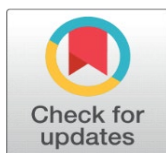# EMERGING ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN MULTIMODAL TEACHING PEDAGOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

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. An unparalleled surge of interest and activity has been observed in research and practice in the field of multimodality in English language learning in recent times. The inter weave of digital technology with language teaching has exhibited results related to rewarding learning experiences. Availability of abundant research data on benefits like creating audience and genre awareness, improved motivation level of learners and investment in language learning, identity development, multimodal communicative proficiency and second language competence has established multimodal teaching pedagogy as a vital approach in changing times. In addition, it has helped create learner autonomy. One of the challenging aspects for the successful implementation of multimodal pedagogy is related to preparing an assessment framework. This article offers useful insights into the assessment framework of multimodal Pedagogy in Context of English Language Classroom and its effects on learners as well as its implications for teachers.

Keywords: Multimodal Pedagogies, Mode, Student Centered Approach, Identity, English as Second Language (ESL), Learner Investment, Autonomy, Inclusive and Mixed Ability Classroom

1. INTRODUCTION

Multimodality has emerged as an important approach for ELT in recent decades. Multimodal resources, such as visual aids, technology, and creative activities can be effectively utilized to meet the various learning requirements of students and to accommodate various learning preferences and promote a more inclusive and engaging environment for language competence. Multimodal practices incorporate various modes of communication and media to improve learning experiences (visual, aural, gestural, spatial and linguistic) by creating a rich and dynamic learning environment. (Brezemer and Kress, 2015)

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changing times. In addition, it has helped create learner autonomy. Study after study found that the implementation of multimodality contributes to learners' English language proficiency in English. There is an advantage of a multimodal approach in improving higher education learners' vocabulary, reading, speaking, and writing skills and a positive connection between the implementation of multimodality and the development of learners' communicative ability. It is 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). 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 grow identity development and the articulation of student voices.

Vasudevan, Schultz, and Bateman (2010) in their study related to multimodal storytelling 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.

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

One of the challenging aspects for the successful implementation of multimodal pedagogy is related to preparing an assessment framework. Although multimodal pedagogy has been used widely since long, assessment techniques seem to be largely print centric. A clear understanding of multiple elements of multimodal text/composition /presentation can help to create an effective assessment. Assessment techniques should get aligned with the nature of multimodal pedagogy to make them more authentically included in curriculum. Along with multimodal pedagogy for better learning experience, as part of regular curricula practice, a well-defined mode of assessment also plays a crucial role. A well-defined assessment criterion will be useful to inform the students about the expected criteria of quality and performance for assessment. Sadler advises the teachers to use evaluation "as an agent in learning" (p. 138), 'by making explicit the tacit knowledge of evaluative criteria' an understanding of their different dimensions, descriptions and expectations to help them appreciate the path to quality in their own work.

A detailed review on the emerging terms of multimodal assessment, the following points are highlighted as essential points to evaluate the students work - 1. Meaning making 2. Meaning representation by various modes 3. Achievement of coherence and desired effect (Wyatt-Smith, C. & Kimber, K. 2010)

The earlier attempts to develop assessment criteria for multimodal approach were noted by Kress and van Leeuwen's (2002) four strata of multimodal texts (discourse, design, production and distribution). Burn added 'interpretation' to four strata of multimodal texts. Another attempt was designed by Wyatt-Smitha and Kimber (2005) as an application to the final product for the assessment for technologically mediated learning and production. The criteria included four things: e-proficiency, cohesion, content and design.

Bearne (2009) reported on two major projects that involved a consensus of teachers in shaping a continuum of descriptors of multimodal text creation: (a) in the early stages, (b) assured (c) independent, or (d) assured, experienced, and independent multimodal text-makers. A counterpoint, however, was raised by Sefton-Green (2009). While he would support the notion that progress in multimodal text creation is a key issue for literacy teachers, he argued that current school assessment systems operate as 'gatekeepers' consistently requiring "notions of incompetence or failure" (p. 196, Bearne, E. 2009).

From these studies, three key areas related to the development of appropriate multimodal assessment can be drawn: If teachers and students have a shared understanding of terminology that clearly describes the constituent parts of a multimodal text, then there could be a foundation for shaping more focused conversations about quality in multimodal performance:

(1) finding idioms to define characteristics of multimodality; The development of language and metalanguage to shape multimodal assessment needs to be organic, shared and negotiated.

(2) matching the dynamic possibilities of multimodal texts with dynamic assessment tools.

(3) The assessment of multimodal learning should be concerned with the process of learning – not just the final product.

In conclusion, if English teachers are willing to strengthen young people's creative and critical abilities with multimodal pedagogy, then assessment practices are required to be more in line with the digital communication scenario of the present time. The English teachers are also required to focus on how the student-designer has created his/her own multimodal text for specified purposes and audiences, and how the source images and texts have been duly acknowledged, transformed, interconnected and assembled in innovative, aesthetic ways. Multimodal practices offer exciting directions for transforming English teaching and ensuring its continuing relevance in twenty-first century learning. Summing up, the purpose of the assessment should be growth and development of literary and language skills of the students and clear criteria of assessment in multimodal pedagogy would benefit students and teachers as well.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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