


Chapter 10

Exploring Teachers’ Perceptions of a Training Workshop on Multimodal Pedagogy: Implications for a Socio– Critical Agenda

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ABSTRACT

The present study offers a unique glimpse into the perceptions of multimodality held by two EFL and two L1 teachers in a primary school in Spain, before and after participating in a film-based workshop on the topic of female empowerment. Data was collected via semi-structured interviews held with the participants to explore their prior knowledge and experience of multimodal pedagogy and their willingness to incorporate it into their classroom practice. The results suggest that although teachers employed multiple ICT resources in their teaching, they did so without an in-depth awareness of the affordances of multimodality for enhancing students' language learning. Two teacher profiles were identified revealing either complacent or conscientious attitudes towards the future use of multimodal pedagogy. In both cases, the socio-critical component of the workshop was overlooked, suggesting the need for more sustained training in raising teachers' awareness of the full potential

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of pursuing a multimodal and socio-critical agenda.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary literacy can no longer be understood as a monomodal practice traditionally limited to linguistic expression. Instead, literacy is conceived as inherently multimodal, combining multiple semiotic modes—written, oral, aural, and gestural, among others (Hafner, 2018). In educational contexts, interest in multimodality has grown significantly in recent years, creating an urgent need for teacher education to respond to the demands of an ever-evolving digital society. This involves designing effective pedagogical programs that incorporate multimodal practices, thereby ensuring that students can participate meaningfully in a technological society. Although the importance of teaching literacy from a multimodal perspective has been emphasized since the seminal work of the New London Group (1996), research focusing on the need to support educators in implementing multimodal literacy in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts remains limited (Li 2020; Liang & Lim, 2020). One approach to addressing this gap is by examining teachers' perceptions of multimodality and the impact of professional training on those perceptions. This is relevant, as understanding teachers' views helps to identify the barriers and challenges that hinder the integration of multimodality into classroom practice. Despite the importance of this issue, there is still limited knowledge about how instructional practices might influence teachers' attitudes and willingness to adopt multimodal approaches. The present study explores the perceptions of four Spanish primary school language teachers regarding multimodality before and after participating in a training workshop. The study also offers pedagogical insights on the potential of multimodality in promoting a socio-critical agenda.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Multimodality and its Learning Potential

With the purpose of providing students with suitable tools to conceptualize and communicate complex meanings in the digital and globalized environment of the 21st century, literacy has shifted its focus towards multimodality. The term multimodal refers to the use of different semiotic resources to express and communicate ideas (Kress 2010; Choi & Yi, 2016). In contrast to traditional literacy, which relies heavily on the use of linguistic modes (written and/or spoken), multimodal literacy views meaning formation as characterized by the integration of linguistic and

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