

Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Health Discourse on Social Media: Approaches and Practices

Anna Franca Plastina

Abstract

The increasingly consumer-driven world of health care is witnessing an expanding proliferation of social media users searching for health-related information. This phenomenon is leading health organizations and pharmaceutical companies to create their niches within social media environments for different promotional purposes (Plastina 2015, 2021). Accordingly, the wider public is unprecedentedly exposed to pervasive multimodal practices of health-related discourses which are worthy of further in-depth investigation (Plastina 2013). This paper will discuss how multimodal discourse analyses of drug advertising and public health campaigning stand to benefit from questioning respectively their social semiotic meaning-making processes (cf. Kress & van Leeuwen 2001; Kress 2010) and metafunctional organization (O'Halloran & Lim 2014). These multimodal practices artfully "provide us with views of how things are or should be" (Harrison 2002: 857), and thus strongly affect health consumers' attitudes and decisions.

References

- Harrison, B. 2002. Seeing health and illness worlds- Using visual methodologies in a sociology of health and illness: A methodological review. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 24(6), 856-872.
- Kress, G. 2010. *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Kress, Gunther & van Leeuwen, Theo 2001. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.
- O'Halloran, K. and Lim, F. V. 2014. Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis. In S. Norris & C.D. Maier (eds.). *Interactions, Images and Texts: A Reader in Multimodality* (pp. 137-154). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Plastina, A.F. 2013. Multimodality in English for Specific Purposes: Reconceptualizing Meaning-making Practices. *Revista de Lenguas para Fines Específicos*, 19, 372-396.
- Plastina, A.F. 2015. Patient (Mis)understanding of Prescription Drug Ads in Social Media: Multimodal Discourse Analysis of eDTCA, In M. Gotti, S. M. Maci & M. Sala (eds). *Insights into Medical Communication, Series: Linguistic Insights* (vol. 203, pp. 189-212). Bern: Peter Lang.
- Plastina, A. F. 2021. Healthy Pic Hashtagging in Twitter: The Role of Infographics in #AntibioticGuardian. In Maria Grazie Sindoni & Ilaria Moschini (eds.). *Mediation and Multimodal Meaning Making in Digital Environments. Series: Routledge Studies in Multimodality* (pp. 188-204). New York: Routledge.