BRINGING A MULTIMODAL PERSPECTIVE TO THE INVESTIGATION OF SPOKEN CORPORA

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In an age when corpus linguistics has undoubtedly established itself in a variety of fields such as lexicography (e.g. Cobuild, 2006), grammatical studies (e.g. Biber et al. 1999) translation studies (e.g. Laviosa, 1998), and, of course, studies relating to language teaching and learning (Johns, 1991; Partington, 1998; Hunston, 2002), we should reflect on those areas where corpus linguistics lags behind. The research community should reflect on criticisms relating to the form corpora take in linguistic investigations (Leech, 2000; Mishan, 2004), which deprives texts of their multimodal nature (Kress/van Leeuwen, 2006). Some have started thinking about these issues (e.g. Adolphs, 2008) while others (Baldry/Thibault 2001; 2006a, 2006b; 2008) have provided both the theoretical and technological means to create, annotate and concordance multimodal corpora.

With particular reference to spoken texts, this talk illustrates how innovations which have taken place in the new field of multimodal corpus linguistics, especially within the MCA project (Baldry, 2008; Baldry/Thibault, 2008), have been applied to some of the film texts in the Padova Multimedia English Corpus (Ackerley/Coccetta, 2007) in such a way as to promote communicative language competence by language learners at various levels of proficiency. In particular, the talk will show how the multimodal concordancer MCA (Baldry, 2005; Baldry/Beltrami, 2005) can be used to annotate texts for functions and notions (van Ek/Trim, 1998; 2001) and will illustrate the benefits of the kind of information provided to language learners by the concordance lines produced by MCA and their associated video clips-cum-multimodal cotext (Baldry, 2008).

References


