**From Page to Screen: A Review of Multimodal Pedagogy in Context of ESL Classroom**

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**ABSTRACT**

There has been an unprecedented surge of interest 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 digital technology leads to rewarding learning experiences. Since the screen is the “culturally dominant medium in many parts of the globe, and for many members of numerous societies around the world” pedagogical research interest on meaning making realized through linguistic representation, visual representation, audio representation, spatial representation, and gesture is justified**.** Multimodal practices were reported to have benefited L2 students with advantages like enhancing audience and genre awareness, learner autonomy, language learning investment, identity development, multimodal communicative competence, and L2 competence” (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 can provide direction to teachers and policy makers to have more inclusive ESL classrooms.

**KEYWORDS:** Multimodal Pedagogies, Mode, Student centered approach, ESL classroom, identity, English as second language(ESL), learner investment, autonomy, identity development, Inclusive and mixed ability classroom

**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 tomore engaging and inclusive classroom**.** Academicians and researchers are looking for the meaningful ways in which the inter weave of digital technology leads to rewarding learning experiences. Since the screen is the “culturally dominant medium in many parts of the globe, and for many members of numerous societies around the world” (D. Johnson & G. Kress, 2003, p.7) pedagogical research interest on meaning making realized through linguistic representation, visual representation, audio representation, spatial representation, and gesture is justified**.**

 Multimodality came into its own in the 1990s as an independent field of scientific research with foundation studies by Roth (1994), Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), Lemke (1998), van Leeuwen (1999), and Martinec (2000). The New London Group (1996) created the term “multimodality” when they discussed the changing ways of communication due to new technologies. They argued for a much broader view of literacy than the traditional printed text and promoted a new 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- aural, visual, gestural, spatial, and linguistic. These diverse modalities combined in a digital environment in ways that reshaped the printed word and image or sound. This amalgamation of modes provided a positive ground for creativity and meaning making practices. It also contributed to the learning environment. With the advent of technology based interactions, multimodality provided the resources and opportunities that are quite rich as learning experience. With the ever-evolving media and communication landscape, the importance of developing multiliteracies has been increasingly recognized by education systems around the world (The New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; 2015; Scollon & Scollon, 2013; Stornaiuolo, Hull, & Hall, 2017; Mills et al., 2020).Digital multimodal language practices are quite visible in efforts of young people contributing to online video sharing platforms as consumers and prosumers.(“Prosumer” is a neologism which combines the meanings of producer and consumer.of video production) (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Duncum, 2011). This article reviews pedagogical applications of multimodality in the context of English language teaching in higher education, with particular attention to both fostering and leveraging *multimodal literacy* among adult English language learners.

**What is multimodal pedagogy in context of ESL classroom?**

Multimodal pedagogy in this study refers to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices that focus on mode as a defining feature of communication in learning environments (Stein, 2008). A multimodal pedagogy emphasizes on using learning materials that amalgamate semiotic modes like —linguistic, visual, aural, spatial, and gestural meaning and interactivity that requires students to use different sensory modalities (i.e. listening, speaking, viewing, gesturing, touching, etc.) to understand the content. Teachers pick the learning material through various mediums (video, blog post, news article, videogames, short film, etc.). In concluding phase, students have opportunity to show their skill by combining different semiotic modes and present them in a range of mediums.

Various studies done in context of ESL classroom have supported the notion that using a multimodal approach to integrating language and content teaching, has considerable potential in promoting ELL students’ academic success.

It is also observed that when creating a digital story, students have an opportunity to select, represent, and highlight features that matter to them and to build personal connections into the story (Nelson 2006). Particularly for immigrant students, digital stories offer opportunities to explore their personal experiences and cultures, while they also learn subject matter and improve their oral and written language skills in English (Vinogradova et al. 2011). In this way, digital stories can help foster identity development and the articulation of student voices.

Li and Akuto (2021) reviewed 26 empirical studies on digital multimodal composing (DMC) published in well-established journals between 2010 and 2020 in terms of context and participants, multimodal tasks, technology, research data, research strands and themes. Their work showed that most studies on Digital Multimodal Composing were conducted in tertiary ESL/EFL contexts including activities like digital storytelling, digital video production, and multimodal presentation. The research was informed by various theoretical/pedagogical frameworks across multiple disciplines. They reported that digital multimodal practices were reported to have benefited L2 students. The advantages described were : enhancing audience and genre awareness, learner autonomy, language learning investment, identity development, multimodal communicative competence, and L2 competence.

Usage of multimodal pedagogical practices has been proved to be a very helpful option for active learner engagement. It has turned out to be a resource of modernity and creativity for both teachers and students as it actually draws upon available visual, audio, and kinesthetic modes, which could engage students favorably in the course content. It 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) was 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.

**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, in terms of digital skills and multimodal competence.

In a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center (Purcell, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013), Advanced Placement and National Writing Project teachers reported that they recognized the benefits of using technology in their writing instruction. For instance, 96% of the respondents reported an increase in students’ motivation to write and 79% reported students are more willing to collaborate on writing projects when using technology. Moreover, 78% of teachers agreed that digital writing tools support students’ creativity and personal expression in ways that traditional writing tools do not. As one teacher explained,

**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 restrictive and non-natural medium of instruction when they started using it for communication, expression, and acquired ownership of meaning.

Digital access, skills, and opportunities are constrained by the students’ socioeconomic status and family background (Hatlevik & Christophersen, 2013).In this light, it is of even greater imperative for schools to level the playing field and close the digital divide by providing not only digital access, but also the knowledge and skills needed in digital multimodal composing practices amongst students.

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

**Implications for ESL teachers:**

The 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.

Although many benefits of using multimodal pedagogy have been identified, teachers also have reported challenges associated with the unique affordances of digital tools. One challenge is that 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).

Another challenge is related to the need to instill a sense of awareness in students of the culturally and ethnically diverse Internet audience. So they need to consider the various ways that others may interpret their work. Developing a multimodal syllabus for L2 writing requires a pedagogical shift from a predominant focus on learning-to-write (an approach that sees the writing classroom as a place to help students express already-acquired language through writing) to writing to-learn (Hanaoka & Izumi, 2012; Harklau, 2002; Manchón, 2011).

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 and wealth.
* Flexible Learning gives learners the freedom and choice to learn according ... and develop a well-defined personal, social, and cultural identity.
* The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the learner.
* 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.
* The review of these research data highlights the diverse journeys that our students walk as they navigate learning English writing and achieving their educational goals. All of our students come from different backgrounds and have different life situations, goals, motivations and abilities.
* A teacher has to understand student’s collective identity and strive to validate them thereby partnering with students to help them thrive and adapt to a new language and culture. By allowing our students to learn English through activities that encourage self-discovery, we can make their transition to this new life easier.

**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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Moving from the Logic of the Page to the Logic of the Screen: A Review Research on Multimodal Pedagogy in EFL Classroom Contexts

# IThe nexus of multimodality, multimodal literacy, and English language teaching in research and practice in higher education settings