

THE EMERGENCE OF INTERACTIVITY AND MULTIMODALITY IN INTERNET DISCOURSE

Feruz Khamidov

*School of Creativity named after Erkin Vohidov under the
Agency of Specialized schools
feruzkhamidov@gmail.com*

Abstract: *This article examines this emergence through a socio-technical lens, arguing that interactivity and multimodality are not merely additive features but constitutive forces that reshape communicative practices, literacies, and social dynamics online. Findings reveal that these elements create new discourse genres (e.g., reaction videos, interactive infographics), alter power dynamics between producers and audiences, and necessitate evolved forms of digital literacy. The article concludes that the future of internet discourse lies in increasingly seamless and sophisticated blends of mode and interaction, challenging traditional analytical frameworks and redefining public communication.*

Keywords: *Multimodality, Interactivity, Digital Discourse, Semiotic Modes, Social Media, Participatory Culture, Affordances, Media Convergence, Digital Literacy*

Introduction: Internet discourse, in its infancy, was predominantly logocentric, constrained by bandwidth and technical limitations to textual exchange on bulletin board systems (BBS) and early chat rooms. However, the trajectory of digital communication has been inexorably toward greater complexity in both form and function. Two interconnected concepts frame this evolution: multimodality, the integration of multiple communicative modes (linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural) into a single discursive artifact; and interactivity, the technical and social capacity for users to actively engage with, manipulate, and co-create content in real-time or near-real-time.

This article investigates how the entwined forces of interactivity and multimodality have transformed the structure, aesthetics, and social function of internet discourse. It posits that understanding modern online communication requires analyzing not just what is said, but how it is composed and in what way the audience is invited to participate in its construction and dissemination. The central research question is: How have the emergent properties of interactivity and multimodality coalesced to create new genres, practices, and power structures within internet discourse?

Materials and Methods: This study employs a qualitative, multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) approach, examining digital "texts" as integrated ensembles of semiotic resources. The research focused on three platforms chosen for their distinct yet representative emphasis on interactivity and multimodality:



A purposive sample of 150 discrete digital artifacts ("discourse units") was collected over a four-month period, comprising 50 units from each platform category. For TikTok and X, data included the primary post/video and the associated interactive metadata (caption, hashtags, view/like counts) and a sample of key replies or stitches. For interactive long-form content, the entire article/interactive experience was captured.

Results and Discussion:

1. The Genre-Creating Power of Multimodal Interactivity

The fusion of mode and interaction has given rise to entirely new discourse genres that are native to digital ecosystems.

2. Shifting Power Dynamics and Participatory Culture

Interactivity and multimodality have democratized and complicated discursive authority.

3. The Centrality of Platform Affordances and Algorithmic Incentives

The specific shape of interactivity and multimodality is dictated by platform architecture, which in turn is guided by business models.

Discussion: The emergence of these practices signifies a move toward an experiential and embodied form of discourse. Engaging with a multimodal, interactive text is less about decoding a static message and more about navigating an environment, making choices, and experiencing a curated sensory and cognitive pathway. This challenges traditional linear models of communication (sender-message-receiver) in favor of networked, participatory, and spatially conceived models. Furthermore, it raises critical questions about the persistence and context of discourse. A multimodal argument built on a specific viral meme or audio clip may become incomprehensible once its intertextual references fade, highlighting the ephemerality embedded in these forms.

Conclusion: The emergence of interactivity and multimodality has fundamentally reconstituted internet discourse. It is no longer sufficient to analyze the linguistic content alone; the semiotic orchestration of multiple modes and the structured pathways for user participation are now primary sites of meaning. This shift has spawned novel genres, redistributed discursive agency, and created a media ecology where the lines between producer, consumer, and text are perpetually blurred. Understanding this ongoing emergence is essential for navigating, critiquing, and contributing to the digital public spheres of the present and future.

References:

1. Jewitt, C. (Ed.). (2014). *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
2. Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. Arnold.



3. Jenkins, H., Ito, M., & boyd, d. (2016). *Participatory Culture in a Networked Era: A Conversation on Youth, Learning, Commerce, and Politics*. Polity Press.
4. Zappavigna, M. (2016). Social Media Photography: Construing Subjectivity in Instagram Images. *Visual Communication*, 15(3), 271–292.
5. Page, R. (2018). *Narratives Online: Shared Stories in Social Media*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Lemke, J. L. (2002). Travels in hypermodality. *Visual Communication*, 1(3), 299–325.
7. Simonsen, T. M. (2020). *The Digital Dialogue: An Analysis of Interactivity in Online News*. Nordicom.
8. Adami, E. (2015). Aesthetics in digital texts beyond writing: A social semiotic multimodal framework. In *The Routledge Handbook of Literacy Studies* (pp. 431 -447). Routledge.
9. Manovich, L. (2001). *The Language of New Media*. MIT Press.
10. Serra, G., & Caro, L. (2022). TikTok and the evolution of digital discourse: Stitching, duetting, and the dialogic self. *Social Media + Society*, 8(3).