Teaching Intercultural Communication Competency Through Multimodal Language Teaching at Graduate Level: A Study in Pakistani Perspectives

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Abstract

Intercultural communication is essential for advancing phenomenological learning shifts. There remains a gap in intercultural communication competency that can be filled with advanced teaching techniques. This research explores how teaching language in a multimodal manner can enhance language learners' ability to communicate across cultures. Given the increasing emphasis on effective cross- cultural interaction, this study investigates how multimodal strategies (e. g., visual aids, body language, technology use, tone, gestures) facilitate learners' abilities to perceive and engage with other cultures. This quantitative study examines the impact of varying communication mediums on learners' language acquisition and cultural competence. The study relies on a survey- based questionnaire consisting of ten research questions directed at M. Phil. and PhD English- holding teachers and students teaching and learning at different levels. Data was collected from 116 individuals through the questionnaire. The analysis was performed using SPSS version 25. The findings indicate that multimodal teaching aids students in better comprehending and retaining language content while enhancing their intercultural sensitivity. Students who received information through multiple processing methods reported increased confidence, expression, and respect for diversity. This study demonstrates that non- verbal communication and contextual cues play a fundamental role in developing language and cross- cultural understanding. However, it also highlights challenges such as teacher training and inadequate institutional support. To optimize these benefits, the study emphasizes the necessity for curriculum reforms, teacher training, and policy- level support for multimodal methods in language teaching to enhance intercultural competencies in a globally interconnected world. The paper contributes to the rich literature on language teaching and learning. It identifies areas for future research, such as cross- regional communication comparisons and emerging technologies for multimodal instruction.

Key Terms: Multimodal Teaching, Language Teaching, Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Communication Competency

Introduction

Multimodal language teaching utilises various semiotic resources, including visual, auditory, gestural, spatial, and linguistic modes, enabling learners to use and understand a second

language (L2) in culturally transformed contexts. This pedagogical approach is necessary in our modern culture, where merely communicating is complex enough, and the reality of intersecting cultures and perspectives is so vast that relying solely on linguistic ability is insufficient. When integrating multimodality into language education, it draws upon the theoretical background from seminal studies on communicative competence, which encompasses additional dimensions beyond purely linguistic skills (Byram & Golubeva, 2020) and is supported by guidance regarding the role of culture in learning. Recent advances in this research field have refined these ideas, emphasising the importance of multimodality in developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) (Gorham & Amgitt, 2024). Since the last quarter of that year, researchers have focused on proposing multimodal strategies for educational settings. Genre-based multimodal text analysis has shown that students improved their ability to navigate and produce culturally sensitive, context-appropriate texts (Haller-Gryce, 2022). Similarly, the literature has explored digital technologies, such as Virtual Reality (VR), which can provide immersive learning opportunities that simulate real intercultural exchanges (Scavarelli et al., 2021). These technology implementations not only engage learners but also facilitate the experience of cultural management, which is essential for ICC (Wiziack, 2022). Moreover, there has been a shift in English language teaching toward adopting multimedia approaches, whereby teachers are encouraged to use various forms of media, including but not limited to traditional texts and digital platforms, to present students with diverse cultural perspectives and modes of communication (Gomez-Galan, 2020). This is particularly relevant in higher education, where collaborative learning environments enhance intercultural competence as students from different backgrounds learn from one another and benefit from alternative cultural frameworks (de Hei et al., 2020).

There is even empirical evidence that multimodal teaching can facilitate tangible aspects of ICC. For instance, students may experience enhanced vocabulary acquisition, reading, and speaking fluency, supported by multimodal immersion techniques, particularly in EAP and ESP contexts (Rahmanu & Molnar-Heliyon, 2024). Additionally, incorporating culturally related knowledge into language courses through multimodal channels has increased cultural empathy and reduced cultural stereotypes among language learners (Hoter et al., 2024; Fermandez-Corvacho et al., 2024).

In this age, the evolution of technology has significantly transformed people's daily lives and

forms of communication. Vocational schools have merged with other approaches, shaping auditory, visual, and digital skills (Gu, 2024) into multiple complex processes (Gish & Ravichandran,2024). It is widely claimed that "language and culture are intertwined and cannot be separated" (Noels et al., 2020). "Language and culture constitute a living organism; language is flesh; culture is blood," while culture is the soul of the body of language (Jisager, 2020). Without culture, language is lifeless; without language, culture is shapeless. The relationship between language and culture appears to be deeply ingrained. Since individuals from diverse backgrounds may exhibit different attitudes and practices, people need to appreciate their own culture and learn to respect those from various backgrounds to ease the struggles among them. With the development of globalisation, international exchanges have become more frequent, and more individuals are recognising the importance of intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is communication between individuals with different cultural perceptions and symbolic systems, influencing the event (Liu et al., 2023). Successful intercultural communication is achieved through language. Language is the soil of culture, and culture is the mirror of language. There is a close relationship between intercultural communication and English education. Students, especially those majoring in English, should reflect more on intercultural issues. Meanwhile, it is also necessary to cultivate students' intercultural communication competence in English education and motivate them to engage more in intercultural communication as educators (Liu eta al., 2023). Many studies also highlight the significance of communicative competence in English Language Teaching (ELT) and its widely accepted position as the primary goal of ELT in many countries worldwide (Aziziva, 2024). For most learners, English is primarily learned to communicate through speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Words and culture go hand in hand. Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is also essential for successful communication; however, ICC is often regarded as a hidden curriculum in ELT, as its importance is still not fully recognised (Swigart, 2022). Byram, Porto, and Wagner (2021) outline the goals of English teaching. All these goals must encourage interaction, cultural awareness, and a positive attitude towards other societies. Therefore, this paper will address the definition, education, and assessment of ICC to promote its teaching, which is largely neglected in ELT.

Teachers require training in effectively designing and implementing multimodal strategies to ensure equitable access to technology in educational contexts. Moreover, the trade-off

between rich multimodal resources and learners' cognitive load remains a pressing concern for research (Duan et al.., 2025).

Many Pakistani students have to apply for higher studies and jobs in foreign countries, but a lack of intercultural communication pragmatics leads them to experience minimal and delayed gains in their achievements. Culture and language are interlinked, while interculturality helps to understand the complexities of contextual factors (Aziz et al., 2020). Through intercultural communication, teachers and students can become pragmatically equipped with intercultural communication competency. Intercultural communication competency is a significant challenge in the Pakistani setting (Aziz et al., 2020).

There are different barriers to intercultural communication among students. Rehman & Ghani (2024) disclosed in their research conducted at Lahore University that anxiety, similarity assumptions, misinterpretation of nonverbal communication, ethnocentrism, and the diverse cultural and political backgrounds of students are major problems in intercultural communication (Rehman & Gnani, 2024). Siraj, Khan, and Asif (2022) mentioned that intercultural communication is very effective for Pakistani students participating in foreign study programs.

The English language is not only a source of enriched knowledge and competency but also a medium of cross-cultural communication. Sultana (2023) found that the English language can help explain various cultures, their myths, and encourage tolerance through training students. Today, in the age of information technology, multimodal language teaching methodology can be helpful in developing intercultural communication competency based on the needs of the time due to shifts in knowledge and services. At the same time, it serves as a great source of sustainable learning, rather than just conducting physical classes trips.

Statement of the Problem

Shift and search for higher knowledge and services require intercultural communication competency. The emergence of various language aspects in the new era has prompted the search for innovative language teaching methodologies. Several factors must be considered during language teaching and learning to achieve competency as a contact language for intercultural communication. Intercultural communication competency can open numerous opportunities for transferring education, technology, and new resources. Teaching the English language through multimodal methods can help students attain intercultural communication competency. Multimodal language teaching methods can provide cost-effective and

sustainable intercultural communication competency.

Research Objectives

- To understand the importance of multimodal language teaching methods in enhancing intercultural communication competency in Pakistani students.

- To identify the perceived intentions of teachers and learners regarding the value of multimodal language teaching methods for improving intercultural communication competency for Pakistani students.

- To propose potential techniques and strategies to enhance intercultural communication competency within the framework of multimodal language teaching.

Research Questions

1. What is the importance of multimodal language teaching methods for intercultural communication competency for Pakistani students?

2. How do Pakistani learners and teachers perceive the relevance of multimodal language teaching methods for intercultural communicative competency?

3. What strategies should be adopted to implement multimodal language teaching for intercultural communicative competency at the graduate level in Pakistan?

Significance of the Study

The present study can help understand intercultural communication competency in the changing landscape of education and service shifts. The dilemma of learning exists despite many research efforts. This study provides insights from postgraduate teachers and students regarding the usability of multimodal language teaching for intercultural communication competency. The study addresses various techniques for applying multimodal language teaching to enhance communication competency so that graduate and postgraduate students and teachers can achieve future objectives.

Literature Review

Concept of Intercultural Communication Competency

The term "ICC" has been studied by scholars globally over the last few decades (Byram & Masuhara, 2013). However, there appears to be no standard definition of the term to this day. Byram (1995) summarizes ICC in ELT as savoir-être (attitudes), savoir (knowledge), savoir-comprendre (skills to interpret and relate), savoir-s'engager (critical cultural awareness), and savoir-faire (ability to interact and discover).

Byram separates cultural knowledge into two parts:

First, the knowledge is about social groups and their cultures in one's own country and similar knowledge of the interlocutor's country, on the one hand; knowledge of the processes of interaction at individual and societal levels, on the other." (Byram, 1997). For English language learners, interlocutors can be people from around the world, thanks to the lingua franca nature of English. Therefore, in discussing English teaching, the knowledge mentioned in this definition can first refer to the various cultures and languages among people from different countries or even social groups within the same country.

Second, English is a global language used to communicate with others from diverse cultures. This culture isn't restricted to a single country, such as America or Britain. Thirdly, some individuals may have sectoral or cultural specialisation in regions with which they frequently interact. For instance, if someone works in a small firm with partners from India, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia, that individual can focus specifically on their cultural backgrounds. This knowledge would be advantageous when communicating in their daily working life.

Sercu (2005) summarises the idea of ICC based on Byram's framework of saviours as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In his view, knowledge encompasses everything related to the culture in which lessons are delivered, general culture (knowledge about oneself and others), and the language and its relationship with culture. Skills describe the ability to understand, connect, explore, engage, and learn, along with strategies to facilitate learning. Attitudes are primarily concerned with valuing oneself and others and critically engaging with both the foreign culture being considered and one's own. Sercu's definition captures nearly all of Byram's definition while emphasising home or local culture.

Approaches in Multimodal Language Teaching

Digital Multimodal Composition

This approach encourages students to create messages across various forms of communication. This is particularly beneficial for second-language writing, as it allows learners to engage with language in a way that reflects its more natural use. A study on DMC in EAP contexts found that its application increased students' motivation to learn and engage; another study at the university level also indicated a positive effect on students' motivation and involvement. It further aids in developing digital literacy and critical thinking skills (Jiang , 2022).

Multimodal Affective Teaching

This approach incorporates emotional factors related to learning into the overall teaching strategy and suggests that including emotion recognition and management will enhance literacy outcomes. This includes multimodal corrective feedback in writing tasks, where feedback is delivered verbally and involves visual or gestural cues enriching the emotional learning experience. For instance, this approach has been explored in German as a Foreign Language (GFL) to improve writing skills (Mallia, 2020).

Technology for Teaching in Each of the Modalities

Technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and educational games have enriched students' learning experiences. For example, VR storytelling has been utilised in nursing education to boost engagement and interest, showcasing this method's potential in language education (Hardie et al., 2020). In addition to educational games, micro-learning through applications like TikTok has been investigated for its potential advantages for language learners (Khlaif & Salha, 2021).

Scope of Multimodal Language Teaching

Example of Effective Women's Multimodal Literacy Teaching

Explicit teaching of multimodal literacy involves instructing students on interpreting and creating multimodal texts, emphasising the interaction between images, sound, and text. For learners, understanding how to utilise these modes to make meaning is an increasingly valuable skill in a digital world dominated by multimodal communication, extending beyond linear writing (Kress & Selander, 2012; Lim et al., 2021).

Utilising Multimodal Approaches for Inclusivity

Multimodal teaching promotes inclusivity in language learning by accommodating various learning modes. This includes using diverse sensory inputs and outputs during instruction to address different learning preferences and abilities, creating an inclusive educational environment within a single classroom (García-Pastor & Gómez-Martínez, 2020).

Multimodal Communicative Competency

This ability is a complex concept referring to the ease and appropriateness of interacting with others across cultures, known as Intercultural Communicative Competency (ICC). Drawing from recent scholarly findings, here is a brief overview of its theoretical foundations and domains:

Theoretical Foundations of Cultural Learning and Intercultural Communication

ICC is founded on the notion that language and culture are interconnected. Theoretical frameworks often draw on cultural anthropology, communication studies, and applied linguistics, demonstrating that language learning involves understanding cultural norms and practices (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1998).

Cognitive/Affective/Psychological Dimension

Models define ICC by integrating cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitudes), and psychological (behavioral skills)dimensions (Bennett, 1986; Deardorff, 2006). This comprehensive model suggests that ICC encompasses factual knowledge, affective responses, and reactions to intercultural experiences.

Intercultural Sensitivity

Bennett's DMIS outlines the stages individuals move between ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism, emphasising the developmental nature of the journey to achieving intercultural competence.

Models of Communication Competence

By incorporating elements of interpersonal communication competence theories, ICC is viewed as a specific application of these models when confronted with intercultural settings, and thus, whether the intended meaning of messages is appropriate and effective across cultures (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984).

Intercultural Communicative Competency Domains

Intercultural Knowledge

This domain involves knowledge of cultural norms, values, beliefs, and practices of one's culture and others. It comprises knowledge of cultural entities, products, practices, and viewpoints and is essential to comprehensively interpreting interactions that span multiple cultures (Byram, 1997).

Intercultural Skills

Skills refer to the application of knowledge in practice. Key skills include:

Mainly from the Interpretive and Relating

The ability to interpret events and documents of another culture and relate them to oneself.

Discovery and Interaction

The ability to obtain new insights about a culture and manage knowledge, attitudes, and skills within the constraints of real-time interaction.

Intercession

Functioning as a cultural intermediary, enabling dialogue between individuals from heterogeneous cultural orientations.

Intercultural Being

Commonly referred to as the attitudinal or affective component, this domain consists of:

Openness: Willingness to interact with and learn from other cultures.

Regard: A respect for and value of other cultures and ways of living.

Curiosity: An open-minded approach to cultural differences.

Intercultural Understanding Abilities

Since intercultural competence is contextual, this domain also emphasises the importance of consistently adjusting one's behavior, perceptions, and decisions to various situational contexts, including power dynamics, status hierarchies, and the relational nature of competence (Collier, 2015). The term ICC, which initially served as a focal point for discussion, has since evolved into a topic of interdisciplinary convergence that best explains how to educate for the skills required for proficiency in intercultural communication in a transnational context.

Challenges in Multimodality Implementation

Although multimodality can enrich the teaching process, it presents specific challenges (Sheraz et al., 2020). The first concern is that teachers sometimes fail to engage deeply with the implications of this pedagogy, revealing a fundamental lack of understanding of the connections between modalities, the critical use of modes, affective work, and cross-cultural awareness. Second, second-language acquisition is hindered by cognitive barriers encountered by learners and the complexity of the subject matter. Additionally, multimodality necessitates improved methods for processing language and developing skills and competencies relevant to learners at the tertiary level. Finally, multimodality and its various modes require clarification regarding the relationship between language and other modes, along with the collaborative functioning of multiple factors such as spoken language, eye contact, facial expressions, and words (Yan, 2024), which have yet to develop fully. Teaching languages through multimodality means utilising 'modes' (such as text, visuals, audio, gesture, and space) to facilitate language learning.

Research Methodology

This qualitative descriptive study examined the roles of multimodal language teaching

strategies in enhancing intercultural communication competency among language learners. Data was collected in relation to intercultural multimodality in classroom settings. The aim was to explore how these multiple modes of instruction promote both linguistic proficiency and cultural sensitivity.

Research Design

Qualitative research was chosen because it is well-suited for investigating complex social and educational phenomena, especially those involving perceptions, behaviors, and interactions. This design thoroughly explored how teachers implement multimodal approaches and how learners experience them in language classrooms. Furthermore, it enabled the creation of rich descriptive data from multiple sources, offering a comprehensive view of the teaching-learning environment.

Participants and Setting

The participants included language teachers and students from M Phil and PhD offering institutes that integrated English as a second language into their curriculum. The teachers selected for this study employed multimodal approaches in their language instruction, such as gestures, intonation, visual aids, audio samples, and digital tools like videos and presentations. Their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds provide valuable insights into the development of intercultural communication.

Data Collection Methods

The data was collected through the questionnaire, which consisted of 10 questions. The sample was selected through convenience sampling. One hundred sixteen participants with master's and PhD degrees were selected through convenient sampling for the present research.

Data Analysis Process

The collected data was analysed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize responses. Analysis methods explored the relationship between multimodal teaching strategies and students' intercultural communication competency levels.

This study utilized a quantitative approach in its methodology, aiming to achieve statistically meaningful insights and evidence-based conclusions about the changes in language education resulting from multimodal approaches.

Data Analysis

The present section describes the demographic and data analysis of the received opinions on

the questionnaire. The comparison is made between PhD and Master's degree holders so that the opinions are considered prestigious, as both Master's and PhD degree holders encounter similar aspects in the field related to multimodal language teaching and intercultural communication teaching through the foreign language.

Demographic Information

		Masters/PhD			Total	Total N	%	Total Master/PhD	%
Masters	Male	Teacher	Rural	16	46				
			Urban	30					
						52	44.83%		
		Student	Rural	5	6				
			Urban	1					
								85	73.28%
	Female	Teacher	Rural	5	11				
			Urban	6					
						33	28.45%		
		Student	Rural	16	22				
			Urban	6					
PhD	Male	Teacher	Rural	6	17				
			Urban	11					
						20	17.24%		
		Student	Rural	0	3				
			Urban	3				31	26.72%
	Female	Teacher	Rural	3	10				
			Urban	7		11	9.48%		
		Student	Rural	0	1				

Urban	1				
Total		116	100%	116	100%

The demographic data provides an overview of the participants categorised by qualification, gender, profession, and location. A total of 116 participants include Master's holders (85 participants, 73.28%) and PhD holders (31 participants, 26.72%). Among Master's holders, the percentage of male teachers from rural areas is 16 (44.83%), while 30 are from urban areas. Male students from rural and urban areas account for 5 and 1, respectively. There are 11 (28.45%)female teachers, five from rural areas and six from urban areas. Among the female participants are 16 from rural areas, six from urban areas, and additional female students. Among PhD holders, 6 (17.24%) male teachers are from rural areas, and 11 are from urban areas; meanwhile, male students from rural and urban areas total 0 and 3, respectively. There are 11 (9.48%) female teachers, three from rural areas and seven from urban areas. Among female students, one is from a rural area and one from an urban area. Most participants hold a Master's degree, and there are more teaching professionals than students. Urban teachers overrepresent both qualification categories. According to gender distribution, there is a larger number of male participants. Any research on multimodal language teaching likely reflects the diverse range of teaching professionals, not just from an urban education context.

Group Statistics

Masters/PhD		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. I think cross-cultural vocabulary competency can be achieved by teaching English through multimodal methods (e.g., semiotics, audio, visuals, etc.).	Masters PhD	85	4.34	0.48	0.05
		31	4.52	0.51	0.09
2. Students can effectively learn the style of message delivery by learning English through multimodal teaching methods (e.g., semiotics, audio, visuals,	Masters PhD	85	4.20	0.48	0.05
		31	4.61	0.50	0.09

etc.).

3. I think students can learn a variety of means of material representation of other cultures if they are taught the English language through multimodal teaching methods (i.e., semiotics, audio, visuals, etc.).	Masters PhD	85	4.33	0.47	0.05
		31	4.61	0.50	0.09
4. I think students can use high-level means of prosody during intercultural communication if taught through multimodal teaching methods (i.e. semiotics, audio, visuals, etc.).	Masters PhD	85	4.04	0.70	0.08
		31	4.03	1.11	0.20
5. I think the appropriate gestures and facial expressions can be produced in students for intercultural communication competency if taught through multimodal teaching methods (i.e. semiotics, audio, visuals, etc.).	Masters PhD	85	4.19	0.81	0.09
		31	4.32	0.48	0.09
6. I think the multimodal language teaching methods (i.e. semiotics, audio, visuals, etc.) can produce logical and sequential expressions in students for effective cross-cultural communication.	Masters PhD	85	4.18	0.71	0.08
		31	4.23	0.62	0.11
7. I think verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in intercultural domains can effectively be produced in students by teaching them English through multimodal language teaching methods (i.e., semiotics, audio, visuals, etc.).	Masters PhD	85	4.18	0.85	0.09
		31	4.23	0.43	0.08
8. I think the degree of the realisation of	Masters	85	4.08	0.85	0.09

pragmatic goals can be effectively produced in students through multimodal language teaching.	PhD	31	4.61	0.50	0.09
9. Students can also form a general impression of presentation while being taught through multimodal language teaching methods.	Masters	85	4.11	0.72	0.08
	PhD	31	4.32	0.48	0.09
10. The dynamics of a foreign language (speech development, etc.) can also be effectively produced in students by teaching them through multimodal language teaching methods.	Masters	85	4.02	0.64	0.07
	PhD	31	4.13	0.72	0.13

Q1: Cross-Cultural Vocabulary Competency

To develop cross-cultural vocabulary competency, doctoral degree holders (M=4.52, SD=0.51) view multimodal teaching methods more favourably than master's degree holders (M=4.34, SD=0.48). Close mean values indicate general agreement between the groups, with respondents holding PhDs demonstrating more vigorous endorsements. The minor standard deviations suggest that responses within each group were pretty homogeneous. This implies that those with higher qualifications possess greater confidence in the effectiveness of multimodal methods for teaching vocabulary, likely due to their increased awareness of linguistic theories and principles of cross-cultural communication. Overall, both groups perceive multimodal strategies as beneficial for broadening students' vocabulary across various cultural settings.

Q2: Learning How Messages Are Delivered

Respondents with a PhD (M=4.61, SD=0.50) rate the importance of multimodal instruction in message delivery styles higher than respondents with a Master's (M=4.20, SD=0.48). This discrepancy indicates that those with PhDs strongly believe in the effectiveness of visual, auditory, and semiotic means of teaching students to express messages appropriately. These relatively small standard deviations reflect responses consistently clustered around the means, underscoring a more uniform consensus among PhD respondents. The findings suggest a positive relationship between academic qualification and agreement on the significance of engaging in multimodal activities to develop appropriate message delivery skills, likely due

to increased exposure to communication theories in higher education.

Q3: Representation of Other Cultures in the Learning Material

Respondents with a PhD (M=4.61, SD=0.50) are more inclined than Master's respondents (M=4.33, SD=0.47) to believe that multimodal methods are essential for helping students understand how different cultures represent their materials. This suggests that PhD holders perceive a wider range of benefits from multimodal teaching in cross-cultural learning. The results show a high level of agreement, emphasised by the minor standard deviations of both groups. The results indicate that higher academic levels correlate with a greater appreciation for multimodal methods that expose students to diverse cultural perspectives, thus making language teaching more holistic and immersive.

Q4: Discussing Improving Prosody in Intercultural Contact

Both Master's (M=4.04; SD=0.70) and PhD (M=4.03; SD=1.11) respondents evaluating the role of multimodal teaching in prosody enhancement similarly suggest that qualification may not significantly affect perceptions of its crucial role in intercultural communication. The standard deviation is a measure of spread, with higher values indicating more dispersed data points. This might imply that while some PhD holders find multimodal methods very effective for prosody training, others are less convinced. All participants agreed that multimodal approaches, such as audio-visual methods, provide students with better tools to tackle challenges like stress, intonation, and rhythm in cross-cultural communication.

Question 5: Creating Gestures and Facial Expressions

PhD respondents rank the effectiveness of multimodal teaching with relationship gestures and facial expressions slightly higher (M=4.32, SD=0.48) than their Master's degree counterparts (M=4.19, SD=0.81). The PhD group, exhibiting a lower standard deviation in responses, indicates more agreement among its members, whereas the Master's group displays more significant variation, suggesting a broader diversity of opinion. This result implies that Ph.D level understanding may align more closely with the effectiveness of multimodal strategies, such as video modelling and semiotic cues, in enhancing students' ability to communicate non-verbally. Both groups seem to concur that multimodal teaching enhances non-verbal communication skills essential for intercultural competence.

Q6: Logical and Sequential Expressions in Writing

The mean scores are notably similar for Master's (M=4.18, SD=0.71) and PhD (M=4.23, SD=0.62) groups, consistently indicating that both believe multimodal teaching facilitates

logical and sequential communication. The closer responses of the PhD group reveal a more homogeneous perspective than the Master's group. Higher academic qualifications do not significantly influence attitudes toward the contribution of multimodal methods to enhancing structured expression. Furthermore, both groups agree that students engaged in cross-communicative modes of thought can reach new heights in verbal and written expression when utilising techniques such as visual storytelling, diagrams, and interactive media.

Question 7: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Strategies

Respondents with Master's (M=4.18, SD=0.85) and PhD (M=4.23, SD=0.43) degrees agree that multimodal teaching develops verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. The lower standard deviation in the PhD group indicates more consensus, while the Master's group shows higher variation. This suggests that while both groups acknowledge the role of multimodal strategies in teaching communication, PhD holders may have a more coherent understanding of their effectiveness. This finding is consistent with the previous one, reinforcing that multimodal approaches, such as role-playing, experiential learning, and multimedia, are vital for preparing students for effective intercultural communication.

Q8: Accomplishing Practical Targets

PhD holders (M=4.61, SD=0.50) strongly agree that multimodal teaching enables students to successfully achieve pragmatic goals, while Master's holders (M=4.08, SD=0.85) show slightly less agreement. The higher mean score for PhD respondents reflects a more significant endorsement of multimodal teaching methods for pragmatic aspects of language, including politeness, tone, and context-appropriate expressions. Additionally, the more critical standard deviation among Master's respondents indicates a broader range of opinions. This suggests that individuals with a Master's degree may have differing levels of exposure to multimodal teaching. In contrast, PhD holders appear to have a more uniform background through theoretical and practical experiences, indicating that multimodal teaching effectively facilitates andragogy in achieving pragmatic competence.

Question 9: Overall Thoughts on Presentation

PhD respondents (M=4.32, SD=0.48) find multimodal teaching more effective than a Master's (M=4.11, SD=0.72) for developing strong overall presentation styles among their students. This suggests that individuals holding a PhD believe video analysis, interactive presentations, and semiotic techniques are more effective for helping students convey information articulately and engagingly. The standard deviations reveal that Master's holders

present more varied responses than the PhD respondents, who generally agree more closely. The study findings highlight the role of multimodal teaching in boosting students' confidence and competence in delivering oral and written presentations across various cultures.

Question 10: Speech Development in a Foreign Language

PhD respondents (M=4.13, SD=0.72) show a slight preference for multimodal teaching over Master's holders (M=4.02, SD=0.64) in developing foreign language speech skills in students. The subtle difference in means reflects a consensus between the two groups regarding the importance of multimodal teaching in enhancing speech fluency, pronunciation, and articulation. The higher standard deviation among PhD respondents could indicate diverse research backgrounds or exposure to multimodal methods. These findings support the notion that multimodal strategies, such as speech recognition programs, audio-visual resources, and conversation simulations, can significantly enhance students' spoken skills in a foreign language.

Discussion

Multimodal teaching methods have greatly improved learners' cultural vocabulary competency. Feijoo and Anglada (2024) describe an experiment that involved secondary school students learning Spanish as a second language, using audio-visual materials alongside hand gestures to introduce the morphological components of words. The study found that the group receiving audio-visual-gestural input demonstrated the most significant improvement in morphological awareness compared to other groups. As a result, utilising gestures or visual cues to complement verbal expression can enhance vocabulary comprehension and retention, especially in contexts where cross-cultural communication heavily relies on non-verbal cues. Similarly, Nafiah (2023) found that multimodal input (such as images and videos) helped English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners acquire culturally specific vocabulary, further emphasising the importance of contextual and cultural relevance in vocabulary instruction.

Prosody, including intonation, stress, and rhythm, is essential for successful intercultural communication. Madella (2023) recently explored the use of multimodal prosody in L2 teaching and learning, highlighting "prosodic pointing," which refers to how prosodic features draw attention to certain parts of an utterance. These findings can assist teachers in using multimodal methods to teach prosodic features, enabling learners' pragmatic competence to infer better and convey meanings in intercultural communication. Additionally, Shimada (2024) demonstrated that incorporating visualisations of pitch contours into auditory

input improved Japanese learners' ability to perceive and produce English intonation patterns, underscoring the effectiveness of such multimodal strategies in teaching prosody.

Body language, tone, gestures, and facial expressions are key components of non-verbal communication; they convey meaning and emotion across cultures. To support this thesis, Feijoo and Anglada (2024) provided evidence of the effectiveness of hand gestures integrated into explanations of morphological content, suggesting that multimodal input enhances the ability to understand and produce language structures. By using visual cues through gestures, language instructors can give their students additional context that aids in understanding the language and its application, thereby enriching social interactions across cultures. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2025) found that EFL learners engaged in role-play activities and focused instruction on appropriate gestures and facial expressions used in different cultures improved their non-verbal communication skills, affirming the significance of multimodal methods in teaching the non-verbal aspects of language.

Pragmatic competence is the ability to use language effectively to achieve goals in social interactions. Alsmari (2024) examined the influence of multimodal input on understanding conversational implicatures among EFL learners. The study concluded that learners exposed to multimodal tasks containing textual and non-textual cues interpreted implicatures more accurately than those working solely with textual input. Due to their diverse contextual insights, Multimodal teaching methods provide valuable input that can improve one's ability to infer implied meanings in discourse, countering the generalised claim mentioned earlier by suggesting that modal diversity enhances learners' pragmatic competence. Similarly, Tarchi et al. (2021) found that adding subtitles and relevant visual annotations to video clips about requests and apologies supported learners' reception and production skills for these speech acts, demonstrating the relevance of multimodal tools in pragmatic teaching.

Multimodal learning is beneficial, especially in developing foreign language speech skills. Sherwani and Harchegani (2022) investigated the effects of multimodal discourse analysis on the reading comprehension of Iraqi EFL learners. The group receiving instruction that included videos and images based on Halliday's social semiotics showed significant improvements in reading comprehension tasks compared to the control group. While the study focused on reading education, these multimodal aspects can be generalised, and it is reasonable to expect that they would also support speech development, as exposure to various

input modes can facilitate better language acquisition. They also found that animated videos with simultaneous subtitles enhanced Mandarin Chinese learners' pronunciation and fluency, indicating that multimodal resources may promote the advancement of foreign language speech skills.

The Role of Intercultural Communicative Effectiveness Telecollaboration, or online intercultural exchange, has proven to be an indispensable tool for enhancing intercultural communicative competence. Previous studies (Fathi, Rahimi, & Liu 2023, for example) have investigated EFL learners' telecollaborative language learning experiences with both native and non- native speakers of English. Findings indicated that these interactions substantially influenced learners' intercultural communicative effectiveness, including behavioural flexibility, interaction relaxation, and messaging skills. This underscores the potential of technology-mediated, multimodal communication platforms for promoting intercultural cooperation and competence in language learning. In another example, O'Dowd and Dooly (2022) noted that tele-collaborative projects that included collaborative writing tasks with peers from different cultural backgrounds increased learners' awareness of cultural differences and their ability to negotiate meaning during intercultural communication.

Pragmatic teaching can differ when implemented virtually or face-to-face. Vu and Nguyen (2024) examined the effect of virtual versus real classroom instruction on EFL learners' speaking ability using pragmatic markers. The results showed that while both modes of instruction were adequate, the face-to-face environment had a slight advantage in improving speaking skills. This indicates that even though multimodal resources can be effectively used in virtual classrooms, the benefits of face-to-face interactions might be more advantageous for specific communicative competencies. On the other hand, earlier research by Wan et al. (2024) suggested that virtual reality environments could lead to immersive experiences that promote pragmatic development, demonstrating that technology-mediated instruction can also be highly effective if designed well.

Conclusion

The current study emphasizes the critical importance of multimodal language teaching in promoting intercultural communication competence among learners. By recognizing that language is more than a rule-based system and serves as a means of cultural expression, incorporating multimodal resources (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, digital) contributes to a more enriching teaching- learning experience. Results confirm that such methods lead to

greater engagement and intercultural capability, giving students the confidence to navigate communication across cultures. This integration fosters language expertise, critical thinking, empathy, and appreciation of global diversity.

Findings

- The learners with multimodal sources (e.g., videos, visuals, gestures, and digital tools) exhibited enhanced linguistic retention capabilities and contextual understanding.

- Multimodal approaches, especially those that utilize culturally relevant resources, promoted learners' intercultural sensitivity and minimized cultural prejudices.

- Combining multiple modes kept learners engaged and motivated, resulting in active classroom participation.

- The ongoing exploration of multimodal language education for ICC reinforces its relevance in equipping learners for a globalised world. Teaching methods should be adaptable, inclusive, and culturally integrative, spanning early childhood education to university levels, and should extend beyond language learning to encompass the need for cultural competence.

- Students can enhance various non-verbal and verbal communication skills necessary for intercultural communication.

- Educators acknowledged the effectiveness of these methods but expressed the need for training and institutional support to implement multimodal tools.

- The students with higher qualifications possess greater confidence in the effectiveness of multimodal methods for teaching vocabulary, likely due to their increased awareness of linguistic theories and principles of cross-cultural communication. Overall, both groups, M Phil and PhD holders, perceive multimodal strategies as beneficial for broadening students' vocabulary across various cultural settings.

- There is a positive relationship between academic qualification and agreement on the significance of engaging in multimodal activities to develop appropriate message delivery skills, likely due to increased exposure to communication theories in higher education.

- There is a high level of agreement, emphasised by the minor standard deviations of both groups, M Phil and PhD holders. The results indicate that higher academic levels correlate with a greater appreciation for multimodal methods that expose students to diverse cultural perspectives, thus making language teaching more holistic and immersive.

- Some PhD holders find multimodal methods very effective for prosody training;

others are less convinced. At the same time, all participants agreed that multimodal approaches, such as audio-visual methods, provide students with better tools to tackle challenges like stress, intonation, and rhythm in cross-cultural communication.

• Ph.D level teachers' understanding may align more closely with the effectiveness of multimodal strategies, such as video modelling and semiotic cues, in enhancing students' ability to communicate non-verbally. Both groups, M Phil and Ph.D holders, teachers, seem to concur that multimodal teaching enhances non-verbal communication skills essential for intercultural competence.

• Higher academic qualifications do not significantly influence attitudes toward the contribution of multimodal methods to enhancing structured expression. Furthermore, both groups, M Phil and PhD holders, agree that students engaged in cross-communicative modes of thought can reach new heights in verbal and written expression when utilising techniques such as visual storytelling, diagrams, and interactive media.

• Both groups, M Phil and PhD holders, acknowledge the role of multimodal strategies in teaching communication; PhD holders may have a more coherent understanding of their effectiveness. This finding is consistent with the previous one, reinforcing that multimodal approaches, such as role-playing, experiential learning, and multimedia, are vital for preparing students for effective intercultural communication.

• The individuals with a Master's degree may have differing levels of exposure to multimodal teaching. In contrast, PhD holders appear to have a more uniform background through theoretical and practical experiences, indicating that multimodal teaching effectively facilitates andragogy in achieving pragmatic competence.

• The study findings also highlight the role of multimodal teaching in boosting students' confidence and competence in delivering oral and written presentations across various cultures.

• The multimodal strategies, such as speech recognition programs, audio-visual resources, and conversation simulations, can significantly enhance students' spoken skills in a foreign language.

Recommendations

• Professional development programs can be offered in multimodal techniques to leverage the learners in STEM-based education and intercultural pedagogy.

• It can be ensure that the language curriculum systematically integrates multimodal and intercultural components and aligns with the communicative needs of a globalized context.

• Schools should build digital infrastructure while ensuring easily accessible multimedia tools are available to facilitate multimodal learning environments.

• Task-based activities can be utlized, such as role-plays, simulations, and intercultural projects, which allow learners to engage with real-life communication scenarios.

• Assessment methods can be developed that integrate linguistic performance and intercultural competence, utilizing multiple assessment modalities.

Gap for Future Research

• Studies can be conducted in longitudinal is essential to examining the long-term impact of multimodal teaching on intercultural competence.

• Future research can be conducted to compare the effects of multimodal methods across various disciplines, cultures, and language backgrounds.

• The impact of emerging technologies, such as VR, AR, and AI, on intercultural cognition is largely unverified, so these areas can also be researched.

• The influence of multimodal approaches on learner autonomy in intercultural contexts requires further investigation.

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