Bringing Transformed Practices and Identities into the Center of Language Teachers' Pedagogy: Neglected Components of Multiliteracies

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Abstract

The infiltration of technology into our daily lives, which often combines multiple modes of learning, has expanded how we make meaning in language and literacy education. Although teachers and learners interact with multimodal texts for various purposes, in multiliterate research, few explorations have been conducted to examine teachers' pedagogical use of multimodal resources within critical framing. This study investigated the ways in which ESOL teachers utilized multimodal resources in their lessons and how they used multimodal resources for transformative purposes. In a graduate TESOL education online methodology course, the researchers included a multimodally-oriented curriculum that had a potential for empowering identities through critical perspectives and transformed practice. An analysis of 43 teachers' lesson plans, teaching videos, and reflections showed that most teachers utilized multimodal resources to primarily present information, not to have ELLs critically engage in using multimodal texts. Only a few teachers were found to scaffold students for critical perspectives and encouraged students' linguistic and cultural identity development. The findings suggest that multimodality was utilized in a limited sense in our sample ESOL lessons, which has implications for teacher educators and multimodality research.

Keywords: TESOL teacher education, Multimodal resources, Multiliteracies, Transformed practice, Identity development

Introduction

Multiliteracies theory (New London Group [hereafter NLG], 1996) and related pedagogical practices using multimodal resources has the potential of crafting students' identities through critical perspectives (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Yet, in multiliteracies research, emphasis on "critical framing" and "transformed practice" that helps develop plural identities, has mainly focused on students and their academic development in K-12 settings (e.g., Cummins, 2004, 2009; Cummins et al., 2015; Harman & Shin, 2018; Hughes & Morrison, 2014).

Studies of teachers' critical perspectives that lead to transformed practices and identities in the context of multimodal pedagogies have recently begun to be reported in the literature (e.g., Giampapa, 2010, Higgins & Ponte, 2017; Stein, 2004; Vitanova, 2016; Zhang, 2015). Within the few studies related to teachers' pedagogical use of multimodal resources with critical approaches, the main focus was on how teachers used technology and privileged the concept of design. Less emphasis has been given to how teachers promote the use of multiple modes with "transformed practice" (NLG, 1996, p. 87) that highlights the value of transformation rather than the simple substitution of one learning mode for another. Still, missing opportunities are transformed perspectives on plurilingual identities and linguistic diversity with commitments to equity and social justice in local and global contexts (Kendrick & Early, 2017). There is a lack of awareness in critical language teacher education on the benefits of helping teachers recognize multiliteracies pedagogies full potential in classrooms (Choi & Yi, 2016; Rajendram, 2015). When language teachers do not reflect on the strong relationship between identities and teaching practices, they lose the vision regarding student's cultures, values, and language ideologies as valuable, critical, and transformative resources in classrooms (Basalama & Machmud, 2018; Jain, 2014; Motha, et al., 2012). The current study investigates how teachers promote transformed practice and students' identity development in a K-12 English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher education online course at a large university in the southeastern United States. The purpose of this study is to utilize the neglected component of the "pedagogy of multiliteracies" (both the "what" and the "how") (NLG, 1996, p. 60) in a graduate course for K-12 ESL pre-and in-service teachers. Accordingly, we aim to explore the critical engagement or the full potential of multiliteracies by which teachers as well as students utilize language, power, and creativity to design their future identities and "achieve success through fulfilling employment" (NLG, 1996, p. 60) in a new world order.

We offer a comprehensive analysis of 43 teachers' use of multimodal resources for the

purpose of creating transformative practices and appealing to students' identities in ESOL lessons. Drawing on data collected in a graduate course, Methods and Materials for Bilingual and ESOL Teachers (methods course hereafter), in two semesters (2011 and 2014 respectively), we examine how teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs) utilize multimodal resources (i.e., visual, audio, and various technologies) in teaching ELLs in K-12 classes and how closely their uses align with the full potential of multimodally-oriented pedagogies that put emphasis on critical framing, transformed practice and identity development. This detailed look at teachers' use of multimodal resources in ESOL lessons that they design and teach sheds light on what multimodal teaching and learning look like in K-12 ESOL classrooms.

The study is guided by one research question: How does teachers' use of multimodal resources contribute to transformed practices as well as ELLs' identities? We first turn to the theoretical framework, multiliteracies as theory and pedagogy, followed by a literature review related to multimodal pedagogies that ESOL teachers implement.

Multiliteracies Theory and Multimodal Pedagogy

The theoretical framework of multiliteracies was initially proposed by a team of literacy researchers in NLG (1996), referring to the literacies required of students amid ever-changing technologies. The theory suggests that reading and writing is composed of plural literacies shaped by varying social contexts and cultural identities. In addition to emphasizing a broader concept of literacy as well as cultural and linguistic diversity, the theory of multiliteracies addresses the importance of multimodal representations since 21st century skills require working with multimodal texts, which represent visual, audio, gestural, spatial, or linguistic modes to enrich and appropriate meaning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Kress, 2000). Today's learners possess multiple linguistic, professional identities, and literacy skills that can enable them to utilize the potential of the diverse modes of communication offered by new technologies. However, the types of multilingual education prove to be insufficient for the type of complex multimodal skills and multilingualism that globalization has brought to the forefront (García, 2009). Hence, new approaches to language and teaching are necessary since literacy practices, as well as related theories and pedagogies that underlie teachers' work, are changing rapidly worldwide.

NLG (1996) developed the multiliteracies theory, emphasizing its "direct use in educational practice" (p. 89). The group provided a conceptual framework for literacy pedagogy that has four related components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and

transformed practice. Situated practice is an "immersion in meaningful practices within a community of learners who are capable of playing multiple and different roles based on their background and experiences" (NLG, 1996, p. 85). Overt instruction includes "active interventions on the part of the teachers and other experts that scaffold learning activities … that allow the learner to gain explicit information" (NLG, 1996, p. 86). It also includes "the introduction of explicit metalanguages," which helps learners understand the texts and activities in different modes (NLG, 1996, p. 88). Here, mode refers to a "regularized and organized set of resources for meaning-making, including, image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech, and sound effect" (Jewitt & Kress, 2003, p. 1). It is important to note that the purpose of metalanguage is to explain differences between texts and to explain the contexts of culture and situations in which language functions (NLG, 2000). On the basis of students' mastery with the metalanguage, the teacher, then, should emphasize critical framing to provoke students' critical questioning. With critical framing, learners have the ability to "frame their growing mastery in practice and conscious control and understanding in relation to the historical, social, cultural, political, ideological, and value-centered relations of particular systems of knowledge and social practice" (NLG, 1996, p. 86). This leads to transformative practices, through which "students can demonstrate how they can design and carry out, in a reflective manner, new practices embedded in their own goals and values" (NLG, 1996, p. 87). The application of real-life situations into classroom practices is integral to this process. In this stage, learners enact problematic situations and find possible solutions collaboratively. Through these four components, students engage in the "knowledge processes" of experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing and applying (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005).

The current study draws upon the potential of the multiliteracies theory and pedagogy to understand teachers' transformative use of multimodal resources in a methodology course. In this study, the course instructor created a multimodally-oriented curriculum that had the potential for crafting and empowering identities through critical perspectives on teaching and learning. The curriculum that she implemented had a transformative agenda in which language teaching was about not only mastering skills and transmitting knowledge but also inspiring for design and creativity with agentive learners who are willing to advocate for social justice, transformation, and cultural competence (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Most research on multimodal practices highlighted how language pre-and in-service teachers used multimodal resources for learners, which did not give attention to student's critical thinking, but it focused on how the use of various multimodal projects with features such as graphics and videos resulted in enhanced vocabulary and reading abilities for ELLs (Kim &

Gilman, 2008; Lin & Tseng, 2012). The research showed that watching English videos with subtitles could be more beneficial to EFL learners' listening and reading comprehension skills (Saeidi & Ahmadi, 2016). However, very few studies examined how language teachers used multimodal resources to construct students' identities in the ESOL context and in relation to L2 teaching coursework in language teacher education programs (e.g., Giampapa, 2010; Higgins & Ponte, 2017; Stein, 2004). In Giampapa's (2010) study, teacher learning and identities were constructed by another multiliteracies project, Identity Text, where an elementary teacher drew on students' identities to create a multiliteracies project for ELLs to access academic literacies through multimodal, dual language identity texts. Through these texts, both the teacher and students reflected on their lived experiences to explore what native language means and what it means to be a second language learner; thus, they critically, meaningfully, and creatively explored their identities, language, and culture through topics such as bullying, war, and peace. Similarly, in Higgins and Ponte's (2017) study, a group of L2 teachers created multilingual print environments and drew on students' identities to increase attention to students' diverse multilingual identities in classroom practices. These two studies demonstrated how teachers have developed multimodal pedagogies, opened room for home languages, and created a community of practice in the classroom.

In another multimodal project initiated by teachers, Cummins and Early (2011) explored how teachers encouraged students to use multimodal skills to create literature and art for the purpose of gaining insights about social and personal realities. The authors concluded that these literacy practices were identity-affirming and that they increased students' literacy engagement. Inspired by Cummins and Early (2011), Stille and Prasad (2015) investigated the role of multimodal practices in language teaching and learning and discovered that many teachers used multimodal texts creatively. More particularly, they found that teachers used "multimodal identity" texts for the purpose of engaging students in the active use of multimodal resources in meaningful ways. Importantly, these teachers did not view multimodal texts as part of an add-on practice, but they placed them in the center of instruction. Thus, the text became "the products of students' creative work or performances carried out within the pedagogical space orchestrated by the classroom teacher ... [which] then holds a mirror up to students in which their identities are reflected back in a positive light" (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 7). The authors finally drew attention to the significance of using multimodal texts in teaching social justice, imagination, and critical language awareness.

In all of these research studies, the teacher's role in encouraging critical perspectives and

transformative practices was significant in that it showed how teachers could use multimodal texts that aimed for transformed practice. It is important to note that Kitson (2011) and Tang (1991) cautioned against the assumption that presenting learning materials through non-linguistic modes to ELLs automatically leads to enhanced learning that requires transformed practice. The authors argued that teachers need to explicitly direct students' attention to the non-linguistic modes in resources and then engage students in critical framing or discussions for the purpose of changing students' perceptions about how messages are delivered, made, and interpreted through various modes.

The existing literature shows the importance of examining teachers' multimodal resources and how teachers make critical use of these resources in their lessons for ELLs. Despite recent attention to ELLs' multimodal learning in TESOL, more research still needs to be conducted in TESOL education (Block, 2013; Hafner, 2013), especially with regard to what teachers do with resources in K-12 ESOL lessons and how teacher education programs address multimodal teaching and learning (Royce, 2002). The lack of research in the transformative use of digital multimodal resources in ESOL classrooms leads to further investigation of what kind of multimodal technologies teachers utilize to tap into student identities in the classroom and how these resources are presented to and received by ELLs.

Methodology

Pedagogical Context

The study was conducted in an 8-week online TESOL methods course at a university in the southeastern USA in the spring semesters of 2011 and 2014. This was a required course for pre-service teachers of ESOL and in-service teachers who were seeking an ESOL endorsement (i.e., teacher candidates and licensed teachers). This course aimed to equip teachers with the pedagogical knowledge and practice in lesson planning, WIDA[1] ESOL standards, ESOL testing, various language teaching methods, approaches and strategies, and multimodal teaching. One of the authors of this paper was the instructor of the course for both years. Although a few readings were updated in 2014, both semesters were much the same, especially the final project, which is the primary data source in this study.

The final project in the course required each teacher to plan a thematic unit of their choosing for a week to teach ELLs in a K-12 class. Each teacher planned this unit at the midpoint of the course by submitting a progress report to the instructor who provided extensive feedback. The teachers' final projects were then shared and commented on by the class in the discussion

forum. While planning a unit for five days, they had to align their detailed lessons with WIDA and Common Core State Standards (CCSS[2]), "teach multimodally", and finally teach at least two of the five lessons and document their teaching in a multimodal format, such as through a video, PowerPoint, or Prezi. Example topics for the thematic unit included The Life of Butterflies in a Kindergarten ESOL Inclusion Class, Immigration' in an ESOL Middle School Pull-Out Setting, and Different Englishes and Dialects' For High School ELLs. Each final project document, which was approximately 10 pages long, included the following components: introduction and rationale for the unit while citing literature; day-by-day unit overview in a chart format that includes goals, standards, language tasks, resources, and assessments for each lesson; two consecutive 45-90-minute-long detailed lesson plans; teaching resources and an annotated description of each resource; and references. Along with the detailed document, each teacher also submitted a multimodal text in the form of multimedia or PowerPoint presentation while including edited video clips of their teaching in the unit. In addition, some teachers chose to write a teaching reflection in a separate Microsoft Word document while others incorporated it into their multimedia text.

The teachers had ample opportunities to learn about multimodal teaching and learning before embarking on the final project in the methods course. Prior to this course, the teachers read, wrote about, and discussed two articles on the topic in another required course, Applied Linguistics for Bilingual and ESOL Teachers. The readings included examples of multimodal composing of adolescents, one through a digital video in an afterschool (Hull & Nelson, 2005) and another through pen and pencil drawings in an ESOL classroom (Ajayi, 2008). Within the course, the teachers also had the opportunity to compose multimodally by creating video, animated PowerPoint, and Prezi presentations. Furthermore, the instructor of both courses modeled multimodal teaching by presenting materials such as multimodal compositions created by linguistic, non-linguistic, and digital tools, and facilitated discussions by using Blackboard Collaborate (a video conferencing platform), Voice Thread (an interactive presentation tool that allows participants to include audio comments), Padlet (a web-based bulletin board), and so on. Although the instructor provided examples of multimodal productions to the students as scaffolding, she made room for teachers to decide what multimodal teaching would look like in their ESOL lessons for the final project.

A total of 43 teachers (25 in 2011; 18 in 2014) gave consent to participate in the study. Most of the participants were female and had 2-5 years of teaching experience at the elementary school level at the time of their participation. Among them, 19 teachers had taught and were teaching ESOL while 24 teachers had not. The names referenced in this paper are pseudonyms.

However, all of the participants were working towards either being certified or endorsed to teach ELLs upon the successful completion of their graduate studies. Although 10 teachers did not hold a teaching certification at the time of the study, they were teaching as provisional or substitute teachers in K-12 schools as well as in their communities. In addition, for the course final project, as many as 30 teachers taught ESOL lessons in K-5 classrooms, and teachers who were not teaching at the time of the study sought classes to teach as a guest teacher. Lessons were taught to small to large groups of ELLs in push-in, inclusion, and pull-out contexts. Table 1 provides information about the participants.

Table 1
Information About Participants and Grade Level Chosen for Final Project

Categories		2011	2014	Total
Gender	Female	23	15	38
	Male	2	3	5
Years of experience	0-1	1	3	4
	2-5	19	10	29
	6-15	4	3	7
	16-25	1	2	3
Grade level taught	K-5	16	15	31
	6-8	5	1	6
	9-12	4	1	5
	Adults	0	1	1
Teaching certification	Certified	23	10	33
	Not Certified	2	8	10
Content	ESOL	9	10	19
	Others	16	8	24
Grade level chosen for final project	K-5	15	15	30
	6-8	6	2	8
	9-12	3	1	4
	Adults	1	0	1

Procedures

The instructor collected all the electronic data as she was teaching the online course both years. The main data sources for the study were 43 teachers' final projects and associated documents (i.e., progress reports, lesson plans, reflections) created in the methods course. Interested in how teachers utilize multimodal resources in teaching ELLs, we focused on the paper-based final project as well as teaching videos as these demonstrated teachers' use of resources in their lessons. The teachers' multimodal texts, such as multimedia and video clips of their teaching, were analyzed for content. We created tables to show the types of multimodal resources that teachers used and the ways in which teachers used multimodal texts with ELLs. The tables enabled us to identify teachers' use of multimodal resources and students' critical engagement of transformed practices in each of the multimodal resources. To verify transformative practices and identity development, we cross-checked teachers' written data using a comparative and contrast analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). We created tables that included the participants' final reflections and progress reports and color-coded them based on how the participants used multimodal resources. During the coding process, we, the researchers, met several times and came to an agreement regarding the findings. We also analyzed multiple sources of data through iterations and triangulated data to "strengthen the precision, validity, stability, and trustworthiness of the findings" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 33).

We initially devised two broad coding categories, one being the use of multiple modes as a scaffold, which represents "available resources for meaning making in the classroom" (Jewitt, 2008, p. 252). In this category, teachers made use of multiple modes and resources in a way that did not aim for, demonstrate, or encourage critical framing or transformed practices for themselves and/or their students. The second category is the use of multimodal resources that required critical perspectives and transformed practices. Here, teachers carefully planned their lessons; selected texts and media for relevant purposes; incorporated explicit scaffolding for technologies and appropriate language; encouraged reflection and critical thinking; and appealed to the students' professional and linguistic identities (for example, see Ellis, 2016). In this way, students could establish successful interconnection between modes. By engaging in a collaborative coding process (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 401), we further refined the coding categories and developed emerging themes by rereading and discussing the raw data from both years numerous times (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009). For example, we expanded our original coding manual by adding categories, such as "teachers' explaining content through multimodal resources but not bringing students' attention to the importance of generating new

meaning through different modalities" and "teachers having ELLs create a visual representation of their meaning making process and helping them realize the new meanings generated" in their lessons. Table 2 presents the final coding manual that includes the major codes as well as their definitions.

Table 2
Coding Manual

Multimodal resources	Ts use of multimodal resources as scaffolding	Ss use of multimodal resources
Gesture/ Movement	Ts using gestures and/or movements to explain content (e.g., teacher demonstrated read-aloud)	Ts having ELLs use gestures and/or movements purposefully (e.g., reframe understanding of content through skits, acting out, performances, interviews, role plays)
Non-technological/ Visual	Ts explaining content through visuals but not bringing Ss' attention to the importance of generating new meaning through different modalities. (e.g., use of graphic organizer, KWL chart, semantic map, pictures, map, 3D arts, vocabulary cards, flash cards)	Ts having ELLs create a visual representation of their meaning making process and helping them realize the new meanings generated (e.g., student-generated drawings, 3D arts, maps, graphic organizers, vocab cards, flashcards)
Music	Ts having ELLs listen to songs as part of a lesson	Ts having ELLs create songs or lyrics of songs to express their understanding and learning
PPT	Ts using PowerPoint to explain or present content of a lesson	Ts having ELLs generate PowerPoints to present their learning and understanding.
Instructional videos	Ts showing either teacher-created videos or videos available on the web (e.g.,	Ts having ELLs create videos to demonstrate their learning or facilitate critical discussions

	YouTube) to ELLs as part of a lesson	
Websites	Ts presenting information or content through educational websites (i.e., online dictionaries and readings on the web)	Ts having students browse websites to locate information and use it for critical discussions and broadened perspectives

Findings

An analysis of 43 teachers' use of multimodal resources in their detailed 5-day lesson plans, unit plans, unit overview, rationale, teaching videos, and final reflections prompted us to closely examine the ways in which teachers had ELLs interact with multimodal texts by using each of the resources. The deeper analysis of the teachers' uses of multimodal resources showed that most of the teachers used multimodal resources as scaffolding. Furthermore, we found a few examples that demonstrated that teachers planned to use multimodal resources for transformed practice and witnessed the identity development occurring in students' learning experiences.

Teachers' Use of Multimodal Resources with Critical Framing That Led to Transformed Practices and Identities

As teachers participated in the course, many of them reflected on their use of videos and multimedia for instructional purposes. Their reflections showed how these teachers achieved or aimed for critical framing and transformative perspectives. Among them, Jude, working with four 4th grade Latinx students, took critical approaches to her content teaching of social studies. She planned critically to provide students' group a Revolutionary War era newspaper using a political cartoon that had a famous photo and drawing of the Boston Massacre. She also created a PowerPoint to critically reflect on the causes of the Revolutionary War with the students and discussed it in a small group setting. She asked one of her students, Beth, who had immigrated with her family to America from Mexico about two years ago, to create vocabulary books for the Revolutionary War. In her progress report, Jude stated how the multimodal project supported Beth's understanding of the Boston Massacre by providing comprehensible input, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and different registers in different settings. Jude realized that Beth had come up with a different interpretation from what Jude had intended. In her final project reflection, Jude stated:

Beth's explanation of the Boston Massacre photo (what it symbolizes, how she interprets it, how it makes her feel, etc.) will be different from the political cartoon, which will be different from her [student] information in her [student] book about the causes of the war, etc.

By asking Beth to demonstrate meaning through technological modalities, to which she did not have access at home, Jude could ignite Beth's enthusiasm. Besides the fact that this student did not have much experience of using technology at home and school, Jude was surprised that "the students were able to take that information, synthesize it, make meaningful connections, and create their own artifacts" in their multimodal projects. When Jude was creating a video using the Movie Maker, Beth volunteered to speak for the podcast and described her work samples and her interpretation or new understanding of the Boston Massacre photos through symbolism. In a previous study conducted by one of the authors, they explained Jude's critical use of multiple modes helped improve Beth's nuanced understanding of content knowledge about complicated historical concepts (Choi & Yi, 2016).

Similarly, a preservice teacher, James, teaching in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context, reflected on how he validated students' identities through his instruction about English dialects and accents in a small group in a high school ESOL pullout class. When James started to plan his lesson, he had a critical purpose to change ELL students' prejudices and biases regarding English dialects and accents. He stated clearly at the beginning of his reflection that I began this project to teach my students that English was much more varied than what they listened to in recordings or were taught in the classroom. I also wanted to explore the discrimination that many people who speak an English dialect like AAVE [African American Varieties of English] face every day.

He also found that people faced discrimination not only in the USA but also in Korea, especially related to language variance. He explained that he thought that using multimodal resources was an effective way to present a variety of Englishes spoken outside the classroom. In his reflection, he shared his critical framing for the lesson plan which focused on how to impact his students to be proud of their language or their dialect. He believed that students' dialects and accents convey meanings about themselves. After completing a multimodal project in his lesson, he also realized how the multimodal project supports students' transformed practices and identities by stating that

I'm thankful that in a multimodal world we have access to videos, music, and other media that showcase people who are experiencing similar discrimination, but still find pride and beauty in the way they speak. The true power of the multimodal approach is that it could bring my students

together, AAVE speakers of America, Patois speakers of Jamaica, and three young 사투리 [saturi] dialect speakers in Korea. These multimodal approaches to English education gave my ELLs a glimpse at the struggles that other people go through with freedom of expression.

Through his unit, James empowered his students' identities by legitimizing their accents and different Englishes rather than adhering to the standard English that EFL students are often exposed to. And, as he reflected, showing YouTube video clips featuring speakers who proudly speak different varieties of Englishes was effective in his lesson. James explained that he thought video to be a meaningful resource through which he could facilitate students' new perspectives that led to transformed identities.

During the multimodal project, an ESOL teacher, Sharon, also witnessed her students' transformed identities. Sharon created a lesson for 9th grade biology, the topic of which was Eight Characteristics of Living Things. Among her five ELL students, Sharon invited Maria to work with her to create a movie for the final project. Sharon explained how she was impressed with Maria's work. The badger story that Maria created was one that her grandmother had told her when she was little. Maria drew all the pictures, and Sharon and Maria scanned them before they bounded them. Sharon added that she had not seen many of her ELLs stay focused for such a long time. She elaborated how this work gave Maria a new sense of identity which Maria had not imagined earlier:

> Maria thought it was the coolest thing ever that she was included in a college project and took a lot of pride in her work. She even began to make comments about going to college and had the counselor add her name to the SAT schedule.

The project helped Sharon realize her student's capacity and new identity. Although Maria was relatively proficient in speaking English, she struggled with academic writing and reading skills, and, due to a lack of confidence, she had not dreamed of going to college. Maria's accomplishment in this project transformed her perceptions about her future self to include a successful career. Sharon's reflection demonstrated the use of multimodal resources in a lesson facilitated not only students' understanding but also their identity development.

Nadia, an ESOL teacher, showed another example of how students made a connection with their cultural identity as they learned about course content. In this lesson, Nadia collaborated with a content teacher of social studies to teach the first two lessons from the unit and worked with a small group of six intermediate ESOL Latinx students in a pullout setting. Nadia motivated her students to gain a deeper understanding of the course content by utilizing multimodal resources and asking critical questions about the regions and communities where the ELLs, their mainstream

classmates, and teachers live. In this process, Nadia became more confident about using multimodal resources to teach core concepts because the whole class engaged in the successful discussions of design through multimodal modes. Students also discussed the cultural and social implications of the subject matter based on the regions and community settings the students lived in. Nadia commented, "Integration through a multimodal approach is probably the best way to start capturing my ESOL students' attention and understanding of content." Students used multimodal texts to make connections to real-life situations through conversations about cultural, social, and regional issues concerning their peers and friends in real life, which facilitated students' involvement in content. Nadia further reflected: "Hearing and seeing them in a real life setting and connecting their knowledge with the real world was amazing." By giving students opportunities to explore others' cultural backgrounds through diverse resources such as online dictionaries, video, PowerPoint and a time machine game, Nadia realized that she had opened up possibilities of validation for cultural identities not only in the ESOL classroom but in the mainstream classroom as well. Students understood what it meant to live in a certain region as immigrants or international students and specific social groups in the community. Nadia's ELL students described themselves as a unique social group based on their specific culture, one that is different from that of students in the mainstream classroom and most of their teachers. Nadia reflected on how students' discourses that define the ways of acting, believing, and being in the world (Gee, 1996) might be different than that of mainstream classroom members and how their relationship with teachers might be different from other student groups in the school. This reflection represented Nadia's transformed perspective on how ELLs, as a specific social and cultural group, can make meaning through resources in unique ways.

Challenges and Limitation in Teachers' Critical Use of Multimodal Resources

As discussed above, we found a few examples among 43 teachers who used multimodal resources within critical framing for transformed practices and students' identity development. The data showed that most teachers utilized multimodal resources, but some of them faced challenges to utilize multimodal resources within critical framing. The teachers simply presented the learning materials, meaning that multimodal resources served as a direct substitute for the content teaching with no functional change towards the real purpose of criticality. Some of them tried to use multimodal resources with critical framing in mind. However, they ended up presenting learning materials without involving students in using technologies that facilitate students' transformed

practice. In addition, teachers' selection of multimodal resources was limited, and sometimes they struggled to have ELLs actively engage in the creation of these multimodal texts.

Throughout the course, it was evident that many teachers reflected on the usefulness and values of utilizing multimodal texts in class. Nevertheless, our data showed that most teachers relied on technological multimodal resources at the most rudimentary level, considering them to be simple substitutes for written or printed contents to present information. Specifically, with respect to videos, most teachers showed educational and commercial video clips to ESOL classes as part of previewing and/or reviewing concepts, and that often was followed by a whole-class discussion of the video clip regarding the concepts. For instance, a kindergarten teacher, Alice, planned to teach students a character traits unit using short YouTube video clips from commercial movies, i.e., Frozen and Despicable Me. Immediately following the video clips, she elicited responses from the whole class about the characters' traits. We could not find any purpose for using these multimodal resources within critical framing other than initiating conversation or drawing students' attention. She did not make a meaningful connection between the video clip and the lesson. Similarly, Kay, in a persuasive writing unit, had ELLs watch commercial videos from YouTube to teach about persuasive writing and reviewed the parts of the writing process by watching a BrainPOP[4] video, online educational resources created with animated and curricular contents. She scaffolded the persuasive writing process by providing instructional video to the students; however, she did not broaden the students' critical thinking about how to write an essay for persuasive purposes with their own arguments. These ELL students might have gained knowledge about the process of persuasive writing, but the teacher could have developed students' thoughts using videos critically instead of replacing their instruction with the watching of a video.

In addition, a number of teachers expressed difficulties, to include using multimodal texts in class, because of their lack of competency using technology. Many of the teachers shared that they struggled with becoming skilled in using technological multimodal texts. For example, a high school teacher, Ann, reflected the stress and agony that she felt while creating a video by saying that "I am burnt out. It was not the applied linguistics that was the problem. It was the technology, the multimodal aspect. A ten-page research paper is a breeze compared to this." She faced several technical issues while creating a teaching video and integrating technological multimodal resources in her lesson. These difficulties and challenges hindered her from including multimodal texts and resulted in failing to incorporate any critical framing or transformed practice. Ann also reflected on her lesson that although using multimodal texts has motivated her students to engage in the lesson; they did not pay attention to content. She stated, "Classwide motivation existed for

adding music to their PowerPoints and a little bit for the audio play, Television and the video, the book…. They asked for a repeat on both. Only one student really understood that both were a parody or mockery of the attention we pay to a machine." She felt that it could not facilitate the deepening of the students' learning and transformed practice as she expected. As she could not provide appropriate scaffolding to the students due to the lack of technological competency, students only focused on practising technological skills in multimodal texts.

Despite the technological challenges that these teachers experienced, they showed a positive attitude toward the potentials and possibilities of using multimodal resources. A 6th grade teacher, Jason, implemented diverse multimodal resources in his literature class and stated: "This was the first time I mixed a lot of different technologies together. I used PowerPoint, Audacity, iTunes, Garage band, and a lot of animation. Combining them was a challenge…, but I think using them together helped me learn how to use them better." He knew how to use multimodal resources independently, but he had not tried creating his own multimodal project for specific lessons before. Similarly, Sophia mentioned that "I must say it was a learning experience from the beginning to the end. To use any form of technology was a challenge for me, and I wanted to produce something outside my comfort zone." Although teachers did not experience incorporating many multimodal resources before creating their own multimodal project in the methods course, they welcomed being challenged to incorporate multimodal texts in their lessons, and it was critical to provide appropriate and enough support for teachers.

Furthermore, some teachers shared that they tried to use multimodality with critical framing but failed to see the evidence of transformed practice. Although they tried to include multimodal resources in their lesson plans, they could not connect the multimodal resources with the deepening and broadening of students' learning and critical thinking. For example, although many teachers pointed out the benefits of using videos for instruction for ELLs, one teacher, Alex, reflected on how using videos in his instruction did not help his ELLs, who were migrant students, understand the content about the condition of migrant farmworkers (MFWs). Alex explained, "They [the ELLs] did not seem to make the connection of what the video, Harvest of Dignity, was trying to convey: That little has changed for MFWs over the last fifty years." In his teaching video, although the students were provided with history-related video clips in Spanish, they never had a chance to talk about what they had learned from the video clip or to discuss what they watched in English. Alex was critical about his lesson and final project: "I really didn't do well in creating dialogue that led to deeper thinking. Finding good resources was one of the most time-consuming aspects of developing this unit, and the ones I finally chose, I feel, were not interesting to my

students." As Alex stated, teachers spend additional time and effort in finding the right tools or technologies to utilize multimodal resources in the lessons. However, they sometimes learn new tools that they did not feel comfortable with, and they could not secure time to prepare their lesson plan incorporating critical framing and transformed practice.

Discussion and Conclusion

More than a decade ago, Stein (2000) urged the TESOL field to consider "multimodal pedagogies that recognize students as remakers and transformers of the representational resources available to them" (p. 336). However, our examination of 43 teachers' use of various resources in the ESOL classroom shows teachers using multimodal resources primarily as scaffolding to present information, not necessarily to promote critical framing and transformed practice.

While some teachers in our study became conscious about their transformed perspectives through their reflections, a few teachers focused on explaining how they scaffolded students' critical perspectives and encouraged students' identity development around their linguistic and cultural aspects. To integrate resources with transformative purposes, teachers planned their work carefully. That is, they deliberately selected their texts and media for intended purposes and their own students and provided scaffolding for the use of technologies with critical perspectives. Teachers intentionally helped students transfer meaning in new contexts for creative purposes, reflected on their identities and new learning, and developed new practices based upon what they learned in language and literacy classes. With teachers' scaffolding in multimodal practices, students did not only replicate or imitate representational conventions but also became sign makers as they transformed meaning. All these examples are accounts of how multimodal resources can emphasize the many meaningful or transformative ways in which students can experience communication and come to develop new understandings through these rich resources.

As Kitson (2011) and Tang (1991) emphasize the teacher's role in encouraging critical perspectives and transformative practices, it is important to note that we found significant connections between how teachers can use multimodal texts that aim for transformed practice and students' identity development. As research has highlighted meaningful meaning-making and thus an improved sense of agency by learners creating and producing multimodal texts, the findings of this study show that students can take agency and develop their identities by engaging in multimodal texts. The findings also suggest that multimodality is utilized in a limited sense in the K-12 ESOL classroom (e.g., Early & Marshall, 2008; Hull & Nelson, 2005) if teachers do not plan to use multimodality in the class within critical framing. This is congruent with Ware's (2008)

study that demonstrated that less sophisticated uses of multimodality, such as middle school ELLs' limited use of computers to produce PowerPoint presentations, did not lead to meaningful learning experiences.

The findings of this study urge teachers and teacher educators to revisit multimodality not only as tools to present learning materials more interactively and engagingly but also as something that allows ELLs to become text makers and designers of their meaning-making. In other words, the interpretation of the findings is not to discourage teachers of ELLs from using visual and video clips as stimuli and/or scaffold for linguistic text for ELLs. Rather, it is for teachers to encourage ELLs to be transformative meaning-makers and signifiers of meaning whereby they gain agency and control of their learning. Studies have shown that the use of multimodality does not automatically lead to increased student learning unless the teacher is intentional and purposeful about the resources being utilized (Kitson, 2011; Maher, 2011; Tang, 1991). This also calls for multimodal resources to be used more prudently and intentionally by both teachers and students as Shanahan (2013) argued, "Ultimately, teachers and students need to have explicit knowledge of the five sign systems to strategically leverage the communicative potential of each" (p. 224).

Given that it was left open for teachers to design their understanding of multimodal teaching, this study importantly shows what teachers of ELLs have easy access to, what they deem as multimodal teaching, and what might be plausible in the K-12 classroom context. Although only a few teachers successfully had ELLs compose multimodally, this study could be closer to what might be currently available in the everyday teaching context. The teachers in our study did not employ more varied technology in instruction, other than the predominant use of non-technological visual aids, videos and PowerPoint. Following this, the reason for the teachers' limited use of technology could be related to the school curriculum, lack of technical support, or teachers' unfamiliarity with advanced technology. To reach the full potential of multimodal pedagogies in the education of ELLs, teachers should be exposed to a variety of approaches to using multimodal resources, especially technologically oriented resources, in broader and more sophisticated ways by which ELLs actively remake and transform multimodal texts.

By looking at teachers' use of resources through the critical lens of multiliteracies, we intended to disrupt the power dynamics in the classroom. We thus gave chances to teachers who wanted to make their students' voices heard and promote social justice in the classroom with an awareness of how important identity construction is for ELLs. The pedagogical implications of such empowering practices have been enormous in the literature (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). However, more research on how teachers can apply the empowering concept of transformed

practice in their teaching is needed to address this imbalance. In response to the increasing political tensions related to racial and cultural issues and incidents of violence that we witness in news and social media, we must update the pedagogies we offer to learners who continue to face serious questions about human rights and social justice (Hawkins & Norton, 2009).

Thus, it is also important to explicitly address what multimodal teaching means for teachers in teacher education courses, both using multimodal resources to present materials and to have students engage in implementing meaningful ideas. When in- and pre-service teachers enhance their capacity to design and implement lessons with critical lenses for ELLs, they will be empowered to develop multiliterate identities for themselves and their students (Yi & Choi, 2015). To encourage empowering teachers' identities as "transformative intellectuals" (Giroux, 1985, p. 379), teacher educators need to open more spaces where teachers can engage in multimodal practices (Choi & Yi, 2016).

When using multiliteracies, the purpose is not to provide an effective supplemental mode but to create a creative synergy through the combination or orchestration of modes. Future studies could investigate the ways in which multimodal resources are being utilized in the ESOL classroom to capture the current use of multimodal resources more accurately and whether classroom practice precisely matches research.

Endnotes

[1] WIDA is a consortium to develop English Language Development Standards based on multiple theories and approaches and to support educators and students (see www.wida.us/index.aspx). Recently, WIDA decided to stop using the acronym definition. Now, WIDA just means WIDA.

[2] Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are the guidelines for English language arts and mathematics for each grade level with the objectives of college and career readiness.

[3] On the website of www.blabberize.com, students can create their own 'blabber' with images and sound recordings.

[4] BrainPOP is an animated educational site for children: www.brainpop.com.

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