

THE INTEGRATION OF MULTIMODALITY IN EFL CLASSES: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACTS

Technology has greatly influenced education in the twenty-first century. Multimodal teaching is one of many classroom methods brought by technology. However, only a few studies have been conducted on how to create a multimodal pedagogy to assist EFL students in enhancing their language skills. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of high school English students regarding the integration of multimodality into English classroom practices. Participation in this study was determined using a random sample. Data was gathered from 100 high school students in SMA Panjura, Malang. These students have experienced using multimodal in their learning process for six weeks. In this research, a quantitative method with a survey research design was chosen. The data were analyzed using SPSS 24 and the data was presented descriptively. The study revealed that the majority of students had a positive attitude toward the implementation of multimodality in their learning process in response to the characteristics of current students.

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid advances in science and technology transformed human communication. It has influenced our culture to become increasingly visual. The use of images, colors, gestures, and other nonverbal cues enables people to communicate and construct meaning through all mediums. Thus, people obtain, interpret, and transform messages differently (Short, Kauffman, & Kahn, 2000). This impacts all aspects of life and revealed certain complexities in the educational context. It has evolved education into one of the most significant issues facing this disruptive era. Understanding the importance of newly acquired skills and the need for students to be able to use technology to interact and communicate on a daily basis, the concept of English literacy education should be modified to meet the needs of modern students, and the practice must be adapted to be more flexible to current situations. Hence, teachers should shift their literacy concept and pedagogical strategies, as well as contextualize classroom activities with real-world examples (Navehebrahim, 2011). Therefore, traditional competencies are insufficient to face the complexities of the current world. To fulfill this demand, the practice of teaching and learning the English language should be shifted to be more adaptable to the current situation and students' needs.

Experts in education have always been interested in the characteristics of students in digital era, as well as the goals and motivations underlying their behavior, actions, and processes. Camarillas and Garcia (2016) acknowledged that students in digital era learn a new language through a combination of kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learning strategies. Moreover, Kizil (2017) defined the characteristic of student in digital era is a multitasker who prefers images, sounds, and videos over text relies on non-linear elaboration, accesses information via a variety of media, and favors simultaneous interactions. It requires students to use technology not only to communicate and interact with one another but also to demonstrate their understanding through a variety of modes of interaction. (Hart, 2017). Therefore, in order to help students learn, teachers must employ appropriate strategies, optimize teaching methods, and adapt to their students' needs and characteristics.

Recent studies have considered multimodality to promote learning skills in modern students' characteristics. Multimodality is a communication and social semiotics theory. It refers to the use of two or more modes of communication within a single text to convey and create meaning (The New London Group, 1996). Kress (2010) defined multimodal as involving collaborative interpretation of visuals, videos, graphics, animations, sounds, music, gestures, and facial expressions to produce meaning. Moreover, Hull and Nelson (2005) stated multimodality could convey a unique message that could not have been conveyed as effectively through the use of each mode separately. In conclusion, multimodality refers to any type of representation or communication that employs multiple modes to convey its meaning. It utilizes all the meaning-making resources that people use in different contexts (visual, spoken, gestural, and others) and develops methods to demonstrate how these are organized to produce meaning. Therefore, teachers should be able to understand the importance of multimodality and have the competencies required to implement multimodal practices in classrooms for academic and social purposes. As stated by Lim (2017) that teachers should be able to employ a variety of learning strategies, including the combination of semiotic resources.

Multimodality has gained popularity in the EFL field due to its ability to improve English students' skills. Teachers have the opportunity to explore their instructional potential because multimodal broadens pedagogy. Multimodality promotes reflective, imaginative, and higher-order thinking. Contrary to conventional teaching, it can support student engagement and intellectual quality (Haren, 2010). Moreover, Li (2020) stated multimodal empowers, engages, and expands students' knowledge and digital learning. With its emphasis on multimodality, the multiliteracies approach focuses on the acquisition of a wider range of literacy skills than the traditional learning process. The multiliteracies approach improves literacy education by incorporating multiple modes of communication. Even though some modes may be more dominant than others and probably occur concurrently, each has a unique characteristic that generates distinct meanings or communicative activities. As stated by Walsh (2010), the use of multimodal in language learning affects the characteristics of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. In addition, Jewitt (2008) stated that multimodality allows students who are discouraged by linguistically-focused teaching to experience learning in ways that feel the most pleasant to them. Therefore, multimodality provides students who are not linguistically oriented with a broad range of learning methods. As stated by Schewe (2002), the variety of modes used to instruct a language skill, the more motivated the student will be to comprehend and retain it. Hence, multimodality in English language learning may generate useful implications for teachers (especially in EFL context) that can maximize the benefits of technology and new literacy for learning. Through the use of multimodal, students can expand their interpretive abilities beyond cognitive processes.

Previous research studies with various designs and paradigms have been conducted to determine how multimodality influences in EFL classes. A study by Sakulprasertsri (2020)

examined the perspectives of Thai university English instructors and undergraduate students regarding the use of multimodality in English classrooms. It was discovered that students' language skills were improved and that they were better able to apply their knowledge and skills in practical situations when exposed to multimodal content. Moreover, Varaporn and Sitthitikul (2019) investigated the effects of multimodal on Thai university students' critical reading ability and perceptions. It was found that students' motivation increased as they become more engaged in a class that employs multimodal. Considering the affordances of multimodal in EFL context, this study aims at determining how multimodality helps students improve their English in terms of 21st-century learning, as well as the benefits and challenges perceived by students after receiving multimodal implementation.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

To investigate students' perceptions on the integration of multimodality in EFL classes, a survey was conducted. Ponto (2015) mention that survey research was to gather information efficiently about the characteristics of a large number of individuals' interest. During the study, a number of procedures are conducted. The steps include preparing the instrument by creating a questionnaire. The questionnaire entry relates to student perspectives of students on how different multimodal modes influence their willingness to learn English. The questionnaire contains 24 statements adapted from Peng (2019). The statement is comprised of five aspects in multimodal teaching such as audio/video, visual design, voice/facial expression, gestures, and spatial motion.

Population and Sample

This research was taken place at SMA Panjura, Malang. The reason for choosing the school was because this school was one of the schools that required the students to active in use English. Therefore, it was important to conduct this study to discover students' views on the integration of multimodality in EFL Classes. The population of the study consists of 100 students who participated in a multimodal approach for six weeks in the classroom. Participation in this study was determined using a random sample. The participants have been instructed by a variety of teachers with a variety of teaching styles with multimodal approach.

Instruments

To prevent confusion among students as they responded to the survey, it was written in Bahasa Indonesia. Google Form was used to distribute the questionnaire to students, who were instructed to choose one of the following responses: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree(D), and Strongly Disagree(SD). After that, the questionnaire was validated by the experts. The relevancy between the questionnaire items and the research goals was checked and the result revealed that the questionnaire items were valid to be given to the participants. The calculation result was then interpreted in the context of the study question and the theoretical review.

Data Analysis

The information obtained from the students' completion of the questionnaire was organized and interpreted with the relevant theories. The data were analyzed using SPSS 24 and the results were presented descriptively.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

In this section, the findings and discussion will be presented. Students' perceptions of multimodality learning strategies in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes have been

summarized as percentage tables based on the results of research questionnaire given to 100 students. The results of 24 questions representing students' perspectives on the integration of multimodality in EFL classes focused on five indicators: audio and video, visual design, voice, and facial expression, gesture, and spatial placement. The data is presented descriptively using a mean score of students' responses in table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Visual Design	100	2.00	4.00	3.2020	.54048
Audio/Video	100	1.80	4.00	3.2540	.59822
Voice/Expression	100	1.60	4.00	3.1980	.57384
Gesture	100	1.50	4.00	3.0575	.56726
Spatial Position	100	1.80	4.00	3.0200	.56889
Valid N (listwise)	100				

From the descriptive statistic, it is shown that there are 100 students who participated in this study. For the visual design, the mean score is at 3.20 with the minimum score of 2.0 and maximum score of 4.0 while audio/video, the mean score is at 3.25 with the minimum of 1.8 and maximum of 4.0. It can be concluded that visual design as a multimodal component has a positive impact on students, but less influence than other visual modes such as audio/video. Moreover, in terms of voice and facial expression, the mean score is at 3.19 ranges from 1.6 to 4.0. Students were also affected by teachers who exhibited a wide range of vocal expressions and played with their facial expressions while they were teaching. The other aspects are gesture with the mean score 3.05 and spatial position with the mean score 3.02 while the minimum score of 1.5 for gesture and 1.8 for spatial position as well as maximum score of 4.0 for both indicators. Due to their similarity, these two indicators also play a crucial role in learning. Whether it will be overused and lose its efficacy, or whether it can be utilized with caution.

The results showed that the mean score for all indicators leans toward the maximum score, indicating that students have a positive view toward visual design, audio and video implementation, voice and facial expression, gesture, and spatial position in the integration of multimodal in EFL class. It is necessary to analyze the constructs of each of the five major indicators in order to understand the students' perspectives on them. Regarding the integration of audio and video, there are five factors to consider: learning interest, pronunciation ability, useful information, attention, and comprehension. The data are presented in figure 1.

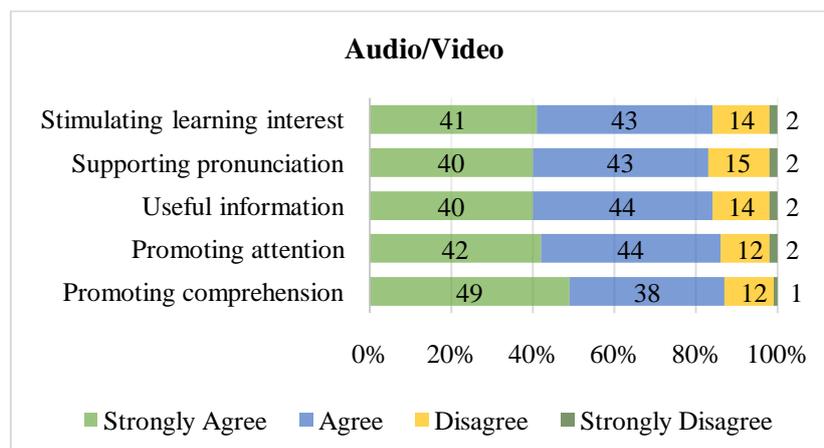


Figure 1. Students' responses toward the use of audio and video

Based on the data in table 2, all of the items have a high percentage of positive responses, with 41% strongly agree and 43% agree for stimulating learning interest, 40% strongly agree and 44% agree for providing useful information. In addition, 42% strongly agree and 44% agree in regards to promoting attention, while 49% strongly agree and 38% agree in regards to their comprehension. This suggests that the majority of students believe that integrating video and audio can stimulate learning interest, improve pronunciation skill, provide useful information, increase learning attention, and improve their comprehension.

Integrating visual design with PowerPoint and images involves five aspects: enhancing comprehension, stimulating interest, illustrating the material, and exerting a stronger influence on the PowerPoint template and colors for students. The data are presented in figure 2.

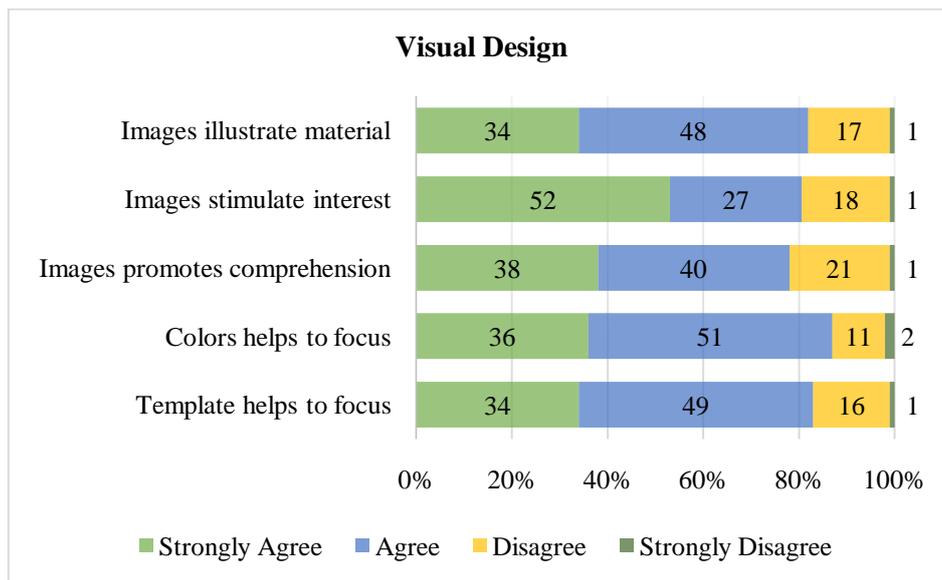


Figure 2. Students' responses toward the use of visual design

Regarding visual design, all items have a high percentage of strongly agree and agree responses, indicating another positive response: 34% strongly agree and 48% agree that images can help students illustrate the material, 52% strongly agree and 27% agree that images stimulate their interest in learning, and 38% strongly agree and 40% agree that images enhance their comprehension. Moreover, regarding PowerPoint, 36% of students strongly agree and 51% agree that colors help them focus, while 34% of students strongly agree and 49% agree that the template helps them focus. This indicates that the majority of students believe that integrating visual design can better illustrate the material, stimulate more of their interest, promote more comprehension, and the templates and colors might influence their learning focus.

The indicator voice and facial expression encompass loudness of voice, smile, eye contact, variety of tones, and variety of vocals. The data are presented in figure 3.

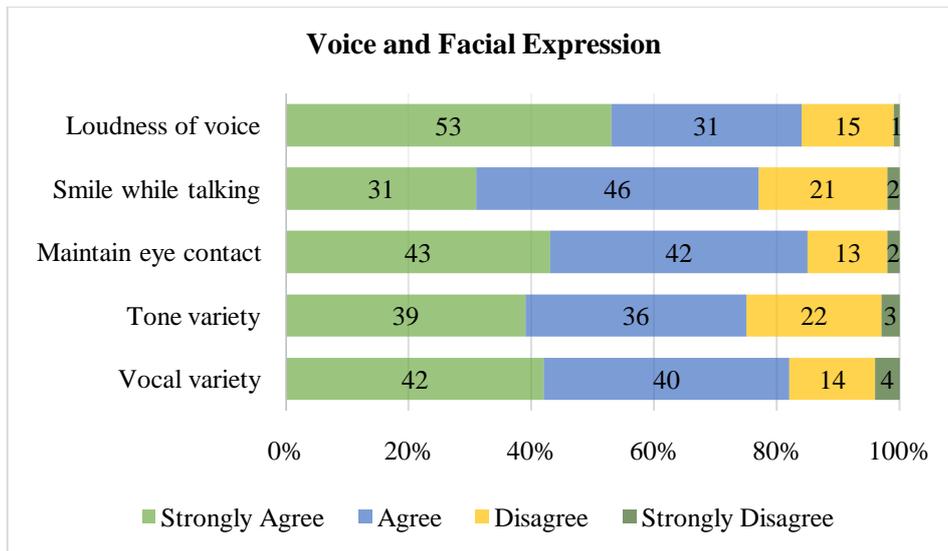


Figure 3. Students' responses toward the use of voice and facial expression

There is a high proportion of both strongly agree and agree responses for each item comprising the indicator of voice and facial expression. There are 34% strongly agree and 31% agree that a teacher with a loud voice could distract students. 31% strongly agree, while 46% agree that students prefer a teacher who smiles while talking. 43% strongly agree and 42% agree that maintaining eye contact with students is important. In addition, 39% strongly agree and 36% agree that students prefer teachers with a variety of tones, while 42% strongly agree and 40% agree that teacher who has vocal variety is preferable. This indicates that the majority of students believe that loudness of voice, smile, eye contact, as well as tone and vocal variety included in voice and facial expression are essential for multimodal integration in EFL classes.

When it comes to gesture, there are four factors that have the potential to influence it. These factors are learning distraction, interest, attention, and comprehension. The data are presented in figure 4.

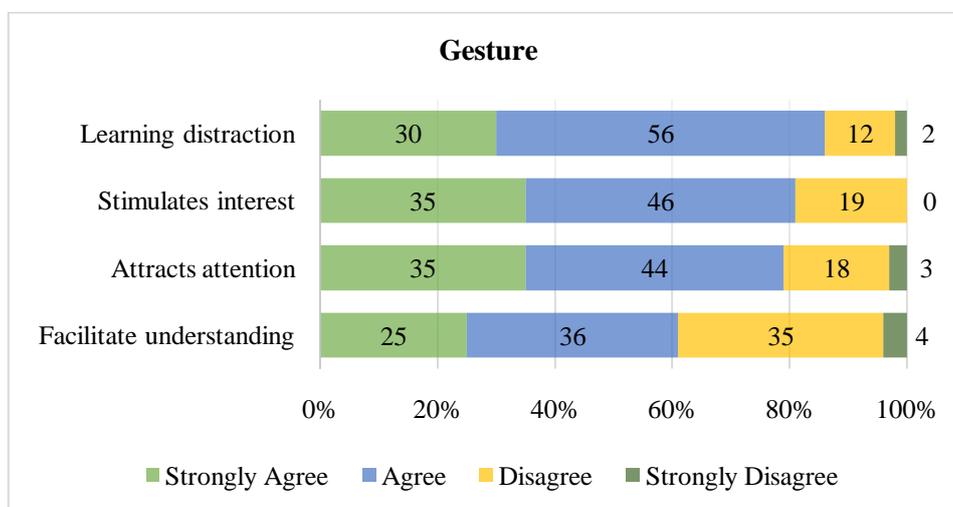


Figure 4. Students' responses toward the use of gesture

The result shows that every item has a high percentage of strongly agree and agree responses, indicating that the majority of students have positive views. In terms of learning distraction, 31% of students strongly agree and 56% agree that gestures can be distracting. Furthermore, 35% strongly agree and 46% agree that gestures stimulate their interest; 35% strongly agree and 44% agree that gestures attract their attention, and 25% strongly agree and 36% agree that gestures facilitate their understanding. This indicates that the majority of students believe that gesture plays a significant role in their learning, for instance, if a gesture is performed incorrectly, it will distract them from their studies. However, if the gesture is suitable, it can stimulate students' interest, attract their attention, and assist them in understanding the material.

As for spatial position, five aspects are measured, including excessive movement, the distance when explaining the material, the distance when speaking to students, stand closer, and teaching while standing in the center of the classroom. The data are presented in figure 5.

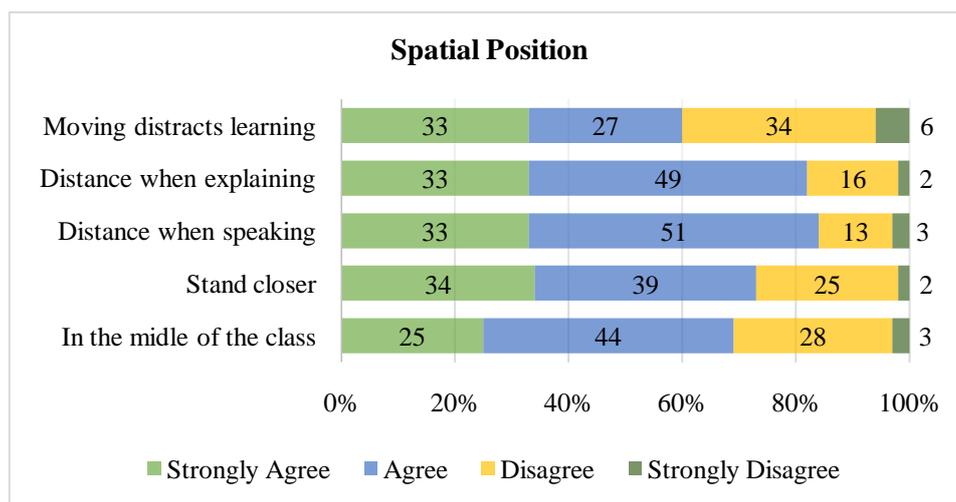


Figure 5. Students' responses toward the use of spatial position

The data indicate a high proportion of strongly agree and agree responses, with 34% strongly agree and 27% agree that too much movement will distract students' attention, 33% strongly agree and 49% agree that students prefer teachers who stand close when explaining, and 33% strongly agree and 51% agree that teachers should move closer to students when they are talking. Furthermore, in terms of standing closer to the students, 34% of students strongly agree and 39% agree, whereas 25% of students strongly agree and 44% agree that they prefer teachers who frequently go to the middle of the classroom. This indicates that the majority of students believe that excessive movement will be a distraction to their learning, that students prefer a closer distance when the teacher is explaining, and that students prefer the teacher to move closer when talking. The same holds true for their preference for teacher who frequently goes in the middle of the classroom.

Discussion

Based on the findings above, suggest that multimodal strategies play an essential part in learning English. Multimodality has a vast scientific scope. In addition, multimodality expands the variety of teaching methods, theories, and learning models. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to investigate how multimodality can be utilized to assist EFL students in enhancing their language skills. The findings indicate that the students consider

the integration of multimodality as their learning method positively. The data indicate that multimodality can be an effective strategy for enhancing students' English skills. The findings indicate that the students consider the integration of multimodality as their learning method positively. The data indicate that multimodality can be an effective strategy for enhancing students' English skills. According to the results, students were more likely to learn from audio/video because it provided a more detailed description than PowerPoint templates and images. These findings could be implemented in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Teaching a foreign language requires more linguistic input than other subjects, which can be achieved by using audio/visual materials like English films, podcasts, and YouTube videos. It asserts authentic, contextualized language usage and stimulates the senses of students. It has been proved that incorporating audiovisuals into the classroom increases students' engagement, enthusiasm, and motivation to learn English by showing how the language is used in its contexts. However, it was discovered that spatial position was less than ideal. Students' relatively low scores indicate that they did not perceive interpersonal proximity. It is more difficult for teachers to get to know each student on an individual level in large classes. Moreover, it was revealed that students were profoundly affected by the verbal tone and facial expressions of their teachers. These modalities related to teacher immediacy behaviors, such as a wide range of tone in their voices, eye contact, and smiling. This finding revealed that teachers can utilize a variety of vocal and facial expressions to convey interpersonal closeness and warmth, which in turn conveys teacher support and assists students in learning.

Due to the positive perceptions of gestures and spatial position in English classes, teachers can maximize multimodal learning by employing head nods, hand gestures, body language, and spatial position in order to establish attachment with students and stimulate their learning. The findings can help teachers understand the effects of these modalities on students, which is significant given that these effects are fleeting and easily overlooked. Since adult students are more adept at interpreting nonverbal cues than their younger students, it is crucial for language teachers to be proficient in gestures to avoid stifling their desire to learn. This is because adult language learners are more likely to express themselves through gestures. As suggested by the present findings, language instructors can encourage EFL student communication by using gestures and verbal messages.

The findings of this study must be interpreted with caution. Even though each of the five dimensions was evaluated with a different item, it was never meant to be said that these methods were independent of each other. On the other hand, these methods often overlap with one another. Nonetheless, this quantitative approach cannot be used to gain a comprehensive understanding. Instead, observation and qualitative research are required. More research must be conducted on the various types of multimodal pedagogies, which offer a wealth of semiotic resources and may help EFL students improve their English proficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study examines actual classroom practices and students' views on multimodality in English classrooms. The modes of instruction utilized in the classroom and the incorporation of multimodality by teachers in English classroom practices were identified. From the research findings, it can be concluded that multimodality has a positive effect on students' ability to comprehend the material and create an authentic learning environment. In addition, the use of multimodal teaching motivates students and affects their learning achievement by stimulating their interest in learning. Students agree that the integration of multimodality in the English classroom enriches classroom engagement, increases their motivation, allows them to practice English, and improves their English skills. Therefore, multimodal learning

has a significant effect on the EFL context. It assists both the teachers and the students in learning English. This research can encourage teachers of English as a foreign language to implement multimodal pedagogies to improve student engagement, classroom participation, and learning outcomes.

Although the research findings have shown that students have positive attitudes toward the use of multimodality in English classrooms, future studies should involve a large sample of students to ensure statistical significance of quantitative data and qualitative findings to elicit more comprehensive findings. In addition, future studies of multimodality in English classrooms should investigate the use of different modes for making meaning and communicating amongst teachers and students, as well as the role of intertextuality in the teaching of English as a second language.

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