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Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4qh4p8t3

Journal

Author

Amgott, Natalie

Publication Date

2020

DOI

Copyright Information

Peer reviewed

L2 Multimodal Composing Abroad: Remixing Languages, Cultures, and Identities

NATALIE AMGOTT

University of Arizona
E-mail: amgottn@email.arizona.edu

This paper explores the second language, digital multimodal composing practices of 12 American undergraduates studying French abroad in Paris. Drawing on multiliteracies, multimodality, and translanguaging frameworks, this study utilizes a qualitative lens and multimodal composing timescapes to analyze how students leveraged languages and modes across 72 digital multimodal reflections and vlogs. Findings demonstrate how reflective multimodal composing developed multilingual identities by fostering metalinguistic awareness and goal-setting practices. Through their vlogs, students additionally participated in transcultural repositioning by making cross-cultural connections and sharing emotional experiences. Throughout the term students increased in traversals of modes, languages, spaces, and places as they became more comfortable with the French language, living in France, and multimodal composing. These results illustrate how digital multimodal composing can enhance learners' linguistic and transcultural competencies while studying abroad. The article concludes with implications for multimodal composing to learn languages and calls for further research on the reflective multimodal composing practices of second language learners.

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In recent years, literacy research has touted the values of multimodal composing for encouraging students to make meaning from their full linguistic, cultural, social, and modal repertoires. While promoting richer meaning-making, multimodal composing also "break[s] the frame" of "in-school" and "out-of-school" boundaries through multiliteracies pedagogies that embrace diverse identities and literacy practices (The New London Group, 1996; Vasudevan, Schultz, & Bateman, 2010). Research demonstrates how multimodal composing supports academic learning (Pacheco, Smith, & Carr, 2017), collaborative literacy practices (Gilje, 2010; Smith, 2019), critical literacies (Amgott, 2018; de los Ríos, 2018), self-reflection (DeJaynes, 2015), and multicultural/multilingual identities and literacies (Cummins, Hu, Markus, & Montero, 2015; Pacheco & Smith, 2015). Research in this area largely focuses on adolescent English/ELA classes or college composition courses, with less research exploring ESL and EFL contexts (Hafner, 2015; Jiang & Luk, 2016; Signes, 2014) and languages other than English (Kumagai, Konoeda, Nishimata, & Sato, 2015; Schmerbeck & Lucht, 2017).

Language learning and studying abroad are ideal contexts for investigating how multimodal composing may mediate expansion of linguistic and cultural repertoire through second language (L2) and cultural learning. As language learners traverse meaning-making in the L2, they constantly make comparisons to their first language(s) (L1), to what they already know of the L2, and to their experiences as language learners (Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll, & Kuehn, 1990). Beyond these navigations,

language learners studying abroad are afforded more opportunities to interact directly with diverse speakers of the L2, allowing them to learn the sociopragmatic features (slang, greetings, leave-taking, etc.) of the language, make cultural comparisons, and interact with the culture more dynamically than the "4 Fs" (food, fairs, folklore, and facts) commonly taught in SLA contexts (Kramsch, 1991). Despite increased opportunities for linguistic and cultural interaction, American students studying abroad are often hindered by program length and a variety of motivational factors (Allen, 2010). Explicitly encouraging students to make connections through multimodal reflections may be a means to enhance their transcultural and linguistic competencies.

The current study explores the multimodal composing practices of American undergraduates studying in Paris to learn French. Through the qualitative analysis of students' multimodal vlogs and Flipgrid reflections, I examined L2 French multimodal composing abroad in relation to a) how students reflect on their linguistic and cultural experiences and b) how students leverage multiple modes (e.g., visuals, sound, gesture, text) to construct their reflections.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED LITERATURE

The complementary frameworks of multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996; Allen & Paesani, 2010) and multimodality (Kress, 2003, 2010) were integrated to analyze the multimodal composing practices of L2 learners of French studying abroad.

Multiliteracies

Multiliteracies is a theory of teaching and learning proposed by the New London Group (1996) to promote pedagogical practices that respond to today's multiplicity of communication channels, languages, cultures, and media and how these impact our interactions in the workplace, online, and within our private worlds. This approach also critiques traditional (largely written) literacy practices for limiting meaning-making potential and underpreparing learners for social futures full of linguistic and cultural diversity in critical evaluation and problem-solving practices (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

Multiliteracies proposes the central concept of "Designs of Meaning" to describe both the "active and dynamic" process and product of meaning-making through "any semiotic activity, including using language to produce or consume texts" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 74). The concept of "texts" as multimodal (e.g., images, videos, music) and stemming from multiple channels of communication (e.g., language(s), registers, online, off-line) is essential to Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned—the three elements of Designs of Meaning. In a language learning context, "Available Designs" could include learners' L1 and L2, language varieties and registers, genres, and semiotic modes. When "Designing," students make meaning through processing and/or producing texts in an iterative and dynamic process based on their Available Designs, which they then transform into the "Redesigned," or a new meaning that becomes a new Available Design ready for redesigning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; The New London Group, 1996).

The pedagogical moves involved in the designing practice include situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. Situated practice

involves encouraging students to apply their newly available designs. In overt instruction, educators explicitly teach through metalanguage or scaffolding to build connections to students' pre-existing knowledge. In critical framing, students step back to make their learning "strange again" by exploring sociocultural, political, or historical relationships. Lastly, students are agents in redesigning meaning through transformed practice to demonstrate their understanding as a result of their cognitive and social processes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; The New London Group, 1996).

In some foreign language programs, multiliteracies has been adopted to enact "significant changes that foster development of language and literacy simultaneously across the undergraduate curriculum" (Allen & Paesani, 2010, p. 120). These curricular innovations have come in response to the 2007 MLA report that drew attention to two problems: academic literacies were promoted solely in high levels of university language learning and tensions were growing between language and literature faculty (Allen & Paesani, 2010). Foreign language advocates for multiliteracies view it as a way to eliminate the gap between the beginner/intermediate curriculum focused on oral production and the advanced curriculum focused on academic literacies—a gap largely resulting from the focus on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which has been criticized for overly emphasizing oral production, neglecting accuracy, and separating language, content, and culture (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Richards, 2005) into separate skill silos. Multiliteracies has been further proposed to enhance American undergraduates' translingual literacies in an effort to catch up with other (e.g., European) countries' linguistic and cultural competences (Pufahl, Rhodes & Christian, 2000).

Developing Identities

Because multiliteracies encourages meaning-making from the full repertoire, students leverage their experiences and informal literacy practices into their learning (Marshall, Hayashi, & Yeung, 2012). In so doing, students consider their multiple identities and which they would like to share through their work (Guth & Helm, 2011). Technology plays a significant role, as multiliteracies innovations often encompass online interactions in the L2. Even beginners can observe linguistic practices through legitimate peripheral participation in online groups like Facebook pages that align with their communities of practice and affinity groups (Blattner & Fiori, 2011; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Through such practices, students can come to view themselves as legitimate users of the L2 (Schmerbeck & Lucht, 2017).

Enhancing Linguistic Competence

As students engage in multiliteracies curricula, their linguistic competence and metalinguistic awareness have benefitted from the affordances of shifting between Available Designs, Designing, and Redesigning. In a study of pre-service EFL teachers from Italy and Germany, Guth and Helm (2011) found that by using English online to learn about teaching with other non-native speakers, participants learned and practiced more English than in their other courses. The affordances of re-recording and reflecting allowed them to focus both on EFL pedagogy and enhancing their English, thereby meaningfully integrating language and content. In other studies,

students have improved their metalinguistic awareness of grammatical, lexical, pragmatic, and regional choices through multiliteracies tasks involving L2 observations of Facebook pages and interactions in blogs and gaming sites (Blattner & Fiori, 2011; Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008). All of these practices affirm a wide variety of personalized language use that is not typically fostered by traditional foreign language assessments.

Multiliteracies in the foreign language classroom ultimately emphasizes a "weaving" back and forth between the pedagogical moves through exposure to various genres of L2 texts that promote "active citizenship centered on learners as agents of their own knowledge processes" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 172). While many introductory college language courses succeed in the pedagogical moves of situated practice and overt instruction that are inherent to communicative language teaching, they often save critical framing and transformed practice only for advanced levels, although these practices can promote reflection at all levels of language learning (Paesani, Allen, Dupuy, Liskin-Gasparro, & Lacorte, 2015). A renewed focus on these methods promotes content learning through texts made for and by users of the language—practices that foster "alternative starting points" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) for students to contextualize language use and linguistic conventions as culturally and socially situated (Allen & Paesani, 2010). While there are various methods of implementing critical framing and transformed practice, the iterative, reflective, accessible, and collaborative nature of multimodal composing makes it a strong candidate to leverage these pedagogies for foreign language teaching and learning.

Multimodality and Multimodal Composing

The concept of multimodality falls under the umbrella of multiliteracies in that it concerns how composers make meaning from a full repertoire of semiotic modes, including how modes are socially situated and how the modes interact to create meaning differing from that of any mode alone (Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2009; Unsworth, 2006). The practice of multimodal composition can be understood through the multiliteracies principles of Designs of Meaning and encompasses the "means, processes, and practices" of communication expressed through use of multiple modes that are situated socioculturally and that interact with an audience that goes beyond the classroom (McGrail & Behizadeh, 2016, p. 25). As a multiliteracies pedagogy, the practice of multimodal composing encourages students to make meaning from the full range of modes and to critically consider the social significance of the modes and their interactions (Gilje, 2010; Smith, 2019).

In L2 learning environments, research illustrates how multimodal composing facilitates the construction of bilingual/biliterate identities and voices (Cummins et al., 2015; Hafner, 2015), transcultural repositioning (Honeyford, 2014; Omerbašić, 2015), metalinguistic awareness (Jiang & Luk, 2016), and motivation through sharing work online (de los Ríos, 2018). In the K-12 setting, students composing multimodal identity texts come to view themselves as bilingual/biliterate in an additive sense rather than from the deficit perspective often promoted by colonized curricula (Cummins et al., 2015). The iterative and reflective nature of multimodal composing allows L2 learners to develop linguistic and modal competences in unison and to build transnational narratives (Vasudevan et al., 2010). Further, research demonstrates how EFL students

develop their English learner voices through remixing media, which provides an infinite palate of choice to increase viewership and engagement (Hafner, 2015).

In addition to boosting biliterate voices and identities, digital multimodal composing enhances metalinguistic awareness of L2 users and bilinguals. In an EFL university setting, students felt that sharing multimodal compositions online helped to correct their own English mistakes (Jiang & Luk, 2016, p. 5). Likewise, students in a Chicanx/Latinx studies class were motivated to express their authentic voices through Spanish and English in online Vine videos that expressed critical issues in their communities (de los Ríos, 2018). Multimodal composing is thus an asset to developing students' language and voice whether students are heritage speakers or L2 learners. In urban centers, digital projects like multimodal autoethnographies have promoted transnational connections that support students' self-perceptions as cosmopolitan citizens of the world, as braided together as the modes in their projects (DeJaynes, 2015). These projects have further supported immigrant and refugee students through transcultural repositioning to advocate for change in their communities and to situate themselves as connected both to their current and original languages and locations (Honeyford, 2014; Omerbašić, 2015).

Translanguaging

Along with promoting positive biliterate identities, multimodal composing enhances practices of translanguaging, defined as the "ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system" (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). Translanguaging, like multimodality and multiliteracies, is grounded in a user's entire linguistic repertoire, thus differing from "codeswitching" which entails languages as distinct systems that are easily turned on or off. While Canagarajah's framework of translanguaging emphasizes languages as "part of a single integrated system," code*meshing* further includes other semiotic modes used in tandem with language(s), as occurs in multimodal composing (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401; Pacheco & Smith, 2015).

Through multimodal composing, multilingual students incorporate the "unbidden" multilingual practices and repertoires that they already use as a resource outside of the classroom (Canagarajah, 2011; García, Makar, Starcevic, & Terry, 2011). Research has demonstrated how translanguaging in the classroom leverages not only linguistic competencies, but also cultural and modal use through negotiated meaning-making across languages, cultural influences, and semiotic resources and how these come together to form a meaning-making repertoire (Canagarajah, 2012). For example, Pacheco and Smith (2015) found that 8th grade students were motivated to incorporate various L1s and representations of cultural identities through multimodal codemeshing, or translanguaging in the process or product of composing multilingual texts. Likewise, Hopewell (2011) discovered that the "learning burden" of bilingual 4th graders was mitigated through Spanish and English translanguaging while reading, instead of separating their languages into siloed domains to be used only at home or at school. As students compose from multiple languages, so too do they increase in their modal traversals as they progress through multimodal projects (Smith, Pacheco, & de Almeida, 2017).

In pedagogical terms, translanguaging provides strategies for educators of all language backgrounds to leverage the linguistic, cultural, and modal repertoires of their students through the strategies of envoicing, entextualizing, and recontextualizing (Canagarajah, 2012). These strategies help leaners and teachers understand language ideologies by reconfiguring resources to adapt to students' repertoires and facilitating discussions about how linguistic resources reflect or diverge from dominant language ideologies (Pacheco, Daniel, Pray, & Jiménez, 2019). Such techniques help establish interdependence across languages, rather than separating languages into single-use domains (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

Expanding on this research, the current study was developed to examine the implementation of reflective multimodal portfolios as part of a multiliteracies curricula in a French L2 study abroad program for university students. This study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do students reflect on their linguistic and cultural experiences through multimodal video reflections while studying abroad?
2. How do students leverage multiple modes (e.g., video, visuals, text, voice) to communicate their reflections?

METHODS

Participants and Context

This study took place at a six-week French language and culture study abroad program in Paris, France in summer of 2018. The 18 students in the program were all French majors or minors at a large university in the Southwest, and all were enrolled in upper level coursework (3rd and 4th year courses). All students were living with French-speaking host families in Paris. This study focuses on the 12 students who took third-year coursework on written and spoken French in cultural contexts.

As the instructor, I designed the curriculum based on the pedagogy of multiliteracies and created units on "Public Transport," "Current Events," and "Art and Architecture" that linked the program's excursions and current events with French-language films, music videos, online news video and articles, and poetry. All student assignments were primarily conducted in French and culminated in a multiliteracies portfolio (Schmerbeck & Lucht, 2017) that included multimodal French video blogs (vlogs) made through iMovie to reflect on their study abroad experiences, Flipgrid video (a video discussion board website) reflections regarding classroom assignments, comments on classmates' media, a comparative essay on their classmates' modal choices, a live debate and argumentative essay on a subject of their choice (Immigration in France), listening and reflection activities based on news media, and a final multimodal research-based or creative-writing project of their choice.

To scaffold students' designing process for the vlogs, the instructor applied situated practice to familiarize the students with the vlog genre. Students viewed various vlogs on YouTube of Francophones studying in the United States and used a collaborative Google Document to answer questions pertaining to listening comprehension and the use of semiotic resources (uses of languages, memes, emojis, sound effects, music, voice, video, and images). After a critical framing through discussion of the affordances of modes, students then participated in overt instruction

through explicit technological mini lessons and a Digital Writers' Workshop to learn about the technological tools they could use to compose, the metalanguage for modal composition, and the choice and interaction of modes (Dalton, 2012). The instructor introduced the vlog projects as a reflective critical framing and transformed practice for students to synthesize their learning across the variety of museum visits, classes, host family experiences, and personal explorations of the program. Students designed three vlogs (one every other week) and viewed and responded to their peers' vlogs as heavily weighted (30% of course grade) opportunities to express their experiences and remix their personal and academic learning. Reflection themes were open for vlogs, with the rubric asking students to reflect on academic and personal experiences while studying abroad. Flipgrids, on the other hand, were intended as informal means of critical framing and transformed practice, and were assigned to students as one-to-three-minute video reflections on specific learning experiences (e.g., opinions regarding the in-class debate). Flipgrids were weighted as 5% as the total course grade as a means to encourage students to speak more spontaneously. For both the vlogs and Flipgrids, students were encouraged to embrace their own designing processes and were not asked to pre-write or storyboard their responses.

The 12 participants in this study were selected because they were in the multiliteracies-based courses and comprise all of the students in my courses: 11 women and 1 man, aged 18 to 23, and living abroad for the first time. All students were majoring or minoring in French, with other specialties in law, medicine, biology, chemistry, creative writing, political science, environmental studies, and/or business. A majority (8 of 12) of students received full or partial scholarships based on both merit and need and all received university credits for their study abroad coursework. All 12 students spoke English, with 1 heritage speaker for each of the following languages: Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese. When polled about their experience with multimodal composing before the course, they all reported to having at least "some experience," referring particularly to creating multimodal PowerPoints. One student (Esther) had extensive experience designing a blog in English with embedded vlogs.

Data Collection

The data collected from the students included each of their Flipgrid reflections on coursework and host family life (3), multimodal vlogs (3), blogs (3), and final projects (1). The current study analyzes the 36 student vlogs and 36 Flipgrids from the program. Students watched their peers' Flipgrids and vlogs throughout the term and were asked to respond to what they had learned from their peers' work. Students thus participated in a reflective, journal-like conversation with themselves and their classmates through the vlogs, and many also chose to share the vlogs with their (Francophone and non-Francophone) families and friends in the United States and France. Data was collected with student consent to download the coursework that they completed for class.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through multimodal transcript logs, coding, and multimodal composing timescapes. I created multimodal transcripts for each of the 36 Flipgrids

(approximately 90 seconds each) and 36 multimodal vlogs (4 to 11 minutes with an average of 6 minutes) and included columns for the time stamp, visual frame screenshot, description of video, French verbal and gestures, English translation, text on screen, music, and translanguaging through use of English or languages other than French (Flewitt, Hampbel, Hauck, & Lancaster, 2014). For the oral French speech, I employed conversation analysis transcription standards to include how the speech interacted with the gestures, and how the students conversed with each other through Flipgrids (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011; Hepburn & Bolden, 2013).

Coding occurred through a qualitative three-step analytic process, involving a series of three iterative passes of the data (Lutrell, 2010). In the first iterative set of passes, transcriptions were open coded by looking for recurrent patterns with the Flipgrids and vlogs. The next stage involved the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) looking for coherence and discord across student Flipgrids and vlogs. The final stage involved identifying and categorizing how students reflected on linguistic and cultural experiences and how they used modes to construct their reflections. Selective coding was used to expand or collapse tags as needed and group them according to emerging themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), often by comparing the same student in the six pieces of data per student, any changes they experienced over time, and how this compared to what their peers were doing in each of the Flipgrids and vlogs. I related the tags to each other, elaborated on definitions, and categorized themes into groups of themes and sub-themes (Table 1).

After having transcribed and coded, I created multimodal composing timescapes (Smith, 2017; Smith et al., 2017). To do so, I first selected four students (Alia, Esther, Mia, and Emma) via purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) who embodied the full scope of the cohort's composing practices. Next, I noted at what time stamps during each vlog that they used different modes and languages, and at what points the modes interacted (Table 2). Using Canva, I created timescapes with line lengths correlated to the time stamps and durations for which students used different modes and how they overlapped.

Trustworthiness (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) was ensured through iterative passes of each of the 72 data points and a triangulated zooming in, zooming out, and comparison across individual modes within each data point, for each participant, and across participants over time.

Table 1
Multimodal codes generated during analysis.

Code	Description and Examples

Linguistic commentary
• Overt Repair
• Metalinguistic:
  - Rehearsal
  - Goal-setting
• Translanguaging
	Oral, textual, gestural, and/or through use of emojis and filters
	Repair: self-correction through freeze frame + text or gesture + repetition
	Rehearsal: pauses and re-recordings, statements about number of "takes"
	Goal-setting: making goals for language, including slang, conjugations, vocabulary
	Translanguaging: oral and/or written use of other languages along with French to scaffold vocabulary, connect with audiences, or convey a cultural concept

Cultural observations and comparisons • People • Customs	Oral, images (flags, photos of people and holidays), student photos of Paris, filters (baguette), costumes (beret), gestures, and text **People:** comparisons of lifestyle, clothing, jobs, sense of humor **Customs:** comparisons of metro, restaurant, traffic, food, public pools, sports, holidays, work, air conditioning, water
Collaboration • Praising • Process • Meaning-making	Mainly oral, some images **Praise:** praise of self or peer for in-class/out-of-class work/actions **Process:** discussion of composing meaning together (*for class projects*). Includes division of work and learning about modes/composing from each other **Collaborative meaning-making:** participate in peer projects, help provide French vocabulary, and/or describe settings. Mention learning from peers' vlogs
Identity Development • Personal connections • Mental health • Goal-setting • Emotion	Oral, movement outdoors and indoors, emojis, text, and gesture **Personal connections:** college major/minor, hobbies, jobs, or other classes **Mental health:** feelings about studying and living abroad **Goal-setting:** goals related to cultural understanding and balancing health and study **Emotion:** stress, happiness, anxiety, pride, fatigue, embarrassment
Traversals • Modal • Spatial	Use of space and modes to traverse experiences **Modal:** voice, videoing, text, sound effect, music, photos, memes, remix other media, voiceover **Spatial:** physical movement, home, campus, public transportation, Paris, other cities, gesturing, museums

Table 2
Codes for multimodal composing timescape.

Mode	Definition	Color
Live Voice	Talking occurs while recording moving video. Includes designer's voice, classmate voices, and local voices, with the speakers of the voices in the frame.	Gray
Voiceover	Designer's voice explains over another mode (music, photo, text, and/or video). Speaker image is not in frame.	Red
Music	Songs are added, remixed, or sung.	Yellow
Special Effect	Sound effect or special effect including slow motion, fast forward, Boomerang movement, filters, freeze, zoom in and out, and text effects.	Pink
Text	Words on screen, including headings, subtitles, transitions, and linguistic repairs.	Blue
Video	Pre-recorded video from excursions or remixed from other media.	Purple
Vlog	Designer's voice and image are present. Designer is seated in front of a still camera talking to the audience.	Orange
Photo	One or more photos from designer's excursions, screenshots from their social media posts, or remixed from other media.	Green
Translanguaging	Use of a language other than French, asking audience how to say something in French, and/or reported events or media occurring in English.	Black

FINDINGS

The analysis of the multimodal video reflections reveals how students leveraged multiple modes to reflect on their linguistic and cultural experiences. In particular, students (1) developed multilingual identities through increased metalinguistic awareness and linguistic goal-setting, (2) participated in transcultural positioning through cross-cultural connections and sharing of emotional experiences, and (3) explored the study abroad experience through increased modal and spatial traversals over time.

Developing Multilingual Identities

Students reflected on their linguistic and cultural experiences abroad through the development of multilingual identities. These reflections occurred over time throughout their Flipgrids and vlogs, where students used rehearsal, repair, and gestures to develop metalinguistic awareness, formulate cultural comparisons, and share emotional experiences.

Promoting Metalinguistic Awareness

Students' video reflections served as a platform for promoting metalinguistic awareness (Barton & Lee, 2013) through rehearsal, repair, linguistic observations, and goal-setting. In both the Flipgrids and the vlogs, students used French speech, text, emojis, filters, and freeze-frames with voiceover to rehearse their French language in a safe space and to transform their grammatical or vocabulary mistakes. They further employed the video platforms to keep themselves and each other accountable through setting linguistic goals like learning more slang, understanding sports announcers, expressing sense of humor in French, and maintaining higher-paced conversations with host families. The examples in Figure 1 from Kendall's third Flipgrid and David's first Flipgrid illustrate how students used gesture, speech, and repetition as a means of linguistic rehearsal.

Kendall's video (Figure 1) illustrates how students used the Flipgrids as a place to practice spontaneous oral speech, watch themselves, and then re-record the 90-second video to make repairs before submitting. Knowing that their peers would watch and reply to their Flipgrids was perhaps a motivating factor for students to practice their French before submitting the final version. Students also used both the Flipgrids and vlogs for linguistic self-repair, as evidenced by David (Figure 1). David leverages repetition to correct his pronunciation of the *passé composé* (past tense) while speaking spontaneously in the Flipgrid. Each of the 12 students participated in instances of rehearsal or repair in at least 50% (3 out of 6) of their multimodal reflections, illustrating the affordances of online multimodal video reflections for facilitating powerful metalinguistic awareness.

For the Flipgrids, all repairs occurred while the students were recording (as seen by David in Figure 1). These synchronic repairs namely consisted of oral repetitions, in which students would say an entire word or part of a word and then repeat it with different pronunciation, a different lexical item they deemed more correct (nouns), a different conjugation of the verb, and/or an entire phrase.
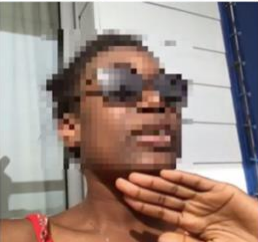

Image	Conversation Analysis	English translation	Gesture
	Elle (1.0) ((closes eyes)) m'a aide le (1.0) /m'a aidé ((gestures out "repeat" motion with R hand)) à accede le wifi? Alors, j'ai appris la phrase "le mot de passe,"	She helped me the/helped me to access the wifi. So I learned the word "password."	Closes eyes; gestures out with a "repeat" motion
	Y'all c'est ma ((crinkles brow)) treizième fois à (1.0) ((gestures in circle with L index finger)) faiser le FlipGrid. Donc ((laughs)) ((gestures out L hand)) l'abri nucléaire était ((L hand out for each très and adjective)) très très très intéressant et très drôle. Euh j'étais fâchée? Parce que Aurora et David ont gagné, mais David est euh ((squints))/David avait ((shakes head)) (1.0) ((turns to L to ask David, who is nearby but offscreen)) quarante-sept, yeah?	Y'all it's my 13th time doing this FlipGrid. So the nuclear shelter [game] was very very very interesting and very funny. Uh I was mad because Aurora and David won but David is uh, David was, 47 [years old], yeah?	Crinkles brow Gestures in circle with "repeat" motion Gestures out for each *very* and *adjective* Turns to ask David for confirmation

Figure 1. *Examples of metalinguistic awareness in the Flipgrids of David and Kendall*

The vlogs demonstrate these same kinds of synchronic oral repairs, and also include linguistic repairs completed in the editing stages through any of the following affordances of video editing software: freeze and text on screen, freeze and voiceover (with or without text on screen), different black screen with white text (with or without voiceover), and voiceover with no freeze.

For more spontaneous portions of their vlogs (e.g., recording and narrating while walking through a park with friends), students often employed the freeze function in iMovie to later add a voiceover in which they either "corrected" their grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary or elaborated upon their ideas. For one of the students, Emma, this meant using the freeze-frame feature of iMovie coupled with the text "*l'or" (*gold) and a voiceover to correct her mispronunciation of "gold" (l'or), for which she had originally pronounced the word "hour" (l'heure) when referring to Versailles. Figure 2 additionally illustrates this phenomenon with voiceover and text in which Alia corrects her original identification of "Venus of something" to "Venus de Milo." She changes from a frame of herself talking to the camera at a park (vlog style) to the photo of an interesting clock at Versailles to the statue of Venus de Milo to clarify while she voices over. The three modes (text, voiceover, and image) help her to repair in a clear and efficient way while still keeping the audience's attention.

Timestamp	Oral voiceover and live video*	Gesture	Text*	Photo/Video
5:30-5:41	In the Pantheon and also with the Versailles castle, there are things that you can see that share science and art together, and I think this is the piece I prefer, because my major is biology and I really like the sciences, like physics too.	Shows picture of a clock in Versailles before panning back to herself talking in a park		
5:42-5:49	At the Louvre, I also liked to see the attention to the mathematical form of the sculptures, like in Venus of someone I don't know.		Venus of Milo	
5:50-5:54	I mean, « Venus de Milo »			
5:54-6:03		Walks through park with a paper crown, waves	THANKS FOR WATCHING I LOVE YOU ALL	

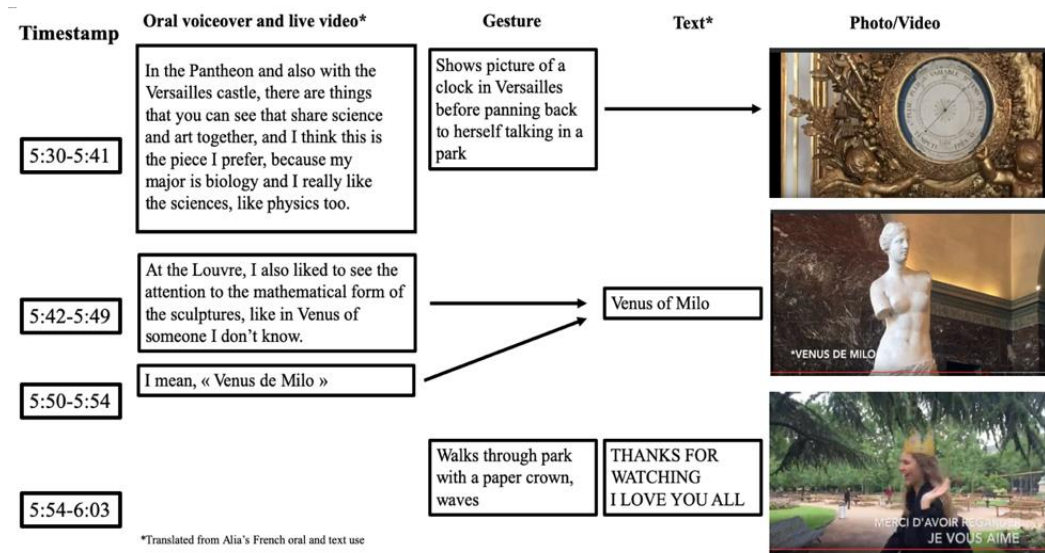*Translated from Alia's French oral and text use

Figure 2. *Multimodal clarification in Alia's vlog Gesturing to Punctuate Reflection*

Students were able to incorporate gestures into their vlogs to convey emotion, connect to the audience, and promote rehearsal or repair in ways that traditional language class assignments (i.e., written essay or PowerPoint presentation) would not allow. The affordances of gesture were particularly beneficial in the process of second language circumlocution, in which students searched for the right word, hoping to connect with or elicit backchannel from the audience (See Figure 1). This finding illustrates the importance of the webcam in mediating gesture to help both the designer and the viewers to make meaning (Kern, 2014) and to distinguish positive and negative experiences (Codreanu & Combe, 2018).

Setting Goals and Keeping Each Other Accountable

The video reflections also served as a stage for students to make metalinguistic commentary about their goals, which emerged as a common theme although not explicitly listed in the assignment rubrics. Student video reflections often included stories of linguistic misunderstandings, as when David had confused the pronunciation of *des* (some) and *deux* (two) and ended up with two coffees instead of "some" coffee. These recounted stories (12 in the transcribed corpus) were normally followed by a "learning moment," in which students realized they had been making a pronunciation, grammatical, or lexical mistake that impeded the interlocutor's ability to understand. From these observations and daily interactions with locals, students often set the following goals for self-improvement in French: clarity in pronunciation, mastery of more slang, comfort with certain conjugations (e.g., subjunctive and conditional), and ability to retrieve vocabulary more easily. Because students watched peers' vlogs and provided weekly comments, they were held accountable for their goals and encouraged to check in on their progress.

David practiced his goal of improving his pronunciation by following Damon and Jo on YouTube, a pair of friends who chronicle their linguistic and cultural experiences in France through vlogs. During his first vlog, David remixed part of a Damon and Jo video ("Mots dificiles à prononcer en français" (*Difficult words to pronounce in French*)) into his vlog and recorded himself practicing and adding his own list of words with difficult pronunciations that he had encountered in Paris. Later, in his third vlog, David described how his pronunciation had improved and his new focus on mastering slang. He detailed various phrases that he had learned from Damon and Jo videos and his encounters with locals, while also providing his own YouTube viewers with important tips about contexts in which the slang should and should not be used.

Although all students employed their vlogs for linguistic goal setting at least once, David and Madison consistently made this the principal subject of their vlogs. David focused on discrete points of pronunciation, slang, and sociopragmatic features; whereas, Madison was more introspective, stating in her vlog that she wanted to use and surround herself with French as much as possible to make her "rêve une réalité" (*dream a reality*). Her main goal for the program, as stated in Vlog 1, was to "*améliorer mon français pour parler à la famille d'accueil sans problèmes. Je suis ambitieuse, je sais!*" ("Improve my French to speak with my host family without problems. I am ambitious, I know!"). Throughout her three vlogs, she frequently referenced her language journal, which she kept outside of class requirements to document vocabulary words, idioms, slang, and pragmatic usage notes that she would then share in her vlog.

In addition to the multimodal affordances of Flipgrid and vlogs that may play a role in promoting metalinguistic awareness, the affordance of the Internet as a performative platform for linguistic discussion may have contributed to attention to language, as the Internet is often a space where users are "more playful and creative with language" and may design forms of digital new media to index their linguistic and cultural identities into their metalinguistic commentaries (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 19). While the Flipgrids were on a private platform and were shared only with the members of the class and the instructor, students chose whether to share their vlogs with the class (4 out of 12 students) or to post them on YouTube (8 out of 12 students) to

engage with a larger Internet audience. By sharing online, students also were able to assume L2 teacher roles, as David did by imitating the famous vloggers, which can be a means to negotiate membership into the online L2 user and learner community (Barton & Lee, 2013). While students surely cultivate metalinguistic awareness through other, more traditional language assignments like essays and in-class presentations meant for a small audience of the teacher or classmates, the digital and online audience affordances of the vlogs and Flipgrids allowed students to publicly display any "errors" and commentary that would typically not be included in more traditional assignments.

Promoting Transcultural Repositioning

Video reflections further fostered transcultural repositioning through their ethnographic nature (Honeyford, 2014), as evidenced by students' connections from in-class learning and their "in the wild" cross-cultural and emotional reflections on living abroad for the first time.

Students leveraged the multimodal video reflections to weave together their in-class and out-of-class experiences, making connections and observations that enhanced class discussions and encouraged students to be critical observers of their surroundings. For instance, when the students saw a French protest on the Champs-Elysées, several of them recorded it and remarked that protests "actually happen." One pair of students, Kendall and David, even decided to interview a police officer in French about what was happening and why there were so many police there for the rail workers strike. They included this video interview in their vlogs and also discussed it frequently during class. Other students also took pictures of pro- and anti-immigration graffiti around Paris and braided the images into their vlogs (Molly & Hannah, Vlog 2). Still others informally interviewed tour guides and bus drivers about their opinions after our excursions and remixed their commentary into their vlogs, Flipgrids, and in-class debate. Other in-class/in-the-wild connections made in the video reflections included: learning about "grèves" (*strikes)* and then being affected by them when not able to take the train; visiting the Opéra Garnier while reading *Fantôme de l'Opéra,* and discussions of art and architecture as introduced in class and seen "en vraie vie" (*in real life*) during excursions (Alia, Flipgrid 1; Kendall, Vlog 3; Mia, Vlog 3).

Cross-cultural Connections and Comparisons

Out of any subject discussed in Flipgrids and vlogs, students spent the most time making cross-cultural connections and comparisons from France to the United States, Paris to their college town and hometowns, Paris to other French towns, Paris to other European towns, and Europe to the United States. Such comparisons most often included observations and comparisons of cultural customs regarding public transportation, clothing worn in hot weather, beach/pool behavior, meal customs, and pop culture (movies, music, and sports).

Students made repeated observations about public transportation and driving in Paris, starting with the hectic nature of public transportation and (weeks later) explaining how quickly they had become accustomed to the metro and bus systems and wished they had metros in their hometowns (Molly, Vlog 2). While some of their observations evolved over time to become more "local," other cultural observations

were repeatedly observed as "bizarre" or "incomprehensible" by the students throughout their weeks of video reflections, namely the amount and color of clothes worn in Paris. The students, accustomed to the warm weather of the Southwest where they attend university, used video, voice, memes, large gestures, and photos in their vlogs and Flipgrids to emphasize how the Parisians wore dark long-sleeved clothing even during warm temperatures. They further observed that most French people did not own or use fans or air conditioning, even in what is deemed "heatwave" weather (80s and 90s Fahrenheit). Although they repeatedly observed these behaviors as odd or different, they did demonstrate emerging transcultural repositioning in their eventual decisions to dress more conservatively than they would have in the same weather in their college town, and to respect "la classe" (*classiness*) of showing less skin (Jalynn, Flipgrid 1; Emma, Vlog 1; Kendall Flipgrids 1 and 2).

In addition to making macro comparisons from French to American culture, students also made cross-cultural connections at the micro level from Parisian to other French towns. For example, in her second vlog, Esther discussed going to the pool in Paris and being surprised that no one was tanning in the way she did at home. Rather, those that were not swimming were fully clothed sitting next to the pool. In her third vlog when Esther went to Le Havre (Northern beach town in France) with some friends, she observed the complete opposite and that there were even some individuals at the beach "sans vêtements" (*without clothes*). Thus, the video reflections served as a space for students to break down stereotypes and de-essentialize discrete cultural points they had learned in the past, by learning for example that "even though they told us no one talks about religion, my host mom always wants to talk about and share her Jewish culture and traditions with me. And she's Parisian." (Hannah, Vlog 2; translated from original). Students followed unique modal paths (Smith, 2017) in their cultural comparisons, leveraging photos, text, emojis, memes, music, and/or special effects that served to heighten students' emerging bilingual voices in a more sensory and dynamic experience for viewer and designer alike than in traditional (e.g., written journal) assignments.

Lastly, students connected French and American pop culture in their video reflections, as evidenced by Kendall's vlog describing the art in the Louvre as: "c'était juste beaucoup de personnes blanches! Les tableaux, les artistes—tous blancs." (*It was just a bunch of white people! The paintings, the artists—all white.*) Incidentally, the day after the Louvre visit, Beyoncé and Jay Z's music video Apes**t premiered. It depicts the famous African American performing couple in the Louvre using some of the same discourse that Kendall, a Haitian American, had used. Kendall remixed parts of the music video, a video about how it was produced, and her "outtake" narrations from the Louvre to demonstrate how she related to the problem of representation and how it was a cross-cultural issue (Kendall, Vlog 2).

Promoting Sharing of Emotional Experiences

Multimodal video reflections further fostered emotional reflections on living abroad and normalized discussions of mental health. Common emotions expressed by the students in the multimodal video reflections were the following: pride, fear, excitement, bewilderment, happiness, sadness, and homesickness. In each of the 72 data sources, students shared at least one emotion, particularly tending to elaborate in

the longer vlogs. They frequently addressed being proud of navigating life abroad, fear of not being understood by locals, and traversing the ups and downs of being happy or "at home" abroad and feeling sad or homesick. This trend was particularly popularized by Jalynn's "teatime" in her first vlog, where she made tea in her host house and explicitly spoke of her mental health in Paris. The first viewing of vlogs occurred in class, and all students commented to Jalynn that they liked how "real" she acted in her vlog and they wanted to make vlogging a space where they could also talk about such issues. Discussions of mental health through "teatime" further emerged in other students' subsequent video reflections, which created a communal traversal of the emotional waters of studying abroad, being away from family for the first time, and communicating in the L2.

Traversing Study Abroad through Modes and Space

In their vlogs, students increasingly traversed modes as they became more comfortable with multimodal composing, the French language, and being abroad. In addition to navigating voice, text, images, music, and photos, students also traversed various spaces in their vlogs, including host family homes, campus, public transportation, various French cities, and public parks.

Reflecting through Multiple Modes Increases over Time

As has been found in previous research on multimodal composing processes (Smith, 2017; Smith et al., 2017), students increased in their modal traversals over time. The multimodal composing timescape (Smith, 2017; Smith et al., 2017) in Figure 3 provides an example of how 11 out of 12 students layered modes and increased use of different types of modes as they progressed through the term (Vlog 1 to Vlog 3). Esther, however, served as a control of sorts, in that she brought her composing expertise and tech savvy to the table. She considered herself a "techie," as often mentioned in her Flipgrids. As students watched peer vlogs and discussed the affordances of each mode, they immediately realized that Esther was a go-to peer from whom they could learn about how to compile their vlogs with more than just the self-video ("vlog") mode. Students grew to mimic Esther in that they saw the value and affordances of using multiple modes and layering them. The students differed in their patterns of composing and modal preferences, although they all progressed in modal use over time. While Esther's use of modes did not drastically increase or decline, she developed a "theme" for each of her vlogs (unlike the other students) and made her composing style match the theme. For instance, she decided to be "artistique" (artsy), in Vlog 2, and thus used more music and spoke in a more serious tone than in her other vlogs. She developed a role as "Movie Critique Time with Esther" in her third vlog and used the "vlog" mode extensively to align with what she thought of the genre of movie reviews and to speak more French than in her previous two vlogs. Figure 3 details how four students (Esther, Mia, Emma, and Alia) traversed modes throughout the first six minutes of each of their three vlogs.

The length of lines represents the amount of time and the placement of time spent in each mode. From left to right, Mia, Emma, and Alia show enormous changes in the modes that they use to compose.
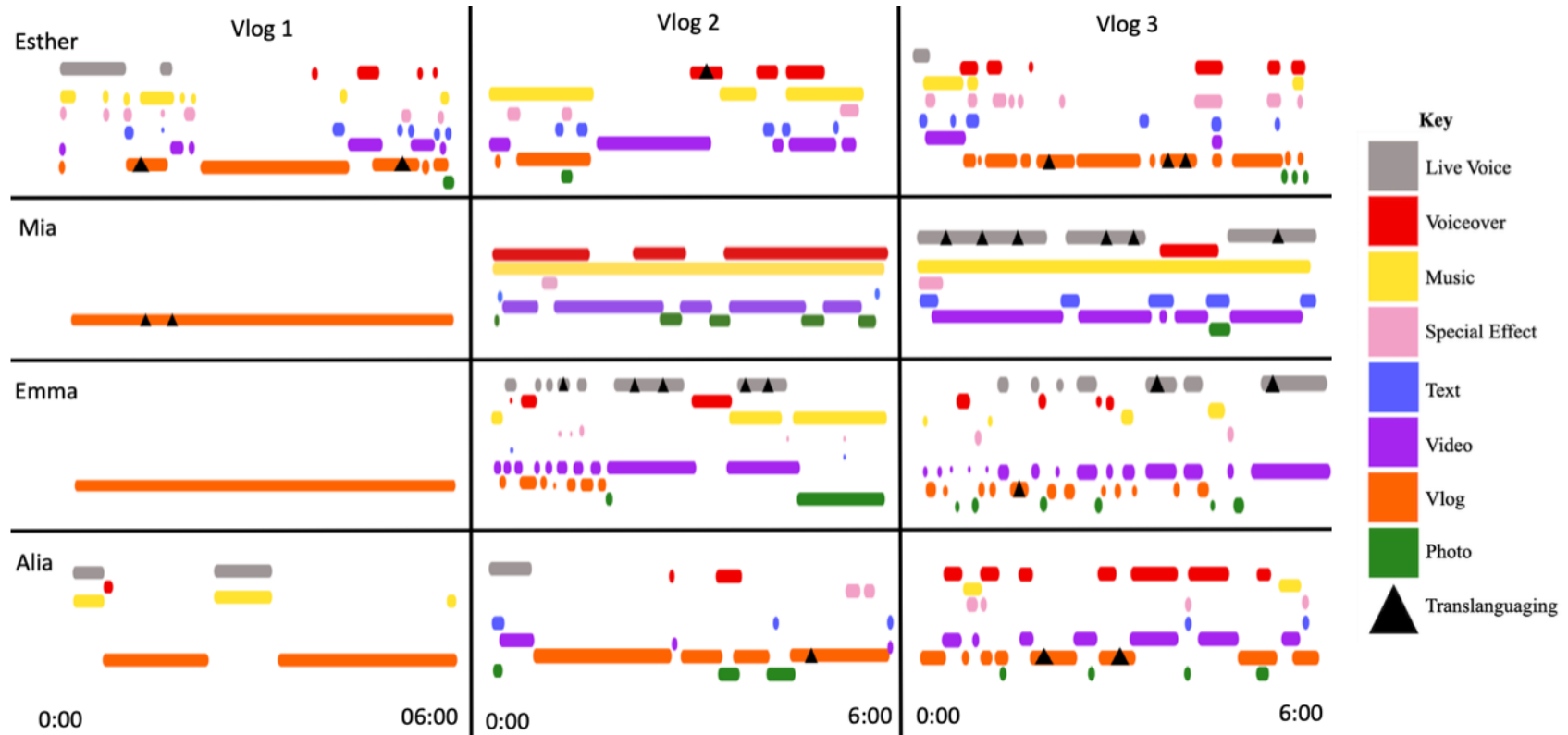

Figure 3. *Multimodal composing timescape illustrating the increase in modal traversals over the three vlogs*

In addition to augmented modal traversals, students increased the number of modes that they simultaneously layered. Modal layerings intensified to include special effects, voiceover, titles, and music. The functions of these layers also became more solidified as students progressed throughout the term. For example, music often accompanied photo montages that introduced or concluded each vlog; freeze frame and sound effects were used during linguistic or factual repairs; video and photo filters were employed during cultural comparisons; and text titles or subtitles were used to give additional information, to linguistically repair, or to organize thoughts with transition screens. Although these modes were leveraged consistently with different functions, there was no one-to-one correlation between modal use and any single coded content feature other than filters for cultural observations. It is likely that students take dynamic and individual composing paths to express such content (Smith, 2017).

Further, as students developed modal traversals, their patterns of composing led to unique codemeshing interactions. Students participated in multimodal codemeshing by incorporating languages other than French and/or other registers (including English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese), as noted by the black triangles. For example, Alia and Hannah became passionate about the pragmatic uses of different types of slang and liked to incorporate them into their vlogs and then ask their viewers to comment on if they were using them in a way that was clear. Likewise, Jalynn, Daniel, Molly, and Madison elicited feedback from their viewers not only by asking them to "like" or subscribe to their vlogs (which they chose to post to YouTube), but also by sharing their vlogs with their French host families and friends to generate conversation and receive feedback. Translanguaging often occurred in tandem with vlogging, live voice, voiceover, and video modes, illustrating that the students were more likely to orally translanguage rather than in written text forms, although vlogs are typically a genre that leverages much more aural, visual, and oral modes than written text features.

Traversing Spaces and Places through Vlogging

Through multimodal vlogs and Flipgrids, students further traversed places, spaces, and time in study abroad, which promoted reflection and transliterate practices that bridged the in-class/out-of-class divide. This was evident in the way that students' reflections included videos from the following locations: host family house, campus, Paris parks, personal and course excursions, train and metro stations, moving trains and metros. The students who created and/or edited their vlogs from the moving train particularly illustrated how their learning and reflection processes were mobile as a result of the nature of the assignment and the digital connectedness permitted by public transport (i.e., free Wi-Fi and chargers throughout the train) (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017). The practices varied from student to student and highlighted the dynamic nature of transliteracies, or mobile practices of meaning-making, of which storytelling can allow designers to capture their emic perspectives and share them with others (Stornaiuolo et al., 2017).

DISCUSSION

This study examined the multimodal composing practices of Americans studying French in Paris through an analysis of their multimodal linguistic and cultural

reflections while living abroad. Findings revealed that multimodal composing abroad promoted linguistic and cultural competencies and enabled students to leverage multiple modes to describe their linguistic, cultural, and emotional experiences while studying French in Paris. In addition to the layers of reflection seen in the Flipgrids and vlogs, it is also important to note how these reflective practices may contribute to identity development and creation of a "transnational space" amongst peers, host families, and local friends, who became viewers and occasional participants in the video reflections (Lam & Warriner, 2012; Pacheco & Smith, 2015)—a finding formerly underdiscussed in the literature on multimodal composing for language learning. This transnational space becomes part of the "imagined community" of the L2 language learner identity, in which the students' "actual and desired memberships in imagined communities affected their learning trajectories" (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 590). This was particularly evident in the practices of linguistic rehearsal, repair, and goal-setting from the multimodal products.

Through the participants' imagined communities as legitimate French users and reflective composers, the process of learning was recognized as social *and* individual (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Students cultivated their individual linguistic and cultural journeys through multiliteracies moves of situated practice and critical framing by repeated recordings of the Flipgrids and through the iterative affordances of the vlogs to go back and edit their speech. This transformed multiliteracies practice was inherently individual *and* social, as it was not only for the designer, but also for their classroom audience and their imagined communities as emergent bilinguals in French. Further, the social/individual border of learning was traversed by watching peers' compositions and sharing multimodal composing processes and preferences, as well as relating emotional experiences that created solidarity in the community of peers and in the imagined community of other language learners or individuals living abroad. It is thus that by "trying on" multilingual voices and sharing them with peers and a broader audience, students were able to reposition themselves as multilingual speakers, or legitimate L2 users (Cook, 2002; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). These findings demonstrate how an increased focus on the multiliteracies pedagogies of critical framing and transformed practice coupled with the affordances of multimodal composing in the L2 can enhance students' translingual and transcultural competencies in dynamic channels not typically afforded by more traditional, more monomodal language assignments.

While these practices certainly helped students to utilize language and multimodal composing as sites of identity construction, it must be acknowledged that various other factors influenced students' feelings of belonging during the six-week study abroad, including but not limited to their language experience, investment in being linguistically and culturally competent, host families, locals that they met, and the emotional hardships that many endured while living away from their family or state for the first time (Allen, 2010). Coupled with these factors, multimodal composing has the possibility to foster reflective attitudes in language learners. The role of scaffolding, however, cannot be neglected. Students benefited from increased explicit technological lessons through continued Digital Writers' mini workshops (Dalton, 2012) after the instructor noticed that the first vlogs were not achieving their multimodal potential. Repeated mini lessons, availability in office hours, and peer-to-peer teaching from tech experts like Esther all played a role in helping students weave their stories and reflections.

The current study was limited in that the program was only six weeks and two levels of proficiency coursework were combined within one classroom. Similarly, translanguaging was not explicitly discussed with students in the curriculum but was practiced implicitly. Future research on multimodal composing abroad should consider explicitly incorporating the metalanguage of multimodal composing and codemeshing, while also collecting data on student processes and perspectives. Additional future avenues for research include the intricate practice of repair in multimodal composing, and how gesture may play a role in embodying language and L2 expression. Ultimately, research on multimodal composing must continue to explore how language learners leverage modes when learning languages at a variety of ages, levels, and contexts.

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