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THE ROLE OF MULTIMODAL LITERACY IN EDUCATION

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Advances in technology have had a paramount effect on almost every aspect of our lives over the past decades. Particularly, electronic devices impact the ways how children construct their identity and the world around them. If we consider the amount of time spent on devices, there is no doubt that the impacts of technology on youth cannot be overstated. Our perception of the world has also become tied up in the media in which it is demonstrated. What it implies is that there are certainly consequences of these changes when it comes to education. For instance, today's students don't tend to discover the news by reading the paper. What they prefer is watching YouTube, tracking Facebook or looking through Instagram. Research says that most American citizens prefer watching the news in contrast with reading it. Therefore, the texts through which our culture communicates are becoming increasingly visual.

Frank Serafini, author of the fantastic "Reading the Visual," claims that people don't receive new knowledge and information in a single mode anymore. He introduces print, visual, and video combinations as multimodality. Nowadays if you are reading an online article or news, most texts contain several modes. Even if we take these texts with different audio or visual aids for granted, we should make a pause and analyse its implications on education. Lemke says that teachers should we begin to think of literacy as a "set of cultural competencies for making socially recognizable meanings by the use of particular material technologies" (Lemke, 1998). Considering the significant role visual, audio and print ensembles play in our culture and everyday life, we could make a sound claim that they deserve more attention in our literacy curriculum.

Certainly, it is not an easy task to change the whole education system and start to present information with multimodal ensembles. Nevertheless, taking concepts from fields such as semiotics can assist us in teaching the content already present in our curriculum. As a result, multimodal literacy can be a huge support and challenge students by offering them a broader set of meaning making tools.

The term "multimodal literacy" refers to literacy as a concept. Multimodal literacy explores the conception of speech by examining the contributions of various semiotic resources (for example, language, gestures, images) Co-involved in various modalities, as well as their interaction and integration in the construction of a coherent text. Based on some work in the field of multimodal literacy, Lim asserts that the notion of multimodal literacy seems to have two dimensions (Kress, 2003, 2010; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress et al., 2001,2005 and Walsh, 2009).

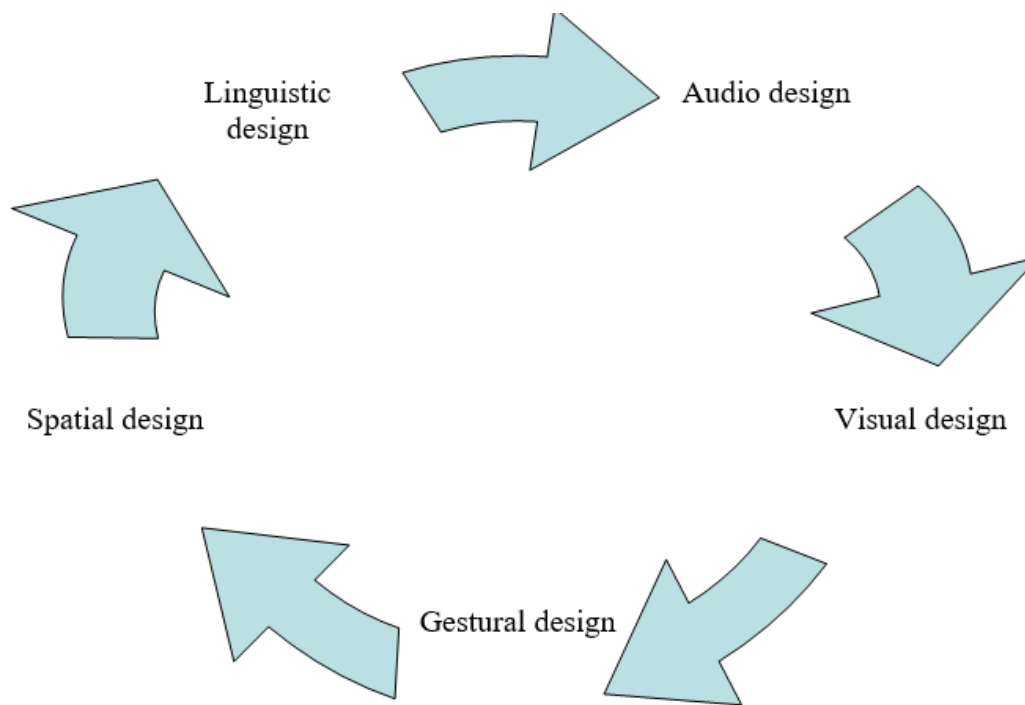


Figure 1. Multimodal literacies.

The first dimension is linked to the predominance of multimodal texts, in particular multimedia texts provided by digital media, which underlines the need to be literate to obtain and access information. Multimodal literacy recognizes the importance of all semiotic resources and modalities in the creation of meaning. Based on this, it can be concluded that a “literate multimodal” student must therefore be sensitive to the semantic potential and the choices provided during the creation of the text, which increases the ability to make thoughtful and effective choices during the construction and presentation of knowledge. Armed with this understanding, students will not only become readable consumers of multimodal texts, but they will themselves become competent producers of multimodal texts.

The second dimension concerns the recognition that teaching and learning are inherently multi-semiotic and multimodal. As O’Toole notes (1994: 15), “we “read” people in everyday life: facial features and expression, posture, gesture, typical actions and clothing”. While new media technologies have highlighted the multimodal nature of our communication, meanings have always been conceived and interpreted in a multimodal way thanks to the use of semiotic resources such as language and bodily resources such as gestures and postures, in various sensory modalities through vision, smell, taste and touch. Norris (2004: 2) notes that “all movements, all noises and all material objects have a sense of interaction as soon as they are perceived by man”. In this sense, any interaction is multimodal. Our communication is more than what is said and heard, but what we perceive through facial expressions, points of view, gestures and movements.

From the dual point of view of multimodal literacy in the multimodal text and in the multi semiotic experience, the introduction of multimodal literacy has two aspects. They consist of 1) instilling in students the skills of multimodal analysis of speech and 2) sensitizing teachers to the use of multimodal resources (the opportunities and limitations offered by each of them, their organization (contextualizing relationships) and their potential to shape the lesson experience) in the classroom.

One of the challenges of implementing multimodal literacy in education is that language teachers are not exposed to fields as semiotics, media and communication in their university studies which lead to the limited knowledge of benefits of modern technology. Due to the low multimodal literacy in the ELA classroom, teachers cannot offer new ways of teaching to students. For instance, Serafini believes that “teachers are rarely, if ever, exposed to these fields of study [art history,

semiotics, media, culture studies, communication studies, graphic design, typography, photography, and advertising] in their certification coursework, graduate degree programs, or professional development workshops” (Serafini, 2013). Therefore, actions should be taken in order to improve teachers` multimodal literacy who can send this new information to their students in turn.

Multimodal learning doesn`t mean beautiful pictures in the Pinterest Pedagogy. Its main purpose is to build a strong skill in students to comprehend knowledge effectively and easily. This type of learning is not only for students. Teachers can use modality to plan their lessons with, make presentations and create assessments. In comparison, students can use it to summarise complex ideas, plan posters, work on group projects, take notes, and etc. Multimodality is an important tool that can benefit different people in numerous contexts.

This is an example of students` work using multimodal learning:

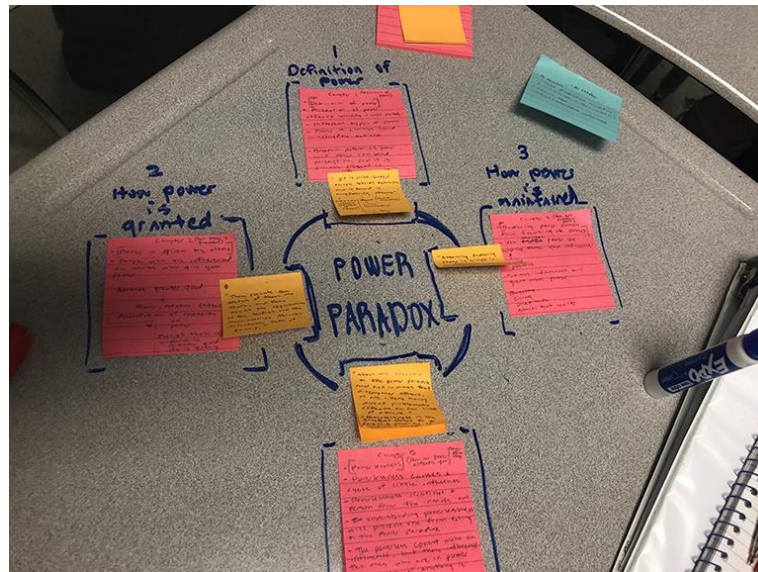


Figure 2. Multimodal learning example.

From this picture, we can see that a student used visual thinking to simplify complex ideas and write the key point of the topic. This is an excellent case of using multimodal literacy because a student has created visual aid to understand information and analyze it.

Multimodal literacy is of paramount importance in the modern classrooms as it includes spoken, visual and digital texts. Every mode uses a unique way of conveying a message and communicating with students. The mode can be of different forms like a book, a dialogue or short movie. Students can improve and learn skills in literacy to arrange their ideas. In the last years, forms of modality have increased as there was a huge development in the digital communication technology that affected all areas of life.

If we look at the meaning of the word multimodality: multi implies many and modal is many and plural. In general, it implies the different ways information is offered. Any new information can be presented through texts, speech, films and audio. In the article “Multimodal literacy: What does it mean for classroom practice?” considered multimodal literacy as “Referring to meaning-making that occurs through the reading, viewing, understanding, responding to and producing and interacting with multimedia and digital texts.” (Walsh, 2010).

We believe that today it is significant to use multimodal texts to teach students literacy. In 2010 Anstey & Bull classified multimodal modes to linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial. If teachers use these modes in classrooms, then it is highly likely that students will gain knowledge effectively. Not only teachers should know these classifications and use them, but also secondary students should be able to recognise and understand these modes. In 2010 Cunneen provided an example of using different modes in the lecture. Children are given the book version of The Three Little Pigs. This mode`s purpose is mainly to entertain and teach a new lesson. Then students are

offered the newspaper report about The Three Little Pigs which is for a different aim, to inform and influence students. Both these have the same theme and content but the mode is different. Therefore, using two different modes of providing knowledge teachers can make students comprehend more.

A multimodal text should contain least two modes. For example, in addition to the text there might be different pictures and graphs. Each of these modes has its own particular purpose and function. In general, most people tend to understand texts with different pictures rather than pure texts. All modes contribute to the overall saying of the story but do so in unique ways. Great authors of multimodal texts integrate modes in different ways to coherently send the message of the text. Another point that should be highlighted is that modes vary in their complexity. For instance, a film text is a more complex than a poster multimodal text since it consists of the semiotic systems of, audio, image, space and acting to convey the main idea.

Currently, there are a vast number of teaching materials, which convey meanings through spoken and written language. Nevertheless, you can find few resources for teaching students how to understand in the other modes. As most young students spend their free time watching films and videos on the internet, education should also be given by using visual resources. What visual resources contain are images and moving animations. Images can contain different cultural connotations, symbolism and present different people, cultures and practices.

Recommendations for the implementation of specific methods of multimodality using multimodal texts: formulate specific ways of implementing multimodal texts that allow you to maximize the use of the methodological potential of digital multimodal texts. The most complete methodological potential of such texts is revealed when using them to solve the following methodological tasks: to remove lexicogrammatic difficulties, to form linguistic competence, to form mediation skills, as well as to develop productive speech. Let us give as an example the work on the formation of the least studied skill – the skill of mediation, that is, transcoding text from one sign system to another. The infographic shown in Figure 3 contains only a small verbal component and can be converted into written or oral text. The exercise on converting infographics into text containing an exclusively verbal component can be used with A1 level students when studying verbs.

Sample text that students should get:

Abai Kunanbayev is a famous Kazakh poet, philosopher, musician, people’s educator. His works are known all over the world. In the morning at 10 o’clock Kunanbayev usually has breakfast. Then he works. In the afternoon at 4 o’clock he walks. The poet dines in the evening, at 5 o’clock. He rests at 10.

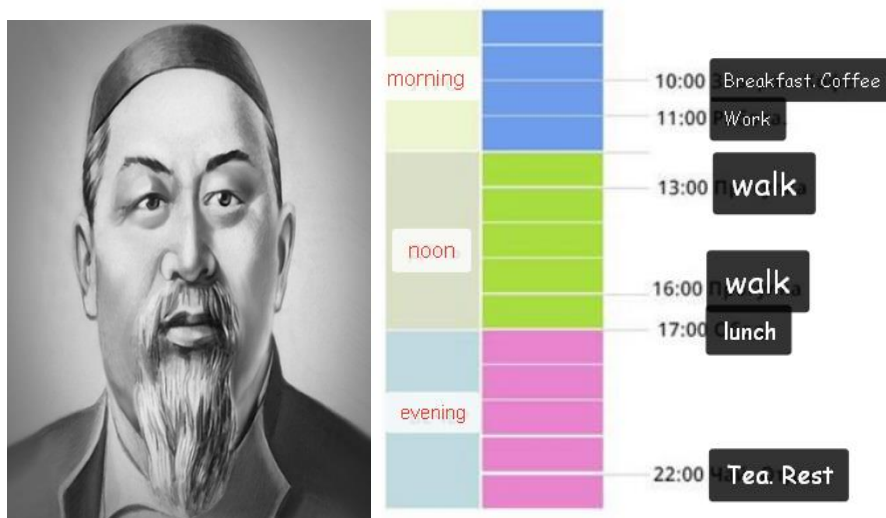


Figure 3. Example of using multimodal texts (infographics).

Computers and new media allowing the creation of multimodal compositions can offer “the opportunity to contribute to a renewed literary tradition and to enrich the means of notation available to us” (Hull and Nelson 2005: 226). Based on this, let’s now mention the possibilities and challenges of using multimodal literacy to learn and teach English to multilingual teenagers. It mainly deals with the practice of multimodal literacy mediated by digital technologies, given that the practice of multimodal literacy is becoming more and more digital.

The practice of multimodal literacy will probably allow ELLs to develop a multimodal communication skill, that is, “the ability to understand the global potential of different ways of creating meaning” (Royce 2002: 192). In other words, when students participate in multimodal practices such as digital storytelling or digital podcasts, they must take into account many semiotic modes (scenario, voice, music and image, for example) and organize them to effectively convey meaning. For example, she must analyze the role of image or sound in relation to language. In doing so, they will probably increase their multimodal communication skills. The importance of multimodal communication competence is emphasized as follows: To enhance our multimodal communicative competence, we must become multimodally and multimedially “multi-competent” (Cook 1991, 2002).

In the modern world of literacy, the development of language skills may not be enough for the adequate consumption, production and dissemination of multimodal texts. Instead, it is essential for ELLs to develop a multimodal communication skill alongside an English communication skill in order to better use the different types of literacy for academic, personal and social purposes.

Can multimodal literacy improve the academic learning part of ELLs?

Some studies have shown that multimodal literacy methods can help adolescents develop their academic skills and promote the assimilation of content. Among the few empirical studies, Margaret Earley and Sondra Marshall (2008) examined the way in which Canadian high school students interpret and evaluate English literature through a multimodal approach.

The study participants had to conceptually represent the key elements of the story (theme, character and style) using the Mandala symbol, a traditional Hindu and Buddhist symbol consisting of a circle framed by a square. Using written, visual and oral means in group work, the students in groups read the stories attentively and thoughtfully several times and discussed their ideas to formulate gather the whole Mandala. Then they began to write an essay-answer about literature. At the end of the four-week study period, 26 of the 28 high school students reported that the use of the (visual) Mandala as a mediation tool led them to “broaden their horizons” and also “affected their level of engagement in the texts” (386). In response to the question “Has your writing improved?” one of the participants replied,

– Yes, certainly because we covered so many different things for the Mandala by going through all these visuals... I remembered this in my essay... my understanding of the text has become much better... so, of course, it will improve my score (393).

What is important here is that multimodal literacy teaching methods can be effective in attracting teenagers, who were sometimes treated as deficient in the traditional sense of the word, to good school performance. With the help of multimodal texts and with the help of teaching multimodal literacy, it helps to increase the level of many displays in the educational process.

Conclusion

The role of multimodal literacy in education is paramount because it correlates with our reality. We don’t receive information with pure texts, but rather in different ways thanks to the development of technology. Education should be provided in different modes in order to meet the needs of today’s students. Furthermore, because of always watching short videos in social media, young students cannot pay attention to long texts or videos. They easily become bored. When choosing modes to prepare a lesson plan, teachers should also take into account this fact. The main purpose of education is to give valuable knowledge to students. Most importantly, the ways of teaching change over time according to the technological developments, people’s needs and psychological conditions.

The goal of education is to prepare for life, and life is not only learning some rules and theories, but more than that. Developing critical thinking and competence in any field is very necessary in the world. Now is the era of multimodality, which means that information is available not only in the form of language. For example, the use of languages for photo and video, audio resources, even scaffolding in education is used as a multimodal assistance to students. Literacy teachers should understand the different types of multimodal literacy, because they are also responsible for using language to develop multimodality in students themselves.

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PEDAGOGY OF HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION IN KYRGYZSTAN AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF STUDENTS' CAREER-ORIENTED IDENTITY

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The globalization of human life has brought a number of socio-social innovations in many countries. This phenomenon has also spread to Kyrgyzstan, and research efforts have intensified in all directions to master criteria that meet such social demands. Since this is related to human knowledge, attention to related issues has increased. Some concepts were adopted from other countries in a ready-made form, some innovative technologies that improve people's lives and ease their burden were recognized in their scientific content, and their special applied nature began to be studied and learned. In particular, this approach completely covered the field of education and was legalized in accordance with the requirements of a democratic social order. In particular, it is known that if the state accepts the standards for the conduct of work on higher professional education in the country within the framework of the law, then rules and regulations are needed for accurate and accessible fulfillment of the requirements. The solution of this problem obliges pedagogical work in all educational institutions to carry out scientific and practical research work. If the task of each investigation to achieve its goal and methodically correct approach to the case is assigned equally to the teaching staff of educational institutions of higher departments of the country, then each subjective action should be based on the norms established by law. These norms are based on the