

Editorial: Theoretical and Analytical Explorations of Multimodality

The cross-fertilization of linguistics and the study of multimodal communication has now continued for half a century or so, ever since conversation analysts started to explore the interdependencies between verbal (speech) and non-verbal means of face-to-face communication (paralanguage; co-speech gestures, postures, and facial expressions). At more or less the same time, the idea that communication is almost invariably multimodal was also taken up by text analysts, who set out to disentangle the complex relations between text and images in various cultural artefacts (advertisements, comics, films, etc.).

In the following decades, the analytical scope of multimodality studies expanded to include explorations of posters, textbooks, picture books, assembly instructions, information graphics, webpages, social media, computer and video games, radio and television broadcasts, corporate logos, graffiti, performance art, and even medieval textiles.

More recently, multimodal analysis has intersected with translation studies, resulting not only in numerous explorations of audiovisual translations of films, television programmes, and live performances (by means of dubbing, subtitling, voice-over, surtitling, etc.) or interlingual translation of comics, but also in research on transformations of narratives across media (e.g., comics to films, novels to comics, video games to films, etc.), theorized as intersemiotic or multimodal translation.

While linguistic theory has always informed, as well as benefitted from, research into multimodal communication, with systemic-functional linguistics and cognitive linguistics arguably providing the most widespread approaches to analysis of multimodal artefacts, multimodality studies has become an increasingly interdisciplinary field of research, interfacing more and more productively not only with linguistics, but also with semiotics, psychology, education, sociology, anthropology, media studies, comics studies, literary theory, film studies, and gender studies.

This volume offers a selection of original studies of multimodality that were presented in their initial form and discussed during the international conference “Theoretical and Analytical Multimodality Studies”, organized by the Department of Translation Studies, Institute of English Studies at the Philological Faculty of

the University of Wrocław and held online on 12–13 December 2021. While the thematic range of the contributions is broad, they all explore the theoretical and analytical synergies emerging from the combined application of techniques, approaches, theories, and methodologies originating from diverse disciplines in pursuit of increasingly more satisfying characterizations of the meaning-making processes involved in multimodal communication.

The volume comprises five original research articles. It opens with a paper by Hiroki Hanamoto titled “Spontaneous Gestures in L2 Naturalistic Spontaneous Interaction: Effects of Language Proficiency”. This article investigates gesture use among learners of English as a second language with varying language proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced). Hanamoto’s goal is to find out whether or not gesture use and type (e.g., iconic, deictic, metaphoric, and beat gestures) differ by language proficiency level. This exploration provides insight into learners’ cognition process during verbal communication by demonstrating that significant differences in gesture use exist among learners of English as a second language with varying language proficiency levels.

In her article “Lost in Time? The Socialist Modernist Monuments of the Former Yugoslavia and Their Shifting Conceptualization”, Ilhana Nowak adopts a perspective combining cultural studies and cognitive linguistics in order to explore the conceptual metaphors guiding the interpretation of 25 monuments erected in the former Yugoslavia from the 1960s to the 1980s. Nowak views the monuments as part of a specific symbolic landscape, immanent to the countries of the former Yugoslavia at a historical point of their four-decade-long political, social, and cultural merger, and she discusses the current possibilities and limitations of their visual/multimodal decodification.

Kimberley Pager-McClymont’s article “‘The Thunder Rolls and the Lightning Strikes’: Pathetic Fallacy as a Multimodal Metaphor” theorizes pathetic fallacy as a kind of master conceptual metaphor projecting emotions from an animated entity onto the surroundings. Conceived of in this way, pathetic fallacy may be studied through its textual indicators and effects. In the analytical portion of her article, Pager-McClymont studies the metaphor’s exemplifications in selected multimodal texts of popular culture: a television show, a feature film, and a song. Her analysis shows that the effects of pathetic fallacy are present in pop-cultural texts, where they contribute to enriching suspense.

In the article “Metaphorical Indicators of the Hyperthemes of *Dune: Part One* (2021): A Multimodal Cognitive-Linguistic Case Study”, Michał Szawerna and Paweł Zygmunt adopt a multimodal cognitive linguistic perspective with a view to exploring the metaphorical indicators of the most general themes, or *hyperthemes*, of Denis Villeneuve’s film *Dune: Part One*. Specifically, Szawerna and Zygmunt look at the relations between the non-metaphorical and metaphorical indicators of the hyperthemes of Villeneuve’s film, the relations between different metaphorical indicators of the same hyperthemes of the film, the relations between the verbal

and non-verbal metaphorical indicators of the film's hyperthemes, and the variation among the metaphors sanctioning the film's hyperthematic indicators with regard to their interpretability.

The volume closes with Julia Wolbergs and Björn Kasper's article "Multimodality in Epistemological Foreign Language Research? Two Case Studies in the Field of German as a Foreign and Second Language". The authors elaborate on the epistemological interest of cultural studies for German as a foreign and second language and point out the limitations of the current focus on certain modes. They broaden this focus by highlighting the connectivity of the epistemological interest to multimodal research using two relevant case studies. One case study explores the negotiation of the patterns of freedom on the basis of music videos and their associated comments on YouTube; the other examines a textbook for the cultural orientation of immigrants to Germany through the lens of the meaning-making of the Holocaust.

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Wrocław, March 2023*