

# Chapter 11

## Creating Multimodal Texts for Language Learning Purposes

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The idea of creating short educational video clips oriented on the language, culture, or communication is well grounded in language learning pedagogy. They support comprehension and language skills of the students, intercultural competence, and digital skill. They change repetitive tasks such as rehearsal or rote learning into attractive and motivating activities well embedded in situated learning procedures making learning more personal. The study aims at analysis of the content of over 280 video clips made by pre-service language teachers between 2008-2014. The clips are intended for a variety of educational purposes (e.g., introducing new language, illustrating usage, enhancing practice, documenting performance, and assessment). Students used subtitles, intertitles, and narrative revoicing a story. They produced various genres. The results show that student teachers are able to produce multimodal texts to enhance various stages of learning and teaching processes (presentation, practice, and assessment) while developing six out of eight lifelong learning competences.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of the analysis is to present the content of home-made multimodal texts for language learning and teaching purposes. The idea of making learners' own videos appeared nearly 40 year ago. It has been discussed (Willis, 1983; Lonergan, 1984; Coombe & Kinney, 1999) but it has not been exploited widely in practice because of technical reasons. Developments in technology have made it possible for learners to record their own video materials for language learning purposes. The analysis presents theoretical grounds for the use of video in language learning and teaching, its practical implementation with student language teachers as an innovative activity in the area of methodology. Making a video requires a high level of intellectual agility that enables students to fulfil the task requirements. It activates and engages learners in various aspects of their social and professional roles in the society. The chapter ends with recommendations for teachers.

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## **BACKGROUND**

The idea of using various senses for learning and teaching appeared in Comenius' *Didactica Magna* in 1657. Since then it has been discussed and applied in many pedagogical approaches. Recently two terms have emerged that is multimodal and multisensory teaching and learning. Both approaches refer to using more than one sense to enhance learning. In teaching languages usually the senses of sight and hearing (vision and auditory) are mainly used. However, other senses such as touch (tactile), smell (olfactory), taste (gustation), and movement (kinetic) can be also used. In this chapter multimodality related to two senses will be exploited that is sight and hearing as means of language acquisition with the use of home-made video materials.

On the one hand, the modern concept of multimodality helps to explain the role of texts, images, and spatial resources for the composition of messages (Murray, 2013). Multimodal messages convey meaning which is accessible to various recipients as mass media contribute to unification of the content and its grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Understanding the semiotic structure of the picture is essential for its use as language learning material. This is a shared area of multimodal linguistics research (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996; Bateman, 2008) and educational research (Kalantzis & Cope, 2002; Bateman, 2008). What is more, multimodal resources represent the social and cultural values of societies (Kress, 2010). Bezemer and Kress (2008) claim that students understand texts in a different way if they are presented not only in alphanumeric format but also accompanied by sound and image. This explains the role of videos as multimodal texts in teaching languages.

Creating a multimodal text refers to situated learning theory, which emphasizes “the relationship between learning and the social situation in which it occurs” (Hanks, 1991: 14). Leve & Wenger (1991) perceive situated learning as a way to encourage social participation in co-creation of knowledge in a community of practice. Teaching and learning are not ways for the transmission of decontextualized knowledge from the teacher to the learners. They are processes taking place in a particular social and physical environment. Situated learning takes place when “(1) learning is grounded in the actions of everyday situations; (2) knowledge is acquired situationally and transfers only to similar situations; (3) learning is the result of a social process encompassing ways of thinking, perceiving, problem solving, and interacting in addition to declarative and procedural knowledge; and (4) learning is not separated from the world of action but exists in robust, complex, social environments made up of actors, actions, and situations” (Efe et al., 2011: 557; see also Anderson et al., 1996; Wilson, 1993; Gajek in press). This theory helps to explain the processes that take place in the production of video clips for language teaching and learning.

Creating a multimodal text is embedded in learner's social and physical environment as students film themselves, their friends, they also select available locations. By assigning creative activities related to real-world contexts, teachers provide meaningful experiences that enhance learning and enrich instruction (Willis & Cifuentes, 2005).

Creating one's own materials for language learning and teaching also refers to Keller's ARCS (Attention Relevance Confidence Satisfaction) model of motivation (Keller, 1987; 2009). It enhances students Attention components such as Perceptual Arousal, Inquiry Arousal, and Variability. If the task is well framed and achievable, the students can adjust the level of their production to their linguistic proficiency level. Thus, their Confidence level raises in the following components: Performance Requirements, Success Opportunities, Personal Control (Lankiewicz, 2008: 116-117).

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