

**THE MERGE OF MULTIMODAL MODES FOR FACILITATING TARGET  
LANGUAGE COMPREHENSIBILITY**

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**Approval page**

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*Ana Maria Signe*

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jaqueline', with the number '25970995.' written below it. To the left of the signature is a small blue square.

**Judge**

*Sonia Perez R.*

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**Judge**

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### **Abstract**

Multimodality involves different forms or modes of expression, among which we mainly find the visual, linguistic, spatial, aural and gestural modes. Even several studies have been conducted analyzing those modes, but separately, our point is that converging these modes in the same social interaction helps the participants to create meaning. Facilitating target language comprehensibility is a core practice based on strategies that the teacher makes use of with the aim of getting students to obtain a better understanding of the target language and to facilitate its meaning, it follows 3 stages, create comprehensible language, create context for comprehension and create comprehensible interaction. These 3 stages help educators to achieve significant interactions in the L2 classroom and converging the different multimodal modes while implementing this practice can improve the performance of the social interactions. Considering this, this study aimed to explore how the merge of multimodal modes facilitate target language comprehensibility. To achieve that, many research articles guided us during the investigation. For the data collection procedures an EFL class was analyzed, the participants were a pre-service teacher and his students when doing his teaching practices. The data collection method used was video viewing and to show the results we used transcriptions with the conversation analysis method (CA). The results of this investigation showed that merging the multimodal modes makes easier for students and teachers create meaning and facilitates target language comprehensibility

Key words: Multimodality, Target language comprehensibility, meaning, conversation analysis, practice

La multimodalidad involucra diferentes formas o modos de expresión, entre los que encontramos principalmente los modos visual, lingüístico, espacial, auditivo y gestual. La convergencia de estos modos en la misma interacción social ayuda a los participantes a crear significado. Facilitar la comprensibilidad del idioma de destino es una práctica fundamental basada en estrategias que utiliza el docente con el objetivo de que los estudiantes obtengan una mejor comprensión del idioma y facilitar su significado, esta sigue 3 etapas, crear lenguaje comprensible, crear contexto para comprensión y crear una interacción comprensible. Estas 3 etapas ayudan a los educadores a lograr interacciones significativas en el aula de L2 y la convergencia de los diferentes modos multimodales al implementar esta práctica puede mejorar el rendimiento de las interacciones sociales. Teniendo esto en cuenta, este estudio tuvo como objetivo explorar cómo la combinación de modos multimodales facilita la comprensión del idioma de destino. Para lograr eso, muchos artículos nos guiaron durante la investigación. Para los procedimientos de recolección de datos se analizó una clase de inglés como lengua extranjera, los participantes fueron un profesor en formación y sus alumnos al realizar sus prácticas docentes. El método de recolección de datos utilizado fue la visualización de videos y para mostrar los resultados utilizamos transcripciones con el método de análisis de conversación (CA). Los resultados de esta investigación mostraron que la fusión de los modos multimodales les facilita a los estudiantes y profesores crear significado y facilita la comprensión del idioma de destino.

Palabras clave: Multimodalidad, Comprensión del lenguaje destino, significado, análisis de la conversación, práctica

## 1. Introduction

Multimodality is an area of study which analyzes how the convergence of semiotic modes (e.g., speech, gesture, gaze, proxemics) generate affordances in communication and social interaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Multimodality has gained interest in educational research since it explores diverse strategies or literacies within teaching, where aural, linguistic, visual, spatial and textual resources are used. It also studies body expressions of both teachers and students which help to identify important feelings or situations in the classroom, which can help realize how significant or interesting the educational process is.

Several studies (Lim, 2019; Macedonia & Klimesch, 2014, Mestre-Mestre, 2015; Lim, O'Halloran & Podlasov, 2012; Smotrova, 2017, Van Compernelle & Smotrova, 2014) have been carried out in the last decade which have explored how multimodality offers language learning opportunities in diverse fields such as science, L2, and social studies.

Flores (2014) analyzed classroom interaction in the EFL classroom, with the intention of examining the way in which teachers and students used space and speech for language teaching and learning. Park (2017) studied classroom interaction in the foreign language classroom, with the intention of studying how multimodality (e.g, the combination of gestures and space) intervenes in learning, but this time from the perspective of the students. Witten (2012) used ethnographic methods to get an idea or perspective on how a lesson is developed in the EFL classroom, paying special attention to classroom artifacts used during class, thus reporting the different forms of literacies used when teaching.



Zhang (2016) analyzed how learning is constructed in science classes focusing on space and gesturing. Smotrova (2018) studied how gestures help students improve pronunciation. Even though there is significant multimodal research, most studies have focused on the analysis of modes separately (e.g., gesturing, space, classroom artifacts) and, in many cases, there is still a main emphasis on the transcription and analysis of the speech mode. Our study aims to analyze how all semiotic resources merge to create meaning and generate learning opportunities in the L2 classroom. More specifically, this study explores how the convergence of multimodal modes facilitates the target language comprehensibility in the L2 classroom.

Facilitating Target language comprehensibility refers to a core practice (Glisan & Donato, 2017) based on strategies that the teacher uses to help students understand the target language. Even though research studies have been conducted to analyze how pre-service teachers use language comprehensibility (Davin & Troyan, 2018, Davin & Donato, 2017), to our knowledge, no study has used a multimodal perspective to understand how this core-practice is realized.

In this study, we will analyze how a pre-service teacher facilitates language comprehensibility when teaching nine graders in a public school in Monteria, Cordoba. We aim at evidencing the diverse multimodal modes that students and teachers use to facilitate the Target Language Comprehensibility and influence the learning moment, inspiring us and answering our research question: How does the converge of multimodal modes facilitate the target language comprehensibility? This study contributes to existing research about multimodality and also helps teacher educators, pre-service teachers and experienced

teachers to understand how other modes of communication, different from speech, can facilitate the Target language Comprehensibility.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. Multimodality**

Multimodality approaches representation, communication and interaction as something more than language itself, that is, a multimodal interaction is all that in which we make use of the visual, the aural, the spatial, the gestural and the linguistic to express ideas, give points of view and communicate in any context. As Kress and Van Leeuwen explain (2001), multimodality is the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event". The first thing to keep in mind in multimodality is to understand that the social interpretations of language and its meanings are extended to all the modes of communication that are used to give meaning to the topics worked on in a given context., which can be: images, writings, gestures, sight, speech, posture, etc. With the aforementioned it is possible to understand that all social interaction is multimodal, Goffman (1981) claims that all face-to-face interaction, all gestures, posture, noises, among others, provide interactional meaning

Multimodality involves different forms or modes of expression, among which we mainly find the visual, linguistic, spatial, aural and gestural modes. The visual refers to all the images and characters that people can see, which can be textual or through symbols. Linguistic mode refers to the delivery of written or spoken text, the organization of words into sentences and paragraphs, and the development and coherence of words and ideas. This

linguistic mode is probably the easiest to use, since when interacting you can use audio and video transcripts to make understanding easier. Spatial mode, as its name implies, refers to the arrangement of elements in space.

It involves the organization of elements and the physical proximity between people and objects, a good example of the spatial mode could be the different ways chairs and desks are arranged in a classroom. Aural mode focuses on sound including music, sound effects, ambient noise, silence, tone of voice in spoken language, and more. An example of this might be a recording of a public address given to several people, a podcast, or a radio show. And finally, the gestural mode refers to the way in which the movement is interpreted. Facial expressions, hand gestures, body language and interaction between people are gestural. Gestural mode works with visual, aural, and spatial language modes to create more detail and better gaze.

## **2.2. Facilitating target language comprehensibility: A core teaching practice**

Practice is a way of transforming a reality, of approaching it and proposing alternative solutions to certain difficulties, even without knowing what the true and real solution will be for each situation. Wenger (2009) points out that: “The concept of practice connotes doing something, but not simply doing something in and of itself; it is doing something in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do”. In this sense, practice the central actions and tasks of ambitious teaching. They are sets of strategies, routines, and activities that teachers can unpack for learning across subject areas, grade levels, and contexts. Teaching well depends on having a flexible repertoire of high-leverage

strategies and techniques that can be deployed quickly with good judgment, depending on the specific context and situation. (Core Practices Consortium, 2020)

Facilitating target language comprehensibility is a core practice based on strategies that the teacher makes use of with the aim of getting students to obtain a better understanding of the target language and to facilitate its meaning. Glisan & Donato (2017) suggests three stages to facilitate target language comprehensibility: creating comprehensible language, creating contexts for comprehension, and creating comprehensible interactions with students.

For Creating Comprehensible Language, we should: (a) Use of examples to define new words, (b) Use of appropriate rate of speech, (c) Multiple use of new words and expressions, (d) Use of tone of voice to signal new words and structures, (e) Use of paraphrasing, (f) Use of familiar vocabulary and structures. For Creating Contexts for Comprehension: (g) Use of gestures to clarify new language, (h) Clearly conveying lesson topic and objective before input, (i) Use of meaningful and purposeful context, (j) Use of visuals and props.

For Creating Comprehensible Interactions with Students: (k) Active involvement of students in lessons and (l) Use of appropriate sequences of questions. This core practice is a meaningful tool teachers should understand and enact in order to progressively familiarize students with a L2 context. For this reason, this core practice has become the main focus of analysis in this study.

### 3. Literature Review

As previously mentioned, multimodality has gained significant attention in research in the last two decades. As a result, researchers have used this area of study to analyze meaning making in diverse classroom interactions and contexts. Flores (2014) showed how influential are the spatial and the aural modes (i.e., the different variations of speech: intonation, rhythm, stress) in terms of facilitating the oral interaction in the EFL classroom. Using a multimodal ethnographic analysis of discourse in the classroom, this EFL scenario was analyzed to see how the teacher and the students 'workplaces and the teacher's speech was involved in the learning process. Instruments such as a video camera were used for video sequences, lesson transcripts, photographs, and field notes.

The class was recorded from the beginning to the end by the teacher, then it was transcribed using Conversation Analysis to analyze the structure of the dialogue and identify the speech actions performed. The shots were analyzed along with the transcripts of the dialogues to identify what was said and how it was seen during the lesson to capture and present the most important aspects. Findings showed that the non-strategic use of space is a modality that has not received enough attention within learning contexts. Therefore, this may cause negative effects for the learning and teaching process. Flores explained that the students, in this class, can interpret the limitations of furniture and the lack of a designated classroom and space for the subject of English with the expression "English is not taken as a serious subject at school". He also argued that even though the teacher in this class managed to capture the attention of the students through a controversial and interesting topic, more

language opportunities would have been generated if the teacher would have had the chance to make more eye contact and body gesturing with the students.

Witten (2012) conducted a study in a language faculty of a public university in Mexico and, through ethnographic methods, conducted a multimodal analysis that examines how teachers and students as participants use different literacies in various situations in an English class. Data sources such as videos of a classroom, photographs, notes, and transcription were used to conduct this study. Through an analysis of interactions, the study explored patterns and the different roles that are enacted within the classroom context, paying special attention to classroom artifacts especially the English textbook, discovering how these influence classroom practices and how participants within the classroom use these artifacts to achieve a connection to learning, and how multimodal interactions and the classroom as a culture provide different opportunities for learning.

Park (2017) studied nonverbal multimodal cues that students use as an interactive resource to perform a specific interactive activity. For this research, a grammar lesson given to pre-intermediate English students was chosen, in which a teacher and six students were recorded. For this research, a question-and-answer activity between teachers and students or students with their own classmates was chosen. The data was taken through photos and recordings in two different corners of the classroom. Each part where the use of multimodality by the student was evident, was identified and transcribed by the researcher.

The teacher began by encouraging a student to come forward and start the activity, match a word with a photo, the student integrates verbal and non-verbal actions with their gestures and space thus creating meaning, The student must be more precise in his answer,

so it creates the need to elaborate a clearer answer, in this way the student not only relies on words, but begins to use his body, moves away from the board and makes big movements of arms, thus creating a new interactive space and helping to carry out the learning activity successfully.

The spacing used created a place of interaction that can allow them more enriching interactional resources such as continuous finger pointing to make the meaning more precise in line with the speech. The gestures of the teacher and the student can give meaning to both parts and inform what is happening, for this reason multimodality is considered to be able to facilitate or hinder an interactive space from the perspective of the student and according to understanding. This study shows us that non-verbal communication is possible, and that through multimodal modes such as visual and gestural we can have communication.

Zhang (2016) conducted a study in a middle school in the Midwestern region of the United States, in which A 6<sup>o</sup> classroom was chosen for data collection based on the teacher's willingness to be included in the study. The study reports the results of an ethnographic research about the multimodal science discourse. Discourse analysis in the classroom focused on answering questions that are traditionally answered through close examinations of the language in use, particularly language spoken in the classroom. Findings indicate that the teacher mainly used the speech mode for meaning making while providing explanations, feedback, which may have reduced learning opportunities. Even though findings showed the preference of the speech mode, the transcript of the classroom interaction showed little evidence of how other modes were captured and analyzed.

Following the Conversation Analysis approach to transcription, Smotrova (2017) studied how conscious and unconscious teachers ‘gesturing helped a group of American students to understand and pronounce difficult English sounds through songs and rhymes.

Even though all these studies contribute to multimodal research, only selected modes seem to be analyzed. That is, they do not seem to be studied together as the theory of multimodality suggests. Also, in many cases, researchers use a CA approach to transcription in which it is difficult to observe the presence of semiotic modes such as proxemics, gesturing, and gazing. This study aims to analyze all semiotic modes to understand how a pre-service teacher facilitates Target language Comprehensibility.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Type of study**

In this investigation, an analysis of a group will be carried out to obtain a learning and conclusion on the subject to be investigated. The type of study that we will use will be a case study, which study with depth and attention to a group, event or individual person in order to look for patterns and causes of behavior.

#### **4.1.1. Case Study**

According to Yin (2009), case study is used to explain, describe or explore events or phenomena in the everyday contexts in which they occur. For this reason, we will use a case study to study and explore multimodal behaviors in a classroom, concluding how they



facilitate the learning process. This study will address one main research question: How do semiotic resources converge to facilitate the target language comprehensibility?

#### **4.2. Context and participants**

This research was carried out through a class analysis of a ninth-grade English class of a public school situated in a neighborhood in Monteria, Córdoba, Colombia. This was the first class of the pre-service teacher (Juan, pseudonym). The pre-service teacher started these two hours of class by introducing himself so that the students could get to know him and why he was there. He began by telling them that he is an English graduate student who started doing his teaching practices and needed their help and participation. After the introduction, the teacher continued with a warm-up activity for the students to relate to the lesson to work on. The teacher taught a lesson about culture, differences between Colombia and the United States associated with gastronomy. For the development of the lesson, Juan used a projector, images and a venn diagram and followed a lesson plan sequence previously discussed with his college teacher. Juan organized the class in a round table and tried to maintain eye contact with the students. Even though the students' English level was low, the teacher tried to use the L2 during the whole class, the students responded in the majority of times in a positive way following the teachers' instruction and responding to the classroom activities, in other times silence prevailed.

### **4.3. Data collection procedures**

For the development of this research, we did video viewing, according to Gaudin, Chaliès (2015), there are six objectives of video viewing in teacher training and professional development: to show examples of good teaching practices, to show characteristic professional situations, to analyze the diversity of practices in the classroom from different perspectives, to stimulate personal reflection, to guide/coach teaching, and assess competencies. We will watch a video recording, according to Asan and Montague (2014) video recording records clinical events, allows researchers to verify their observations, and allows for the collection of systematic feedback by means of strategic participant review. Taking this into account we are going to analyze the first English class by the pre-service teacher Juan (pseudonym), which we will analyze multimodality.

We transcribed the video recording using Goodwin's (2007) approach to Conversation Analysis, that is, a detailed transcription of the verbal and non-verbal interaction observed in the video (see sample below).

### **4.4. Data analysis**

For data analysis, we did an iterative viewing of the video recording following a series of steps. First, we watched the video recording separately selecting key moments that pointed to Target language comprehensibility. Second, we reviewed the information that each of us collected during the video viewing and chose the hot spots where target language comprehensibility was most notorious. In the third round, we chose a total of 2 crucial moments which we reviewed in detail by watching the video iteratively. Fourth, we

proceeded to make a multimodal transcription (see sample below) of the selected hotspots, watching the video several times to capture the convergence of modes.

*Transcript conventions.*

T → Teacher

S? → Unidentified student

Ss → Students

S# → Specific student

HIGH → Capital letters mark high tone of the voice

High → Common writing marks normal speech

(( )) → Researchers' comments

, → Normal pause

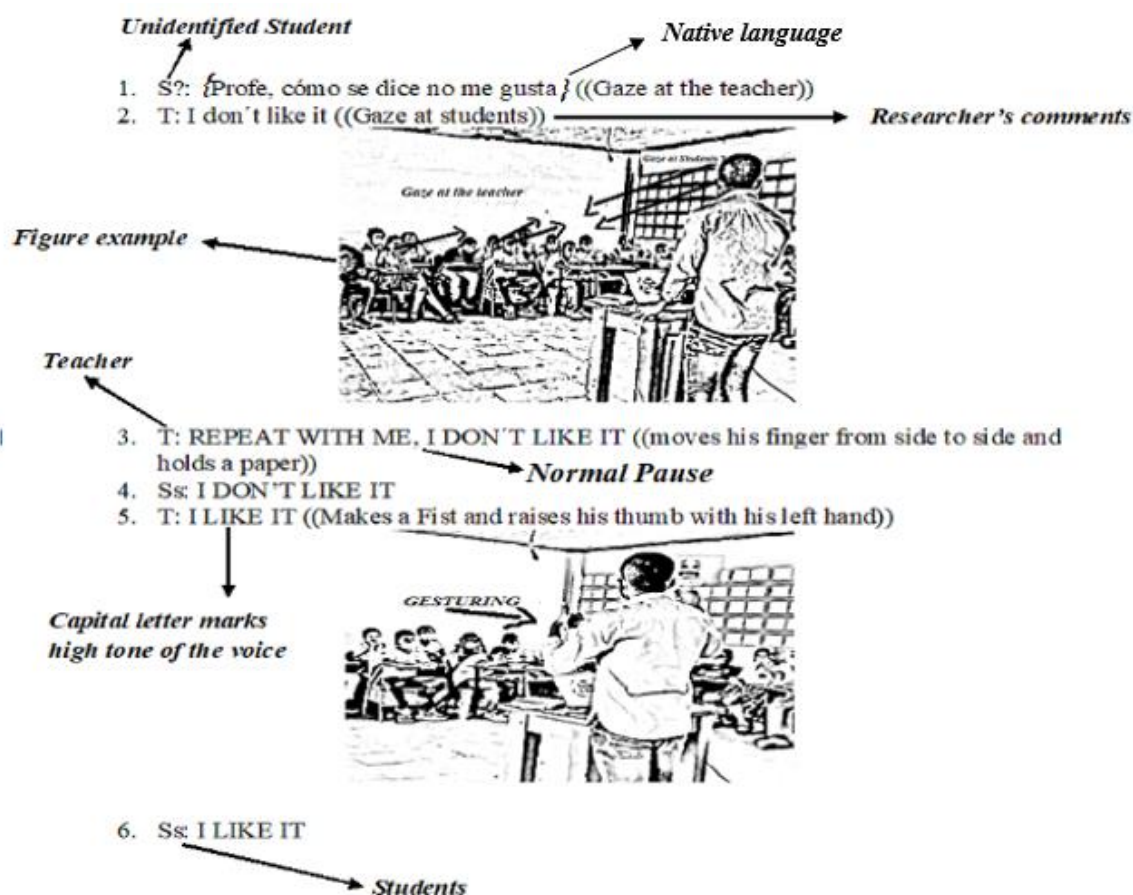
XXX → Unintelligible talk

{ } → Native language

? → Rising intonation followed by a pause

(.#) → Seconds pause

### Transcript Example



During class a student asks the teacher out loud in Spanish how to say “I don't like it” in English (turn 1), then the teacher answers the student with the expression in English (I don't like it) In response to his question while observing the students (turn 2), the teacher asks them to repeat after him the expression “I don't like it) while moving his finger from side to side and holding a sheet alluding to the expression ( turn 3) the students repeat the expression in unison (turn 4), the teacher says the expression “ I like it” making a fist with his left hand and raising the thumb (see figure 0) while with his right hand holds a sheet alluding to the expression (turn 5), the students repeat the unison expression (turn 6).

## 5. Findings

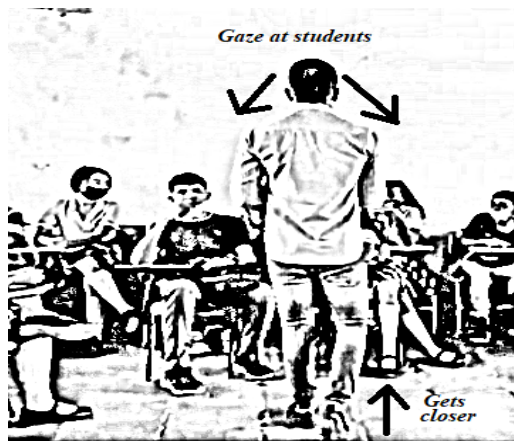
Findings show how social interaction takes place in an EFL classroom making use of multimodal modes such as gestural, linguistic, spatial, visual and aural to facilitate target language comprehensibility. These are described using CA divided into three segments, warm-up activity to introduce a topic, presenting local and foreign gastronomy and classification of Colombian and American food.

### 5.1. Warm-Up Activity to Introduce a Topic

The following interaction describes the first minute of the EFL class in which the pre-service teacher started the lesson with a “piri pong” game to introduce the Gastronomy topic by asking questions in English about the students’ favorite drink.

1. T: PIRI PIRI PIRI PONG, ((the candy passes from one student to another))
2. T: ((gets closer to the student)) What is your favorite drink?

Figure 1



3. S1: (,4) ((Gazes at the teacher with her hand on her mouth))

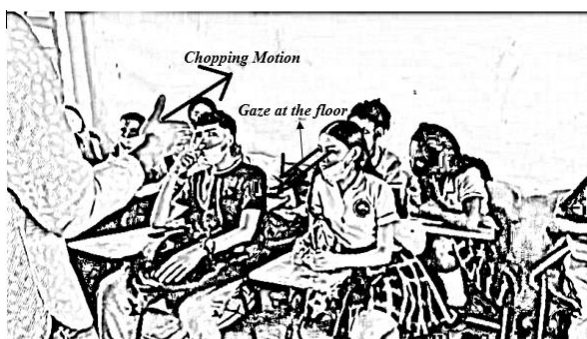
4. T: DRINK, ((Raises his right hand, closes 3 fingers and puts his thumb to his mouth))

Figure 2



5. S1: coca cola, ((smiles and gaze back at the teacher))
6. T: no, someone else said coca cola, a new one ((move his hands))
7. S1: (4) ((touch her hair with her left hand))
8. T: my, favorite, drink is, ((Chopping motion))

Figure 3



9. S1: {no sé} ((laughs and covers her face with her left hand))

Figure 4



10. T: time out, ((smiles and restart the game))
11. T: PIRI PIRI PIRI PIRI PONG! ((the candy stops on another student's hand))
12. T: your turn, your favorite drink,
13. S2: Pepsi ((Look at one of his classmates and put his index finger on his temple))

Figure 5



14. T: Pepsi, okay!
15. S2: ((smiles and high-five with a friend))

Figure 6



As shown in the transcript above, the teacher started the interaction with a dynamic activity, in this case he used a very common game called "piri pong" to prepare the students for the topic in question. (1) The teacher begins the chant of the game "piri piri piri pong", at that moment he begins to use the aural mode where, in addition to the chant, the laughter and noises of the students are heard, while they pass the candy quickly, the candy stops in the hands of S1, (2) the teacher using the space of approaching her (figure 1)

and asked her what her favorite drink was slowly but raising the intonation, (3) the student seems not to understand with clearly the question, she was silent with her gaze towards the teacher and her hand covering her mouth.

(4) The teacher repeats the word DRINK with a high tone of voice and decides to use another semiotic resource, making a gesture, with this he wants to express the meaning of the previous word, he took his right hand to his mouth simulating drinking something so that the meaning is more understandable (Figure 2). Following that, (5) S1 seems to finally grasp and understand the question thanks to the semiotic resources used and correctly responds with the word Coca Cola while smiling with his gaze fixed on the pre-service teacher (6), The teacher quickly asks her for a new answer while moving both hands in the same direction, trying to speed up the answer. (7) S1 remains silent while touching her hair with her left hand, apparently, she again missed the question. (8) the teacher realizes and indicates to her how she should respond, trying to use the resources available to her, repeats the question with pauses while moving her hands to the sound of each word (figure 3) trying to obtain a different answer,

(9) S1 resorts to using her native language to let the teacher know that she does not know what to answer while laughing and covering her face with one hand, she may not have understood the question or simply does not remember the name of some other drink (figure 4). (10) The teacher lets S1 know that time is over by giving her a smile dissipating the tension of the silence and (11) restarting the game chant as S2 holds the candy in her hands. (12) The teacher with a fluid tone of voice asks S2 what his favorite drink is, (13) while he puts his index finger on his temple looking at his classmate (Figure 5) and answers with the



word Pepsi. (14) The teacher notices the student's quick response and responds by repeating the word Pepsi followed by the expression Okay. (15) S2 smiles and gives a friend a high-five (Figure 6) in reaction to his clever response.

In this transcription we can see how the different semiotic resources are combined in the same social interaction to facilitate students' comprehension of the target language in the classroom during foreign language class. The teacher combined different modes to generate understanding, created a comprehensive language through the appropriate use of the speed of speech during the activity and a use of the tone of the voice, in this case raised, to refer to the word drink, a new word in the student's vocabulary. He also created context for comprehension when introducing the word, he did this through the use of gestures, trying to simulate the drink and finally created understandable interactions using a sequence of appropriate questions, the teacher only used the same question with different variations which made the process easier supporting in all of this, the teacher ask questions and tries to make himself understood until the students answer correctly and they begin to make use of what they have learned, facilitating the understanding of the meaning in the classroom, obtaining a better performance in the interactions and achieving positive responses to the objective of the activity.

## **5.2. Presenting Local and Foreign Gastronomy**

After the games and activities that teacher Juan (pseudonym) carried out to enter into the topic of gastronomy with the students, he began giving the explanation, they will be

focusing on the American and Colombian breakfast, socializing images projected with a video beam to practice the meaning and pronunciation of this vocabulary.

1. T: is this the Colombian flag? This one ((Points with the index finger of his right hand to an image on the board while looking at the students.))

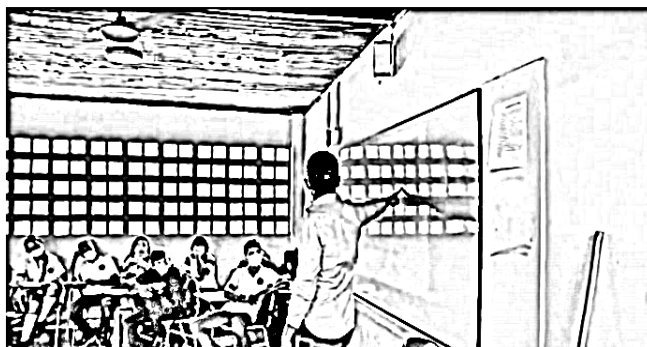
2. Ss: yes ((few students answer quietly))

3. T: {es la bandera Colombiana} ((Repeats while continuing to point to the image looking at the board.))

4. Ss: {SI} YES

5. T: what about this one, ((touch the image of the American flag projected on the board with the index finger of his right hand))

figure 1



6. Ss: {americana},

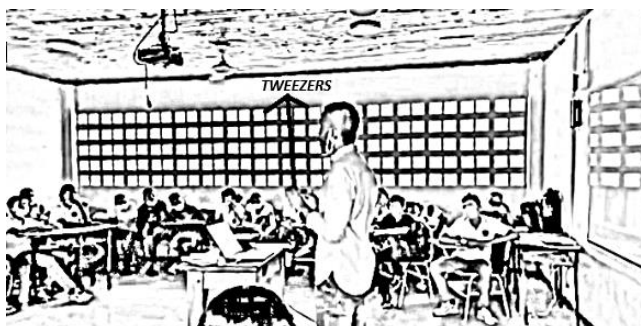
7. T: as you can see, according to the title we are going to be talking about Colombian and American food ((points to the title on the board with his right hand and then he takes his left hand to his mouth making a movement with four fingers))

figure 2



8. T: {vamos a hablar sobre la comida americana La gringa como diríamos}  
 ((makes a gesture with the fingers of both hands))
9. S?: {Y LA COLOMBIANA}
10. T: {y la comida Colombiana} ((nod pointing to the student))
11. Ss: XXX
12. T: okay, let's continue, So first of all, we are going to start with breakfast, the first meal of the day. (( looks at the students while move his index fingers and thumb of both hands))

figure 3



13. T: do you know what breakfast is? ((asks as he turns his head to look at all the students))
14. Ss: {sí}
15. T: BREAKFAST, {DESAYUNO, LA PRIMERA COMIDA DEL DÍA}  
 ((Makes the number 1 with the index finger of his left hand))

figure 4



16. T: so, what can you see in this picture? American breakfast. ((Approaches the board and points to the image with the index finger of his right hand))

17. S?: {HUEVO}

18. T: what else? ((Points to the projected image on the board with his right hand while looking at the students))

19. Ss: {Tostadas}

20. T: toasts ((Pronounce observing the students while pointing to the word on the board))

21. T: we see coffee ((make a gesture with his left hand))

figure 5



22. Ss: {CAFÉ}

23. T: ok let's see, pay attention to me ((Raises and shows the palm of his hand))

figure 6



24. T: repeat with me, EGGS ((moves his index finger in circles forward as they start talking))

25. Ss: EGGS

T: {AREPA} ((Observe the students))

Ss: {AREPA}

T: CHEESE

Ss: CHEESE

The teacher begins the introduction of his topic and the activity using multimodal modes, specifically the visual mode, (1) Through images of a flag pointed out by the teacher and projected on the blackboard, using the spatial mode through a video beam, an important semiotic resource during this class, while asking if that is the flag of Colombia, looking at the students and waiting for an answer, followed by this (2) only some of the students answer in a low voice, apparently some students they did not get the question (3) so the teacher repeats the question in Spanish again while observing the students and points to the image on the blackboard again, (4) Then, the students respond affirmatively out loud, some give their answer in English and others in Spanish while looking at the image. (5) Then the teacher points the index finger of his right hand at the American flag (figure 1) performing the same action as with the previous flag, following a pattern that benefits the students by asking which flag he is pointing to. (6) Students answer that it is the American flag, using their native language.

(7) The teacher points with his right hand to the title on the board, this time using the linguistic mode to explain to the students, according to the title they observe, they are going

to talk about American and Colombian food, then making a gesture of reference to eat with the left hand, exemplifying with this resource the meaning of the action performed (figure 2). (8) The teacher translates this explanation into the native language and explains that they are going to talk about American food or, as many say, the "gringa" by making quotation marks with their fingers. (9) An unidentified student says out loud in the native language that they are also going to talk about Colombian food, (10) to which the teacher Juan nods his head confirming what the student said, both creating an interaction that complements information in the classroom.

(11) for a moment the students start talking to each other all at the same time causing an unintelligible conversation. (12) Then the teacher tries to get attention and silence in the class by telling them to continue, receiving an indication of the activity to be carried out, telling them that first they are going to start talking about breakfast, which is the first meal of the day while observing students and performs tweezers with the thumb and index finger of both hands (figure 3). (13) The teacher asks them if they know what the word breakfast means while he turns his head to observe all the students, (14) to which some respond in a low voice and in Spanish that they do know the meaning. (15) The teacher repeats the word breakfast again in English and Spanish, again emphasizing that it is the first meal of the day while he makes the number 1 with the index finger of his left hand (figure 4).

(16) Once again, the teacher approaches the blackboard and points to an image with his index finger, asking the students what they see in the image. (17) An unidentified student responds aloud to the word egg in Spanish. (18) The pre-service teacher Juan asks the students again what they see most on the blackboard, pointing to the projected image with

his hand. The students respond in Spanish and out loud that they see “toast” (19), the teacher does the translation and responds in English “toast” while he points to and reads the word on the board (20).

After this, pointing to the image with his right hand, he tells the students that they see the word "coffee" (21) while with his left hand he makes the gesture of holding a cup of coffee (figure 5), students respond in Spanish with the word “café” out loud (22). To finish, the teacher asks them to pay attention (23) raising and showing the palm of their hand (figure 6). Professor Juan asks them to repeat the word egg behind him while he watches them moving his index finger in circles forward to talk about Colombian breakfasts (24), the students in unison repeat the word eggs, the teacher says “arepa” they repeat and again the teacher pronounces “cheese” out loud, they respond by pronouncing the word (25).

In order to create comprehensible language, the teacher made use of familiar vocabulary and structures, in this case he introduce the topic of the Colombian and American breakfast by showing the flag of those countries, first point at the Colombian flag in order to let the students know that they are going to talk about the Colombian breakfast and do the same with the united states flag, this was really helpful for the students because, thanks to that introduction, they were able to think about Colombian and American meals, before the teacher started to show them. Then in order to create context for comprehension, the pre-service teacher made use of visual and props, for this he used a video beam to show pictures of different meals that Colombians and Americans have for breakfast and helped himself with gesturing in order to clarify the meaning of a word, in this case the word coffee. Finally, to create comprehensible interactions, he was asking students if they already knew the

meaning of the words and the students were actively answering and also asking him all the time.

### 5.3. Classification Of Colombian and American Food

This interaction was about the shared and studied vocabulary about dinner, analyzing which meals are American or Colombian and which belong to both cultures, analyzing and also sharing the learning of a new word for the students.

1. T: let's focus on this vocab, ((Points to the board))
2. T: okay, meat and salad, is it Colombian, or is it American? ((Points to the board and gaze to the students))

Figure 1



3. Ss: American,
4. T: ((makes a sound with his mouth))
5. Ss: Colombian
6. T: Colombian, what about pizza? ((look at the board and point to it))
7. Ss: Colombian, American,



8. T: {de los dos}, BOTH ((Move his hands side to side))

Figure 2



9. T: Arepa, is it Colombian? ((Point to the board with his right hand and look the students))

10. Ss: xxx

11. S?: BOTH

12. T: {a ver, arepa} ((Look at the students and move his left hand))

13. S?: {Paisa}

14. T: Colombian ((Point with his hand to the students))

15. T: what about {salchipapa}, IS IT AMERICAN? ((point to the board and gaze the students))

16. Ss: COLOMBIAN

17. T: what about, baked potatoes? ((Looking at the students))

18. Ss: AMERICAN

19. T: American, excellent ((walk to the other side of the board))

Figure 3



20. T: what about soda? ((Point to the board))
21. Ss: xxx
22. T: BOTH ((move his hands side to side))
23. T: pancakes and bacon? ((points the image on the board with his right hand and look at the students))

Figure 4



24. Ss: American
25. T: American, excellent, okay, French fries?
26. Ss: xxx
27. T: what about this side, what did you guys say? French fries, is it American?  
((points the left side of the classroom with his left hand))

Figure 5



28. S?: Yes
29. T: excellent ((walks to the right side of the classroom))
30. T: this is too easy, eggs? ((look at the students and move his hands side to side))
31. Ss: BOTH, BOTH
32. T: yes
33. S1: { cómo es que se dice ambos? } ((looking at the teacher))

Figure 6



34. T: BOTH ((look to his bag))
35. S1: ahh ((look at her classmate on her right))

In this section the pre-service teacher begins by guiding the students to the activity to be performed, (1) the teacher asks the students to focus on the vocabulary he/she points to on the board, making use of the linguistic mode through written words that the students can read on the board (2) the teacher begins to show images about foods such as meat and salad asking the students if they have knowledge about the cultural origin of these foods while pointing to the board and observing the students ( figure 1).

(3) the students answer that those foods are American, (4) and the teacher makes a denial sound with his mouth, for this reason, (5) the students respond with another answer and say that those foods are Colombian, (6) the teacher nods and asks them what they think about the pizza while observing and pointing to the board (7) some students answer that the pizza is Colombian and others say that it is American with slightly low tones of voice. (8) the teacher answers them by saying that pizza is from both cultures and moves his hands from side to side (figure 2) simulating the word both so that the students can get a better idea about the meaning. (9) Again, the teacher asks the students but this time about another food, the arepa, he asks them if it is Colombian while pointing to the board with his right hand and looking at the students. (10) The students are all talking at the same time and it is not clear what they are saying (11) An unidentified student on the video camera responds by saying the word both.

(12) the teacher again wants to get an answer but this time a different one and asks them again. (13) another unidentified student answers that the arepa is paisa, the student according to his answer understood the question and has knowledge about the origin of this food. (14) the teacher complements this answer by saying that the arepa is Colombian, (15) now he asks the students if they know what country the salchipapa is from while pointing to the image of this food on the board, (16) all students answer without hesitation and loudly that the salchipapa is Colombian, demonstrating that they know the answer very well. (17) Students must now answer what country the baked potatoes are from, (18) all students respond without hesitation and loudly that baked potatoes are American, (19) to which the

teacher responds by telling them that their answer is excellent as he paces back and forth (figure 3).

(20) The teacher stops at the board while pointing to the image of a soft drink and asks the students where the drink is from, (21) the students again start talking all at the same time and are not understood at all, (21) the teacher tells them that the soda belongs to both, moving his hands from side to side to exemplify the word both. (23) then the pre-service teacher points to a picture on the board with his right hand and looks at the students (figure 4) and asks them what country the pancakes and bacon are from. (24) the students instantly answer that this food is American, (25) the teacher responds by telling them that their answer is excellent and then asks them where the French fries are from. (26) the students talk to each other without being able to understand what they are saying, (27,28) noticing that all the students talk at the same time and do not get an answer, the teacher starts asking one side of the classroom and then the other if that food is American while pointing to the students with his left hand and with his right hand he points to the French fries on the board (figure 5), to this the students respond by saying yes.

(29) The teacher answers them with the word excellent and walks to the right side of the room (30) He lets the students know that the next question is very easy, and asks them about the cultural origin of eggs as he watches the students and moves his hands back and forth. (31) Students respond loudly and repeatedly to the word both, apparently, they started to use this new word after the teacher repeated it more than a couple of times. (32) the teacher answers them with the word yes (33) S1 after listening to his partner's answer asks the teacher in his native language, how to say the word ambos in English while observing the teacher

and the teacher observes her (figure 6), (34) the teacher responds loudly and clearly the word both in response to S1's question while looking down at his bag trying to find a marker to write the word. (35) the student responds with a vowel sound saying Ahh while nodding and looking at his classmate.

The teacher made use of examples for creating language for comprehension, he defined new words by showing pictures of some meals with the objective of letting students answer to what country it belonged to. To continue creating language for comprehension he used familiar words helping the students to understand the topic, for example, pizza. To introduce a new word very important for the lesson, in order to create context for comprehension, the students needed to answer which meals belonged to Colombia and which to America, and also which ones belonged to both countries, this word (both) was new for the students, this took the teacher to use gestures to put them in context, to help the students understand the meaning of the word “both” he used his hands and move them from side to side, showing that the meal can be eaten in Colombia and also in America. Finally, for creating comprehensible interactions, the teacher never stopped talking, he was always asking the students and they were answering accurately.

## **6. Discussion**

The findings presented in this research are an example of how multimodality and the use of all semiotic resources together facilitate the understanding of language, in each segment the preservice teacher tries to create connection and interaction with students using multimodality during all the class. He used all the resources available to him to carry out the

class, making use of Aural, Gestural, Linguistic, spatial and visual modes. Through the game that she used to start the class, he tried to let the students know that the topic they would talk about would be gastronomy.

The teacher placed the students around the room and carried out the round of questions, approaching the students in the classroom, repeating the questions with variations of his voice and, since he did not obtain answers through questions, he resorted to complementing them with the help of gestures to define the meaning of the new word instead of translating it, with which he obtained positive results and correct answers. Moving on to the gastronomy presentation part, the teacher presented foods from two cultures by using a video beam which projected images and titles on the board, using these visual aids to support comprehension, approaching each to practice the pronunciation of the foods repeating with them and making gestures that exemplify the meaning of the words that during the vocabulary practice were not understood by the students, in the last part of the lesson, they classified the foods according to the culture, showing images, asking the students what culture each meal was part of, using proximity and eye contact with them, complementing the questions and projected images. In these findings we could see how the teacher used the different semiotic resources to generate understanding in the classroom, converging the different multimodal modes, this in turn complemented by the three states suggested according to Glisan & Donato (2017) to facilitate target language comprehensibility, creating understandable language, understandable interactions, and context for understanding.

If we use limited resources for teaching, this process may be paused at some point due to gaps that occur by not providing a clear explanation, such as in the case of student 1

(S1) the teacher tries to ask her a question that contains a word that is unknown to her, despite the fact that the teacher is making use of several multimodal modes all the time before and during the question, the student does not understand until a gesture is made simulating the word that for her it is unknown that in this case it is "drink" at that moment the understanding of the language is facilitated by obtaining a positive response to the interaction and the question, allowing the information to be retained much more easily.

Furthermore, for example, in the second transcript when the teacher tries to classify the food according to nationality, he is actively going around the room observing his students, he makes gestures with his hands, he reads the word "coffee" on the board, but when he points to the image and the students make eye contact and see an image of the word they are talking about, immediately recognize the meaning in their native language and identify what they are talking about, with the use that the teacher makes of the space, he is positively taking advantage of the opportunity to improve the teaching process, locating the students around the room allows the teacher to have better control of the classroom, managing to have visual contact with everything around him. around and giving him the space to approach the students and get their gazes directly when asking questions. At the moment in which the pre-service teacher uses all the modes together, he expands the possibilities by providing more options to students and him, complementing multimodality with the three stages suggested by Glisan & Donato (2017)

This study ties to Davin and Troyan's (2015) work in that they also observed that pre-service teachers can use different modes to refer to the different categories presented by Glisan and Donato. However, our work presents new insights about how all categories



overlap throughout the lessons and how they are all realized by the convergence of different modes. Another work that coincides with what we have done in this research is that of Park (2017) who makes use of multimodality in interactions within the classroom, in terms of the results obtained, it also has some similarities in how the use of space can create opportunities for better social interactions in the classroom, as well as a good use of speech, tone of voice and others, help students better understand the message sent by the teacher

This research and its results can provide to teachers, students and future researchers ideas for class methodology, facilitating comprehension and understanding during the teaching and learning process through the use of merged multimodal modes. Many times, despite the fact that multimodality is used in the classroom, we do not have knowledge of it or how it can impact the process, this research can make teachers realize the importance of multimodality to generate meaning and facilitate language, breaking down barriers found in the classroom such as the low level that students have in the language and little participation due to lack of knowledge. We suggest to all teachers make an appropriate use of semiotic resources as a whole to facilitate the understanding of language, communication in the classroom would be more effective. If the multimodal interaction is used completely from the beginning, the understanding would be immediate, avoiding silent pauses or mental gaps that can interrupt the process. In addition, we suggest for future researchers to study multimodal interaction in classrooms where special education is required to cover this aspect and compare findings, complementing the research results.

## 7. Conclusion

From the beginning, this research proposal aimed to answer the following question: How does the converge of multimodal modes facilitate the target language comprehensibility? To make this possible we used an English class which we observed through video viewing, in order to evidence how multimodal modes combined facilitate the comprehension of the target language. It is worth noting that in the past there have been studies that studied semiotic modes, but separately.

As for the results we obtained, it was very nice and satisfying to see how the teacher to help himself and the students to carry out an exceptional class, he made the students understand what each lesson would be about, making use of the categories that Glisan and Donato (2017) define for Facilitating target comprehensibility, the teacher to create a comprehensive language relied not only on a multimodal mode, he used to his advantage the different modes as a whole, An example of this can be seen when he makes use of the space as well as his body parts to make gestures, approaching the students, asking repeated questions, using his tone of voice to make emphasis in the moments that merited it, in the same way he created context for understanding and comprehensible interactions for the students, the latter was noticeable when the teacher after giving explanations, the students were actively participating and asking him questions at all times.

This research proposal is limited in that its area of focus is second language teaching, i.e., for those investigations that have a different objective than showing how multimodality facilitates language comprehension, it falls somewhat short in terms of content. On the other hand we found limitations in this research, which were few, all of them relied on the

observation of a video of an English class, this video was somewhat short, and had many cuts between interactions which made it somewhat complicated and tedious to demonstrate that if we were giving an answer to our research question, Another point to take into account is that the level of the students was quite low, and the interactions were mostly on the part of the pre-service teacher, we noticed this due to the silence that the students maintained when the teacher asked a question and also when using the native language, in this case Spanish.

We recommend for further research, to maintain the vision of the use of multimodality converging the semiotic modes, contrasting with the studies that study the modes separately. This research proposal can be a starting point for those researchers who plan to base their studies on multimodality, with the work done we plan to show that multimodality is best studied by uniting the different semiotic modes, as the name itself indicates. applying multimodality in this way can be effective for any area of work and in any type of social interactions.

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## Appendix

### A. Lesson plan of the analyzed class.

Lesson plan: American and Colombian food			
Teaching Practices	Time	Explanation	Comments

Contextualizing	15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher begins the class introducing himself to let students know the reason why he is there. He starts telling them he is an English student who is starting to do his teaching practices and requires their attention and participation.</li> <li>- After the introduction, teacher continuous with one of the two warm up activities already planned, which is called “piri piri pon” a popular game for them, but instead of playing this game with a simple object such as a ball or something else, teacher brings to the class 4 candies and 1 apple to motivate them to participate in the piri piri pon game because Who doesn’t want a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was such a terrifying moment for me because I could feel all eyes on me, but I consider I did a great job, and they felt my good energy. Of course, I used that moment in specific to demand attention and respect. Also, I let them know that I was a cool teacher, and they were going to learn and have fun with me.</li> <li>- Doing the piri piri pon thing was a great moment because as soon as I showed them the candies,</li> </ul>
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		<p>candy or an apple? So, teacher and students start playing and this game consists in the teacher saying piri piri pon over and over again, while students are passing the candy one another until teacher says PON, as soon as teacher says that word, they have to stop passing through the object and whoever has the object in their hands has to answer a very easy question: What is your favorite food? If the student answers this question correctly and correctly means saying it in English, then the candy is all theirs. The questions can switch from What is your favorite food to What is your favorite drink.</p>	<p>they got excited and willing to participate and I guess that is good to feel when you are the teacher standing right in front of them. I for sure think I caught their attention and their responses where good taking into account their English level, their participation was just on point.</p>
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Facilitating language comprehensibility	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The second move the teacher takes is to present through a the power point presentation six images in which they can see different plates from Colombian and USA, Then, teacher explains to students that the activity they are about to do is called the palette game, this activity is about holding a palette made of cardboard, both sides of it have a phrase, one of them says “I don’t like it” whereas the other one says “I like it” Having said this, students are going to see the images and then the teacher is going to volunteer them to stand up and through the faces of the palette say if they like or not the food in the image presented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this part of the class, students were still focused on it, everyone wanted to participate. Although I felt they didn’t quite understand the explanation in English, once I told them what they had to do in Spanish, they looked motivated and willing to cooperate.</li> </ul>
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Integrating language and culture	15	<p>- In this moment of the class, teacher is going to present the first meals of the day, considering American and Colombian customs in this matter. Teacher starts with breakfast, but at the beginning he does not show nothing but images of a regular American and Colombian breakfast to see if students are able to express what they see using the target language. Then, teacher introduces two short paragraphs that talk about both Colombian a American breakfast and using them, teacher shows students the foods or plates that belong to each culture. The same process goes to the lunch and the dinner part.</p>	<p>- At this point of the class, students kept participating actively, they were clearly related to some of the objects showed by me, they tried to response to my questions and although they made many mistakes, they were interested in what I was presenting them. Most of them didn't know anything about what I was talking about, but I did my best so everyone in the classroom could understand.</p>
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			<p>There were a few exceptions because 5 students were very connected to the class and they understood everything at once, which made the other students to be more interested in participating .</p>
Facilitating understanding	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- After having presented all the images related to breakfast, lunch and dinner, teacher is going to use them as vocab to complete the next activity, but first of all, teacher asks students which country the different plates or food come from to make sure that they really understood one of the most important portions of the class.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At this specific moment I saw that the whole class was following me, almost all of them were responding to my questions, but not only in Spanish, now I could listen a little bit more of English, I have to</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this point of the class, teacher presents a Venn diagram, in which students need to write down those foods that belong only to the American or Colombian culture as well as those that belong to both. Teacher gives them the diagram printed in a piece of paper, while the whole vocab is presented in a slide with images and words so they can see the food and its spelling to complete the diagram.</li> </ul>	<p>mention that the only problem I had was that the video bean didn't work properly as students cloud barely see what I was trying to show them, they were constantly saying to me that it was impossible for them to see, but I tried my best to find a solution and I walked the entire classroom holding my pc while presenting the same slide so the could see better and closer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In terms of the diagram, although I</li> </ul>
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			<p>tried to be as clear as possible, I had to explain what they needed to do in Spanish mainly because I wanted to make sure that everything was clear.</p>
Giving feedback / Correcting Mistakes	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once students complete the diagram, teacher asks them to go to the board where the diagram is being projected through the video beam and place at least one word in any of the spaces of the diagram. After these, teacher checks one by one with the help of all the students if the words were written in the right category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In this final exercise I found some spelling mistakes and some of the words were written in the wrong category, but students themselves figured out where they really belonged.</li> </ul>

**B. Video recording link.**

<https://youtu.be/G7E1d3rMHWa>