Unit 13 Language and Media

Unit Overview

The Internet and smart phones are changing the way we greet others and express ourselves, just like printing, advertising, films and television did in the past. The differences may lie in the speed of their influence, as well as the interactivity and multimodality involved, all of these can be found in the texts of this unit and your corresponding exploration.

Text A

Language has a way of following its own course, regardless of people's will or efforts. Linguistic changes are actually very minor, except for some shifts in vocabulary and sentence mechanics. Computers and cell phones are apparently affecting our attitudes towards language and its use. The first attitude shift is "whatever", and the second is using computers and cell phones to manipulate linguistic behavior. Baron believes that (1) language norms are constantly changing, (2) schools and individuals have their part in following standards. As to young people's manipulation of conversation using technological means, Baron proposes that we should understand their attitudes, in order to reach common ground.

Text B

Language teachers try to teach students spelling, however, the rules are often broken in advertising. In fact, the rule breaking practices are by no means manifestation of ignorance. On the contrary, such practices are reflective of legal, economic and social factors. Advertisers will break spelling rules in order to protect their trademark, save space and cost, create puns and associations. In a word, advertisers play with spelling rules creatively, in order to create positive images.

Text A and Text B both deal with how language is used via different media, if not for the same purpose. Text A addresses the concern of language being corrupted and Text B discuss how and why spelling rules are broken in advertising. In both articles, spelling rules are violated or exploited, not to create confusion, but to achieve certain effects.

Teaching objectives
  Reading competence:

- Check and monitor comprehension
- Distinguish between facts and assumptions
- Develop an awareness of discourse structure

Communicative competence:
- Learn the differences between media language and academic language
- Grasp the relationship between claims and supporting evidence
- Learn how reporting verbs are used in academic writing

Critical thinking:
- Understand the intended meaning of the text
- Evaluate the measures advocated by the author in response to linguistic shifts
- Be aware of the complexity of the language-media relationship and avoid oversimplification, e.g. "rules" in the text

Intercultural competence:
- Understand how social and political contexts shape language use
- Develop an awareness of the prescriptive tradition in English
- Evaluate critically media language in English and in Chinese communities

Autonomous learning:
- Use reference books/materials
- Seek information from libraries or the Internet
- Seek social assistance (from peers, teachers or other adults)

Teaching strategies

Text A mentions the comparison of the differences between media language and standard (academic) language, but it is not wholly devoted to such differences. Instead, it focuses on the changes of people' attitude toward language use in the wake of the Internet and mobile phones.

It is advisable to put more weight on training students' ability to discern the resources available to the author to convey their own attitudes(e.g. *sensationalize*) and describe attitudes of parties involved, (e.g. *have little regard for* and *confirm*).

In order to help students to get a bigger picture of the topic, you can introduce to them David Crystal's *A Little Book of Language*. After it, you can encourage them to read some academic journal papers dealing with media and language. Additionally, magazines in China sometimes run articles on cyber language in China, with some exalting the creativity and others deploring the degeneration of Chinese. You can encourage students to thumb through this articles, chew the interesting examples, and examine their argument critically.

You can even exploit students' interest in time-travel drama, encourage them to create a dialogue or drama featuring the 18th century prescriptive grammarians, George Bernard

Shaw, David Crystal, and the contemporary young people growing up in cyber era. Their conflict may center on interpretation of certain words or inconsistency of spelling rules.

Preparatory work:

(1) Consult the Internet to discover the research interests of Naomi Baron and her main publications, especially her award-winning book. You can get a preview of the book at Amazon.com.

Research interests: electronically-mediated communication writing and technology, the history of English, and higher education

Publications:

Baron, N. (2000). Alphabet to email: How written language evolved and where it's heading. London: Routledge.

Baron, N. (2008). Always on: Language in an online and mobile world. New York: Oxford University Press.

Baron, N. (2015). Words on screen: The fate of reading in a digital world. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Classroom tactics:

1. This exercise familiarizes students with the author's research interests, publications, and academic background, so as to inspire their enthusiasm for language. If the Amazon website does not allow preview in China, you can recommend students to borrow the book from the library.

2. This exercise is also designed to develop students' ability to extract key information from sources. The publications of Baron can be found via many sources, such as the webpage of her institution. But they have to summarize the information in order to find Baron's recent research interests.

(2) PEW, Nielsen and Gallup are three major information research companies in the U.S. Browse the Internet and find out their major business areas.
PEW:

Pew studies U.S. politics and policy; journalism and media; the Internet, science and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and trends; and U.S. social and demographic trends.

Nielsen:

Nielsen measures the popularity of U.S. television shows. They conduct separate surveys for many large media market areas. Commercial television networks use their findings to set advertising rates for each program as well as to determine which programs to continue or to cancel.

Gallup:

Gallup works on customer engagement, employee engagement, organizational culture and identity, leadership development, talent-based assessments, entrepreneurship and well-being. They work with scientists and experts to serve businesses in a range of industries, including banking, finance, healthcare, consumer goods, automotive, real estate, hospitality, education, government and business-to-business (B2B).

Skill: Develop students' ability to retrieve, digest and present relevant information.

Classroom tactics:

You can refer students to Encyclopedia Britannica's online version for information. If such database is not available on your campus, you can browse the websites of the three for "Mission statement" and "About us".

References:

Boudway, I. (2012). *Right or Wrong, Gallup Always Wins*. Retrieved from http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/articles/2012-11-08/right-or-wrong-gallup-always-wins

Nielsen ratings. (2015). In Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/414607/Nielsen-ratings

Pew Research Center. (2015). In Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/1996235/Pew-Research-Center

(3) Middle English, the language of Chaucer's era, differs dramatically from contemporary English in spelling. Match the Middle English words with their modern equivalents.

theef	thief
gerl	girl
deef	deaf

yeve	give
discryve	describe
esily	easily
freend	friend
fyre	fire
mooder	mother
melodye	melody

Classroom tactics:

This exercise is designed to familiarize students with Middle English and it does not force students to learn Middle English. It only takes a little patience and guesswork to make the matches, as the hints are quite obvious. In doing so, students can realize how big the changes of English have been over the last centuries, so that they can better understand the author's idea of language change.

References:

Algeo, J. (2015). *The origins and development of the English language*(6th ed.). Edition Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Baugh, A. & Cable, T. (2005). *A history of the English language*. London: Routledge.

Crystal, D. (2005). The stories of English. London: Penguin.

English language. (2015). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/188048/English-language

Lerer, S. (2007). *Inventing English: A portable history of the language*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Critical Reading

I. Understanding the text

1. Outlining

Thesis: Electronic media affects language itself in a limited way, but it causes two attitude shifts concerning language use among people.

Part	Para(s).	Main ideas
Introduction	1-3	The seemingly overwhelming influence of media on language is not as serious and students know what appropriate language is.
Minor shifts	4-12	Electronic media's influence on vocabulary, spelling and punctuation is minor.
Attitude shift1	13-20	A laissez-faire attitude towards language rules.
Attitude shift2	21-29	A higher degree of control in linguistic interactions with electronic media.
Responses needed	30-34	Strategies to cope with the two shifts.

2. Comprehension check

(1) As an academic paper, Text A cites as evidence a collection of research findings and opinions of others. Read the text once again and match the following findings/opinions with the people listed. Examine the backgrounds of these people and consider to what extent they lend support to the arguments.

1. Instant messages and text messages are killing language.

A. Author herself

2.Creative mediated language can come into school essays.

B. popular media/journalists

3.Media's impact on language is not as significant as described by journalists.

C. Lord Chesterfield

4.Misspelling is a serious mistake and can

D. Constance Hale and Jessie Scanlon

cause life-long harm.

5.When writing e-mails, we can use language   E. David Crystal and other experts

freely and creatively.

Answer: 1(B), 2(E), 3(A), 4(C), 5(D)

Skill: Catch the main idea or message of the quoted persons

Classroom tactics:

This exercise develops students' ability to catch the main idea or message of the quoted persons. In other words, they are asked to find out "Who said what?" and "What does that lead to?" With this ability, they can navigate in the forest of direct and indirect quotations in an academic paper, and comprehend the author's position.

(2) Answering the following questions will help you understand the main idea and the organization of the text better. Try to answer them by yourself, and then discuss them with your partner.

   a. According to Baron, what is the relationship between media and language/language use?

      Media affect not only such aspects of language as vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, but also people's attitudes towards language use. (Para. 12)

   b. Why do you think that Baron uses the word "infamous" to describe "red pen"(Para.15)? And what does the phrase "the infamous red pen" refer to?

       She would like to the readers to realize the significance of "red pen", which is a neutral thing itself. The "infamous red pen" here refers to the prescriptive idea of language/language use, emphasizing accurate adherence to certain (man-made) standards. The prescriptive attitude was not only found in language education but also in many other fields. (Para. 15)

   c. Para. 17 ends with the suggestion "Why not just ditch one and let the other do double duty?". Do you think Baron agrees with this suggestion? Why or why not?

      No, she does not agree with this suggestion. She just uses a laissez-faire tone of students, in order to highlight the absurdity of such practice, because apparently these two words have too much social significance to merge into one. Additional evidence comes from Para. 33, where she expresses approval of teaching handwriting by some schools. (Para. 17)

d. What does Baron mean when she says "it actually is possible to say no" (Para. 30)?

Teachers can discourage such linguistic forms.   (Para. 30)

e. What does "personal empowerment" mean in the last paragraph?

It means allowing "somebody to do certain things using electronic media". (Para. 34)

II. Evaluation and exploration

1. Evaluating the text

(1) How does Baron establish her position concerning online language in the first three paragraphs? Is this introduction appealing? Why or why not?
Baron establishes her position by refuting the popular assumptions concerning media influence on language. Her introduction is appealing because she opens with an absorbing question and then refutes some sensational reports.

(2)How does Baron defend her view that the media's effects on vocabulary and sentence mechanics are minor?
   Skill: Grasp the relationship between claims and supporting evidence
She defends her view with a variety of means, including findings of her own research, that of her colleagues, a PEW study and quotes of relevant scholars. More importantly, she adopts a historical view that language evolves and in comparison, such media-caused language changes are not substantial (Para.11).

(3)What is Baron's attitude towards the fundamental linguistic changes brought about by the media? To what extent do you agree or disagree with her? And why?
Skill: Understand the intended meaning of the author

Baron does not pass judgment on these fundamental changes. But this does not mean that she approves inconsistent use of language. You can refer students to Para. 33.

(4) What particular measures does Baron advocate in responding to linguistic "whatever" attitude? How do you evaluate the effectiveness of those measures?
Baron suggests that we can teach handwriting(Para.33). The evaluation is specified below in Classroom Tactics.

Skill: Evaluate the measures advocated by the author in response to linguistic shifts

Classroom tactics:

1. The effectiveness evaluation can be done using two classes(preferably more than 30 students in each class), one being experiment group with "whatever" attitude and the

other control group with emphasis on precision. After teaching for some time, you can test both groups, and compare the two groups' precision test using an independent *t*-test. Such tests are not impossible missions, as the students have already been exposed to statistics in their high school courses.

The t-test of the scores will be reported as in the following example:

> On average, participants given a "whatever" attitude treatment have lower precision score(M=56, SE=23.333) than those given precision training (M=62, SE=20.505). The difference, -6, CI [29.4, 39.6], is significant, $t(50)$=-5.9, p=.040. However, it represents a medium-sized effect, r=0.64.

2. Or, if research ethics board does not approve the plan, the effectiveness evaluation can also be done within a single class. The class will have a pre-test after they have been taught with "whatever" attitude for four weeks, then they will a posttest after four weeks of precision-focused teaching. The scores of precision tests will be compared using a paired *t*-test. The *t*-test report will be similar to that of independent *t*-test.

References:

Liu R. (2013).外语教学中的科研方法[Research methods in foreign language teaching]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Xu H, (2013). 第二语言研究中的统计案例分析[Learning statistics from examples of second language research]. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

(5) Para.31 cites an example in which the plural pronoun "them" collocates with the singular noun phrase "a friend." What is Baron's interpretation of this example? Do you agree with her? In your opinion, are there any other considerations that justify this "a friend-them" collocation?
Baron interpret the "a friend-them" inconsistency as the result of Bill McKibben's linguistic "whatever" attitude. Actually, you may come up with other interpretations. For example, if you go back to Unit 12 where we mentioned feminist movement, you can find that some writers are catering for feminists' taste in this way.

(6) Throughout the article, Baron demonstrates an awareness of the complexity of the issue under discussion. Find relevant evidence in the text and try to explain why Baron does this.
Skill: Develop an awareness of the issue in question and avoid oversimplification

Baron's awareness of complexity of issue is demonstrated in Para. 3, where she writes, "Yes, young people sometimes accidentally slip a btw...But..."; in Para. 13, 14 and 15, Baron deals with the "rules" in the discussions of mediated language, suggesting that she knows the complexity of the issue in question; in Para. 34, where she finds the issue is

trickier and proposes that we should understand young people's perspectives, instead of following a simple recipe.

2. Exploring beyond the text

(1) According to Text A, since the 1960s, revolutions in school pedagogy began replacing teacher-directed classrooms with peer review and activities designed to foster collaboration. What was the philosophy behind the original rigid teacher-directed teaching? What was the philosophy behind these revolutions? Discuss the pros and cons of the two teaching approaches.

- Skill: Use reference books and online resources

The old philosophy mentioned in Text A is a mechanical and formalism version of Johann Friedrich Herbart's pedagogy, which was the first modern and scientific pedagogy. It is worth mentioning that Herbart does not want teachers to teach rigidly. What has been attached and replaced is actually the degenerated version of his pedagogy, which featured rigid, teacher-directed instruction. Behind the revolution is not a single philosophy, rather it is a convergence of philosophies, including feminism, multiculturalism, postmodernism and others. Feminism confronts the preexisting male-dominated world and male-centered assumptions in education. Multiculturalism calls for legitimacy and recognition of ethnic minorities. Postmodernism challenges the neutrality of research, truth and power, stability of meaning, possibility of objectivity, etc. In a word, this convergence of philosophies and thoughts challenges the world views and values in education, as it does to other aspects of social life.

Classroom tactics:

This activity encourages students to learn by using reference books such as encyclopedia or handbooks of related disciplines. More patience is needed to guide students, as they may not have learned all such schools of thought.

References:

Feminism. (2015). In Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/724633/feminism

Johann Friedrich Herbart. (2015). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/262683/Johann-Friedrich-Herbart

Philosophy of education. (2015). In Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/179491/philosophy-of-education

(2) In the text, David Crystal was referred to several times for his discussion on the creative potential of text messaging. Browse the Internet for Crystal's article entitled "2b or not 2b?" and discuss his main arguments on mediated language.

According to Crystal, texting has not been a disaster to language. On the contrary, it improves children's writing and spelling. In spite of certain case of breaking spelling rules, the creative or "crazy" text language actually follows most of the important rules intrinsic to language, and seldom deviates from them.

- Skill: Retrieving and digesting information, evaluating arguments

Classroom tactics:

David Crystal's article can be located using the Internet. It is advisable to ask students to evaluate Crystal's argument that" all the popular beliefs about texting are wrong".

References:

Crystal, D. (2008). *2b or not 2b?* Retrieved on August 30 2015 from http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jul/05/saturdayreviewsfeatres.guardianreview

(3) According to Baron, what is the main theme of multiculturalism? Discuss the meaning and implications of multiculturalism in American politics and education. You may refer to Para. 15 and the Internet for more information.

According to Baron, multiculturalism refers to a tolerance of differences and respect for other people of other culture backgrounds. In practice, multiculturalism means more than that. Multiculturalism in American was set off by the civil rights movement and promoted by the waves of Latin American and Asian immigration. Supporters of multiculturalism requires that diversity be recognized and the rights of ethnic minorities be protected. In politics, we can find the "melting pot" metaphor is giving way to the "collage" or "salad bowl" metaphor. In education, multiculturalism includes education of one's children in their own languages or language varieties(e.g. African American Vernacular English), getting public support for autonomous cultural institutions devoted to their ethnicity, etc.

References:

Philosophy of education. (2015). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/179491/philosophy-of-education

(4) Do you agree that there exists a tension between maintaining linguistic standards and encouraging linguistic creativity? If yes, what policies would you recommend to address this dilemma?

Skill: Be aware of the complexity of the issue in question and avoid oversimplification

This is an open question inviting students to relate what they have learned to social policies. It may sound too big a question for students to handle, as it is a sociolinguistic issue. However, students can narrow down their topics, to some concrete aspects, such as language education, social cohesion, etc. You can also refer them to merits and consequences of the relevant language policies adopted in France and the UK in the 17th century, and similar attempts in America in the 19th century.

References:

H. L. Mencken on American English. (2015). In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/2033264/H-L-Mencken-on-American-English

Language enhancement
I. Words and phrases
1. Word formation
  Skill: Learn words commonly used in mediated language

Blends	Constituent words	Meanings
troublem	trouble, problem	a troublesome thing or person
smog	smoke, fog	smoky fog
medicare	medical, care	medical care
pixel	picture, element	a basic unit in imaging technology
blog	web, log	a website containing a writer's or group of writers' own experiences, observations, opinions, etc.
malware	malicious, software	any software used to disrupt computer operation, gather sensitive information, or gain access to private computers
stagflation	stagnation, inflation	a situation where the inflation rate is high, the economic growth is slow
cheeseburger	cheese, hamburger	a hamburger topped with cheese
taikonaut	taikong, astronaut	an astronaut from China

2. Preposition

(1) to
(2) into
(3) into
(4) into
(5) over
(6) toward
(7) to
(8) with
(9) as
(10) In

II. Sentence and discourse

1. Paraphrasing

(1) The popular media say that a handful of OMGs (oh my god) and smiley faces, along with a lack of capital letters and punctuation marks, are destroying English.

(2) Similarly, if you type a misspelled word (or phrase) into Google, the search engine will give you a list of web sites. The list is largely the same as what you get from the search engine if you are very good at spelling.

(3) If we want to talk about such issues as word separation, hyphenation, and spelling more generally, it will be helpful for us to think historically.

(4) At school, the teachers no longer emphasize the importance of linguistic rules or even linguistic consistency.

(5) However, computer and mobile-phone technologies cause people to care even less about language rules and consistency.

(6) Computer and mobile phones not only promoted people's indifferent attitude toward language rules, but also promoted the second shift of attitude, namely our control of linguistic interactions.

(7) As there are more and more methods to control language interactions, we increasingly regard language as a system we can control to benefit ourselves, rather than an opportunity for dialogue.

(8) Second, regardless of language changes, individual schools or teachers are able to set their own standards.

2. Translation

(1) 二十世纪六十年代以来,许多因素共同发挥作用,改变了我们对"良好语言使用"的看法。学校里的教学法发生过若干次革命,将教师主导的课堂改变为同辈评议以及各种培养协作的活动。曾经"恶名昭著"的红笔更多地用于鼓励学术探索，而不是用于纠正句子结构。

(2) 无论这种转变多么值得称道，它在语言领域产生了若干后果。学校不再给学生灌输"语言规则很重要"的意识，甚至连"语言一致性"也不强调了。

(3) 这些网址还让用户毫不不费力地维持着与朋友们的关系。例如，年轻人经常通过浏览在线相册或在线状态报告来关注朋友们的活动，再也没有必要打电话或发电子邮件了，更不要说亲自拜访了。

(4) According to scientific research, babies are aware of nuances of parents' speech.

(5) Their faulty research methods rendered the results useless.

(6) To the despair of my parents, I left university last year and have been jobless in Beijing ever since.

3. Reporting verb

Attitudes	Reporting verbs
positive	confirm, recognize, wrote in praise of, encourage
neutral	reveal, find, report, note

negative	sensationalize

Skill: Learn how reporting verbs are used in academic writing

Classroom tactics:

This exercise is designed to acquaint students with academic writing by developing their discourse awareness. You can encourage them to learn the nuances of the reporting verbs. For example, when the author writes, "X confirms... the findings of Y", it means X agrees with Y but it does not necessarily show author's approval of either party. When the author writes, "X sensationalizes ...", it means the author does not agree with what X presents and the author would like to present it in a derogatory way. When the author writes, "X rightly comments that ...", it means the author highly approves of X's comments.

Intercultural reflections

1. Read Text A once again to summarize the characteristics of new media language and mediated language behavior as observed by the author Naomi Baron. Do they match your observation of new media language in China? If not, in what ways are they different?
Skills: Evaluate critically media language in English and in Chinese communities

      Understand how social and political contexts shape language use

Classroom tactics:

This exercise involves students in three tasks, namely (1) summarization of Baron's writing, (2) reflections on their own use of new media language, and (3) a comparison.

In the comparison part, you can give students some guidance in comparing the two systematically, so that they are comparing corresponding elements, not comparing apples with oranges. Besides, you can encourage students to search journal article dealing with new media language in major databases by using key words. The retrieved articles can add depth to their comparison and lead students into the realm of scholarship.

2. As more and more foreign brands are coming to the Chinese market, how to translate those brand names is no trivial issue. On the one hand, the Chinese translation for Lexus was changed from the original 凌志 to the current 雷克萨斯 in 2005. On the other hand, the boutique chain Lafayette was translated as 老佛爷 . How do you like these translations? Do you think they are effective in achieving their aims? Why or why not?
Skill: Use reference books/materials and databases

Classroom tactics:

1. The first question asks the intuitive impression of these two translation, warms students up in their exploration of translation effect study.

2. The teacher is NOT required to introduce such technical jargons as "foreignization" and "domestication", as one cannot force the cases to fit these two strategies. If interested, the teacher is recommended to read Venuti(1995).

3. The third question will have been answered after you have explored the second answer, which may involve some surveys or interviews of the prospective consumers of these two products. The complexity and depth of study may vary according to your resource availability and students' overall level.

References:

Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

3. Throughout human history, language has adapted to different media, from rhyming in poems, written records, printed books, all the way to radio, television and the Internet. In your opinion, how has the Internet allowed language to show its flexibility and adaptability? Give examples in Chinese and English to support your argument.

Classroom tactics:

1. In order to inspire students into profound exploration of the characteristics, or the flexibility and adaptability, of Internet language, you can introduce them the differences between speech and writing, as summarized by David Crystal.

Speech	Writing
1 Time-bound, dynamic, transient. Both participants usually present; speaker has a particular addressee in mind.	1 Space-bound, static, permanent. Writer usually distant from reader, and often does not know addressee.
2 Spontaneous and fast. Sentence boundaries often unclear, constructions looser, repetition occurs.	2 Time-lag occurs between production and reception. Organisation and expression more careful.
3 Facial expression and gestures used to aid meaning. Deictic expressions referring directly to the situation are often used (e.g. that one, in here, right now).	3 Participants cannot rely on context to aid meaning; no immediate feedback. Deictic expressions often avoided.
4 Contractions (isn't, he's) common. Sentence construction lengthy and complex. Use of nonsense, obscenity and slang may occur.	4 Multiple instances of subordination in same sentence; elaborately balanced syntactic patterns. Use of certain words never spoken (e.g. long names for chemical compounds).
5 Speech suited to social or 'phatic' functions, such as passing the time of day. Good for expressing social relationships, personal opinions.	5 Writing suited to recording of facts and communication of ideas. Written records easy to keep; good for tabulation and so on.
6 Speech can be rethought and qualified, but errors cannot be withdrawn. Interruptions and overlapping are normal.	6 Errors can be eliminated by redrafting. Interruptions are invisible in the final product.
7 Unique features include the nuances of intonation, contrasts of loudness, tempo, rhythm, pause, tones of voice.	7 Unique features include pages, lines, capitalisation, spatial organisation and aspects of punctuation. Some genres of writing (e.g. timetables, graphs) can only be assimilated visually.

2. It is easy for student to come up with the coinage of Chinese characters and creative instances of Chinese texts, however, it is the teacher's job to introduce the idea of multimodality, communicating messages using more than one semiotic mode, or channel of communication. For example, magazine articles use not only words but also pictures. Websites contain audio clips alongside the words, or film which uses words, music, sound effects and moving images.

It is more desirable if you can help students realize that language communication has always been multimodal, the degree of which has been varying according to media. When we talk, we are having a multimodal communicating for sure, as we have facial expressions, tones, etc. When we write emails or text each other, we can use emoticons. Besides these obvious cases, however, there have been many other nuanced cases. For example, a piece of solid written text with no pictures can be said to convey messages from visual modes. We may be influenced by the typeface of the text: it may seem formal or informal, childlike (such as large lower case letters and specific fonts).

References:

Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kress, G. & Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London, Arnold.