

Multimodal critical discourse analysis in chemsex: sounds and orality in Speaking of Chemsex podcast

During the last two decades a robust body of knowledge on chemsex has been produced. Mainly, there has been three sources: psychobiomedical studies (epidemiology), critical studies of chemsex (cultural studies) and art (documentaries, podcast, among others). Where art has not had much visibility. Chemsex has been defined as drugs use for the purpose of enhancing and lengthening sexual encounters, mainly by men who have sex with men. A homogenising hegemonic discourse has emerged which has constructed a participant in chemsex encounters as a subject in need of control and/or modulation due to its risky practices, multiple relations, high rate of STIs contagion and tendency towards addiction.

There are several digital platforms concern on chemsex. The Addiction Care Network ONG is one of them. It has comics, stories, a podcast and other. We have chosen five short sequences of its podcast called "Speaking of Chemsex" made between November and December, 2022 as our study corpus. There are two objectives in the study: first, to determine and characterise the discourse about the participants given by the podcast; two, to compare this discourse with the hegemonic one. Multimodal critical analysis centred on Multimodal Sociosemiotic Theory (Kress, 2010; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001) is used as methodology. We present analysis and results of orality and sounds modes. These modes are analysed in three aspects: representational strategies, transitivity and generalisation.

Results show that in some pieces of the podcast extradiegetic sounds, tone, volume, pauses, silences, pronoun use, verbal voices, among others features generate a discourse in which the representation of participants is a subject with clear objectives, with own voice and identity specificity. The above allows us to conclude that the "Speaking of Chemsex" podcast sometimes, but not always, produce an alternative discourse to the hegemonic discourse of chemsex.

Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London: Routledge.

Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold.

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