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Within the ‘Educational Chasm’: The Chilean ELT Textbook and the Development of Multimodal Literacy

Benjamin Carcamo

Facultad de Comunicaciones y Artes, Universidad de Las Américas, Santiago, Chile

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Abstract

Since the mid-90s, a growing concern has emerged regarding text comprehension from a multimodal perspective. In the Chilean educational context, multimodality has been highlighted in the official programs of the Ministry of Education. The present study examines one of the official Chilean ELT school textbooks, investigating whether its reading comprehension questions align with the country’s interest in developing multimodal literacy. This analysis employs Unsworth et al.’s (2019) taxonomy for classifying question types to examine 17 while-reading sections, comprising 216 questions. The findings reveal a predominant focus on questions that can be answered by reading the written text without looking at the pictures as well as a lack of images in several reading passages. These results highlight the crucial role that teachers play in complementing the school textbooks, enabling students to develop multimodal literacy as well as the necessity for textbook designers to recognize the pivotal role of images in comprehending multimodal texts.

Keywords: *Educational Chasm, the Chilean ELT Textbook, Multimodal Literacy*

Introduction

It has been established by governmental institutions, consulting agencies, and researchers from various fields that the school textbook (ST) is one of the primary resources used by teachers to facilitate meaningful learning in different subjects (Norberg, 2023; van den Ham & Heinze, 2018). Indeed, the ST has been said to be the most representative sample of pedagogic discourse (Rojas et al., 2020) as well as one of the most used teaching resources (Ibáñez et al., 2022). In alignment with its significance in the teaching and learning processes, several countries have implemented public policies aimed at supplying school textbooks to students across the country. In the case of Chile, this public policy, dating back to 1990, has facilitated the distribution of a substantial number of textbooks, reaching a spending of more than

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: bcarcamo@udla.cl

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US\$23,000,000 in the year 2023 alone (MINEDUC, 2022). Nevertheless, the mere presence of STs does not guarantee the learning process. For students to gain knowledge from their STs, it is imperative that they achieve a deep comprehension of the content (Best et al., 2005; Goldman, 1997; McNamara & Kintsch, 1996). This level of understanding requires the creation of a detailed mental representation of the situation described in the text (Kintsch, 1998; van den Broek, 2010), which inherently involves the successful establishment of a situation model, that is, the integration of prior knowledge and the content of the text (Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998)

Since the mid-90s, there has been a growing concern regarding text comprehension which goes beyond the classic understanding of comprehension and learning from texts understood as words on a page (Jewitt et al., 2016; Lim et al., 2022). The current understanding of texts as multimodal highlights that different semiotic modes, such as images and typography, contribute to the creation of meaning. Therefore, researchers have argued in favor of a pedagogy of multiliteracies that prompts students to understand the role semiotic modes play in the generation of a situation model taking into account features of intersemiotic texture (Eksi & Yakisik, 2015; Kress, 2010). Nonetheless, for a pedagogy of multiliteracies to be successfully implemented it is necessary to have teaching materials and assessment tools that exploit the multimodal nature of texts (Kessler & Marino, 2023). Research on the extent to which reading comprehension tests compel students to examine images accompanying texts in the assessment has detected what is known as the *educational chasm* (Unsworth et al., 2019). This term refers to the fact that, while the curriculum advocates for the development of students' semiotic awareness, standardized national tests tend to assess only the meaning conveyed by words. In contrast, prestigious international tests such as TIMSS and PISA not only assess students' comprehension of written text, but also of images and image-text relations (Unsworth, 2017; Unsworth et al., 2019).

Taking into account this context, the present study delves into an unexplored dimension of the educational chasm, specifically addressing a crucial element of EFL teaching: The ELT school textbook. Our objective was to identify the types of questions included in reading comprehension activities in one of the official Chilean ELT textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education from a multimodal perspective. To achieve this objective, we analyzed the reading comprehension activities using Unsworth et al.'s (2019) taxonomy for classifying types of questions. Given the explicit emphasis on multimodality outlined in the official Programs of the Ministry of Education, we contend that the ELT textbook should actively foster a multimodal approach to reading comprehension by including questions that prompt students to pay attention to semiotic modes beyond the written text.

Theoretical Framework

Reading Comprehension and Multimodality

Texts have always incorporated multimodality depending on the technology available at the time of their creation and the author's creative inclinations. The importance of recognizing this inherent multimodality in texts has been articulated in different terms such as 'the discovery of the obvious' (Kaltenbacher, 2007; Parodi, 2010), 'the visual turn' (Mitchell, 1995), and 'the multimodal turn' (Jewitt, 2009). These conceptual frameworks have propelled us beyond a logocentric understanding of text, leading us to perceive texts as complex multimodal artifacts

(Weninger et al., 2024). Currently, the increasing availability of digital media for text production entails that there is also an increasing need to understand the interaction between the written words and other semiotic modes to fully comprehend a text. In this context, research has shown that effectively exploiting and attending to semiotic modes can significantly enhance teaching and learning (Chang & Millet, 2014; Mayer, 2021; Pellicer-Sánchez et al., 2020; Webb & Chang, 2015) and that the understanding of reading needs to, therefore, be expanded to include the negotiation of diverse semiotic modes and their interplay (Unsworth & Chan, 2009).

Unsworth et al. (2019) examined the importance of multimodality on both international and national standardized exams. Their analysis of The Australian National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) sought to establish whether it assessed comprehension from a multimodal lens, that is, considering the interaction between language and image, which would in turn align with the curricular expectations in the country as well as international tests' demands. To analyze the questions in the NAPLAN tests, the researchers developed coding categories that accounted for what the reader needed to pay attention to in order to respond effectively. Table 1 shows the categories developed.

Table 1
Coding Categories for Questions

Category	Explanation
Yes	The image is pivotal in answering the question. In other words, only by looking at the image could the correct answer be provided since the information needed was not in the written text.
No	Although the text or test item contained an image, this image was not related to the answer, because the answer could only be found in the written words.
Supports	The answer could be obtained from the written words, but the image helped to support the answer by functioning as visual aid to what was written.
References	Looking at an image was necessary to obtain part of the information needed for the answer, such as an object's name, which was not in the written text.
Image in answer	Category that accounted for those questions in which the answer (e.g. alternatives in multiple-choice item) contained visual images regardless of whether there was or not an image in the reading passage as well.
No image	Both the reading passage and the answer included no images.

The results of the study conducted by Unsworth et al. (2019) showed that, unlike international tests such as TIMSS and PISA, the NAPLAN reading tests from 2008-2016 exhibited a minimal proportion of items that addressed images and image-text relations and that, in fact, there has been a progressive decrease in the inclusion of questions concerned with multimodality. In the case of the PIRLS data set, image-essential questions were 9% of the test items while in the 2015 TIMSS science text image was essential in answering 42% of items. Finally, the 2015 PISA assessment test addressed image-language relations in 73.5% of cases. The findings led to the conclusion that the NAPLAN test needed to be reviewed to make it consistent with curricular requirements pertaining to multimodal literacy in general and the multimodal nature of international tests specifically.

Similarly, Lim and Tan (2021) examined the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) visual text comprehension and the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Levels) (GCE O') items. The findings revealed that the percentage of questions that addressed image-text

relations for the PSLE from 2017 to 2019 was of 20.8% whereas for the GCE O' Level visual text comprehension from 2013 to 2019 was of 48.6%. Despite this, the weightage of the visual comprehension items was a mere 4% and 3.5% respectively. As for the PISA and PIRLS reading tests, the researchers found that the 2016 PIRLS sample fared better than the PISA data set, reaching 30.7% of the test items addressing text-image relations. Even so, the image-essential questions were minimal, making up less than 3% of the test items. Considering that the PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS tests were previously used as benchmarks by Unsworth et al. (2019), these findings suggest that tests in Singapore positively compare with what should be international standards although the neglecting of image-essential questions is a common weakness across the exams.

Scholars suggest that assessment trends that overlook the importance of the multimodal nature of texts result in teaching practices that perpetuate readers' focus on words as well as their neglect of other semiotic modes. This observation has been supported by research findings indicating that young and adult readers prioritize written words over images (Serrano & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2019; Tragant & Pellicer-Sánchez, 2019). Said phenomenon has been referred to as *the logocentric principle* (Parodi & Julio, 2016; Parodi et al., 2018; Parodi et al., 2020). To underscore the importance of attending to multimodal text features in contemporary reading practices, several countries such as Canada, Australia, the US, Singapore, and Sweden have incorporated multimodality into their curricula. This deliberate inclusion aims to challenge people's tendency to pay exclusive attention to the written word (Unsworth et al., 2019), so that they can develop the necessary skills to understand, produce, and evaluate the types of texts currently produced (Serafini, 2023). Similarly, the Chilean Ministry of Education has included multimodality within the national curriculum, for example, the program for 11th and 12th grade states that "communication, either written, oral or multimodal, requires generating strategies and tools that adapt to diverse situations and different purposes" (MINEDUC, 2019, p. 26). Although there is no clear progression in learning outcomes related to multimodality, the explicit acknowledgement of the multimodal nature of the text in Chilean education is a positive step in the right direction. However, there is currently no research studying the effectiveness of the ELT textbooks as valid resources for teachers to develop multimodal literacy in the EFL classroom. This emphasizes the necessity of investigating the role that ELT textbooks play in promoting multimodal literacy.

Research on Chilean ELT Books

School textbooks are instrumental in guiding students toward the attainment of learning outcomes. In Chile, the government takes a proactive stance by providing official school textbooks sanctioned by the Ministry of Education for each student of public and subsidized schools. The commitment to this initiative is evident in the substantial financial and resource investments made by the Ministry of Education. This financial backing is directed not only towards ensuring availability but also towards maintaining the overall quality of the textbooks. Through these efforts, the government aims to uphold the textbooks' status as indispensable pedagogical tools, facilitating effective teaching methods in classrooms (MINEDUC, 2022).

In the case of the book used for English as a Foreign Language (ELT textbook), researchers have examined both the previous and the current version of the ELT textbooks provided by the Ministry of Education (Carcamo, 2018, 2020, 2023; Lizasoain & Vargas Mutizabal, 2023).

Regarding teachers' perceptions, Lizasoain and Vargas Mutizabal (2023) explored EFL teachers' views of the ELT school textbooks used in schools. The study involved a survey of 484 EFL teachers from various contexts. The findings revealed that EFL teachers using the school textbook provided by the Ministry of Education thought it did not support effective learning and that its content did not align with the Ministry's programs. On the other hand, EFL teachers who worked with purchased ELT textbooks instead, selected either by themselves or their schools, reported a higher level of satisfaction.

Another aspect of the current Chilean ELT textbooks that has been examined is readability. Carcamo (2023) specifically investigated the readability level of the reading passages featured in the ELT textbook *Get Real* (Inostroza Domínguez & Olate Rojas, 2020), designed for use with 11th and 12th grades (first four units for 11th grade, and the following four for 12th). Considering that students are expected to reach level B1 by end of these grades, the researcher used the *Cambridge B1 Preliminary Exam* booklet as benchmark for readability. The findings of the study revealed that the RDL2 index (specific English as a second language readability index) indicated that the Chilean EFL school textbook included reading passages that are more challenging than those found in the *B1 Preliminary* (Cambridge University Press, 2019, 2020), potentially resulting in a more demanding reading experience for students than intended.

In summary, research suggests that the ELT school textbook fails to fully convince teachers in terms of quality. This has been supported by both studies on teachers' perceptions (Lizasoain & Vargas Mutizabal, 2023) as well as textbook analysis concerning readability and types of questions used (Carcamo, 2018, 2020, 2023). Given the significant role of multimodality in developing students' comprehension and language learning (Farías & Véliz, 2019; Sharmin, 2023), it is imperative to thoroughly explore the effectiveness of ELT school textbook. Specifically, this exploration should focus on how well these resources align with the challenges outlined in the national curriculum (Ibáñez et al., 2022; Rojas et al., 2020; Unsworth et al., 2019).

Method

Design

The research follows Stradling's textbook analysis framework, as delineated by Nicholls (2003). This framework provides tools to identify potential problematic dimensions in textbooks, enabling teachers to supplement content effectively. The dimension from the framework emphasized in the present study is 'pedagogical value.' In essence, the study aims to verify whether the ELT school textbook contributes to the development of multimodal literacy, aligning with the Ministry of Education's recent acknowledgement of texts as multimodal, as articulated in the official guidelines provided to teachers.

The school textbook analyzed for the study is the textbook provided by the Ministry of Education for the final two years of high school: *Get Real English 3 y 4 medio* (Inostroza Domínguez & Olate Rojas, 2020). This school textbook is made available to all interested public and subsidized schools in Chile, ensuring that their students can acquire the book along with access to the workbook and supplementary materials. The textbook comprises eight units, with four units intended for coverage during the 11th year and the remaining four intended for the 12th year, each unit contains four lessons thematically related to the unit. These lessons encompass listening and reading components, with speaking and writing typically included as

post-listening and post-reading activities. Additionally, each unit contains lessons for making connections with other school subjects, a literary text, a project-oriented lesson, and formative assessment. For the study, we examined only the lessons that focused on reading comprehension. To identify these lessons, we located the ‘before reading’, ‘while reading’, and ‘after reading’ headings within each lesson, and analyzed all the questions included in the ‘while reading’ section. The while-reading section was generally divided into the following sub-sections which grouped different numbers of questions: Smart Reading, Analysis, Think Critically, and Make Text-to-Self Connections. Table 2 presents the reading passages that were analyzed and the unit in which they were located.

Table 2*Reading Items Analyzed*

Unit	Name of the text
Unit 1	What are the benefits of part-time jobs for students?
Unit 1	Experiences of blind graduates in employment (Extract)
Unit 1	How to write a job application letter
Unit 2	9 Uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK (extract)
Unit 2	Be a culture shock absorber! (Extract)
Unit 3	How to live to 100
Unit 3	Happiness
Unit 4	7 Surprising Benefits of Volunteering
Unit 4	Interview with young entrepreneur Raymond Lei (extract)
Unit 5	Government’s “Positive for Youth” paper is a welcome step
Unit 5	What should you know about getting a summer job?
Unit 6	An Ocean of Plastic. Plastic is polluting the seas, but there’s still time to turn the tide.
Unit 6	Do you know how many things drones can do for you?
Unit 7	What would you do if you were an adult today?
Unit 7	It’s Time for a Change
Unit 8	The worst holiday of my life
Unit 8	Lost in the Amazon

As Table 2 shows, each unit included two reading section except for unit 1 which included three. The total number of while-reading sections analyzed was 17 while total number of questions amounted to 216.

Coding Strategy

To facilitate coders’ work, we adjusted the initial coding book based on Unsworth et al. (2019), making use of clearer labels and explanations, so that they would be easier for coders to memorize. Table 3 displays the coding categories.

Table 3
Coding Categories

Category	Number code	Explanation
Image question	1	The answer can be obtained exclusively from the image.
Text question	2	The answer can be obtained exclusively from the written text.
Text question with image reinforcement	3	The answer can be obtained from the text with the image supporting the information by functioning as visual aid.
Image-text question	4	The complete answer is obtained only by complementing information obtained from the written text with information obtained from the image.
Image in answer	5	Category that accounted for those questions in which the answer (e.g. alternatives in multiple-choice item) contained visual images regardless of whether there was or not an image in the reading passage as well.
No image	6	Both the reading passage and the answer included no images.

An example of the label changes includes shifting from ‘YES’ to ‘Image question’ or from ‘Support’ to ‘Text question with image reinforcement’. All items were single-coded, except for one that received both ‘image in answer’ and ‘text question’ categories as it occurred in previous studies using this coding strategy (Unsworth et al., 2019). Interrater agreement was calculated using Cohen’s Kappa, yielding a value of $k=.916$, with a percentage agreement of 95.8%.

Results

The school textbook for 11th and 12th graders comprises eight thematic units. All units contained two reading activities that followed the expected pedagogical sequence of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. In total, the analyzed questions came from seventeen different reading passages, with the overall number of questions analyzed reaching 216. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the types of questions identified in each unit and the overall total.

The results indicate that most questions fall into two categories, text questions (62.9%) and no image (31.5%), which together represent 94.4% of the total questions found in the *Get Real* school textbook. Units 1, 5 and 7 predominantly feature no image questions, as they involve texts that did not include images. Conversely, when images were included in texts, they were almost always intended for decorative purposes, as questions relying on images to complement or reinforce information amounted to barely 5.6% of the total questions. Notably, the most concerning finding is that the coders were unable to identify any question for the category ‘Image question’, indicating a lack of questions that can be answered exclusively by examining the image.

Table 4*Types of Questions in the ELT School Textbook*

Unit		Image question	Text question	Text question with image reinforcement	Image text question	Image in answer	No image	Total
1	Count	0	24	2	1	0	12	39
	%	0%	11.1%	0.9%	0.5%	0%	5.6%	18.1%
2	Count	0	28	2	0	0	0	30
	%	0%	12.9%	0.9%	0%	0%	0%	13.9%
3	Count	0	16	4	1	0	0	21
	%	0%	7.4%	1.9%	0.5%	0%	0%	9.7%
4	Count	0	24	0	0	0	0	24
	%	0%	11.1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	11.1%
5	Count	0	0	0	0	0	22	22
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10.2%	10.2%
6	Count	0	18	1	0	0	0	19
	%	0%	8.3%	0.5%	0%	0%	0%	8.8%
7	Count	0	0	0	0	0	34	34
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	15.7%	15.7%
8	Count	0	26	0	0	1	0	27
	%	0%	12%	0%	0%	0.5%	0%	12.5%
Total	Count	0	134	9	2	1	70	216
	%	0%	62.9%	4.2%	0.9%	.5%	31.5%	100%

Note. % indicates the percentage in relation to the total amount of questions

Furthermore, we conducted a detailed examination of the nature of the questions for different question types and their corresponding texts. The ornamental use of pictures in texts appears to be topic-related. In other words, if the text was about drones, the text would include a picture of a drone, which would not require further examination for answering any of the questions. An illustrative example is found in the text “Do you know how many things drones can do for you?” an image of a drone is used. This picture does not provide additional information about drones or details about what drones can do for people. The use of a picture merely to repeat the main content word of the title seems problematic, as it fails to elicit answers that necessitate examining semiotic modes beyond the written text.

In the case of texts with no images, further examination reveals the utilization of other multimodal features in both questions and answers that are not part of text-image relations addressed in the Unsworth et al.’s (2019) typology used for the study. For instance, the text “What should you know about getting a summer job?” includes highlighted text and the use of bold. Figure 1 shows an extract from the text.

Figure 1

Extract from the Text “What should you know about getting a summer job?”

Have you ever heard the phrase “practice makes perfect”? Recruit a friend or a family member to have a **mock** interview. Here are some things you can expect interviewers to ask you: *What is your greatest strength/weakness? Why should we hire you?* And so on.

As it can be observed, there word *mock* is highlighted so that the student can notice it and

later answer a question related to it. Similarly, the questions *What is your greatest strength/weakness* and *why should we hire you?* are also highlighted, in this case by means of bold. These instances serve as examples of how the textbook uses semiotic modes to guide the students and prompt them to answer more effectively the questions. In addition, texts incorporating these features encompass activities designed for students to notice and use these semiotic modes to answer questions, and thus cultivating their semiotic awareness. An example of this can be observed in the instruction given in question 1 of the text titled “9 uniquely British traditions you must experience in the UK”. This instruction reads as follows: “Read the text, paying special attention to the highlighted words. Match them with their synonyms in bold (a-d). Write your answers in your notebook.”

Summing up, the analysis of questions in the *Get Real* school textbook reveals a predominant distribution of questions into two types: text questions and no images. The percentages suggest that the textbook would not be suitable to develop multimodal literacy skills with students, as there are limited instances for them to exercise the skills necessary to identify the role and interplay of the different semiotic modes. Furthermore, the examination of the texts and activities confirms an ornamental use of images, serving primarily as topic-level decorations rather than as informational aids. On the other hand, in texts lacking images the presence of other multimodal features can be observed, such as highlighted text and bold formatting. This suggests a broader spectrum of non-text-image relations not addressed in the typology used in this study.

Discussion

The results obtained in the present study raise concerns on three fronts: The lack of focus on text-image relations, the absence of image essential questions, and the number of no image questions. In terms of text-image relations, the present study revealed that this crucial aspect of multimodal literacy was only present in 5.6% of the questions. Combining text questions in which the image offered support as well as questions in which the image complemented the text. If we compare this percentage to what has been shown in international tests such as PIRLS, TIMSS, and PISA, the findings are troubling. PIRLS tests are reported to include 16% of items that assess image-language relations, TIMSS Science test 79% of such items, and PISA 73.5% of items that aim at these relations (Unsworth et al., 2019).

In the case of image essential questions, that is, where the answer to a question could only be answered by examining the image, the present findings are concerning due to the complete absence of questions of this type in the ELT textbook for 11th and 12th grades. This result implies that Chilean students in classrooms in which the *Get Real* textbook is being used are likely to not be exposed to questions of this nature in their EFL lessons of their last two years of high school. Comparable studies have demonstrated that tests such as the PISA include 53% of items in which the image is essential for answering questions, while TIMSS included 21.4% in 2015 and 22.8% in 2011 (Unsworth et al., 2019). More recently, Lim and Tan (2021) have noted a lack of image essential questions, noting that no questions in the PISA trial reading items available online addressed this type of question. Likewise, the PISA test only included 2.9% of image essential questions.

Additionally, it is worth noting that 31.5% of the questions are found in texts in which there are no images. The nature of no images questions suggest that the reader cannot rely on any

visual aid to either support the comprehension process or facilitate the development of visual literacy skills. In international tests, no image questions may be mostly absent; for example, Lim & Tan's (2021) analysis of different versions of the PIRLS revealed that 2.9% of the questions were in relation to texts that included no images (same percentage as items that were image essential); however, it has also been shown that the PISA trial reading items reached 21.4%. Despite the disparity in percentage between both the PISA and the PIRLS exams, it is concerning that the number of no image items in the Chilean ELT school textbook significantly surpasses those observed in any of the international exams explored in previous studies.

Finally, the fact that there are other semiotic modes at play involved in multimodal literacy, such as color, typography, and mathematical symbols is in line with how some texts and questions are designed in the analyzed ELT school textbook. However, the categories established by Unsworth et al. (2019) and further explored and validated by Lim and Tan (2021) do not account for them. We propose that future studies should take into consideration these features of multimodality to enhance our understanding of the role of multimodality in reading comprehension. While text-image relations may be the cornerstone of multimodal literacy, it is essential to recognize the relevance of other semiotic modes as to fully comprehend multimodal literacy.

All these issues combined give rise to an 'educational chasm' related to the discrepancy between the expectations set by the national curriculum and the limitations posed by school textbooks. Clearly, if there are no images in texts or the comprehension questions do not require examining the images provided, it is difficult for teachers to help students understand how multimodality works. Two primary factors may contribute to this gap. Firstly, the evaluation process of the tender procedures for selecting STs conducted by the Ministry of Education might be inadequate. The current process might not sufficiently prioritize aspects like multimodal literacy. Findings such as the one obtained in this study puts into questions the assessment guidelines used. Another reason may be a lack of awareness among textbook designers regarding recent developments in academia concerning the understanding literacy from a multimodal perspective (Fälth et al., 2023; Sixin et al., 2024). To address these kinds of issues, Shu et al. (2023) suggest a collaborative approach between researchers, educators, and textbook designers in the creation and validation of teaching materials, such as ELT textbooks. This collaborative effort can facilitate the co-creation of knowledge and foster positive emotional interactions. Therefore, by involving more researchers both in the design process of the ELT textbooks as well as in the evaluation of the final products, it is possible that the ELT textbooks can be more in line with the national curriculum and with research findings, ultimately enhancing educational outcomes.

If we examine the results in the context of research done on Chilean school textbooks, the findings of the present study reinforce a persistently concerning trend. They indicate that current Chilean ELT school textbooks fall short of meeting the expectations outlined in the national curriculum and international standards (Carcamo, 2020; Carcamo, 2023; Lizasoain & Vargas Mutizabal, 2023). The new insights provided by the present analysis underscore the lack of questions that promote the understanding of texts as multimodal artifacts in which different semiotic modes combine to produce meaning. It is imperative that the designers of the Chilean ELT textbooks prioritize multimodal literacy to align with the necessary skills required for literacy standards in the 21st century worldwide.


Conclusion

In the present study we replicated previous endeavors focused on text comprehension from a multimodal lens (Lim & Tan, 2022; Unsworth et al., 2019), but with a novel interest: exploring the types of questions used in ELT textbooks. The rationale behind this is to expand our understanding of the educational chasm, transitioning from being perceived as an assessment-curriculum issue to a curriculum-teaching-assessment problem.

The study of questions in relation to multimodality has consistently revealed that there is a predominant focus on written text. Despite the inclusion of images in the assessment material, the assessment itself tends to include items that do not encourage students to examine the images. Additionally, when students are prompted to consider images, it is mainly as support for what is already present in the written text. The findings in the present study align with this general trend. The analysis of the 216 questions available in the while-reading sections of the school textbook for Chilean students, *Get Real*, indicates that 94.4% of the total questions do not require students to examine the images provided. These findings emphasize the outdated perception that images in multimodal texts usually serve ornamental purposes and do not contribute to meaning. From a pedagogical standpoint, the results suggest that the school textbook provided by the Chilean Ministry of Education is not an effective tool for EFL teachers to develop multimodal literacy. Moreover, given that visual aids have been shown to be a significant support for EFL students (Wright, 2010), the fact that almost all the questions lead students to disregard this semiotic mode undermines the opportunities for educators to train students to make meaning out of the different semiotic modes at play.

During the analysis we identified certain limitations related to the categories employed for the analysis. While the employed categories proved effective in addressing text-image relations, they did not allow us to account for other aspects of multimodality, such as elements related to the typographic semiotic mode, like the use of highlighter or bold. We suggest expanding the categories used in analyses like this to include other semiotic modes that may play a significant role in comprehension. Additionally, EFL Teachers in Chile should be mindful of the limitations present in the school textbook provided by the Ministry of Education. This awareness is essential for adapting the textbook material (Carrete-Marín & Domingo-Peñafiel, 2022), whether by adding questions that prompt students to focus on images and understand their importance in the meaning making process or by including activities that guide students in editing the text to incorporate more meaningful images that can contribute to the meaning of the text and that help in understanding.

ORCID

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7330-9007>

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