



NEW METHODS FOR MULTIMODAL RESEARCH

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INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CONFERENCE

Multimodality research has developed fruitfully and is currently gaining momentum as an independent discipline with a strong foothold in linguistics and communication studies (see, e.g., Jewitt, 2014; Jewitt et al., 2016; Klug & Stöckl, 2016; Bateman et al., 2017; Wildfeuer et al., forthc.). The outlines of the field are now firmly sketched involving a circle of core theoretical concepts, increasingly unifying terminology and a widening array of objects of study. By comparison with more long-standing linguistic disciplines such as the study of language grammars and socio-/discourse linguistics, however, methodological deficits become apparent. This lack concerns available corpora (Bateman, 2008) and readily applicable toolkit-like methods for the study of multimodal texts on a number of analytical levels (but see Stöckl 2016; Bateman et al. 2017). Remedying it gains urgency against the backdrop of a general rise of the digital humanities.

The conference aims to **sample, showcase and critically look at available methods** for studying multimodal texts. It resonates around three thematic strands: *Contact – Variation – Change*.

Contact refers to relations between semiotic modes and to cross-influences between different socio-cultural routines in multimodal production (see, e.g., Lemke, 2002; Stöckl, 2004, 2009, 2016; Bateman, 2014).

Variation naturally becomes relevant to multimodality in relation to differing media and genres (see, e.g., Bateman, 2008; Stöckl, 2016; Stöckl & Pflaeging, forthc.).

Change, finally might be a more specific concern of the workshop as methodological approaches and criteria need to be vetted most carefully when applied to tracing multimodal genre change over longer stretches of time (see Bateman et al., 2014; Luginbühl 2014; Stöckl, 2015, 2017; Pflaeging, 2017a, 2017b).

The conference will be firmly **based on the conceptual trinity** *media, genres* and *modes*.

Media are understood here as technological platforms with formal-functional and social-relational affordances but also as specific media in the sense of publishing institutions with editorial styles and cultures (Stöckl, 2012). Media in turn shape the mode repertoire, their configuration in genres, available genre profiles (Luginbühl, 2014) and overall communicative resources and functionalities.

Genres, then, are the focal points of analysis because they provide the actual locus where modes are combined to structure themes in communicative stages and make socially conditioned choices of mode resources and multimodal design options (Bateman, 2008).

Modes, finally – following their own distinct grammatical potentials and constraints – must be examined primarily from the perspective of their relative status and underlying logical semantics in mode-relations. Inter-semiotic cohesion and coherence producing genre-specific textures have proved to be profitable frameworks in this respect. But attention must also be paid to the prototypical patterns of using language, image and sound etc. (Stöckl, 2016).

The conference invites **contributions** that can set out and show the applicability of analytical frameworks for the study of multimodal text. Such studies ought to specify their medial and social contexts, be based on a clear selection of authentic and systematically sampled data and be oriented to a sufficiently and suitably specified aim of analysis. Rather than be able to present exhaustive and ultimately tenable results, the contributions should make the explanation of the methods and their critical reflection an important objective. Care should also be taken to compare the current approach to alternative methods and to look out to potential extensions and successive applications. There is no bias against any approach concerning the type of data or its method. Apart from **empirical-practical project reports**, whereby data and results are presented from a methodological standpoint, we also invite **theoretical-methodological reflections**, which detail the move from theory to method.

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