

## **RFL Special Issue Call for Papers: Multimodality and L2 Reading**

### **Guest Editors:**

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### **Background**

While multimodal input (e.g., reading accompanied by audio or visual input) has been used to aid reading for several decades (e.g., Schneeberg, 1977), scientific investigation into how the use of multimodal input affects reading processes is relatively new (e.g., Pellicer-Sánchez, 2022). Furthermore, the advance of instructional technology which enables various multimodal input types and tools calls for research on how reading-related processes and resources are used as L2 learners engage in multimodal reading in digital learning environments. In response, this special issue proposes investigating the use of multimodality in L2 reading in digital learning environments. More specifically, this issue aims to achieve the following goals: (1) to understand the cognitive mechanisms underlying L2 reading when it is aided by multimodal input or tools in a digital learning environment; (2) to understand the effectiveness of multimodal reading in L2 reading comprehension in a digital learning environment; and (3) to understand the current pedagogical practices of multimodal L2 reading in a digital learning environment.

### **Goals**

Multimodality, in the forms such as audio accompanied reading or visual aids to reading passages, has often been used to aid L2 reading comprehension in language classrooms (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2022; Tytko et al., 2026). With the advance of technology, these traditional forms of multimodality in the context of L2 reading are also evolving; Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based learning platforms allow immediate text summaries of video content (e.g., VidReader); AI-generated 3D holograms now replace illustrations that once accompanied reading passages. Applications such as Perusal, Book Creator, and Google Docs make collaborative reading and annotation much easier than before. In contrast with the fast advancement of multimodal tools in education, reading researchers are only in the beginning stages of understanding how multimodality affects L2 reading. At present, most of such research studies examine readers'

cognitive processes while reading with mostly traditional multimodal input (e.g., reading-while-listening, reading with an image) using eye-tracking methods. In this special issue, we aim to expand our understanding of how the use of the current multimodal reading tools affect the reading processes through a series of empirical studies adopting diverse research methods.

### **Scope and Information for Authors**

For this special issue, we would like to recruit two different types of empirical studies; the first group of studies will investigate the mechanism of multimodal L2 reading. That is, they will investigate the operations of reading-related processes and the use of cognitive resources as the L2 reader engages with various types of multimodal input in a digital learning environment. The method of observation may vary (e.g., eye-tracking, input-logging, think-aloud, post-task interview, focus group interview). The purpose of these studies is to help us gain a closer understanding of how L2 readers utilize multimodal input and how the use of multimodal input affects their reading processes; the second type of empirical studies will compare the effectiveness of traditional, text-only reading instruction and that of multimodal reading instruction in a digital learning environment. Candidate studies will use experimental or quasi-experimental research design to examine the effectiveness of digitized multimodal L2 reading instruction compared to traditional methods.

### **References**

- Pellicer-Sánchez, A. (2022). Multimodal reading and second language learning. *ITL – International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 173(1), 2–17.  
<https://doi.org/10.1075/itl.21039.pel>
- Schneeberg, H. (1977). Listening while reading: A four year study. *The Reading Teacher*, 30(6), 629–635.
- Tytko, T., & Pandža, N. B. (2026). The effect of multimodal input on L2 learners' reading comprehension: A preregistered eye-tracking study. *The Modern Language Journal*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.70023>

### **Timeline for the Special Issue:**

First draft: **August, 2027**

Revision and final draft: **December 2027**

Publication: **First or second issue, 2028**

For any enquiries on whether the abstract is suitable for the special issue or for submission, please contact

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