

# **Critical Discourse Analysis and Multi-modality: Tracing ‘New’ Domains and Genres**

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# Outline of my presentation

- Why study multi-modality?
- The Discourse Historical Approach (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2009; Wodak and Meyer 2009).
- A case study of televangelism

# I. Why study “multi-modality”?

- There is more integration between modes (Hartmut Stöckl 2014, Bremen University)
- In addition, increased mediation and the rise of infotainment create more spaces for the interaction between sound, verbal language and image.
- On the Internet, as Barton and Lee (2013: 7) comment, the emergence of “Web 2.00 spaces... present(s) new opportunities for easy creation, posting, and sharing of multimodal texts... (for instance) sharing a video from YouTube with a self-generated written description posted on Facebook”.

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# Flashback...

Multi-modality has been examined from many perspectives and conceptual views:

- # Dramaturgical approach (e.g. Goffman)

- # Ethnography (e.g. Goodwin)

- # Cultural studies (e.g. Stuart Hall)

Perhaps one important upturn in the study of multi-modality is the publication of *Reading Images* (1996) by Kress and Van Leeuwen, where the question of power and ideology becomes more salient.

Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) have examined the tools through which we can deconstruct “the grammar of visual design”.

E.g. gaze, dress code, line of directionality and color

# The grammar of visual design



Photo taken from PHD thesis, Shaimaa El Naggar, Lancaster University

So far... We have touched upon the different approaches to multi-modality

# There are issues at stake

- With these various approaches to the study of multi-modality, there are issues at stake (Bezemer and Jewitt 2010).
  - ❖ According to Bezemer and Jewitt (2010: 180), “some studies are based on the assumption that speech or writing is always dominant, carrying the essence of meanings and that other simultaneously operating modes can merely expand, exemplify or modify these meanings”.
  - ❖ This has led according to them to “methodological privileging of particular linguistic resources rather than others” (ibid. p.180).
  - ❖ To add, the emergence of new genres (e.g. political cartoons, blog posts, tweets) calls into question an examination of how modes such as text and image interact.
- I propose that the DHA can provide a comprehensive view that integrates, among other modes, the analysis of both text and image.

# II. The Discourse Historical Approach

The Discourse Historical Approach acknowledges four levels of context:

- 1-The immediate language or text-internal co-text
- 2-The intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses
- 3- The extralinguistic social level
- 4- The broader sociopolitical and historical contexts which the discursive practices are embedded in and related to (see Wodak and Meyer 2009; Reisigl and Wodak 2009).



# Methodological framework

➤The Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) uses five questions as tools for analysis (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2009:93-94).

1. How are persons, objects, phenomena/events, processes and actions named and referred to linguistically?
2. What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to social actors, objects, phenomena/events and processes?
3. What arguments are employed in the discourse in question?
4. From what perspective are these nominations, attributions and arguments expressed?
5. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly; are they intensified or mitigated?

# Text according to the DHA is not restricted to verbal language but can include images (e.g. Wodak 2001).

6. How do modes interact in the process of meaning making? To what effect?

# III. Televangelism

- Televangelism refers to the use of television/Internet for preaching religion.
- The 1980s in the United States of America witnessed the emergence of televangelism with the popularity of figures such as Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson .
- Televangelism was soon taken up by preachers in Muslim majority and minority contexts (e.g. the United Kingdom).
- As a phenomenon, televangelism has some particular characteristics:
  - ❖ Hybrid genre of religion and entertainment (e.g. use of video clips, songs and sermons/speeches).
  - ❖ Commercialization (e.g. televangelists sell DVDs of their sermons).
  - ❖ Media celebrities with thousands of fans and followers.

# Hamza Yusuf

- In relevant literature, Yusuf is described as an intellectual who has 'a huge grassroots following, particularly among young Western Muslims' (Esposito and Kalin 2009:78).
- He has established one college in California, the Zaytuna College, which aims to 'train students in the varied sciences of Islam, while also instilling in them a sophisticated understanding of the intellectual history and culture of the West'<sup>1</sup>.

1. The website of Zaytuna college: <http://www.zaytunacollege.org/about>



**Hamza Yusuf**

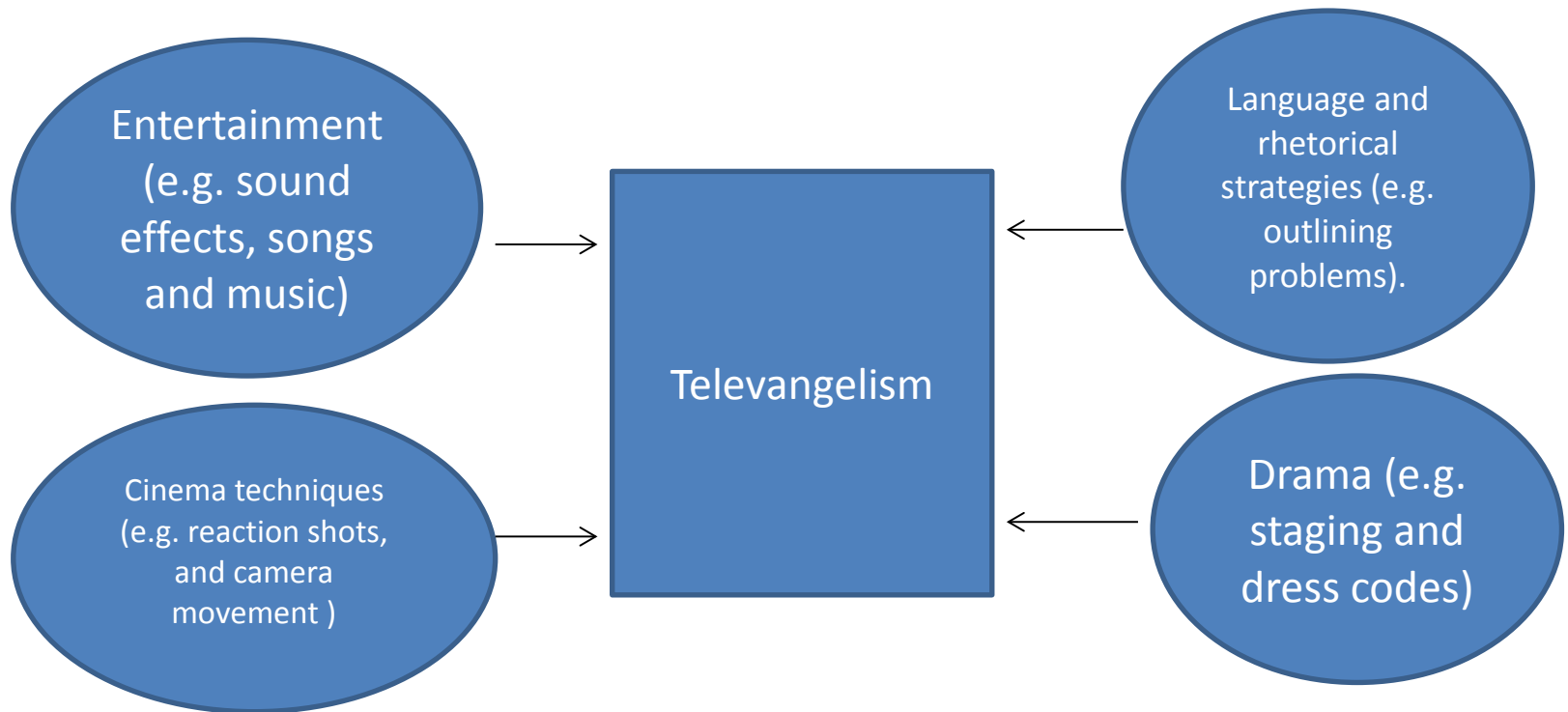
Why have some televangelists become popular?

What might be salient about this phenomenon?

Speech-sermon was given in 2004 in the context of a terrorist incident that took place in Russia



# The complexity of televangelism as a genre



# Hamza Yusuf: A preacher, an intellectual, a political and social critic, a media celebrity

On the discursive level, he navigates through different genres:

- .There is the sermon genre aimed at giving religious advice.

- .There is the hybrid speech/sermon genre in which topics on religion overlap with topics on politics. One example is the speech (a message to humanity) given in 2004 in a conference in Chicago; in the speech, Yusuf calls on Muslims to condemn and completely reject the concept of indiscriminate killing; in the speech, references to Guantanamo Bay, and the suffering of the Palestinian people sit together with discourse topics on the unity of believers in the Abrahamic faith (Jews, Muslims and Christians).

- .In other contexts, he (primarily) positions himself as an intellectual; for instance, one of his YouTube videos is about 'how to read a book' critically. Another important article is one he published on his blog, which was later re-mediated in different websites, in which he explains why Holocaust denial undermines Islam.

# Staging, dress codes and gestures

From the speech 'Islam From the sermon 'The  
and the West' danger of heedlessness'



Uploaded on YouTube in 2007



Uploaded on YouTube in 2007



# A media celebrity



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Thank You!

Vielen Dank!