

COURSE:

MULTIMODALITY IN LITERARY TEXT

Multimodal Discourse Analysis: 3 Metafunction Approach

Lecture 3

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Learning Objectives

1. The basic concept of multimodal discourse analysis
2. The clarity of multimodal discourse analysis
3. Interpretation and representation in MDA
4. The 3 metafunction approach





Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Discourse

Fairclough (2015) argues that discourse is language in its relations with other elements in the social process. Language works as social practice which is determined by the social structures.

Fairclough, 2015

The term "discourse" and finds is valuable in exploring the social factors connection within the language (Gee, 2008). According to Foucault, "discourse" socially produces "knowledge".

The terms "text" and "discourse" have often been connected to the spoken and written language, as well as to signify the inherent social meanings within such texts

Texts play a dual role:

They help shape social institutions and serve as records of interactions within these institutions.
They offer a way to understand the intentions and purposes of those involved in creating texts within an institution.

This distinction between **text and discourse** is crucial in discourse analysis

(Kress in Gee & Handford, 2023).

MDA

MDA aims to describe and analyze what is going on in a text, including how power relation works through the social interaction. In MDA, the understanding of a text involves understanding various aspects, including the selection of discourses, their organization, identifying the dominance and its functions.

So,

In Multimodal Discourse Analysis, the objective is to provide a complete and coherent analysis of text, which includes what is happening within the text and how the power relation work in the social interactions.

A large, light gray, stylized number '02' is positioned on the left side of the slide. The '0' is a simple oval shape, and the '2' is a bold, blocky numeral. Both characters have a subtle drop shadow effect, giving them a slight three-dimensional appearance.

**The Clarity of
Multimodal Discourse Analysis**

Multimodality emphasizes that language is only one of tools for conveying meaning. This perspective treats all the different modes of communication available in a culture as a single, interconnected field of resources for meaning-making.

In this approach, all modes are considered equal in their potential to contribute to the meaning of a complex semiotic entity, such as a text. Each mode is also seen as distinct in its material and social characteristics, requiring appropriate descriptive categories that account for these differences.

When combining multimodality and social semiotics, we can explore a wide range of questions about meaning and how it is created.

1. Who creates meaning and how?
2. What limits meaning-making?
3. Social Signs and Knowledge
4. Resources and Capabilities.

(Kress in Gee & Handford, 2023)



It is important to distinguish between two linguistic modes: spoken and written (Halliday in Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). In MDA, both spoken and written are treated as different modes. They bring their unique meaning potentials to shape discourse and ideology. In MDA, all modes are taken seriously and examined closely, rather than marginalizing or ignoring meanings expressed in other modes.

Modes, such as speech and writing, are distinct due to their material properties and how they have been socially shaped over time. For instance, speech and writing differ both in their materiality and how they have been culturally shaped in various societies. In some societies, links have been established between speech and writing, allowing for the representation of spoken language using alphabetic scripts.

The key takeaway is that MDA treats all modes as explicit carriers of meaning, considering their unique characteristics and social influences.



03

**Interpretation and
Representation in MDA**

PIGGYBOOK



Anthony Browne

Figure 1 (Browne, 1990)



Figure 2 (Asidiky Z. et al., 2022)

Multimodality is...

Multimodality is multidisciplinary which means that multimodality covers meanings across various fields and it is applicable in various related areas. So in multimodal text which includes images and writings, the writings may carry a set of meanings while the images carry another. In the case of speech and writing, they can express a certain representation to be taken which images cannot. Therefore, the truth is the truth of perception. The visual mode calls truth as 'realism'. The more we think about the image that we see, the more it will resemble what we see in reality, the greater the visual truth.

(Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021)

3 Metafunction Approach

Reading Images (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2021)

1. Representational Metafunction
2. Interactional Metafunction
3. Compositional Metafunction



Summary and Conclusion:

MDA requires analysis of multimodal resources, not monomodal. The three metafunction concept of MDA is more suitable to be implemented in the literary works which consist on only writings or still images but more to the moving images, sounds, gestures, settings, and more resources. The more modes to be analyzed to deeper framing, interpretation or meanings can be concluded. Movies, series, song video clips, speech videos, podcast, and vlogs. The focus of MDA is into the whole context of the multimodal resources being presented. Therefore, in the analysis process, the researcher need to have a very critical mindset by keep questioning what, why, how, when, who, or to whom the multimodal resources appear in such a way. Just like the primary approach which are semiotics and social semiotics, MDA is also very much suitable for people with high curiosity about something. MDA cannot accept something just the way it is. Therefore, Kress and van Leeuwen have elaborated the very detail framework of three metafunction in their "Reading Images" book (2021) which consists of: representational metafunction, interactional metafunction, and lastly compositional metafunction.

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Sources of Figures:

Figure 1

Browne A., (1990). Piggybook. Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com/Piggybook-Anthony-Browne/dp/067980837X>

Figure 2

Asidiky Z. et al. (2022). Multimodal Portrayal of Joko Widodo on Tempo's Cover Story: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis. JJMLL

