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MULTIMODALITY IN THE EFL CLASSROM

A PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE SPANISH EFL STUDENTS' ORAL SKILLS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This end of master's degree project approaches the topic of multimodality from the perspective of social semiotic multimodal analysis and its implications within the education landscape. Considering the importance of developing students' communicative competence in English so as to be successful both in academic and non-academic contexts, this project presents a multimodal proposal aimed at improving Spanish EFL students' oral skills. Despite this, the lockdown of Spanish education centres due to the spread of COVID-19 impeded the implementation of this proposal in the Official School of Languages of Castelló. Therefore, the present master's dissertation aims at finding out the perceptions that two EFL teachers have regarding multimodality, non-verbal communication, and the designed proposal. In order to do so, the project includes a literature review section which deals with multimodality and its relationship with education and non-verbal communication; a section focused on the multimodal proposal; and a section which details the methodology and the results of the study, which have been obtained by interviewing two EFL teachers and analysing linguistic legal documents that regulate foreign language courses around Europe and Spain. Finally, the discussion will prove that multimodal learning is still facing challenges that mainly depend on education policies and that need to be overcome because, in overall, multimodality contributes to make the teaching-learning process rich and successful.

Keywords: Multimodality, multimodal proposal, education, non-verbal communication, linguistic mediation, English as a Foreign Language, Official School of Languages.

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, it is inconceivable to describe Europe without considering its linguistic and cultural diversity, which is part of Europeans' common heritage and identity (Ortega & Huges, 2018). Promoting linguistic diversity is considered to be key according to the European Union, as it enables individuals, whose mother tongues are different, to communicate and/or interact each other. Thus, learning languages is not only an individual need, but also a common responsibility among Europeans (Dooly, Escobar, Moore & Noguerol, 2016). In particular, Spain is a multilingual country where there is one official language (Spanish) and four co-official languages (Catalan, Valencian, Galician, and Basque) (Baïdak, Balcon & Montiejunaite, 2017). Co-official languages are promoted and introduced as languages of instruction, as well as Spanish, in the education systems of their corresponding autonomous regions so as to contribute to their preservation. For instance, in the Valencian Community, an autonomous region on the northeast coast of Spain, students have the right and obligation to learn both in Spanish and Valencian since 1978, year in which the Spanish Constitution established that both the national and the co-official languages of the autonomous regions should be languages of schooling since pre-primary education (Baïdak et al., 2017). In addition, due to different phenomena which started to emerge since the 1990s, such as globalization, the European cohesion, new technologies, economic expansion or the European linguistic diversity, foreign languages started to be considered as essential tools within the Spanish population and government (Marsh, Mehisto & Frígols, 2008).

According to the last update of the European Commission's Eurobarometer survey data on languages in Europe (2019), English is the most widely known foreign language both in Europe and Spain. In the case of Spain, this is due to the fact that English is currently the most taught and learnt foreign language through its different educational levels and systems (Baïdak et al., 2017). Within the Spanish education system, English is considered to be a foreign language (FL) because, as Fortanet explains (2013), Spanish citizens do not use English to communicate with each other unless they need to communicate with individuals who do not speak the national language or, in the case of autonomous regions, one of the co-official languages. Therefore, whereas English is described as a foreign language when it is used by non-native speakers of English who use their national and/or regional language in their daily lives, English has also been recognised as a *lingua franca* outside the classroom environment when it is used as a communication tool between non-native speakers of English, particularly in international exchanges (Dooly et al., 2013) social media, advertising, and music (Fortanet, 2013).

In this master's dissertation, English is going to be referred to as a FL, as the focus is on two advanced groups of adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Official Language School of Castelló, that is, a non-compulsory education context in which students are non-native speakers of English. In Spanish Official Schools of Languages, English is taught as a FL to adult learners, who are expected to become skilful, according to the different English proficiency levels, when writing, reading, listening, speaking, and mediating in English (Ortega, Hughes & Madrid, 2018). According to Ortega et al. (2018), the teaching and learning of these five skills must be balanced. However, despite teachers' effort to make this possible by making students participate actively during EFL lessons, it has been found out that an important number

of EFL learners is reluctant to speak in English inside and outside the FL classroom (Navarro, 2009). Actually, only 31% of European citizens assert that they are skilful enough to communicate in English (Fortanet, 2013). As stated by López (2011), this issue occurs due to the fact that students are not taught strategies to improve their oral skills, particularly, nonverbal communication skills such as gestures or facial expressions. Learning strategies to communicate in a language which is not students' mother tongue would make them become more confident and fluent while using the foreign language. Therefore, if we want students to fit in this globalized, changeable and networked society we live in, where communicating in English is indispensable, a shift must be applied to students' curriculum (Bauman, 1998; Castells, 2001, as stated in Jewitt, 2008).

The aim of the present master's dissertation is to analyse the implementation of multimodal approaches, particularly focused on oral communication, in EFL classrooms. The analysis is divided into two parts: a theoretical and a practical part. The theoretical part includes a definition of this multimodal literacy learning practice, a description of its application and challenges in the EFL classroom, and a justification for including non-verbal communication within students' curricula. The experimental part is aimed at studying and analysing two teachers' perceptions regarding students' oral communication skills throughout their working experience as teachers. This analysis has been divided into two different parts: two teachers have analysed a virtual multimodal proposal on improving students' oral presentation skills that has been designed specifically for this study and, then, the same teachers have been interviewed regarding their views on multimodality, non-verbal communication, and the analysed proposal. Teachers' analysis of the virtual proposal and results of the interviews allow us to see whether there are differences between multimodal literacy learning theory and practice.

2. DEFINING MULTIMODALITY

Jewitt (2008) explains that *multimodality* is a term that was originated in the early 1990s due to the different phenomena, particularly globalization and technological advances, that were emerging in the world. According to Jewitt, those events have had such an impressive impact on our society throughout the contemporary era that this era could be described as a historical turning point in which visuals have become the dominant modes of communication.

As argued by Choi and Yi (2016), multimodality is a complex term to define and, for this reason, not all multimodal researchers coincide with their definitions. Early, Kendrick, and Potts (2015) suggest that in order to understand the mentioned concept, firstly, language must be acknowledged as one of multiple resources used to communicate and to make, distribute, and/or interpret meaning. Therefore, multimodality reflects that language is not the only mode used when communicating so as to create meaning. In other words, each communicative event entails different modes, namely, social and cultural semiotic resources used to make meaning, such as layout or facial expression, which strictly correlate each other (Kress, 2010). Thus, people are sign-makers who are constantly selecting and shaping modes according to a specific context (time and place) and the interactions that take place in their daily lives (Jewitt, 2008).

Once it is clear that the term multimodality refers to the fact that "human communication is an amalgamation of various modes, including not only language" (Peng, 2019, p. 162), it can be remarked that despite some academics and researchers understand it as a theory, others describe it as a perspective or as a methodological application (Jewitt, 2008). Furthermore, three approaches have been identified within

multimodality: (1) social semiotic multimodal analysis, whose main foundation is to understand sign-making as a social process; (2) systemic functional approach, which aims at theorising semiotic resources; and (3) multimodal interactional analysis, which focuses on people's use of different modes when interacting in different contexts (Jewitt, 2008). However, this study focuses on the first mentioned approach, the social semiotic multimodal analysis, and its implications within the education landscape.

3. MULTIMODALITY AND EDUCATION

The need of a multimodal shift in the education backdrop started to be considered since 1996, when the New London Group (NLG) claimed that, due to the social and cultural changes over the communicational landscape, both knowledge and pedagogy needed to be reconsidered as multimodal by researchers and educators (Jewitt, 2008). In other words, the NLG suggested that a multimodal literacy, which takes into account multiple modes of communication, was necessary in order to cover the demands and changes of the 21st century (Loerts, 2013).

Traditional education is characterised by being monomodal because it focused mainly on one mode: the written language (Martínez, 2014). This means that, for ages, it has been given more importance to written modes rather than to other modes of communication such as image. However, monomodal education does no longer fit in our society, as we live in a multimodal society dominated by new information and communication technologies (Alfonso & Giralt, 2014). For this reason, Martínez (2016) claims that the FL classroom must be seen as a multimodal learning environment where different modes are used to convey and produce meaning so that both teachers and students can benefit from the teaching-learning process, as by employing different modes,

the multiple individual needs and learning styles can be covered (Sankey, Birch & Gardiner, 2010). In this sense, if contemporary learners use more than one mode so as to create meaning, both inside the classroom and in their daily lives, it can be posited that knowledge is "multimodal, co-constructed, and performed or represented" (Miller, 2007, p. 65).

4. MULTIMODALITY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

The increasing interest in multimodal perspectives within the language education field is currently evident and necessary (Early et al., 2015). For this reason, there is an important number of studies which analyse the impact of multimodality in EFL classrooms. For instance, Sankey et al. (2010) analysed the impact of specific multimodal learning materials, such as videos, on learners' comprehension; whereas Peng (2019) investigated EFL students' perceptions of multimodal pedagogies and the relationship of such pedagogies with their willingness to communicate (WTC) in the foreign language studied. On account of that, studies on multimodality in the EFL classroom can be focused on multiple topics and analyse multiple elements, from the learning materials used by students to the impact of teachers' gestures over students' performance, for instance. Despite being a broad field to study, different studies, which are going to be described in the following subsections (4.1 and 4.2), have shown that the outcomes of multimodal learning experiences regarding benefits and challenges often coincide.

4.1 BENEFITS OF MULTIMODALITY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

So far, an important number of studies have demonstrated that, when multimodality is used in the EFL classroom, multiple benefits can be identified. Sankey et al. (2010)

found out that multimodal learning assures that the multiple learning styles, preferences, mental abilities, and intelligences of students are fostered. In addition, they remarked that students' comprehension, retention, and working memory increases, especially when visuals and audio (verbal and non-verbal approaches, respectively) are combined. Choi and Yi's study (2016) proved that multimodal learning leads to a more successful teaching-learning experience because multimodality enables teachers to establish a connection between content knowledge and students' lives, which makes students' cognitive and affective engagement possible. In addition, Choi and Yi also reported that multimodality increases EFL learners' confidence and self-esteem, both when working individually or in groups. In fact, working in groups is another advantage that multimodality makes possible. The ability to work cooperatively is essential for students because it is key in the labour market, as well as the ability to interact and the ability develop leadership attitudes, which are also developed when multimodal approaches are implemented (Martínez, 2014). Finally, Alfonso and Giralt's study (2014) made evident that multimodal teaching and learning is not only beneficial for the written language, but also for the oral language.

4.2 CHALLENGES FOR MULTIMODALITY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

The analysis of different articles on the studied topic have allowed us to see that despite the multiple benefits of introducing multimodality in the EFL classroom, there are some challenges that need to be faced. The main reason for the presence of drawbacks comes from the fact that education policy still boosts programmatic and institutional curricula that foster linguistic modes and print literacy (Farías, Obilinovic & Orrego, 2007). Therefore, because of the administrative pressure, most teachers

consider this approach as unfeasible in terms of standardized tests' preparation and time constraints (Choi & Yi, 2016). Lastly, Jewitt (2008) added that it is not only the lack of support by education policies that hinders multimodal teaching and learning practices, but also the lack of teachers and educators' multimodal pedagogical knowledge and training in order to integrate multimodality within students' curriculum.

5. MULTIMODALITY AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

As stated in previous sections, the worldwide spread of English due to the need of this language to communicate internationally has made possible the reconsideration of English as the current *lingua franca* (Dooly et al., 2016). Therefore, European students need to be competent when communicating in this language if they want to be successful in their daily lives, particularly outside the school context, that is, when dealing with non-academic matters such as looking for job opportunities in the demanding labour market (Martínez, 2014).

For this reason, the main aim of current language teachers and educators should be to promote students' communicative competence[1] in the FL studied. In fact, it is of relevant importance to focus on the idea of being competent when communicating because, in order to develop this competence, two aspects must be taken into consideration (Cestero, 2017). On the one hand, teachers need to foster the acquisition of students' linguistic competence by focusing on the English language itself. On the other hand, teachers need to help their students to become aware of communication systems that go beyond the use

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[1] Communicative competence refers to the linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and cultural aspects of a language that a speaker needs to consider so as to communicate effectively (Council of Europe, 2018).

of words, *i.e.* non-verbal communication systems (López, 2011). In other words, foreign language teachers must focus not only on linguistic aspects, but also on non-verbal communication aspects, such as the use of gestures, so that their students are able to communicate effectively when using the studied language (López, 2011).

Non-verbal communication, as a discipline, was coined in the middle of the twentieth century and it comprises all non-linguistic elements that are used when communicating. Actually, non-verbal communication divides its constituents into two different groups: (1) cultural signs systems and (2) non-verbal communication systems, a group which is divided into four systems (Cestero, 2017):

(2.1) paralinguistics, the study of phonic qualities that modify the meaning of verbal messages;

(2.2) kinaesthetics, the study of body movements that contribute to and/or communicate;

(2.3) proxemics, the study of communicative habits related to a particular society and/or culture; and

(2.4) chronemics, the study of people's associations to time and time distribution.

Therefore, despite languages have universal elements in common, there are other aspects which are particular of each language and need to be learnt, particularly when being non-native speaker of a language (Cestero, 2017). Despite this, the fourth chapter of the CEFRL (Council of Europe, 2018) only focuses on one type of non-verbal communication systems: paralinguistics. The CEFRL entitles this section as "paralinguistic actions" and divides it into three groups: body language (*e.g.* eye contact),

extra-linguistic speech sounds (*e.g.* 'sh') and prosodic qualities (*i.e.* voice quality, pitch, loudness and length). Therefore, considering Cestero's classification (2017), the CEFRL should reconsider to classify body language as another category, as well as proxemics, as the framework classifies proxemics as an example of body language, but proxemics actually depends on the characteristics of a particular society and/or culture.

Nowadays, non-verbal communication is indispensable in our society because, as Martínez reminds us (2014), we live in a multimodal society dominated by visuals and education needs to adapt to this situation by fostering multimodal education opportunities that entail communication and interaction, rather than focusing on print literacy (Loerts, 2013). In fact, according to Albert Mehrabian (as cited in Rao, 2017), 55% of communication depends on the use of non-verbal cues. These non-linguistic signs communicate even when speakers are unaware of their use and, whenever there is a contradiction between verbal and non-verbal messages, non-verbal messages are the ones that prevail. Furthermore, non-verbal communication signs can be used for multiple purposes: to add information, to regulate interactions or, among others, to meet the lack of linguistic knowledge in the first stages of foreign language learning, as a scaffolding strategy.

Actually, as Albaladejo explains (2008), non-verbal communication plays an important role within the education backdrop, particularly when it comes to classroom environment and the relationships between teachers and students. According to her, being aware of what is communicated through non-verbal cues contributes to more coherent and effective communication exchanges, which, as a result, improves the emotional atmosphere of the classroom. At this point, having seen the multiple benefits that non-verbal communication offers, it is evident that non-verbal communication should be taken

into account by teachers and educators when designing students' curricula (Cestero, 2017), as this aspect of communication is usually overlooked within the education environment (Albaladejo, 2008).

6. MULTIMODAL PROPOSAL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this fourth section is to justify, present and analyse a multimodal proposal aimed at improving EFL learners' oral skills by introducing non-verbal communication in EFL classroom activities and assessment criteria when performing a linguistic mediation task.

Before focusing on its justification, it must be explained that the activities of this proposal were designed for two groups of advanced C1 learners studying English at the Official School of Languages of Castelló, the education centre where I stayed during the practicum period of this master's degree. Due to time constraints, I was allowed to implement a didactic unit designed for beginner EFL learners aimed at describing places and people, whereas C1 teachers could only share with me two hours of their remaining instruction time so that I could carry out this study. Additionally, teachers agreed to participate in this study under the condition that the activities prepared for the study were related to their advanced students' curriculum, as the academic course was expected to end at the end of May and most C1 students aimed at taking the certification exam in June. Therefore, as detailed in the following sections, I needed to adapt the study to the students' syllabus and, apart from preparing questionnaires and (pre-/post)-tests, I had to design activities including

non-verbal communication that could help students not only with the language course and/or the certification exam, but also in their daily lives. However, due to the fact that Spain was declared as an alarm state since the spread of COVID-19, it was not possible to implement this proposal at the end of March as it was already agreed with the English teachers of both groups. Consequently, this study needed to be rearranged amidst the uncertainty of the situation.

The following subsections include a justification of the designed proposal, a clarification of its aims, a description of the context where it was expected to take place, a detailed presentation of the designed activities and, afterwards, an explanation of the methodology that would have been followed if students had been able to participate in the study. Finally, the last two parts of section 4 include the analysis of teachers' interviews and students' expected results according to teachers' answers in their interviews.

6.2 JUSTIFICATION

Among the multiple options that multimodality offers, I decided to focus on non-verbal communication because, as detailed in section 5, it is indispensable when communicating in general, but specially in a FL. Despite this, during the first part of my practicum period, I observed that most students did not feel comfortable when doing oral presentations in English and that their non-verbal communication did not always go hand in hand with their verbal messages. For this reason, I decided to analyse the acknowledgement and attention given to this type of communication within linguistic legal documents that regulate foreign language courses around Europe and, in particular, the Official Schools of Languages in the Valencian

Community. The goal of this analysis was to find out where lies the problem regarding the mismatch between students' verbal and non-verbal messages. The analysed documents are the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL) (2018), the Spanish decree-law 1041/2017 from the 22nd of December, the document *Proves de certificació 2019-2020. Guia del candidat*[6], and the syllabus of the English department in the Official School of Languages of Castelló (2019-2020). In fact, they are analysed in this order for a particular reason, that is, the presented documents depend on the previous one in the list and have been elaborated according to the indications of the preceding.

By analysing the CEFRL, it was found out that it devotes a section of its fourth chapter to non-verbal communication and, when dealing with oral communication strategies, it is reinforced the idea of using non-verbal communication strategies that accompany verbal messages. In spite of this, the descriptors of the CEFRL do not consider non-verbal communication strategies unless they refer to compensating strategies at beginner levels. In other words, the descriptors of the CEFRL do not include and/or specify which non-verbal strategies to use in intermediate or advanced levels and, in beginner levels, they are not presented as boosters for verbal-messages, but only as compensating strategies whenever there is a lack of linguistic knowledge. Similarly, the document which contains the syllabus of the English department in the Official School of Languages in Castelló specifies, in its methodology section, that teachers are expected to promote students' efficient use of body language, extralinguistic sounds and conventional prosodic features of the English language. However, these

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[6] *Proves de certificació 2019-2020. Guia del candidat* is a document prepared for candidates of language certification exams in the Official School of Languages of the Valencian Autonomous Region. In this document, candidates can find all the information that they need to know regarding such certification exams (*e.g.* aims, contents and/or evaluation criteria).

aims are not applied within the contents and evaluation sections of both this document and/or *Guia del candidat*. To be more precise, the curriculum of advanced C1 learners states that learners should be able to produce and co-produce oral texts of a wide range of topics in a fluent and spontaneous way (*i.e.* almost effortlessly). In doing so, C1 students are also expected to show that their command of linguistic resources, as well as discursive, interactional and compensating strategies, is good enough in any communicative event. In that sense, it could be argued that when the curriculum refers to 'fluent', non-verbal communication is included within the 'discursive strategies' and 'compensating strategies' mentioned. Nevertheless, non-verbal communication is not included and/or specified within the contents of the curriculum, except for phonetic aspects such as tone, as opposed to linguistic aspects, which are presented in detail. Furthermore, none of the mentioned documents includes non-verbal communication in the evaluation criteria, which may justify the absence of this aspect in the book of the students participating in this study (*On Screen* C1, see references).

The analysis of these documents has allowed us to see that the three of them mention the need to use non-verbal strategies when communicating, but that they do not specify whether or how to introduce them in the EFL classroom or in the evaluation criteria. Therefore, considering the existing mismatch between verbal and non-verbal communication as problematic for students both in academic and non-academic contexts, the following sections present and detail a multimodal proposal aimed at facing this issue.

6.3 AIMS

The aims of this study were to improve advanced EFL students' oral presentation skills by introducing non-verbal communication in their syllabus and make them reflect upon the need and importance of this type of communication. By introducing non-verbal communication in the EFL classroom, the goal was to know teachers and students' perceptions on both multimodality and non-verbal communication before and after the study. However, as students were not able to participate because of the lockdown of Spanish education centres caused by COVID-19, by interviewing their corresponding teachers it has only been possible to answer the following research questions:

(1) What are teachers' perceptions on multimodality?

(2) What are teachers' views on non-verbal communication?

(3) To what extent can this multimodal proposal improve EFL students' oral skills?

6.4 CONTEXT

This study was expected to be carried out in the Official School of Languages of Castelló de la Plana, a non-compulsory education centre characterised by its diverse student body, which can be classified, according to their motivations, into three groups: (1) professional motivation, (2) academic motivation, and (3) other personal motivations such as the interest in learning languages or the pleasure for travelling. In addition, the diversity of this centre also has to do with the presence of different nationalities, cultures and/or socioeconomic status among students. On the other hand,

when designing the activities of this proposal I also took into account the fact that they are adult learners and that in the two advanced groups there was an average of 10 students per group, as observed *in situ* before preparing the activities.

6.5 ACTIVITIES

This section justifies, presents and details the designed activities that would have been implemented in on-site or online sessions if the situation would have allowed to do so. Actually, the multimodal proposal designed for this study was turned into a Google Classroom space so as to use it as a support for students during the online sessions through Google Meet and/or to help those students who could not attend online sessions at the scheduled time because of job incompatibility or family reconciliation, as confinement caused these types of inconveniences. Despite it could neither be implemented online, the effort of creating the virtual space was worthwhile because it was accessed and analysed by the two teachers participating in this study before their interviews, something they appreciated because they were given access to the Google Classroom space two weeks before the interviews so that they could organise their work and personal timetables better.

The activities are presented in the format of a didactic unit in order to explain all the elements that constitute the proposal in a clear and concise way. In particular, the didactic unit has been divided into two different sessions of 50 minutes each, the total amount of time that EFL teachers could have shared with me. In the first session, students are expected to recognise and understand the most important verbal and non-verbal aspects to bear in mind when performing an oral presentation task, an overall aim which is intended to be achieved thanks to a video available at YouTube and a

Power Point Presentation prepared for this session. On the other hand, session 2 is aimed at producing an oral mediation task after preparing it and rehearsing individually and/or with a classmate, that is, to put into practise the knowledge acquired in session 1. Furthermore, both sessions have been divided into 4 parts[7]: (1) Warm-up, in which the context of the session is set; (2) Instruction/Participation, in which contents are presented and/or put into practise; (3) Closure, in which it is checked whether the overall aim of the session is achieved; and (4) Follow-up, in which students practise, reinforce and/or reflect upon the acquired knowledge during teaching-learning process.

Due to the fact that the overall aim of this study is to help EFL learners improve their verbal and non-verbal communication skills when using the FL studied, the methodology of the didactic unit could be defined as a communicative, interactive and dynamic methodology. Therefore, the main focus of the session is on the students, who learn in an inductive way thanks to the multimodal materials selected and/or elaborated for this study. Conversely, the teacher adopts other roles such as guiding, informing, motivating and making students feel comfortable during the sessions and when communicating in English. In addition, as online learning would have challenged students if they would have been asked to do cooperative tasks, particularly because they are adult learners and many of them were responsible of taking care of their children, peer-assessment was introduced to avoid that students stopped learning cooperatively as they were used to. Actually, both peer-assessment and emphasis on practising the mediation task with a classmate through Google Meet before presenting

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[7] Division adapted from the CTLE resources that Utha University (EUA) offers in the section "lesson planning" of its official website.

it in front of the class, are expected to help students improve their communicative skills, as students can share constructive feedback each other and feel more comfortable and predisposed to do the oral mediation task during the online session where the teacher and all the students would be present. Regarding the reasons why I introduced a mediation task in order to improve learners' oral skills, it must be stated that they are strictly related to time constraints and teachers' preferences, as they still had content of the syllabus to cover and wanted their students to do activities that could be helpful for them. Therefore, after analysing different options and discussing them both with my tutor and the teachers, I decided on the mediation task option. In my opinion, linguistic mediation is strictly related to the topic of this master's dissertation because it takes places whenever a speaker of a particular language needs to be assisted by another individual who speaks the same or a different language, an exchange of information where non-verbal communication is of special importance. For instance, in the mediation task prepared for this study, the student needs to imagine that (s)he is a Spanish shop assistant working in an electronics store and is required to help a British costumer who wants to buy a laptop. Consequently, the student needs to mediate with a speaker of the FL studied at the same time (s)he interprets, paraphrases and summarises the most relevant elements of an infographics (*i.e.* a multimodal text) according to the information required by the costumer. Then, if the student wants to sell a laptop to a British costumer, (s)he would need to accompany his/her verbal messages with non-verbal communication strategies such as pointing at the screen of the laptop. Finally, apart from the fact that this task could be adapted to the topic of the study and the students' curriculum, I also thought it was the most appropriate option because the fourth chapter of the CEFRL deals not only with non-verbal

communication, as mentioned in section 5, but also with mediation. Therefore, according to the CEFRL, there is a strict relationship between non-verbal communication and linguistic mediation.

Finally, before presenting the tables that include the curriculum specification of the activities and the didactic unit itself, it is important to remark that all the materials designed for the sessions are multimodal so as to satisfy the different needs of the students and are accessible thanks to the hyperlinks shared in the descriptions of the activities. In addition, materials can be found in the appendixes, except for students' background questionnaire and (pre-/post-)tests (Google Forms), which can only be accessed through the hyperlinks.

CURRICULUM SPECIFICATION OF THE ACTIVITIES[8]			
(CO-)PRODUCTION OF ORAL TEXTS AND MEDIATION ACTIVITIES			
CONTENTS	EVALUATION CRITERIA	INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT	SESSION
• Neutral/formal/informal register. • Compensating and discursive strategies. • Assertive, convincing and expressive language. • Oral coherence and cohesion. • Reasoned and appreciative modality: affirmation, negation, factuality, certainty, necessity, probability and others.	• Participating actively in formal and informal conversations and/or discussions which involve abstract, specific and/or unknown topics. • Expressing opinions and reflections regarding complex topics and being able to support such opinions with reasoned arguments. • Adapting verbal and non-verbal messages to the circumstances of the communicative event: context, interlocutor(s), level of formality and communicative function. • Using appropriate grammatical structures, lexis, intonation patterns	• The student(s) can participate actively in formal and informal conversations and/or discussions which involve abstract, specific and/or unknown topics. • The student(s) can express opinions and reflections regarding complex topics and support such opinions with reasoned arguments. • The student(s) can adapt verbal and non-verbal messages to the circumstances of the communicative event: context, interlocutor(s), level of formality and communicative function.	• 1 • 2

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[8] Adapted and modified from *Real Decret 1041/2017, de 22 de desembre*, *Programació Didàctica del departament d'anglés de l'EOI de Castelló* (2019-2020) and *Proves de Certificació de la GVA (2019-2020). Guia del candidat*.

• Varied grammatical structures, lexis, pronunciation and intonation patterns adapted to the proficiency level of the learners.	and non-verbal communication strategies that support and complement verbal messages. • Transferring information from multimodal texts (infographic) by paraphrasing and summarising its most relevant key elements according to the needs of the task. • Mediating with native speakers of the target language (TL) in a clear and concise way. • Using persuasive language trying to convince the interlocutor(s) regarding a particular aspect which may be unfamiliar and/or related to a specific professional context.	• The student(s) can use appropriate grammatical structures, lexis, intonation patterns and non-verbal communication strategies that support and complement verbal messages. • The student(s) can transfer from multimodal texts (infographic) by paraphrasing and summarising its most relevant elements according to the needs of the task. • The student(s) can mediate with native speakers of the TL in a clear and concise way. • The student(s) can persuade the interlocutor(s) regarding a particular aspect which may be unfamiliar for him/her.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6" align="center">**ACTIVITIES OF THE PROPOSAL: SESSION 1**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">**TOPIC:** Successful oral presentations.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">**OVERALL AIM:** By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to recognise and understand the most important verbal and non-verbal aspects to bear in mind when performing an oral presentation or communicative task.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">**FOCUS:** Types of communication and elements to consider when preparing and doing an oral presentation.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">**LEVEL:** C1 (CEFRL).</td></tr>
</table>

TIME (minutes) 50	AIMS	INTERACTION PATTERNS[9]	ROLES IN THE CLASSROOM[10]		ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES AND MATERIALS
			Teacher	Students		
12	To identify, understand and reflect upon the differences between a good a bad oral presentation.	T ➡ C S ➡ T T ➡ S S ➡ S S ➡ C	Tells Explains Describes Outlines Illustrates Evaluates Verifies Justifies	Interpret Analyse Predict Discuss Understand Recognise Remember Deduce Choose Contrast	**WARM-UP** **Differences between a good and a bad oral presentation (YouTube video):** In this activity students are expected to analyse the attached video and try to identify the aspects that characterise a good and a bad oral presentation. Once they have identified the differences and discuss them with the whole class, they are required to reflect upon previous presentations that they have done during the academic year and write on the forum of the classroom other positive or negative aspects to bear in mind when doing an oral presentation.	✓ Computer ✓ Google Classroom ✓ Google Meet ✓ YouTube video

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[9] T (= teacher), S (= student), Ss (= students), C (= whole class).
[10] According to Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson, L. & Krathwohl, D., 2001).

20	To understand the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication; to remember how to structure a presentation; and to learn from presented tips.	T ➡ C S ➡ T T ➡ S S ➡ S S ➡ C	Outlines Explains Describes Illustrates Justifies Verifies	Interpret Analyse Understand Recognise Remember Deduce Choose	**INSTRUCTION**	✓ Computer
					How to make a successful oral presentation (PPT): In this activity, students are expected to pay attention to the teacher's Power Point Presentation so as to understand the differences between verbal and non-verbal communication and the most remarkable aspects to bear in mind when preparing and doing an oral presentation. Despite they have access to the PPT prepared by the teacher, during the teacher's presentation students are advised to take notes on those tips that they find most useful and they would incorporate in their next oral presentation. Moreover, at the end of the PPT presentation they are able to ask any questions to the teacher so that she can solve doubts.	✓ Google Classroom ✓ Google Meet ✓ PPT (See Appendix A)
10	To make sure students have acquired the previous aims regarding oral presentations.	T ➡ C S ➡ T T ➡ S S ➡ C	Explains Indicates	Understand Remember Analyse Recognise Choose	**CLOSURE**	✓ Computer
					Forum reflection: After having seen and analysed the YouTube video and the PPT presented by the teacher, students have to access the classroom forum, reflect and write regarding three aspects: something they need to stop doing, something they need to start doing, and something they need to continue doing in their next oral presentation.	✓ Google Classroom ✓ Google Meet

| 8 | To make students revise, practise and reinforce the knowledge they have acquired during the session. | T ➡ C
S ➡ T
T ➡ S | Explains
Illustrates
Justifies | Understand
Recall
Examine
Practise | **FOLLOW-UP**

Instructions to follow individually outside the online session: Before leaving Google Meet, students will be assigned a linguistic mediation task designed by the teacher to prepare and practise at home. The PDF document is available in students' Google Classroom space and it includes all the instructions to follow. Despite this, the teacher will read the instructions and clarify emerging doubts. Furthermore, students have access to the checklist that the teacher has prepared in order to evaluate next session's mediation task. Finally, the teacher will encourage them to put into practise the verbal and non-verbal aspects learnt throughout this session. For this reason, she will lastly recommend them to use a mirror, a videorecorder or a live video call with a classmate when practising, though she will insist on the last option, as it can be more instructive and helpful for students if they share constructive feedback each other. | ✓ Mediation task
(See Appendix B)
✓ Video recorder/ Mirror/ Google Meet
✓ Mediation checklist
(See Appendix C) |

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">ACTIVITIES OF THE PROPOSAL: SESSION 2</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">TOPIC: Successful oral presentations.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">OVERALL AIM: By the end of this lesson, learners will be able to put into practise the most important verbal and non-verbal aspects to bear in mind when communicating through an individual linguistic mediation task.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">FOCUS: Types of communication and elements to consider when preparing and doing an oral presentation.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">LEVEL: C1 (CEFRL).</td></tr>
</table>

TIME (minutes) 50	AIMS	INTERACTION PATTERNS[11]	ROLES IN THE CLASSROOM[12]		ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES AND MATERIALS
			Teacher	Students		
5	To revise and learn from the classroom reflections upon what to do when doing an oral presentation or communicative task.	T ➡ C S ➡ T T ➡ S	Explains Describes Outlines Evaluates	Interpret Analyse Understand Recognise Remember Contrast	**WARM-UP** **Review:** Before starting with the students' individual mediation tasks, the teacher will make general comments regarding the students' entries on the forum of the classroom so as to make them realise that it is important to reflect upon one's previous speaking tasks in order to improve and become an efficient communicator in the long run. Finally, she will also ask students what they learnt when practising the task with a classmate.	✓ Computer ✓ Google Classroom ✓ Google Meet

[11] T (= teacher), S (= student), Ss (= students), C (= whole class).
[12] According to Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson, L. & Krathwohl, D., 2001).

| 30 | To perform a communicative task adapted to the actual criteria of a mediation task; to focus on both verbal and non-verbal communication; and to pay attention to all classmates' tasks according to the available checklist. | T ➡ C
S ➡ T
T ➡ S
S ➡ S
S ➡ C | States
Explains
Describes
Illustrates
Justifies
Evaluates
Verifies | Interpret
Understand
Remember
Produce
Recognise
Analyse
Evaluate | **PARTICIPATION**

Mediation task (PDF): In this activity students are expected to do the prepared mediation task following the instructions and adjusting it to the specified duration (1-2 minutes). The order in which students present their tasks will be stablished randomly as soon as the warming-up part ends. Furthermore, students are asked to pay attention to their classmates' performances according to the checklist that their teacher showed them in the previous session and uploaded it to their virtual classroom space. Finally, the teacher recommends them to take notes regarding the classroom presentations, as once all students have done the mediation task, they will be evaluating a classmate whose name will remain unknown until the end of the class.
Note: Learners who cannot attend online sessions during the scheduled time because of the difficulties caused by the pandemic would be able to record themselves using Flipgrid and they would receive teacher's feedback only, unless other classmates volunteer to participate. | ✓ Computer
✓ Google Classroom
✓ Google Meet
✓ Mediation task
(See Appendix B)
✓ Mediation checklist
(See Appendix C)
✓ Flipgrid
(exceptional cases only) |

10	To make sure students are able to recognise when another student is able to communicate and/or mediate effectively by being aware of their verbal and non-verbal communication.	T ➡ C S ➡ T T ➡ S	Explains Indicates Analyses Evaluates Verifies	Understand Remember Analyse Recognise Choose Evaluate	**CLOSURE** **Peer-assessment:** After having listened and analysed all participants' mediation tasks, students will be sent an individual and private email with the name of the classmate they are about to evaluate using the checklist prepared by the teacher. Once they fill in the checklist adapted into a Google Forms so as to facilitate the task, the teacher will compare it to her own perception and send students the results according to both analysis of the tasks.	✓ Computer ✓ Google Classroom ✓ Google Meet ✓ Mediation checklist (See Appendix C) ✓ Google Forms 1
5	To make students revise and reflect upon both the previous task and the knowledge they have acquired during the two sessions.	T ➡ C S ➡ T T ➡ S	Explains Indicates Analyses Verifies	Understand Recall Examine Discuss	**FOLLOW-UP** **Final reflection:** Having received the filled checklist by one classmate and the teacher, students will need to reflect upon their tasks and improvements compared to previous oral communicative tasks so as to be aware of the importance of combining verbal and non-verbal communication. Finally, they will need to fill in another Google Forms in which they will need to express their opinion(s) regarding the evaluation system used, that is, peer-assessment.	✓ Mediation task (PDF) ✓ Google Classroom ✓ Google Forms 2

6.6 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

6.6.1 PARTICIPANTS

In total, two EFL teachers working at the Official School of Languages of Castelló participated in this study. In fact, these two teachers are responsible of the two groups of advanced C1 learners in which the multimodal proposal was expected to be implemented. Therefore, the information in this subsection corresponds only to the interviewed teachers (see Table 1).

The two participants are female and speak the state language, the co-official language of the study's region and two foreign languages: English and German. Despite this, both of them emphasise that they feel more comfortable with English, the language of the courses they teach and the one they are specialised in, as both participants studied the Degree in English Philology. In addition, as they are keen on teaching and education, they have done many courses related to these topics. Finally, the two teachers were asked to specify the number of years they have been teaching EFL officially, to what one of them replied that she has 13 years of experience and the other 34.

TEACHERS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
Characteristics/Features	**Participants**
Gender	2 females
Multilingual	2: Spanish, Valencian, English and German
Higher Education	2 English philologists
Additional courses on education	2 foreign language teachers
Years teaching EFL	1 teacher: 13 years, 1 teacher: 34 years

Table 1. Teachers' background information

6.6.2 INSTRUMENTS

In order to collect the data, three instruments were designed: a students'
background questionnaire, a test to use as students' pre-test and post-test, and an
interview.

The instruments used to collect students' data, that is, students' background
questionnaire and (pre-/post) tests, have been adapted from Ortega *et. al.* (2018)
and a combination of previous studies on the topic present in the literature review,
respectively. Then, both were turned into two different Google Forms. On the one
hand, in the background questionnaire students were expected to provide
information regarding their age, gender, English proficiency level, previous
studies, languages spoken, number of years studying English, their existing or
non-existing pleasure for learning English, their uses of the English language, the
reasons why they are enrolled in this language course, their satisfaction with the
classroom environment, and the degree to which several education resources
presented help them to learn. On the other hand, the (pre-/post-) tests were created
in order to check students' perceptions and views on both multimodality and non-
verbal communication before and after the implementation of the multimodal
proposal. For that reason, the questions in the tests combine three different
formats: Likert-scale, yes-no questions, and two open-ended questions so as to get
more subjective feedback on the topic of the study.

On the other hand, the interview prepared for teachers, which has been the only
instrument used in the end, has been designed and adapted from Loerts' study
(2013). The interview (see Appendix D) consists of 24 questions aimed at
knowing teachers' background data relevant for the study, which has been used in

the participants subsection; and teachers' perceptions regarding multimodality, non-verbal communication, and the multimodal proposal that was expected to be implemented in their respective C1 classrooms. In order to know teachers' perceptions, they were asked yes-no questions and open-ended questions that they were also required to justify. These questions focused on: classroom environment; teaching resources used; importance given to the different language skills and the degree of difficulty of these skills; students' previous oral presentations; importance given to verbal and non-verbal communication; presence or absence of non-verbal communication in their classrooms and/or assessment checklists; and views, perceptions, and possible outcomes derived from the multimodal proposal analysed.

6.6.3   PROCEDURE

Once the virtual proposal and the interview were designed and the two teachers accepted their participation in the study, the students' data would have started to be collected. Before implementing the activities, students would have filled in the background questionnaire and pre-test. Then, students would have acquired theoretical knowledge regarding how to perform a successful oral presentation and put it into practice through an oral mediation task. After the implementation, students would have been asked to fill in the post-test so as to check whether their perceptions had changed after the implementation. Finally, the last step in the procedure was to interview teachers and compare their views to the students' views. However, in the end it was only possible to interview the two teachers after giving them access to the Google Classroom space created using the provided code (46nafrt) and after having analysed it.

6.7 TEACHERS' RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

In this section, the results of the teachers' interviews are going to be presented according to the way in which two of the research questions of this study have been answered: (A) What are teachers' perceptions on multimodality and (B) What are teachers' views on non-verbal communication? On the other hand, the last research question, which focuses on the multimodal proposal created, will be analysed in the following section (section 6.8).

In order to know the perceptions on multimodality that the two teachers interviewed have, they were asked the following questions: (1) Which are the most helpful teaching resources you use in your classes?, (2) Which are the least helpful teaching resources you have used in your classes?, and (3) Do you know what is multimodality?

In the first question teachers needed to mention the most helpful resources that they use to teach English, to what both teachers replied that videos related to the topic studied are always welcomed by students. However, whereas one participant (participant A) mentioned that Flipgrid is the education tool she finds most useful for students to practise and improve their oral skills thanks to video recordings, the participant with more teaching experience (participant B) confessed that she is not really keen on new technologies and does not even use Power Point Presentations in her lessons. Regarding the least helpful resources that were reported in the second question, both teachers agreed that books are not always helpful because they do not usually contain and/or focus on all the aspects they want their students to work on.

Consequently, as participants stated, they need to create lots of materials to solve that problem. Despite this, participant B confessed that she uses the book only as a guide, that is to say, she hardly ever uses the book in her lessons. Conversely, participant A finds it difficult to step away from the book in advanced levels because of two reasons: her unfamiliarity with the book and the pressure to prepare students for certification exams. Additionally, despite they admitted not to know what multimodality is and/or how to define this term, multimodality is present in both teachers' classrooms, as they have mentioned education resources that entail multiple modes, that is to say, not only written language.

On the other hand, in order to know teachers' views on non-verbal communication, they were asked some more questions: (4) What English skill do you think is more/less important for your students?, (5) What is more important when doing oral presentations: verbal or non-verbal communication?, (6) Have you ever taught your students about non-verbal communication?, (7) Do you include non-verbal communication in your assessment checklist when students do oral presentations? and (8) Do you think non-verbal communication is useful for your students?

In the fourth question, both participants agreed that speaking is the most important skill for their students, but their arguments were different. Participant A said that speaking is important because it is the skill which students are less used to and cannot practise outside the school context, as English is not the language of communication among Spanish people. On the other hand, participant B argued that speaking is the most important skill because she has no doubt that her students need this language in order to study, work, and/or travel. Despite having a clear answer for the first part of question 4, it was difficult for teachers to decide whether writing or reading was the

least helpful skill for their students. Participant A just mentioned that reading and writing are the skills that students are more skilful at and, for that reason, are the least important. Conversely, participant B stated that the degree of importance to ascribe to reading or writing varies according to the situation of the learner or the context in which (s)he uses English. Furthermore, both teachers insisted on the fact that, actually, all skills go hand in hand. Then, when it comes to oral presentations, participants recognised that both verbal and non-verbal communication should be treated in a balanced way (question 5). In other words, none of the participants decided on just one type of communication as the most important because they believe that, as with language skills, these two types of communication complement each other. For that reason, as answered in question 6, they include non-verbal communication in their syllabus. Participant A prepared a presentation with tips for students to use in oral presentations at the beginning of the course in which she included non-verbal cues such as maintaining eye contact with interlocutors. Conversely, as participant B is not keen on Power Point Presentations, she prefers to use videos including real examples of students doing oral presentations in certification exams so as to make her students reflect upon non-verbal communication, though she admitted that, after 34 years teaching, this was the first academic year in which she decided to put emphasis on non-verbal communication. Finally, even though in the last question (question 8) they both coincided with the fact that non-verbal communication is useful for their students, none of them includes it explicitly in the evaluation checklists they use to evaluate their students. On the one hand, participant A uses already done checklists prepared for certification tests and those checklists do not include non-verbal specifications. On the contrary, participant B uses her own checklists, but she does not specify and/or

assign a particular percentage to non-verbal communication. In fact, both participants confessed that they evaluate non-verbal communication indirectly and take it into account as part of students' delivery, though they know they should not evaluate it in such a subjective way. Therefore, they recognised that non-verbal communication should be part of evaluation checklists.

6.8 STUDENTS' EXPECTED RESULTS

In this section, the expected results that would have been achieved by students thanks to the implementation of this proposal are going to be presented. In order to deal with these results, the answers provided by the two teachers in the last section of the interview are going to be considered, as they were required to assess the multimodal proposal so as to answer several questions regarding it: (9) Do you think that the proposal you have seen and analysed focuses on multimodality?, (10) How do you believe that this proposal would influence your students if it was implemented virtually?, (10.1) Would it have a different impact if it was implemented in a face-to-face classroom?, (11) What do you think about the checklist proposed to evaluate students' mediation task?, (11.1) Would you remove or add any items? Moreover, the answers of these questions, which are going to be presented in the following paragraph, are aimed at answering the last research question: To what extent can this multimodal proposal improve EFL students' oral skills?

Having explained them briefly what multimodality is after having expressed their unfamiliarity with this term in previous questions of the interview, in question 9 they were able to define the presented proposal as multimodal because the activities include combinations of text, image, video, and audio. Furthermore, analysing these activities

allowed them to answer question number 10 by sharing their own perceptions on how the activities would influence their students if implemented online. In general terms, teachers considered the proposal to be interesting, useful, and very complete for their advanced students. In particular, participant A believed that implementing this proposal online would have benefited all students in terms of oral production skills, but specifically shy students, as having to perform a communicative task inside their comfort zone would have made them feel more comfortable. On the other hand, teacher B also remarked that the proposal would be more beneficial for students in on-site sessions because she has experimented that online learning does not offer as many opportunities as on-site learning, among which she highlights cooperative debates and teacher's reinforcement. In addition, though she did not only refer to shy students, participant B underlined that students' results would depend mainly on their personalities, particularly with this topic, as she believes that it is possible to raise students' awareness regarding the importance of non-verbal communication in two sessions, but she thinks that for some students two sessions would not be enough. However, she insists on the fact that these two sessions are a good way to start with, so that students pay attention to non-verbal cues and incorporate them when speaking in English. Finally, teachers were required to comment on the adapted checklist included in the proposal in order to evaluate students' mediation task. On the one hand, participant A was satisfied to see the checklist because she realised that it was perfectly adapted to the aims, contents, expectations, and timing of a real mediation task. Furthermore, she was satisfied with the fact that non-verbal communication was included explicitly in the checklist. Then, as she thought it was a complete evaluation tool, she said she would neither remove nor add any items. Similarly, participant B

defined it as a clear and concise checklist. Nevertheless, she said that she would give a higher percentage to students' ability to select and transmit information, though she confessed that she could not give a clear argument and/or percentage. Finally, having detailed the answers of the last question, in overall terms, teachers judged the checklist as a complete tool to use when evaluating and participant A even said that she would definitely use it if she was offered to do so.

7. DISCUSSION

After having analysed, studied, and compared teachers' answers in their interviews with the linguistic legal document used in this study and the results of previous studies on this topic, it has been found out that there are more similarities than differences between multimodal literacy learning theory and practice. Therefore, these similarities and differences will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Regarding similarities between multimodal theory and multimodal practice, it has been ascertained that most teachers consider non-verbal communication as a helpful tool for their students in terms of improving their communicative skills because non-verbal cues contribute to students' fluency, efficiency, and naturality (López, 2011). However, despite this general agreement, there is still the need to include non-verbal communication in the students' curricula, classes, books and, as demonstrated in this study, evaluation checklists. Firstly, this change needs to be reconsidered by education policy because, according to Jewitt (2008), programmatic and institutional curricula promoted by education authorities still focus on linguistic modes and print literacy. For this reason, teachers participating in the study admitted having experimented administrative pressure and time constraints because of upcoming certification tests, a result which was also

experimented by the teachers participating in the study of Farías et al. (2007). However, despite focusing on standardized tests may be important for students' future (Gorman, 2019), it must not be overlooked that, in the long run, results of formal assessment and correctness may not be as important as students' overall communicative competence in the FL studied (Akoue, Ndong, Allogo &Tennant, 2014).

Another challenge to be faced, which is mentioned in the literature review in an indirect way, is the need to explicitly incorporate non-verbal communication within assessing checklists, as assessment needs to be objective and consistent (Gorman, 2019). Conversely, as seen in the answers of the interviews, both teachers admitted to take non-verbal communication into account when evaluating fluency, but did not have a specific criteria or percentage on non-verbal communication in their checklists, then, the need to define the term fluency in a more clear and concise way is also present. In addition, apart from including non-verbal communication in evaluation checklists, it is highly important to include EFL learners in the evaluation process, particularly in online learning (Waterson, n.d.). For this reason and according to their long teaching experience, participants find it very interesting to share the checklist prepared for the mediation task with the students before preparing the task and use it to incorporate peer-assessment while practising and/or after their performance to evaluate another classmate assigned randomly and anonymously. According to Waterson (n.d.), peer-assessment, particularly if checklists including can-do statements or similar statements as done in this study are introduced, contributes to reduce students' pressure, a factor that teachers mentioned to impede EFL students' oral performances. Additionally, peer-assessment plays an important role in students' learning process, as they are required to participate actively during the process and, as a result, develop a deeper understanding of their performances

and obtain better results in the long run, which also increases their motivation (Akoue *et.al.,* 2014).

On the other hand, teachers also mentioned an important issue to be considered when comparing online and on-site learning, which is related to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978, as stated in Dooly *et.al.,* 2016). As stated in the previous section, teachers considered that the multimodal proposal designed for this study would have had a better impact if it was about to be implemented on-site because they have experimented that online learning does not allow them to provide as much reinforcement. In addition, they have also noticed that scaffolding and interaction opportunities are reduced. These aspects are related to Vygotsky's ZPD because, considering teachers' comments, students are able to obtain better outcomes if scaffolded in the precise and required moment by an individual with more experience, that is, the teacher. In addition, teachers were also worried about the relationship with their students because of online learning, as they know that good relationships between teachers and students and classroom environment are interwoven. In other words, as demonstrated, affective teaching is essential when foreign languages are involved.

Furthermore, in the same way previous studies confirmed that preparing realistic activities connected to students' lives and interests is key in foreign language learning (Martínez, 2014), participants in this study highlighted the good choice of designing the mediation task included in the multimodal proposal. On the one hand, the mediation task has been defined as a realistic activity in which students have a clear interlocutor, communicative function, and goal in their minds, as opposed to monologue activities. On the other hand, the mediation task is an activity that could happen daily in that particular professional context. In fact, the CEFRL (Council of Europe, 2018) includes this type of

mediation performance as a sample of social and/or transactional situations. Moreover, both the mediation task and the video selected for students contribute to students' critical thinking development, an essential tool in the labour market (Martínez, 2014).

At this point it must be clarified that despite the similarities presented between multimodal theory and real practice, two differences have been identified regarding the use of new technologies and the recognition given to non-verbal communication. Firstly, both teachers claimed that in order to boost non-verbal communication and make sure that the teaching-learning process is multimodal and successful, it is not recommendable to rely completely on new technologies. Conversely, previous studies such as the one by Farías *et.al* (2007), advised teachers and educators to rely more on materials that students can access through a screen rather than printed materials so as to be adapted to the current electronic revolution. Finally, it was interesting to see that when participants referred to non-verbal communication, they did not only define them as compensating strategies as linguistic legal documents do. In particular, teachers emphasised that non-verbal cues are boosters of verbal messages and that there must be a balance between these two types of communication, because, as Rao claims (2017), coordinating verbal and non-verbal messages assures effective public speaking.

8. CONCLUSION

This master's dissertation aimed to find out the views that students and teachers have about multimodality and non-verbal communication. However, due to the lockdown of Spanish education centres because of the spread of COVID-19, students were not able to participate and the multimodal proposal designed for this study could not be

implemented. Despite this, it has been possible to analyse teachers' answers of the interviews and compare them with linguistic legal documents and previous studies dealing with the studied topic. This analysis has proved that there are more similarities than differences between multimodal theory and multimodal practice.

On the one hand, the similarities include: (1) the need to include non-verbal communication in students' curricula, education materials, and assessment criteria; (2) the need of education policy to reconsider their views on literacy and go beyond the written language; (3) the need to focus on students' communicative competence in English to meet the demands of the current society; and (4) the need to bear in mind students' real lives when preparing lessons and/or activities.

On the other hand, the differences consist of two key aspects mentioned by the teachers that did not correspond to the information in the literature review: (1) the recommendation to not to abuse of new technologies and (2) the consideration of non-verbal cues as both boosters and compensators of verbal messages.

Finally, there is a number of factors that have influenced teachers' results when analysing the multimodal proposal presented and that are considered to be key in EFL students' successful oral performances and FL learning in general: (1) affective teaching, (2) welcoming classroom environment, (3) capability to control public speaking anxiety, (4) open personality, and (5) confidence.

In conclusion, current language teachers must be aware of the demands of the 21st century (Dooly et al., 2016) by introducing multimodality in their classrooms and use it as "a springboard for more traditional reading and writing practices" (Loerts, 2013, p.

164) in order to expand students' communicative opportunities and, as a result, become competent speakers in the foreign language studied.

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OUTLINE

(1) WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

   (1.1) DEFINITION

   (1.2) TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

(2) HOW TO STRUCTURE A PRESENTATION

(3) WHAT LANGUAGE TO USE

(4) WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING AND DOING AN ORAL PRESENTATION

(1) WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

(1.1) DEFINITION

communication noun

🔖 Save Word

com·mu·ni·ca·tion | \ kə-ˌmyü-nə-ˈkā-shən 🔊 \

Definition of communication

1 a : a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behavior

(1) WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

(1.2) TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

- **Verbal communication:** The type of communication that occurs when we use **words** to speak or write.

- **Non-verbal communication:** The type of communication that occurs **without** written or spoken **words**. For example, it takes place through:

  ➤ Non-oral: Gestures, posture, eye contact, or gaze.

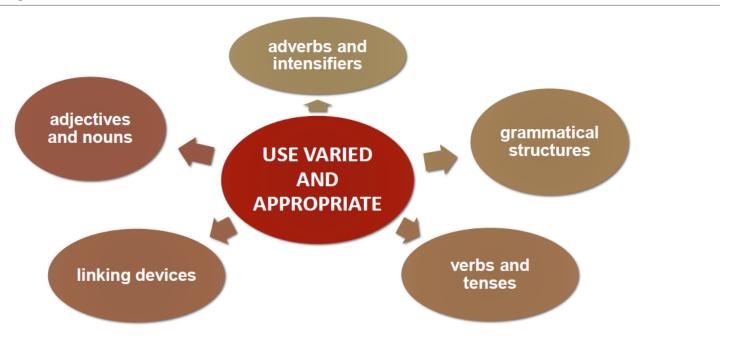 ➤ Oral: pausing, laughing, or crying.

(2) HOW TO STRUCTURE A PRESENTATION

1. **Introduction**
   - Greet the audience
   - Introduce yourself
   - Introduce the topic
   - Use an appropriate opening technique (a (rhetorical) question, a quotation, humour...)

2. **Main body:** Present and explain the points of your presentation

3. **Conclusion**
   - Summarise the main points
   - Use an appropriate closing technique (a (rhetorical) question, a quotation, humour...)
   - Thank the audience

(3) WHAT LANGUAGE TO USE

(4) WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN PREPARING AND DOING AN ORAL PRESENTATION

✓	✗
• Be polite	• Do not be too serious/anxious
• Smile	• Do not keep your hands in your pockets
• Use a clear voice	• Do not speak too soft
• Use the appropriate register	• Do not ignore the context
• Maintain eye contact with your audience	• Do not read your notes
• Use appropriate facial expressions, movements and gestures to make your ideas clear	• Do not slouch • Do not turn back to your audience • Do not fold your arms or put your hands in your pockets
• If using presentation software (as PPT), use simple layout, background and fonts	• Do not use distracting visuals • Do not use long sentences
• If using presentation software, images, infographics... point to them and indicate the thing you are trying to reinforce	• Do not ignore the resources you are using

You are a salesman/saleswoman who works in an electronics store located in the city centre. It is summer and a demanding British customer whose laptop has been stolen at the airport wants to buy a new one in your store. She is an important businesswoman who wants an appropriate laptop for her job and, despite being on holiday, she needs to finish a project asap. As her Spanish level is A2 and the terminology of the infographic in your shop is too technical, she wants you to advise her on whether to buy a laptop that runs on the MAC operating system or the Windows operating system. Your aim is to convince her to become a MAC user rather than a PC user. Therefore, you need to interpret, summarise, paraphrase and comment on **the most remarkable information** below. Remember that it is July, the electronics store is packed and you have about 2 minutes to deal with each customer.

APPENDIX C: Mediation checklist

CHECKLIST[13] – MEDIATION TASK – C1					
Pay attention to your classmate's speech and circle the number you think he/she deserves in this task **(1 = Totally disagree 5 = Totally agree)**					
SELECTION OF INFORMATION (10%)					
The information selected is appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
LINGUISTIC MEDIATION STRATEGIES (10%)					
The student has summarised, synthesised, annotated and paraphrased the information	1	2	3	4	5
ADEQUACY (10%)					
The student has used the appropriate register (formal, colloquial, or informal) and timing	1	2	3	4	5
COHERENCE AND COHESION (10%)					
The speech has a logical structure and it is comprehensible	1	2	3	4	5
LEXICAL DIVERSITY (10%)					
The student has a wide range of vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
CORRECTNESS (10%)					
The student's pronunciation and grammatical structures are correct	1	2	3	4	5
DELIVERY (40%)					
The student is confident and well-prepared	1	2	3	4	5
The student uses a clear voice	1	2	3	4	5
The student maintains eye contact	1	2	3	4	5
The student uses appropriate facial expressions and gestures	1	2	3	4	5

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[13] This checklist has been created from the information on *Prova de certificació GVA 2019-2020. Guia del candidat.* Extra items (delivery) have been added.

UNIVERSITAT
JAUME·I

The aim of this interview is to know teachers' perspectives regarding multimodality. Your answers are confidential; they are going to be used only for academic purposes. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this master's dissertation.

1. Teacher's name:
2. The teacher is: ☐ male ☐ female ☐ other
3. Which is your mother tongue?
4. Do you speak other languages? If your answer is yes, could you indicate which ones?
5. What degree did you study?
6. Did you do a master's degree or any other course on teaching? If your answer is yes, what was it?
7. How long have you been teaching?
8. Which is the English proficiency level of the students in your class?
9. Do you feel comfortable with the environment of your class? Why?
10. Do you think your students feel comfortable in your class? Why?
11. Of the teaching resources you use in your class, which are the **<u>most</u>** helpful for your students? Why?
12. Of the teaching resources you use in your class, which are the **<u>least</u>** helpful for your students? Why?
13. What English skill do you think is more/less important for your students? Why?
14. What English skill do you think your students find more difficult/easier? Why?
15. Do you believe your students feel comfortable when doing oral presentations? Why?
16. What is more/less important when doing oral presentations: verbal communication or non-verbal communication? Why?
17. Have you ever taught your students about non-verbal communication? Why?
18. Do you include non-verbal communication in your assessment checklist when students do an oral presentation? Why?

19. Do you think non-verbal communication is useful for your students? Why?

20. Do you know what is multimodality? If your answer is yes, could you define it?

21. Do you think that the proposal you have seen and analysed in Google Classroom focuses on multimodality? Why?

22. How do you believe the proposal would influence your students if it was implemented virtually?

    22.1 Would it have a different impact if it was implemented in a face-to-face classroom? Specify it, please.

23. In the virtual space created you were able to have a look at the checklist that would be used by the teacher and the students to evaluate a student's mediation task. What do you think about that checklist?
    23.1 Would you remove any items? Why?
    23.2 Would you add extra items? Why?

24. Is there anything you would like to comment/add/suggest regarding this proposal or this project?

Thank you