



**BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD  
AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA**

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**FACULTAD DE LENGUAS**

**ANALYZING MULTIMODAL NOM STRATEGIES IN  
ONLINE EFL CLASSES: A CASE STUDY ON TEACHER  
AND CHILDREN INTERACTION**

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
LANGUAGES FOR THE DEGREE OF:

**MAESTRÍA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

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PUEBLA, PUEBLA

NOVEMBER, 2025



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TESIS PRESENTADA A LA FACULTAD DE  
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NOVIEMBRE, 2025

**Analyzing Multimodal NoM Strategies in Online EFL Classes: a Case Study on Teacher and Children Interaction**

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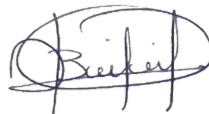
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# DEDICATIONS

## ABSTRACT

Negotiation of Meaning (NoM) strategies are crucial in teacher-student interactions as they involve conversational modifications that aid in clarifying and understanding meaning. These strategies have become even more significant in the context of online teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), particularly for children. This contextual shift requires different modes of analyzing interaction beyond verbal approaches. Multimodality seems an appropriate framework to support meaning comprehension through gestures, visuals, and other non-verbal cues. This research aims to explore teachers and children's interaction in online EFL classes through NoM strategies and multimodality—such as facial expressions, hand movements, images, and on-screen annotations—is used to enhance meaning-making processes and facilitate understanding. The findings identify combinations of NoM strategies and multimodal communication that could inform the design of more inclusive, engaging, and efficient online EFL teaching methodologies for children. Ultimately, this research emphasizes the need to embrace innovative practices that foster better interaction and understanding, ensuring that children can thrive in virtual learning environments.

**Key words:** *Interaction hypothesis, negotiation of meaning strategies, multimodality, online classes, EFL*

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

English language teaching (ELT) is an academic field of study that has significantly evolved due to the shift of theoretical concepts, learners' needs, and the rise of technology. This is evidenced by the significant rise of ELT in online modalities since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The severity of health conditions obliged people to continue their daily activities from home. As a result, education was affected by these new conditions and began to be delivered online globally. This shift forced educators and students to move the teaching dynamics done in face-to-face classrooms into online classes.

The change of teaching modality also impacted the interaction between the teacher and students. Toscu (2023) reveals that in online classes there is more interaction from teacher to student(s) than from student to student(s). The author express that this interaction is developed through message-related incorporations rather than form-related ones. Additionally, Toscu (2023) agrees with Yüksel and Uysal (2021) that group work activities are less common in online classes, so that interaction between teacher and students is more prevalent. Therefore, classroom interaction is crucial for language, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL). To illustrate, Long (1996) proposed the Interaction Hypothesis, a theoretical perspective that states that the input that learners receive is not enough; interaction is necessary in order to learn the L2.

However, the classroom interaction between learner and learner, learner and teacher or even learner and native speaker may not be completely equal all the time, "the lack of vocabulary store, incorrect grammar and weak pronunciation often causes communication impasses between speakers" (Rahma et. al, 2020, p. 125). So, Hartono (2017) explains that when these speakers

present some problems to understand a message, they employ some conversational strategies in order to obtain successful communication, and this use is called Negotiation of Meaning (NoM).

As explained by Pica (1987), NoM refers to the “activity that occurs when a listener signals to the speaker that the speaker’s message is not clear and the speaker and listener work linguistically to resolve this impasse” (p. 200). Similarly, Hartono (2017) also manifests that NoM consists of the conversational modifications that occur in everyday interactions to clarify meaning and ease an understandable message. Therefore, according to the Interaction Hypothesis, NoM occurs when learners modify their input to ensure it possesses the equal level of comprehensibility they can manage; this interactive NoM facilitates the acquisition of the L2 (Long, 1996).

Additionally, some studies done by Pica and Doughty (1985), Pica (1994a, 1987b), Long (1983a, 1996b), Foster (1998), among others, explain the main NoM strategies that learners use in order to reach a clear understanding of each other. Hartono (2017) made a review of research on NoM and discovered that the most frequently used strategies were clarification requests, confirmation checks, and clarification checks. Moreover, these investigations have been supported by more recent ones made by Hartono and Ihsan (2016, 2017), García and Lazaro (2015), Khalid, Khalid et. al (2019), and so forth to analyze the frequency by which these NoM strategies occur in the classroom, as well as the impact on the students’ learning.

Despite the Interaction Hypothesis establishing that NoM occur between native and nonnative speakers of a language, recent research proposes that not only the learners utilize these communicative strategies, but teachers also employ them. The use of these sources allows teachers to expand their possibilities of enhancing interactions in the language teaching process.

Proof of this is the research done by Schaap et. al. (2016), Rahmah, et. al. (2020), and Putri (2022), among others, regarding the relation between teachers and the negotiation of meaning in the classroom interaction with language learners.

Nevertheless, this shift from face-to-face teaching to online modality accentuated that verbal communication is not the only means by which teachers and students can exchange information, and therefore, to manifest misunderstanding during the interaction process. Hence, different communication strategies are necessary to convey meaning when interacting in online modality. According to Kress (2003), multimodality consists of using different modes such as textual, aural, linguistic, spatial, and visual, for communication and meaning-making. Likewise, Kessler (2022) defines multimodality as the “individual’s use of different modes (i.e., channels of communication) with the purpose of conveying meaning”. This author also states that with the spread use of digital devices and technology, multimodality is now ingrained in many aspects of teacher’s daily work.

In addition, Van der Zwaadr and Bannink (2016), Canals (2021) among other researchers indicate the urge to consider some nonverbal modes of communication, such as gestures, rising eyebrows, and long pauses during the speech as indicators of misunderstanding within the interaction in the classroom. So, the multimodal modes of communication may function similarly to NoM, in that they can indicate a misunderstanding of a message, but can also be employed to convey comprehensible meaning. This may be observed through a multimodal interaction analysis, which is defined by Norris (2004) as a “holistic analytical framework that understands the multiple modes in (inter)action as all together building one system of communication” (Norris and Pirini, 2016, p. 24).

Moreover, Wigham and Satar (2021) explain that mediated actions, the site of engagement, communication modes, as well as modal configuration and modal density are the key analytical tools from the multimodal (inter)action analysis from Norris (2004). So, adopting a multimodal interaction analysis can be useful to analyze the NoM and Modes of Communication employed by teachers and students when interacting in online EFL classes. By focusing on the analytical tool of communication modes, a multimodal interaction analysis can provide relevant information to identify, explore, and observe how both teachers and students employ the NoM and Modes of Communication to interact in online classes and convey meaning.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

As previously mentioned, the ELT in online modality is proof of the evolution in the field of language teaching. The rise of technology and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 increased the implementation of online education. To contextualize, language institutes took advantage of ELT in online modality to offer more language courses. By doing so, more learners from different ages, such as children, could access English language acquisition. However, this new mode of teaching creates circumstances that hinder the negotiation of meaning between teachers and children.

In the first place, some language institutes adopted a Communicative Language Teaching method (CLT) in their online language courses. Consequently, teachers are required to use and promote English exclusively. This issue affects children's interaction since they usually try to use Spanish as a NoM strategy to convey the meaning of their misunderstanding of new concepts, vocabulary, or grammar structure. Then, teachers need to look for different strategies to resolve this misunderstanding, but only using the English language.

Moreover, the online ELT modality limits children from interacting with each other directly. Even when they can relate through the chats or breakout rooms from some software by which they are having online classes (i.e. Zoom, Meet, Teams, etc.), this interaction is slow and time-consuming. So, the fastest and easiest way for children to understand and clarify meaning is by interacting directly with the teacher. Therefore, the strategies that both teachers and children use to convey meaning in their interaction are very significant; these support each other to get a better understanding of the information they are struggling with.

Finally, another issue that affects the teacher-children interaction in online ELT modality is the children's concentration time in class. To contextualize, Caraballo (2022) explains that children from 8 to 10 years old have a concentration time of 16 to 50 minutes on average. So, because of the nature of online ELT modality, there is a greater probability of children losing attention in class when the teacher only speaks to interact with children. Then, the strategies that both teachers and children employ when interacting in online classes go beyond words. Different Modes of Communication are necessary either to indicate misunderstanding or to convey comprehensible meaning.

In addition, some studies made by Schaap et. al. (2016), Rahmah et. al. (2020), Putri (2022), among others, analyze the conversational strategies used in classroom interaction, but they simply focus on NoM strategies with English for Specific Purposes (ESP), as well as teachers' strategies to negotiate meaning just for face-to-face classes. Moreover, a few researchers, such as Canals (2021) and Norris and Pirini (2017), have analyzed these concepts of multimodality and NoM together. However, there is no research regarding ELT that considers these previous concepts in combination with the context of children learning English in an online modality.

Therefore, there is a need to analyze the NoM strategies and modes of communication that teachers and children employ in online EFL interactions. Here, a multimodal interaction analysis may be useful to identify, explore and observe how NoM strategies and Modes of Communication are used in teacher-children's interactions within English classes in online modality.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

This research topic may be significant for the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), more specific to the field of the acquisition of a foreign language. This can be possible because it will present an overview of how teachers and children employ NoM strategies and Modes of Communication to interact and convey meaning in online EFL classes. Moreover, this project will consider a multimodal interaction analysis to get better insights by exploring and observing how the different Modes of Communication and NoM strategies are used to convey meaning in interactions of online EFL classes. Thus, it can be relevant to expand the field and promote teachers' reflection on their daily practices.

The NoM strategies and Modes of Communication employed by teachers and children to interact within online EFL classes are crucial for both the adequate development of the class and the correct understanding of the English language in the classroom. These two strategies have a significant impact when used to interact in online modality. On the one hand, they overcome problems in conveying meaning in online English classes. On the other hand, these strategies also contribute to the EFL acquisition process of children learning in an online modality.

Assuming this, the information obtained from this research project could be useful to improve online EFL modality by developing more effective, inclusive, and dynamic classes that consider different strategies to convey comprehensible meaning. Getting the information

obtained into consideration, it may be beneficial for teachers to design effective language learning activities, create materials, or develop techniques that promote both the NoM and Modes of Communication to interact within EFL classes in online modality. Therefore, this can allow more efficient ways to convey comprehensible meaning and support a faster acquisition of the English language.

#### 1.4 **Aim of the study**

The overall aim of this research is to explore the NoM strategies present in teacher-child interaction in online EFL classes with a focus on how these strategies are used to reach an understanding or mutual comprehension of the contents of an intermediate-level class. Furthermore, this study aims to analyze the multimodal modes of communication that interact with these NoM strategies to convey comprehensible meaning. In addition, this study examines the effectiveness of combining multimodality and NoM strategies to facilitate meaning in online EFL classes.

#### 1.5 **Research questions**

To be able to fulfill the aim and objectives previously established, the following research questions were developed:

**RQ1:** What are the NoM strategies that are presented during teacher and children's interaction in online EFL classes at the intermediate level?

**RQ2:** Which multimodal modes of communication interact with the NoM to convey comprehensible meaning during teacher and children's interaction in online EFL classes?

**RQ2.1:** How effective is the combination of NoM strategies and multimodality to facilitate comprehensible meaning during teacher and children's interaction in online EFL classes?

## **1.6 Thesis outline**

This study is composed of five chapters. Chapter one described the problem and justification for this research, as well as the context in which this research took place. This chapter also included the research questions that guide this study. Chapter two consists of the literature review, which details some definitions of terms required to get a better understanding of the topics related to this study. Furthermore, this chapter describes the situation of teachers and students in English language courses in online modality. Moreover, the chapter covers some useful information with respect to the concepts of NoM, Modes of Communication, and multimodal interaction analysis. Later, Chapter Three focuses on the methodology and instruments used in this study to obtain the necessary information. Chapter Four presents the findings and the discussion to answer the research questions. Finally, Chapter Five contains the conclusions of this study.

## **CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces topics focused on the areas of language teaching and learning, language acquisition, and multimodality, among others. First, the Interaction Hypothesis is explained. Then, some Negotiation of Meaning strategies are addressed. Later, the area of online teaching is approached by considering the online teaching modality used in the English classes. Later, the English language teaching in Mexico is considered. Here, some particularities of private language institutes are stated. Finally, the panorama of multimodality is covered.

### **2.1 The Interaction Hypothesis**

During the learning of a language like English, interaction plays an important role, especially for young learners. It is evident that children do not benefit solely from passively absorbing linguistic concepts. Instead, some improvement in their language learning can be observed, due to the opportunities they have to actively use these concepts in the classroom through conversations with their classmates and the teacher. So, this interaction not only helps clarify any ambiguity or misunderstanding regarding the language input they receive in class, but it also encourages a deeper comprehension and retention of this language.

This importance of interaction in the learning of a language is particularly highlighted by Long (1996). This author suggests that the merely being exposed to language input is not enough for learners to fully comprehend a second language. Thus, according to Long (1996), engaging in meaningful interactions is crucial for the learning of a language, as it enables learners to process and acquire the linguistic structures that they receive through input. Moreover, Ortega (2009) explains that Long focused on interaction and proposed that the best comprehensible input for learners is the one that has been interactionally modified. But, besides the input, interaction with

the language also involves producing output, since some language skills such as speaking and writing allow learners to perform what they have noticed and use the language in meaningful ways (Ortega, 2009).

Moving this hypothesis into the language teaching, some dynamics are followed by teachers and learners within the classroom. To exemplify, Shaheen et. al. (2020) explain that when the teacher enters to the classroom, the interaction with the student begins by doing questions, and they respond by using the target language. So, these author manifest that along the class, teacher serves as a facilitator, and the positive feedback he gives encourages peers to both speak and write in any language they are learning. By doing so, Shaheen et. al. (2020) clarify that the teacher's utterances require to fulfill the purpose of communication skill. Then, the previous information shows some of the dynamics that occur in an English class, where the interaction between learners is important, but the teacher's role is also crucial to promote this interaction.

In addition, Huang, et. al. (2024) discusses the application of Long's hypothesis for a future development direction. Firstly, they consider that the interactive teaching model greatly boosts students' engagement and excitement for learning, transforms the typically monotonous classroom environment, and enhances ineffective learning results. Secondly, teachers should create a language learning environment in the classroom to enhance learners 'contact with English features, then choose to minimize the use of simplified language in communication (Huang, et. al., 2024). These authors also explain that the Interaction Hypothesis results practical for the English teaching, because it is applied to mobilize student's participation in the classroom.

By engaging in dialogue with classmates or seeking clarification from their English teacher, students can address their questions and concerns, thereby reinforcing their language

skills in a supportive and collaborative environment. Overall, the combination of a proper learning environment in the classroom and interactive engagement is crucial for developing proficiency in a foreign language, as it allows learners to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, ultimately leading to more effective and meaningful language acquisition. When it comes to acquiring a language like English, children and students must employ a variety of strategies to enhance their language proficiency effectively.

## **2.2 Negotiation of Meaning Strategies**

Building on the Interaction Hypothesis, Pica (1987) defines negotiation of meaning (NoM) as the process by which, during interaction, a listener signals that a message is unclear, leading to linguistic collaboration between speaker and listener to resolve the impasse. Similarly, Hartono (2017) also considers that NoM consists of the conversational modifications that occur in everyday interactions to clarify meaning and ease an understandable message. Additionally, Ortega (2009) claims that the negotiation of meaning and form enables learners to notice their gaps, reflect on their utterances, use the feedback provided by negative and positive evidence, and carry modifications of their output, thus confirming a correct development in the acquisition of the second language.

Considering this, some studies from Hartono and Ihsan (2016), García and Lazaro (2015), and Khalid et. al. (2019) explain the main negotiation of meaning strategies that learners go through to reach a clear understanding of each other. However, it was Hartono (2017) who made a review regarding research on NoM strategies and identified that confirmation checks, clarification requests, and comprehension checks are the most frequently used strategies during the interaction process. To begin with, Hartono and Ihsan (2016) consider that confirmation

checks are employed by the listener to verify if he correctly listened to and understood what the other speaker previously said. According to these authors, rising intonation is a key feature of this NoM strategy, because it “indicates that the speaker is requesting confirmation” (Hartono and Ihsan, 2016, p. 261). For example, Hartono (2017) mentions that rising intonation questions (the man? Or the man, right?) could go with or without a tag, but they can easily be answered with simple confirmation, such as “yes, Mmm”.

Additionally, García and Lázaro (2015) agree with Long’s (1996) definition of clarification request, as it is any designed expression that aims to seek clarification or assistance to understand the preceding utterance from a speaker. Examples include questions, statements (e.g., “I don’t understand”), and imperatives (e.g., “Please repeat”). Also, Khalid et. al. (2019) explain that clarification request consists of simply asking the speaker to clarify what he said, by using expressions such as “sorry?” or “what do you mean?”. Similarly, “clarification requests are mostly formed by questions, but may consist of wh- or yes-no questions” (Hartono, 2017, p. 2). So, the speaker is required either to provide new information or modify information.

Lastly, García and Lázaro (2015) consider that comprehension checks consist of the attempts or moves from the speaker to anticipate the misunderstanding. So, one speaker intends to check if his message has been understood correctly by the other participant. Here, Hartono (2017) explains that this previous NoM strategy can be manifested by asking direct questions, tag questions, or repetition. Then, some questions such as “Do you understand?” are employed to check the comprehension of the message.

The NoM strategies help learners to resolve the problems of misunderstanding in communication and are employed to achieve mutual comprehension, which promotes the

interaction and facilitates language learning. Significantly, García and Lázaro (2015) developed their research to distinguish whether children from both content-and-language integrated-learning (CLIL) and EFL settings negotiate meaning in task-based interaction. Then, these authors conclude that children from both contexts negotiate meaning by employing NoM strategies. Here, they use conversational adjustments and repetitions, which allows them to make less use of their shared L1 while interacting. The preceding information outlines the various strategies available for children and learners in general to negotiate meaning with others. These strategies are employed with respect to unclear concepts or words, with the ultimate goal of communicating comprehensible meaning. However, the implementation of these strategies may differ when utilized by teachers, who employ them to enhance the clarity of their speech and instructions during classroom activities.

### **2.2.1 Negotiation of Meaning Strategies in ELT**

To begin with, Schaap et.al. (2016) establish that the negotiation of meaning is a common strategy that emerges thanks to the interactive process between students and teachers, where both participants need to actively collaborate to transform students' knowledge. Here, the author states that the strategies used by teachers in their practice related to meaning negotiation “are not implicit or unconscious, but intentionally and by preference explicit to students (Schaap et al., 2016, p. 65)”. This previous information helps to understand how strategies for meaning negotiation can also be developed by teachers in their teaching practice, with the purpose of achieving a clear understanding when interacting with learners, by facilitating the language for them.

Furthermore, Pica (1991) proposes triggers, signals, response, and follow-up as the four main components that teachers consider as strategies for meaning negotiation. First of all, this

author defines *triggers* as the sentences, sometimes questions, produced by the teacher to show confusion about asking for information, so students complement with an answer with some utterances and finish the question. Accordingly, Putri (2022, p. 15) presents an example of a trigger in a conversation:

*Teacher: Ok class, last week we discuss how to be euuuumm...? (Trigger)*

*Students: Commentator? (Utterance)*

Later, Pica (1991) also explains another meaning negotiation strategy called *signals*, where the speaker produces an utterance to demonstrate that better comprehension is needed, and this occurs by clarifying requests and confirmation checks. After that, the author introduces the third element for meaning negotiation called *response*, in which the teacher provides a simple question and learners attempts to provide an input to clarify the misunderstanding by repeating what the teacher mentioned or modifying that information provided.

Finally, Pica (1991) presents a strategy under the name of *follow-up*, where the teacher provides a question with the intention to confirm that the information mentioned was clear or not for the students. Thus, if the learner is able to answer that follow-up question, it means the message was comprehended. By considering all previous information, it can be observed that the chances that teachers have to negotiate meaning in EFL classes when interacting with children.

Similarly, Rahmah et al. (2020) also align with the NoM strategies proposed by Pica (1991) and explain that the most frequent component of negotiation used by teachers in negotiation is “trigger”, because they manifest as an indicator of teachers’ misunderstanding of students’ messages. Furthermore, the author claims that even when triggers and self-modification responses are less common, they are used by teachers and are the most frequent response that appeared in the negotiation of meaning process (Rahmah et. al., 2020).

Later, although Putri (2022) agrees with Pica's NoM strategies for teachers, this author considered that teachers innately use NoM strategies as a speaking skill when developing online class conversations. Moreover, Putri (2022) manifests that NoM strategies help teachers to communicate with students in online speaking classes, because these are an effective strategy to get learners actively engaged. Finally, this previous author suggests that these NoM strategies may help teachers to be more creative in the way the content is arranged. Also, teachers can "provide a fun speaking lesson where students can have fun in online teaching and learning" (Putri, p. 19, 2021).

Overall, the teacher's NoM strategies presented previously demonstrate some correlation with the strategies developed by children during their language acquisition process. The NoM strategies employed by both teachers and children serve as a means to convey comprehensible meaning and facilitate effective communication when interacting in online EFL classes. Later, the similarities in the NoM strategies used by teachers and children highlight the shared goal of achieving mutual understanding and successful language exchange within the online EFL learning environment.

## **2.2 Online Teaching**

First and foremost, technology has served as a significant force for societal change for many years. As a result, it has been integrated into various aspects of daily life, including social media, the workplace, and educational opportunities. In a similar vein, English language teaching now has the capability to be conducted not only in traditional face-to-face settings but also through online platforms. This shift in delivery teaching performance requires the development of a methodology and interactive processes to ensure successful outcomes.

According to Friedman (2019), online education “simply means acquiring knowledge through the use of instruction provided via the internet”. Similarly, Bates (2016) defines online learning as “a form of distance education in which a course or program is intentionally designed in advance to be delivered fully online”. These previous explanations agree with the concept of online instruction, which is necessary to consider in this study since the NoM strategies will be analyzed in this particular EFL modality.

Moreover, the performance of EFL classes in online modality requires a methodology to succeed, so teachers are required to understand how to manage some methods for the teaching of the English language, and this understanding helps the teacher to design a practical and efficient class for students (Patel & Jain, 2008). This previous definition from the authors serve to raise awareness of how important it is to use an appropriate methodology when designing a class, considering the teaching modality. So, even when teaching or learning English is done in online modality, it should not be considered informal. This is because when a face to face class turns to online, the children’s learning is also affected by this change, as well as the interaction process.

Additionally, related to the concept of ELT, Kerla and Zolota (2015) present some methods that can be used in online education such as the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, the Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching, Contentbased Approach, and Task-based Approach. These previous methods suggested by the authors expand the horizon of possibilities when teaching English in online modality, so teachers can perform their classes and enhance interaction with their students without restrictions of using a specific ELT methodology.

As previously presented, there are a variety of methods that are available for teachers to work online, and most of them are actually similar to the ones used in face-to-face modality. In the end, as Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011, p. 12) consider, “any method is going to be shaped by a teacher’s own understanding, beliefs, style, and level of experience”. So, it is necessary to use appropriate methods and plan significant lessons that enhance the interaction of both teacher and children during online EFL classes, and therefore to improve students’ experience regarding online education.

Over time, computer-mediated and online education have modified the interaction between language learners and the teacher. To illustrate, Toscu (2023) researched the online interaction in EFL classes and identified that in this context, there is more teacher-student interaction compared to the student-student interaction. The author also manifests that teacher’s speech is more prevalent while student’s speech is minimal, so the interaction is dominated by the teacher.

Similarly, Musbarok (2023) also explored the interaction process in online EFL classes and identified three different types of interaction. Firstly, the teacher-whole class refers to the speaking time the teacher has during the classroom practice. Secondly, the action of asking questions to check students’ comprehension and delivering understandable material is called teacher-individual interaction. Finally, this author explains that the student-teacher interaction is the time when students have to ask questions to the teachers and clarify meaning. Musbarok (2023) also concludes that teachers interact more than students in the class, due to some student’s problems, such as a lack of initiative to interact directly, a lack of vocabulary, and a misunderstanding of material.

Eventually, both Toscu (2023) and Musbarok (2023) suggest that the role of the interaction should be held by students rather than the teacher, so “in online education, student-student interaction needs to be re-considered, and more attention should be paid to the ways to increase it” (Toscu, 2023, p. 11540), where students can practice the language with each other, rather than with the teacher.

### **2.3 English Language Teaching in Mexico**

In order to understand how the English language is taught to children in the Mexican context, it is necessary to highlight the difference between teaching English as a second or as a foreign language. On the one hand, Nordquist (2020) explains that English as a Second Language (ESL) is taught where this language is already spoken by people outside the classroom. On the other hand, the author also claims that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) consists of “the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the dominant language” (Nordquist, 2020). Then, this difference may be significant in understanding that English is taught as a foreign language, rather than as a second language. Additionally, this perspective can be supported by Moeller and Catalano (2015), who agree that “a language is considered foreign if it is learned largely in the classroom and is not spoken in the society where the teaching occurs” (p.327).

Moreover, English language teaching is considered nowadays as part of the curriculum of basic education in Mexico. So, there is a syllabus organized and planned by SEP, which establishes some important aspects regarding the teaching of this specific language. According to SEP (2017), the subject of English is composed of two stages: the stage of contact and familiarization (directed to kindergarten and first 2 grades of elementary school students) and the

stage of competencies and a basic command of English (directed to students from elementary school and secondary school).

In addition, SEP (2019) manifests that the English program utilized for basic education in Mexico has the purpose of adding the English language as an obligatory subject. Then, SEP (2017) manifests that the purpose of the subject of English is that “students develop abilities, knowledge, attitudes and learning typical strategies of different routines, habitual and known communicative and cultural contexts, with native and not native speakers of English” ( p. 265). However, Hernandez (2019) considers that the program is partly efficient because of some factors, such as the temporal contract of teachers, the lack of an official syllabus, the availability of books, and the incomplete expansion of the program. "In fact, Mexico requires a linguistic policy that is based on an adequate and contextualized diagnosis" (Hernandez, 2019).

All previous information provides valuable insights to understand the methodology by which the English language is taught in the Mexican context. However, the emergence of ELT in an online format became significant to the advancements and evolution within the field of language education. In some circumstances, such as the rapid rise of technology and the challenges originated by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, increased the shift of online education. Considering the context for this research, language institutes took advantage of the education inonline modality to expand their offerings and provide a more extended range of language courses to learners. Then, this strategy facilitated access to English language teaching for a diverse population, including children and individuals of all ages.

Considering that English is taught as a foreign language in Mexico, it is essential to recognize that the interaction between teachers and children during online classes also follows a foreign language perspective, because as Nordquist (2020) says, EFL is taught where the target

language is not regularly spoken. Then, the NoM strategies implemented in this online modality play a crucial role in helping children to learn the language effectively, but also teachers to facilitate this process. The significance of this NoM strategies in the online EFL classes emerges because this particular modality represents the environment where children can receive enough input from the English language, but it is also the opportunity for both teacher and children to engage actively in language production and therefore, language learning.

However, the transition to this new teaching modality brought about some challenges that affect the dynamic between teachers and students, particularly in the context of negotiating meaning during classes. Online education can be helpful because it offers greater accessibility to digital sources and classes; however, it can sometimes affect the interactions that are common to occur in face-to-face classrooms. So, as educators and learners navigate in online EFL classes, it is important to strengthen the interactions to enhance the effectiveness of online teaching, as well as the essential significance of convention of meaning. Hence, it becomes necessary to employ NoM strategies in the EFL online classes, because language institutes complement the ELT but in a more effective way, differently from how SEP classes occur in face-to-face modality.

## **2.4 Multimodality**

As it has been explained in previous sections, the transition from traditional face-to-face teaching into online modality, has highlighted an important fact, which is that verbal communication is not the only method by which teachers and students can share information and engage in meaningful exchanges. As a result, it is essential to explore and implement different communication strategies that can effectively convey meaning and facilitate understanding in online interactions, this can be done through multimodality.

According to Kress (2003), multimodality consists of using different modes such as textual, aural, linguistic, spatial, and visual, for communication and meaning-making. Similarly, Kessler (2022) defines multimodality as the “individual’s use of different modes (i.e., channels of communication) with the purpose of conveying meaning”. This author also states that with the spread use of digital devices and technology, multimodality is now ingrained in many aspects of teacher’s daily work. Considering this, some multimodal modes that include the use of visual aids, interactive tools, and diverse forms of media may promote a more collaborative and engaging atmosphere in the online EFL classes that encourages active participation from both teachers and children . Therefore, integrating these multimodal communication approaches into online English classes is crucial for helping teachers and students navigate the complexities of online learning.

In addition, the variety of multimodal modes of communication may work in a similar manner to the NoM strategies, because these strategies can reveal instances where a message has been misinterpreted or misunderstood. So, the multimodal modes can also function as indicators of such misunderstanding. However, it is important to take into consideration that these multimodal modes of communication are not merely limited to highlighting misunderstandings. Actually, they can be effectively employed to convey comprehensible meaning as well. To exemplify, a few studies have been developed regarding the consideration of multimodality in combination of NoM strategies to convey meaning, which means that there is an urgent need to analyze the NoM strategies and multimodality that teachers and children employ to interact in online EFL classes.

To begin with, Canals (2020) conducted some research about the use of modality in the negotiation of meaning within online communication. Thus, this author encountered that some

multimodal modes, such as gestures, postures, digital and physical devices, contribute to the negotiation of meaning to convey meaning. Similarly, Norris and Pirini (2017) explain that children multimodally communicate and convey meaning, they shift their attention, and interact together in order to work on misunderstandings via video conferencing. So, the integration of different multimodal modes of communication, such as images, sounds, gestures, and text, allows communicators can create a better exchange of meaning that enhances understanding and encourages clarity.

## **2.5 Conversation Analysis**

Conversation Analysis (CA) is a methodological approach that investigates the structure and organization of talk-in-interaction. Initially developed within sociology by Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff, and Gail Jefferson in the 1960s and 1970s, CA emerged from ethnomethodology and the idea that social interaction is fundamentally organized and orderly (Liddicoat, 2022). In the context of language classrooms, particularly online EFL settings, Conversation Analysis offers valuable tools for analyzing how meaning is negotiated between teachers and learners.

For example, when learners display confusion or respond unexpectedly, teachers often engage in repair sequences—interactional practices designed to resolve misunderstandings and restore mutual comprehension. These repairs may be initiated by either the speaker or the listener and are essential for maintaining smooth interaction and co-constructing meaning (Wong & Waring, 2021). Furthermore, CA pays particular attention to adjacency pairs—such as question-answer or invitation-acceptance—that form the foundation of conversational structure. These pairs often exhibit a preference organization, meaning that certain responses (e.g., agreement) are socially favored over others (e.g., disagreement).

In classroom discourse, this is observable when teachers pose display questions and students provide expected answers, which are typically reinforced positively to support the overarching goal of learning (Liddicoat, 2022). Rather than considering language as a set of abstract rules, CA emphasizes how participants utilize language in real-time communication to accomplish social actions. Another important concept is turn-taking, which pertains to how speakers manage the flow of conversation by taking turns and yielding the floor. Online environments, especially those facilitated through video conferencing platforms, introduce new complexities to turn-taking, such as delays, audio lag, or the lack of visual cues like eye contact and body language. These factors influence how participants project the conclusion of their turn and determine appropriate moments to speak (Wong & Waring, 2021).

A fundamental insight of CA is that conversation is not a random or chaotic activity; rather, it is systematically organized by the participants themselves. Each turn at talk is influenced by what has been previously said and, in turn, influences subsequent exchanges. This phenomenon is described as the context-shaped and context-renewing nature of interaction (Heritage, 1984, as cited in Liddicoat, 2022). In other words, participants demonstrate their understanding of ongoing interaction through both verbal and non-verbal responses.

Importantly, CA treats multimodal resources—such as gaze, gesture, intonation, and pauses—as integral to meaning-making. This is particularly significant in online classes where video, audio, chat, and screen-sharing features contribute to interaction. Liddicoat (2022) emphasizes the role of embodied actions and multimodality, arguing that these non-verbal elements are essential for understanding how participants orient to each other and to the activity at hand. In the context of second language pedagogy, CA contributes to our understanding of interactional competence, which includes the ability to take turns appropriately, manage

sequences, repair misunderstandings, and use language to perform social actions (Wong & Waring, 2021). These skills are essential for learners to engage meaningfully in communication, and CA provides both a theoretical and practical framework for analyzing and developing them.

By examining the actual talk that occurs in online EFL classrooms, researchers can identify how teachers and students use interactional practices to co-construct understanding. This aligns with the aims of negotiation of meaning, where learners signal problems of understanding, and interlocutors work collaboratively to resolve them. As such, Conversation Analysis offers a powerful lens for exploring the interactive dimensions of language learning in digitally mediated environments.

## CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

As it has been discussed, English language teaching has evolved in the last few years due to a new online modality. This modality becomes more complex to understand the English teaching and learning process, so it needs to be analyzed in a holistic way. To do so, this research aims to explore the Negotiation of Meaning (NoM) strategies that occur within the English Language Teaching classroom and in interaction with other modes of communication. Moreover, this research also aims to understand how the combination of the analysis of NoM strategies and multimodal resources can promote more effective scenarios to convey comprehensible meaning in online EFL classes for children at the intermediate level.

This Chapter is organized into six sections. The first one explains and justifies the research methodology of this case study. The second section introduces the research context in where this project was carried out and explains the boundaries of this case study. The third section describes participants, as well as a justification for their selection. After that, the author Yin (2018) takes more relevance because his procedure when developing case study research served as the basis to support the decision making in the sections of instruments, data collection, and data analysis. In the end, these two last sections provide very detailed information accompanied by punctures that better illustrate the methodology process of this research.

### **3.1 Research methodology**

To begin with, this study adopts the methodology of a case study as the qualitative method to describe the particular situation from this research project and to explore it in depth. This methodological choice is based on the descriptions of case study research provided by Yin (2018) and Creswell (2021), as outlined below.

Firstly, Yin (2018) explains that a case study consists on an ‘empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth within its real world context’ (p.15). So, the phenomenon from this study is the use of NoM strategies and Multimodality during teacher and children’s interaction in online EFL classes. Additionally, this previous author complements his definition by explaining that a case study particularly occurs “when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2016, p.15), which means that the context is not just background but part of the story. Then, the use of NoM strategies and multimodal modes of communication are tied to the real-world setting of online modality by which the EFL classes are given. So, there are some elements such as the teaching environment, teaching materials, teaching tools and interactions that shape the ways to convey comprehensible meaning during online classes.

Secondly, Creswell (2021) similarly explains that case study involves the description an in-depth analysis of a case, which also takes into consideration the boundaries it contains. Then, this thesis project is bounded by three specific English intermediate-level groups from a language institute, which own similar features among themselves such as learners age, material, teaching method and modality. By focusing on a case with certain boundaries in order to examine teacher and children’s interactions occurring in the real-life context of online classes, as well as analyzing in depth how the Multimodal modes of communication support the NoM to convey meaning, this thesis project meets the considerations from both Yin and Creswell’s descriptions regarding case study. Therefore, this research design becomes appropriate for understanding the ways to facilitate meaning and mutual comprehension in online EFL classes for children at intermediate level.

### 3.2 Research context

Considering Yin's framework, the context plays a central role within the methodology of a case study because it is inseparable from the phenomenon of research. This author explains that a case study is employed "[.] especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2018, p.15); so, the context is part of what shapes and gives information to the case. Accordingly, this study explores the way teachers and children from a language institute employ NoM strategies alongside multimodal modes of communication during online EFL classes at the intermediate level, as well as identifies effective combinations of NoM strategies and multimodal communication.

The language institute is called "EnglishDotNet" and functions as an institution that offers a variety of courses for the public, but with the particularity that they are in an online modality. These courses are administered by certain departments within this school. For this study, I particularly worked with "Yupee", the administration that offers purely English courses for kids in this language institute. ~~Since its creation~~, it has focused on offering online classes for children ages 3 to 11. To contextualize, this language institute follows the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to organize the groups and locate students based on their language proficiency level.

Additionally, all the language courses in this institute are designed by following some of the principles from the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, which is 'grounded in the belief that language learning is most effective when students are actively engaged in meaningful communication' (Sanako Blog, 2024). Also, the classes are given and recorded through the 'Zoom' Platform, which allows for saving the recording in the cloud for learners to

repeat it in case it is necessary or if they could not attend to the class in a particular day. The following sections describe this in detail.

Based on Yin's framework for conducting a case study, another important step within the case study methodology is to properly 'bound the case'. This involves considering different contextual conditions that are significant to the phenomenon being studied. According to this author, 'bounding the case [...] will help to determine the scope of your data collection and, in particular, how you will distinguish data about the subject of your case study ("the phenomenon") from data external to the case ("the context")' (Yin, 2018, p.31). Thus, the boundaries of this case are set around the 'Yupee' department, particularly within three groups of English at the intermediate level for children. Accordingly, Yin's framework on case study design suggests the inclusion of detailed narrative of the context, so readers understand how it shapes and complements the case. So, the following section gives more details of the boundaries of this case.

### 3.3 Participants

The previous section presented the importance of 'bounding the case' when developing case study research. I will describe how the participants of this study form a bounded case. So, three groups of English at the intermediate level, which belong to the coordination of the 'Yupee' department, were the participants of this research project.

**Table 1. Participants of the study**

Group	Teacher	Students	Students' age
1	1	5	8-9 years old
2	1	6	7-10 years old
3	1	5	7-8 years old
<b>TOTAL</b>	3	16	7-10 years old

In summary, Table 1 describes the distribution of participants from these three groups. As perceived, the total number of participants is three English teachers and sixteen children, who are aged 7 to 10 years old at an intermediate proficiency level. For example, Group 1 is working with

Unit, Group 2 is working with Unit 4, and finally Group 3 is working with Unit 5. In addition, since these are courses in online modality, every participant belongs to a different part of the Mexican Republic, and none of them know each other in real life. So, there is no more interaction than the one inside the virtual classroom.

To begin with, a specific material is used for the language classes in this department from the school. That is, a digital book is provided to the teachers, and it contains videos, games, audio activities, worksheets, and the lessons, but more interactively and attractively. Later, 'Yupee' coordinators design PowerPoint presentation for the teachers to use as a manner of organizing the rhythm of the courses, to make sure all courses finish as programmed.

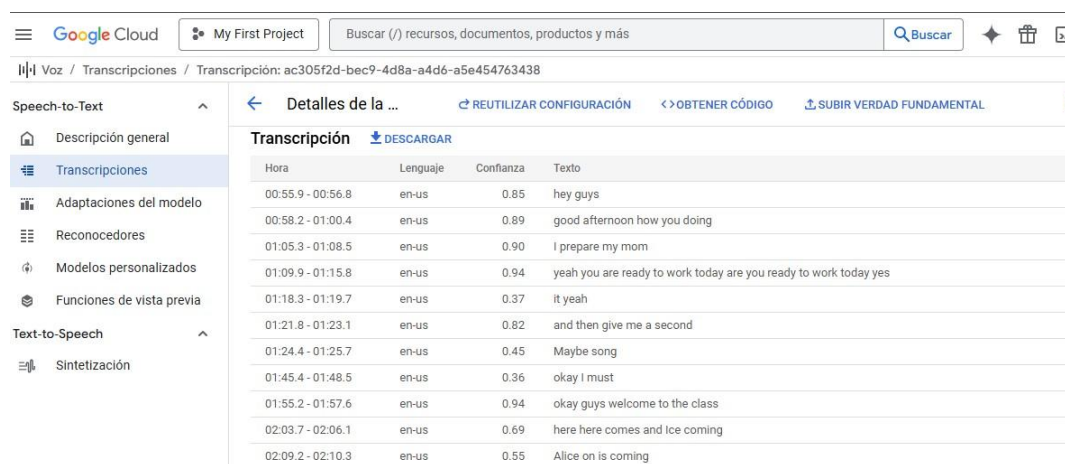
In addition, children are provided with a book that contains the exact information from the PowerPoint presentations, and this helps learners not to get lost during the class. So, the digital book is only useful for playing multimedia and audio sources. Later, the classes from these three participants followed the CLT method. Moreover, one of the purposes of this thesis project is to explore how NoM strategies are employed during online EFL classes; and according to the Interaction Hypothesis from Long (1996), learners should possess an intermediate level of the target language, so they have the necessary information to change their speech, vocabulary, or sentences to convey meaning. That is the justification of the participants' selection, as they also represent only a percentage of all the courses, not only from Yupee but the complete language institutes. By doing so, the interaction between the participants of this study within the online EFL context can be observed in order to explore the NoM strategies they use, and the usefulness of using multimodality to convey meaning.

### 3.4 Data collection

In the previous section, some elements of the methodology have been explained, accompanied by a deep description of the context of this study. All previous information served as the foundation to organize what is coming now, the compilation of real-life evidence. Yin (2018) recognizes four principles of data collection in case study, this author considers they ‘[...] can help to deal with the problems of establishing the construct validity and reliability of the evidence’ (Yin, 2018. p. 126). Each of these principles is integrated in this study and explained as follows.

#### 3.4.1 Principle 1: Multiple sources of evidence

This principle was followed by collecting one video recording of an online class from each group participating in this research, resulting in a total of three video-recordings of almost sixty minutes each.



The screenshot shows the Google Cloud interface for a transcription. The main content is a table titled 'Transcripción' with the following data:

Hora	Lenguaje	Confianza	Texto
00:55.9 - 00:56.8	en-us	0.85	hey guys
00:58.2 - 01:00.4	en-us	0.89	good afternoon how you doing
01:05.3 - 01:08.5	en-us	0.90	i prepare my mom
01:09.9 - 01:15.8	en-us	0.94	yeah you are ready to work today are you ready to work today yes
01:18.3 - 01:19.7	en-us	0.37	it yeah
01:21.8 - 01:23.1	en-us	0.82	and then give me a second
01:24.4 - 01:25.7	en-us	0.45	Maybe song
01:45.4 - 01:48.5	en-us	0.36	okay i must
01:55.2 - 01:57.6	en-us	0.94	okay guys welcome to the class
02:03.7 - 02:06.1	en-us	0.69	here here comes and ice coming
02:09.2 - 02:10.3	en-us	0.55	Alice on is coming

Figure 1 Example of Instrument \_ Transcription Google Cloud

Moreover, these recordings were transcribed and in order to obtain a more refined and organized version, two different transcriptions were done, one by using Google Cloud (see Figure 1) and another one by using Pinpoint tool. These apps were selected due to the easy access they offer, as well as the precision they provide with their transcriptions. To ensure the validity of the transcriptions, both automated versions were compared against the original audio recording, and

final corrections were made manually. This allowed to organize the refined transcription based on the results that Google Cloud and Pinpoint offered.

### **3.4.2 Principle 2: Create a case study database.**

This standard was followed when creating a database with the transcriptions from both Google Cloud and Pinpoint tools, and then a new final transcription with the refinement of both and the comparison with the original audio recording. So, both of these previous research sources were employed to have a better written conception from the video-recordings of the English online classes, as well as to accelerate the transcription process. In addition, video recordings served to create a database that is part of a multimodal interaction analysis (which is explained in the next section of this chapter). According to Yin (2018), ‘the creation of a database markedly increases the reliability of your entire case study’ (p. 131), and the data collection from this thesis project results consistent with this author’s claim.

### **3.4.3 Principle 3: Maintain a chain of evidence.**

This was ensured by taking into consideration the case study protocol and linking database, analysis, results, and conclusions to the research questions of the study. Furthermore, the implementation of both sources to do the transcription also ensures transparency in the data, which allows readers to check the veracity of the data being analyzed. Consequently, the implementation of the three recordings and the two different versions of transcriptions in order to arise a refined version allows the triangulation of data in this study. “Using multiple sources of evidence permits going beyond appreciating the breadth of a case study’s scope. You also will have an opportunity to purpose a critical methodological practice – to develop converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 2018, p. 127).

In addition, the ethical considerations of respecting the findings from the data become significant to thrust on the transcription and results. In that way, a chain of evidence can be accomplished by any external person who is interested in verifying the credibility of the evidence by deeply analyzing the case study database, results, and answers to the research questions from this study.

#### **3.4.4 Principle 4: Exercise care when using data from social media sources.**

This data collection process adhered to Yin's (2018) case study protocol procedure to ensure the reliability and validity of the evidence. This particular precept was followed by providing and respecting the consent format. All the information obtained from the video recordings, the transcriptions, the Zoom platform, Google Clouds, and Pinpoint was carefully manipulated and used only for this study. So, to make this process ethical, a message was personally sent to the principal of the language institute to explain the purpose of the study and formally request permission to access the necessary data. Once the necessary authorization was approved, a virtual session was programmed to better explain this research project and provide a consent form with the necessary information and ethical considerations of the study (see Appendix I).

Following this, the principal of EnglishDotNet presented me a short list of candidates that she had considered based on her own interests to be possible participants of my research. This principal told me that I was free to contact only those teachers; once her intervention was over, she could not make extra for me. So, those selected teachers were contacted privately by WhatsApp to explain this study (see Figure 2), share the consent form and request their cooperation in providing the video recording of any of their classes that followed these conditions: a class from their intermediate level course in Yupee, a content class, a class given in

the previous week they were invited to participate in this research, and finally the link of the recording with the option to be downloaded.

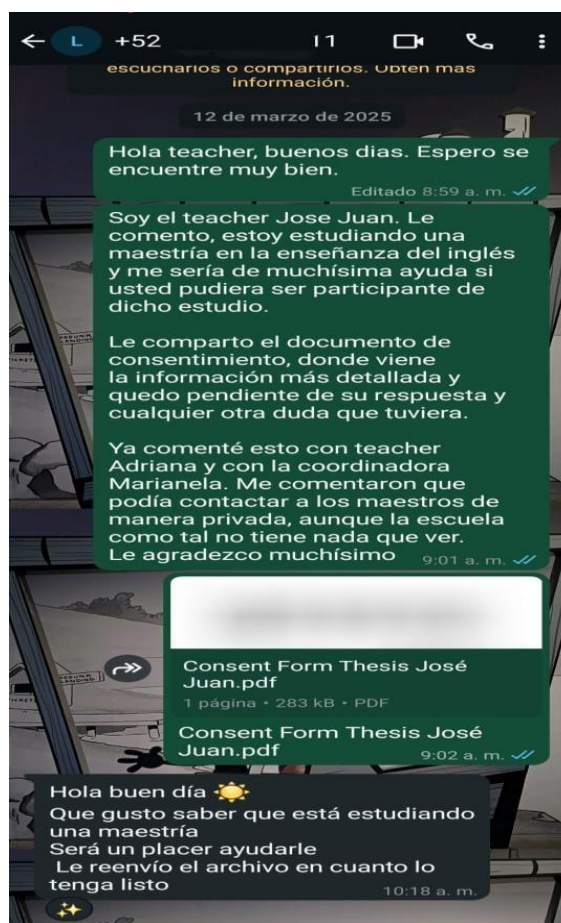


Figure 2 Individual approach to collect data \_ teachers

In addition, these teachers were informed of the importance of their contribution to the research, and addressed any concerns they might have. Throughout this process, a clear and respectful communication was maintained, maintaining the confidentiality and voluntary nature of their involvement in the study. This approach was designed to gather authentic data while adhering to ethical research standards. Thus, the protection and confidentiality of participants' self-information, as well as any other data that is not necessary for the study, ensure the

authenticity and credibility of this study, and demonstrate a compromise with the caution of data in social media sources.

Moreover, Yin (2018) explains that part of the procedure to collect data is to identify the different sources of evidence that will be used in research. This author claims that ‘a good case study will therefore want to rely on as many sources as possible’ (Yin, 2018, p. 113). Thus, after teachers agreed on participating in this research project, the main source of evidence collected were the video recordings of the online EFL classes. All the participants shared their evidence through a link to their Zoom Cloud, where these video recordings were saved. Likewise, these participants shared some geographical information from their course, such as the number of students in the class, their ages, and the Unit they were working with, according to their syllabus.

To sum up, the data collection process in this study was carefully planned and applied by following the methodological proposal from Yin (2018) regarding case study. In addition, the attachment to the four principles from this author when collecting data gives a sense of security and confidence to the concepts of triangulation, validity, and reliability from the obtained information in this study. Thus, the aim to explore how teachers and children employ NoM strategies alongside multimodal modes of communication during online EFL classes seems more achievable.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

This last section of the methodology chapter is still aligned with Yin’s (2018) proposal when developing a case study. For the analysis of data, this author suggests the use of an analytical strategy because it links the findings from the case study to other significant concepts of interest. Then, these concepts are useful to discover an adequate manner to analyze the data.

According to Yin (2018), ‘the best preparation for conducting case study analysis is to have a general analytic strategy’ (p. 174). Besides the variety of strategies that Yin (2018) proposes, the data analysis of this thesis project was based on theoretical propositions, which is a kind of analytical strategy that particularly considered the Interaction Hypothesis as the first framework of this study. There, the concept of NoM strategies emerged and was located in the specific context of the case in EnglishDotNet.

Similarly, the analytical strategy of case description was used as the strategy to give detailed information on the multimodal modes of communication that emerged in the real-life context of online EFL classes. Thus, the combination of both strategies, the theoretical proposition and the case description, enables the complete analysis that answers the research questions of this research project, which focus on exploring the NoM strategies and multimodal modes of communication that interact within teacher and children’s interaction in online modality.

Moreover, after collecting the three videos, the process illustrated in Figure 3 was followed. First, we transcribed the videos using Google Cloud and Pinpoint. Later, a “template of analysis” was designed to systematically arrange the data using the following theoretical models: Conversation Analysis (CA) from Liddicoat (2022) and Multimodal Interaction Analysis (MIA) from Norris (2004).

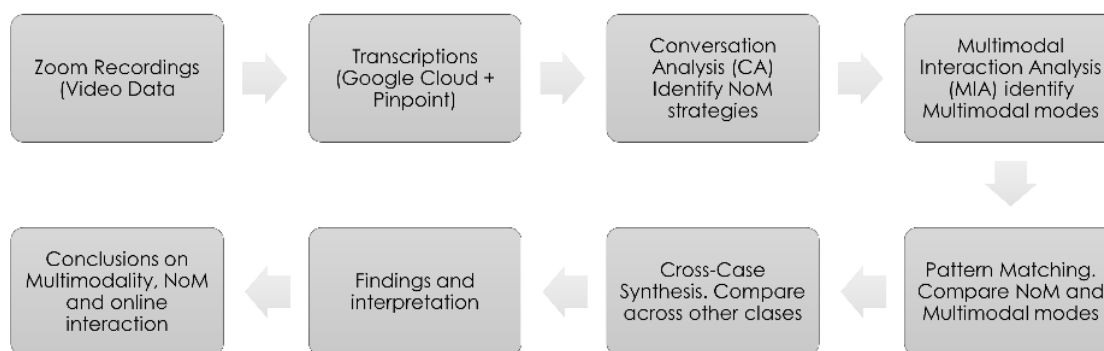


Figure 3 Data collection process

### 3.5.1 Conversation Analysis of a class

This process facilitated the identification and analysis of NoM strategies in teacherstudent interactions, thereby addressing the first research question. After the transcriptions of the video-recording sessions were completed, a template of analysis was created. This template considers the features of the following theoretical frameworks. To begin with, the first analysis of this study employed the Conversation Analysis framework proposed by Liddicoat (2022), along with his proposed model of transcription. This approach was selected to explore the NoM strategies used in teacher and children’s interactions.

As perceived in Figure 4, the Conversation Analysis in every transcription consisted on the registration of a variety of elements such as silence period, raising intonation, quicker and slowed speech, among other communication features by following the transcription key proposed by Liddicoat (2022). Secondly, the NoM strategies within the online classes were identified in the template of analysis, then the corresponding name of each strategy was registered in a specific column next to every NoM strategy.

Template of			
Conversation analysis			
PERSON	TIME	TRANSCRIPTION	NoM STRATEGIES
T	[16:15]	Nice. \$That's a good activity\$ hh (.) Thanks Now Anna (.) is your turn You're going to ask to Allison please. (.)	
S	16:27	Alison (.) what are you going to do on Friday . (0.9)	
T	16:47	Allison? (Qs)	Confirm. checks
S	[16:50]	It's going to:: get I'm going to (.) the:: Uhm :: (0.4) foot (0.5)	
T	17:09	What are you gonna do? Sorry ? (Qs) I'm going to	Clarific. Request
S	[17:11]	I'm going to - I'm going to go to fo:: foot (0.7) a sleep To sleep? (Qs) You're going to sleep. (Qs) Okay. Alison so	
T	[17:30]	now you're going to ask to Chandler . (0.6)	Confirm. checks
T	[17:43]	I don't know who's Chandler (Qs) but there is a Chandler. (0.5)	
S	17:52	Chandler (0.4)	
T	07:56	Okay? (Qs)	
S	[17:58]	Um <What are you going to do o::n eh (0.3) Sunday.> (0.4) It's going to be cloudy ? (Qs) I'm going to go to the:: park. (0.5)	
S	[18:12]	Okay very good . (.) Now you:: are going to ask to someone (0.8)	Confirm. checks
T	[18:24]		
S	[18:38]	Aldo (.) what are you going to do on Saturday . (0.4)	Compreh. Checks
S	[18:48]	Saturday ? (0.4)	(Repetition)

Figure 4 Example of Conversation Analysis \_ NoM strategies

### 3.5.2 Multimodal Interaction Analysis of a class

The Multimodal Interaction Analysis (MIA) was used to examine various multimodal resources and explore their contribution to meaning-making, addressing the second research question.. This MIA is grounded in Norris' (2004) proposal and the purpose of implementing this framework was to identify if different multimodal modes of communication contributed to conveying comprehensible meaning.

The decision to use Norris' (2004) multimodal framework aimed to provide comprehensive lens through which to interpret the data In this study, the video recordings of the online EFL classes were examined with the sound off to recognize multimodal forms of communication—like gestures, facial expressions, screen sharing, actions, and visual artifacts. These modes were outlined, classified, and timestamped in the template of analysis.




C		F		G		H	
Template of Analysis							
Multimodal (inter)action analysis						Image	
TIME	PERSON	NOTES				Image	
[16:15]	T	T looks smiling while speaking					
16:27							
16:47							
[16:50]							
17:09							
[17:11]							
[17:30]							
[17:43]							
17:52							
07:56							
[17:58]							
[18:12]	S	A girl appears speaking in front of the camera and checking her notes					
[18:24]							
[18:38]	S	A girl appears speaking in front of the camera and checking her notes					
[18:48]							
18:53							

Figure 5 Example Multimodal Interaction Analysis \_ Modes of Communication

As it can be observed in Figure 5, the video recording of the online EFL classes was analyzed with the sound off with the aim of distinguishing the variety of multimodal modes of communication, such as gestures, facial expressions, screen sharing, movements, pictures, visual artifacts, among others, that occurred along the video recording of every class. So, this description was described and categorized in the template of analysis by specifying the correct time these modes of communication emerged during the classes.

### 3.5.3 Pattern Matching Technique of a class

After the CA and MIA were complete, we followed Yin's (2018) proposal of an analytic strategy called "pattern matching technique" to distinguish whether the NoM and Multimodal modes were employed at the same or similar times. This helped to determine whether NoM strategies and multimodal resources happen at the same time or in a closely timed manner. Then, a selection of focal interactions for detailed analysis was considered by comparing the similarities in time that both NoM strategies and multimodal modes of communication occurred in the online

English class. So, these comparisons were used to emphasize patterns and connections between verbal and multimodal interactions within the online classes.

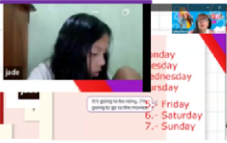
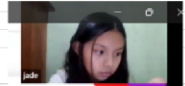

Template of Analysis					
Conversation analysis		Multimodal (Inter)action analysis		Image	
E	TRANSCRIPTION	NoM STRATEGIES	PERSON	NOTES	
	Nice. \$That's a good activity\$ hh (.) Thanks Now Anna (.) is i) your turn You're going to ask to Allison please. (.)		T	T looks smiling while speaking	
:27	Allison (.) what are you going to do on Friday. (0.9)				
:47	Allison? (Qs)	Confirm. checks			
i)	It's going to: get I'm going to (.) the: Uhm = (0.4) foot (0.5)				
:09	What are you gonna do? Sorry? (Qs) I'm going to j) I'm going to - I'm going to go to fo: foot (0.7) a sleep	Clarific. Request			
	To sleep? (Qs) You're going to sleep. (Qs) Okay. Alison so i) now you're going to ask to Chandler. (0.6)	Confirm. checks			
	I don't know who's Chandler (Qs) but there is a Chandler. i) (0.5)				
:52	Chandler (0.4)				
:56	Okay? (Qs)				
i)	Um <What are you going to do o:n eh (0.3) Sunday-> (0.4)				
	It's going to be cloudy? (Qs) I'm going to go to the: park. j) (0.5)	Confirm. checks	S	A girl appears speaking in front of the camera and checking her notes	
	Okay very good. (.) Now you: are going to ask to someone i) (0.8)				
i)	Aldo (.) what are you going to do on Saturday. (0.4)	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)	S	A girl appears speaking in front of the camera and checking her notes	
i)	Saturday? (0.4)				
:53	Saturday. <i>Cómo se dice me quedo en casa tranquilo. Hh (.)</i>				

Figure 6 Example Matching of CA and MIA analyses

In Figure 6, the analysis template features an image that captures the instance when NoM strategies and multimodal modes intersect to express meaning. As it can be perceived in this picture, a corresponding section in the template of analysis was filled with a picture that represented the moment that both NoM strategies and multimodal modes occurred at the same time in the English class to convey meaning. Lastly, a layer of verbal communication onto the multimodal analysis was observed in order to understand meaning-making holistically and therefore to interpret the complete data from the study.

Thus, this process matches with Yin's claim that 'one of the most desirable techniques is to use a pattern-matching logic [...] compares an empirical-based pattern[...] with a predicted one' (Yin, 2018, p. 175). In this case, the predicted pattern (resulting from the assumption that multimodality effectively supports NoM strategies) was tested against the evident empirical pattern from video recordings and transcriptions. These previous comparison results are useful to

recognize whether a theoretical proposition, or the hypothesis of what could have occurred, is true or not.

After the pattern matching of both the CA and MIA, the last technique from Yin (2018) to analyze the case study was “Cross-Case Logic”. This is an important analytic technique because it has to do with the examination of more than just one participant, as in this case, where three groups were analyzed. This consisted of the examination of the analysis from the three distinct groups, which allowed us to identify both similarities and differences between lessons. Thus, this not only enriches the case study but also allows a comparison between the different participants where similarities and differences can be distinguished regarding the use of NoM and multimodality in online EFL classes. This expands the data and therefore it strengthens the validity of the findings and the analysis.

To sum up, this research examined three online EFL classes for intermediate-level children through video recordings. Conversation Analysis (CA) analyzed NoM strategies, while Multimodal Interaction Analysis (MIA) explored gestures, facial expressions, and visual elements. Pattern matching and cross-case analyses connected verbal and multimodal exchanges, offering a systematic, triangulated approach to address the research inquiries. The next section discusses the findings of this research and provides examples of the data collected.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the study's findings obtained from both the Conversation Analysis (CA) based on Liddicoat (2022) and the Multimodal Interaction Analysis (MIA) based on Norris (2004). Considering that this thesis project follows the methodology framework from Yin (2018) about doing a case study, the following chapter considers the data analysis suggested by this author. The following lines integrate the findings from the data analysis process and match them with relevant literature previously presented in order to answer the research questions from this study.

First, information regarding the NoM strategies that are presented in online teacher and children's interaction is considered. Second, an analysis of the multimodal modes of communication that emerge during English online classes is explained. Third, a panorama regarding the effectiveness of integrating NoM strategies and multimodal modes of communication to facilitate comprehensible meaning in online EFL for children is explained.

### **4.1 Negotiation of Meaning strategies in online teaching**

After conducting the Conversation Analysis (CA) from Liddicoat (2022), the three most common Negotiation of Meaning (NoM) strategies during the teacher and children's interaction in online EFL classes are clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks, which are explained as follows.

#### *4.1.1 Questions + confirmation checks*

In this section, I will describe a phenomenon perceived during the NoM in teacher and children's interaction. It was noticed that the confirmation checks were the most common NoM strategies used among students, because they used them to verify whether their answers during their participation in class were correct. To exemplify, an extract from the CA of a class is

presented in Example 1. Here, the interaction between a teacher and a student in an online EFL class is represented.

T	(00:50:50)	What's his name? (Qs)	
S	(00:50:53)	Pablo ? (Qs)	confirm. Checks
T	(00:50:54)	Pablo (.) pablo had a camera. (.) so let me write Pablo °and it's a little bit bigger° (.) °Pablo had a camera° <Pablo had a camera> (.) oka::y now number three Alondra plea::se <u>who</u> was (.) <u>Who</u> was sca::red (.) can you please read ? (Qs)	

*Example 1 Confirmation check employed by a student*

As part of the class, the group is checking the answers from an activity, so the teacher asks the question “*what’s his name?*” to a child, and she responds but raising intonation (*Pablo?*) as if it were a question, but without following the same structure . This rise in intonation is represented with a question mark (?) and is based on the Transcription key from Liddicoat (2022). When analyzing this rise in intonation, it can be inferred that it refers to a confirmation check strategy because the student is unsure that his answer is correct, so he negotiates its meaning by raising the intonation of his response.

Thus, when the student makes this NoM strategy, the teacher responds and actually confirms that the student’s answer (*Pablo*) was correct. Additionally, it can be observed in Example 1 that the teacher not only confirms that the answer is correct but also complements it with extra information. This makes the student better understand and realize that her answer was correct.

T	(00:08:37)	okay but have dry:: and rai::ny sea::son so okay ? (Qs) hot (.) okay POLAR temperate or tropical? (Qs)	
S	(00:08:47)	tropical? (Qs)	confirm. Checks
T	(00:08:48)	uh-huh\$ °tropical okay tropical° o::kay please the next one (.) eh <u>Danna</u> uhum <u>climates</u> have? (Qs)	

*Example 2 Confirmation check employed by a student*

Observe now Example 2, where the group is working with the topic of weather. In this online EFL class, the teacher is filling in the blanks of some sentences related to a lecture. So, the teacher reads a sentence and asks a question for a student to give her the correct response

(*POLAR temperate or tropical?*). Then, a child answers, but raising the intonation at the end (*tropical?*), and the teacher repeats the same word twice. By doing so, the teacher confirms that the student's answer, provided through a NoM strategy, is correct.

As perceived in both situations from Example 1 and Example 2, there is a similarity on how teachers and children convey meaning through NoM strategies. First, the teacher makes a question to a child in class. Secondly, this student answers but with an intonation of a question. This raise in the intonation manifests the presence of confirmation check as a NoM strategy, employed by students among the online EFL classes. Finally, the teacher repeats the student's answer and complements it with more context or extra information.

This teacher's response demonstrates to the child that her answer was correct and therefore, it confirms that the NoM strategy employed by this student worked successfully. So, this pattern of "question + confirmation checks" matches with the view from Hartono and Ihsan (2017), which explains that this NoM strategy often involves repetition and is one of the most common strategies to negotiate meaning.

#### *4.1.2 Muted moments + clarification request.*

Another significant finding from the CA was that children used to mute after some of the questions that teachers asked. So, in the following lines, I explain how this fact could be considered as a clarification request strategy. To illustrate, Example 3 presents an extract from the class where the group is working with the topic of weather and climate zones.

T	(00:08:45)	uh-huh\$ *tropical okay tropical* o:kay please the next one (.) eh <u>Danna</u> uhum <u>climates</u> have? (Qs)	
S	(00:08:50)	climates have (0.4) percent? (Qs)	clarification request confirm. Checks
T	(00:09:00)	<u>aha</u> for Seasons ? uh-huh (.) or polar temperate ? or tropical. (Qs)	
S	(00:09:05)	Uhm (0.6)	clarific. Request
T	(00:09:11)	<u>Four Seasons</u> we have the <u>Four Seasons</u>	
S	(00:09:16)	mmm polar?	confirm. Checks
T	(00:09:19)	polar? (Qs) where the- or where the (.) the polar bears <u>live</u> ? (Qs) s- 'ah no° T- the <u>first season</u> remember is spring summer (.) eh fall autumn, 'well* after <u>autumn</u> winter	confirm. Checks
S	(00:09:36)	Temporal ? (Qs)	confirm. Checks
T	(00:09:37)	<u>temperate</u> okay? <temperate temperate> <u>okay guys</u> we say one more time <u>temperate</u> (.) <u>temperate</u>	

*Example 3 Muted moments and clarification request*

As perceived in this example, the teacher asks a question to the child (*Danna uhum climates have? (Qs)*) and she responds (*climates have (0.4) percent? (Qs)*) but has a period of silence, which is represented by the Transcription key from Liddicoat (2022) with brackets (0.4). This can be considered a clarification request strategy because the child did not understand the teacher's question. So she takes some seconds to be able to respond, answering with a confirmation check, actually (*percent? (Qs)*). So, the teacher reformulates the question, indicating the child's response was incorrect and confirming there was a misunderstanding.

After teacher asks again (*aha for Seasons ? uh-huh (.) or polar temperate ? or tropical. (Qs)*), the student exclaims an expression of doubt (*Uhm*) and remains quiet for several seconds (0.6). One more time, this muted moment indicates a misunderstanding on what the question refers to and the urge for a clarification request. Thus, it can be perceived in the Example 3 hoy the teacher and the child get immersed in a play where both employ confirmation checks to verify they have correctly understood each other. In the end, the student gives an answer with the raise in the intonation (*Temporal ? (Qs)*) and the teacher confirms the answer is finally correct (*temperate okay? <temperate temperate>*).

Thus, this previous example demonstrates how the muted moments within the online EFL classes were used as a NoM strategy to clarify meaning. This aligns with Pica's (1987) and García and Lazaro's (2015) conception that clarification requests are used to seek clarification of a preceding utterance. Similarly, Hartono (2017) considers these conversational modifications helpful to achieve comprehensible meaning. Finally, the employment of clarification request strategies in online EFL classes serves as an opportunity that teachers to modify their input when interacting with students, especially children. This validates the aim of the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) to avoid misunderstanding and convey comprehensible meaning.

#### 4.1.3 Repetition as comprehension check

This section discusses another form of NoM that was more evident in teacher's interventions. It was observed that during the teacher and students' interaction, the comprehension checks were the main NoM strategies used by teachers, because these participants employed them as a manner to verify that their instructions, speech, or suggestions were understood. In addition, one of these comprehension checks was represented by teachers through repetition of some words or phrases.

B (Ss)	23:53	[What - What are you go (.) going to - What are you going to the to the <u>Monday</u> ?] ( )	
T	[24:06]	On Monday ? (.) What are you going to do on Monday ?	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)
B	[24:08]	[Elias .][OF NEXT WEEK]	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)
S	[24:10]	Next week .	
B	[24:12]	[Yeah <u>what</u> are you going to do on <u>Monday</u> ? ] [¿ <u>Cómo</u> se dice::]	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)
S	[24:15]	<u>Cómo</u> se dice deprimido . (0.3)	
T	[24:20]	depressed? (Qs) (.)	Clarific. Request
S	[24:22]	depressed but	
T	[24:24]	pero - eh it's not about your <u>feeling</u> it's about <u>what</u> are you gonna do::	
S	[24:29]	Ahh:: <u>qué</u> vamos a hacer? (Qs) (.)	Confirm. checks
T	[24:32]	I'm going to. (.) <Yes> ? hh	

Example 4 NoM strategy by a teacher

The comprehension check of repetition is presented in Example 4, which shows the extract of a conversation in class, where the group is working with the days of the week and the grammar topic of *be going to*. As part of an activity, every student asks a question to another classmate, but there is a student who has some problems asking the question, so the teacher helps him by providing an example of how to construct it. So, it can be observed that two students are speaking at the same time, one only says (*What,*) but it was probably because he got confused, and another classmate tries to say his question (*What are you go (.) going to - What are you going to the to the Monday?*) but with some difficulties.

For example, this student makes a pause because he realizes his speech is incorrect and automatically corrects it (*go(.) going to*), then makes the complete question again, but it is incorrect one more time (*going to - What are you going to the to the Monday?*). So, the teacher repeats the last part of student's speech to verify that Monday is the day the student chose. After that, the teacher repeats the question but with the correct grammar (*On Monday ? (.) What are you going to do on Monday?*).

Unfortunately, it can be observed that this NoM strategy did not succeed at the beginning. However, Example 4 shows how the teacher actually repeated the same question four times until the student comprehended what he was supposed to answer. This is evident due to the expression of excitement from the student when he says "*Ahh:: qué vamos a hacer? (Qs) (.)*". As perceived with the transcription key from the CA, the student extends his speech, represented with (*Ahh::*) and raises his intonation by asking a question to the teacher to verify he has finally understood. So, the teacher confirms this with the expression "*<Yes>*".

T	(00:47:00)	think of your family read and answer who talks quietly tell me Leilani who talks quietly (Qs) (.) who speaks quietly in your house (.) in your family . (Qs) (0.6)	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)
S	(00:47:30)	i::t	
T	(00:47:34)	<who talks quietly> (.) in your family . (Qs)	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)

Example 5 NoM strategy by a teacher

Another feature observed in the use of repetition among confirmation check strategies in online EFL classes is that teachers tend to modify the rhythm and intonation when repeating their own utterances. This can be perceived in Example 5, where the teacher asks a question (*who talks quietly (Qs)*) without the rise in intonation in the last word, as a common question per se. Then, she repeats the question (*who speaks quietly in your house (.)*) but with the intonation of an affirmative sentence, and finishes by asking again but with a falling intonation (*in your family . (Qs)*) represented in the CA with a dot (.) in the Transcription key from Liddicoat (2022).

Later, it can be perceived that after the student is not able to answer, the teacher repeats the question (*<who talks quietly> (.) in your family.(Qs)*) but now with a slowed speech, represented with the signs (<>). Additionally, this question is concluded similarly to what the teacher did before the student's intervention, using a falling intonation in her question (*in your family.(Qs)*). So, as this example demonstrates, teacher's employ repetition but with a different intonation. This is a strategy that Hartono (2017) considers as the defining element of confirmation checks.

#### *4.1.4 Exemplification as comprehension check*

The following lines explain another manner that teachers employed comprehension checks to interact with children in online EFL classes, which was through the exemplification of some concepts or situations to the students. To exemplify, Example 6 contains an extended extract from the previous example class where the group is learning some adverbs.

T	(00:47:00)	think of your family read and answer who talks quietly tell me Leilani who talks quietly (Qs) (.) who speaks quietly in your house (.) in your family . (Qs) (0.6)	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)
S	(00:47:30)	i::t	
T	(00:47:34)	<who talks quietly> (.) in your family . (Qs)	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)
S	(00:47:45)	(Uncomprehensible noise)	
T	(00:47:45)	Sorry? (.) your <u>mom</u> your <u>dad</u> your <u>uncle</u> your <u>grandma</u> your <u>sister</u> your <u>brother</u> who ? (Qs) (.) talks quietly talks quietly	Compreh. Checks Exemplifying
S	(00:47:59)	My mom ? (Qs)	confirm. Checks
T	(00:48:01)	Your mom. ok Now (.) tell me (.) Leo(.) who eats loudly in your family? (Qs)	

*Example 6 NoM strategy by a teacher*

Here, it can be perceived how the teacher is repeating a question (*who talks quietly (Qs) (.) who speaks quietly in your house (.) in your family . (Qs) (0.6)*), but the seconds that the student took to speak (*0.6*) and her ambiguous answer (*i::t*) may represent that she did not understand the question, so the teacher repeats the question again (*<who talks quietly> (.) in your family.(Qs)*), but the student does not answer successfully.

Due to the misunderstanding in the message that the child is still manifesting, the teacher resorts to exemplifying the possible answers the student may give. As perceived in Example 6, the teacher provides some possible responses (*your mom your dad your uncle your grandma your sister your brother*). After the teacher does this strategy to verify the student comprehended what the question means, she asks her again (*who ? (Qs) (.) talks quietly talks quietly*). Employing this strategy supports the understanding of the student and provides an answer with a confirmation check (*My mom ? (Qs)*), which is corroborated by the teacher.

As it can be observed in previous examples, the strategy of comprehension checks was commonly employed by teacher when giving long instructions or asking confusing questions for students' level. However, this strategy was employed mostly through repetition and exemplification of the unclear message. This NoM strategy of comprehension checks results consistent with Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, where participants regularly modify their

talk to avoid breakdowns, as it occurred when teachers repeated the questions but with some variations to better explain it.

Moreover, the teacher's use of comprehension checks was frequently followed by periods of silence, suggesting that teachers used them as a mechanism to help students understand what teachers meant and prevent other interactional breakdowns. This previous information is related to Pica's categorization of negotiation elements, such as the signals (request for clarification) and responses (modification to clarify misunderstanding).

#### *4.1.5 Misleading NoM strategies*

An important fact to mention is that not all the repetitions or exemplifications done by teachers could be considered strategies of comprehension checks. This section presents how some words or phrases are presented in the online EFL classes but function merely as filler words, which may be part of teacher's speaking style. Proof of this is the situation presented in Example 7, which presents an extract from an explanation of the teacher in the English class regarding a spelling bee practice.

T	(00:27:05)	o::kay well so <u>now</u> we're going to <u>start with</u> (.) our practice for the spelling bee , okay so let me share my screen with you guys? (Qs) I'm <u>pay attention</u> because we are going to work <u>in teams</u> and you:: okay <u>accept</u> the invitations ready ? (Qs) okay can you see my screen guys? (Qs)	
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*Example 7 Repetition but not NoM strategy*

As perceived in this example, when the teacher is giving some instructions in regard to an activity in the class, she includes the repetition of the word “Ok” several times. The fact of repeating a word among teacher's speech can be perceived as a way to get student's attention or as a filler word that the teacher already owns in her teaching style. Thus, repeating a word several times in the teaching practice is not necessarily considered as a NoM strategy of confirmation

check. This information seems similar to what Rahmah et. al. (2020) consider as triggers and self-modification responses, which are part of natural speech in a real-life context of a class, as occurred in the online modality.

To sum up, the most straightforward strategy for teachers was comprehension checks, mainly through repetition and exemplification to ensure that meaning was understood, especially after moments of hesitation or doubt. However, not all repetitions were identified as NoM strategies, as some of them were merely filler words as part of verbal habits. In the case of students, confirmation checks were the most common NoM strategy employed by them. A crucial feature was the use of intonation and the changes in rhythm while repeating phrases, which supports Hartono's (2017) idea that prosody contributes to confirmation checks. These findings support Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis and Pica's negotiation perspective, showing that confirmation and comprehension checks prevent communication breakdowns, while multimodal modes of communication, such as intonation, enhance the effectiveness of NoM strategies.

## **4.2 Multimodal resources in online EFL classes**

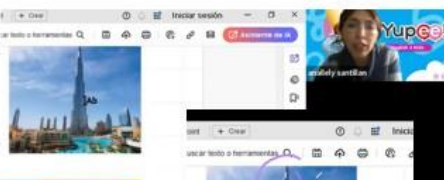

After conducting the Multimodal Interaction Analysis (MIA) from Norris (2004), findings demonstrate that the most frequent multimodal modes of communication during the teacher and children's interaction in online EFL classes were visuals resources, written text and body movements, which are explained as follows.

### *4.2.1 Visual resources*

Kress (2003) states that creating meaning incorporates various channels, including images, colors, and layouts, that together influence comprehension. Findings from this thesis project showed that power point presentations, pictures and digital illustrations were the

multimodal modes with the highest presence in the online EFL classes for children. So in this section I will explain how visuals are perceived as part of teacher and children's interaction.

To illustrate, Example 8 contains an extract from a class where the group is learning the topic of weather. As part of the class activities, the teacher uses the power point presentation provided by the coordination of the language institute which contains the information of the class. These presentations use some extracts of a digital book, which is supported with pictures related to the topic. As part of this class, both teacher and the students are working with a reading activity, which talks about the weather in Arabic desert. In addition, this reading is accompanied by the picture of a desert, a man wearing the traditional white clothes from that country, and a picture of a skyscraper.

Multimodal (inter)action analysis	Image
NOTES	
TEACHER SPEAKS	
STUDENT APPEARS TO BE SPEAKING/READING, YET HIS STARE IS DOWNWARDS. ANOTHER STUDENT PEEKS BUT SAYS NOTHING.	
TEACHER POPS UP AND TALKS AT (21:20) STUDENTS POPS UP BUT DOESN'T DO ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR, TEACHER CONTINUES, A FROWN FORMS IN HER FACE, ANOTHER STUDENT JUST STARES.	
TEACHER SPEAKS AS SHE SIGNALS THE IMAGE OF A TOWER, HER FROWN BECOMES MORE VISIBLE	
STUDENT SPEAKS, NO LIP MOVEMENT SEEN. TEACHER CIRCLES THE TOWER, STILL WITH A FROWN ON HER FACE, ANOTHER STUDENT POPS UP BUT MOVES AWAY FROM CAMERA.	

*Example 8 Teacher using visual mode to convey meaning*


As observed in Example 8, the teacher points out the picture of the skyscraper in the PowerPoint presentation because it seems she is explaining it. Furthermore, it can be perceived in this example that the teacher does not only limit to show a picture, she also uses the resources from Zoom, such as a marker or highlighter to point out, circle, or remark the information she is

referring to while speaking. This movement clarifies that she is talking about that building with the class, and the fact that she circled the skyscraper in the picture represents that she was trying to clarify to students that she is referring to that specific picture, word or explanation (*skyscraper*).

This previous situation matches with Kress's (2003) idea of visual communication as a resource for meaning-making that is similar to linguistic expression. Thus, visual resources acted as support tools that enhanced understanding, particularly for children who depend on images to acquire language input.

#### 4.2.2 Written text

In this section, I will describe how the written resources were a common multimodal mode of communication presented in online EFL classes to children. To illustrate, Example 9 demonstrates how teachers not only use visuals but also the written mode.

T	TEACHER SPEAKS AS SHE WRITES THE NAME OF THE OBJECTS FROM THE PICTURE. THEN SHE POINTS WITH HER MOUSE TO A BLANK IN HER SLIDES, RELATED TO THE WAY OF ASKING HOW TO SPELL.	
S	STUDENTS SPEAK.	

Example 9 Teacher's use of written mode



As perceived in this example, the teacher is working with a spelling activity in the class. So, the MIA done to this session describes how the teacher not only shows the picture while speaking, but she also resorts to writing the name of those objects from the picture to reinforce her discourse. After that, the teacher points out the drawings and makes some movements with the arrow that may refer to the explanation of how to spell that word. This can be inferred because it is visible how the teacher makes these movements while speaking. One feature

perceived in these online EFL classes is that, meanwhile teachers mainly employed this mode though on-screen annotations, children did it solely through the chatbox from Zoom.

This practice, previously explained, aligns with Norris and Pirini's (2017) perception that interaction in online modality combines textual and verbal modes into multimodal strategies that support understanding. Writing the vocabulary or children's answers as a visual guide allows students to review or reconsider the language input and clarify meaning. It also strengthens the relationship between form and meaning, especially for children acquiring literacy skills.

#### 4.2.3 Body movements

The following lines explain how non-linguistic cues were another multimodal mode of communication that resulted commonly employed by both teachers and children in the online EFL. On the one hand, children used gestures such as facial expressions to show misunderstanding. To illustrate, Example 10 includes an extract of a class where the children are learning the grammar topic of *be going to*.

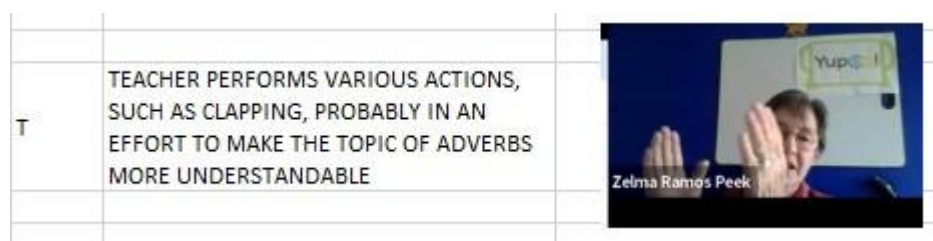
T	T eliminates previous lines but leaves the text (days of the week), but now she underlines the title of "activity list" (maybe to remind they have to talk about that)	
S	A girl makes a face opening her mouth and looking with surprise or suspicion to the camera (like showing she already understood)	
S	The girl opens her mouth and looks at the screen, she is speaking, then she moves her eyes to the right (like trying to think or remember sth) looks at her notes and continues the speech	
T	T says something to the girl, now the T looks serious	
S	The girl checks her notes again and continues her participation	

Example 10 Children's gestures in online classes

It can be perceived in this MIA that after the teacher provides an explanation and underlines a title on the screen to remind learners what she is talking about, a child can be seen

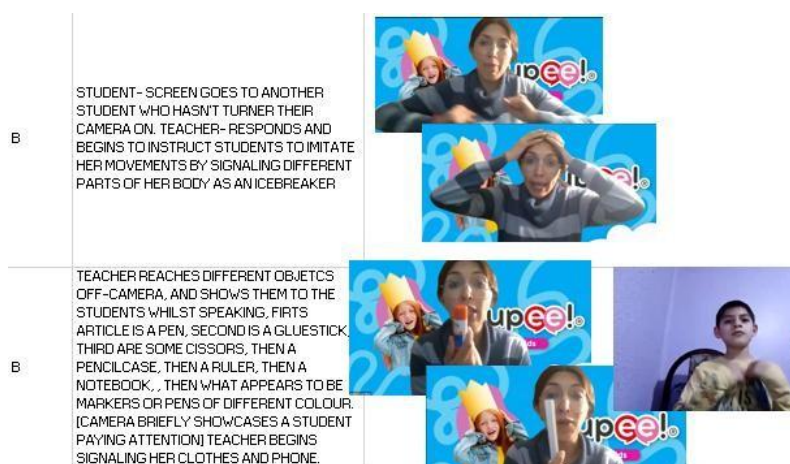
opening her mouth with an expression of surprise while speaking. This may represent that the student actually understood the explanation from the teacher. It can also be observed that the student looks at her notes to participate in class.

On the other hand, teachers employed facial and eye gestures during their classes, as well as hand movements to illustrate to children what they were talking about. This situation can be observed in the Example 11, where the teacher is explaining the topic of adverbs in English.



*Example 11 Gestures and body movements in online EFL classes*

It can be observed in this example, the teacher is giving the class, but employs some movements as part of her teaching practice. She starts clapping, and it can be inferred that she did it as a strategy to show adverbs to children. In the MIA, it is visible that the teacher claps in two different ways: fast or slow. Observe now Example 12, which is an extract of the beginning of a class, where the teacher is doing a warm up activity and a review from the previous class.



*Example 11 Teacher's gestures and hand motions*

As perceived in the MIA from this class, the teacher is speaking while she recreates the movements from the instructions she is giving. First, she touches her head, then her shoulders, and finally brings her hand to the bottom of her body, which is not perceived at all. She repeats these movements for several times and makes it faster. Due to the repetitive movements and because it is the beginning of the class, it can be inferred that she is singing the song “Head, shoulders, knees and toes” to children. What it can be perceived here is that in online EFL classes, the teacher employs movements and gestures to represent what she is referring to.

After that, it can be observed in Example 12 that the teacher shows different objects to the camera and points them out. It is also visible that the teacher gesticulates a little bit more exaggeratedly when she presents the realia than when she normally speaks or gives her class. At the same time, the Zoom recording shows how students pay attention to the class while the teacher is speaking. Thus, the use of gestures, body movements, and realia seems to be an effective resource to get student’s attention in online EFL classes. Additionally, it can be said that the online modality gives teachers the opportunity to interact with their students through body movements, as well as the visual and written representation of what they are referring to while speaking, similarly to the face-to-face modality.

All previous information matches with Kress (2003), who claims that communication encompasses “gestures, posture, gaze, [and] images” as important elements in the meaningmaking process. Also, Kessler (2022) emphasizes that these multimodal actions are now incorporated into teachers’ everyday practices. In this research, these physical movements enhanced verbal interactions, assisting in conveying meaning in the online context.

Overall, the findings from this study suggest that teachers primarily conduct the use of multimodal resources of visuals and text, whereas students rely more on the written text. However, both students and teachers use gestures to transmit meaning and show understanding. The effectiveness of these resources depends on their clarity, coordination, and alignment with learners' cognitive and linguistic skills. This emphasizes that multimodality offers educational benefits only when modes are carefully structured.

### 4.3 Integration of Multimodality and NoM

In previous sections, I presented the results of CA and MIA independently, with the aim of perceiving in detail all the elements identified in the online EFL classes. After looking at these two different types of analysis, this section integrates both CA and MIA to explain the manner which multimodal modes of communication interact with the NoM strategies to convey meaning in teacher and children's interaction in online EFL classes.

#### 4.3.1 Clarification request + gestures

This section presents how children combined their spoken participations with gestures to declare to the teacher that they did not understand the message and request clarification of the information. To illustrate, Example 13 presents an extract of the class where the group is working with the grammatical structure of be going to and working with a reading related to travelling.

T	[30:04]	Okay (.) ALLISON (Qs) are there any places you want to visit? (Qs)			T	T brings her hand to the back of her head, she may be combing her hair or tired	
S	[30:10]	Uhm (.) <yes>	Clarific. Request		S	A girl appears on the screen touching her headphones (maybe to better listen to the T)	
T	[30:12]	Yes? (Qs) which places do you want to visit. (Qs)	Confirm. checks				
S	[30:18]	Uhm (0.12) Mexico	Clarific. Request		S	The girl moves her head and directs her eyes to the top, so she may be wondering or thinking on an idea or an example she is about to say	
T	[30:25]	Okay ? (Qs) Tha::nks (.)			T	T makes a grin while speaking after she heard a girl's participation, that may indicate the S's answer was not correct	

*Example 13 Gestures and clarification request*

As perceived in this example, the complete template of analysis used for this research shows how the teacher asks a question to the student (*ALLISON (Qs) are there any places you want to visit? (Qs)*) and the notes from the video explain that the child appears on the screen touching her headphones, which could mean she had a problem with listening. This technical issue made the student not get the meaning of the question, and she asked for clarification of it, represented with the expression (*Uhm*), but at the same time, the child gave an answer that is completely different from the question (*Yes*).

This NoM strategy makes the teacher confirm that the student has some problems to get the meaning of the question because she repeats the student's answer (*Yes? (Qs)*) but immediately asks the question again (*which places do you want to visit . (Qs)*). One more time, the student employs the clarification request strategy because she says the expression (*Uhm*) and takes several minutes waiting for the teacher's help (*0.12*). In the picture, it can be observed how the student moves her head and directs her eyes to the top because she is formulating her answer.



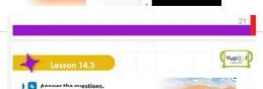
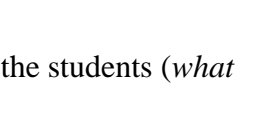
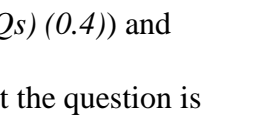
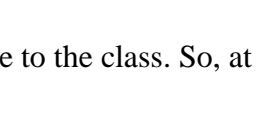
Finally, the student gives an answer (*Mexico*) and the teacher thanks her as a way to finish the conversation. However, the MIA demonstrates how the teacher gesticulates a gesture with a grin after the student's participation. This gesture from the teacher represents that the student's answer was incorrect because the teacher's questions (*are there any places you want to visit? (Qs)*) and (*which places do you want to visit . (Qs)*) actually referred to the places that were indicated in the activity, not the place the student imagined.

Even though the student's answer was incorrect, the teacher decided to finish the conversation and continue with the class. This practice was not ethically correct because the

teacher had the opportunity to employ more NoM strategies and continue orienting the child. However, Example 13 demonstrates how the misunderstanding is manifested not only in a verbal manner through NoM strategies, extra multimodal modes of communication, such as gestures, which support the NoM strategies to show misunderstanding and to convey meaning as well.

#### 4.3.2 Comprehension checks + visuals and written text

According to the data analysis from this research, a tendency on combining verbal checks with multimodal resources was found. So, the following lines explain how teachers usually employed comprehension check strategies with visual resources. To illustrate, Example 14 demonstrates this combination in a class where the group is working with a reading activity related to the weather and climate zones.

S	(00:015:13) what are the ladies borrows of clothes <u>wear</u> in desert the desert. (Qs)		S	STUDENT SPEAKS	
T	(00:15:18) Uhuh? (.) okay what color eh Danna for clothes. (.) <u>what color is it</u> (Qs) (.) <u>what color is he wearing?</u> (.) <u>what color is he wearing?</u> (Qs) (0.4)	Compreh checks	T	TEACHER SPEAKS AS SHE CICLES AN IMAGE OF A MAN ON A DESERT WITH HER MOUSE.	
S	(00:15:41) Wear*? (Qs)	confirm.			
T	(00:15:42) oka:y? Aron what color is he wearing? (Qs)		B	STUDENT SPEAKS, TEACHER RESPONDS WHILE STILL CIRCLING THE IMAGE.	
S	(00:15:49) he's wearing- he's wearing uhm		S	TWO STUDENTS POP UP.	
T	(00:15:56) <u>he's wearing ?</u> (Qs) <u>what color is he wearing?</u> (Qs)	Compreh checks	T	TEACHER SPEAKS WHILE CIRCLING THE IMAGE	
S	(00:15:59) < a white>		S	STUDENT TILTS HER HEAD	
B	(00:16:00) T-a whi::te? (Qs) okay yes 5- [tshirt or? (Qs) <u>uhuh</u> yes	confirm. Checks	B	TEACHER USES A TOOL TO ANSWER THE FIRST QUESTION ON THE EXERCISE, WHILE STUDENT SEEMS TO TELL HER WHAT THE	

Example 14 Combination of NoM and Multimodality

It can be observed in this example that the teacher asks a question to the students (*what color is it (Qs) (.) what color is he wearing? (.) what color is he wearing? (Qs) (0.4)*) and actually repeats it as a strategy to check whether children comprehended what the question is about. In the MIA, it can be distinguished that the teacher is sharing a picture to the class. So, at the moment that the teacher is asking the question, she circles the picture of a man in the screen, and does it several times. This strategy of using visuals to children continues while the teacher asks the same question but in a different way twice (*he's wearing ? (Qs) what color is he wearing? (Qs)*). Finally, a child gives an answer in a confirmation check manner (*tshirt or?*

(Qs)), so the teacher corroborates the answer is correct (*uhuh yes*).

T		I don't know who's car Nolan (Qs) <i>What?</i> Who's Nolan? (Qs) Okay? so well <i>let's</i> start with Hade and Anna.	Clarific. Request			
T	[13:03]	Hade (.) you are going to ask to Hannah about activity <i>list</i> . For example, <i>what</i> are you going to do on Thursday. (Qs) Okay here we go Number one is <i>Monday</i> (.) Okay? (Qs) (.) Yeah (Qs) so I'm gonna write down here? (.) Number one: so you can remember (.) is Monday. (0.4)	Compreh. Checks	T	T moves the arrow around the picture of activity list in the screen (maybe she's explaining the examples that Ss should write or use in their participations) Then she points out to the conversation examples on the screen like to exemplify the structure in sentences or the roleplays	
	13:22			T	T starts writing the days of the week on the screen using the text options from Zoom app (maybe to help students remind them)	
T	[13:31]	Number two: is: Tuesday. (.) Number three (.) is (.) Wednesday. (.) <i>Wednesday</i> (.) s:day Okay? (Qs) Number four is (.) Thursday. (.) <i>Number five?</i> Is: >which< is number five? (Qs)	Compreh. Checks			
T	[14:01]	Do you remember? (Qs) What's the next day. (Qs)				
B	14:06	[Friday.] [Friday.]				

Example 15 Teacher's use of writing and confirmation checks

Observe now the following example, which presents how teachers complemented their NoM strategies with written multimodal mode of communication. This Example 15 includes an extract from a class working with the topic of days of the week and be going to. Here, the teacher is giving a long instruction to the student regarding the days of the week. Meanwhile, this teacher is asking the question (Okay?) to as a NoM strategy to verify her instructions, the message, is being understood. Additionally, it can be perceived that the teacher not only checks the children's comprehension by asking them a question, but also decides to write down in the screen what she is referring to.

So, the MIA allows to observe that the teacher starts writing the message to be understood (days of the week) on the screen, in order to support children's understanding of what she is talking about. In the CA, it can be observed how the teacher starts enumerating the days of the week and combines it with writing them on the screen. In addition, the teacher employs the same question (*Okay?*) to verify the students are getting the same information she is trying to indicate. Prof of this is when the teacher stops enumerating and asks for students help to say the next answer (*Do you remember? (Qs) What's the next day. (Qs)*), then students actually day the correct response (*[Friday.] [Friday.]*).

As perceived in precious examples, the teacher employ comprehension checks as a NoM strategy but it is complemented by the use of visuals and written text in order to verify and supports learner’s understanding. These replies align with Pica’s (1991) “follow-up” phase, verifying if understanding has been attained. So, the combination of NoM strategies and multimodal resources, such as visuals and written text, allowed children to rely not only on the speaking mode but also to construct meaning by the employment of different modes of communication.

#### 4.3.3 Repetition + intonation and sounds

The findings from this study demonstrate that teachers played a significant role and were crucial facilitators in multimodal negotiation. This section presents how comprehension checks were implemented by rephrasing and exemplifying student’s responses, frequently incorporating written or visual materials to enhance understanding. This situation can be perceived in Example 16, where the teacher is explaining the topic of adverbs to children.

T	(00:12:53)	okay (.) you clap your hands Alondra ? (Qs) (.) you like to clap your hands ? (Qs) (.) very fast or slo::wly . ((Teacher employs different tones to help student infer meaning))	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)		
S	(00:13:04)	Hmm (.) fast? (Qs)	Confirm. checks		
T	(00:13:07)	fast (.)Jokay Uhm:: Regina you like to speak very *softly* or VERY LOUDLY . ((Use different tones to help student infer meaning))	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)		
S	(00:13:20)	Hmm(.) es que depende teacher			
T	(00:13:24)	no tell me (.) softly or loudly . (Qs) *softly* OR LOUDLY ((T repeats the same strategy of using different tone)) (0.3)	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)		
S	(00:13:32)	Uhm Softly			
T	(00:13:36)	Softly (.)you like to speak softly (.) okay now Daniela you like to (.) to sing (vocalizes) (.) or do you like to do rock and roll or do you like to do rock and roll? ((T says the question by using a tone that seems like the music genre from the questions))	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)		
B	(00:14:00)	S- Rock and roll T- You like to Rock and roll (.) okay very good		B	AS THE EXPLANATION PROGRESSES, CHILDREN SEEM VERY ENTERTAINED BY THE WAY THE TEACHER IS EXPLAINING. BOTH THEM AND THE TEACHER ARE SMILING.

Example 16 Intonation and sounds as multimodal modes

This example illustrates with red color and in brackets some variations in intonation employed by the teacher in their speech. First and foremost, the teacher asks a question to the student but repeats it twice, which means she employed the comprehension check of repetition (*you clap your hands Alondra ? (Qs) (.) you like to clap your hands ? (Qs) (.) very fast or slo::wly .*). However, this second question has a particularity on the rhythm. Considering that the

class is about adverbs in English, the CA shows that the teacher exemplified the meaning of every adverb only by changing the rhythm and intonation of them; that is, the teacher slowed her speech when saying the adverb (*slowly*) and rushed it when repeating the word (*fast*).

So, as distinguished in the notes from the CA regarding teacher's speech, the employment of different tones while speaking aims to support students to infer the meaning of the adverbs, without the necessity to translate or write or use visuals (*Teacher employs different tones to help student infer meaning*). Later, the teacher selects another student to ask a question with different adverbs, which she represents again only with the variations in the intonation and the sounds. As perceived in Example 16, the teacher uses a quiet speech represented with (° °) when saying (°*softly*°) and uses a loud speech, represented with capital letters, when saying the words (*VERY LOUDLY*). This representations in the CA are based on the Transcription key from Liddicoat (2022), and the teacher decided to vary the intonation of these adverbs based on what they mean.

Finally, Example 16 indicates how the teacher asks a last question to the children, but now it is related to some activities. So, it can be observed that the teacher asks for the child's preference between singing and rock and roll (*Daniela you like to (.) to sing (.) or do you like to do rock and roll or do you like to do rock and roll?*). However, this time the teacher employs the comprehension check by exemplifying the actions these words refer to: (*vocalizes*) and (*using a tone that seems like the music genre from the questions*).




As perceived in this Example 16, the combination of repetition and exemplification as comprehension checks (NoM strategies) with the variations in rhythm and intonation while speaking (multimodal resources) resulted in significant improvements for students in two particular factors. On the one hand, the variations in intonation allowed children to comprehend the meaning of the question and were able to answer the teacher. On the other hand, both

teachers and children got excited and interested in the class, which is an important issue when learning a language, since the information becomes significant for learners and easier to learn.

This active process corresponds with the concepts presented by Pica (1991), highlighting that negotiation consists of repetitive phases, trigger, signal, response, and follow-up, where meaning is gradually clarified through communication. In addition, this previous information aligns with García and Lázaro's (2015) findings, which indicate that students work with meaning by making conversational modifications supported by contextual cues. It also illustrates Ortega's (2009) claim that input modified through interaction, aided by contextual signals, improves understanding.

#### *4.3.4 Confusing resources*



The previous sections demonstrate how multimodal resources support NoM strategies to convey meaning in online EFL classes. But this section explains that certain multimodal strategies used by the teacher were not effective at all. So, Examples 17 (Part 1, 2 and 3) explain a situation that occurred in a class where the group is working with a reading activity related to the grammar topic of *be going to*.

T	[26:04]	What do you think (.) the boy is doing? (0.7) (Qs)	Compreh checks		T	After moving the arrow direct to the picture, now T zooms the picture ( like to better check in detail for 0.5 sec) and goes back to a less big but still zoomed size.	
T	[26:13]	Do you like to look at maps? (Qs) Oh (.) who's racing? (Qs) Hey um Joshua? (Qs) what is - what do you think the boy is doing . (0.4) (Qs)			T	T points out to the questions from the activity (maybe to indicate the activity or to clarify they have to answer those questions) and moves the arrow to the picture. T continues speaking	
S	[26:28]	It's go to beach.					
T	[26:31]	Um No:: ? (.) What is he doing . (Qs)					
S	[26:39]	Uhm	Clarific. Request				
S	[26:42]	Teacher <i>qué</i> significa doing	Clarific. Request				
T	[26:47]	DOING es <i>Qué</i> está haciendo. <i>Qué</i> piensas que el chico está haciendo. <u>What</u> do you <u>think</u> the boy is <u>doing</u> . (Qs) (0.3)	Compreh. Checks (Repetition)				
S	[26:48]	Uhm (0.6)	Clarific. Request				
S	[27:05]	Uhm (0.4)	Clarific. Request				
S	[27:08]	He:: He - He <u>is</u> on a picture . (0.3)		[27:08]	T	T opens the chat box in the middle of the screen again, but it is still unable to see the chat, because in the screen it only appears a big rectangle	
T	[27:15]	Well >he's on the picture but< what is he <u>doing</u> (Qs)		[27:15]	T	T moves the arrow in circles around the picture (maybe to explain sth about the picture, or to clarify they are talking about that picture) T now makes imaginary moves around the boy that is on the picture (maybe she is explaining sth about this person, or to clarify that what the first question says "what do you think the boy is doing" refers to the person from the picture)	
S	[27:19]	In the giant picture? (Qs)	compreh. Checks	[27:19]			

Example 17 Part 1 Visual modes that were confusing.

As perceived in Example 17 Part 1, the teacher asks a question to the student (*What do you think the boy is doing? (Qs)*) related to what she is actually presenting on the screen, a picture of a man looking at a map. This teacher points out and even zooms the picture on the screen, because she is referring to the boy there, then the teacher repeats the same question. So, a child gives an incorrect answer (*It's go to beach.*), which makes the teacher ask again but now with a shorter version of the question (*Um No:: ? (.) What is he doing . (Qs)*).

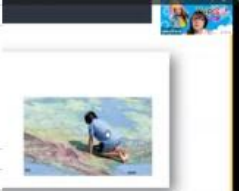



[At this moment, it can be perceived that children do not understand the meaning of the question because they employ different NoM strategies. First, a child requests some clarification by asking the translation of the question (*Teacher qué significa doing*). Second, some other students employ muted moments preceded by an expression (*Uhm*), which represent a clarification request to what the teacher is referring to. Thus, the MIA illustrates how the teacher moves the arrow around the picture from the screen and draws some imaginary circles on it while asking the same question (*Well >he's on the picture but< what is he doing (Qs)*).

B	[27:24]	[I think it's a map.] [It's a painting?] (.)	compreh. Checks	[27:24]			
T						T continues moving the arrow in the space from the picture that surrounds the boy, moving the arrow in the same direction several times (maybe she's explaining sth about that section or specifying sth about it to Ss)	
	[27:32]	No is - it's a map.		[27:32]			
B	[27:35]	[And <u>what</u> is he <u>doing</u> ] [Is in on the map]					
T	[27:40]	He's what? (Qs)	Clarific. Request				
S	[27:43]	He's on the map					
T						T moves the rectangle on the left side now to the bottom of the screen, this rectangle may be related to Zoom options (maybe she moved it to avoid it limits her to watch the book page)	
	[27:46]	Well he's on the map but <u>what</u> is he doing on the map . (0.3) (Qs)					
SS	[27:55]	[He's doing the map ? (Qs)] [What teacher? (Qs)]	Clarific. Request				
T		<b>WHAT IS HE DOING(.) ON THE MAP. (Qs)</b> He's on the - Yes but what is he doing there (Qs) Qué está haciendo ahí (Qs) What is he doing there (Qs) (.) Alguien sabe? (Qs) someone .					
	[27:58]		Compreh checks				
	[28:01]					While speaking, T makes a short movement with her hand, moving them from the middle to the sides, like forming a circle (like meaning sth as a total, or in general, or global, or around sth)	
S	[28:09]	He discover it? (0.5)					
T	[28:15]	<b>What is he doing? (Qs) (.)</b> ¿Los demás chicos saben? (0.6)	Compreh checks				

Example 17 Part 2 Visual modes that were confusing.

Observe now Example 17 Part 2, the teacher and children continue with the same dynamic: children requesting some clarification, answering with comprehension checks and the teacher continues doing the same movements on the picture from the screen. But now, it can be perceived in the CA that the teacher uses loud speech when asking (**WHAT IS HE DOING(.) ON THE MAP. (Qs)**). At the same time, the MIA allows to demonstrate that the teacher does not only draw circles on the picture, she also does it in front of the camera, directing her speech to the students.

These previous strategies employed by the teacher could represent a bit of frustration from her, since students are not able to comprehend the meaning of the question, and therefore the class cannot continue. As perceived in this example, the teacher even makes the question in Spanish as a way to support students understanding (*what is he doing there (Qs) Qué está haciendo ahí (Qs) What is he doing there (Qs) (.)*), and continues asking the same question with few variations on it (*What is he doing there (Qs) (What is he doing? (Qs) (.)*).

T	[28:15]	What is he doing? (Qs) (.) ¿Los demás chicos saben?	Compreh checks			
	[28:21]			T	T keeps quiet (like waiting for an answer) and moves the arrow around the picture again, but she is not speaking (so maybe she's waiting for the Ss answer but helping them to guess or guiding them by pointing out to the picture). T makes the same movements but faster and continues quiet	
T	[28:24]	What is the boy doing. (Qs)	Compreh checks			
S	[28:26]	Uhm	Clarific. Request			
S	[28:28]	Painting? (Qs)	Confirm. checks	S	While T continues moving the arrow in circles around the picture, a child appears speaking	
B	[28:31]	[Uhm] () (Ss speaking)				
B	[28:32]	[In the floor?] (Qs) [No.]	Confirm. checks			
				T	T is speaking but at the end she makes a grin with her mouth (she may be meaning that the answer was incorrect, or she got mad with the answer, or the answer was obvious)	
T	[28:33]	I don't think so that is painting?				
S	[28:37]	Tiene muchos detalles.				
T	[28:39]	[Viewing? (Qs)] () (Ss speaking)	Confirm. checks			
B	[28:41]	[Discovering][Looking? (Qs)]	Confirm. checks			
S	[28:43]	Looking the country.				
T	[28:44]	Discovering? Looking. Yeah? (surprise) that - that is what he is doing		T	T nods her head to her right side while speaking (this may mean now she heard a correct answer)	
		He's maybe looking at (.) at a city or a place to go (.) Yeah he's looking at the map He Maybe he's uh searching a place (.) Or maybe he:: is a LEARNING where are the countries and the states of a country (.)				
T	[28:49]	Okay? do you like to look at the map? (Qs) (0.4)	Compreh checks			
	[29:02]			T	T moves the arrow in circles around the picture again while speaking (she may be explaining or giving examples but referring to the picture). T is also nodding her head now to the front (maybe because she's listing some examples). Then she moves the arrow to point out question 2 from the activity	
T	[29:21]	Do you like to look at the map? (Qs) (0.5)	Compreh checks			

*Example 17 Part 3 Visual modes that were confusing.*

Direct your attention now to Example 17 Part 3, which presents the ending of this problem to convey meaning in an online EFL class. Here, the same dynamic of children employing clarification (.) requests, comprehension checks, and the teacher drawing circles on the picture is still observed. However, the complete template of analysis demonstrates that when the teacher says to children that the answer is incorrect, she accompanies her answer with a grin. This gesture may indicate that the teacher is exhausted from dealing with the same question for a long time because the students are still unable to understand the meaning of the question, and their answers are still incorrect.

After repeating the same question for a long time, the last strategy from the teacher is to provide some examples of possible answers (*[Viewing? (Qs)] [Discovering]*) until a student provides the answer that the teacher was looking for (*Looking the country.*) regarding the meaning of the picture. When doing this, the teacher actually answers with a tone of surprise and

complements with more information (*Yeah? (surprise) that - that is what he is doing*), Similarly, it can be perceived in the MIA how the teacher nods her head while speaking, which represents that the child's answer is finally correct.

Thus, the previous examples demonstrate that even when visuals and comprehension checks were a common multimodal strategy used in the online EFL classes, some of these resources were not effective enough to clarify meaning when interacting with children. It was observed that some images caused confusion when they appeared excessively detailed, ambiguous, or culturally unfamiliar to the students. Similarly, some comprehension checks presented mostly through repetition resulted in being ineffective in conveying meaning in the teacher and children's interaction in online classes.

This problem of negotiating meaning by employing a visual resource could be attributed to some factors, such as the lack of clarity with the picture, the mismatch with children's reality or even the lack of extra multimodal modes of communication to better approach the misunderstanding. Thus, these findings reinforce the importance of using context and visual clarity that facilitates the understanding of information when employing them to negotiate meaning. This aligns with Norris and Pirini's (2017) caution that inadequate alignment between modes can interfere with the understanding instead of facilitating it in online EFL classes.

To sum up, certain teacher's multimodal strategies were not effective. In some cases, ambiguous visual resources, as well as unclear NoM strategies, led to confusion instead of clarity. Furthermore, children actively participated in multimodal negotiation, although their involvement was more reactive. In the face of comprehension challenges, they often depended on facial cues, gestures, or reiterations to indicate a lack of understanding. This pattern reflects Hartono (2017) and García and Lázaro's (2015) perception that students employ clarification

requests and repetitions to attain understanding. Based on the findings from this study, teachers and students utilized a mix of verbal NoM strategies, mostly confirmation and comprehension checks, alongside visual, gestures, written texts, and sounds to clarify meanings and ensure understanding in their online EFL classes. According to Putri (2022), these innovative methods (multimodality) in digital environments enhance interaction among participants and favor children's learning.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter shows the overall conclusions from this research about the Negotiation of Meaning (NoM) strategies and multimodal modes of communication presented within teacher and children's interaction in online EFL classes. So, the following lines summarize the principal findings from this research, as well as examine their theoretical and educational implications. Also, the limitations of the study are explained. Finally, this chapter concludes with some suggestions for future research that aim to enhance comprehension on the way that language learners and teachers convey meaning in EFL classes in online modality.

### 5.2 Research main Findings

This thesis project analyzed the ways how teachers and children interact to show misunderstanding and convey meaning in online EFL classes, by integrating NoM strategies and multimodality. By analyzing the classroom interactions through video recordings, multiple key patterns arose that illuminate how meaning is negotiated and facilitated in online modality.

The findings indicated that both language teachers and students actively employed NoM strategies, including clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks. These teachers often employed repetition, exemplification, and variations in rhythm and intonation to clarify and emphasize meaning, whereas learners relied on intonation and repetition to verify the comprehension of meaning. These results align to Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, which highlights the importance to negotiate when interacting with other participants of a conversation in order to acquire a language. Likewise, these findings match with Pica's (1991) model of trigger, signal, response, and follow-up phases in meaning negotiation.

Besides verbal negotiation, the research demonstrated that teachers and children usually employed multimodal resources. For example, gestures and visual resources, such as pictures or realia, were the most common and effective methods used to convey comprehensible meaning. These findings align with studies by Toscu (2023) and Musbarok (2023), who distinguished that visual and gestural modes are frequently used apart from verbal resources to communicate in online environments.

So, the integration of both NoM strategies with multimodal modes of communication significantly improved children's comprehension and favored the meaning making process. For example, teachers' confirmation checks along with visual resources became useful to clarify meaning, and gestures supported verbal explanations. Nonetheless, this method required teachers to invest more time in the classes, as well as more involvement in the explanation. However, the interaction between multimodality and NoM strategies encouraged a greater degree of interaction between teachers and children, which evoked a more significant communication in the online EFL classes.

### **5.3 Research implications**

This section presents the possible implications on theory and teaching practice that can be obtained from the results of this research.

#### *5.3.1 Implications in theory*

First, the findings strengthen current theories on interaction and multimodality in second language acquisition, as well as the growing field of teaching in online modality. From a theoretical perspective, they provide evidence that the modification of input through interaction (Long, 1996) is crucial, even in online modalities, where a variation of multimodal tools serve as parallel resources and channels to show misunderstanding and convey comprehensible meaning.

In addition, the findings from this study support Kress's (2003) and Norris and Pirini's (2017) views on multimodality, by highlighting that communication in online modality goes beyond verbal signs; it includes body movements, gestures, sounds, and visual resources.

Additionally, this research demonstrates that the combination of multimodality and NoM serves not only as a communicative act, but also as a learning opportunity where both teachers and learners work collaboratively to understand each other, convey comprehensible meaning and reach the meaning-making process. The alignment of NoM strategies with various multimodal modes of communication represents an extensive model of interactional competence, an approach that combines online modality, visuals, and embodied cues with conventional linguistic abilities.

### *5.3.2 Implications in teaching practice*

From an educational perspective, the results from this study highlight the importance and significance of developing inclusive and innovative teaching strategies that systematically incorporate multimodality and teaching techniques that work with the NoM strategies. Language teachers have the ability to design online classes that:

- Integrate confirmation and comprehension checks as standard to support scaffolding techniques to teach children.
- Employ visuals, gestures, sounds, and realia to extend the manners to negotiate meaning and to enhance verbal communication in online EFL classes.
- Develop language classes that include a variety of multimodal modes of communication and NoM strategies that favor the learner's attention and actively involve students in the online class, especially with children.

- Create syllabuses and teaching materials that combine linguistic and multimodal resources to guarantee an easy comprehension of the language, which is facilitated through various modes of communication

In this way, language teachers can develop more interactive and dynamic classes in online settings for children, where language learning takes place through active, multimodal participation. Putri (2022) notes that the use of negotiation techniques in online education promotes learner's engagement and motivation, transforming virtual classrooms into interactive environments for meaning-making in the English language.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

While the research offers important perspectives on online EFL interaction, there are several limitations that must be recognized.

- **Sample size:** This research examined a small number of online sessions in a particular educational classroom setting, which might not represent the variety of online EFL environments. So, a larger number of participants could reveal further patterns or differences in the way to use multimodality and negotiate meaning in online EFL classes.
- **Participant's proficiency level:** Similar to previous limitation, the participants of this study were merely children at intermediate level. However, the consideration of only participants with these characteristics limits the applicability to other participants' age ranges or proficiency stages, like teenagers or adults. So the

- participation of learners with different ages may vary the NoM strategies and multimodal resources that are used in online EFL classes.

Limitation of recordings: The limited number of recordings affected the depth and frequency of observations of multimodality and NoM strategies. A longitudinal observation from the same groups among other classes could more effectively capture the evolution of strategies and multimodality to convey meaning over time.

- Technological elements: The quality of the audio and the limitation of Zoom recordings to capture only the recording of the participants in every section limit the clear identification of multimodal resources, and therefore the deeper analysis of the multimodal interaction.

The recognition of these previous limitations provides essential context to understand the results and sets the foundation for future research design.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

This section includes some areas where future research could investigate to expand the findings of this research project:

- Comparative research among different age groups or skill levels: Analyzing how children, teenagers, or adults employ NoM and multimodality might offer a deeper understanding of the variation of interaction in online modality to convey comprehensible meaning.

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- Longitudinal research designs: Examining the evolution of multimodal negotiation usage by teachers and children over time may show some patterns in the employment of NoM strategies, interaction between teacher and learners and the way the language is transferred in the online EFL classes.

Teacher's training: Future research might explore the impact that professional development on the use of multimodality and NoM strategies may have to effectively incorporate multimodal modes of communication and NoM in teaching techniques to work in online modality or working with learners from different ages and language proficiency levels..

- Cross-contextual analyses: Comparing private language institutes, public schools, and informal online English classes may reveal how different institutional environments, teaching material or teacher's backgrounds influence the interaction between teachers and children to convey meaning using multimodality and NoM strategies.

These future studies would enhance a deeper understanding of the evolving connection among interaction, NoM strategies, multimodality, and teaching methods in online EFL settings.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

To conclude, this research highlights that the combination of both NoM strategies and multimodal modes of communication improves understanding, interaction, and involvement in online EFL courses for children. Teachers and students participate collaboratively to convey

•  
meaning through verbal and non-verbal resources, which reinforces the importance of interaction explained by learning theories in online environments.

Although the method requires the investment of effort and time from both teachers and children, it enriches the learning experiences because of the emphasis on the comprehension of information and meaning, which favors the learner's engagement in the language class and effective communication skills. The findings from this study promote innovative teaching

methods in online EFL classes, encouraging teachers to see multimodal and interaction as vital elements, rather than extras, of effective and inclusive EFL instruction for children.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Consent Form

*Analyzing Multimodal NoM Strategies in Online EFL Classes: a Case Study on Teacher and Children Interaction*

#### FORMATO DE CONSENTIMIENTO PARA PARTICIPANTES

Mi nombre es José Juan Hernández Luna y soy estudiante de la Maestría en la Enseñanza del Inglés en la Facultad de Lenguas de la Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Actualmente llevo a cabo una investigación sobre la interacción entre maestro y niños en las clases de inglés en línea y me gustaría invitarle a participar en este estudio.

#### Propósito

Los objetivos de esta investigación son

1. Explorar las estrategias de negociación de significado durante la interacción entre maestro y niños en las clases de inglés como lengua extranjera en línea.
2. Analizar los modos multimodales de comunicación que interactúan con estas estrategias de negociación para transmitir un significado comprensible.
3. Examinar la efectividad de combinar multimodalidad y las estrategias de negociación de significado en las clases de inglés como lengua extranjera en línea.

Si acepta participar en esta investigación se le pediría su consentimiento para que me comparta la grabación de una de sus clases impartidas con niños de nivel intermedio la semana pasada. Dicha

grabación debe ser compartida con la opción de descargar, para poder realizar el análisis sin contratiempos.

Además, se pediría que la grabación sea de alguna clase que no sea de revisión o que pertenezca a la semana de evaluación, a fin de evitar cambios en la metodología de la clase analizada.

#### Confidencialidad

La información recolectada será usada para fines de investigación; ni su nombre, el de la escuela, de los alumnos, ni alguna otra información que pueda identificarle serán utilizados en cualquier publicación o presentación de los resultados de la investigación. Toda la información recolectada para esta investigación será confidencial. Se utilizará un seudónimo cuando me refiera a los docentes y la institución.

#### Riesgos y beneficios

No hay riesgos por participar en este estudio

#### Participación voluntaria

La participación en esta investigación es voluntaria. Tanto usted como cualquier maestro de grupo pueden negarse a participar, contestar cualquier pregunta o retirarse de la investigación en cualquier momento.

#### Preguntas

Si tiene preguntas acerca de esta investigación, puede contactarme directamente al correo [teacher.josehernandez@gmail.com](mailto:teacher.josehernandez@gmail.com) o al teléfono celular 797-123-80-14.

Esta carta de consentimiento le pertenece y le servirá como referencia en un futuro.

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José Juan Hernández Luna

Licenciado en la Enseñanza del Inglés

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