

The Value Students and Instructors Place on Multimodal Composition within Academic Life

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Abstract

This mixed methods research-based study was conducted to investigate the advantages and possible disadvantages of using multimodal compositions (MMCs) in the English as a Second Language (ESL) writing classroom. The conveniently selected participants were thirteen ESL learners and a native speaker of English instructor. Two data collection instruments were employed to gather the primary data for this research study. The first instrument was a student survey to explore the perceptions and beliefs of the students about MMCs. The second measure involved a set of semi-structured interviews with four students and their instructor. The results of the statistical data analysis of the student survey indicated that the majority of the student participants expressed their preference for using MMCs because this writing approach enabled them to more completely and professionally explain their meanings to others. The findings from the analysis of the data gathered from the semi structured interviews demonstrated that the students believed that MMCs made writing easier than writing with words only. However, the perception of the teacher was that some students believe that MMCs add an extra burden to their writing assignments and do not constitute an integral part of an assignment itself. Suggestions and recommendations for the more effective use of MMCs in ESL writing classrooms in the USA context, based on this research study, are provided at the end of this study.

Keywords: Multimodal composition (MMC), English as a Second Language (ESL) context, mixed methods, TESOL

Cite as: Alghamdi, M., & Reed, M. C. 2019). The Value Students and Instructors Place on Multimodal Composition within Academic Life. *Arab World English Journal*, 10 (1) 283-297. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no1.24>

1.0 Background:

In the past two decades twenty years, a confluence of events has generated the need for ESL instructors to follow pedagogically advantageous methods in their teaching, employing a wide variety of materials like textbooks, diagrams, photographs and drawings to facilitate students' understanding and their Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Simpson & Bogan, 2015). This area of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching has been addressed extensively over the past two decades. Ajayi (2012) states that: "English teachers have grappled with how to integrate different learning modalities into classrooms" (p. 16). This was evidently stated in Gardner (2000) book reflecting on the ground breaking theory of multiple intelligence, where he stated that: "students possess different kinds of minds and therefore learn, remember, perform, and understand in different way" (p. 11). Gardner (2008) stresses that learners have different perspectives and therefore, they learn, analyze, remember, perform, and understand through different approaches.

Lotherington and Jenson (2011) argue that learners are currently living in a digital universe which involves them in active, dynamic, and multidimensional communication. Thus, writing styles have changed and shifted from the paper to the screen and many students and teachers will have to adopt that. These changes are not only significant, but also far reaching. These changes are certain to be challenging for a huge number of instructors of English composition since they have to be skillful and more experienced in ways that they qualify them to use technology and provide effective models for learners.

Takayoshi and Selfe (2007) declared that digital environments require multiple modalities, such as moving and still images, sounds, music, color, words, and animations, to convey meaning. Additionally, these modes are distributed essentially, but not exclusively, through digital media such as computers, computer networks, CDs, DVDs. Multimodal compositions theoretically include many dimensions like social interaction, computer interaction, physical coordination, visual design, multiple language, musical accompaniment, and animation (Martínez-Álvarez, Cuevas, & Torres-Guzmán, 2017; Martínez-Álvarez & Ghiso, 2014).

In the ESL context, learners often encounter a number of difficulties while learning the four language skills (Alrabai, 2018; Elyas & Picard, 2018; Kabouha, 2014). Amongst the most difficult tasks for ESL learners is mastering rhetorical writing (Rajab, Khan, & Elyas, 2016; Shukri, 2014). Thus, it is suggested that learning MMC techniques would be a powerful resource tool that may support second language writers to express their ideas and opinions. These types of compositions also help writers to more effortlessly share their culture and beliefs with the wider audiences.

Sullivan (2001) notes that writers have the opportunity with computer technology to have more power over the page than they have ever had before. Zheng and Warschauer (2017) states that: "The emergence of digital technologies has significantly transformed the forms, genres, and purposes of writing both inside and outside the classroom" (p. 61). Consequently, the use of multimodality is a useful approach in composition classes. It shifts the nature of literacies and writings from the perception of learning to a more interactive and engagement environment. Learning how to complete multimodal tasks plays a vital role in keeping up with the revolution in

technology. Thus, investigating the impact of applying MMCs in an ESL writing classrooms may provide practical solutions and recommendations to ESL instructors to improve their instruction of English composition.

2.0 Review of the Literature:

Teaching composition has gone through many progressions and stages. It started from focusing on the final product and imitating forms of correct language and moved to the perception of literacies as multiple and engaged in social context.

2.1 Historical Look at L2 Writing:

2.1.1 The Product Writing Approach

In the product writing approach, as Nunan (1989) states: “writing focuses on the end result of the act of composition, i.e. the letter, essay, story and so on. The writing teacher who subscribes to the product approach will be concerned to see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and so on” (p.36). He notes that in the product approach, students are engaged in meaningful classroom activities that emphasize imitating, copying and transforming models of correct language. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) underscored that in this traditional approach, which is the product approach, learners are required to read novels, short stories, plays, essays, and poetry and then, they are asked to analyze these works in written compositions or themes. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) also reported that the teaching practices emphasized the understanding and interpretation of acknowledged literary texts.

2.1.2 Focus on Form Approach

Focus on form is an essential construct in task-based language teaching and this approach was first presented by Michael Long to refer to a method where learners increase their attention to linguistic forms as they become involved in the composing of texts (Ellis, 2017; Long, 2018). Silva (1990) highlighted that the focus on language structures was born from the marriage of structural linguistic and the behaviorist learning theory of second language teaching that dominated in the 1960s. Furthermore, Valeo and Spada (2016) noted that in the era of the Focus on form, the audiolingual method was the central mode of instruction and writing was looked upon as having a secondary role. The role of the writing was to reemphasize oral patterns of the language and writing took the form of sentences exercises like fill-ins, replacements, transforming tenses and personal pronouns, and completions (Steeves, 1969).

In second language writing research, it indicates that the focus on form should include textual features such as the number of passives or the number of pronouns (Raimes, 1991). Ebsworth (2014) adds that these textual structures should be counted and compared them for users of different languages or cultures. F. Hyland (2003) argued that some L2 writing instructors now see writing as an alternative skill, but it is unhelpful to see writing as not connected to other language skills. She suggested that students need an understanding of how words, sentences, and larger discourse forms can construct and build the meanings that they want to produce.

2.1.3 Focus on the Writer Approach

The third writing approach takes the writer, rather than the form, as the starting point. Many L2 writing teachers from liberal arts backgrounds see their classroom purposes as boosting L2 students' expressive skills, inspiring them to find their own voices to form writing that is fresh and spontaneous (Elbow, 1998; Murray, 1984). K. Hyland (2003) mentioned that, in terms of focusing on the writer abilities, these writing classrooms revolve around students' personal experiences and ideas, and writing is considered a creative act of self-discovery. This approach can assist to create self-awareness of the writer's social position and literate possibilities as well as encourage clear thinking, effective relating, and satisfying self-expression (Friere, 1974; Moffett, 1982).

In addition, K. Hyland (2003) clarified that in the focus on the writer approach, the teachers' role is to provide students with the space to make their own meanings within a positive and cooperative atmosphere.

2.1.4 Focus on the Writing Process Approach

Raimes (1983) reported that the focus on the composer as language learner and creator of writing led to a process approach. According to Williams (2003): "The process approach emphasizes revision, and also feedback from others, so students may produce many drafts with much crossing out of sentences and moving around of paragraphs. The correction of spelling and punctuation is not of central importance at the early stages" (p. 19). He further adds that: "An important element of the process approach is the meaningfulness it brings to learners, who make a personal connection to the topic and come to understand the processes they follow when writing about it. This starts with prewriting and brainstorming to generate ideas and activate the schemata, which is the background experience or world knowledge a person possesses that allows a writer to relate personal experiences to the topic and discover everything he or she has to say" (p.19). Raimes (1991) described that the process approach applies a new range of classroom activities formulated by the employ of journals, cooperative peers, invention, revision, and attention to content before form.

Hyland (2003) indicated that the process approach to teaching writing highlights the writer as an independent producer of texts, but it goes farther to cover the concern of what instructors should do to support learners as they perform a writing task. The numerous characterizations of this approach are consistent in recognizing basic cognitive processes as essential to writing exercises and in stressing the need to develop students' skills to plan, define a rhetorical issue, and propose and assess solutions (Alonso, López, Manrique, & Viñes, 2005).

2.1.5 Focus on Content Approach

Focus on Content (FoC) is another method of conceptualizing L2 writing instruction is in reference to content, that is, what students are demanded to write about. An emphasis is on the content method where it focuses on a collection of themes or topics of a course that establish a coherence and goal of the course that students will discuss (Spada, 2016). Wilkinson (2018) described that with the focus on the content approach came another academically oriented types, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This is to stress that the focus is mainly on the purpose of the course content (Ferris, 2018). Some researchers argue that that the studies that discuss the content-based approach involve analysis of the rhetorical organization of technical writing (Zare-ee, 2011). Also, the studies include researches of students writing in

content fields, and surveys of the content and tasks second language learners can expect to face in their academic life (Wright, 2010). Other research studies conclude that topics and themes are often evolved around social and environmental problems such as pollution, relationships, stress, juvenile crime, smoking, etc (Barrot, 2015). As such, L2 learners may be disadvantaged in such classrooms if they do not have a strong knowledge about either the themes or the types of texts they require to write about.

2.1.6 Focus on Readers and Discourse Communities, Social Constructionism and Socioliterate Approaches

Similar to the content-based approach, reader and discourse approaches for writing instruction have developed partly in preference to the focus on the writer approach and the process-oriented approach (Grabe & Zhang, 2018). Hedgcock and Ferris (2013) stated that content, reader, and discourse approaches overlap significantly in terms of techniques and purposes, but they may seem different subjectively and fundamentally. For example, reader- and discourse-based composition instruction is influenced by the social concept that novice writer's essential to be apprenticed into multiple discourse communities like academic disciplines, profession, and social systems beyond the classroom (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Grabe & Zhang, 2018). Gee (2012) emphasized that literacies involve not only text forms but also the composers who create literate practices such as writing. Literacies include the social practices of individuals and groups in the contexts as these contents express meaning and purpose, and where these texts enjoy situation.

This view of literacies as multiple and engaged in social activity is consistent with Johns's perception which is a socioliterate perspective. In 1997, he stated that literacies are developed mostly through exposure to discourses form a variety of social frameworks. Halliday (1978) highlighted the complicated relationship between language (form) and text, and how language and text operate in social contexts. He proposed that there are three central factors shape the forms of language, beginning with words and sentences to conversations and texts. These three main features are *field* (the social practice setting), *tenor* (the relationships among contributors), and *mode* (the communication channel). Furthermore, the emphasis on the relationship between the social and ideological contexts for writing has also been influenced by the North American tradition, which is recognized as the research of the New Rhetoric (NR). The NR research highlights that the purpose of argumentative essays is to provide a clear understanding to whom is addressed and to influence the audience (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969).

Motivated by NR and related methodological models, Hyland (2007) pointed out that the need toward situating genres, writing processes, writers, and readers with respect to their sociocultural backgrounds has positively influenced L1 and L2 writing pedagogy. He also stated that in the socioliterate method students in the writing class are regularly engaged in research into texts, roles, and contexts. Students also are involved into the strategies that they must utilize in finalizing literacy activities within particular situations. Ferris and Hedgcock highlighted that socioliterate approach applicably focuses on examining, exercising, and reproducing the implicit and explicit structures of texts organized to present to specific audiences.

The capability to use and form contents from different genres is important to develop literacies, which are constantly enclosed in sociocultural contexts and promote by involving in

dynamic verbal activities (Gee, 2012). Cope, Kalantzis, and Kress (2014) added that the verbal activities include reading and speaking beside multimodal features that we employ from two or more modes to create a message. Harste (2009) stressed that all language practices are multimodal in some sense.

2.2 Definition of Multimodal Compositions

Kress (2003) stated that MMCs are written texts that involve processes that apply more than just words and letters to help people to communicate their thoughts (Takayoshi & Selfe, 2007; Walker, 2017). They may utilize audios, visuals, videos, graphics, drawings or any visual elements to enhance the meaning of the message or the text. When viewing, analyzing, and creating multimodal assignments in the writing classroom, instructors and learners are immersing themselves in MMC (Gee, 2012). Selfe and Selfe (2008) added that creating podcasts, collages, video, blogs, audio essays, comic strips, and digital storytelling all fall under the types of MMC tasks. Smith (2017) suggested that MMCs often involve a huge number of visuals, sounds, movement, and written text to build synergistic messages. MMCs theoretically include many dimensions like social interaction, computer interaction, physical coordination, visual design, multiple language, musical accompaniment, and animation (Dallacqua, 2018). Lotherington, Fisher, Jenson, and Lindo (2016) also pointed out that these dimensions have reshaped how learners and instructors understand, instruct, and assess language and literacy in the classroom. In second language teaching, Valdés (2004) highlighted that teachers have the tendency to formulate language in their teaching as an abstract linguistic system isolated from a broader socially assembled multimodal perspective. Indeed, instructors in foreign language education have been hesitant to recognize and employ these new dimensions in their classroom. This principle is echoed in Kress (2003) who states that: “we have moved from telling the world to showing the world” (p.140). Moreover, he emphasized that it is impossible to think about literacy in isolation from an infinite collection of social, technological, and economic factors (Kress, 2009).

2.3 Types of MMCs

MMCs can be classified by two major headings: *technological projects* and *non-technological projects* (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012). Technological MMCs include: digital storytelling, and videos. Digital storytelling is a stream of information that involves many different modes like video, music, visuals, written texts, narration, and varieties of sounds (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014). On the other hand, videos have also had their impact on MMCs. For a long time, composing video has been seen as an impossible mission in schools specifically in the literacy classroom since it requires training, access to equipment, and cost (Stafford, 1995). Because of these drawbacks, Goodman (2003) pointed out that many researches discovering that students who have motivation to compose a video tend to construct the task out of school setting.

Non-technological MMCs projects include: diorama/poster projects. These projects are basically seeing something from a different angle and in modern times, it refers to three dimensional sights. A diorama provides learners with a good environment to be creative and employ objects from their surrounding like homes or classroom’s aids to construct different diorama models. Below is one example of a diorama that integrates colors, drawing, and written texts (Quinn & History, 2006).

2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of MMCs

Several researchers believe that there are three main advantages to MMCs and there are: 1) engagement and forming identity (Alvermann, 2008; Kress, 2003), 2) students as designers and innovators (Shin & Cimasko, 2008) and 3) acquiring higher-order thinking skills and scaffolding (Bourne & Jewitt, 2003). On the other hand, some researchers argue that adopting MMCs approach can have two distinct disadvantages. These two disadvantages are: the various technical issues that could occur as well as being time consuming (Beard & Jeannie, 2012). The other disadvantage is related to the curriculum planning and faculty training where MMCs present a challenging situation for the presently followed strategies in teaching literacy in the major of education institutions around the world (Jewitt, 2008; Knobel & Lankshear, 2007).

Notwithstanding these advantages and disadvantages, it is evident that research studies, old and new, stress a lot of potential for the implementation of MMCs in the educational classrooms in general and the L2 classrooms in particular.

3.0 Methodology

The main purpose of this research study was to explore the advantages and possible disadvantages of applying MMCs in the writing classrooms from both, the students and the teachers' perceptions and beliefs. As such, a mixed methods approach was utilized since the researcher strongly believes in the gaining of knowledge from both objective as well as subjective inquiries. Whitehead and Schneider (2007) state that: "Mixed-methods research offers a way of making research more meaningful, complete and purposeful than is the case when using either a singular qualitative or quantitative approach and provides the researcher with other valuable tools to add to their research resources" (p. 264).

3.1 Participants

Due to the nature of this research study, the participants were conveniently selected and were thirteen ESL learners studying in an intensive English program (IEP) with their native speaker of English instructor. All of the students participated in the questionnaire phase and only four of them with their teacher engaged in the semi-structured interview phase. The entire participants were at a major university in a small private university in northwestern Ohio, USA.

3.2 Survey Instruments

This research study utilized two instruments to collect the primary data. A twenty-three item students' questionnaire was custom designed and given to the students for the first phase. Then, the researcher conducted an interview for four students and one instructor for the second phase. Each interview lasted between 15-25 minutes for the students. On the other hand, the interview with the teacher lasted for 30 minutes.

3.2.1 The Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire consisted of 23 items and it was purposefully divided into three sections: 1) demographic questions; 2) close-ended questions; 3) open-ended questions. The close-ended and open-ended questions were related to the MMCs. However, the first section had five questions and those questions examined the participants' background information such as gender,

age, their status at the university, students' levels based on their grades, the current course of study or planning to register.

The second part of the questionnaire contained 16 questions and they were close-ended questions. Questions (6–8) asked about the first time that students started to use a computer and their ability to use computers and technology. Questions (9-11) evaluated the students' perspective regarding using MMCs. Questions (12-18) examined participants' feeling towards MMCs and how employing MMCs in their works was helpful and convenient. Questions (19-21) were asked to address the creativity, the skills used, and the time required for creating a MMC project.

The last section of the survey contained two open-ended questions #22 and #23. They were intentionally included on the questionnaire to give the participants more freedom to share their ideas and opinions regarding using MMCs in their writing class. For example, question # 23, asked participants about which form of the MMC they prefer and *why*.

3.2.2 Semi Structured Interviews

The students were asked six open-ended questions relating to the students' perspective about MMCs and its usage and their teacher was asked five open ended questions relating to her theoretical perspective on using MMCs in writing class, her opinion if MMCs motivate students to write and why, her views of the advantages that students acquire from learning MMCs, her thoughts of the disadvantages of teaching MMCs, and finally which form of MMC projects does she prefer to teach and why. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Once the interviews were transcribed verbatim, thematic analysis was conducted to identify emerging themes.

4.0 Data Analyses

4.1 Survey Data Analyses

This study was undertaken to test two hypotheses set by the researcher. The first hypothesis suggested that there would be a correlation between students' evaluation of themselves as students (Question #4 and question #10), which stated that students enjoy using MMCs in their writing. The second hypothesis suggested that there would be a negative correlation between question #7, which asked the students to rate their abilities with computers and technology, and question #21, which asked the students to rate their time needed to finish a multimodal project. Furthermore, the two open-ended questions, Q#22: *If you have done a multimodal composition did you enjoy it, and why? And if you have not done a multimodal composition do you think you would enjoy it and why?* and Q#23: *Which form of a multimodal composition do you like or do you think you would like most, and why?*

4.1.1 Coefficient of Determination (Correlation) – First Hypothesis

The calculated value of the coefficient of determination (r-value) for the first hypothesis was 0.322 (p-value was 0.262). This value indicated a strong correlation between the two questions (Q#4 and Q#10) which indicated that students value the use of MMCs and believe it to be an advantage in their writing assignments.

4.1.2 Coefficient of Determination (Correlation) – Second Hypothesis

The calculated value of the coefficient of determination (r-value) for the second hypothesis was 0.128 (p-value was 0.492). This r-value was not high enough to confirm a good connection between the answers to these two questions. In addition, the p-value of .492 which is too high. As a result, this hypothesis was not justified because the r-value is below the standard .3 level and the p-value is too high. As a consequence, it can be seen that there is not a link between the student's ability to use computers and technology and how much time they spend to start an MMC project. This might be good news for teachers of MMCs because, based on this finding, teachers do not have to be concerned with whether or not their students have high computer and technology skills as a pre-condition for promoting this type of writing.

4.1.3 Open-Ended Question #22

Students' responses to this question were slightly similar. Even though the majority had similar responses, there were some comments that were different and interesting. One of the students stated, *"I enjoyed a lot when I used PowerPoint because it helped me a lot to explain my idea."* Another student added, *"I have and I enjoy it. It makes it easy for me to express my feelings."* Also, one of participants answered, *"Yes, I will feel the sense of achievement."* Those three comments or quotations have similarity in the sense of touching the students' feelings and how using MMCs assists them to practice that. However, one participant mentioned, *"I have done the multimodal composition and it was easy to make presentation because I do not have to write a lot."* Another student answered, *"Yes, I have. That is interesting because it requires us to be more creative, which is the most important for future career opportunities."*

Students believed that using MMCs in their writing assignments or projects would provide them with the opportunity to be more creative and gain useful skills in order to be more professional in the career's environment.

4.1.4 Open-Ended Question #24

The majority of the students responded that PowerPoint was their favourite MMC form since they perceive it to help them to comfortably demonstrate a presentation and it is easy to get used to it. One student commented, *"I like PowerPoint best because PowerPoint is the most sophisticated and flexible."* A second student added, *"PowerPoint, because you can easily add videos, sounds, and pictures. Easy to use."* Also, another student proposed, *"the most common is a PowerPoint. Because that is easy to get used to it. Secondly, it is already installed and automatically, therefore, we do not have to pay extra for it."*

Those responses emphasized the notion that PowerPoint is the most common tool that is being used within MMC projects. They mentioned that PowerPoint is easy to use and more flexible. They also declared that PowerPoint is affordable and free with no cost and is already installed in their computer software. This stresses students' concern about the availability of a resource and whether it requires a payment from users to install it or, is free.

4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews' Data Analyses

4.2.1 Students' Interviews

When the students were asked: "*Which do you prefer most to use when you write a paper, writing by hand or using computer? And why?*", the responses were varied, but the majority preferred to use a computer rather than writing by hand because they believe that writing with a computer is easier, faster, and reduced their mechanical mistakes. When they were asked: "*How often do you use multimodal composition for school assignments? And why?*", one student responded that he sometimes creates a PowerPoint presentation for class because he thinks that if he includes MMCs in his presentation, it will be easy to create and he does not have to write so many words. Another response underlined that he utilizes MMC a lot because he thinks it helps him to make his points clear to students and make it fun.

Moreover, students were asked "*Which form of a multimodal composition do you like or do you think you would like most, and why?*", one student said, "I like a PowerPoint because not only visual aids, but also it makes the presentation more interesting and more convincing." Another student added:

"I think I like making videos the most because videos are... like films... they are like widely effective because they have everything...so someone is writing a script...someone needs to write anyways, so you have the writing...you have literature in it...then needs someone needs to form it...you have science in it...and then someone needs to edit it, someone needs to act on it, you have arts...so these are like every form together combined and you are getting one thing, so it's so powerful I think...it definitely something that I would definitely love to do it in my carrier also."

4.2.2 The Instructor's Interview

The instructor was given five questions. The first question was "*What is your theoretical perspective on using multimodal composition in writing class?*" She responded that the MMC is learner-friendly and does not require students to express their ideas in one mode, but it allows several different ways. The second question stated: "*Do you think that multimodal composition motivates students to write, and why?*" She commented on this question said that the students get motivated to write more by employing MMCs in their project. She stated: "*The more they invest in it in a creative way, the more engage will be*". Furthermore, the third question was "*From your experience in teaching rhetorical writing specifically multimodal composition what are the benefits that students acquire while they are composing multimodal texts?*" She replied that a MMC is like brain storming and it encourage students to collect and apply different modes of presenting information. Also, she added that it allows students to come up with new ideas and promote creativity. The fifth question was "*Do you think are there any disadvantages of teaching multimodal compositions?*" She answered,

"I think sometimes students may perceive it as additional work...that has more work, but really if the teacher structures it well. It's kind of taking a place of some of the written aspects of the process of writing, so it might be just exchanged...you know...so not everything is done in pencil and paper, but through different mode...so..., but also some

students...may be older students don't know how to use technology and that might intimidate them."

This quotation emphasized that the writing instructor has to be aware of the student's perspective regarding the concept of the MMCs. Also, the teacher has to be familiar with technology and computers and provide students with a good resources and explanation about the usage of MMCs. The last question was "*Which form of multimodal composition do you prefer to teach, and can you please explain why?*" She responded that she likes to instruct the digital storytelling and the narrative because using a multimodal approach to create a narrative is more interesting and the audience also will be able to see pictures and images that relate to that story. Finally, the instructor suggested that the more comfortable a teacher is with technology, the better it is.

5.0 Discussion and Conclusions

Following the data analysis of the collected primary data from the questionnaire and the semi structured interviews, it can be seen that applying MMCs in ESL writing classroom would be an amazing tool to create more interactive and engagement environment. By employing MMCs, students will be able to draw on their knowledge, experiences, and their home background to share new stories and become more deeply engaged in the school setting. We now are live in a globalized interconnected society and immersing in technology becomes a necessity for both learners and educators. Therefore, utilizing MMCs in ESL writing classroom would be extremely valuable to L2 learners to share their values and promotes diversity. Students can make good relations with people of different thoughts and from different places. Thus, when students engage in these processes, their mind habits will develop over time. They will become creative, risk taker, persistent, and mindfully. These skills are not only very important in the academic setting, but they are beneficial in the carrier field. Even though there are many positive results of using MMCs in ESL writing courses, there are some disadvantages, or we can say barriers of applying MMCs. One of these barriers relates to technology problems. One of the participants stated that he did not know how to insert a picture or video and how to change the background of the presented piece. Therefore, instructor has to facilitate an interactive and supportive learning environment in order to encourage students to achieve their goals create a meaningful work.

Finally, one last comment which considers to be a disadvantage of employing MMCs in ESL composition class, was stressed by the instructor. She stated that students perceived MMC as an additional work rather than it is part of it. Thus, the instructor must bear in mind that not all students have a clear understanding of the reason of applying MMCs in their writing assignments. Therefore, the teacher has to provide students with helpful resources and explanation regarding the usage and the benefits of utilizing MMCs.

5.1 Limitations

The students who participated in this study have not had a lot of experience on exercising with implementing different types of MMCs in their writing assignments. The study would have worked much more positively if the students had had enough experience regarding the usage of MMCs. The potential limitation was that students' responses of the questionnaire and the interview's questions were based on their perception not based on their usage. Thus, this could affect their answers because they have not completed MMC projects during the current semester.

5.2 Recommendation for Further Research

There has not been much formal study constructed about the advantages and the possible disadvantages of employing MMCs in ESL writing classroom. Since researchers and educators are currently focusing on how to apply multimodal compositional skills in the writing classroom, there is a need of conducting studies on the students' perspectives regarding the usages of MMCs in their writing assignments. Further research could focus on the potential difficulties that learners encounter while they are composing a MMC project. Also, investigation on what are some new ideas of MM applications that instructor can bring to the ESL composition classroom.

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