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Systemic functional-multimodal discourse analysis (sf-mda) of KPG reading comprehension source texts

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This paper will present the results of research conducted on literacy requirements of the multimodal source texts used in the Greek exams for the state certificate of foreign language proficiency. In the framework of what has come to be known as the KPG exams, communicative performance is defined as discursive and multimodal (Dendrinos 2008). KPG candidates taking part in the reading comprehension test of the B or C level exams in English are expected to interact with texts of various discourses, genres and registers, given that the test development team views language as a semiotic system in which meanings develop rather than pre-exist (Dendrinos 2008). A KPG candidate is assumed to be a person capable of acting effectively in different communicative contexts by using verbal and visual texts, involved in the productive process of meaning-making (Mitsikopoulou 2008).

In this context, informed by a multimodal approach to text and task analysis, the paper will report on the types of literacy required for successful performance in the multimodal tasks of the KPG reading module. More specifically, the paper will focus on literacy requirements of KPG reading comprehension source texts of twelve exam periods (2007-2012), at three exam levels (B1, B2 and C1). The systemic functional (SF) approach to multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) has been adopted for the analysis of the data, which has mainly been conducted with the use of the Multimodal Analysis Image interactive software (O'Halloran et al. 2012). The software program served to systematically identify the main features, structures and ideas in the printed texts of my data and helped me develop an understanding of the different features of a variety of text types. It assisted me in my attempt to critically analyse how visual and verbal components work together to create an impact and achieve the purposes of the texts (Tan, K.L.E. and O'Halloran 2012).

My presentation aims at discussing the importance and usefulness of this pioneering software program for the purposes of my study and the way I employed it for my data analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative results from the inter-level data analysis will be presented along with a discussion on the impact of multimodality on meaning-making, addressing how each mode lends itself to different semiotic work (Kress 2010) and 'intersemiosis', referring to how different modes contribute to meaning-making co-actively (O' Halloran et al. 2012).

References

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