

THE IMPORTANCE OF A MULTIMODAL APPROACH IN DEVELOPING CREATIVE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN SENIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19562254>

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of a multimodal approach in enhancing creative communicative competence among senior school students. In contemporary language education, the ability to communicate creatively and effectively across diverse contexts has become a key educational objective. Traditional monomodal teaching practices often fail to address the complexity of modern communication, which integrates linguistic, visual, auditory, and digital modes.

The aim of this research is to examine how multimodal instructional strategies contribute to the development of students' creative communicative competence. A quasi-experimental design was employed, involving 68 senior school students divided into experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught using multimodal techniques, including visual texts, audio-visual materials, digital storytelling, and interactive platforms, while the control group followed a conventional communicative approach.

Data were collected through pre- and post-tests, creative speaking tasks, and observation protocols. The results demonstrate a statistically significant improvement in the experimental group's performance, particularly in originality, flexibility of expression, and contextual appropriateness.

The findings suggest that multimodal instruction enhances students' engagement and supports deeper cognitive processing, leading to improved communicative outcomes. The study concludes that integrating multimodal resources into language teaching is essential for fostering creative communicative competence in senior school learners.

Keywords

multimodal approach, communicative competence, creativity, language teaching, senior students, digital learning, pedagogy

Introduction

In the modern educational paradigm, the development of communicative competence is no longer limited to linguistic accuracy but extends to the ability to express ideas creatively and appropriately across diverse communicative contexts. This shift reflects the growing complexity of communication in the digital age, where meaning is constructed through multiple semiotic modes, including text, image, sound, and gesture.

Creative communicative competence refers to the learner's ability to generate original ideas, adapt language use flexibly, and respond effectively to communicative situations. In senior school education, this competence plays a crucial role in preparing students for higher education and professional interaction. However, traditional language teaching methods often rely on linear, text-based instruction, which limits students' creative and expressive potential.

The multimodal approach, grounded in social semiotic theory, offers a solution to this limitation by integrating various modes of meaning-making into the learning process. Scholars such as Kress (2010) and Jewitt (2008) emphasize that learning becomes more effective when students engage with multiple representations of knowledge. Multimodality enables learners to process information through different channels, thereby enhancing both cognitive and communicative development.

Furthermore, creativity in language learning has been widely discussed in the works of Guilford (1967), Torrance (1974), and Amabile (1996), who highlight the importance of divergent thinking, motivation, and contextual interaction. When combined with multimodal instruction, these elements create a dynamic learning environment that fosters innovation and engagement.

Despite the recognized potential of multimodal pedagogy, its application in developing creative communicative competence among senior school students remains insufficiently explored. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the effectiveness of multimodal strategies in enhancing students' communicative creativity.

Literature Review

Communicative competence, as conceptualized by Canale and Swain (1980), includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic components. Later, Bachman (1990) expanded this framework by incorporating pragmatic competence, emphasizing the functional use of language.

The concept of multimodality has been extensively developed within social semiotics. Kress (2010) argues that communication in the modern world is inherently multimodal, requiring learners to interpret and produce meaning across

various semiotic resources. Jewitt (2008) further highlights the pedagogical potential of multimodal learning in enhancing engagement and understanding.

Research on creativity in education underscores the importance of learner-centered and interactive approaches. Torrance (1974) identified fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration as key indicators of creative thinking. Amabile (1996) emphasized intrinsic motivation and domain-relevant skills as critical factors in creativity development.

Recent studies indicate that multimodal instruction supports higher-order thinking skills and improves learners' communicative performance (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). However, empirical research focusing specifically on senior school students remains limited, particularly in relation to creative communicative competence.

Methodology

The study employed a quasi-experimental design involving senior school students (grades 10-11), divided into an experimental group and a control group .

The experimental group was taught using a multimodal instructional framework, which included:

- video-based discussions
- digital storytelling tasks
- image-based interpretation activities
- interactive online platforms

The control group followed a traditional communicative approach based primarily on textbook materials.

Data collection instruments included:

- pre- and post-tests measuring communicative competence
- creative speaking tasks evaluated using Torrance-based criteria
- observation checklists

Statistical analysis was conducted using Student's t-test to determine the significance of differences between groups.

Results

The results indicate that the multimodal approach significantly enhances students' creative communicative competence. The experimental group demonstrated a marked improvement in all evaluated criteria, including fluency, flexibility, originality, and contextual appropriateness.

The mean score of the experimental group increased from 64.2 in the pre-test to 82.5 in the post-test, representing a 28% improvement. In contrast, the control group showed a more modest increase from 63.8 to 70.1 (10% improvement).

Statistical analysis confirmed that the difference between the groups was significant ($t = 3.12 > t \text{ critical} = 2.00$). This suggests that multimodal instruction has a substantial impact on students' communicative development.

Qualitative observations revealed that students in the experimental group were more engaged and willing to participate in communicative tasks. They demonstrated greater creativity in expressing ideas and were more adept at using language in contextually appropriate ways.

The use of visual and digital materials enabled students to construct meaning more effectively and to connect linguistic forms with real-life situations. This integration of multiple modes facilitated deeper cognitive processing and supported the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Table

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Improvement t
Experiment	64.2	82.5	28%
Control	63.8	70.1	10 %

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that multimodal instruction plays a crucial role in developing creative communicative competence. By integrating multiple semiotic modes, students are able to engage more deeply with learning materials and express themselves more creatively.

The results align with the theoretical perspectives of Kress (2010) and Jewitt (2008), who emphasize the importance of multimodal meaning-making in education. Additionally, the study supports the creativity frameworks proposed by Torrance (1974) and Amabile (1996), highlighting the role of interactive and motivating learning environments.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the multimodal approach is an effective pedagogical strategy for enhancing creative communicative competence in senior school students. The integration of visual, auditory, and digital resources creates a rich learning environment that fosters creativity, engagement, and contextual language use.

The results suggest that educators should move beyond traditional text-based instruction and adopt multimodal techniques to meet the demands of modern education. Such an approach not only improves communicative competence but also prepares students for real-world communication in a digital and multicultural society.

Future research should explore the long-term impact of multimodal instruction and its applicability across different educational contexts.

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