MEDICAL COMMUNICATION: A CORPUS OF MEDICAL SIMULATIONS/ANIMATIONS

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As part of developments into multimodal corpus linguistics (Baldry and Thibault 2001, 2006, 2008), this poster illustrates work carried out in relation to a corpus of Medical Animation Demos. An MA Demo is an advertisement of a specialised kind, a free web sample that advertises a Medical Animation, a longer, purchasable film. Both text types typically illustrate body processes. Thus like an MA, an MA demo will zoom in on an artery, swivel it through 90° degrees, and further zoom in on a shaded and/or lesioned area. At the same time, an off-screen narrator will describe stages and cause-and-effect patterns in the onset of pathological conditions, together with associated surgical or pharmacological procedures. The narration is typically synchronized with visual selections and labellings of body parts and processes.

MA demos thus use the resources of the cartoon genre to simulate body conditions and processes at the same time as they metatextually map scientific information onto the cartoon simulation, in visual and verbal ways that are strikingly different. They demonstrate that, like verbal resources, visual resources also distinguish between an event level and a comment level, thereby contributing significantly to the overall meaning-making processes being enacted.

In so doing, MAs create a significant problem for multimodal description and analysis: how can visual processes be best described given that, while verbal processes have a long tradition of description, visual processes do not? The poster session will suggest that the solution to this complex problem lies in the brevity of MAs and the power of multimodal corpus linguistics to provide fine-grained analyses and comparisons of linguistic and visual patterns that provide clues to the nature of the visual processes at work in many film genres and ultimately as to how they integrate with verbal processes.

References


