What and how?

Multimodal analysis of a fast-food training video

Length: 02:26
Date: mid-1980's
Topic: Serving side dishes at a Wendy's restaurant
Media Form: music video

Modes:

- Music
- Lyrics (sung word)
- Video
- Onscreen text (video effect)

Theoretical Frameworks:

- Social Semiotics (Jewitt, et al.)
- Multimedia Literacy and Instructional Design (Clark)

Tools and methods

- VLC Player
- ffmpeg
- FileZilla

} Free and open source

- HTML editor (VS Code –free, not open source)

- Downloaded video from YouTube
- Split soundtrack from video

} VLC Player

- Generated frame captures (every .2 seconds) ffmpeg
- Transcription/timeline built as an HTML table
- Resources/transcription uploaded to the Web

Details on next slide…

Building the transcript

Watched video at ½ speed and using frame captures to identify:

- Scene contents
- Scene cuts
- Onscreen text overlays and effects

Notes

- 1 second capture times are probably too far apart
- Screen captures would be useful for motion/gesture analysis

Soundtrack

- Determined time placement of lyrics relative to video (again 1 second intervals were too wide)
- Break apart structure of music
    - Musical style (80's R&B-influenced pop/dance music –note electronic beats and slap bass w/ brass)
    - Song structure (AAB AAB AB, with turnarounds: no conventional verse/chorus)

Notes

- Vocal style is influenced by R&B and Funk, but songs are pop –I believe the singer (Marvin Hawkins) is African-American (not a lot of current information besides the name)
- Song structure/melody is adapted to provide instructions in lyrics (vamping)



The time scrubber can be set to match timepoints in the transcript timeline when the video is playing or paused.

0:00 / 2:26

Isolated audio from video

Frame captures for the first 10 seconds of video

Multimodal Transcription and Analysis of a Mid-1980's Training Video

Time	00:00	00:01	00:02	00:03	00:04	00:05	00:06	00:07	00:08	00:09	00:10	00:11
VIDEO: Scene Description		Rapid-cut montage of Wendy's side dishes.	Tray with Wendy's side dishes displayed neatly.	Montage of scenes in a Wendy's restaurant. A cheerful multiracial staff of counter persons is serving dishes to customers at the counter.								
AUDIO: Singing/Lyrics								*Wo-oh-ho-o*				*mm-mhm-oo*
AUDIO: Music		Electronic drums		Instrumental intro -- adds slap bass and horn								
VIDEO: Overlay Text/Effects			[black screen with animated square yellow spiral expanding from the center to transparency]									

SCROLL TO THE RIGHT TO VIEW THE TIMELINE.

http://www.u.arizona.edu/~ewlyman/tls561/multimodal

I made the decision to create a Web page as output, because it allowed me to scroll a long timeline horizontally and display the artifact (video) alongside the transcript. Ideally, there would have been more time to use programming to link the two. Transcription/analysis of multiple artifacts would also allow stronger social research frameworks/methods.

From a social semiotics standpoint:

- The interests of the employer (Wendy's) are to standardize procedures and customer experience. The choice of this popular multimodal design "music+video" provides the employer as sign-maker with affordances that elide the power relations in store/restaurant operating procedures (This isn't about profit and compliance; this is about everybody having a good time following procedure.)
- Features such as the design of the "music video", the style of music and singing, as well as the gender and race of video actors may imply other features of the employer-employee/trainee social relationship.

From a multimodal instructional design standpoint

- This is an explanative (how to) video; Mayer's principles apply, though the design "music+video" provides affordances to both genres (music videos::entertainment | instructional videos:: training)
- Music video form includes visual, sonic and lyrical embellishment –including violations of Mayer's redundancy principle (although these seem to be intended as *signaling*, in Mayer's terminology.
- Actual instructional lyrics are paired with the corresponding activity (contiguity, modality) on screen; instructions are segmented and presented informally (personalization)