

## **A multimodal analysis of parliamentary debates for ESP teaching: exploring identity and ideological stance in non-verbal communication**

This study wishes to contribute to recent research into the impact of multimodality on education in ESP with particular reference to higher education contexts. The ongoing transition from language centred texts to multimodal texts has led to shifts in the way societies communicate and access information, and therefore with substantial ramifications on education. As higher education teachers it follows that we are increasingly required to conceptualize alternative or new theories of meaning and communication (Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2009; Plastina, 2013; Prior, 2013) in order to meet the demands of contemporary language learners, and respond and adapt to the constantly evolving landscape of 21st century education scenarios.

Thus, the main aim and impetus of this work is pedagogical, that is to illustrate how multimodality and the multisemiotic dimensions of digital communication can be integrated into an academic ESP curriculum. In particular, this study stems from prior multimodal research analyses of video clips which were subsequently utilized to enhance language learning in *English for Economics* classes in the Faculty of Economics, the University of Rome, Sapienza. Hence, the study also aims to show how research-informed analyses of a corpus of video clips can be utilized to enhance ESP language learning (Crawford-Camiciottoli and Fortanet-Gomez, 2015; O'Halloran et al., 2016).

The research is divided into two stages: first the contribution describes the multimodal corpora from which the videos were extracted and the process of multimodal analysis using the software ELAN (Wittenburg et al., 2020) adopted to determine the multimodal ensembles and intersemiotic resources (Royce, 2007), facilitating the identification of key verbal strategies used in the argumentative rhetoric of the speakers in the video clips. The software allows the simultaneous identification of the non-verbal features which accompanied these verbal utterances, foregrounding the role of semiotic resources such as gesture, gaze, posture and prosodic stress among other elements, and how they interplay in multimodal communication and contribute to meaning-making.

The second part of the investigation focuses on pedagogical applications and reports an ESP multimodal project on the theme of identity and ideology, with reference to institutional debates on economic policy. The teaching project was carried out in the advanced English language classes (C1 European Framework) involving students attending a degree course in Economics. The focus was on assisting students in discerning, exploring 'identities' and ideological stance, not just through the verbal mode (language), but also through the various semiotic resources. Specific classroom activities helped guide the students to reflect on the role of different semiotic modes in multimodal texts, and how different meaning-making resources can be used to construct the nature of the events and the participants involved.

## References

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