

EXPLORING THE MULTIMODAL APPROACH: THE EXPERIENCE OF EFL STUDENTS IN READING CLASS

Mega Mulianing Maharani¹⁾, Sri Wuli Fitriati²⁾, Abdurrachman Faridi³⁾, Dwi Rukmini⁴⁾,

Rahayu Dwi Haryanti⁵⁾

Doctoral Program of English Education

Semarang State University (UNNES)

Country Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia

megamulianing@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

Examining the multimodal approach to lengthy reading through the eyes of EFL students is the focus of this study. To better explain the multimodal approach to lengthy reading to EFL students, the authors employ a multimodal framework. Since their reading course requires them to read extensively and because extensive reading incorporates a multimodal approach, their personal experiences are used to define these themes in the report. A total of fifteen students are asked to join the interview about their experiences in reading class. The interview was then analyzed thematically. Proof of the vital position of a multimodal approach in prolonged reading requires their sharing about experiences of this approach. The analysis and interpretation of their responses are then tailored to align with the goal of this research. Based on the results, authors conclude that the students' experience were on the level of reading based on the length of the story; reading selection and variety, and quantity of reading selection.

Keywords: multimodal approach, EFL students, reading

Introduction

Extensive reading is a subject learned in many English Departments. It is the subject that piques students' interest in reading (Nation & Waring, 2019). Its primary goal is to make reading enjoyable for students (Macalister, 2015), therefore understanding how it works in the classroom is important (Delfi & Yamat, 2017). In addition, it is helpful for lecturers to know when their students have done substantial reading practice during the extensive reading (Zhou & Day, 2021).

In order to satisfy students' natural curiosity about what it is like to engage in extended reading practice, a specific approach should be used. A multimodal approach is chosen to be used in the classroom. Using a variety of reading strategies is central to this approach (Pereira, 2018), which aims to help students find pleasure in reading (Kress, 2015). The reasons are because the combination of picture, sound and text in reading can help them find their special moment to enjoy it.

The pictures produced in reading sources can take students into their variety imagination. Students may have different imagination about the information by looking the pictures while they are reading (Leander et al., 2017). Moreover, the sound produced such as music and narrator can help students enjoy the event happen in the sources. It makes them like they are the characters of the story who can feel the situation based on the sound produced (Huang, 2015). When the sound is so boisterous, they can feel that they are in that crowded situation. When the sound is so calming, their feeling is so quiet. In addition, the text produced in the reading sources can help them enjoy to follow the scene. It means that their understanding will be improved as well (Núñez, 2015). It is argued that the improvement of reading understanding is because the improvement of readers' vocabularies (Ruck, 2022). In short, the strengths produced by multimodal approach makes writers to

choose it to be implemented in the classroom.

The fact that most forms of communication are multimodal in the modern day provides more evidence in favor of employing a multimodal approach. Linguistic and cultural learning are pedagogically aided by it (Kress, 2015), which is as the typical condition of interpersonal dialogue (Thuy, 2017). Much of the research on multimodal approach focuses on ways to improve the utilization of different senses—sight, hearing, text, and movement—to create meaning (Dieterle & Vie, 2015; Hiippala, 2017; Lwin, 2016). To emphasize a supplementary message, co-occurring modes can align (Dalton et al., 2015). Researchers interested in multimodality have looked at how authors use the semiotic resources of different modes (e.g., visuals, sound, and video) in their digital products (Jakobsen & Tønnessen, 2018; Nagy, 2020). Added by Nicholls and English (2020), students' memory can work so long to save information if the message is transferred into a visual mode.

By combining several modes, the process of meaning making can be improved. Together linguistic (writing, speech), visual (image, picture, moving image), audial (music, soundtrack), spatial (layout), and/ or gestural (gesture) modes (Han, 2023), they are crucial for encouraging the kind of critical thinking that leads to the formation of meaningful conclusions (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2016). The works of those modes in a reading class is implemented to know the students' experience. Therefore, the objective of this study is to know the EFL students' experience about multimodal approach implementation in reading class.

Methodology

Researchers opted for a qualitative study approach in order to achieve the research objectives. The research was done in extensive reading class. There were 15 students decided to be the subject of the

study. To gain the purpose of the study, the data were collected by doing a semi structure interview. The interview was in the form of video recording which was given to fifteen participants. The reason was to understand and get the feeling of the participant. For example, when they were asked about their motivation, then researchers could guarantee how motivated they were and so on. The interview was done based on the interview guidelines. The interview then was analyzed thematically to find the students' answer about their experiences in extensive reading during the implementation of a multimodal approach.

Findings and Discussion

Exploring the work of a multimodal approach in this research was focused on the students' experience in extensive reading. It means that in extensive reading practice, researchers used several books which were presented in a multimodal approach. In short, the students could see picture, hear sound produced by narrator, music as the background, and read sentences.

Findings

The findings of this study are presented in this section following the order of the research question. To begin, the main theme that emerged from the data analysis are tabulated as follows.

Table 1. The students' experience in extensive reading based on a multimodal approach

What they feel	What they encounter
Pleasure/ Enjoyment	Level of reading based on the length of the story
Motivation/Challenge	Reading selection and variety

Joylessness	Quantity of reading selection
-------------	-------------------------------

The Students' Pleasure and Enjoyment

The respondents in this study, reported their experience about the pleasure and enjoyment they got in extensive reading based on the work of multimodal approach. Fifteen respondents expressed positive pleasurement and enjoyment from joining extensive reading. The report is as the experiences stated.

Three students in their pseudonames, A, B, and C, declared their same experience on pleasurement read in extensive reading practice. Their experience is written as experience 1.

Experience 1:

I felt the multimodal approach used in extensive reading was really interesting. It introduced pleasurement to continue reading the full book. (Students A, B, and C)

Based on the experience, it can be said that multimodal approach promotes students' interest to read. This makes students continued reading.

Four students in their pseudonames, F, J, K, and L, declared their same experience on enjoyment to read in extensive reading practice. Their experience is written as experience 2.

Experience 2:

The combination of pictures, sound (music) and writing made me enjoy reading the book. (Students F, J, K, L)

Based on the experience, it can be said that a multimodal approach which consists of pictures, sound and writing promotes students' enjoyment. It affected the students' willingness to read the book.

A student in his pseudoname, M, declared he got enjoyment in extensive reading practice. His experience is written as experience 3.

Experience 3:

I really enjoyed reading the book in extensive reading practice. (Student M)

Based on the experience, it can be said that extensive reading practice promotes students' enjoyment. This makes student continued reading book.

Two students in their pseudonames, D and E, declared their same experience on enjoyment to read book presented in multimodal approach. Their experience is written as experience 4.

Experience 4:

It was my first time to read book in multimodal approach and it was really treated me to enjoy reading the book. (Students D and E)

Based on the experience, it can be said that students had been treated to enjoy the book used in extensive reading even it was their first time to have a multimodal approach.

Five students in their pseudonames, G, H, I, N and O, declared their same experience on pleasurement to read book in a multimodal approach. Their experience is written as experience 5.

Experience 5:

It was my first experience to have multimodal approach in reading. It really sounded interesting for me. It improved my pleasurement to read and read. (Students G, H, I, N, and O)

Based on the experience, it can be said that students were interested in reading the book. In addition, they found their pleasurement to read even it was their first time to have a multimodal approach.

The Students' Motivation and Challenge

The respondents in this study, reported their experience about the motivation and challenge they got in extensive reading based on the work of multimodal approach. Fifteen respondents showed their motivation and clarified their challenge about joining extensive reading. The report is as the experiences stated.

Three students in their pseudonames, B, G, and J, declared their

same experience on motivation to read in extensive reading practice. They added that they got challenge to understand the book. Their experience is written as experience 1.

Experience 1:

Multimodal approach has motivated me to read. Even it was introduced in several modes, it treated me to challenge the way to understand the book. (Students B, G, and J)

Based on the experience, it can be said that students had been motivated and challenged to understand the book presented in several modes like in a multimodal approach.

Five students in their pseudonyms, A, D, E, F and O, declared their same experience on motivation to read book even actually they did not like to read. Their experience is written as experience 2.

Experience 2:

The presentation of several modes in the book had motivated me because so far I did not like to read. Therefore, it challenged my way to read. (Students A, D, E, F and O).

Based on the experience, it can be said that students had been motivated and challenged to find the way to read the book because it was their first time to have a multimodal approach in extensive reading.

Three students in their pseudonyms, C, H and I, declared their same experience about their motivation to read was better since they were introduced a multimodal approach in extensive reading. Their experience is written as experience 3.

Experience 3:

Multimodal approach was new for me and it had changed my way to read. Therefore, my motivation to read was better. I felt in a challenging time because I had to use my visual and auditory to understand the book. (Students C, H, and I)

Based on the experience, it can be said that students had changed the way to read the book because their motivation to read was increase. In addition, their ability to modify visual and auditory was challenged during the reading time.

Four students in their pseudonyms, K, L, M, and N, declared their same experience on challenge to focus their reading time. Their experience is written as experience 4.

Experience 4:

The practice of extensive reading through the work of multimodal approach firstly challenged me because the combination was so amazing for me. I needed more focus to read the book. At the end, I really motivated to have it for further books. (Students K, L, M, and N)

Based on the experience, it can be said that students had challenge to understand the book through the combination of several modes found in the book to take the moment of meaning making.

The Students' Joylessness

The respondents in this study, reported their experience about the joylessness they got in extensive reading based on the work of multimodal approach. Fifteen respondents showed their joylessness about joining extensive reading. The report is as the experiences stated:

Four students in their pseudonyms, C, D, M, and O, declared their same experience on joylessness on increasing the quantity of book selection. Their experience is written as experience 1.

Experience 1:

The joylessness I found was in the reading selection. I had been rarely to read before I had extensive reading practice so I found it as joylessness when I had to read many books to read. (Students C, D, M, and O)

Based on the experience, it can be said that the joylessness was about the number of books should be read during the extensive

reading practice. It was due to their lack of time to read books before they were introduced to a multimodal approach.

Five students in their pseudonyms, A, B, E, F and K, declared their same experience on joylessness in increasing the number of books selected. Their experience is written as experience 2.

Experience 2:

The target about quantity in reading selection in extensive reading had made me in a joylessness, but I could handle it time by time because the book was presented in a multimodal approach. (Students A, B, E, F and K)

Based on the experience, it can be said that even the students showed their joylessness in increasing the number of books read, they immediately could handle it because a multimodal approach was something interesting for them.

Six students in their pseudonyms, G, H, I, J, L, and N, declared their same experience on feeling unjoylessness about increasing the quantity of book selection. Their experience is written as experience 3.

Experience 3:

I did not feel under joylessness of the quantity of reading selection because I enjoyed the reading book used in extensive reading practice. By having books presented in a multimodal approach, it was a good way for me. (Students G, H, I, J, L, and N)

Based on the experience, it can be said that the students did not underpressure to increase the quantity of books selected during the extensive reading practice. It was because the multimodal approach was a good approach for them to increase the quantity of books selected. In other words, this group of students were good in reading ability.

Discussion

Reflecting on the principles of extensive reading, the findings of the study focused only to know the principles of learners like

read as much as possible and the purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding. Based on those main focus of the study, researchers tried to know the effect of having those principles on motivation to read and in addition, to know the challenge when the practice of extensive reading was under the multimodal approach implementation.

By focusing those parts, the researchers found that the students' experience were varied. First, dealing with pleasure and enjoyment, their experience was about the level of reading based on the length of the story. This result was in line with the research about how enjoyment filled the reading class atmosphere (Bussert-Webb & Zhang, 2016). Second, dealing with motivation/challenge, their experience was about reading selection and variety. This result was in line with the idea that multimodal approach improved students' motivation (Unsworth & Mills, 2020). Third, dealing with joylessness, their experience was about quantity of reading selection. This result was in line with the idea that quantity of reading reflected the students' preference on reading (Fitriani et al., 2024).

For each category, the students showed their similar experience they mentioned in the interview. In the first category, researchers found five experiences type. Each type was represented by some students. In addition in the second category, researchers found four experiences type. Each type was represented by some students as well. Moreover, in the third category, researchers found three experiences type. Each type was represented by some students as well.

Conclusions

By doing the research about exploring the multimodal approach: the experience of

EFL students in extensive reading, researchers classified the students experience into three categories. To conclude, the students' experience were on the level of reading based on the length of the story; reading selection and variety, and quantity of reading selection.

References

- Bussert-Webb, K., & Zhang, Z. (2016). Reading Attitudes of Texas High School Students. *Reading Psychology*, 37(3), 424–448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02702711.2015.1059396>
- Dalton, B., Robinson, K. H., Lovvorn, J. F., Smith, B. E., Mo, E., Uccelli, P., & Proctor, C. P. (2015). *Fifth-grade Students' Digital Retellings and the Common*. 115(4), 548–569.
- Delfi, S., & Yamat, H. (2017). Extensive Reading in Developing Language Competency for Indonesian EFL Learners Majoring in English. *IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 1(2), 153. <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v1i2.20>
- Dieterle, B., & Vie, S. (2015). Digital First-Year Composition: Integrating Multimodality into a Writing about Writing Approach. *Journal of Global Literacies, Technologies, and Emerging Pedagogies*, 3(1), 276–289.
- Fitriani, S. A., Kurniawati, N., & Amuddin, M. (2024). Students' Responses to Multimodal Texts in Learning Reading Course. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris*, 17(1), 148. <https://doi.org/10.24042/ee-jtbi.v17i1.19459>
- Han, J. (2023). *A Multimodal Approach to Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) in the Digital World*. 13(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJCALLT.322026>
- Hiippala, T. (2017). An overview of research within the Genre and Multimodality framework. *Discourse, Context and Media*, 20, 276–284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.05.004>
- Huang, S. Y. (2015). The intersection of multimodality and critical perspective: Multimodality as subversion. *Language Learning and Technology*, 19(3), 21–37.
- Humphrey, S., & Macnaught, L. (2016). Functional Language Instruction and the Writing Growth of English Language Learners in the Middle Years. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50(4), 792–816. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.247>
- Jakobsen, I. K., & Tønnessen, E. S. (2018). A Design-Oriented Analysis of Multimodality in English as a Foreign Language. *Designs for Learning*, 10(1), 40–52. <https://doi.org/10.16993/df1.89>
- Kress, G. (2015). Semiotic work. *AILA Review*, 28(Mm), 49–71. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.28.03kre>
- Leander, K. M., Aziz, S., Botzakis, S., Ehret, C., Landry, D., & Rowsell, J. (2017). Readings and Experiences of Multimodality. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 66(1), 95–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336917719247>
- Lwin, S. M. (2016). It's story time!: Exploring the potential of multimodality in oral storytelling to support children's vocabulary learning. *Literacy*, 50(2), 72–82. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12075>
- Macalister, J. (2015). Guidelines or commandments? Reconsidering core principles in extensive reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 27(1), 122–128.
- Nagy, N. (2020). Multimodal literacy development in a higher education English Studies classroom. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 39(3–4), 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1051144X.2020.1826218>
- Nation, I. S. P., & Waring, R. (2019). What

- Makes a Good Graded Reading Scheme? In *Teaching Extensive Reading in Another Language*.
- Nicholls, L. A. B., & English, B. (2020). Multimodal coding and strategic approach in young and older adults' visual working memory performance. *Aging, Neuropsychology, and Cognition*, 27(1), 83–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13825585.2019.1585515>
- Núñez, A. J. C. (2015). Multimodality and Multi-sensoriality as Basis for Access to Knowledge in Translation: The Case of Audio Description of Colour and Movement. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 212, 210–217. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.335>
- Pereira, A. (2018). Exploring the multimodal argument: the interplay of multimodality and attention economy. *Pedagogies*, 13(3), 201–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554480X.2017.1399796>
- Ruck, J. (2022). Elementary-level learners' engagement with multimodal resources in two audio-visual genres. *Language Learning Journal*, 50(3), 328–343. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2020.1752291>
- Thuy, T. T. H. (2017). Reading Images - the Grammar of Visual Design. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, 33(6). <https://doi.org/10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4217>
- <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367809256-12>
- Unsworth, L., & Mills, K. A. (2020). English language teaching of attitude and emotion in digital multimodal composition. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 47(January), 100712. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2020.100712>
- Zhou, J., & Day, R. R. (2021). *Online Extensive Reading in EAP Courses*. April.