Multimodal Writing: The Case of Graffiti

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Abstract
The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing graffiti as a pedagogical tool in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms to teach second language (L2) writing. Within the theoretical frameworks of the multimodal social semiotic theory and an arts-integrated language pedagogy, this paper examines how graffiti can be perceived as both a form of art and a multimodal mode of literacy. In order to argue for graffiti as a form of art that is multimodal, this article presents a review of recent studies and literature on multimodal literacy and art-based strategies to teach English. Findings of the study suggest that graffiti can be conceptualized as a form of art that represents a mixture of words and drawings as semiotic resources that can be used to reflect upon critical meanings, allowing students to link the two pathways of visual and linguistic, and gaining deep, structured knowledge in ways that are productive for students' achievement as writers. As a multimodal literacy, graffiti empowers second language (L2) learners to contribute as critical thinkers, transforming available semiotic resources to make meanings that reflect their interests and deep, transformative understandings of the world. Arguing for graffiti as a form of art that is multimodal, the author illustrates that graffiti can be used in (ESL) classrooms as a way to empower (L2) learners, strengthening their voices to express themselves creatively. The researcher suggests that further research is needed to assess the impact of utilizing graffiti in (ESL) classrooms to enhance (L2) writers' literacy skills. Implications for further research are also discussed.

Keywords: art, graffiti, meaningful literacy, meaning-making, multimodality

Introduction

The current understanding of the role of new technologies in classrooms is that they will change learning and that they will change it for the better (Jewitt, 2006). Gee (1989) explains that literacy is a powerful force "that leads to logical, critical, analytical thinking, general and abstract uses of language" (p. 5). On the other hand, in the age of technology, literacy has been defined as a multimodal process in which all modes are critically interpreted and their interactions considered a useful one (Kress, 2003).However, multimodality should not always be attributed to the presence of technology, but with the notion of multiliteracies. Thus, while acknowledging the importance of new technologies to enhance teaching of composition in (ESL) classrooms, an equal significance should be attributed to arts, and more specifically to graffiti as both a form of art and a multimodal mode of literacy.

The traditional perception of literacy limits learning to students acquiring certain information directly from the teacher or (the textbook), the transmitter of knowledge, which marginalizes the roles of students, as well as teachers who function as facilitators of students' discovery of the facts (Kress, Jewitt, Ogborn, & Tsatsarelis, 2014). The focus on the concept of literacy in its most restricted sense as a matter of competencies in reading, writing, and speaking reflects the "dominant view of learning as primarily a linguistic accomplishment" (Kress et al., 2014, p. 28; The New London Group, 1996). From a multimodal perspective, Jewitt (2006) argues that this conception of literacy fails to address how meaning is embedded in other modes of representation. Thus, the perception of language as the central means of representation and communication is no longer tenable (Kress &van Leeuwan, 2001). In his description of this 'New Media Age,' Kress (2003) illustrates that"the screen is beginning to take the place of the book," which "alter[s] the relations of the means by which we represent our meanings, bringing image into the center of communication" (p. 9). Accordingly, within a multimodal literacy, writing does not fully account for all the meaning and "we can no longer treat literacy (or 'language') as the sole, the main, let alone the major means of representation and communication" (Kress, 2003, p. 35). In other words, language becomes one mode of communication among others (van Leeuwan, 2015) because of its representational inadequacy (Norton, 2006).

As explained by Albers and Sanders (2010), the immersion of "art, multimodality, and 21st century literacy redefines the world of literacy and our understanding of what it means to be literate" (p. 2). In this new media age, being literate involves being able to create a "range of paper-based and online texts," actively participate in virtual settings (classroom, Twitter, Facebook), and "critically analyze multimodal texts that integrate visual, musical, dramatic, digital, and new literacy" (Albers & Sanders, 2010, p. 2). Gee (2003) suggests that these new ways of engagement with the world redefine our understanding of literacy and the meaning to be literate in the twenty-first century.

Multimodal literacies relative to teaching of (L2)writing are concerned with the various ways within which students are engaged with multiple languages (art, drama, music, movement, written/oral, math) and with the fundamental orientation that students learn best when involved in "complex, socially constructed, personal relevant, creative composition and interpretation of texts" that incorporate multiple semiotic resources and communication modes (Albers & Sanders, 2010, p. 4). Albersand Sanders(2010) arguethat teachers of English must be

knowledgeable of the multimodal resources available to them to teach using multiple literacies,and, thus, to face the challenge of teaching students of varying English language skills and with different literacy skills.

Research on aesthetic education in formal educational settings shows pedagogical value.Arts-integrated curricula helps to reflect on meaningful experiences (Greene, 2001) and introduce opportunities for meaningful expression and personal discovery (Hanauer, 2011). Aesthetic education embodies

> the entire field of art in which lines, colors, forms, and their structures, motions and interrelations are used to create visually, auditorily and/or kinesthetically perceptible works. These include painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, pottery, architecture, industrial design, photography, cinematography, textile arts, basketry, typographical arts, multimedia arts, vocal and instrumental music, dance and indigenous forms of visual artistic expression. (Spina, 2006, p. 99)

Robinson (2011) correlatesarts-integrated curricula to greater student success. Similar to Robinson's (2011), Dai (2010) acknowledges the essentiality of using arts-integrated curricula as a way to promote critical thinking and enhance the quality of educational outcomes.Introducing an arts-based language pedagogy to (L2) learners in a Korean context, Criag and Porter (2014) assert that they "re-discover some of [their] students' social worlds and find that even those with more basic levels of English proficiency [are] capable of producing nuanced and politically salient opinions of power structures, of seeing themselves as subjects within them, and of engaging in artistic practices that [make] their resistance to such positions a visible and viable part of classroom literacies" (p. 46).Based on findings of these studies, graffiti used as part of an arts-integrated pedagogy might support the development of (L2) students as writers.

Graffiti can be perceivedas a sign system with its own unique semiotic resources and internal representational grammar as it may have the same profound effect on students who learn through arts and multimodal literacies. More specifically, the author argues that graffiti can be understood as a form of multimodal literacy because it empowers (L2) learners to enter the conversation of scholars without being hindered by their level of language proficiency, presents the opportunity for students to be critical thinkers who are able to transform available semiotic resources to make meanings, reflecting their interests, deep, and transformative understanding of the world, which is the core value of multimodal learning and the characteristics of arts and multimodal literacies of the twenty-first century.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing graffiti as a pedagogical tool to promote (L2) writing skills. Within the theoretical frameworks of the multimodal social semiotic theory and an arts-integrated language pedagogy, this paper examines how graffiti can be conceptualized as both a form of art and a multimodal mode of literacy to enhance (L2) writing skills.

Research Questions

The focus of this article is to address two research questions:

(1) In which ways does the use of graffiti within an (ESL) context enforceprinciples of the multimodal literacy approach to learning?
(2) In which ways does the use of graffiti within an (ESL) context fostervalues of arts-integratedlearning?

Theoretical Background
Graffiti as a Meaningful Literacy
As graffiti stands as a power to social change(Idding et al., 2011), it can be recognized as a form of literacy. Graffiti strengthens the voices of marginalized individuals, most of whom afford minimal social participations due to their inability to read and write. Graffiti can represent a social discourse that distributes power among various individuals in the community, especially those who have no voice to contribute to social transformation because of being poor and uneducated. In this sense, literacy can be identified as not merely "reading the words," but also "reading the world" (Freir, 1998, as cited in Iddings, McCafferty, & de Silva, 2011, p. 7). For example, for poor, uneducated communities in Brazil, graffiti is empowering because it symbolizes a critical state of consciousness in which these communities participate as critical minds within unstatic conditions of world and words. Hence, the perception of literacy as a social condition that empowers individuals to social change is the core value of graffiti. This is to say thatgraffiti embodies the notion of literacy as not merely a reflection of individuals' abilities to read and write, but also a social condition that empowers individuals to think critically, to understand their own realities, and to make new interpretations of reality, in order to contribute creatively.

As it is able to contribute implied meanings while connecting to the social and ecological system, graffiti can no longer be limited to be dentified as a "combination of different codes, lettering, stenciling, drawing, and painting," but a voice to empower communities (Idding et al., 2011, p. 8). According to Idding et al. (2011), the exospheric indexicality in Brazilian graffiti creates an exceptional context in which it becomes "part of the fabric of the ecosocial semiotic environment of a neighborhood" (p. 8). This exemplifies an integrated context in which graffiti does not only connect to the ecological system of the environment, but also to the society in which it occurs (Idding et al.,2011). As a process of meaning-making, graffiti that relates to the ecological system of an environment stands as a powerful representation of the interrelationship between "the internal semiotic of the sign [and] the external emplacement of the sign" (Scollonand & Scollonand, 2003, as cited in Idding et al., 2011, p. 8).Therefore, graffiti can be acknowledged as a form of ideological literacy that is uniquely attributed to serve a community while standing as an expressive medium of individuality.

Graffiti does not only intertwine with distribution of power within communities, but also with the notion of expressing the self effectively, even if one has no access to either reading or writing. It expands potentialities for community participation while reflecting on a certain perception of a social issue, even if participants are illiterate. In this sense, graffiti fosters critical awareness and consequently carries social change. As reported by a community member in Idding et al.'s (2011) study, graffiti makes her "stop and think" (p. 17). Therefore, graffiti promotes democracy in the sense of sharing information and other forms of social and cultural stands. In addition, it empowers individuals to function as social actors. These social actors create a complex landscape of integrated meanings. Accordingly, graffiti can be viewed as a

production of society and a center of meaningful social interactions that foster change.

Multimodal Social Semiotic Theory

As Jewitt (2006) describes, multimodality in which all modes of communication are attended as part of the process of making meaning is basedupon Halliday's social semiotic theory of communication. As indicated by Jewitt (2006), the main idea underpinning Halliday's social semiotic theory of communication is that language is social and that language is the way it is because of the social functions it serves in people's lives (as cited in Jewitt, 2006). In this sense, the theory of social semiotics describes language as being related to materialistic aspects, as well as shaped by social and cultural contexts. Therefore, within this perception of meaning-makingas related to semiotic resources or modes of communications, the social semiotic theory of communication illustrates that meaning are not merely implied within written linguistic texts, but can be conveyed through music, speech, sound, action, and visual communication that can be used to make meaning (Jewitt, 2006). As explained by Jewitt (2006), these resources are "signifier-material" for meaning-making (making of signs) (p. 17). Thus, semiotic systems offer a new way of "thinking about semiotic resources and the role of the sign maker in the process of making meaning" (Jewitt, 2006, p. 17). Accordingly, the emphasize should no longer be focused on how to use semiotic resources to convey meaning, but on the role of "sign-makers" as designers of multimodal meanings.

The multimodal social semiotics theory extends Halliday's theory of understanding meaning as represented in a range of modes. The multimodal theory to learning focuses on the ways in which modes are combined to make meaning and on individuals' processes of meaning-making (Jewitt, 2006). It is the process in which people make choices from a network of alternatives, including writing, music, speech and sound, and action, as well as visual communication to make meaning (Jewitt, 2006). Therefore, signs are a product of a social process of sign-making in which a person (sign maker) brings together a semiotic resource (a signifier) with a meaning (the signified) that they want to express (Jewitt, 2006, p. 18). The meaning of a multimodal text is shaped by the signmakers' choices from a range of meaning-making systems that resonate the interest of a particular communication situation (Kress et al., 2014).

According to The New London Group (1996), language, visual and other modes of meaning- making are dynamic representational resources that function as webs of structures within which the interest of the sign-maker is expressed and the understanding that different semiotic resources have different affordances for meaning-making. Because each semiotic resource has different organizing logic, it also has different affordances for meaning-making. For example, meaning encoded in visual images may offer an indication differs from meaning encoded in oral language. While the former might hold more spatial kind on meaning, the later represents ideas in a more sequential manner (Kress et al., 2014). As Kress and van Leeuwan (2001) further explain, meaning can be made differently using different modes of representation that are "co-present in communicational ensemble" (p. 111). While reflecting upon Kress et al. (2014), the process of creating meaning in the classroom can be defined as the orchestration of the modes in which teachers and students are engaged in the sign-making process.

In accordance to The New London Group (1996), the proposed framework of Kress et al. (2014) consider students' signs as always transformative of resources that are available to learners to reflect their interests at the point of making the sign. In addition, each semiotic resources carries only part of the informational load and have a specialized task within which images have a profound effect on writing (Kress, 2003).Kress et al. (2014) explain that the semiotic systems used in the making of designs for the process of meaning-making are constantly transformative in accordance to their use by social actors. Kress et al. (2014) add that semiotic resources enter into the shaping of meaning, "both in relation to knowledge and in relation to audience" (p. 21).Therefore, multimodality proposes that different representational semiotic resources offer disparate potentials of meaning-making that can be developed by students to represent the world as knowledge.

Learning within the multimodal approach takes place when a person's view of the world is transformed (Jewitt, 2006). According to Jewitt (2006), learning includes taking a "new position to a phenomenon, a new way of talking about and describing it, and new meanings and concepts" (Jewitt, 2006, p. 28). In alignment with Kress et al.'s (2014)definition of learning, learning within the multimodal approach can be seen as a transformative, dynamic process of sign-making that does not only transform meaning,but also the sign maker.

Framing Arts and Multimodality in the English as a Second Language Classroom
Arts, Literacy, and Graffitias Transformative Learning Tools
Arts-based learning is framed within the understanding that engagement with the arts is a social and literacy practice that offer a new perception of the world, "looking through the lenses of various ways of knowing, seeing, and feeling" to explore new possibilities, and, thus, find a sense of themselves as learners (Albers & Harste, 2007, p. 9). As described by Albers and Harste (2007) "'the arts' often refers to the visual, musical, and performance arts, including paintings, ceramics, photographs, films, plays, storytelling, concerts, and others; the term is often associated with the word aesthetic" (p. 8). Similarly, the aesthetic elements of graffiti can be powerful to urge learners to become aware of the multiple facets of a graffiti work, including medium, textures, light, and color (Eisner, 2002) and of the significance of their marks as a way of "reading, listening, and viewing" (Albers & Harste, 2007, p. 10). However,limited amount of research explores the effect of arts-based learning on student-writers' literacy experiences as writers.

Findings of Dickinson and Werner's(2015) study indicate that art of comics, as a form of multimodal writing, holds a pedagogical value to teach writing. Similarly, graffiti may also hold the same significance as a pedagogical tool to approach (L2) writers because it shares the characteristics of comics, including the complexity of symbols and the use of a mixture of words and drawings to reflect upon critical meanings that are within and across their semiotic resources. As explained by Dickinsonand Werner (2015), students in their study are asked to create their own comics to synthesize four assigned readings. In this sense, sourced comics are used by students to engage into the conversation with multiple academic sources. Using sourced comics, students are enabled to be part of the academic discourse, not only as learners, but also as active participants, even though they do not possess the same power and authority as these scholars (Dickinson& Werner, 2015). Thus, while sourced comics offer students the opportunity to engage with scholarly sources in creative ways, they also empower students to be active

agents, who are indirectly engaged in the scholarly conversation as negotiators of power, in which they might "position themselves as equals in the conversation they are entering" (p. 57). While not all students position themselves as equal in the conversation, Dickinson and Werner (2015) explain, some are encouraged to participate as a "learner, organizer, or experiencer" (p. 68). In this sense, learners position themselves as authorized to participate in the conversation while "also making explicit the power relationship they are working within" (Dickinson&Werner, 2015, p. 67). Accordingly, sourced comics, as a multimodal text, allow students to perceive themselves as powerful participants, and, thus, learn how to negotiate the real power that separates a student from a scholar. Because students are engaged in the scholarly conversation without being required to speak with expertise scholars, source comics are a powerful learning tool that offer students "with the opportunity to make their sources speak their language, rather than the other way around" (Dickinson& Werner, 2015, p. 70).

Besides being powerful as "make[ing] visible the many ways that allow students to rethink scholarly conversation", sourced comics help students to transform as being more active learners and critical thinkers, and, thus more compelled to contribute to "the conversation of how identity, authority, and academic discourse interact" (Dickinson& Werner, 2015, p. 71). Accordingly, sourced comics as a tool to multimodal writing, is not merely a means to an alphabetic end, but also a tool to enhance students' interactions and cognitive understanding of scholarly materials (Dickinson& Werner, 2015). Therefore, while students work through the constraints of the alphabetic literacies, comic resources allow students the opportunity to reflect upon the relationship to and among the source materials, and, thus, to hear their voices and the voices of the scholars because of the range of extensive and complex representational possibilities that are offered by sourced comics (Dickinson& Werner, 2015). As emphasized by The New London Group (1996), using multiple modes expands literacy to include "competent control of representational forms, such as visual images and their relationship to the written word" (p. 61). This is to say that as "writing is a way of searching in order to see," comics offer the potentiality to see beyond the alphabetic text, and, thus, to build critical competencies" (Dickinson& Werner, 2015, p. 55). As comics offer students the opportunity to see beyond language, it is a source of learning that can be used effectively to achieve composing purposes (Dickinson& Werner, 2015). As asserted by Dickinson and Werner (2015), the complexity of the sourced comics inspire students to reflect upon a variety of meaning-making strategies which look beyond words and paragraphs, to "build critical competencies," while thinking "critically about the assumptions embedded in alphabetic literacies" and "break down the barriers that text is often thought to erect," and in turn can be used as a valuable multimodal source for multimodal writing (p. 55). As a matter of fact, writing from an arts-advocacy position proves to expand meaning potential in literacy learning. In a similar manner, graffiti as a sign system, has "something unique to contribute to meaning" (Albers & Sanders., 2010, p. 29).

Similar to sourced comics, graffiti contributes to create a space for students to communicate deeper, more thoughtful multimodal meanings because each communicative mode offers a "full range of features that make up conversation: inflection, gesture, interruption, spatial positioning, and visual cues" (Dickinson& Werner, 2015, p. 56). As sourced comics facilitates students' entrance into the academic discourse, graffiti might also be empowering for students to enter the public discourse and to express controversial contents publicly (Hannauer, 2011). In a study examines the use of sourced comics in an (ESL) classroom, students participated as

powerful agents and critical thinkers because they were empowered by the use of comics to engage as part of the conversation regardless of their level of proficiency of English, using the language of art that profounds their writing and enhance their perspectives and understandings of the scholarly abstract ideas (Hannah et al., 2015). In this sense, through an art-integrated learning, students do not only transform meaning, but also transform themselves as empowered to express their deep interpretations of the world while negotiating power in the public, as well as academic arenas.

Albers and Sanders (2010) share examples of teachers and students engaging in various art forms as parallel to literacy learning. Examples of English language learning and arts pairings that are discussed in the Albres and Sanders' book (2010) include the use of opera and fairy tales (Blecher& Burton, 2010), filmmaking and short stories (Robbins, 2010), and drawing and essay writing (Zoss, Siegesmund, &Patisaul, 2010). As Albers and Sanders (2010) assert, "The arts encourage a different type of language learning, one that enables children to authentically tell their cultured stories, to speak through art, and to understand stories more deeply through informed viewing of art" (Sanders & Albers, 2010, p. 8).

As Zoss et al. (2010) argue, for students who struggle with language, an art-based strategy of "moving from the nonlinguistic to the linguistic can be a critical type of pedagogical intervention (p. 152). The students' emotional engagement with learning are evident in their essays as these students are able to do something that they could not do before (Zoss et al., 2010). Thus, students are able to move across the semiotic resources, "from the realm of visual thinking to the universe of oral and written language;" students are able to "create parallel pathways for creating meaning: one visual, the other linguistic" (p. 153). Thus, as Zoss et al. (2010) explain, by allowing students to link the two pathways of visual and linguistic, students gain deep, structured knowledge in ways that is productive for students' achievement as writers. Likewise, graffiti, with its complex multimodal text, combining visual and verbal modes of representation, it may also assess students in reaching "deeper" and "significant" goals in linguistic composition (Zoss et al., 2010, p. 153). Eisner (2002) writes, "In a metaphorical sense, becoming multiliterate means being able to inscribe or decode meaning in different forms of representation" (p. 22). Therefore, arts-integrated multimodal learning, specifically graffiti may also hold valuable pedagogical implications for teaching English as a second language because, as a form of art, it presents "new possibilities for matters of representation" that "can stimulate our imaginative capacities and can generate forms of experience that would otherwise not exist" (Eisner, 2003, p. 381).

An Arts-integrated Multimodal Literacy
Graffiti as an arts-based literacy is multimodal because it offers exceptional opportunities to express the ways through which (L2) learners encounter the world (Greene, 2001). Kress's (2003) multimodal theory demonstrates that "the world told is a different world to the world shown" (p. 1). Similarly, Albers and Sanders (2010) explain "one must see in order to have something to say" (p. 136).In this sense, works of artexpandstudents' opportunities to participatethoughtfully.This is to say that arts-based literacies indulge students in interactive processesthrough which they express deep structures of meaning.Arts can be seen as a multimodal literacy because learning through the arts, Greene (2001) argued, develops different forms of thinking in which learners position themselves as active participantsrather than passive

receivers of knowledge. Accordingly, students will be able to pursue a deeper understanding of meaning while composing to construct informed perceptions oftheir everyday life. As one of the characteristics of multimodal literacies is to empower students to convey more critical, reconstructed understanding of the world, artscan be seen as multimodal because it has the same profound effect on students' writing. Graffiti, used as arts-integrated multimodal literacy, emphasizesthe same values of multiliteracy learning within which learners are transformed as part of the learning process.Supported by the use of art, students will develop adequate writing skills to enhance their abilities to use composition for purposes of inquiry, learning, and critical thinking. Therefore, graffitican be utilized within (ESL) classrooms, promoting the conception of multiliteracies as a tool to transformative learning, and, thus, to enhance students' writing literacy skills.

Multimodality, Graffiti, and Meaning-Making

Graffiti as a form of multimodal literacy symbolizesmeanings of multilayeredsemiotic resources. According to Kress et al. (2014), there are three meaning-making principles that indicate three types of meanings. The first type of meaning is a representation of who does what, with or to whom, and where. This ideational meaning of semiotic modes represent what is going on in the world and concerns who does what, with or to whom, and where. The second type of meaning is interpersonal meaning, indicating the interactions and relationshipsbetween members of societies and refers to the inextricable interrelation between power and knowledge. The third meaning principle refers to textual meaning which organizes the text as a coherent account of the world (Kress et al., 2014). From a multimodal perspective, these three types of meanings are attended in and across each of the semiotic modes, which increase the complexity and depth of the meaning afforded while multiple modes of representation interact. In this sense, each mode of communication interacts with and contributes to the other. As graffiti represents these three meanings, itmight offer an opportunity for (L2) learners to indicate complicated meanings without being hindered by their level of language proficiency.

While modes produce meanings in themselves, in accordance to their specific affordances, these modes intersect and interact to produce multimodal meanings (Kress et al., 2014). The distinct representational affordances of each mode lead to its functional specialization (Kress, 2003). This is to say that within the lines of different modes' affordances, different modes have its specialized meaning resources that can be combined with those of another to produce more complex multimodal meanings (Kress et al., 2014). For example, each of the textual, visual, actional, linguistic modes of communication perform a special and differently significant role to "produce different meaning-making potentials" (Kress et al., 2014, p. 20). As Hafner (2014) explains, while writing tends to convey particular kinds of meanings, image conveys others. Hafner (2014) illustrates that "writing is suited to the discussion of abstract concepts because they can be categorized by word, but may be difficult to show visually" (p. 659). Conversely, "images are suited to the depiction of finely graduated properties" (Hafner, 2014, p. 659). For example, using the mixture shades of colors one sees when looking at a tree, images can be used to show these minute details. On the other hand, language would be used to "describe the color in categorical terms, e.g., green)" (Hafner, 2014, p. 659).

Multimodality describes that each of the different modes of meanings is a systematic semiotic resource, with its own internal grammar, while no mode is privileged over the other

(Hafner, 2014).As Kress et al. (2014) explain, "attention to one mode alone fails to capture the meaning of a communication event; not just that it fails to capture all the meaning, but it fails to capture the meaning" (p. 18).On the other hand, multimodality accounts for how various semiotic resources are "orchestrated" in order to create a multimodal "ensemble," a material product which combines "a plurality of signs in different modes into particular configuration to form a coherent engagement" (Kress, 2010, p. 162). While learners "re-articulate" and "re-combine" semiotic resources of meaning-making, the outcome is a "new meaning that becomes a new meaning-making resource" (New London Group, 1996, p. 76). This new meaning is a result of a goal-directed act that is oriented towards communicating a designer's intention while using multiple modes in the process of meaning-making (Hefner, 2014). Echoing Kress et al.'s (2014) concept of multimodal meaning, designers of graffiti are also designers of meanings. Graffiti designs require orchestration of different modes of representation that are socially constructed to create meaning. In other words, the various semiotic resources of graffiti interact and intersect constantly to create more in-depth, socially-situated meanings. As being complex and symbolic, graffiti encourages learners to reconstruct and reimagine reality to produce fully articulated meanings that reflect the depth and richness of graffiti texts.

As previously mentioned, one of the most essential features of a multimodal text is being of mixed logic. Each logic is associated with different potentials for representation. Thus, the designing of meaning lies beyond the modes that employed for the purpose of meaning-making. Meaning is rather embodied in the designing of the relations of meaning "in between" these modes of representation (Nelson, 2006). Thus, it is essential to understand that the quality of meaning is bounded by organizing different logics of different modalities which is the core notion of synaesthesia (Nelson, 2006). Synaesthetic meaning, as identified by Kress's (2003) theoretical framework, is bounded to the co-operation of transformation and transduction. As Kress (2003) explains, transformation operates "on the forms and structures within a mode," while transduction "accounts for the shift of semiotic material…across modes" (p. 36). On the other hand, in transduction, "designers reshape semiotic resources across modes, shifting from one mode to another for the intended meaning to be delivered" (Yang, 2012, p. 223). As Yang (2012) illustrates, designers in the process of transduction might choose to represent an idea using a video instead of a spoken language. While modes are under transformation and transduction, "the logic of presentation may no longer stay the same because the different modes may carry varying properties for the act of message delivery" (Yang, 2012, p. 223).

Therefore, meaning relies within and across different semiotic resources (Nelson, 2006). On the other hand, synaesthesia emerges as a result of multiples authoring semiotic resources (Nelson, 2006, p. 59). Nelson (2006) argues, "semiotic synaesthesia must be understood not as a purely perceptual phenomenon, but a phenomenon jointly governed by a process of sensing and sense making" (p. 59). The most important consequence of perceiving meaning within the notion of synaesthesia or sense making is that the "emergence of synaesthetic meaning can occur even when the semiotic elements involved are no longer co-present" (Neslon, 2006, p. 59). In this sense, as emphasized by Kress (2003), in a multimodal communicative practice, synaesthesia is "much of what we regard as creativity" (p. 36). Accordingly, I would argue that graffiti holds the synthetic feature of multimodality. A graffiti text is multimodal as it constitutes different semiotic resources that are designed to convey meaning according to the sign-maker interest and

communicative message. Accordingly, meaning in the multimodal text of graffiti relies within and across different semiotic resources.

While investigating the benefits of multimodal composing, Nelson (2006) examines multimodal composing in digital storytelling. Nelson (2006) argues that writers recognize the "synaesthetic relationship between the image and word" (p. 63). Such an awareness of the relationship within and across semiotic resources enhances the possibilities to indicate powerful, intentional meanings while composing (Nelson, 2006). In describing multimodal writing, Nelson (2006), illustrates that "multimodal meaning can shift diachronically from iconic to symbolic significance" (p. 63). This specific alternation, that is offered as part of the multimodal meaning, enhances the richness and depth of the words. In this case, multimodal composition offers students the opportunity to recognize "a new, more sophisticated form of semiotic relationship" (p. 63). Thus, by means of semiotic resources, it is evident that authors, while "recognizing the relations of meaning that bind semiotic modes together," are able to increase their authorship competencies to develop a "deeper, more complete, more abstract quality of meaning that develops within the image-word sign in a multimedia composition as it progresses (Nelson, 2006, p. 62). Nelson (2006) asserts that multimodal writing offers new means by which to "experiment with and learn about structuring relations of meaning between modes, which may well be supportive as powerful expression in the future" (p. 65). Additionally, Nelson's (2006) findings indicate that multimedia practices offer L2 writers the "freedom to communicate and negotiate meanings by means of media that are not the L2" (p. 65).

Similarly, Yang (2012) examines the English language learners' multimodal digital story composing. When designing with multimodal forms, learners "rely on their sociocultural personal or community experiences to co-construct interpretations of these semiotic resources" which can help them to "create and develop new meanings for the semiotic resources in a new communicative context, such as in a multimodal design context" (p. 223). The use of digital story narratives allows the researcher to assert that these digital stories help (L2) learnersto develop more understanding of their meaning-making processes.

Building on these studies' findings, graffiti can be examined for its pedagogical significance. Using semiotic resources, graffiti's special functional specializations and unique synthetic features, learners might be able to create and develop new meanings while orchestrating different semiotic modes. In addition, graffiti can also be conceived as a multimodal communicative mode, standing as "one kind of evident of what" students' "thinking may have been like" (Kress et al., p. 152).Therefore, graffiti can be used by language teachers to help (L2) learners evolve creative, richer meanings that support their written expressions and transform their writing experiences to be more productive and creative.

Multimodality, Graffiti,and Transformative Learning
The description of multimodal learning by Kress et al. (2014) consider learners as active participants in the remaking of the signs and part of the transformative learning that occurs as the result of learners' social interactions with different semiotic resources. These created signs mediate learners' responses to the communicative actions through which they express their interest and share their creative visions(Kress et al., 2014). As Kress et al. (2014) explain, multimodal learning is "the perpetually transformative action of sign-making through which students are involved in active remaking of signs according to the context of the lesson and the

different interests of the teacher and the student" (p. 34). This perception of multimodal learning emphasizes The New London Group's (1996) concept of learning as a"results of the designs of complex systems, environment, technology, beliefs and text"(p. 74).These signs stand as one kind of "evidence of learners' thinking and learning" (Jewitt, 2006, p. 29). Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) assertion that all social actionsare semiotic, and that all semiotic actionsare social. Therefore, transformative learning can be signified as a "social action" that helps learners to create socially constructed meanings (Kress &van Leeuwen, 2001). In fact, according toThe New London Group (1996), design does not only transform knowledge in "producing new constructions and representations of reality," but also transforms learners' as meaning makers who "remake themselves as they reconstruct and renegotiate their identities" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 76).

Reflecting upon The New London Group's (1996) understanding of designs as transformers of knowledge, of people's relations to each other and of people themselves, graffiti, as a design of art, provides the same opportunity for learners to transform themselves, meaning, and the world in terms of knowledge that they produce while interpreting the complexity of relations in the multimodal text of graffiti. Kress (2003) and The New London Group (1996) agree on the concept that learning is a result of the sign-making process within which learners involve to rearticulate these signs in accordance to their intents and contexts. This is to say that multimodal literacy perceives the product of the design as evidence of learning, as well as a reflection of learners' thinking and thoughts.

Graffiti can be described as a meaningful literacy that can be used as a pedagogical tool to enhance (L2) writers' literacy skills. The use of graffiti can be conceptualized as promoting an arts-based language pedagogy, enforcing values of multimodal learning to enhance the process of learning in ways that values visual, as well as cognitive perspectives of learning.

Implications for Further Studies
Further research is needed to examine the use of graffiti as a way to enforce principles of multimodal learning. Future empirical studies may examine the effectiveness of using graffiti to enhance (L2) learners' writing skills. Perceived as promoting values of an arts-based language pedagogy, further research is needed to investigate the impact of utilizing graffiti as a way to promote (L2) learners' critical thinking, transforming the ways through which they approach learning and their (L2) writings.

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