

A Social Semiotic Analysis of Instagram as a Multimodal Platform for Supporting EFL Learners

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Abstract

Social media has become an essential educational tool nowadays. Most existing research on digital learning in EFL contexts has primarily focused on traditional classroom-based instruction and less attention has been paid to social media platforms. The present study aims to fill the gap by using social semiotics to analyze four Instagram posts: two from *BBC Learning English* (@bbclearningenglish) and the other two from *Learn English with Emma* (@englishwithemma). Instagram posts are classified as multimodal texts with participatory and representational elements. The study adopts Kress and van Leeuwen's (2005) Social Semiotic Multimodal Framework to analyze four purposely selected posters by answering the following research questions: What representational meanings are created by Instagram posts meant to assist EFL learners? What is the relationship between interactive meanings and Instagram posts and their EFL audiences? How might compositional meanings enhance Instagram's overall efficacy as a multimodal teaching tool for English as a foreign language? The findings reveal that meaning can be produced using a range of semiotic resources such as linguistic content, visual aspects, and interactive components. They also show that the order of text, visuals, and user engagement all affect how meaning is created. Finally, Instagram posts use metafunctions to increase the student's engagement, and also to improve language comprehension by using Instagram outside the traditional classroom.

Keywords: Instagram, multimodal discourse, semiotic analysis, social media, visual grammar

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Introduction

Instagram is one of the applications commonly used on social media platforms. It combines interactive, verbal, and nonverbal communication. It considers a valuable free tool for learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for free (Nasution, 2023; Putri & Subekti, 2023). Instagram communication uses a variety of semiotic resources, such as colour, gesture, facial expression, framing, and images, all of which work together to create meaning in social contexts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Pease & Pease, 2004). Additional visual and symbolic resources, such as fashion trends, further improve the communicative potential of multimodal texts (Pendergrast & Pendergrast, 2004) and the cultural and emotional connotations of colour symbolism (Wang, 2016).

Multimodal social media platforms, such as Instagram, have been shown in a number of studies to increase the motivated and collaborative learning outside the classroom. This allows students to express themselves, receive real input, and use language in a socially situated context (Aloraini, 2018). Nevertheless, the majority of the available literature has concentrated on text-based platforms, even though interest in digital learning is expanding. As a result, no documentation exists on Instagram's multimodal affordances and capabilities, especially its ability to integrate image, text, audio, and interaction, in relation to EFL instruction and students' involvement.

The current study uses Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996/2005) Social Semiotic Multimodal Framework to analyze how multimodal meaning creates in Instagram posts meant for EFL instruction. This study aims to explain how Instagram posts use representational, interactive, and compositional metafunctions to promote EFL learning. The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What representational meanings are created by Instagram posts meant to assist EFL learners?
2. What is the relationship between interactive meanings and Instagram posts and their EFL audiences?
3. How might compositional meanings enhance Instagram's overall efficacy as a multimodal teaching tool for English as a foreign language?

Literature Review

Social Semiotics

The study of meaning and meaning-making in (inter) action is known as 'social semiotics' and this theory explains various text generation methods. It derives from the Greek word "semeion," which means "sign," the most basic unit of meaning. The term "semiotics" also alludes to a fusion of meaning and form. Through "Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design", Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) provide an example of a study that uses social semiotics. In this study, the authors offer an analytical framework for classifications of images influenced by Halliday's Functional Grammar (1985). Notably, multimodality is not a theory but rather the outcome of the Grammar of Visual Design. The foundation of both perspectives and frameworks constitutes social semiotics. The objective of a social semiotic approach to meaning is to acknowledge and bring all forms of meaning-making into the open. This perspective requires that what is "currently unnoticeable noticeable, what is inaudible audible, and what is invisible visible" be made visible (Bezemer & Kress, 2016, p.5). It is a way to comprehend meaning that goes far beyond accepted notions. The definition of "literacy" as including all means of meaning-making, however, is opposed because it may jeopardize the accuracy of analytical and descriptive

processes. Education is a semiotic process: the person, the tool, and the object utilized are all necessary for work. Work brings about change, and meaningful change results from labor. Meaning shifts as a result of social agents' semiotic labor in all uses of semiotic instruments, including literacy (Gualberto & Kress, 2019). It is the semiotic work that leads to a semiotic shift with social consequences whenever someone constructs a message by assembling semiotic materials.

The emphasis on work in social semiotics also draws attention to the socio-agents who perform it. As a result, all forms of communication—verbal or sign language, sound, color, expressions, or imagery—have unique grammatical structures or meaning systems. Instagram posts and other multimodal texts are the outcome of combing several multiple modalities. They should be analyzed as a set of signs rather than just language (Van Leeuwen & Kress, 2006). According to Shamsuddin, Keong, and Hamid (2015), a social semiotic analysis clarifies how Instagram's visual, textual, and interactive elements contribute to meaning, thereby aiding language acquisition for students in EFL contexts. The way that signals represent the world, events, or ideas is known as representational meaning. Instagram posts could be about an EFL learning experience or a cultural practice. In contrast, the interactive meaning refers to how signs connect producers (such as Instagram users, teachers, and students) and viewers (like peers, followers). Choices about hashtags, emoji use, camera angle, and appearance can convey intimacy, authority, or distance. As for the compositional meaning, it concerns how signs arrange to make sense. Attention and interaction are influenced by Instagram posts' arrangement, color schemes, text and image placement, and visual balance (Gualberto & Kress, 2019).

Multimodal Discourse

Multimodal discourse refers to the integration of many communication modes, including language, imagery, auditory elements, gestures, spatial arrangement, and color, within a single communicative act. Speaking and writing are the only languages covered by traditional discourse analysis (Abbas et al., 2025). In contrast, multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) uses multiple modes and looks for meanings that are vital to social contexts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2005; O'Halloran, 2011). The fundamental principle of multimodal discourse states that spoken language is neither sufficient nor necessary for meaning construction. Nowadays, the term "multimodality" is frequently used in academic settings. The number of publication titles that use the term has increased dramatically since the mid-1990s. Since that time, numerous conferences, books, and edited books have emerged.

There have been numerous books and scholarly discussion platforms that emphasize multimodality. The academics who contribute to it usually come from a wide variety of disciplines such as media studies, semiotics, linguistics, new literacy studies, social science, psychology, and education (Kress, 2010). Given how often the term is extensively used, it could appear that these scholars have discovered an ordinary object of study, a phenomenon of interest. In fact, people can characterize that phenomenon, or object of interest, as something akin to "we make meaning in a variety of different ways" or "we communicate in a multitude of ways". However, we must add right away that "multimodality" (and associated terms, such as "mode" or "modality," and "semiotic resource") has a distinct definition. The precise way in which the idea is expressed and "operationalized" differs greatly among disciplines as well as within them, and research customs where the term is currently widely used (Kress, 2010).

So, it is really challenging and problematic to discuss multimodality without making a clear position on theory and methodology. If a "means for making meaning" is a "modality," or "mode," as it commonly refers to, then people could argue that the concept of "multimodality" acknowledges that people employ a variety of methods to convey meaning. But the idea of multimodality cannot be adequately described by that recognition alone. As early as the 20th century, Saussure had already proposed that "linguistics" was a "branch" of a more general science that was dubbed the general science of "semiology" (Kress, 2010). Since then, the branches of that hypothetical, science has remained specialized in the study of one or a limited number of methods for constructing meaning: semiotics on images and movies, musicology on music, and linguistics on speech and writing; additionally, new subfields have emerged: visual sociology, as opposed to focus on, for example, photography; visual anthropology, which is focused on, like a dress.

These sub-disciplines focus on the methods of meaning-making that fall within their "remit"; they do not consistently investigate modes that are both within and outside of that scope (Kress, 2010). Besides, researchers should add some crucial footnotes to this. First, not everyone working in multimodality uses the notion of 'meaning making'. Depending on their disciplinary background and focus, they might say that they are interested in 'multimodal communication', 'multimodal discourse', or 'multimodal interaction'. We will use the term 'meaning making' unless we are writing about a specific approach to multimodality, nor does everyone working in multimodality use the term 'mode': some prefer to talk about 'resource', or 'semiotic resource', and generally avoid drawing firm boundaries between different resources, highlighting instead the significance of the multimodal whole ('Gestalt'), (Kress, 2010).

Multimodality Language Learning (MLL)

A multimodal language learning (MLL) tool is designed to assist individuals in learning foreign languages in context. It occurs by using various modes of meaning-making. These modes include written texts, images, gestures, and digital interaction. Several theoretical frameworks serve as the foundation for multimodal approaches in language training. They emphasize the importance of combining several communication channels to improve the learning experience, even if this or that tool has not yet developed its potential for advancement, and its role in users' language and social development. This approach is based on the social semiotic theory, which shows that meaning constructs through communication by combining several semiotic resources (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; Jewitt, 2009). Because Instagram is a multimodal digital environment that incorporates photographs, short videos, captions, emojis, audio, and comment-based interaction, it naturally accommodates MLL. EFL students coordinate these many modes to interpret and make meaning when they interact with posts or produce material on Instagram. In this sense, emoticons and hashtags are used to provide contextual or emotional meaning and the visual content of an image or clip may aid in comprehending a caption.

The layered meaning-making process promotes the development of both linguistic and visual literacy. These layers combine to form multimodal literacy (Kress, 2010). Therefore, Instagram is a valuable tool for promoting EFL learning in socially engaging and context-rich ways because it closely adheres to the MLL tenets. MLL is a personalized language resource smartphone app designed for college students who employ multimodal AI creation (computer vision, text-to-speech, image-to-text, etc.). It provides a contextualized, guided, and integrated language skill development (Sulaiman, 2024).

Instagram as a Multimodal Learning Environment

Instagram is a popular social networking tool among students and has great potential for educational purposes, especially in English studies. It includes some functional interactive elements such as stories, reels, and captions. It is a living nature that makes it a more effective technique for vocabulary acquisition. Regarding Storytelling, for example, it helps pupils recognise and recall new vocabulary in an interesting way (Rosinta et al., 2025) through interactive exams or polls. They can watch and create short videos that show how words are used in daily life. Captions can help enhance writing skills by introducing new terms into comments or descriptions. Instagram live is another tool that teachers and students can use to discuss synonyms, words, definitions, and how they use it in daily conversation. According to Lestari and German's (2021) research, Instagram's multimedia features, such as quizzes, help people learn English. Quizzes can help EFL students to correct common mistakes and provide visuals for cartoons and other content. They present children with engaging, relevant scenarios to help them remember words (Rosinta et al., 2025). According to many studies, Instagram is a helpful teaching tool. It can help students learn the English language better by giving them a regular chance to use that language. Alfu et al. (2021) indicate that students who knew vocabulary on Instagram were more motivated and had better memory than those who learned it in the old-fashioned way. Mirković (2022) asserts that Instagram's multimodal design, which blends text and images, greatly enhances cognitive abilities and language memory. Instagram is different from other social media sites like YouTube and TikTok. Although TikTok gives quick video-based instructions, word comprehension may be hampered by its impulsiveness and speed. Damayanti (2022) states that while some students consider YouTube helpful for learning English, others criticize its limitations. Instagram interactive stories are more effective than YouTube and TikTok for engaging students in contextual vocabulary education.

Meta-functions of Visual Grammar

Kress and van Leeuwen(2006) examine the composition of visuals and the types of meanings communicated through diverse compositions. Composition pertains to the representational and interactive significance of the pictures in relation to one another through three related functions: informational value, framing, and salience.

Representational Meta-function

Representation involves participants (people, figures, or things) creating a visual “Syntax” of an image by relating them to one another. Visual structures of representation can be either narrative (presenting unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements) or conceptual (representing participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structural meaning) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The representational meta-function refers to the way images depict people, events, and contexts. In other words, it describes how images communicate concepts similar to the ideational function of language. Participants include people, objects, or symbolic elements in an image that play a vital role in conveying a specific idea or action. For instance, a student enhancing vocabulary or a teacher demonstrating a grammatical concept could serve as a participant on Instagram.

Interactive Meta-function

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) assert that visual communication employs resources that both establish and sustain contact between the creator and the observer of a visual work. They propose that reading or observing a visual entails two categories of participants: the represented participants and the interactive participants. The former refers to the actual representation in a visual representation (such as the individuals, locations, and objects depicted). At the same time, the latter refers to participants who engage in visual communication (for instance, the photographer and the spectator) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The interaction category comprises three subcategories: contact (image acts), social distance (frame size), and attitude (subjective or objective image).

Compositional Meta-function

Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) discuss how different compositions convey different kinds of meanings and illustrate this point. Composition is concerned with how the pictures' representational and interactive meanings relate to one another using three related principles: salience, framing, and informational value.

Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research method and Instagram posts are the data to be examined. According to Torihin (2012, as cited in Hamood & Challob, 2023), qualitative research makes it easier to conduct a thorough analysis of phenomena such as learner behavior, perception, motivation, and actions in the context of social media. In contrast to conventional quantitative research, which yields statistical findings, qualitative research prioritizes naturalistic and interpretive interpretation of data (Mackey & Gass, 2005, as cited in Abed Al-Hussein & Al-Saaidi, 2022). In qualitative research, analysis begins concurrently with data collection and continues throughout until the research is complete (Wimmer & Dominick, 2010). The researchers of the present study use structured data sheets to identify, organize, and analyze semiotic resources in Instagram posts. Layered and fine-grained analysis is the result of early data interaction. This research investigates the multimodal complements of Instagram posts, such as pictures, captions, hashtags, emoticons, and layout features. The current study adopts Kress and Van Leeuwen modal (2006) which consists of three meta-functions of representation, interaction, and composition in order to explain how three parts create meaning. The researchers can now better understand how Instagram posts for EFL learners pose challenges for language comprehension and multimodal content engagement. Additionally, the research is guided by a range of analytical frameworks. Eclectic models use a variety of theoretical frameworks to meet the study's objectives and the data's features. In addition to other ideas from clothing (Pendergrast & Pendergrast, 2004), body language (Pease & Pease, 2004), and colour symbolism (Bruce-Mitford, 1996; Wang, 2015; Girard, 2016), the current study's methodology incorporates Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic model. It expands our knowledge of the interactions between verbal, visual, and interactive components in Instagram postings, which is vital for conceptualising EFL learning. It anticipates that the study will employ a visual analytical model. The framework is based on the social semiotic model developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) which allows for a detailed analysis of the interactions between text, graphics, and interactive components in Instagram posts that complement the EFL training. This research will eliminate cultural and gender disparities. Although these elements may influence interpretation, they are removed to focus on the global

semiotic circumstances and meaning-making principles in a multimodal EFL text. These characteristics may then be used in subsequent future research where human interaction is necessary to maintain in different educational contexts, particularly in multilingual and cross-cultural environments (Khedr & Abbas, 2026).

Data Collection

This study is intended to examine the role of Instagram in supporting English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning through multimodal resources by using a structured framework. To do so, four Instagram posts from *Learn English with Emma* (@englishwithemma) and *BBC Learning English* (@bbclearningenglish) are selected to serve as the study's primary data sources. They are selected on the basis of providing an illustration of the multimodal content, which consists of texts, images, subtitles, and interactive. They especially develop with EFL learners in mind. Data is gathered by methodically observing and documenting multimodal Instagram posts. This method requires accurate observing and recording of the multimodal content in order to capture the compositional, interactive, and representational aspects of each post. The researchers have examined each post's interactive, textual, and visual components to determine how these platforms provide educational resources to draw in students and advance language acquisition. The primary objective of the research is to employ observational techniques to locate materials in meaningful Instagram posts systematically. The visual image, caption, emoji, and hashtag described the latter; as a result, these components functioned as semiotic tools that control and encourage students' comprehension and participation in the information-understanding process. To demonstrate how these multimodal elements add to the representational, interactive, and compositional complexity of the postings, the recording method entailed manually entering the postings into a pre-made data sheet.

Post Description

The two posts selected from *BBC Learning English* include an infographic that shows phrasal verbs, along with succinct explanations and examples of sentences that demonstrate them. Each post presents information in a different and attractive way with a caption that emphasizes the learner's participation using comments. Two additional posts, taken from *Study English with Emma*, are info-graphic that explain the present perfect tense. They emphasize key ideas by using images and keywords. They includes posts that use standard English idioms in everyday speech and replicate interaction through text overlays, gestures, and direct audience participation. These postings are suitable for analysis within a social semiotic framework since they expressly aim to support EFL learning and incorporate a variety of semiotic resources (images, text, colour, layout, and interactive features).

Research Procedures

The study was situated within the three meta-functions of visual grammar after the four Instagram posts were analysed using Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework: The interactive meta-function focuses on how the posts engage the learners, including gaze, perspective, and direct address; for example, Emma's reel instantly looks at the camera and gestures towards the viewers; the representational meta-function illustrates learning through images, characters, and actions in postings; for example, an infographic visually conveys vocabulary or grammar ideas; and the compositional meta-function analyses layout, colour

schemes, text positioning, and salience to analyse how meaning organizes to enhance learning. Keywords, on the other hand, focus on vibrant illustrations that pull the learner's attention to important information. Each post is methodically analyzed to record the semiotic resources and their functions. Such an approach examines how to use multimodal resources to help students understand English content and create meaning. Besides, this approach provides a methodical and thorough examination of how Instagram postings serve as multimodal learning resources, addressing questions about compositional, interactive, and representational meanings in EFL learning environments. Each poster is shown through a figure before going through the types of meaning it is intended to represent or convey.

Data Analysis

In this section, the four purposely selected posts are presented and analyzed following Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework. Each post is discussed in terms of the three types of meaning discussed earlier. These posts are shown in Figures (1-4) below:

A multimodal analysis of the first post titled 'Slang quiz'

This post, taken from *BBC Learning English* (2025) (@bbclearningenglish), is designed to test students' knowledge about how well they know English Slang. The details constituting the post are shown in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1. Post titled "Slang quiz"

This post conveys the following types of meaning:

The Representational Meaning

This post shows a real woman. The woman holds a "GO AWAY" sign, and the extra quiz content together. The woman looks angry, it is evident from her gestures, the idea of rejection, the quiz question and choices give the slang lesson some background. As a result, representation presents both the experiential content (showing what it means to reprimand) and pedagogical content (putting slang in the context of an educational exercise).

Interactive Meaning

Making direct eye contact creates an interaction by simulating face-to-face communication. The sign creates a sense of urgency through its prominent placement. This makes the spectator feel as though the information is addressed to them directly. When the spectator gives a "choose the slang phrase..." question, they become active instead of passive. By reducing the tone, emojis in the explanation provide a more welcoming learning environment and balance out the hostile picture.

Compositional Meaning

Some parts of the post mean to stand out. The title "Slang quiz" at the top effectively introduces the content in the middle which is the post's primary focus. At the same time, the BBC logo at the bottom adds credibility and authority. The blue background, white instructions, and red "GO AWAY" make sure that the slang term stands out the most. The typographic hierarchy makes it clear what the headline, task, and options are, which helps EFL students understand what they read. Hence, this Instagram post creates a representational meaning through the demonstration of rejection (participant, sign, action). Interactive meaning is shown through the direct gaze and quiz-based participation, and the compositional meaning through a meticulously structured hierarchy of text, color, and image. Collectively, these meta-functions render slang training both memorable and interactive, demonstrating Instagram's multimodal capacity for EFL education.

A multimodal analysis of the second post titled 'vacation vs. holiday'

This post is taken from *English with Emma* (2019) (@englishwithemma). It is designed to test students' awareness related to the different kinds of English: American English and British English. Such details are shown in Figure 2 below:



Figure 2. Post titled "vacation vs. holiday"

Having a look into the post in Figure 2, the following meanings are conveyed:

Representational Meaning

Through the interaction of the human participant, the leisure-based environment, and the overlay text that suggests contrast, the post communicates a representational meaning. The picture is taken from the side of the pool and shows a woman lying down, her face obscured by the shadow of a striped hat. Rather than being a specific person, she has become a symbol for relaxation and escape. In the semantic sphere of vacation and holiday, this offers a universalized definition of leisure. As a result, the image gives abstract lexical differences of concrete lifestyle settings. At the same time, the superimposed text, "vacation vs. holiday," frames the picture as a comparison of language and culture rather than just aesthetics. Thus, the representation rests on two levels: experiential (showing leisure and travel) and didactic (teaching a vocabulary distinction within actual experiences).

Interactive Meaning

An offer image engages the spectator, while the participant's face is hidden, making it impossible to develop an interactor gaze (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The observer perceives learning or analyzing rather than conversing with someone since, in reality, the absence of eye contact encourages observation rather than participation. In order to express the affective meaning of the words under study, the relaxed posture and outstretched arm convey a sense of tranquility. The conversational question "Did you know there are different kinds of English?" creates a welcoming and inquisitive instructional environment for the linguistic discussion that takes place within the caption. This interaction differs from that of the BBC post in that it promotes inquiry and self-learning in the multimodal framework in a contemplative manner.

Compositional Meaning

The post creates a textual and visual hierarchy in this compositional ground to support comparison. The "middle", "upper," and "lower" positions of "holiday" and "vacation" show the order of elucidation, with the Americans taking precedence over the British. The bold and diminutive "vs" underscores the functional differences between the two terms, while the prominent black serif font shows their semantic equivalence. Combining black text, blue water, and a black-and-white hat, the color scheme further highlights the essence of the two phrases. According to Kress and van Leeuwen's structure (2006), the comparison is in the center, the bottom is New (British version), and the top is Given (familiar, American English). The post physically represents the educational logic or the contrast in the fourth contrast knowledge, and the understanding via this well-organized arrangement. In summary, the "vacation vs. holiday" post uses a clear layout and colors to organize the information, an engaging educational tone to encourage interaction, and familiar leisure symbols to represent its meaning. In multimodal EFL education, all three meta-functions help transform a fundamental vocabulary distinction into a visually cohesive, culturally grounded learning experience. They even show how Instagram can be used to combine language instruction with lifestyle aesthetics.

A multimodal analysis of the third post titled ‘Opinions and Facts’

This post is taken from *English with Emma* (2019) (@englishwithemma). It is designed to test students’ knowledge related to the difference between something that is definitely true and something that we think. Details related to ‘Opinion’ and ‘Facts’ are shown in Figure 3 below:

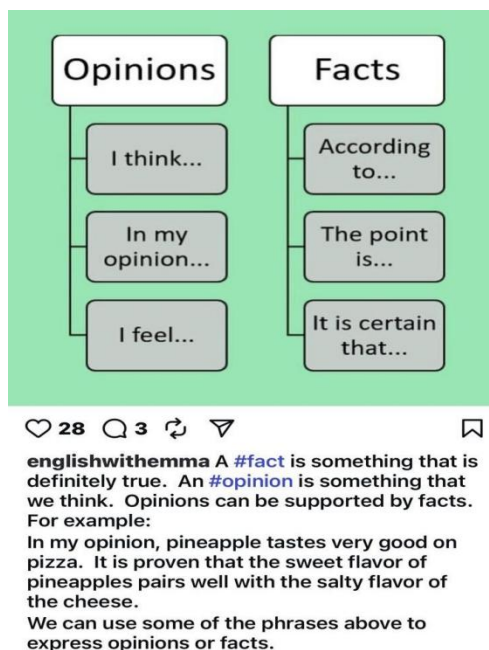


Figure 3. Post titled “Opinions and Facts”

The post presented in Figure 3 leads to the following meanings:

Representational Meaning

This post uses schematic contrast to express its representation of meaning. There are two parallel categories, "Opinions" and "facts", each with its own boxed linguistic stems (for example, "I think..." and "according to..."). This design puts speech actions ahead of people or things and moves the focus from real-life interactions to the acts of communication themselves. Representation serves two aims: it shows the structural differences between two types of utterances (conceptual), and it helps EFL users learn by putting the distinction in a way that can be understood (pedagogical)

Interactive Meaning

Interaction occurs in words, not pictures. Since there are no people or eyes in these pictures, they present an informational statement rather than a request. This turns the viewer into a learner rather than a conversation partner. The caption and text about facts and opinions turn into an interactive learning activity. The statement “In my opinion, pineapple tastes great on pizza”

encourages students to think critically. This means that the interaction becomes an active learning experience when students are encouraged to leave comments.

Compositional Meaning

The post uses a clear graphic structure to make the instructions more straightforward to understand. The columns on the left (Opinions) and the right (Facts) make a symmetrical structure that balances equality and difference. There are big black names at the top of each category, and the gray boxes below them act as flashcards that group similar phrases. This symmetry not only makes it easier to read, but it also emphasizes the categorical difference. The design keeps visual distractions to a minimum and puts accessibility, clarity, and structure first for EFL learners. So, the post uses abstract speech functions to convey representational meaning, caption-driven engagement to create interactive meaning, and a symmetrical, chart-like structure to create compositional meaning. These meta-functions combine to turn a complicated language difference into a helpful tool. They can be applied to make learning enjoyable and structured.

A multimodal analysis of the fourth post titled ‘Fill the gap’

This post is taken from *BBC Learning English* (2025) (@bbclearningenglish). It is designed to test students’ ability to answer English grammar questions related to negative modals. The details of this post are shown in Figure 4 below:



Figure 4. Post titled “Fill the gap”

Going through the fourth post, the following meanings are conveyed:

Representational Meaning

The post reflects a representational value since it uses both words and pictures when having "Oh no!". The numbered options (don't, didn't, and haven't) show the choices students have. "I ____ bring my phone" is a grammatical gap problem. This makes learning grammar seem like

something you have to do. The frustrated man covering his forehead shows what it is like to forget by connecting the grammatical form "didn't" to a familiar setting of human error. So, representation combines the act of forgetting something meaningful with the practice of language, choosing the right words.

Interactive Meaning

Interaction is achieved through both textual and visual methods. The man's apparent movement, in which he puts his hand over his eye, is an expressive appeal because it shows an emotion that the viewer can relate to, making them feel like they belong. The caption gets people involved right away by saying, "We've all done it! Can you answer this grammar question?" It builds suspense and makes people want to comment and rate themselves by delaying the answer. Emojis make the environment better by encouraging a friendly teaching tone and making conversations more personal. So, it involves both emotional and academic involvement.

Compositional Meaning

The structure of the post is designed to be clear and prominent. The gap-filling exercise is the primary focus where the grammar work is placed prominently. They are emphasized by the bold typeface and stark color contrast (red backdrop, white, and black text). For EFL learners, the visually distinct numbered options improve readability and aid in decision-making. The language exercise is anchored in a physical response as the man's picture matches the sentence.

By giving the post institutional authority, the BBC Learning English badge increases the credibility of the posts. As a result, composition balances an organized instructional hierarchy with aesthetically appealing design.

Discussion

This present paper has examined the vital role of the Instagram posts as multimodal resources for English as a Foreign Language. Within a multimodal framework that blends visual and verbal approaches, the idea is investigated through the three meta-functions, representational, interactive, and compositional, using related methodologies. For EFL learners, the first question examines how Instagram posts communicate representational meaning. The results show that, depending on pedagogical factors, representation can be achieved through a variety of methods. Lexical posts, like vacation versus holiday, connect the language with cultural and experiential contexts and go beyond simple word contrasts to include lifestyle imagery. Grammatically incorrect posts, like "Oh no! I didn't have my phone with me" help students to highlight common learners' errors. They also explained abstract rules through gestures and contextual cues that are integrated into everyday activities. Another point is that having conceptual tasks related to facts and opinions needs representations whether schematic or abstract. This is simply because the value is based on linguistic stems rather than on people or things. These results imply that, depending on the educational goal, representational meaning suppresses layers of significance by conforming to lived experience, symbolic action, or schematic design. Look, gesture, captions, and quiz prompts all work together to illustrate the second study question's interactivity. Those with the direct gaze, like the "GO AWAY" slang question, position learners as interlocutors and directly engage them. In contrast, those like "vacation vs. holiday," treat learners as merely observers. When posts with static images fail to engage students, captions attempt to compensate by prompting them to consider questions or comments. This shifts the focus of interaction from the image to the text. In

this way, resources share with the goal to maintain students' involvement as interactivity negotiates across modalities. The third question examines how compositional meaning is expressed. Composition works by using prominence, contrast, and hierarchy. There is a particular style of quiz post that uses bold type and colour to help distinguish between options. Lexical contrasts rely on vertical alignment and a balanced typeface. They differentiate between visually and spatially culture differences in the texts on opposing sides. The design of the post uses schematic activities and boxed sections to facilitate reading such as opinions versus facts. As teaching aids, these design exercises guarantee accessibility and provide students with visual guidance through the content. In this situation, Instagram could serve as a multimodal teaching tool. The posts' positioning offers visual scaffolding for learning; interaction is facilitated by gaze, gestures, and textual cues; and representation transmitters through experiential, symbolic, and schematic modalities. Together, these meta-functions enable the postings to create a bridge between entertainment and education, positioning students as both observers and active participants in a digitally mediated learning environment.

Conclusion

This research paper uses the concept of English as a Foreign Language to conduct a multimodal study of Instagram posts. The framework consists of three levels to analyze the data, namely, representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. The researchers have found that depending on the learning goal, representational meaning can be provided by either schematic abstraction, experiential engagement, or symbolic activity. Students are positioned as either observers or active participants when gaze, gesture, captions, or quiz prompts are used, as previously mentioned. Additionally, the compositional design uses hierarchy, contrast, and salience to help students navigate the text accurately. Finally, the researchers have concluded that these three meta-functions collaborate to create educational resources that strike a balance between language learning, accessibility, and Instagram posts. The purpose of these posts is not only to share information, but also to determine if learning is achieved. Two straightforward and helpful recommendations can be suggested. First, trainers should make obvious charts to help learners understand the topic. They can provide some incentives to support an engaging and valuable topic. The second recommendation is that learners should be tested on a regular basis. Thus, trainers can assess the effectiveness of the method used to learn the language.

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