

Embracing Multimodality To Teach EFL Students: English Course Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

This article explores the Indonesian English course teachers' perception on the use of multimodal teaching resources to enhance the learning experience of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Multimodal resources, which integrate various modes of communication such as text, audio, visuals, and interactive elements, are designed to cater to different learning styles and preferences. The study highlights the benefits of multimodality, including increased student engagement, improved comprehension, etc. This study used qualitative research methodology to gain the teachers' perception of multimodal teaching resources implementation. The participants were experienced English course teachers over three years teaching in the Ruang Guru platform. Furthermore, the researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Despite the advantages, the article also discusses the challenges associated with implementing multimodal resources, such as technological barriers and the time required for resource creation. The findings showed that teachers really understand the term of multimodal teaching resources before conducting it in their teaching and learning process. It found that the utilization of multimodal teaching resources has several advantages for teachers to support their teaching, however in preparing and using these multimodal resources, teachers encounter several obstacles and difficulties. By embracing multimodality and addressing these challenges, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for EFL students.

Keywords: *Multimodal teaching resources, EFL Students, English Course Teachers, and Teachers' Perceptions*

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world of digital technology, integrating multimodality has become an essential method for teaching English as a Foreign language (EFL) students, for some extent. Trisanti et al. (2002) revealed that teachers have demonstrated flexibility in incorporating multimodal literacy into their teaching materials, and they are aware of transitioning from traditional to digital formats. According to Bezemer and Kress (2015), multimodal is the integration of language with other modes of communication, such as visual, auditory, or spoken, inside a single text. Multimodal teaching materials combine multiple types of communication, including audio, text, visual, and other interactive elements to deliver the messages and enhance the more engaging learning environment. In line, Wahyuningrum et al. (2024) argue that multimodal text, which incorporate several means of communication can improve the learning process by accommodating diverse learning styles and making the content more interesting. Thus, various materials possess varying capacities for creating meaning (Danielsson & Selander, 2021). Furthermore, due to the requirement of dealing with multimodal texts, it is essential for teachers to possess an understanding of the mechanisms by which various resources for creating meaning perform. However, it is also necessary for them to cultivate teaching methodologies that incorporate tactics that facilitate the processing of texts that are seen as difficult. From this perspective, the process of creating meaning through texts must constantly evolve (Danielsson & Selander, 2021).

A number of investigations have been conducted in the subject of multimodal instructional resources (Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2022; Berliana, 2023). Most of them showed positive attitudes towards the implementation of multimodal teaching resources in their learning (Trisanti et al., 2022; Jayanti & Damayanti, 2023). Teachers had a very good opinion that the usage of multimodal resources will engage students in active and motivated language learning. Furthermore, teachers agreed that employing multimodal resources enabled pupils to be autonomous learners (Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2022). A study done by Qin and Wang (2021) analyzed how teachers in China employ their diverse combinations of communication tools to actively embrace students in the class. The results indicate that language teachers with advanced

multimodal skills have a beneficial impact on student engagement throughout the introduction phase of the classroom. Another research done by Ferstephanie & Pratiwi (2022) investigated teachers' beliefs and evaluation of the use of multimodal resources in the instruction of English language skills. The study found that the majority of teachers held the beliefs that utilizing multimodal resources had advantageous effects on pupils in the context of language learning. Additionally, the utilization of multimodal materials actively involved both teachers and students in attaining significant language acquisition.

Previous empirical researches have established that incorporating multimodal literacy in English classrooms is a well-known idea in Indonesia. However, only few of them investigating teachers' perspective toward multimodal teaching resources in their teaching and learning process, specifically in the context of English course teachers. Teachers' perception of multimodal teaching resources relates to how educators perceive and interpret the utilization of these resources in their instructional practices. Gaining insight into teachers' perspectives is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of multimodal teaching methods and pinpointing areas that need enhancement. It includes their beliefs, attitudes, and opinions regarding the usefulness, advantages, and difficulties of incorporating multimodal materials into their classes. Gaining insight into teachers' perspectives is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of multimodal teaching methods and pinpointing areas that need enhancement. In addition, none of the previous research has scrutinized the challenges may face by the teachers dealing with the implementation of multimodal teaching resources in their teaching and learning process. Therefore, this study tries to fill the gap by examine English course teachers' perception on the use of multimodal teaching resources in their class. Furthermore, both benefits and challenges regarding with the implementation of this method are also investigated. In addition, the results of this study can be a great asset in directing future teacher professional growth.

II. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to grab insights from English course teachers regarding their implementation of multimodal teaching resources. Semi structured interviews and class observation were conducted to collect the data. A semi-structured interview format was chosen since it provides flexibility to include or exclude any specific aspects of the pre-determined questions (Mustafa et al., 2023). Alamri (2019) states that semi structured interview comprises a set of crucial inquiries that aid in delineating the research domains under investigation. Furthermore, the interviews were focused on the English course teachers' perspectives dealing with the use of multimodal materials in their teaching and learning process. The study involved two teachers who were teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, specifically in a well-known course in Indonesia, named the Ruang Guru. The first participant is an experienced teacher who has been a senior teacher in the English course of the Ruang Guru platform.

On the other hand, the second teacher is a novice English teacher in the same course of the Ruang Guru platform. Both of them are teaching in Surakarta. The teachers are chosen as the participants in this study as they were selected intentionally using purposive sampling (Merriam & Merriam, 2009) due to their expertise in a particular theme, concept, and phenomenon, as well as their familiarity with the subject of the research (Robinson, 2014). Consequently, the participant recruitment was based on their experienced in teaching English using multimodal teaching resources. Both teachers should have at least three years experienced in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in an English course. All participants should possess over two years of teaching, embracing a variety of multimodal resources such as websites, digital technology, projectors, learning application, etc. Furthermore, the privacy of the participants in this study is ensured, which addresses the ethical concern. As a result, written or other forms of communication did not disclose any personal information about the individuals (Hennik et al., 2019).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data derived from the interviews and video analysis indicate that the participants employ a variety of multimodal resources in their teaching and learning process. The findings support the earlier perspective that most participants were aware of multimodal literacy in the age of technology (Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2022; Jayanti & Damayanti, 2023). The term multimodal teaching resources refers to instructional

materials that employ various modes or techniques of communication to transmit information. Teachers believed that by involving the use of multiple modes of communication can enhance the educational experience. As all of the participants know exactly the term of multimodality, they deliberately include those various types of modes in their teaching with the aim of maximizing the teaching and learning process as well as the students' outcomes. As exemplified in the subsequent excerpts from the participants:

"I try to make my teaching become more interesting by using several media to deliver my material to the student"

"Using several kinds of teaching media when delivering my materials make the students more engage with the learning process."

The result was in line with the study done by Ferstephanie & Pratiwi (2022). Based on their findings, it revealed that teachers exhibited a highly favorable perception on the utilization of multimodal resources, which will effectively include students and enhance their motivation in language learning. In addition, utilizing multimodal resources can enhance the engagement of learning by accommodating diverse learning styles and sustaining students' interest via a range of content. By accommodating diverse learning styles, it can ensure that most students have the chance to grasp the material effectively when teaching and learning process. For example, visual learners will be benefited from the use of picture, graphic, or even diagram. Meanwhile, the auditory learners get the information of the material well from listening to audio recordings and discussion. Moreover, the kinesthetic learners engage in teaching and learning process by the application of interactive activities. This inclusively helps maintain students' interest and participation.

"I usually use more than one way to deliver the materials, such as using PPT, writing on board, playing video, etc."

The teachers stated that they utilized more than one media in delivering the materials to the students. This study revealed that the participants employed several semiotic resources when creating their instructional materials (Trisanti et al., 2022). They make use of the development of the technology as the multimodal teaching resources to support their teaching and learning process, such as video, audio, PPT, etc. In line with the previous research, Ferstephanie & Pratiwi (2022) demonstrated that using many multimodal resources enabled students to enrich their learning experiences. Furthermore, the way the teachers teach their students and how they utilize various media, combine several modes in meaning making, for example visual, aural, gestural, spatial, and also linguistic (Wahyuningrum et al., 2024).

"I sometimes use both audio recording and also digital text so that my students who are auditory and/ or visual learners can be bridged in understanding my material."

Multimodal resources, which encompass several modes of communication including text, audio, visuals, and interactive elements, are designed to cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. As also stated by Wahyuningrum et al. (2024) in their findings, multimodal texts, which integrate diverse modalities of communication like text, graphics, and sound, can enhance the learning experience by catering to varied learning styles and making the content more engaging. However, when it comes to the use of music, one teacher noted negatively about utilizing this kind of semiotic resources as supporting media in teaching and learning process. He admitted that some of his students listened to music just to make them more relaxed and focused before learning started. Meanwhile, it will be disturbing if the music is played during the teaching and learning process. The students become less focus whenever listening to music while studying.

"Some of my students listen to their preference music or song in order to help them concentrate before test."

"They become less focus"

This discovery showed negative attitude towards the presence of music in learning process. This finding contradicts the results of the previous findings which has been studied by Trisanti et al. (2022). They found that it was deemed crucial for the participants to include music and images in the text. They believed that the presence of music and other visuals is very helpful in the teaching and learning process Trisanti et al. (2022). However, in line with the statement above dealing with the use of several kinds of teaching resources, another teacher emphasized that the teacher does not have to use all kinds of multimodal teaching resources even though they seem and sound interesting to be used. The use of multiple modes simultaneously can

overwhelm students. Consequently, it makes it difficult for the learners to process and retain the information effectively. One of the teachers claimed that effective multimodal communication occurs when we utilize something that carries significance. The utilization of multimodal materials should be based on the topic course objectives and the students' requirements (Ferstephanie & Pratiwi, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary that we utilize applications, films, or photographs that are truly meaningful to use. The statement was evidenced by the extract below.

"We don't have to use many kinds of media in our teaching even though they seem good and interesting. So, we have to choose the most appropriate media which is suitable with the materials only."

The research findings indisputably demonstrate that the utilization of multimodal resources offers numerous advantages for both educators and learners. On the other hand, the implementation of multimodal teaching resources brings about new challenges for teachers for some reasons. Both teachers agree that the time consuming become one of the obstacles which has to be faced by the tutors in preparing multimodal teaching resources. Besides, the researcher also found other barriers which has been reported as following evidence.

"Of course, this requires sufficient time to prepare, especially if there are more types of learning."

It corroborates the findings of the prior study that time constraints posed a limitation in terms of preparing the course on multimodal literacy (Jayanti & Damayanti, 2023). Developing good and suitable videos with the materials, as well as integrating it with interactive activities requires significant effort and expertise. The tutors have to select the best multimodal resources to be used in their teaching and learning process since not all types of learning and material are suitable with the use of it. In other words, a specific topic or material may use only specific multimodal resources. Besides, they need to balance this with their existing workload, making it challenging to dedicate the necessary time to make an effective multimodal material. Those, creating and integrating appropriate multimodal resources can be time consuming for the tutors. As found in the study done by Trisanti et al. (2002), the implementation of multimodal teaching resources frequently encounters challenges related to time management as well as technological constraints.

"Not all students may have access to the necessary technology or may lack the technical skills to navigate multimodal resources effectively."

"Sometimes, I experience challenges when the projector that I want to use to teach at school or at a tutoring course doesn't function properly"

The technological barrier seems to be another primary challenge faced by most English course tutors. Therefore, the teachers emphasized the necessity of thorough preparation prior to implementing interactive media (Trisanti et al., 2022). They are already cognizant of the significance of adequately preparing digital media for their students. However, it can be quite frustrating when the instructor has prepared instructional materials using certain media, but when it comes time to use them, the tool is malfunctioning and unable to operate properly. This necessitates the teacher to engage in critical thinking in order to promptly and spontaneously substitute alternative forms of media. Therefore, tutors or teachers requires specific skills and knowledge to be able to create, integrate, and utilize many kinds of multimodal resources. Without adequate training, teachers may struggle to implement multimodal teaching strategies effectively. Furthermore, in terms of the various types of online learning, not all students have the certain technology which need to be used in their learning. Some of them may not have a stable internet connection. These things can hinder their ability to fully engage with multimodal resources. This is particularly problematic, such as in remote areas, where access to digital and high-speed internet is limited.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper investigates the views of English course teachers in Indonesia on the usage of multimodal teaching tools to improve the learning experience of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Multimodal resources, which incorporate several modalities of communication such as text, voice, graphics, and interactive components, are intended to accommodate a variety of learning styles and preferences. All teachers showed positive attitude towards multimodal teaching resources. The teachers make use of

multimodal teaching resources to support their teaching and learning process. The implementation of multimodal teaching resources is proven to improve students' engagement with the materials as well as improve their comprehension about the materials. Furthermore, this study not only examines the advantages, but also acknowledges the challenges associated with the use of multimodal resources, including technological barriers and the time required for their creation. Through the implementation of multimodality and addressing these challenges, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Additionally, by understanding the crucial role of multimodal literacy practices in language learning and teaching, students are expected to have the necessary skills to navigate and communicate effectively in diverse and complex multimodal communication settings (Tandiana et al., 2024).

In conclusion, embracing multimodality in EFL education offers numerous benefits, including enhanced students' engagement, improved comprehension, and catering to different learning styles. English course teachers generally perceive these resources as valuable tools that make lessons more interactive and enjoyable. However, challenges such as technological barriers and the time required to create high-quality resources must be addressed. By leveraging the strengths of multimodal resources and addressing these challenges, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment for EFL students. In addition, the researcher hopes that the study about implementation of multimodal teaching resources can provide valuable insights into their effectiveness and help address the challenges faced by the teachers. Furthermore, the researcher suggest for the future research on implementation of multimodal teaching resources should focus on examining their long-term impact, including comparing their effectiveness with the traditional ones. Additionally, the role of teacher training and development as well as technological integration should be investigated in the future research. by addressing these areas, future research can provide valuable insight and practical recommendations for creating a more effective learning environment.

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