FROM PAGE TO SCREEN: A REVIEW OF MULTIMODAL PEDAGOGY IN CONTEXT OF ESL CLASSROOM

Abstract

An unprecedented surge of interest has been observed in the field of research in multimodality in language learning in recent times. Academicians and researchers are looking for the meaningful ways in which the inter weave of multimodal techniques using digital medium that can yield to rewarding learning outcomes. The screen has become the most prevailing and powerful communication medium across the globe. So, pedagogical research interest on meaning making realized through various modes including digital technology tools is justified. One after the other researcher has acknowledged the benefits of multimodal practices for L2 students. Li and Akoto have shown several benefits of multimodal techniques like improved awareness in audience and genre, autonomy of learners, investment in language learning, identity development and competence in second language and communication (Li & Akoto, 2021, p.1). This article offers useful insights into Multimodal Pedagogy in Context of ESL Classroom and its effects on L2 learners as well as its implications for L2 teachers. Second language learning process is intricate and contemporary research in multimodality can provide direction to teachers and policy makers to have more inclusive ESL classrooms.

Keywords: Multimodal Pedagogies, Mode, Student centered approach, Identity, English as second language(ESL), learner investment, autonomy, Inclusive and mixed ability classroom

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I. INTRODUCTION

There has been an unprecedented surge of interest in the field of research in multimodality in language learning in recent times. The two prominent reasons are: it is multidisciplinary in nature and it can/may lead to more engaging and inclusive classroom. Academicians and researchers are looking for the meaningful ways in which the inter weave of multimodal techniques using digital medium yield to rewarding learning outcomes. The screen has become the most prevailing and powerful medium of communication in majority parts of the world. So, pedagogical research interest on meaning making realized through various modes including digital technology tools is justified (D. Johnson & G. Kress, 2003, p.7). This article reviews pedagogical applications of multimodality in the context of English language teaching in higher education.

The concept of multimodality emerged as an independent field of research in 1990. The scholarly studies by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), Lemke (1998), van Leeuwen (1999), and Martinec (2000) provided the rich groundwork for the research. The New London Group (1996) offered the term "multimodality" in the process of discussion of the changing ways of communication owing to new technologies. They advocated for a broader perspective of 'literacy' above and beyond the customary printed text. In addition, they introduced a novice approach to engage students and use all available resources, especially multimedia technologies (New London Group, 1996). It was Kress who predicted in 2003 that 'the screen' will rule over all our interactions and communication very soon. Jewitt (2006) did fundamental work in defining modalities as different modes of expression like aural, visual, gestural, spatial, and linguistic. This amalgamation of modes provided a positive ground for creativity and meaning making practices. It also contributed to create a positive learning environment. With the advent of technology based interactions, multimodality provided the resources and opportunities that are quite rich as learning experiences. The importance of developing multiliteracies has been increasingly recognized by education systems across the globe along with growth of digital technology. Digital multimodal language practices are quite visible in efforts of young people contributing to online video sharing platforms as consumers and prosumers. ("Prosumer" means producer and consumer of video production) (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Duncum, 2011).

II. MULTIMODAL PEDAGOGY FOR ESL CLASSROOM

Multimodal pedagogy is defined as a pedagogy that uses different modes as an essential feature of communication in curriculum, teaching-learning and assessment practices. A multimodal pedagogy emphasizes on using learning materials that amalgamate different semiotic modes. In this learning method, students use different modes like linguistic, visual, aural, spatial and gestural. They are required to use different sensory modalities like listening, speaking, and viewing, gesturing and touching to understand the content. Teachers pick and choose the learning material from various mediums like -video, blog post, news article, videogames and short film. In concluding phase, students have opportunity to show their skill by combining different semiotic modes and present them creatively in some medium.

Various studies done in context of ESL classroom have supported the argument that multimodal approach used for language and content teaching can contribute in significant manner to ELL students' academic success.

Creation of digital story is one important task in this reference. While creating a digital story, students get an opportunity to choose and present the features that relate to them and to make personal connections into the story (Nelson 2006). The immigrant learners get opportunities to explore their personal experiences and cultures and also learn subject matter and improve their oral and written language skills in English while handling their tasks (Vinogradova et al. 2011). In this way, creations of digital stories could encouragee student identity development and the verbalization of student voices in case of EFL/ ESL students.

Li and Akoto (2021) analyzed 26 empirical studies on digital multimodal composing (DMC) published in well-established journals between 2010 and 2020. They considered the aspects like context, participants, tasks, technology, research data, research strands and themes. Their review showed that most studies were conducted in tertiary ESL/EFL contexts. The studies included activities like digital storytelling, digital video production, and multimodal presentation. Li and Akoto (2021) found that digital multimodal practices proved quite beneficial for L2 students in the context of enhancing audience and genre awareness, learner autonomy, language learning investment, identity development, multimodal communicative competence, and L2 competence.

The most essential advantage of usage of multimodal pedagogical practices is its efficacy to create active learner engagement. The usage of multimodal pedagogical practices has proved to be a source of modernity and creativity for both teachers and students because it could engage the students in the course content actively as it draws upon available visual, audio, and kinesthetic modes. This exercised a positive effect on oral production of learners, improved quality of communication between the learner and the teacher.

The earlier practices of teaching with one modality (mostly linguistic) were inadequate to cater the requirements of all learners with various learning styles and individual differences in English class. Using multimodal pedagogy in ESL classroom can create a more inclusive class in terms of teaching and learning both.

III.EFFECTS OF MULTIMODAL PEDAGOGY FOR ESL LEARNERS

Vasudevan, Schultz, and Bateman (2010) in their study related to multimodal story telling stated that students' engagement improved by this method. In addition, they also developed multiliteracies.

The Pew Research Center (Purcell, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013), Advanced Placement and National Writing Project, conducted a survey research in which the teachers reported the advantages of using technology in their writing instruction like increased willingness and motivation level of the student to collaborate on writing projects when the medium of technology is used. Moreover, the usage of digital writing tools for writing projects boosted students' creativity and personal expression which was not observed in the case of traditional writing tools.

IV. TOWARDS MORE ENGAGING AND INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

A research project in the context of Uganda showed that the multimodal pedagogies like drawing, photography and drama for teaching the English curriculum proved to be highly effective in supporting English language learning in the classroom (B. Norton 11). The reason behind it was that the use of innovative methods helped the students to reject their opinion of English as restricted and non-natural medium of instruction when they started using it for communication, expression, and acquired ownership of meaning.

It is seen that students' family background, social and economic standing has significant impact on their capacity for digital access, skills, and opportunities (Hatlevik & Christophersen, 2013). So academic institutions can close this 'digital divide' by providing the students the access to technological tools and the knowledge and skills required for teaching learning process like digital multimedia composing..

Multimodal pedagogy has proved to be very advantageous for language teaching as it can help students learn to employ different modes other than only verbal language to understand and produce texts in target language more effectively. It will also enhance their awareness of target culture. (Busà, 2010, 2015).

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR ESL TEACHERS

ESL teachers are required to build up a pedagogical structure to teach and facilitate digital multimodal practices carried out by in the classroom. Learner trainings should be provided for the students to train them for using online website or application to create a video, poster or a digital story as well as how they can integrate written and visual texts.

The teaching and learning activities focus on the teacher's role through the various phases. The teacher demonstrates any one activity and teaches relevant semiotic information and the metalanguage of meaning-making process while using different modes. The teacher also guides them to acquire adequate skills for efficient use of technology. Apparently, there are many challenges on the part of teachers catering for students' diversified composing needs.

The teachers and academicians also have reported challenges associated with the usage of digital tools for multimodal teaching practices. According to Sweeny, a prominent challenge is, "truncated forms of expression used for texting, Internet searching, and social networking (i.e., Twitter) spill over into students' formal writing assignments, underscoring the need to emphasize pragmatic competence" (Sweeney, 2010).

VI. NEP 2020 RECOMMENDATIONS

The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. "Develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the ... India's national identity tnd wealth. Flexible Learning gives learners the freedom and choice to learn according ... and develop a well-defined personal, social, and cultural identity. Using Multimodal practices in L2 classes certainly exercises

positive influence on teacher's classroom interaction and student motivation strategies. It helps the teacher to make better choices to empower learning in an ESL classroom.

VII. CONCLUSION

Here are some prominent insights in to the Characteristics of Research on Multimodal Pedagogy: Multimodal Pedagogy was found motivating and engaging at large in ESL context. It has improved English Language and Multimodal Literacy Skills of the students. It contributed to boost Learners' Autonomy and Creativity. And it has proved to be quite challenging for teachers.

NEP 2020 has made very specific recommendations for the new curriculum suggesting to incorporate "basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics" for development of capabilities of learners with a purpose to provide "more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling education" to the learner (NEP, 2020). It also emphasizes flexible Learning gives learners the freedom and choice to learn and develop a well-defined personal, social, and cultural identity. Using DMC in L2 classes certainly exercises positive influence on teacher's classroom interaction and student motivation strategies. It helps the teacher to make better choices to empower learning in an ESL classroom.

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