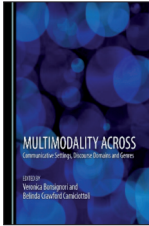


Reseñas/Book Reviews



Multimodality across Communicative Settings, Discourse Domains and Genres.

Veronica Bonsignori, Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli (eds).

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The volume edited by Veronica Bonsignori and Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli has its origin in the workshop *Multimodal Perspectives on Language Teaching and Research* (University of Pisa, 2015), where the contributions collected in the volume were first presented. The publication stresses the pivotal role multimodality plays in “live” communicative events. As van Leeuwen states in the Foreword, “[m]ultimodality matters. It is not just an add on, a matter of style. It partakes meaningfully in the representational as well as in the interpersonal and textual functions of communication” (page ix). In general terms, the edited volume deals with multimodality in diverse communicative settings, and pays particular attention to the interplay of different semiotic modes and to the way the meaning of verbal expressions is reinforced by non-verbal elements. More specifically, it highlights the great importance of multimodality in language teaching and learning. The book is composed of ten chapters divided in two sections: the five chapters in the first part revolve around multimodal resources employed in teaching contexts and activities, considering also learners with disabilities. In the second part, composed of five chapters as well, multimodality is discussed as a fundamental element of communication in different genres (e.g. TED talks, political interviews, film genres) and domains (e.g. legal discourse, political discourse).

In Chapter 1, María Carmen Campoy-Cubillo explores the role of different communicative modes in the process of listening comprehension. Multimodal listening is discussed as a macro-skill composed of several micro-skills that involve the understanding of different inter-connected modes within a single communicative unit. The chapter discusses diverse

criteria for multimodal listening task design, but focuses particularly on two issues (question types and task administration) because of the central role they play in multimodal listening implementation.

In Chapter 2, Gloria Cappelli and Sabrina Noccetti investigate how to improve the way adult learners with dyslexia process lexical input, and this through multimodal and multisensory activities. To this end, they develop a case study which compares two groups of Italian dyslexic learners in the process of acquiring specialised English vocabulary through two different methods, one of them highly multisensory and multimodal. The results obtained confirm that multimodal and multisensory learning methods, by making lexical inputs more easily processable for dyslexic students, contribute to the successful acquisition of specialised vocabulary by those learners.

The contribution by Belinda Crawford Camiciottoli (Chapter 3) also consists of a case study which examines how verbal (e.g. questions, imperatives) and non-verbal (e.g. co-speech gesture) modes of communication interact in lecturer-audience interpersonal episodes in an academic lecture. Specifically, the video recording and transcript of a political philosophy lecture (available online) are analysed, using the software ELAN to annotate the co-occurrence of verbal and non-verbal elements during the lecture. Ultimately, the study shows how the interplay of different modes in lecturer-audience interactions contributes to strengthen meanings and enhances comprehension.

Chapter 4, by Vicente Beltrán-Palanques, discusses the importance of taking into account the multimodal dimension of pragmatic competence (which involves pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge) in teaching second and foreign languages. Since communication is naturally multimodal, the interplay between diverse modes is an essential issue to be addressed regarding the development of pragmatic competence in language learning. From this standpoint, the author proposes a multimodal pragmatic conversational approach for teaching speech acts, and ultimately highlights the centrality of multimodal pragmatic competence in language learning.

In Chapter 5, Elena Davitty proposes a multimodal approach to study the communicative dynamics of dialogue interpreting (DI), one which takes into account both the verbal and embodied resources (e.g. gesture, gaze) at play in interpreter-mediated dialogue situations. It is also argued that all the parties involved in interpreter-mediated interactions (and not just the

interpreter) contribute to the multimodal co-construction of meaning. Hypotheses are tested through the analysis of extracts from authentic data from a multimodal and multiparty standpoint. As a conclusion, it is suggested that this kind of research may help improve the practice of professional interpreters, as well as positively influence their training process.

Chapter 6, by Silvia Masi, considers the increasing use of TED talks in foreign language teaching as a tool to develop listening comprehension skills and teach how to use gestures. The study specifically explores the interaction between verbal utterances and arm and hand gestures in TED talks, and, through the analysis of three talks on socio-economic topics, discusses how co-speech gesture may facilitate meaning understanding in international contexts like those where TED talks take place.

In Chapter 7, Silvia Bruti addresses the role of body language and gestures in the construction of meaning in political interviews, and compares male and female styles. Specifically, she analyses in detail the CBS News programme *60-minute* interview with President Obama and the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, aired in January 2013. Clinton's and Obama's gestures in the interview are contrasted with their gestural performance in two other interviews. Also, both politicians' speech is compared to that of other politicians (male and female) in TV interviews in order to see if Clinton's and Obama's speech style is gender-related. It is concluded that Obama's and Clinton's speech, body language and gesture preferences in the main interview do not follow gender-related patterns, but rather depend on the topic of discourse and the context of enunciation.

The contribution by Veronica Bonsignori (Chapter 8) discusses the interplay of non-verbal elements (e.g. gestures, gaze) and verbal rhetorical strategies (e.g. parallelism, metaphor) in political discourse. The aim of the study is to shed light on the way different semiotic resources cooperate in political contexts to construct meaning. To this end, selected fragments from two political drama films -*The Ides of March* (2011) and *The Iron Lady* (2011)- are annotated with ELAN and analysed from a multimodal perspective. It is also pointed out that the multimodal analysis of political films may constitute a useful tool for research and teaching in ESP due to films being crafted for native speakers of a language.

In Chapter 9, Daniele Franceschi offers a multimodal analysis of trial language. The selected data consist of some audio-visual fragments from the trial of the South African athlete Oscar Pistorius. The analysis focuses on the

questioning techniques and speaking styles employed by both defence and prosecuting lawyers, which are examined in terms of their lexical-semantic and socio-pragmatic features, as well as considering the non-verbal elements that accompany speech. The study aims to contribute to the analysis of trial discourse in English-speaking countries other than US and UK, while doing so from a multi-semiotic perspective.

Finally, Chapter 10, by Gianmarco Vignozzi, deals with the multimodal representation of idiomatic expressions in selected Disney animated films. The examples analysed show how the complexity of meaning of idioms is translated to the multi-semiotic nature of film to achieve humorous and *double entendre* effects, as well as an effective construction of meaning. Finally, a reception study involving children and adults is suggested for further research, which would serve to test, among other things, which semiotic elements are perceived as pivotal in the multimodal representation of idioms.

Overall, the studies that compose the volume represent novel contributions to research on multimodality from different methodological approaches and techniques (multimodal discourse analysis, multimodal transcription, and multimodal annotation software, to name a few). Because of the variety of topics covered, the book may appeal to researchers working on multimodality in general, and also to those with an interest on particular discursive genres and domains (e.g. political discourse, trial language). It may be highly informative as well for foreign language teachers who want to learn about ways of implementing multimodal learning techniques in their classroom.

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