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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research is to examine the literacy practices of EFL teaching and learning in an education course from a multiliteracies and multimodality perspective. A case study consisting 24 pre-service teachers and 8 in-service school teachers who were enrolled in a Masters of Education programme at a private college in India were selected for the research. The researchers of this study describe how they designed and executed the aforementioned teaching concerns in India using two multimodal techniques for pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. Results of the study reveal that introducing multimodal techniques into teacher education, particularly among EFL teachers, is a challenging experience. It is as a result of these considerations that the approach takes into account difficulties such as teacher reluctance to adopt multimodal practises, as well as challenges related to instructional and philosophical issues. The researchers offer suggestions for developing techniques as well as a roadmap for future EFL teacher education and training.

Keywords: Digitalization, English Language Teaching (ELT), multimodal teaching practices, technology

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, digital and multimodal practices are becoming common in the daily lives of English language learner. The majority of English language learners (ELLs), for example, prepares PowerPoint presentations in school, post photos and videos to social media, and publishes multimodal videos to YouTube (Çakmak et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2021). Through the use of multimodal practices, according to a research by Vinogradova, Linville, and Bickel (2011) propagates the idea English language learners (ELLs) can increase their ability to read, write, and speak in a variety of situations. Additionally, it has the potential to extend their critical viewpoints on sociopolitical matters (Ajayi, 2008). Wilson, Chavez, and Anders (2012) state that questions concerning the identities of students are also facilitated by multimodal techniques. As a result, students are inspired to pursue studying on their own initiative (Hafner & Miller, 2011). Furthermore, digital and multimodal literacy are important social tools for students who want to improve their work and employability skills. According to Rance-Roney (2010) and Smythe and Neufeld, (2010), English language learners' multimodal practices are influencing teachers' pedagogies as they use digital and multimodal behaviours into their instructional materials and procedures (Rance-Roney, 2010; Smythe and Neufeld, 2010).

Despite their best efforts, teachers face a slew of difficulties while seeking to engage their students in digital and multimodal practises. Numerous studies and anecdotal evidence indicate that Numerous educators are hesitant to include multimodal pedagogies into their classrooms (Sadik, 2008; Coyle, Yanez, & Verd , 2010). Multimodal methods are being used in classrooms, but teachers believe they lack the necessary knowledge and experience to implement them. Because of this, the researchers investigated the extent to which multimodal approaches can and should be addressed or integrated into English as a Foreign Language classroom (Kumar & Supriyatno, 2021).

Two multimodal approaches for pre-service and in-service teachers in for EFL classrooms were designed and implemented by the researchers, and they plan to be deployed across the country. They explore the difficulties

associated with implementing multimodal pedagogies into EFL classrooms and suggest ideas to improve teacher education and ELL pedagogy. The researchers think their results will lead to new ideas for EFL teacher education and professional development.

Research Questions

- (i) What are possible benefits of using multimodal literacy practices in EFL Teacher Education?
- (ii) How can multimodal literacy practices be included into the training of English teachers?
- (iii) What are the difficulties associated with implementing multimodal pedagogies into EFL classrooms?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

With the invent of technology and digitalization, EFL teachers have adopted multimodal approaches of teaching English as a foreign language. The evidence from observation and experiment, however, reveals that teachers are often unprepared to incorporate such tactics into their classrooms. An attempt has been made in this paper to look at how multimodal literacy practices can be included into the training of English teachers.

According to Stein and Newfield (2006), in educational settings, the term multimodal pedagogies refers to curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation techniques that encourage modality as a distinguishing feature of communication in order to differentiate learning environments. Developing and implementing multimodal pedagogies requires a thorough understanding of the theoretical notions of multimodality and multiliteracies.

The phrases multimodality and multiliteracies are independent concepts; however, they are commonly used interchangeably. Rowsell and Walsh (2011), for example, provide a succinct summary of the relationship between the two in the following manner:

“Multimodality is the field that takes account of how individuals make meaning with different kinds of modes. Multiliteracy is a pedagogy developed by the New London Group.... Designing on-screen has not only transformed how we make meaning, but also transformed ways of reconstructing and renegotiating our identities. Multimodality comes first in that it informs how we make meaning, and multiliteracies, as a possible pedagogy, give us tools for doing so.... Multiliteracies as a pedagogy simultaneously account for linguistic diversity and the use of multimodalities in communication” (pp. 55–56).

Since communication and expression are believed to be the integration of several modalities of idea formation, the word ‘multimodality’ is used to identify a social semiotic, cross-disciplinary approach to these subjects. According to Jewitt and Kress (2003) “regularized and organized collection of resources for meaning formation, including image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech, and sound effect” is how mode is defined here (p. 1). Researchers on multimodality say that humans like to create meaning through the selection and arrangement of multimodal resources such as verbal codes, visual pictures, auditory sounds, and gestures. According to Early, Kendrick, and Potts (2015), new media and technologies are commonly associated with multimodality however, “multimodality is not synonymous with the digital” (p. 454). Multimodal texts, including brochures, posters, videos and others, have long been a feature of the educational experience for students in both print and digital versions.

As described by Ghahderijani, et al. (2021), and New London Group (1996), using the term ‘multiliteracies,’ to describe this new strategy, which combines the strategic use of a number of communication channels, is expected to help students considerably. This paradigm tries to overcome traditional language-based methods to literacy instruction, while simultaneously taking into account the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom. It considers “situated practise, explicit instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice” as a new literacy pedagogy, similar to the concept of ‘multiliteracies’ (New London Group, 1996; p. 83). Thus, multimodal pedagogies can benefit greatly from the integration of the upper mentioned four elements.

3. METHODS

3.1. Research design

A case study was conducted using qualitative methodologies from the multiliteracies and multimodality perspectives in order to provide a more detailed account of literacy practises in the teaching and learning of the English language from a multimodality and multiliteracies perspective. The purpose of this study was to focus on second language acquisition (SLA) and learning in a range of contexts through EFL classroom activities.

The researchers devised and used two multimodal techniques to be implemented to pre-service and in-service teachers in EFL classrooms in India. The researchers provided a concise description of their methodology. Each of these multimodal techniques has a theoretical foundation that dates all the way back to its inception (Khan, et al., 2021; Jewitt & Kress, 2003).

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study looked at pre-service and in-service school teachers who were enrolled in a Masters of Education programme at a private college in India. 24 pre-service teachers and 8 in-service teachers

were involved in the study to check the effectiveness of to create multimodal instructional techniques. The researchers chose the teachers through a purposive sampling technique.

3.3. Data collection tools

In order to analyse the usage of multimodal approaches in EFL classroom, data was collected in a number of media, including photographs, videos, audio recordings, fieldwork notes, and other documents. The researchers devised and used two multimodal techniques to be implemented to pre-service and in-service teachers: using multimodal projects in EFL classroom and using multimodal instructional materials in EFL classroom

3.4. Data analysis

The transcription and interpretation of the interviews and focus groups, as well as the formation of coding and classification, theme identification, and idea generation, were all required for the qualitative data analysis. Data was tagged and classified before being chosen for inclusion in the study based on the questions posed by the researcher. The participants in the study were consulted by the researcher in order to ensure that the findings were genuine.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

First Multimodal Strategy: Using Multimodal Projects in EFL Classroom

Language acquisition (SLA) and learning are two distinct processes. It's critical to prioritize the needs of teachers (Bacha et al., 2021; Kumar, et al., 2021; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) so that new technologies can be acquired and implemented before the language and literacy needs of students are addressed. The researchers involved 24 pre-service teachers and 8 in-service teachers in an EFL course. He provided multimodal projects to them to check its efficiencies. To create a multimodal project, the researchers used a print-based term paper assignment. This course is intended to provide pre-service and in-service teachers with an introduction to the principles of second language acquisition (SLA) and learning in a variety of contexts. In the project, these may be the conditions for multimodality.

- a. Recognize and comprehend specific theoretical foundations, terminology, or theories in the field of language instruction and learning and be able to demonstrate this knowledge,
- b. Usage of specific subjects in the classroom and in your delivery, and
- c. Methods in which these thoughts and theories are acquired by English language learners.

The multimodal project was intended to assist EFL teachers with grasping SLA ideas. Students should be expected to use conceptual knowledge in the classroom and communicate their knowledge in a variety of ways, as expected by teachers. Teachers in this course used iMovie, Movie Maker, Microsoft PowerPoint, Prezi, Storybird, Voicethread, Weebly, YouTube, and other tools and resources to create and distribute multimodal activities.

Second Multimodal Strategy: Using Multimodal Instructional Materials in EFL Classroom

To assist English language learners in improving their language skills in a second language (L2), another course involved 24 pre-service teachers and 8 in-service teachers to create multimodal instructional techniques.

The teachers who participated in this initiative were able to develop their own multimodal resources for the academic literacy instruction of English language learners, as opposed to the prior multimodal project (ELLs). They devised a five-minute digital story that may be used as a warm-up for reading a literary snippet or a topic. Students created a reading lesson plan that included at least two of the course's pre-reading strategies before beginning to work on their digital narratives. Following that, as part of their reading lesson, students developed a digital story that they could share with others. Most teachers use iMovie or Movie-Maker software to create their multimodal educational videos, which they then upload to YouTube or their course website.

The researchers served as instructors for both groups. They conducted a series of mini-lessons and workshops on multimodality as well as the technology aspects of creating multimodal texts. Several previous literature reviews as well as several websites were shown to the students in order to aid them in the development of their multimodal projects as future instructors.

Difficulties and Solutions of Education for Teachers

There are many challenges that a teacher and educator may face when trying to include multimodal pedagogies into EFL classroom in the two situations stated above. This section discusses the difficulties that a teacher faces in the implementation of multimodal pedagogies.

When it comes to introducing multimodal practices into teacher education, one of the most difficult difficulties appears to be epistemological issues surrounding what constitutes knowledge and what constitutes academic literacies. The researchers must take several factors into account while developing a multimodal teaching program while teaching an applied linguistics course: If teachers' knowledge gained through the implementation

of multimodal teaching practices constitutes as important teacher knowledge, and; if the multimodal teaching practices are appropriate for graduate-level classes.

In addition, Romero and Walker (2010) believe when the researchers asked teachers to convey their SLA expertise in multimodal form, they re-examined the notion of “what counts as legitimate representation” (p. 213). The researchers were aware of the fact that in the majority of EFL classrooms at academic institutions, linguistic and print-based modes of instruction are used rather than modern multimodality-based instructional methods. They concentrated on teaching and memorizing grammatical conventions in both written and spoken form. They also used traditional language-based teaching and learning strategies to limit their EFL students' writing in the classroom to traditional print-based writing. Early et al. (2015) opine that in today's communicative context, “addressing the full range of semiotic resources” is necessary, and a language-based strategy is extremely restrictive (p. 448).

In order to evaluate multimodal practices in the classroom, the first challenge has to be overcome: determining which characteristics or components should be taken into account. Rubrics used to measure instructors' subject comprehension were heavily included into the development of rubrics for multimodal practices, which the researchers found to be quite beneficial. The use of nonlinguistic modes and the synchronization of numerous modes were the only criteria included in rubrics for evaluating the design features of multimodal projects. Multimodal projects, on the other hand, lack information on why specific graphics, fonts or background music were consciously chosen and coordinated. They wished they could have explained why they chose the typeface, image, colour, and tempo for her multimodal educational materials. Several scholars have recently studied the subject of multimodal product assessment, which is a promising development. The development of a theory-based design benchmark for evaluating Taiwanese college students' ability to present in English was carried out by Hung, Chiu, and Yeh (2013). This rubric, on the other hand, did not necessarily take into account content knowledge. Despite the effectiveness of the design rubric, the researchers noticed that developing design criteria for evaluating teachers' topic comprehension and the design of multimodal projects in their classrooms was challenging.

Furthermore, the researchers discovered that some teachers were hesitant to participate in multimodal activities made possible by digital technology. Teachers' concerns, problems, and negative attitudes about multimodal practices appear to be at the basis of this opposition. We analyse this issue using data from current first- and second-language studies in this section. Teachers have expressed concerns about: inability to effectively integrate multimodal practices into training due to lack of subject understanding and technological skills; the absence of adequate instructional materials and administrative support; limitation of time, and preparing students for standardized assessments (Tan, Bopry, & Guo, 2010). Many pre-service teachers “struggled to craft an argument, think visually, and maintain authorial control over the reader's/experience” despite their self-described talents as writers and proficient technologists (Hundley & Holbrook, 2013, p. 504).

For two separate reasons, some teachers expressed doubt about digital and multimodal activities. To begin, some educators claimed that they commonly run into issues while attempting to evaluate students using both digital and multimodal methods, as well as traditional print-based assessment methods (Tan et al., 2010). One of the most common concerns raised by educators was the positive impact of multimodal practices on student academic progress, which was echoed by a large number of educators, including Coyle, et al. (2010) and Sadik (2008). Teaching multimodal practices will be more difficult for these educators because of their doubts and constraints. It is notable that instructors' restrictions and opposition appear to be hindering teacher educators from using multimodal approaches in teacher education.

5. CONCLUSION

It goes without saying that when multimodal methods become more prevalent in EFL teacher education, some difficulties will inevitably occur. After discussing their findings, the researchers make some recommendations to teachers and educators, as well as potential future directions for the improvement of teaching practices and professional growth.

When it comes to increasing the effectiveness of multimodal activities, the first and most important step is to consider the various components of those practices. Teachers and educators should begin by reassessing their students' understanding of what multimodal practices are and how they might be used in the classroom. Tan & McWilliam (2009) express their opinion that multimodal practices are “seen only as either useful extensions or helpful interventions for high-performing and at-risk students respectively” (p. 203).

As part of the implementation of multimodal practices efficiently, it is necessary to challenge the notion that text-based linguistic methods and materials are superior to nonlinguistic materials such as images, sounds, and other visual representations of information. Miller (2007) supports the idea of reviewing the educational assumptions regarding “the status/design of non-print and print-mixed modes as ways of knowing and communicating” (p. 63).

The research outcome is also in the line of Abiria, Early, and Kendrick (2013) mentioning “Multimodal possibilities as resources for learning and communication” will emerge (p. 571). However, the adoption of a

multimodal practices do not diminish the importance of ELLs' multilingualism in their multimodal use. Multilingualism is an important resource for ELLs' language acquisition, thus we should continue to encourage our children to incorporate other languages into their multimodal presentations.

As a result, it is critical to examine how students are evaluated in order to allow them to convey their knowledge in a variety of ways. A semiotic classroom is one in which students can learn and teach through the use of a variety of linguistic and multimodal resources, and this should be the focus of future teacher education classes.

What can be done, then, to change one's mind about multimodal practices, assessment, and classrooms? One makes specific recommendations here. To begin, in light of multimodality, one should critically examine one's own practices, particularly those linked to teaching, research, and writing. The ways in which text-based multimodal practices can flourish and contribute to mutual understanding and knowledge will be investigated in this study. Multimodality should be considered in all aspects of one's professional lives. It is essential to transition between print-based practices and multimodal practices for effective outcome. Teachers should employ both print and online materials to synthesize or organize reading or thinking in order to make teaching more efficient. They should also use computers to take notes, create PowerPoint presentations, and write reports (Ajmal & Kumar, 2021). Multimodal literacy practices are included into one's teaching practices and contribute to one's educational practice by acknowledging the ongoing transition between print-based and multimodal approaches in EFL teaching.

Students in EFL classes should also participate in multimodality practices and activities to develop a better understanding of the process of creating and analyzing multimodal texts that include digital and non-digital materials. The teachers can use multimodal synthesis to explain reading structure, transmit concepts in verbal and visual forms, and develop multimodal formulations of writings. Teaching and learning tools, such as posters and PowerPoint slides, can also be created by teachers who are familiar with multimodal texts. According to Hung et al. (2013), "the metalanguage of multimodal texts" must be learned while experimenting with multimodality (p. 409). In order to define multimodal writings, metalanguage for visual texts should be taught and utilized to describe colors, perspective, foregrounding, background, and angle, for example. It is possible to gain a deeper understanding of what it is to be alive, comprehend, and communicate in a variety of ways through an investigation of multimodal texts and activities.

Furthermore, when experimenting with multimodality, one is prone to reverting to a beginner state. The researchers used a number of strategies to engage in multimodal practices in a range of contexts, interacting with their students and developing skills and knowledge along the way. It became clearer when they looked at the technology and skills required for digital production. Students offered a wealth of knowledge and skill with developing technology to teacher education sessions. As a result, the instructor and students collaborated to form a community of learners in which wisdom was created collaboratively.

However, the researchers do not claim that all of these issues can be solved in a single workshop or technical training programme. According to them, one workshop or professional development session will not be enough to adequately integrate multimodal practices into teaching. Teachers and educators are advised to examine their own prejudices and skepticism towards multimodal teaching and learning practices, as well as to consider other aspects of multimodal teaching and learning practices. Educators who work together to address these fundamental issues, multimodal pedagogies can be more effectively integrated into EFL teacher education.

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