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## A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO EXAMINE THE USE OF MULTIMODAL APPROACHES IN THE TERTIARY-LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE CLASSROOM

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**Abstract:** *The use of multimodal approaches in the English literature classroom has gained popularity in recent years as a result of the surge in educational technology and an increase in social media use. Numerous studies have examined the impact of this phenomenon, but the focus is primarily on the effects on student learning. Much more needs to be known about the implementation of multimodal approaches and their impact on both English literature educators and students, as well as other aspects of English literature instruction. This article proposes a conceptual framework for a future study that seeks to examine the use of multimodal approaches in Malaysian tertiary-level English literature classrooms. The article begins with a review of the existing literature in the field, followed by an identification of the research gaps. The article then presents the research problem, the overall aim and objectives, followed by the methods used by the prospective study. The article concludes with the proposed conceptual framework and its pedagogical implications.*

**Keywords:** Conceptual framework, multimodality, English literature, tertiary education, Malaysia.

## 1. Introduction

Multimodal approaches have gained popularity among English literature educators in recent years. This is largely caused by the rise of social media and educational technology and their integration into English literature instruction. Multimodal approaches in the English literature classroom can be referred to the use of different modes or sources of meaning-making such as written and audio-visual materials, as well as gestures and spatial elements. The approaches are often used not only to enhance students' retention and comprehension of literary works but also their experience and engagement with literature. Additionally, multimodal approaches are utilized to aid or enhance other aspects of English literature instruction such as lesson planning and execution, learning tasks and activities, and assessment and evaluation.

To date, there have been numerous studies examining the application of multimodal approaches in English literature lessons across different educational levels. The focus, however, has primarily been on the effectiveness of these approaches, particularly on students' literature learning. And yet, there remains a gap in our knowledge regarding the implementation of these approaches and their impacts on both teachers and students. This knowledge gap can be presented in the following questions:

- What are the types of multimodal approaches used in tertiary-level English literature classrooms, and the reasons for using them?
- How are these approaches utilized in tertiary-level English literature lessons?
- What effects do these approaches have on the teaching methods used by educators in their literature lessons?
- What effects do these approaches have on students' multimodal learning styles and preferences?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of using multimodal approaches in tertiary-level English literature classrooms?

The questions are worth answering because they may offer further valuable insights into the phenomenon that is currently taking place in today's English literature instruction.

To address this knowledge gap, the article proposes a conceptual framework for a future study that aims to examine the use of multimodal approaches in the Malaysian tertiary-level English literature classroom. The teaching of English literature at Malaysian higher institutions of learning presents a unique case and context for future study. This is so for several reasons: First, universities in Malaysia -both public and private-owned- offer specialized literature and language studies programmes, in addition to English language teaching programmes such as Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). These programmes integrate English literature into their syllabi and curriculum. Second, most of these programmes, especially TESL, TEFL, and TESOL are designed to equip graduates with the essential skills and knowledge to teach English literature at different levels of education. And third, universities in Malaysia are required to develop sustainable literature and language programmes that are sustainable to meet the changing educational landscape (Cloonan, 2015; Chan, Chia, & Choo, 2017; Hazard, 2019; Siyaswati, 2020; Mira & Gracia, 2021) in today's digital world. This change can be observed in the growing and urgent need to integrate multiliteracies, multimodality, and 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning competencies.