Pragmatics of the dynamic use of the multimodal mode in foreign language learning for regional bilinguals in Bukovina

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The issue of studying language and understanding the phenomenon of multimodality is still a topic of discussion. This paper looks into the challenges faced by local bilingual students (Romanian-Ukrainian) while learning English. The goal is to explore the motivations behind using a multimodal approach in English classes at Bukovinian State Medical University (BSMU). What's new in this study is the application of multimodal pragmatics to support beginners in learning English within a medical school setting. The findings suggest that the dynamic use of a multimodal approach was significantly more effective than traditional academic methods. Bilingual students who engaged with this approach demonstrated better outcomes compared to those who followed the conventional academic path.

KEY WORDS: multimodality, academic approach, cohesion, coherence, semiotic resource.

Kwestia nauki języka i rozumienia zjawiska multimodalności pozostaje przedmiotem dyskusji. Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest wyzwaniom stojącym przed lokalnymi studentami dwujęzycznymi (rumuńsko--ukraińskimi) podczas nauki języka angielskiego. Celem jest zbadanie motywacji stojących za stosowaniem podejścia multimodalnego na zajęciach języka angielskiego na Bukowińskim Państwowym Uniwersytecie Medycznym (BSMU). Nowością w tym badaniu jest zastosowanie pragmatyki multimodalnej do wspierania początkujących w nauce języka angielskiego w środowisku szkoły medycznej. Wyniki sugerują, że dynamiczne wykorzystanie podejścia multimodalnego było znacznie bardziej skuteczne niż tradycyjne metody akademickie. Dwujęzyczni studenci, którzy zaangażowali się w to podejście, wykazali lepsze wyniki w porównaniu z tymi, którzy podążali konwencjonalną ścieżką akademicką.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: multimodalność, podejście akademickie, spójność, koherencja, zasoby semiotyczne.

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Introduction

Multimodality comes from mode / model and is a system of symbols that can be compared or contrasted. Multimodality is a special way of expressing information in a certain environment. Multimodal mode can be broken down into two or more separate modalities that simultaneously express values (Kitalong & Miner, 2017). Every day we read newspapers, magazines, watch television, collections of short stories, encyclopedias, etc., we are inseparable from multimodality; the gestures and expressions we use when we speak also reflect the use of multimodality.

A multimodal discourse analysis emerged in the West in the 1990s. The idea of multimodal learning was first introduced by the New London Group. They advocated for using various teaching methods to engage students' different emotions, helping them collaborate and actively participate in language learning. Compared to foreign countries, regional studies of multimodal discourse are still in their early stages. Jancsary et al. (2016) suggested that in addition to text, multimodality also contains compositional discourses with images, diagrams, etc., or any text whose meaning is realized by character encoding. Arnott & Yelland (2020) note that multimodal discourse refers to the phenomenon of using different senses, such as hearing, sight, touch, etc., to communicate through language, images, sound, action and other means and symbolic resources. Liu (2013) accepts as true that multimodality refers to the channel of communication and means, including language, technology, images, color, music and other symbolic systems.

In the context of the described problem, multimodal pragmatics seems to be relevant. Pragmatics as a branch of linguistics is still a relatively young subject but it can help improve the ability to use language correctly in specific situations and achieve the goal of communication.

Pragmatic competence is defined in two dimensions: pragmatic linguistics, which is that speakers can use different linguistic resources to build discourses in a particular language; and sociopragmatics, which are social conditions that limit and regulate the use of language. In the context of mastering a second language (L2), for the purposes of this article, pragmatics is considered to be interlingual pragmatics, which focuses on the study of the use and mastery of forms of discourse of the target language by non-native speakers and local bilinguals. Communication in general, and pragmatics in particular, involves the interaction of various semiotic models that shape human interactions. From the point of view of multimodal pragmatics, given that pragmatics deals with the construction and deconstruction of meaning through the interaction between speakers and listeners, it can be argued that the approach of MP (multimodal pragmatics) can be obtained empirically by exploring all conversational aspects of multimodal interaction. Multimodality derives from the concepts of mode and model, representing a system of symbols that can be analyzed in relation to one another. It serves as a distinct method for conveying information within a specific context.

Social semiotics in the plurality of Holliday's theory of systematic functional linguistics can be added to the theoretical foundations of teaching English in a multimodal context. Social semiotics, like pragmatics, is used in social communication and can indicate the intentions of the speaker. The theory of systemic functional linguistics considers language in the perspective of social semiotics, emphasizes the potential of meaning (semiotic resource) and other symbolic forms in addition to language that can express meaning. In teaching English, teachers can use a variety of semiotic resources for learning. Dzekoe (2017) proposed the concept of multimodal learning and this allowed teachers to make full use of several modalities in a multimodal context to allow students to receive and impart useful information. This

theory of teaching supports the use of pictures, the Internet, role-playing games and other teaching methods to mobilize students to actively participate in language learning and the development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Multimodal learning also favors the use of a variety of teaching methods, such as communicative methods, interactive listening and speaking methods, dialogic speech, and more. The characteristics of the multimodal pragmatic method of teaching meet the requirements of the classroom teaching of English at Bukovinian State Medical University. There are many benefits to using multimodal learning. For example, it emphasizes that students can use several senses when learning English, which can help students memorize words well. The use of multimodal learning in the classroom can focus students' attention and facilitate the learning of English. Teaching English and giving students the opportunity to use English for effective communication in oral and written form in the professional and social spheres is targeted at the regional level as well at the Department of Foreign Languages of Bukovinian State Medical University.

The objective of this article is to show the benefits of using multimodal pragmatics in adapting the work of beginners in learning English in medical school.

Tasks:
- evaluate pragmatics from a multimodal point of view;
- show its interactions, which involve a combination of different categories of modalities and modi in the process of learning English at BSMU;
- demonstrate how multimodal pragmatics can be applied to the analysis of pedagogical interaction in the work with local bilingual students.

1. Research methods

This study investigates the pragmatics of utilizing a dynamic multimodal approach in foreign language education, specifically targeting local bilingual students at Bukovinian State Medical University (BSMU). A method that dynamically incorporates multimodal learning strategies into the English language curriculum was proposed. This method is intended to be more effective and engaging compared to traditional academic approaches.

1.1. Participants and Methodology
The experiment involved 26 first-year medical students enrolled in the Department of Foreign Languages at BSMU, from September to December 2021. The students' ages ranged from 17 to 18 years. Out of the 26 participants, 13 had only recently started learning English, having previously studied either French or German. Among these 13 new English learners, three were absolute beginners, while the rest had some prior exposure to English in school. Therefore, it is estimated that 16 students were at the beginning level of English language proficiency.

From the total group, six students who could effectively complete the tasks were chosen to participate in the testing process. It is also important to note that three additional students, who were not selected for the main groups, participated in the tests. Their results were included in the analysis, despite being less comprehensive.

1.2. Group Division
The participants were divided into two groups based on the teaching approach used:
Group 1: 10 students who were taught using traditional academic methods.

Group 2: 16 students who were instructed through the dynamic multimodal approach.

1.3. Testing Procedures

A series of tests was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of each teaching method. Both groups undertook two successive tests that utilized traditional methods of memorizing grammatical and lexical content, allowing for a comparison of the two approaches and potential integration of both methods.

On the testing days, students were provided with lexical materials along with their phonetic transcriptions. Each participant was asked to write down the words they heard, ensuring that the vocabulary was familiar to them to avoid skewed results.

In the analysis phase for Group 2, students read texts in the target language (L2), detailed their analysis of each component (words, structures, etc.), and subsequently translated the content into their native languages (L1). This method emphasizes that learners need access to multimodal resources that extend beyond mere vocabulary lists, incorporating audio-visual elements to enhance comprehension.

The advent of the internet has profoundly changed language learning dynamics, providing resources that many learners have yet to fully utilize. A wealth of educational materials is now available online, allowing for easy access to textbooks and supplementary resources. Such materials facilitate learning, enabling students to understand word meanings through interactive tools and translations, significantly reducing the time-consuming process of traditional dictionary usage.

1.4. Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study is the small participant size, which affects the ability to generalize the results. The limited number of students majoring in medicine during the global pandemic contributed to this small sample. Future research with a larger cohort would be beneficial in obtaining more comprehensive and relevant data on the efficacy of the dynamic multimodal approach in language education.

In summary, our investigation highlights the advantages of dynamic multimodal methods for language instruction and suggests that these approaches could significantly enhance learners' understanding and usability of a foreign language in an increasingly digital learning environment.

2. Results

During the phase of synthesis, it was essential for participants to engage with a text in their native language (L1) and translate it into the target language (L2). The first group utilized traditional dictionaries and reference manuals for this process. In contrast, the second group, focused on acquiring English, was encouraged to leverage computer-based tools, specifically typing software. For our students, the most effective and user-friendly tool identified was the Read & Write for Google Chrome™ extension.

This extension is regarded as one of the premier resources for language learners, applicable to various languages, not exclusively English. Its key features encompass the capability to translate text bi-directionally, access to built-in dictionaries that provide definitions—including representations through images – contextual suggestions, and support for audio and visual media. Additionally, users can activate an English input panel within the Windows operating

system by navigating to Control Panel > Language and Regional Standards > Languages tab > Add-ons > Add. This technological arrangement enables users to write directly in English within a Word document, a functionality that significantly enhances the learning experience. Utilizing this tool not only facilitates the acquisition of pronunciation through repeated reading and listening exercises but also aids in the recognition and correct spelling of words.

Upon installation of the necessary software, it is imperative to establish a practical schedule that is both cyclical and dynamic. This framework facilitates a multi-faceted approach to engaging with the text, allowing learners to explore it through various methods during each session (Table 1).

Table 1
Stages (steps) of work with the set text

Step 1	Listening and reading (comparison and translation on L1)
Step 2	Analysis (phrase-sentence showing unknown structures and terms)
Step 3	Repetition (listening and reading, only orally)
Step 4	Translation of L1 (thesis proposal, without viewing the available translation)
Step 5	Repetition (listening and reading)
Step 6	Synthesis of L2 (translation, thesis reproduction, final error checking)

Group 2 was encouraged to ignore written instruction, focusing exclusively on phonetics, pronunciation, and speech recognition. The main goal was to first study the sound of the word (as well as its *meaning*), and only then its spelling.

Thus, during the first month, students translated only orally. At this stage, you could auto-check and check old texts using Read & Write for Google Chrome™. When it became necessary to improve the handwritten introduction in English (for testing), the following steps could be added to the above program (Table 2):

Table 2
Learning steps with Read & Write for Google Chrome ™

Step 1	Listening and reading (comparison with L1 translation)
Step 2	Analysis (phrase-sentence showing unknown structures and terms)
Step 3	Repetition (listening and reading, handwriting)
Step 4	Translation L1 (handwritten entry with access to translation)
Step 5	Repetition (listening, reading, writing)
Step 6	Synthesis of L2 (written translations, final error checking)
Step 7	Copying text
Step 8	Writing text

After performing the above steps, testing was performed and a percentage evaluation was performed.

Table 3
Results and evaluation of students by tasks in percentage

Groups	Reading	Translation	Synthesis	Writing new vocabulary – glossary
Group 1 (academic method)	55%	62%	56%	32%
Group 2 (dynamic multimodal method)	79%	92%	67%	68%

As a result of studying the effectiveness of methods (Table 3), we found that the method of the dynamic use of the multimodal mode was much more effective than the academic approach. Students who worked with this method showed better results compared to those who worked with the academic approach. In six months of learning English with multimodality included, novice students performed better on the test than those who studied the language at school.

3. Discussion

The interaction and use of various semiotic resources in learning is an integral part of linguistic sciences. In this perspective (Hill & Dorsey, 2020), multimodal pragmatics is seen as an opportunity to observe how participants use different semiotic resources to build and form interactions. The authors are convinced that modern communication is increasingly viewed in a multimodal perspective, and multimodal texts are becoming more relevant and attract the attention of linguists. Despite the fact that in the study of text multimodality (especially visual components), some scholars (Cope, Kalantzis, & Smith, 2018) differentiate language and images as separate communication systems, their interpretation often depends on linguistic structures. The work of Jiang (2018) focuses on the integration of linguistic elements within the structure of the text, which includes visual elements. We agree with the fact that when it comes to a written or printed word, attention is first paid to the font design, content, rather than to language structures or the poetics of the meaning. Font typeface, color, graphic symbol and graph derivation elements are non-verbal means of transmitting information in multimodal text.

Recent research (Valdeón, 2018) on the pragmatic potential of multimodality in the study of foreign languages is relevant to this task. Here, the study of multimodal pragmatics extends to the field of study of interpersonal pragmatics, which concerns the relational aspects of language use.

The European School (Beltrán-Planques & Querol-Julián, 2018) urges that in foreign language teaching, teachers choose a multimodal form of learning to provide students with relevant information so that students can better understand and master the content being taught. Teachers can use short videos of English even at the beginning of learning English. Teachers use multimedia teaching methods in English classrooms, play slides or short videos relating to the text, and explain text, phrases, sentences or words with the help of video clips (Dzekoe, 2017). We agree with the authors, as using the benefits of students' figurative thinking allows them to fully understand and remember the content taught by teachers, such as words, expressions, sentence structure, and so on. Lohani (2019) describes music as a form

of artistic self-expression that is enjoyed by all and can not only enhance the atmosphere in the classroom, but also achieve good learning outcomes. The author is convinced that the variety of song content is inexhaustible and teachers can apply Using English songs as a teaching tool, which can be very effective when combined with different teaching methods. For example, teachers can ask questions before listening to a song, encourage students to express their ideas through performance, and provide opportunities for speaking practice. This approach helps create a relaxed atmosphere, making it easier for students to engage with and enjoy their English learning experience. Metros (2008) discusses the application of multimodal discourse analysis in teaching. The author is convinced that in the information age, teachers' use of multimodal teaching methods in foreign language classes is crucial for effectively teaching English, and multimodal discourse learning plays a very positive role in promoting English language teaching. In this perspective, the work of Smith, Pacheco & Khorosheva (2021) is relevant to this study. The authors urge that teachers make full use of audio, text, images, video, online resources and other multimodal forms to provide students with a relatively real environment for learning English, allowing students to easily learn a foreign language. However, when choosing a multimodal teaching method, teachers must also take into account the actual level of students' language proficiency, as well as choose a learning mode that suits students to make foreign language teaching more effective.

Of note is the work of Arnott & Yelland (2020) on the ability to analyze and think in a multimodal context. The development of this ability requires teachers to transfer knowledge of a foreign language in class and to enable the autonomous learning of students after school. Cope, Kalantzis & Smith (2018) state that one of the important criteria for assessing the effectiveness of training is evaluation. The assessment process encompasses the assessment of students conducted by teachers, feedback from students regarding their teachers, and evaluations of the teaching units delivered by educators. In addition to assessing student attendance, homework, and tests, teacher assessment should also be conducted using multimodal English teaching videos and classroom English feedback to analyze whether the multimodal method of teaching English is reasonable and acceptable. Teachers can find problems, solve problems and improve the quality of English language teaching. Students' assessment of teachers occurs when students evaluate teaching through an online teaching evaluation system and give feedback to teachers. For example, in the school where the author teaches, students use a learning management system to evaluate teachers' learning twice a year. We agree that this method has certain advantages. This helps teachers to improve their teaching methods. At the same time, the teaching evaluation unit should also evaluate the "learning" of teachers and the "learning" of students. Therefore, we believe that in the mode of multimodal learning, it is necessary to formulate evaluation criteria suitable for multimodal learning.

4. Conclusions

Multimodal learning is based on systemic functional linguistics, which considers language, sound, images, video, etc. as a form of transmission of meaning, and has a systemic diversity. Simplifying English allows students to better comprehend, communicate, read and write in English, as well as to engage more effectively with other elements of this teaching approach. While teaching English at BSMU, the development of students' skills in multimodal literacy can not only direct them to use multimedia and other technical means in this information age to

understand the meaning of English discourse, but also increase their intercultural awareness and help them understand English. However, teachers should also pay attention to the proper use of multimodal teaching methods to avoid some negative consequences in learning, such as the potential for cognitive overload, where students may become overwhelmed by too much information presented through various modes simultaneously. This can hinder their ability to process and retain knowledge effectively. Additionally, if multimodal methods are not well-integrated, students might struggle to connect concepts and ideas across different formats, leading to fragmented understanding. As the analysis of multimodal discourse influences the teaching of English in medical schools, further research is needed to make its application in English teaching more specific and in-depth. The information age brought in a multimodal method of learning, which contributed to the development of multimodal discourse analysis. Research on the application of the multimodal context in teaching English in the information age and cultivating students' abilities for multimodal reading is not only very positive for teaching English, but also extremely important for the development of English teaching.

The issue of studying language and the inherent understanding of multimodal phenomena, along with cohesion and coherence, remains evident. Multimodality pragmatic competence is realized as people's communication through the speech, gestures, expressions and other visual forms or perception and information through various semiotic resources.

In the process of learning a foreign language at Bukovinian State Medical University, students must not only master the general knowledge of the language, but also use it effectively in the professional sphere. Therefore, foreign language teachers should use a variety of teaching aids to improve the teaching effect and objectives of foreign language learning. The pragmatics of the multimodal contextual learning of English has become one of the distinguishing features of modern teaching, allowing teachers and students to use different education styles and ways of learning. This paper examines the problems present in the study of English for local bilingual students (Romanian-Ukrainian languages), who previously learned French or German in schools. The aim is to consider the motivation for the use of the multimodal mode in English classes at the Bukovinian State Medical University, and to show its effectiveness. The novelty of the work is the use of multimodal pragmatics in adjusting the work of beginners in learning English in medical school. Pragmatics is considered from a multimodal point of view, as such interaction involves a combination of different categories of modalities and modus. It illustrates how multimodal pragmatics can be applied to the analysis of pedagogical interaction. As a result of studying the effectiveness of this method, we found that the method of dynamic use of multimodal mode was much more effective than the academic approach. Local bilingual students who worked with this method showed better results compared to those who worked with an academic approach. In six months of learning English with the inclusion of multimodality, novice students performed better on the test than those who studied the language at school. We conclude that the use of a multimodal context for a new model of English language teaching in medical school is of great importance.

The results of the study showed that the dynamic multimodal use of various modi in learning English for bilingual local students at BSMU in combination with the use of technical support is productive and optimal for students. Cognition of the language environment through multimodality has shown positive dynamics. An important factor at the stage of learning English is the typology with the native language. This proved to be crucial for language

acquisition and memorization. At the same time, it is necessary to introduce the student to the national-traditional environment in the process of learning English.

The practical and scientific value of the research lies in the evidential potential of building English language learning and, in particular, the easy memorization of vocabulary, combining traditional methods with the integration of new ones involving the use of the multimodal mode and computer technology.

Possible areas of applying the research results include English for regional bilingual universities, in the fields of pedagogy, linguistics, English culture and civilization.

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