

Reexamining feedback on L2 digital writing

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Emerging digital tools have been associated with multimodal genres (e.g., digital storytelling, Wikipedia entries, blog entries) and have expanded our understanding of L2 writing. No longer viewed in isolation, text is now often a complement to or complemented by other ways of communicating meaning. Despite the increasing presence of L2 multimodal learning tasks, instructors have not often modified the way in which they provide feedback and still focus on language development—replicating the feedback behaviors modeled by non-digital writing assignments—rather than on all the components of multimodal texts. When providing digital feedback, however, it is essential to take into account the semiotic resources included in the L2 text (e.g., language, images, sound). Determining how to provide feedback, therefore, involves the recognition of the complexity of factors that affect feedback choice and use, such as what linguistic aspect to focus on, especially when students write in multilingual or translingual manners; the extent to which multimodal resources are integrated successfully; the purpose of the L2 writing task; the type of digital genre; and the (local and/or global) audiences.

In this presentation, we discuss theoretical approaches (e.g., social-semiotic theory and activity theory) that relate to digital feedback. The presentation will predominantly focus on providing a rationale for expanding the use of feedback to cover the linguistic and non-linguistic components of semiotic resources encountered in a multimodal text. Furthermore, aware of the importance of the affordances of various digital tools to create suitable environments for scaffolding learners' development of multimodal texts, we will also address the potential for novel and sometimes complementary modes of feedback (e.g., oral and written feedback using Screencast-O-Matic). Only by providing (digital) feedback that consider the digital genres and tools that we have at our disposal will we have the opportunity to shape multiliterate and multilingual writers and promote the expression of writers' identities and voices in a dynamic digital world.