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研究論文

HOW MULTIMODALITY AFFECTS THE MEANING OF MARTIAL ART TEXTS

マルチモダリティが武道に与える影響とその意義

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Abstract

This paper looked at multimodality and its importance to understanding the meaning of texts. Two texts were examined to identify their multimodal (MM) elements and how these elements combine to make the meaning of the text as a whole. The texts were presented in two different medium: a book and a webpage. Text 1 was the Larry Tatum's (LT) webpage with an embedded movie describing martial arts training. A simplified transcription of the webpage movie was presented in Appendix 1.

Text 2 is pages 49 and 50 in the Pellman, L, J. and Shinmabukuro, M (1995) book "Flashing Steel" on swordsmanship. It discussed the nomenclature of Japanese swords and is presented in Appendix 2.

What is multimodality?

Texts always contain at least two semiotic modes and are thus considered to be multimodal (MM) according to Goodman, Lillis, Maybin & Mercer (2002, p.84). Indeed "all human communication is intrinsically multimodal" (Goodman et al., 2002, p.69).

Semiotic modes include for example:

- Written language
- Spoken language

- Intonation
- Images
- Gestures
- Facial movements
- Action (Goodman et al., 2002, p.70)

The above semiotic modes are usually associated with one of the five senses. For example spoken language, intonation and action use the sense of hearing. Written language, ges-

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ture, action and facial movements use the sense of sight. Text and images can use the sense of touch. The senses of smell and taste are more difficult, in my opinion, to access using current technology and so are rarely used in MM texts.

Note that MM texts can be displayed in a variety of mediums for example; television, video and books.

Why is the study of multimodality important?

Texts have always been MM, however due to limits of technology the major semiotic modes of “language” (spoken and written) were privileged whilst image modes such as childrens’ drawings were largely ignored (Millard and Marsh 2001 quoted in Goodman et al., (2002, p.73). Currently texts containing multiple semiotic modes are becoming easier to produce due to advances in Information Technology (IT). For example the LT webpage (Text 1) contains sound, image, action, gesture, facial movements and language modes.

As MM texts are becoming more abundant, the traditional notion of print based literacy being “merely reading and writing” (Wilson, 2003, p.306) now needs to be updated to include an analysis of how MM texts meaning is communicated. I agree with the New London Group in its goal to broaden “traditional conceptions of literacy to encompass MM communication” (Goodman et al., 2002, p73). As Kress (2003) says “we cannot understand the (text’s) message unless we take account of all of these modes and what they are doing”.

I believe that MM literacy should follow the ideological perspective of literacy since the complex interplay of modes within MM texts can lead to multiple interpretations. This view is also shared by De Souza who says that “to understand literacy practices... (you) need to understand culture and belief systems” from where the text was produced (2003). Synder (2003) also believes that the knowledge of how MM modes combine should be included in the definition of literacy.

I also believe that MM texts should be studied from a Critical Literacy viewpoint. We need to become more critically aware of the ways in which a wide range of semiotic resources contribute to the construction of the meaning (Lillis and McKinney, 2003, p.86). Thus it is important to study how the modes within a MM text combine to help the text’s “author” produce the meaning they want. It is also important for “readers” of the MM text to understand that MM texts, like all texts, are shaped by political, cultural and commercial forces. MM texts need to be looked at critically in order to answer the following questions: Who produced it? Why was it produced? What views were portrayed/rejected? This extension of critical literacy to include MM texts is a logical one in my opinion.

How to study of multimodality?

The nature of MM texts means that “each mode represents different ways of shaping and conveying information and meaning,” (Goodman et al., 2002, p.84). These meanings are not fixed and therefore I agree with Wilson that the researcher’s stance and the environment or “Researchers Space” where

the research takes place is very important. The researcher needs to reflect on the research process and be “receptive to the dynamics of the research environment (2003, p. 293). Since “the phenomenon under study will vary according to what the researcher thinks they are looking at” (Goodman et al., 2002, p.86) as well as what they do/do not study and how they study it. The research is decided by the researcher therefore the researcher needs to be aware of their stance - critically aware. Especially as I agree with Lillis and McKinney in that we are more critically attuned to what is said but less so to what is shown or sounded or acted (2003, p.129).

I agree with Grunther Kress (2003) and Lillis, T. and McKinney that when analysing MM texts there is a “need to develop an integrated approach to the analysis of the relationship between different semiotic modes”. (2003 p.120). This integrated approach includes text transcription methods that contain information of all the semiotic modes present in the text with time being best used as the anchor (Jewitt and Kress, 2003 p.280). They have also included drawings to help represent three dimensional images in a two dimensional printed format (Iedema (2001) in Lillis and McKinney pp 125-131).

Unfortunately, an integrated approach to analysis MM texts is time consuming and so transcription methods which foreground the written and spoken language with other information / modes / paralanguage added in brackets, are more common. Due to the nature of this short report a detailed and time consuming MM analysis was not carried out.

Instead I have undertaken a targeted analysis of two texts to highlight how their constituent semiotic modes combine to make meaning.

How semiotic modes combine to create meaning in Texts 1 and 2

Semiotic modes within a text can have separate functions or they can combine together to make the meaning of the text. The text’s author either consciously or unconsciously combines the semiotic modes to explain phenomenon and create meaning in the text. This action of combining modes and mediums of a text has been described as “orchestration” by Goodman, S. et al. (2003) and is a critical part of “designing” a text. The notion of design (Goodman et al., 2002, p.74) has led to an increasing specialisation and differentiation in terms of modes and function Van Leeuwen (2000).

TEXT 1

The Larry Tatum Tip of the week webpage (2012) presented in Appendix 1, uses the semiotic modes of written and spoken language, sound, image, facial movement and gesture. These modes have different functions that can combine to create meaning. For example, the black border across the top and left of the page function is to frame the page and leave the centre of the page to contain new information. The left border contains a menu that allow the user to navigate the rest of the website. The font chosen invokes a professional but informal feeling.

Images within the website have both an illustrative “dami” or meaning making “kene” function as identified by De Souza (2003) in

their study of the Brazilian Kashinawa people's traditional drawings. For example, the image in the top left corner has a meaning making function; but it is limited to those who have specialised knowledge of Kenpo Karate. For example, the tigers represent strength and power and the geometric image was designed by the founder of Kenpo Karate Ed Parker. Viewers without that specialized knowledge would probably only see an illustrative function of the image. This highlights the concrete meaning and the abstract metaphorical meaning of images.

The top border contains the badge of the Larry Tatum Kenpo Karate Association (LKKA) and the name of its founder Larry Tatum. The badge of the LKKA also has an illustrative as well as a meaning making function. The individual elements of the patch all carry meanings. For example the dragon at the top of the patch is traditionally associated with wisdom and knowledge in the martial arts.

The text's font and size used for the LT banner again reflect an informal but professional image. The silver edging around the letters emphasise the LT brand image and also draws the viewer to the top of the page.

In the 'blank' centre of the page where new information is presented, there is a water-marked black and white portrait of LT. This again reinforces the LT brand; whilst allowing the new information to be foregrounded.

The "Tip of the Week" text is at the top of the central blank area and functions to orientate the viewer. In the centre the icon driven

movie viewer is located.

The LT webpage follows the image analysis of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) which has the GIVEN on the left (the menu buttons) the IDEAL at the top (the LTKKA patch and founders name) and the REAL and NEW located to the bottom and right where the "Tip of the Week" movie is located.

Image analysis after Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) shown in Figure 1.

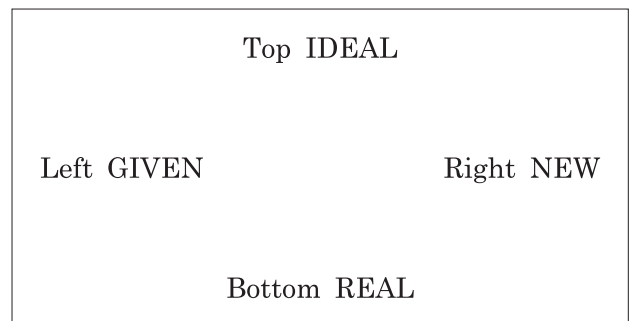


Figure 1. Image analysis

This design layout follows the western left to right method of reading text (Jones, 2004).

On the webpage, sound has been used to provide an aural confirmation that a button has been clicked. Sound is also used embedded in the movie clip.

The embedded movie uses the semiotic modes of spoken language, sound, facial movement, gestures and actions to create meaning. The movie starts with a blank screen that lightens to show a picture of LT against a wall wearing a black martial arts uniform and behind him is a sword on the wall. These images reinforce the martial theme of the movie.

LT introduces himself and this week's "Tip of the Week" and proceeds give advice on Kenpo Karate for 65 seconds using a combination of semiotic modes to provide meaning to the viewer. Speech is used as a commentary; actions, facial movements and gestures are both illustrative and meaning making. For example, LT raises his hand to illustrate a High Five handshake (Line 5 see the transcription in Appendix 1). The action also takes the place of his speech as where LT counts 1,2,3,4 and five is not spoken but can be seen and heard in the flurry of strikes that hit John (Line 18).

Modes combine to make and reinforce meaning for example when LT says "Thank you" (Line 23) to John; the action of LT's salute and the sound of their hands clashing together reinforces LT's speech.

Speech would sometimes describe the target as in (the eye - Line 11); the function of the move (a block - Line 9); the way of moving (slicing - Line 15) and the weapon (chop - Line 16).

The sound of the strikes hitting John add to the impression of speed and power towards the end of the movie (Lines 18, 20 and 22). When the action and gestures were more illustrative, the sounds of the strikes were almost inaudible.

The movie provides contextual information that helps viewers, especially those with a limited experience in the martial arts, to understand the tip of the week.

The LT webpage allows people interested in

the martial arts to interact with each other and thus is part of Mercers "Community" concept (2000 pp118-130).

The webpage designer and movie maker have orchestrated multiple semiotic modes to design the webpage which reflects the message that LT required. Presumably this goal was to provide information on Kenpo Karate on an easily navigated website that promotes the LT brand.

TEXT 2

Pages 49 and 50 of Pellman and Shinmaburo's book on swordsmanship will be looked at next. Page 49 is the first page of Chapter 4 and is about the names of the parts of a Japanese sword. The page is designed with a central block of text in the "GIVEN/REAL/NEW" locations of the page (Kress and van Leeuvan, 1996). Above the text are three titles in the IDEAL location of the page, as well as the text "Chapter 4". The title of the Chapter 4 is given in two Japanese scripts and an English one. The top title is in kanji which are Chinese/Japanese Characters. The middle script gives the reading of the kanji in a western script and finally the bottom of the three titles is the English translation of the Japanese title. It is in a smaller and different font from the middle Japanese pronunciation reading.

The block of text uses visual effects to highlight important words, they are italics for Japanese words and brackets are used for the English translations. Interestingly kanji are not used in Text 2 except for the title. It would seem that the kanji has less of a literal meaning, and more of a design meaning

to highlight that the book is about mysterious Japanese culture.

Page 50 shows two labelled diagrams; one of the sword mountings and one of the parts of the sword itself. Continuing the theme from the previous page italics are used for Japanese words with English translations in brackets. A bold font has been used to highlight important sword terminology.

The labelling of the diagrams invokes a scientific feeling to the images. The font of the labelled words help to give meaning to the page. The image at the top of page 50 does not appear to have a function except for illustrative purposes. However as in LTs webpage, these images may have a meaning making function to viewers who have a specialised knowledge about Japanese swords.

The labelled sword diagram illustrates the meaning of the terminology. This follows the traditional illustrative function of images in western texts as identified by De Souza (2003) quoted in Goodman et al., (2002, p.71). The font effects also have a meaning making function, where the italics identify Japanese words written in English. The important terminology is highlighted in bold.

These pages only use shades of black and white; semiotic modes are limited to written text and images with mainly an illustrative function. Thus these pages are similar to the “old fashioned” science textbook described by Kress, Ogborn and Martins (1998) quoted in Lillis and McKinney (2003 pp.107-112)

Conclusion

Both Texts 1 and 2 contain multiple semiotic modes that have various functions that combined to make the meaning of the text that was designed by the author. However this meaning is not fixed and it also depends on the individual viewer’s ideology and past experience. This echoes John Wallace’s tutorial comment “which mode is the most important depends upon your point of view” (2004).

The influence of technology is seen in both these texts affecting the number and type of semiotic modes available. Advances in IT are a double edged sword; since the more modes that are available the more difficult it becomes to orchestrate these multiple semiotic modes. The simpler technology of the printed page allows less semiotic modes to be used but still manages to portray information.

In conclusion, an understanding of the multimodality of a text is essential for both the texts designer and user when they are respectively trying to present and understand the text’s message

Acknowledgement

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Appendix 1

Text 1 Larry Tatum Tip of Week 31 Movie Transcript

Beginning 0 seconds

1. Hello my name is Larry Tatum

2. Welcome to tip of the week
3. Ok now
4. I have people email me asking what is High Five
5. Well High Five is not just a way of shaking hands
6. Ok High Five is Five Swords taking and putting it all the way up around an opponent's neck and head
7. And so ok this will be a nice little exercise for you to learn
8. With the help of John here
9. If we take the block that we used in Five Swords
10. Right from here now we chop
11. And we would poke to the eye
12. And instead of going to the solar plexus
13. We go to the throat
14. And we chop to the side of the neck or we can hook the eye ok
15. And re-hook it again as we slice with this hand
16. And then come back with the other chop as well
17. So we actually get five so it looks something like this
18. So if we have 1 2 3 4
19. And that was all Five Swords
20. And this
21. We sliced up here
22. And back
23. Thank you John
24. Play with it a little bit
25. And see what you come up with
26. I look forward to hearing your feedback

End 65 seconds

Note:

This transcription method only includes the speech language mode. Other semiotic modes have not been described. The transcription is chronological but not timed.



Appendix 2

Text 2 Flashing Steel Page 49 and 50

刀の名称

Katana no Meishō

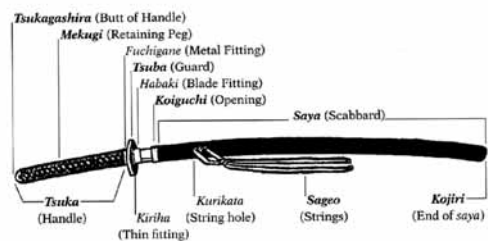
Sword Nomenclature

Throughout this book, as well as in any traditional *dōjō* you might attend, the various parts of the sword are referred to by their Japanese names. The following two illustrations identify the most commonly used parts of the sword. In particular, you should memorize those names printed in bold type, as these are the most frequently used terms in *iaijutsu* training.

The sword in its entirety is usually called a *katana*, which is a somewhat generic term. More specifically, the *katana* we generally practice with is a *daitō* ("long sword"), to distinguish it from the *wakizashi* or *shōtō*, the shorter companion-sword often worn by *samurai*. The unsharpened sword used for *iaijutsu* practice is called an *iaito* ("iai sword") You may also occasionally hear reference to *chūtō* ("middle sword"), which in modern times denotes a mid-length sword used by children for swordsmanship training. Another generic term for sword is *ken*. This term is most commonly found in such terms as *kendō* (the sport of swordsmanship), *kenjutsu* (the art of sword battle), or in such phrases as *Ken Shin Ichi Nyō*, discussed in Chapter Three.

KOSHIRAE

(Mountings)



TO SHIN

(Bare Blade)

