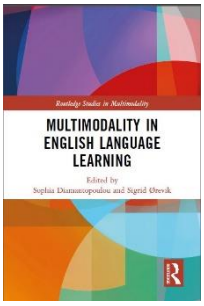
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# BOOK REVIEW: MULTIMODALITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING




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**Ahmad Sugianto**
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia
correspondence: ahmadsugianto@upi.edu
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**Abstract**
Multimodality has been one of the prominent and burgeoning fields and phenomena in English classrooms. It is based on both the credence which is proven by scholarly evidence that English language learning and instruction will be significantly and effectively delivered if more than one semiotic resource or mode is used. Lots of scholars across the globe have taken part in portraying such significance and effectiveness of multimodality concerning English classrooms. Diamantopoulou and Ørevik (2022) have conflated sheer studies from various distinguished authors providing 'fresh' outlooks of the use of multimodality, particularly in English as an additional language (EAL) context across the globe. The use of multimodality in EAL is concisely discussed from various lenses, from its salient perspectives, and pedagogical practices through assessments. Thus, this book is recommended to those who are concerned and willing to capture the latest trajectories of the use of multimodality pertaining to EAL by its par excellence as well as the matter at hand.

**Keywords:** English as an additional language, English language learning, multimodality, social semiotics, systemic functional linguistics

Multimodality—a term coined firstly in the mid-1990s (Jewitt, Bezemer, & O'Halloran, 2016) foregrounds the notion that the way individuals make meaning or communicate does not hinge upon language solely but also is resonated by the other semiotic resources such as images, sounds, gestures, etc.—has been a burgeoning academic field in the recent decades. Such proliferation is by the advancement of technology that goes hand in hand with social, economic, and cultural values, issues, and development (Kress, 2010). Moreover, this flourishing

multimodality phenomenon has also successfully drawn scholars' and researchers' attention, particularly those who are in the English teaching and learning domain, to take part in studying, scrutinizing, and 'celebrating' it. In this respect, *Multimodality in English Language Learning*, which constitutes a follow-up to the scholarly work and rigorous observations under the research group named Text-based English Language Learning (TELL) at the University of Bergen, serves the readers the delineations of the recent inspections and theoretical perspectives of multimodality. The issues raised in this volume are mainly discussed within the English as an Additional Language (EAL) domain.

The book comprises eighteen chapters which are structured into five main parts. To begin with, Part I focusing on Multimodality in the Teaching and Learning of EAL: Overarching Perspectives consists of five chapters. The first chapter, written by the editors of the book, Sophia Diamantopoulou, and Sigrid Ørevik, provides a brief overview of the contents of the book, the contexts in which the studies of the remaining chapters were conducted, the underlying tenets thrusting on the investigations, and the fundamental theories regarding multimodality discussed in the book, namely Halliday's (1978) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and multimodal social semiotics. Following on from the discussions, Staffan Selander elaborates on the basic framework that is design-theoretic and multimodally orientated in association with teaching and learning in the EAL context. Next, Eva Maagerø and Elise Seip Tønnesen highlight multimodal literacy in the EAL context, starting from the discussions of literacy, Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach to related key terms and metalanguage of multimodal literacy, such as affordances, modes, bottom-up and top-down approaches, and the principles of cohesion encompassing congruence and divergence; they end the discussions by pedagogical implications as a consequence of discerning multimodal literacy. Additionally, Andrew Burn proposes a framework to construe the 'grammar' of computer games utilized in English learning, particularly for Year 8 in a UK context; the framework was adapted from Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006, 2021) grammar of visual design, consisting of representational, interactional, and compositional metafunctions. The last chapter of Part I, written by Bessie Mitsikopoulou, addresses the issue considering the two efficacious policy designs manifested in a large-scale exam and the national curriculum in Greece context, i.e., Greek State Certificate in Language Proficiency (known as *KPG*) and Integrated Foreign Languages Curriculum (IFLC), to facilitate multimodal and digital literacies.

Furthermore, Part II, under the theme Making Sense of Multimodal Texts in the English Classroom: Literary and Cultural Understandings of Texts, encompasses three chapters. First, Akisha Pearman and Arlene Archer discuss the construal of semiotic resources within video series called *Shaping Angola*, which is used to develop the teaching methodology of Angolan EAL teachers and is drawn on local resources. The artifact was investigated within the social semiotic theory (Hodge & Kress, 1995) and the grammar of visual design (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, 2021). The next chapter, written by Anja Synnøve Bakken, addresses the multimodal affordances of the film resources, such as speech, gestures, facial expressions, and the like. The film artifact entitled *The Help* was used to facilitate critical literacy required in the Norwegian national curriculum, particularly carried out at primary and secondary levels. This film was investigated within three main

issues, i.e., representation of gender and race, the viewer's position, and the viewer's contribution to meaning. Another chapter was written by Hege Emma Rimmereide, investigating the affordances of three graphic novels, i.e., *Persepolis*, *Noughts & Crosses*, and *The Arrival*, as a means of developing students' critical visual literacy and intercultural understanding for secondary school students by utilizing Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006, 2021) grammar of visual design, Bhabha's (1994) notion of Third Space or a space that facilitates the understanding between Self (oneself) and Other (world) and Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) dialogic space/polyphony/heteroglossia that facilitates interactions among the authors/illustrators, the texts, and the readers.

Akin to Part II, Part III within the scope of Multimodal Texts for English Teaching and Learning: Language Pedagogies and Didactics is divided into three chapters. To begin with, Fei Victor Lim and Weimin Toh propose a metafunctional framework drawing on Kress' (2010) multimodal social semiotics and Halliday's (1978, 1994) SFL to analyze an educational app, Metamorphabet, to teach children some alphabets and vocabulary. They advocate four types of meanings, namely representational meaning (divided into classificatory, analytical, and realism systems), interactional meaning (consisting of attention, participation, gameplay, and activity systems), and compositional meaning (classified into three types of systems, i.e. architecture, pathway, and cohesion) with another additional meaning, i.e. discourse semantics (encompassing senses, world, and events systems). The next chapter is written by Sompatu Vungthong, Emilia Djonov, and Jane Jorr. They used systemic functional multimodal discourse analysis and Bernstein's (2003) theory of pedagogic discourse encompassing instructional and regulative discourses to investigate the way two English language teachers utilize speech and gestures in two primary classrooms situated in Thailand implementing tablet-based instructional materials. The last chapter in Part III was written by Aud Solbjørg Skulstad. She points out some theoretical notions associated with meaning as a choice about genres, options, and constraints regarding the contexts, which based on the functional theory, consist of the context of a situation, context of culture, and intertextual context; she also asserts that the use of technology resonates the way multimodal texts are produced, and she ends the chapter with the inspections of tasks prompts of five English textbooks for students' multimodal text productions.

Next, Part IV expounding on Learners' Production of Multimodal Texts is divided into three chapters. In this regard, Xiaoqin Wu and Louise Ravelli go through an interactive classroom practice at the tertiary level mediated by the use of a whiteboard to transduce speech into writing. The result of the transduction is analyzed within Halliday's (1978) social semiotic theory, particularly using Martin and Rose's (2007) taxonomic relations and logico semantic relations in terms of the ideational meaning, and Martin and Rose's (2007) periodicity in terms of textual meaning as well as Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006, 2021) compositional meaning encompassing information value, framing, and salience systems. Next, Rumiko Oyama demonstrates a multimodal pedagogic model to teach reading literary texts through drawing, i.e. condensing the information grasped from texts into pictures. Another chapter is written by Anita Normann. Using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), she scrutinized student-teacher experiences in making meaning through digital storytelling.

Lastly, there are four chapters in Part V untangling the issues concerning the way to assess learners' multimodal texts. To begin with, Germán Canale discusses formative assessments associated with recognizing students' multimodal text production in the context of an EAL classroom in Montevideo, Uruguay. Following on from the discussion, Maria Grazia Sindoni, Ilaria Moschini, Elisabetta Adami, and Styliani Karatza discuss a framework to assess students' multimodal text and intercultural competence, delineated into four intertwined aspects, namely 'multimodal orchestration, digital technologies, intercultural communication, and transversal skills. Moreover, Mari Carmen Campoy-Cubillo and Mercedes Querol-Julian discuss modified Common European Framework Reference (CEFR) descriptors to assess multimodal listening comprehension, particularly using online informative videos. The last chapter written by Sigrid Ørevik focuses on developing a framework. It is used to assess students' multimodal text production. She developed an assessment grid that includes several aspects encompassing 'relation between modes or semiotic resources, clarity of message (divided into several aspects, such as coherence, clarity, and intertextuality), and originality and creativity'.

To sum up, *Multimodality in English Language Learning* is worth reading. It is because it provides insights into recent conceptual frameworks and perspectives as well as studies in this area. Besides, the burning issues in question or topics discussed in this book might be an inspiring point of departure to conduct further studies for scholars and researchers having interests in multimodality. Furthermore, to some extent, this book complements another recent book on the same topics by Joyce and Feez (2019), entitled *Multimodality across Classrooms: Learning about and through Different Modalities*. Both two books have some similar topics or issues in question, such as multimodal literacy and multimodal assessment. Nevertheless, in comparison with Joyce and Feez's book discussing multimodality within various disciplines, the present authors, Sophia Diamantopoulou and Sigrid Ørevik, limit the contexts to the EAL context only. Albeit such a limitation emerges, some topics raised in this book might also be beneficial to be conducted in the other area, for instance, the metafunctional framework for an educational app developed by Lim and Toh in this book might also be used to scrutinize another educational app in the other discipline. It is inevitable for several proponents and scholars of multimodality drawing their theoretical frameworks on social semiotics to work with discourses from other disciplines, for instance, O'Halloran (2005) in mathematical discourse, Doran (2018) in terms of physics and mathematics, Guo (2004) in biology, O'Toole (2004) in architecture, etc.

Moreover, the book offers several benefits that might not be found in another volume. For instance, the topics are discussed in various EAL contexts, i.e. from primary to tertiary school levels situated in countries deriving from five continents; consequently, it brings comprehensive or at least adequate representations and portrayals of the practices of the current multimodal pedagogy in the EAL contexts. In addition, in the initial pages of the book, there are brief descriptions of the contributors of each chapter, encompassing information about their bio, affiliation, and research interests, and even some of them provide Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) link; such descriptions allow the readers to discern and know the contributors' expertise. Besides, the discussions in some chapters are presented with some excerpts, such as images, tables, interview transcriptions, or

graphs; such excerpts are useful because they can help the readers to grasp the problems in question. In addition, the last pages of the book provide an index that might be useful for readers to locate some key terms or words throughout the book. However, if the publisher was considering a reprint of this book, one change could be a 'glossary' to give the readers aid to comprehend the meanings or definitions of the keywords having to do with topics or issues in question and offered in the book.

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