PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF MULTIMODAL APPROACHES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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SUMMARY
In today's globalized and digital society, modern communication combines various aspects within a single multimodal landscape. Foreign language teaching should consider these peculiarities to reflect real-world communication, promote purposeful language learning, accommodate a variety of learning styles, and make language acquisition more interesting and efficient. The article aims to investigate and determine successful multimodal teaching approaches and strategies that educators may use to improve foreign language teaching. For this purpose, important theoretical frameworks in language teaching that facilitate multimodal learning are studied. The potential of utilizing several multimodal activities from multimodal text analysis, educational videos, projects using collaboration or blogging, digital storytelling, multimedia (research) presentations, role-playing and drama, interactive museum projects/interactive career guidance quest-tour, multimodal vocabulary journals, interactive learning modules to online learning platforms and interactive textbooks is described. It is concluded that multimodal techniques are effective when they encourage learners to connect actively with the language in meaningful ways by using several senses and communication types.

Multimodal strategies in foreign language instruction help create a more holistic and immersive learning environment, which is conducive to better comprehension and retention, as well as the development of creativity, critical thinking, communication, and teamwork, along with other essential 21st-century skills.

Key words: *multimodal teaching approaches, meaningful language learning, language acquisition, active engagement.*

Problem statement. Today's globalised and digitally connected world has made language learning more advanced than before when the work with textbooks and rote memorisation prevailed. The contemporary communication environment is by its very nature multimodal, using textual, gesture, audio-visual, and visual elements to communicate meaning. To promote more genuine and in-depth language learning, foreign language education and learning must adjust to these developments. Multimodal techniques, by reflecting the complexity of real-world communication and accommodating a variety of learning styles, can make language learning more relevant, successful, and interesting for today's learners, digital natives.

Recent research and publications. The study of multimodality in the language teaching contest is a relatively recent phenomenon. The notion of *multimodal literacy* and its importance in ELT was explored. It encompasses the ability to interpret and produce texts that use multiple modes. Together with written language, it calls for students to critically interact with the various elements (sounds, images, etc.) that make up a text (Oxford University Press ELT, 2023; Guo, 2023). Some researchers studied the positive aspects of the multimodal approach in language learning. C. Kalmatova (Kalmatova, 2024) paid attention that multimodal methods could foster greater student involvement by using diverse sensory inputs, thus making learning more dynamic and interesting. Additionally, it was observed that the application of multimodal techniques is in line with the demands of contemporary education, especially in light of digital technology. P. Magnusson and A.-L. Godhe (Magnusson, Godhe, 2019) noted that incorporating multimodal elements can make learning engaging for students as multimodal meaning-making is relevant to the meaning-making that students engage in outside of school or to contemporary communication in general. R. D. Paynor (Paynor, 2024) investigated the use

of multimodal teaching techniques and integration of cultural components in teaching the English language and observed significant improvement in students' academic performance due to enhanced retention and understanding. Li (2024) explored the way multimodality enhances translation teaching and cross-cultural skills. Guo (Guo, 2023) studied the positive influence of multimodal corrective feedback on writing proficiency and emotional engagement. D. Sutrisno et al. (Sutrisno, 2023) observed the impact of multimodal literacy on the promotion of student engagement, critical thinking, and communication skills in English language learning contexts. The significant improvement in English language learning and instruction by using multiple semiotic resources or modes is emphasizes by A. Sugianto (Sugianto, 2023). Although the educational potential of multimodality has been investigated from various perspectives, comprehensive studies on the successful application of multimodal techniques in practice are scarce. Educators lack the expertise or self-assurance to use multimodal tactics which leads to cautious integration of multimodal literacy into traditional courses.

The purpose of the article is to investigate and determine successful multimodal teaching approaches and initiatives that educators might use to improve foreign language teaching and learning. Utilizing various communication modes may help language learners build multimodal literacy, which is important for navigating a variety of communication modalities in the modern world.

Methods. Key theoretical frameworks and practical approaches pertinent to multimodal foreign language education were investigated and integrated using the standard research methods of analysis and synthesis. The action research method received particular attention, allowing foreign language teachers to examine and improve the use of multimodal approaches in their instruction through cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Participants

The participants included the teaching staff at the Foreign Languages Department of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University and their students enrolled in the courses *Introduction to Legal English* and *Academic English*, where the multimodal

approaches were implemented. The teachers played an active role as both facilitators and researchers, observing and documenting the impact of each multimodal technique on student engagement, comprehension, and overall language proficiency.

Materials and Tools

A variety of multimodal resources aimed at enhancing engagement and language comprehension were used in this study. Multimodal texts integrating visual and textual elements were used for reading exercises, while educational videos provided both auditory and visual context. Collaborative platforms such as blogging tools and shared digital workspaces supported group projects, allowing students to practice language skills in real-time. Digital storytelling tools enabled creative language use, and interactive learning modules from online platforms were incorporated to reinforce vocabulary and grammar through gamified exercises. Role-playing scripts and drama activities encouraged immersive language practice, while vocabulary journals allowed students to track and personalize their language acquisition process. Collectively, these tools supported a holistic and interactive learning environment, catering to varied learning styles and preferences.

Research course. Multimodality in language teaching and learning incorporates different communicative modes, such as visual, aural, and textual ones. Combining these modes results in a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of communication. To help students understand a lexeme, a teacher can use different forms of instruction, such as presenting an image, gesturing toward it, and offering its written form. The way that each mode supports the others helps learners comprehend, retain, and apply new knowledge more easily. This multiple-layered approach captures the reality of communication, in which body language, noises, pictures, and words are frequently used to create meaning. In the digital age, where a variety of media can impact students' comprehension and engagement, this method is becoming more and more pertinent. To help students interact with the target language in a way that resembles real-world conversation, language teachers have to apply a multimodal approach, which can contribute to increasing learning effectiveness and relevance while also enhancing interaction.

Multimodal learning's theoretical underpinnings come from a variety of educational and cognitive theories that describe how people process and create meaning through many communication channels. To improve learning outcomes, these theories emphasise the significance of integrating diverse sensory and cognitive inputs, including visual, aural, kinaesthetic, and textual modes. The following are some important theoretical frameworks in language teaching that facilitate multimodal learning.

1. *Systemic functional linguistics*, which has its roots in Michael Halliday's research, offers a framework for comprehending how language works in social situations. According to this idea, communication requires a variety of semiotic resources in addition to language, such as auditory and visual clues. Using this approach, multimodality in education highlights the interactions between various communication modalities, enhancing the educational process.

2. The *VARK model,* created by Neil Fleming, divides learners into four main modalities: visual (V), auditory (A), reading/writing (R) and kinesthetic (K). This model emphasizes how crucial it is to take into account students' varied learning preferences in order to maximize educational efficacy.

3. *Cognitive load theory*, developed by John Sweller, implies that people's ability to digest information is restricted. Educators can facilitate learners' perception and retention of knowledge by distributing cognitive burden over many channels (visual, aural, and kinesthetic) through the use of multimodal techniques. This strategy seeks to reduce cognitive overload by distributing the demands on working memory.

4. *Constructivist learning theory*, suggested by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, states that students build their knowledge through interactions with their surroundings and experiences. This approach is supported by multimodal learning, which promotes active participation and engagement through a variety of techniques that help students retain and gain a deeper grasp of the material (e.g., group projects, multimedia presentations, interactive activities, etc.).

Theoretically, multimodal learning combines ideas from various educational theories to produce a more comprehensive approach to teaching and learning, which demonstrates the multifaceted character of multimodal learning. Educationalists may create more

effective learning environments that meet various requirements and preferences by taking into account the effects that various modalities have on emotion and cognition.

Educators can assist their students in developing multimodal literacy abilities in a number of ways. The following are practical examples of multimodal projects and instructional strategies that utilize modality to facilitate foreign language acquisition among students. They give language learners the chance to interact with different kinds of communication, which improves their comprehension and articulation.

1. *Text analysis.* Multimodal texts, such as infographics, films, and other multimedia information are introduced to students first. Then students are assigned the task of analysing these texts, noting the various forms of communication that are employed and how each adds to the main idea. To communicate their observations, students could make little films, record audio reflections, or even draw visual representations.

2. *Educational videos.* Platforms like YouTube provide a great number of educational videos that incorporate visual, auditory, and linguistic elements. For example, law students watch a video explaining the concept of negligence which uses animated case scenarios to illustrate duty of care, while providing verbal explanations of legal principles and on-screen text to reinforce key case law and statutes.

3. *Projects using collaboration or blogging.* Students can create short films, podcasts, or maintain a class blog where they write about interesting subjects. They can also collaborate in groups to capture videos. A post may contain hyperlinks, photos, videos, text, and other formats. An activity for law students could involve creating a collaborative class blog where students are assigned to research and write posts on current legal issues, followed by peer reviews and online discussions to critique legal arguments and perspectives presented in each post. Students learn how to properly use digital tools and interact with an audience online as well as enhance their writing skills through this project.

4. *Digital storytelling.* This method has the potential to be a very effective multimodal expression tool. Students can use programs like Adobe Spark, Storybird, or Sanako Connect to create narratives

that incorporate text, pictures, and audio. This improves linguistic skills while fostering critical thinking and creativity. For example, the Department of Foreign Languages at Yaroslav Mydryi National Law University conducts the annual Digital Storytelling Contest «The Tradition of Legal Excellence Since 1804». Initially launched to celebrate the university's legacy in legal education, the contest has evolved significantly in both purpose and technological scope. While early presentations relied on basic PowerPoint, participants now incorporate advanced tools, including artificial intelligence, to craft their stories. The competition encourages students to creatively depict aspects of university life, legal education, and the institution's rich history. Through multimedia projects, students not only reflect on their academic experiences but also explore themes like the university's legacy, the impact of famous alumni, and even global legal education trends. Collaborative efforts, such as group video projects, are a hallmark of the event, fostering team spirit and pride in their legal heritage.

In their works students use a variety of modalities — visual, auditory, and textual elements – to tell their stories, often portraying both the joys and challenges of student life. Their works range from humorous depictions of international legal quirks to thoughtful reflections on their career aspirations. The event has also adapted to the changing times, with recent presentations addressing the harsh realities of war in Ukraine, showcasing the resilience and determination of the students (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. The digital storytelling contest invitation

5. *Multimedia (research) presentations.* Law students, as part of their individual coursework,

prepare multimedia presentations on various legal topics, integrating a combination of visual aids, video clips, and text to enhance their understanding and communication of complex legal concepts. For example, a student might create a presentation on tort law, using case re-enactments and graphic illustrations to explain legal precedents and principles. This format allows them to engage with the material interactively, sharpening both their legal reasoning and digital literacy. Similarly, postgraduate students utilise multimedia research presentations to showcase their advanced legal research. These presentations typically incorporate data visualizations, audio commentary, and video explanations of intricate legal theories or findings, allowing them to present their research in a more dynamic and accessible format, appealing to diverse academic audiences. This method helps them improve their presenting abilities while encouraging them to combine information from other modalities.

6. *Multimodal vocabulary journals.* In place of traditional paper-based vocabulary lists, students engage in creating multimodal vocabulary journals. Each journal entry incorporates a range of modalities — combining the written word, its definition, a visual representation, and a sentence using the word in context. This approach taps into multiple sensory channels and cognitive pathways, fostering deeper engagement and retention of vocabulary.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the vocabulary landscape shifted dramatically across media, social networks, and daily communication. Students were tasked with investigating these linguistic changes — such as new meanings for existing words, the creation of new lexical items, and the rise of slang neologisms. Through a multimodal analysis, they illustrated the etymology and semantic evolution of these terms, culminating in an online presentation titled «Covid-19 Language: Overwhelming Domination in Global Discourse». This exercise encouraged students to interact with language across various modes, enriching their understanding and adaptability in a rapidly changing linguistic environment.

Here, modality was leveraged not only through written and spoken language but also through visual and technological media, promoting a comprehensive and immersive language learning experience.

Fig. 2. Multimodal vocabulary journal on Covid-19 language

7. *Role-playing and drama.* An example of a role-playing and drama activity for law students, incorporating modality in foreign language teaching, is organizing a mock trial conducted entirely in the target language. In this activity, students are assigned roles such as attorneys, judges, witnesses, and jurors. They prepare by researching legal terminology and procedural rules in the foreign language, drafting legal documents, and developing arguments. During the mock trial, students use verbal communication to present their cases, cross-examine witnesses, and deliver opening and closing statements. Non-verbal modalities are also employed, as students utilize body language and courtroom etiquette appropriate to their roles. Visual aids like exhibits, evidence charts, or multimedia presentations can be incorporated to enhance understanding. This immersive experience engages multiple modalities — auditory, visual, kinaesthetic — and helps students develop legal vocabulary, public speaking skills, and a deeper understanding of legal concepts while practicing the foreign language in a realistic legal setting.

8. *Interactive museum projects/interactive career guidance quest-tour.* Students can create an «interactive museum» or interactive excursion where each group presents an exhibit on a specific topic related to their studies. They can use posters, models, digital presentations, and scripts for guided tours of their exhibits. This project encourages creativity while reinforcing language skills through research and presentation.

The interactive career guidance quest-tour «Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University — Your Gateway to the Legal Profession and Happy Student Life», organized online by the Department

of Foreign Languages, brought together school students from across Ukraine. Using the gaming and educational platform Kahoot, the organizers engaged prospective applicants in a quiz featuring interesting and creative questions about the university and student life. The questions sparked interest among the students, and a video commentary on the correct answers served as a guided tour of the university. During this virtual tour, the faculty introduced students to the various opportunities the university offers for education, leisure, personal development, and professional growth.

The project effectively integrates multiple modalities to engage and inform prospective students. By using the educational platform Kahoot, the activity combines visual, auditory, and interactive elements to enhance student participation. The quiz format involves written questions, visual cues, and video commentary, providing a multimodal learning experience that reinforces the information presented. The video commentary not only explains the correct answers but also functions as a virtual tour, using visual and auditory modalities to showcase the university's academic, recreational, and personal development opportunities. This blend of interactive digital platforms, video guides, and real-time participation encourages active engagement and deeper understanding, making the legal education environment more accessible and appealing to future applicants.

9. *Interactive learning modules.* Interactive learning modules, such as educational games, simulations, and activities like Kahoot quizzes on legal topics leverage a combination of text, visuals, sound, and user interactions to create an engaging educational experience. These tools not only foster active participation but also enhance students' understanding of complex legal concepts in a dynamic way. Kahoot quizzes, for instance, encourage quick thinking and recall through interactive legal questions. By integrating these activities, learners engage with content in a multimodal environment, enhancing both comprehension and practical application of legal knowledge.

10. *Online learning platforms and interactive textbooks.* Many educational platforms integrate quizzes, videos, discussions, and readings into a single, cohesive learning experience. By utilizing multiple modalities, these platforms cater to diverse learning styles

and enhance comprehension through varied approaches. Currently, the department is working on creating an interactive unified platform that will enable students to engage in all types of speech activities and tasks in one place. This innovative resource aims to provide a comprehensive learning environment where students can seamlessly transition between different modes of learning, fostering deeper engagement and understanding of the material. By combining interactive elements with traditional educational resources, the platform will support a more dynamic and effective learning experience.

Conclusions. The research underscores the potential of the practical application of the multimodal approach in foreign language instruction, which represents a significant advancement in foreign language teaching methodology. By integrating various modes of communication educators can create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment that reflects the complexities of real-world interactions and prepares students for them. The efficiency of multimodal strategies also lies in their ability to promote deeper comprehension and articulation, encouraging learners to engage actively with the language in meaningful ways. Beyond traditional literacy, language learning in the modern century requires a new set of skills. The future lies in multimodal literacy, which integrates creativity, critical thinking, communication, and teamwork with essential 21st-century abilities. Language teachers can better prepare students for the demands of today's digitally native world by focusing on these abilities.

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ПРАКТИЧНЕ ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ МУЛЬТИМОДАЛЬНИХ ПІДХОДІВ У НАВЧАННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

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АНОТАЦІЯ
У сьогоднішньому глобалізованому та цифровому суспільстві комунікація являє поєднання різноманітних аспектів у єдиному мультимодальному ландшафті. Викладання іноземних мов має враховувати ці особливості, щоби відображати спілкування в реальному світі, сприяти цілеспрямованому вивченню мови, враховувати різноманітні стилі навчання та робити вивчення мови більш цікавим і ефективним. Стаття має

на меті визначити й дослідити успішні мультимодальні навчальні підходи та стратегії, які педагоги можуть використовувати для покращення викладання іноземної мови. Із цією метою досліджуються важливі теоретичні основи викладання мов, які сприяють мультимодальному навчанню. Описано потенціал використання кількох мультимодальних видів діяльності: мультимодальний аналіз тексту, освітні відео, проекти з використанням співпраці чи блогів, цифрова розповідь, мультимедійні (дослідницькі) презентації, рольові ігри, інтерактивні музейні проекти / інтерактивний профорієнтаційний квест-тур, мультимодальні словникові журнали, інтерактивні навчальні модулі, онлайн-платформи для навчання й інтерактивні підручники. Зроблено висновок, що мультимодальні методи ефективні тоді, коли вони заохочують учнів активно осмислено спілкуватися мовою, використовуючи кілька органів чуття та кілька типів комунікації. Мультимодальні стратегії в навчанні іноземної мови допомагають створити більш цілісне та захопливе навчальне середовище, яке сприяє кращому розумінню та запам'ятовуванню, а також розвитку креативності, критичного мислення, комунікації, командної роботи та інших важливих навичок, необхідних у 21-му столітті.

Ключові слова: *мультимодальні підходи до навчання, осмислене вивчення мови, засвоєння мови, активне залучення.*

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