementia may encourage awareness of this health issue but disabling visual choices may evoke negative social interpretations. Organisations should deliberate on the different visual elements which invoke empowerment, advocacy, handicapping and othering implications as outlined in ViDD. When capturing and publishing images of

dementia, it is necessary for choices which reflect reality but they should inculcate empathy and promote inclusivity.

Keywords: Dementia; Alzheimer's disease; Visual communication; Disability; Social exclusion

Reference

Ang, P. S., & Knox, J. S. (2020). Visualization of disability in news photographs: An analytical framework. *Visual Communication*. Advance online publication <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357220957051>

The Impact Potential of Organizational Semiotics

(Chair: Louise Ravelli)

Presentation

1. The Impact Potential of Organizational Semiotics

Louise Ravelli, The University of New South Wales

Theo van Leeuwen, University of Southern Denmark

Dennis Jancsary, Vienna University of Economics and Business

This panel discusses the impact potential of Organizational Semiotics, a neologism coined by Ravelli, van Leeuwen, Hoellerer and Jancsary (2023) to encompass the intersection of multimodal studies with organization studies. Organizations – be they public or private, large or small, for-profit or not – are inherently semiotic entities, complex assemblages of a wide range of multimodal communication practices, and thus there is much for multimodal scholarship to contribute. But while organization studies has recognized the potential contribution of multimodality for some time now (see for example, Hoellerer et al 2018, Hoellerer et al 2019), and while there have been numerous contributions of multimodal scholarship to various organizational fields (such as Bezemer et al 2019; Iedema 2003; Ledin and Machin 2016), explicit recognition of this intersection as a field in and of itself has been lacking. Reflection is needed on many issues, including the questions that need to be asked, and by whom; the nature of our role in relation to organizations; and the potential benefits and pitfalls of such engagement. In this panel, we take a conversational format to discuss the key components of the edited volume and to argue that by recognizing this field, the contributions of multimodal scholarship to a wide range of organizations and organizational issues can be maximised.

Keywords: Organization studies; Organizational semiotics; Multimodality

References

- Bezemer, J, G. Murtagh, and A. Cope. (2019). "Inspecting objects: Visibility Manoeuvres in laparoscopic surgery." In E. Reber, and C. Gerhardt (Eds.), *Embodied Activities in Face-to-Face and Mediated Settings*. London: Palgrave, 107–135.
- Hoellerer, M., Daudigeos, T. and Jancsary, D. (Eds), (2018) *Multimodality, Meaning, and Institutions*. (Research in the Sociology of Organizations, Vol. 54A). Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited,
- Hoellerer, M.A., van Leeuwen, T., Jancsary, D., Meyer, R., Andersen, T. and Vaara, E. (2019). *Visual and Multimodal Research in Organization and Management Studies*. London: Routledge
- Iedema, R. (2003). *Discourses of Post-bureaucratic Organization*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Ledin, P., and Machin, D. (2016). "Performance management discourse and the shift to an administrative logic of operation: A multimodal critical discourse analytical approach." *Text and Talk -An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language Discourse Communication Studies* 36(4): 445–467.

Ravelli, L.; van Leeuwen, T., Hoellerer, M. & Jancsary, D. (Eds). (2023).
Organizational Semiotics: Multimodal perspectives on organization
studies, London: Routledge.

Multimodality and Future Landscapes: Meaning Making, AI, Education, Assessment, and Ethics

(Chair: David Ruttenberg)

Abstract

In this panel we will discuss meaning-making in education in relation to new digital tools from our respective positions within multimodal research, bringing ethical perspectives into the conversation. Educational tools for meaning making in digital environments have been widely used during the last few decades. Technology offers continuously expanding possibilities for communicating and creating written texts, images, films, and more. These tools are available on phones and computers and can be found in practically everyone's pockets. Still, worldwide access is not widely available to everyone, and digital technology and communication is not equally accessible for everyone, or in every country. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly pervasive, and conversations about its potential impacts on education and society are becoming more complex. As technology and AI advances, the ethical implications are becoming increasingly important. We ask:

- *What may happen when students use AI to produce representations of learning?*
- *How might teachers approach assessment in the face of possible AI supported student texts?*
- *Can safeguards be implemented to protect a technological runaway causing accidental disclosure of teachers' and students' personal data, especially those who have vulnerabilities or exceptionalities?*

Keywords: AI; Ethics; Multimodality; Education; Exceptionalities

Presentations

1. **Technology and multimodal assessment: What and where literature said and posit itself**

Laily Maulida Septiana Harti, University College London

Laily Harti is a first year M.Phil./Ph.D. student at the Culture, Communication and Media, IOE, UCL. Her research interests are multimodality and its relation to assessment, looking at the social semiotics of its application. Multiliteracies is concerned with how technologies are influencing society, especially in the education context. With the advancement of technology that has brought about Artificial Intelligence (AI), hundreds of research studies have been conducted starting from the use, the challenges, the problems, and all the way to the future possibilities of the implementation of AI in education. At one end, AI and automated composing text tools are increasingly being used to create content. However, at the other end, AI raises concerns based on its ability to generate an automated essay. A more serious concern is directed at how educators should look at assessment, especially where AI might be incorporated by students, pertaining to academic fraud. Assessment should play an important role in education as it helps

to measure student learning and progress, identify areas where students may need additional support, and inform instruction. However, should AI intervene in the text-making process, this could reduce the degree and undermine the integrity of the education system. I address how multimodal assessment needs to move beyond evaluating the decision on the choice of modes to ensuring the validity and reliability of the assessment and addressing ethical concerns.

References

- Chen, X., Zou, D., Xie, H., Cheng, G., & Liu, C. (2022). Two Decades of Artificial Intelligence in Education: Contributors, Collaborations, Research Topics, Challenges, and Future Directions. *Educational Technology & Society*, 25(1), 28–47. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48647028>
- Lim, V. F., Toh, W., & Nguyen, T. T. H. (2022). Multimodality in the English language classroom: A systematic review of literature. *Linguistics and Education*, 69, 101048–. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101048>
- Ocaña-Fernández, Y., Valenzuela-Fernández, L. A., & Garro-Aburto, L. (2019). Inteligencia artificial y sus implicaciones en la educación superior. [Artificial Intelligence and its Implications in Higher Education] *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 7(2), 536-552. <https://doi.org/10.20511/pyr2019.v7n2.274>
- Pikhart, M. (2020). Intelligent information processing for language education: The use of artificial intelligence in language learning apps. *Procedia Computer Science*, 176, 1412–1419. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2020.09.151>

2. Multimodal assessment in higher education meets generative AI

Henrika Florén, University College London

Henrika Florén is a part time fourth year PhD candidate at the UCL Institute of Education. Her doctoral research into multimodal assessment in a context of Swedish higher education, uses a multimodal social semiotic theoretical frame (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Kress et al., 2021). Multimodal social semiotics provides tools for exploring and analysing what guides teachers in their assessments of student-created digital and multimodal texts; these texts can have multiple parts, and include written, spoken, visual and gestural modes. Focus is placed on what guides teacher in their assessments of written and multimodal text in situations where assessments go beyond that which can be easily measured. As higher education opens up for non-conventional (multimodal) texts and tasks where the process and the social aspects of both the students' and the teachers' meaning making become part of assessments, this offers hope for the creative use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), while potentially offering a solution to concerns the use of generative AI (Sharples, 2022) raise in relation to authenticity of the students' texts. In higher education students work with representing their learning in digital and multimodal texts, such as slide presentations, video, screen recordings, and digital written texts with hyperlinks, design features, with or without images, and more. All of these forms of texts can now be enhanced with AI. Technological developments such as AI continue to fuel changes in the means and *modes* available for students' multimodal text-production and meaning making. This, in turn, entails changes for teachers in how to understand, recognise and assess the students' knowledge and learning expressed in multimodal texts (Siarova et al.,

2017). Currently generative AI for text, image, film and music and more, are adding to the speed and character to these changes. Educational practices, including assessment, are now both under reconsideration and pressure, as the ways and means for communicating and representing learning change with generative AI. Consequently, research into multimodal assessment where AI is used for creating texts needed for understanding and informing reliable means of assessing students' digital and multimodal representation of learning in educational contexts where generative AI are used.

References

- Bezemer, J., & Kress, G. (2016). *Multimodality, learning and communication: A social semiotic frame*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Kress, G., Bezemer, J., Diamantopoulou, S., Jewitt, C., & Mavers, D. (2021). A social semiotic perspective on learning: Transformative engagement in a changing world. In *Learning as Social Practice*. Routledge.
- Sharples, M. (2022). Automated Essay Writing: An AIED Opinion. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 32(4), 1119–1126.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-022-00300-7>
- Siarova, H., Sternadel, D., & Mašidlauskaitė, R. (2017). *Assessment practices for 21st century learning: Review of evidence : analytical report*. (Analytical doi: 10.2766/71491; NESET II Report, p. 90). Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/71491>

3. Multimodal technologies for neurodiverse and sensory-laden environments David Ruttenberg, University College London

David Ruttenberg is a final year PhD candidate at the UCL Institute of Education. His research intersects multimodal systems design, cognitive neuroscience, and ethics relating to implementing technologies that may specifically assist autistic adults in sensory-laden environments of higher education, employment, and social venues. A majority of autistic adults report how sensory issues cause barriers to their daily functioning and arise from psychophysiological responses stemming from atypical reactivity to auditory, visual, and other cues. Research suggests that technologies might help, manage, and/or alleviate impacts of these disturbances. David focuses on whether and what types of technology-supported accommodations might be desired and tolerated as expressed by autistic adults. Despite the documented fragility of autistic populations' physical and cognitive states, technologists are said often to misunderstand neurodiversity by designing for non-disabled people. Methods employing participatory research may help identify what sensor types and accommodations would support autistic individuals in their daily routines. Patient Public Involvement methodology is employed to understand opinions and existential viewpoints about visual, auditory, and physical distractions and their impacts. These resulted in Mediating Models predicting how mental health serves as a conduit between cues and distractibility—and provide design specification for real-time sensory tools to reduce susceptibility to distraction. In-field Sustained Attention to Response Task experiments, using a Wizard of Oz methodology, were deployed and revealed how personalised accommodations improved sensitivity, distractibility, and mental health. Experiments highlighted how massive data counts require design and collection

considerations that protect against autistic vulnerability, security, and privacy issues by using safeguards that may help technologists and engineers design for those with invisible differences and eliminate against their accidental or intentional data disclosure. The study further recommends how accommodations might be embedded within ethical systems.

References

- Cesaroni, L., & Garber, M. (1991). Exploring the experience of autism through first-hand Accounts. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 21(3), 303–313.
- el Kaliouby, R., & Robinson, P. (2007). Therapeutic versus prosthetic assistive technologies: The case of autism. *Assistive Technology*.
- Leekam, S. R., Nieto, C., Libby, S. J., Wing, L., & Gould, J. (2007). Describing the sensory abnormalities of children and adults with autism. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 37(5), 894-910.
- Shew, A. (2020). Ableism, Technoableism, and Future AI. *IEEE Technology and Society Magazine*, 39(1), 40–85.

Uniquely Chinese: Multimodality in Chinese Social Media

(Chair: Yiqiong Zhang)

Abstract

China has one of the world's most vibrant environments for social media. Distinctive social media discourse has been developed in the context of surveillance and censorship. What is particularly worth noticing is the extensive and creative use of non-verbal resources such as graphicons and videos in Chinese social media, partially as a strategic reaction by the users to the censorship that was mainly based on verbal text.

This panel explores the uniqueness of the multimodality in Chinese social media. The four studies in the panel investigate how graphicons (e.g. emojis and stickers), internet memes, and videos are used in both traditional discourse practices (such as the Chinese New Year celebration), and emerging discourse practices (such as cyber-nationalism, and civic participation). Interactions between verbal and non-verbal resources for meaning-making in these practices are investigated from synchronic and diachronic perspectives. The multimodal analyses in these studies, informed by ethnography, social semiotics, and pragmatics, will reveal the unique and complex interplay between available multi-semiotic resources and evolving discourse practices in Chinese social media, furthering our understanding about multimodality in digital media.

Keywords: Chinese social media; Graphicon; Internet meme; Civic participation; Cyber-nationalism

Presentations

1. A multimodal composing perspective on youth's civic participation online

Lianjiang Jiang, The University of Hong Kong

Online communities afford new possibilities for civic participation via social media use. This presentation contributes new insights into youth's civic participation online from the perspective of digital multimodal composing (DMC), which refers to a new literacy practice of digitally mediated textual construction by combining words with other semiotic modes such as visuals and audios. Based on a virtual ethnography (Black, 2009; Hine, 2000) of social media platforms in China, this talk presents a multimodal discourse analysis (Baldry & Thibault, 2006; Hafner, 2015) of two COVID-19 related videos authored and disseminated by Chinese educated netizens at a time of crisis. What will also be presented includes how video makers drew on meaning-making resources and multimodal techniques in DMC to enact practices of civic participation. The analysis revealed two new forms of civic participation enacted through DMC: popularizing scientific knowledge of safe living at a time of confusion and discriminations, and inspiring people to fight the virus and fears with courage and hope. The findings show that these forms of civic participation were mediated by ingenious remixing practices and gave rise to participatory communities with local and global reaches. The study argues that DMC renders a new avenue for civic participation and refutes the stereotype that

takes contemporary adolescents as a citizen group of little interest in civic participation.

Keywords: Civic participation; Digital multimodal composing; Remixing

References

- Baldry, A., & Thibault, P. J. (2006). *Multimodal transcription and text analysis: A multimodal toolkit and coursebook*. Equinox.
- Black, R. W. (2009). Online fanfiction, global identities, and imagination. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 43(4), 397-425.
- Hafner, C. A. (2015). Remix Culture and English Language Teaching: The Expression of Learner Voice in Digital Multimodal Compositions. *TESOL Quarterly*, 49(3), 486-509. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.238>
- Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual ethnography*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Ltd.

2. Recontextualisation and vernacular creativity in Chinese political Internet memes: A multimodal corpus-based analysis

Zhe Liu, University of Leeds

Driven by creative imitation, copying and remixing, Internet memes are ubiquitously used by multiple participants for public commentary. During the process of producing Internet memes, producers usually need to actively evaluate, select, and organise suitable elements as meme components. Therefore, as a representative practice of vernacular creativity within the digital environment, Internet memes not only function as mirrors of cultures and societies, but also reflect the producers' innovative skills of combining different semiotic resources to express the intended meanings.

From the social semiotic perspective, this study explores 150 Chinese political Internet memes that were produced and transmitted by a group of Chinese young people during the online activities of the Diba Expedition from 2016 to 2019. Using the GeM (Genre and Multimodality) model and a modified annotation schema, this study builds a multimodal corpus to investigate what semiotic resources were selected as suitable meme components to represent the pro-government stance, and how these resources were organised to convey political opinions.

Findings show that the practice of recontextualisation was highly valued to provide sufficient sources for selecting ideal meme components. The primary political opinions were generally expressed by the selected components themselves which were creatively grouped together through specific rhetorical relations and a layer-based spatial structure. However, the intertextuality of the recontextualised meme components made further contribution to support and justify the pro-government stance formulated in China's socio-cultural context. Thus, this study argues that the GeM model facilitates an in-depth investigation of the Internet memes' internal compositions as results of elaborate selection and combination. Moreover, the social semiotic perspective helps to move beyond the creative playfulness of

Chinese political Internet memes and emphasizes their roles in reflecting the relevant contexts.

Keywords: Chinese Internet memes; Recontextualisation; Vernacular creativity; Multimodal corpus; Social semiotics

References

- Bateman, J. A. (2008). *Multimodality and Genre: A Foundation for the Systemic Analysis of Multimodal Documents*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2021). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Liu, H. (2019). *From Cyber-nationalism to Fandom Nationalism: The Case of Diba Expedition in China*. London: Routledge.
- Shifman, L. (2014). *Memes in Digital Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

3. Interactions between graphicons and language in Chinese social media: A diachronic investigation

Yiqiong Zhang, Indiana University Bloomington & Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Susan C. Herring, Indiana University Bloomington

Rongle Tan, Macquarie University

Graphicons are graphical icons used in digital communication, including (but not limited to) emoticons, emojis, stickers, GIFs, and images (Herring & Dainas, 2017). Graphicons interact with language to make meaning in various spaces and across time. Multimodal studies thus far have mainly focused on how graphicons interact with language synchronically to make meaning. It remains largely unexplored how they interact diachronically, despite popular discourses of “language endangerment” stoking fear that graphicons will replace and degrade language.

A recent diachronic study (Authors, under review) found that graphicons have taken over some of the functions of sentence-final particles in Chinese. The current study focuses on the impact of graphicons on the use of evaluative adverb (EA) in Chinese (such as 终于[finally], 果然[expectedly]) based on a 14-year longitudinal corpus of 992,856 comments posted on the popular Chinese social media platform Bilibili. We obtained normalized frequencies of both graphicons and EAs based on the total number of messages, based on which a sampled corpus was selected for qualitative analysis. Findings show that graphicon frequencies increase while EA frequencies decrease over time, and that the correlation between these two trends is statistically significant. However, qualitative analysis on the EAs with an increasing trend shows that EAs that encode negation, rhetorical questions, or doubts and uncertainty are less likely to be replaced by graphicons, which is consistent with the overall positive meanings associated with graphicon use.

We conclude that, diachronically, graphicons are developing into alternatives for a limited set of linguistic categories on Bilibili. As such, they are indeed in competition with language, but we argue that the competition is enriching rather than debasing language.

Keywords: Graphicon; Diachronic; Competition; Language endangerment; Evaluative adverbs

References

Herring, S. C., & Dainas, A. R. (2017). "Nice picture comment!" Graphicons in Facebook comment threads. *Proceedings of the Fiftieth Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, USA*, 2185-2194. <https://doi.org/10.24251/HICSS.2017.264>

4. Face saving with a Doge face: Pragmatic functions of the Doge emoji in Chinese social media

Yanmin Wu, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Yiqiong Zhang, Indiana University Bloomington & Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

The Doge emoji is replacing the emoji of face with tears of joy to be the most popular emoji on Chinese social media (e.g., Zhang et al., 2022). Ubiquitous as it is, little is known about what it means and why it is overwhelmingly popular. This study explores the pragmatic functions of the Doge emoji based on a corpus of 3,117 sampled comments from the annual Spring Festival Gala Show (2020-2022) on Bilibili, one of the most popular Chinese social media platforms. The analysis is informed by an adapted scheme of illocutionary effects (Herring & Ge-Stadnyk, forthcoming). The adaptation includes adding sub-categories of "softening face-threatening acts" and "downgrading commitment" to the function of "illocutionary force mitigation", and "indicating joking" and "indicating humor" to the function of "illocutionary force modification".

Findings show that the Doge emoji is pragmatically multifunctional. It mainly serves as an illocutionary force indicating device to modify, mitigate or enhance the illocutionary force of its accompanying verbal text. The Doge emoji often indicates humor and enhances the positivity of the verbal text for rapport management. In addition, it also serves to soften face-threatening acts, downgrade commitment, and indicate jokes for negative face management. With these functions, the Doge emoji has become a symbol for face-saving and liability waiver in a social media context where communication is increasingly indirect due to surveillance and censorship.

Keywords: Doge emoji; Pragmatic functions; Chinese social media

References

Herring, S. C., & Ge-Stadnyk, J. (forthcoming). *Emoji and illocutionarity: Acting on, and acting as, language*.

Zhang, Y., Herring, S. C., & Gan, S. (2022). Graphicon evolution on the Chinese social media platform Bilibili. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Workshop on Emoji Understanding and Applications in Social Media, USA*, 75–85. <https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2022.emoji-1.9>