PROSPECTS OF MULTIMODALITY FOR SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION REVIEW, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF PUBLISHED LITERATURE

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Abstract:
The article reviews the prospects of multimodality for second language acquisition. Explanation of the term "multimodality", and a brief description of three theoretical approaches to multimodality are followed by the detailed discussion of social semiotics and systemic grammar as aspects of social semiotic multimodality (SSM) and multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) in second language learning with the analysis of few examples from published sources. The conclusion draws on implications for second language learning and teaching.

Key words: multimodality, social semiotics, meaning making, images, second language (SL), multimodal discourse analysis, systemic functional grammar

In their communication, people interact with each other for meaning making considering different modes of communication. In spoken interaction, these include gaze, gesture, posture, intonation during conversation, et cetera. In written communication, text performs as the primary source of interaction, though in text we can highlight the following modes as structure of the sentence, style of the written language, choice of words that make the message coherent and cohesive. All these modes culturally and socially bound to convey meaning appropriate in a relevant discourse (Martens, Martens, Doyle, Loomis & Aghalarov, 2012). Contemporary world calls on mastering skills in order to be able to interact with the multicultural community recognising multimodal tools and applying them appropriately in our interaction. In educational environment, teachers apply multimodal tools to enhance learners' knowledge of studying subject. For instance, drawings help learners to develop their reading and writing (North & Shelton, 2014; Pantaleo, 2015), graphs serve to support young mathematicians to solve problems (Ferrara, 2014), and diagrams with the description of photosynthesis enhance knowledge of future biologists (Jaipal, 2010). Second language (SL) teaching and learning does not stand aside of this line. With the rapid expansion of modern technology, current SL teaching has become complex with different modes which are supposed to serve learners in developing their SL, and further, communicative competence. For learners, it sets the task for mastering communicative skills with engagement of multimodal instruments for the purpose of successful communication. For teachers, there is a demand in utilisation of multimodal instruments into their teaching with the purpose of raising awareness of learners in how they can benefit from using multimodal tools in their SL development and competence. Prior to providing few

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examples of applicability of multimodal tools in SL environment, it is worth to define different theoretical approaches to multimodality.

Jewitt (2014, p. 33) defines three theoretical approaches to multimodality. Social semiotic multimodality (SSM) focuses on 'what choices people make' in order to communicate and construct meaning. Though, in Jewitt's SSM the emphasis is on context as he believes the context determines what resources are available for meaning making. Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), as given by O'Halloran (2011), is based on Halliday's systemic functional grammar (Halliday, 2007) that viewed functionality of language within given discourse. Though, unlike SSM presented by Jewitt, MDA studies language in relation to other semiotic resources (here: images, gaze, gesture, postures), and how these interact with each other to contribute to meaning making (O'Halloran, 2011). Multimodal interactional analysis (MIA) is defined by Norris (2004, cited in Jewitt, 2014, p 37): 'multimodal interactional analysis set out to understand and describe what is going on in a given interaction'. So, in MIA the focus is on how people employ semiotic resources to convey meaning in their interaction. Having shortly described three theoretical approaches to multimodality, it is necessary to note all three consider context, language, interaction and semiosis, though each focuses specifically on one aspect. In our discussion we will focus on social semiotics and systemic functional grammar as aspects of SSM and MDA with further discussion of implications for SL learning and teaching.

Significant influence on multimodality was constituted by Halliday's representation of systemic functional grammar (SFG) (Halliday, 2007). Halliday describes three types of social meanings, or functions that are drawn on simultaneously in the use of language. These are ideational (what text is about), interpersonal (relation between participants), and textual (how the message is organised). As O'Halloran (2011) points Halliday's combination of three meanings presented in the text is used for readers for a complete construction of meaning. In Halliday's SFG linguistic text (written, or spoken) plays an important role. Semiotic resources of text (word, clause, sentence) represent society, context and culture. The text, though analysed from grammatical point of view, implies what meaning this choice of grammatical notions brings to the text. Moreover, it implies what is the function of the text presented through these grammatical attributes. Analysis of these choices, as given by Halliday, is suggested to reveal how message is conveyed through the text and how participants interact through these choices in a particular context. A vivid example of different newspaper headlines describing one and the same incident expresses how each newspaper positions itself from the political, social point of view. Their choice of words and expressions to put into the description of the political events provides us with how the newspapers present themselves, how they understand the incident, and how they prefer to convey their point of view to a wide audience. In 'Rhodesia Herald' 'A political clash has led to death and injury', and in 'Tanzanian Daily News' 'Rhodesia's white suprematist police…opened fire and killed thirteen unarmed African' phrases are used to describe the political event (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 2). The choice of words (death, injury, white, killed, unarmed African) defines how these newspapers represent their political views. Analysing these two phrases from grammatical point of view, it might be suggested that the choice of nouns (death, injury) implies 'Rhodesia Herald's position as a proponent of the then governmental policy, whereas, 'Tanzanian Daily News' presented events with the

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use of the verb (kill) that implies the use of active subject (police) and the direct object (unarmed African), that describes their attitude as opposite to 'Rhodesia Herald's view.

Social semiotics has emerged from sociolinguistics which viewed language in the context of society. Sociolinguistics considered language to carry function in the specific society and how specific group of people worked with language to construct meaning. Social semiotics has been considered as study of signs in the given context. According to Morris (1938, cited in Schiffrin, 1994), semiosis considers three methods to study signs. Syntax studies the relation of signs to each other; semantics considers signs and their meaning, whereas, pragmatics studies signs and the users of signs, i.e. the receivers and senders of those signs and the social context in which the interaction takes place (Schiffrin, 1994). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) have developed this conception of signs to explain how images can be interpreted and analysed within the context. Here, their definition of reading images interrelates with the Halliday's SFG notions of ideational, interpersonal and intertextual meanings of the linguistic text. However, Kress argued that Halliday's focus on text considers only function of grammar in written text, even within the 'spoken text', hence other semiotic resources are left aside, which he considered as 'partial'. 'Partial' they are as SFG does not account the whole complex of the process taking place around the text. It concentrates on meaning, choice of words, functionality of words within text, and their analysis reveals the participants, their interrelations, their identities; whereas in social semiotics the analysis considers the whole spectrum of semiotic resources (visual, gestural, spatial). These all create rich context that supports participants in their meaning making and further in understanding the message conveyed (Kress, 2009). Despite this argument, in support of SFG, Ryan (2011) considers social semiotic approach in SL teaching to improve learners' reflective writing skills at higher educational level. Her assertion is based on the idea that explicit teaching of linguistic structures of reflection samples may scaffold students' learning process on writing, and further, raise their awareness on academic reflection. Consequently, we cannot completely agree with Kress' attribute (partial) in description of Halliday's SFG. At the same time, we cannot stand against comprehension of images applying Kress and Van Leeuwen's conception (2006), as they introduce new ways of understanding semiotic resources.

Early on, it was mentioned that modern technologies broadly integrated into education force learners and teachers to reconsider their view on teaching, particularly on SL learning and teaching. Current belief is that it is not enough to rely only on the linguistic patterns of the text that were long supposed to contribute to meaning making. Rather, Kress and Van Leeuwen's theory (2006) of other modes contributing to meaning making is being considered more and more in teaching (Moya Guijarro, 2011; Weninger & Kiss, 2013; Michelson & Alvares Valencia, 2016). Apparently, questions arise on how teachers and learners can benefit from modes in SL classroom, considering that SL learning environment has already become multimodal due to integration of computers, printed materials with pictures, as emphasised by Early, Kendrick and Potts (2015); taking into account that in their real-life learners face multimodal environment (Martens et al., 2012). Before going further into discussion of implications multimodality poses in SL teaching and learning environment, it is necessary to analyse few examples from published sources and find out whether

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SL teaching and learning should be reconsidered from the perspectives of multimodality.

Martens et al. (2012) study children's ability to read through the images. They highlight that despite the fact that schools still prefer language and linguistics to play the central role in comprehensive development, picture books in reading classrooms serve to enhance reading and drawing skills. After, children are able to create their own artworks through which they interact with their peers due to their mastered ability to read images. So, ability to construct meaning through images, and ability to understand those meaning provides children with skills necessary for understanding the whole complexity of multimodal world. This study is supported by relatively recent study by Ranker (2014), who analyses the complexity of interaction in five-year-old children from the social semiotic prospective and multimodal analysis. Her study investigates how semiotic visual and gestural resources contribute to developing interaction between children, and further to construction of cohesive facts about animals in their writing task. Consequently, it could be said that children possess that ability to apply multimodal tools for meaning making. However in their study, Dely and Unsworth (2011) find out that image-text relations should be thoroughly and explicitly taught as students should be able to comprehend image-text relation that serve for meaning making. Dely and Unsworth (2011) claim that inefficient ability to understand image-text relations through 'concurrence' and 'complementarity' resulted in lower marks received by 8–10-year-old students in their assessment paper. 'Concurrence' and 'complementarity', according to Unsworth and Chan (2008, cited in Dely & Unsworth, 2011), are the types of relation between image and text, where 'concurrence' presents relation of one mode to elaborate on the meaning of the text or image without introduction of a new element; and 'complementarity' presents relation of one mode to elaborate on the meaning of image or text introducing additional, or new element. Explicit explanation of verbal elements with the relation to visual ones would help students to comprehend the complexity of images. And teachers, as Dely and Unsworth (2011) state, should not make their own assumption on the easiness of the images, but in opposite, draw students' attention on to the interrelation of image and text in creating new meanings.

Having briefly discussed few examples on application of multimodal tools in SL classroom, several implications for SL teaching can be developed. Multimodal tools, though complex in theory, increase learners' enhancement of SL. From one side, learners already possess unconscious knowledge of multimodal tools that supports their SL development, and skills required to read diverse semiotic resources in their communication. In SL environment, learners deploy this knowledge to interact with peers, teachers to construct meaning; to read images and analyse relations between images and text. However, in order to recognise the whole complexity of multimodality, learners should have explicit knowledge on the interrelation of multimodal resources for meaning making. In turn, this calls on teachers' reconsideration of their teaching methods with the engagement of multimodality as a part of their teaching process. Therefore, teachers should provide learners with explanation and interpretation of image-text relations to ease learners' understanding of images and written text (Dely & Unsworth, 2011); carefully scaffold learners to improve their writing skills (Ryan, 2011). Although, this seems questionable, as Ajayi (2012), Pantaleo (2015) state

teachers themselves should have appropriate training to understand the whole complexity of multimodal resources and its contribution to meaning making; or rather they would themselves benefit from the in-depth comprehension of interrelation of linguistic texts and images before guiding their students to multimodality in their SL teaching.

Since multimodality has abruptly expanded within SL teaching, further research is needed to investigate how multimodality can better contribute to SL teaching engaging learners into learning process and developing their language skills. This will help teachers to gain insight knowledge of multimodality from one hand. From the other hand, this will support teachers to develop their learners' understanding of multimodal resources in learning SL. Further, the ability to comprehend multimodality will support learners to expand their understanding of multicultural real world that may increase their chances for appropriate multimodal communication.

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