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INTERSEMIOTIC MEANING-MAKING IN MULTIMODAL ACADEMIC WRITING: HOW IMAGES AND WORDS WORK TOGETHER IN EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TEXTS

Irsyad Nugraha[1], Muhammad Soni[2], Moch Zidane Maulana[3], Aryani Nurwasilah[4], Ichsan Fajar Sidiq[5]

[1,2,3,4,5] *English Education Program and Teacher Professional Education, Institut Pendidikan Indonesia Garut, Indonesia*

Corresponding author's email: irsyadnugraha@institutpendidikan.ac.id

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Abstract: In contemporary higher education, academic writing increasingly involves the integration of visual and verbal resources, positioning multimodal literacy as a crucial competence for EFL pre-service teachers. Despite growing interest in multimodality, research on EFL academic writing has largely focused on linguistic features, often overlooking intersemiotic relations between images and written language. Addressing this gap, this study investigates how intersemiotic meaning is constructed in multimodal analytical exposition texts produced by 3 EFL pre-service teachers. Employing a qualitative design with Multimodal Discourse Analysis grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013) and intersemiotic complementarity, The study analyzes 3 purposively selected multimodal analytical exposition texts from a total of 25 texts produced by EFL pre-service teachers to examine semantic relations across visual and verbal modes. The findings reveal that declarative mood, balanced modalization, and dominant material processes establish an authoritative and persuasive stance, while visual elements re-realize and extend ideational meanings through representational structures. The study concludes that effective multimodal academic writing depends on strong intersemiotic alignment and highlights the importance of explicitly developing visual–verbal meaning-making competence in EFL teacher education.
Keywords: *intersemiotic meaning, multimodal academic writing, systemic functional linguistics, intersemiotic complementarity, EFL pre-service teachers*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary academic contexts, writing is no longer understood as a purely linguistic activity (Kern, 2024; Bakhtin & McGee, 2024; Liu, 2024). The increasing presence of images, diagrams, charts, and digital layouts has transformed academic texts into multimodal artefacts in which meaning is constructed through the interaction of multiple semiotic modes (Irma et al., 2025; Thahir & Latifa, 2025; Dahlström, 2023; Tang, 2023). In higher education, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, students are increasingly expected not only to produce coherent written arguments but also to integrate visual resources in ways that enhance clarity, persuasion, and disciplinary appropriateness (Hidayat et al., 2024; Nugraha, 2023; Salih, 2021; Hiippala, 2026; Hellwig, 2023; Nichols, 2025). This shift has positioned multimodal academic writing as a crucial literacy practice in teacher education programs.

Within multimodal discourse studies, meaning constructed through the interaction of multiple semiotic resources is commonly referred to as intersemiotic meaning (Jewitt et al., 2016; O'Halloran, 2008; Royce, 2002). Intersemiotic meaning emphasizes that communication does not emerge from language or images independently, but from the semantic relationships established across modes (O'Halloran, 2023; Hasyim & Arafah, 2023). From the perspective of Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-

MDA), meaning is realized metafunctionally through ideational, interpersonal, and textual dimensions operating simultaneously across verbal and visual resources (O'Halloran, 2008; Sai, 2024; Castaldi, 2024). In multimodal academic writing, therefore, images are not merely decorative additions but meaning-bearing resources that interact with written language to construct arguments, organize information, and shape interpretation.

Despite the growing emphasis on multimodality in education, research on EFL academic writing has predominantly focused on linguistic dimensions such as grammar, cohesion, rhetorical organization, and genre structure (Eisenlauer & Karatza, 2020; Nugraha et al., 2024; Xie et al., 2021). Although these studies provide valuable insights into students' textual competence, they often marginalize visual resources and pay limited attention to how meanings are constructed intersemiotically across modes (Kim et al.,2023; Chien, 2024; Cheema et al.,2023). More importantly, no previous study has systematically examined intersemiotic relations in EFL pre-service teachers' multimodal analytical exposition texts using a full SF-MDA approach. Existing studies generally emphasize instructional intervention, students' perceptions, or digital multimodal practices rather than clause-by-clause analysis of visual–verbal meaning relations in student-generated academic texts.

This gap is particularly important because multimodal academic writing requires more than simply combining words and images (Adami et al., 2022; Eisenlauer & Karatza, 2020). Writers must orchestrate semiotic resources so that visual and verbal modes work cohesively to achieve shared communicative purposes. In argumentative genres such as analytical exposition texts, visuals are expected to support claims, reinforce evidence, and strengthen logical reasoning (Darmawansah et al.,2025; Tan et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2026). Analytical exposition texts are a genre that aims to persuade readers by presenting a series of logical arguments supporting a thesis, characterized by declarative mood, material processes, and modalized assertions (Emilia, 2005; Hermayanti & Gunawan, 2024; Cariñe, 2024). In this genre, visual and verbal elements are expected to work intersemiotically to reinforce argumentative meanings and maintain textual coherence. When visual and verbal elements are poorly aligned, multimodal texts may become fragmented, redundant, or contradictory (Kress et al., 2021). Understanding how intersemiotic meaning is constructed is therefore essential for developing effective multimodal academic literacy.

The concept of intersemiotic complementarity proposed by Royce (2002) provides an important framework for understanding how images and written language interact in multimodal texts. Royce explains that visual and verbal modes may establish relations of repetition, elaboration, extension, and recontextualization to create coherent meanings across modes. Through these relations, images may reinforce written claims, provide additional experiential information, or reorganize meanings from alternative semiotic perspectives. Intersemiotic complementarity thus highlights that multimodal coherence depends not on the isolated quality of images or language, but on the semantic alignment established between them.

This perspective is further strengthened by O'Halloran's contribution to SF-MDA, particularly her discussion of semiotic metaphor in multimodal discourse (O'Halloran, 2008; O'Halloran & Smith, 2012). Extending Halliday's notion of grammatical metaphor, semiotic metaphor occurs when meanings typically realized linguistically are re-realized visually, spatially, or symbolically (Law & Matthiessen, 2023). For example, abstract processes may be represented through diagrams, while evaluative meanings may be conveyed through visual salience or spatial arrangement. Such intersemiotic shifts enable greater abstraction and semantic density in academic discourse (Lindenberg, 2023; Liu et al., 2024; Mowafy, 2024). Consequently, meaning in multimodal texts is not additive but multiplicative, emerging from cross-modal mappings that expand semantic potential beyond individual modes.

In EFL teacher education, intersemiotic meaning-making becomes particularly significant because pre-service teachers are expected not only to produce multimodal academic texts but also to teach multiliteracy practices aligned with contemporary curricular demands (Arias-Alzate, 2025; Zhang, 2024; Jantasin, 2025). In the Indonesian context, recent curriculum reforms emphasize multimodal competence and digital literacy as important learning outcomes. However, evidence from prior studies and classroom practices suggests that many pre-service teachers still struggle to integrate images and written arguments coherently, often treating visuals as supplementary rather than meaning-bearing elements.

Several studies have explored multimodal writing in EFL contexts from pedagogical and

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technological perspectives, including students' attitudes toward multimodal tasks, digital tools, and genre-based instruction (Danielsson & Selander, 2021; Hidayati & Rahmah, 2023; Murtadho et al., 2024; Zhang, 2024). Other studies, including Nugraha et al. (2024), have examined multimodal academic writing through systemic functional perspectives. However, these studies primarily foreground instructional outcomes rather than systematic textual analysis of intersemiotic relations in student-produced analytical exposition texts. Thus, limited attention has been paid to how visual and verbal resources interact clause-by-clause to construct argumentative meanings in EFL students' multimodal writing.

To address this gap, the present study investigates intersemiotic meaning-making in multimodal analytical exposition texts produced by Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers. Drawing on SF-MDA and Royce's framework of intersemiotic complementarity, this study examines how visual and verbal resources interact to construct arguments, convey evidence, and establish coherence in multimodal academic discourse. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on pedagogical intervention or multimodal instruction, this study contributes by conducting a full SF-MDA clause-by-clause analysis of student-generated multimodal analytical exposition texts. In addition, this study is among the first to systematically map intersemiotic complementarity relations—particularly repetition, elaboration, and extension—in this specific genre and educational context.

The context of this study is an academic writing course in an Indonesian EFL teacher education program in which pre-service teachers produced multimodal analytical exposition texts integrating visual and verbal resources. These texts provide a rich site for analysis because they require both logical argumentation and strategic multimodal integration. Through qualitative multimodal discourse analysis, the study explores patterns of intersemiotic meaning and examines how linguistic choices such as mood, modality, and transitivity align with visual representational structures to support genre-specific communicative purposes.

The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do visual and verbal modes interact to construct intersemiotic meaning in multimodal analytical exposition texts produced by EFL pre-service teachers? (2) What linguistic and visual features support argumentative meaning and coherence in EFL students' multimodal analytical exposition texts?

The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically, analytically, and pedagogically. Theoretically, the study extends SF-MDA research by explaining how visual and verbal modes interact to construct intersemiotic meaning in student-generated multimodal analytical exposition texts. Analytically, the study demonstrates how clause-level SF-MDA and intersemiotic complementarity can be systematically applied to identify linguistic and visual features that support argumentative meaning and coherence in multimodal academic writing. Pedagogically, the findings provide insights for teaching multimodal writing in EFL contexts, particularly in helping students integrate images and written language effectively to construct coherent and persuasive academic arguments.

In sum, as academic communication increasingly evolves in multimodal directions, understanding how meaning is constructed across semiotic modes becomes essential. By examining intersemiotic relations in EFL pre-service teachers' multimodal analytical exposition texts, this study seeks to illuminate how images and words work together to construct argumentative meaning and contribute to multimodal literacy development in teacher education.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design with Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) to examine intersemiotic meaning-making in multimodal academic texts produced by EFL pre-service teachers. The study focused on an in-depth analysis of selected student texts to explore how visual and verbal modes interact to construct argumentative meaning in multimodal analytical exposition writing. The Method section covers the participants, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques.

A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to interpret meaning-making processes rather than measure frequencies or test causal relationships. Specifically, the research sought to investigate how EFL pre-service teachers integrate images and written language to construct arguments, requiring close examination of textual features, contextual interpretation, and theoretical grounding. By emphasizing analytical depth rather than broad generalization, the qualitative case study design enabled detailed exploration of intersemiotic

relations within student-generated multimodal texts.

A total of 25 multimodal analytical exposition texts were collected from EFL pre-service teachers enrolled in an academic writing course in an Indonesian teacher education program. The texts were produced as part of a classroom assignment requiring students to construct analytical exposition texts integrating both verbal and visual elements. From the 25 collected texts, 3 texts were purposively selected as representative cases for in-depth multimodal analysis. The selected texts met the following criteria: (a) containing at least one meaningful visual element such as images, diagrams, or graphical representations, (b) following the generic structure and communicative purpose of analytical exposition texts, and (c) being independently written and designed by the students without collaborative authorship. Texts that lacked visual elements, did not follow the analytical exposition genre, or contained incomplete multimodal components were excluded from the analysis.

The three selected texts were analyzed comparatively to identify recurring patterns of intersemiotic meaning-making across cases. The analysis focused on linguistic features such as mood, modality, transitivity, lexical choices, and thematic progression, as well as visual representational structures and intersemiotic relations between images and written language. Although one representative text is presented in detail in the Results and Discussion section to illustrate the analytical procedure, the interpretations and conclusions were derived from patterns identified across all three texts. This approach enabled the study to maintain analytical depth while also identifying cross-text tendencies in multimodal academic writing produced by EFL pre-service teachers.

The analysis employed clause-by-clause Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and SF-MDA frameworks to examine how ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings were constructed across modes. In addition, Royce's (2002) framework of intersemiotic complementarity was used to identify relations such as repetition, elaboration, and extension between visual and verbal resources. This methodological approach was considered appropriate because it allowed systematic examination of multimodal meaning-making processes in student-generated academic texts.

The participants of this study were EFL pre-service teachers enrolled in an academic writing course in a teacher education program at a public university in Indonesia. The participants were selected through purposive sampling, as they were required to produce multimodal academic texts as part of their coursework. This selection was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine how future English teachers construct meaning across visual and verbal modes in academic writing.

The participants had completed foundational courses in English grammar and paragraph writing and were in the process of developing advanced academic writing skills. All participants had prior experience using digital tools to support academic writing tasks, including the integration of images, diagrams, or charts. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining participants' consent, anonymizing all texts, and using the data solely for research purposes.

The primary instrument of this study was document analysis, focusing on multimodal analytical exposition texts produced by the participants. These texts consisted of written arguments accompanied by visual elements such as images, charts, diagrams, or other graphical representations.

To guide the analysis, an analytical framework was developed based on: (1) Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) for analyzing ideational meanings in written language, particularly the realization of processes, participants, and circumstances. (2) Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) for examining the organization and function of visual elements. (3) Intersemiotic Complementarity (Royce, 2002) to identify semantic relations between visual and verbal modes, including repetition, elaboration, extension, and divergence.

These frameworks functioned as conceptual instruments that enabled systematic identification and interpretation of intersemiotic relations within the multimodal texts.

Data collection was conducted during a regular academic writing course in an Indonesian EFL teacher education program. As part of a classroom assignment, students were instructed to produce a multimodal analytical exposition text on an academic topic of their choice. The task required students to construct a written argument supported by at least one visual element, such as an image, chart, diagram, or graphical representation, that was relevant to the topic and argumentative claims presented in the text.

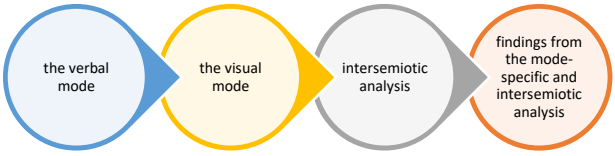
A total of 25 multimodal texts were collected from EFL pre-service teachers. Following

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submission, all texts were screened and evaluated based on predetermined inclusion criteria. Of the 25 collected texts, 3 texts met the criteria of: (a) containing at least one meaningful visual element integrated with the written text, (b) following the generic structure and communicative purpose of analytical exposition texts, and (c) being independently written and designed by the student without collaborative authorship. Texts that lacked visual elements, did not follow the analytical exposition genre structure, or contained incomplete multimodal components were excluded from the analysis. The three selected texts were then digitized and organized systematically for detailed multimodal analysis.

The analysis began with segmentation of the selected texts into verbal and visual components. The verbal mode was segmented into clauses and argumentative phases to facilitate clause-by-clause Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analysis, while the visual mode was identified and categorized based on representational structures, type of visual element, and placement within the text. This segmentation enabled detailed examination of how meaning was constructed within each mode prior to the intersemiotic analysis examining the relations between visual and verbal resources.

Data analysis followed the principles of qualitative multimodal discourse analysis and was conducted across the three selected multimodal analytical exposition texts. Although one representative text is presented in detail in the Results and Discussion section to illustrate the analytical procedure, the interpretations and conclusions were derived from recurring patterns identified across all analyzed texts.



First, the verbal mode of each text was analyzed using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), focusing on ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings realized through transitivity, mood, modality, thematic progression, and lexical choices. This stage examined how processes, participants, circumstances, and evaluative linguistic resources were used to construct argumentative meanings within the written texts.

Second, the visual mode was analyzed using Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) and visual grammar frameworks. The analysis examined how visual elements represented experiential meanings, including actions, relations, participants, and symbolic representations, as well as how visual components were spatially organized to support the overall argument of the text.

Third, intersemiotic analysis was conducted to examine the semantic relationships between visual and verbal modes across the three texts. Drawing on Royce's (2002) framework of intersemiotic complementarity, the analysis identified whether visual elements repeated, elaborated, extended, or recontextualized meanings expressed in the written language. Instances of intersemiotic alignment and misalignment were also identified to examine how multimodal coherence was achieved or disrupted within the texts.

Finally, findings from the verbal, visual, and intersemiotic analyses were compared across the three texts to identify dominant cross-text patterns of multimodal meaning-making. These recurring patterns were then interpreted in relation to multimodal academic literacy and the challenges faced by EFL pre-service teachers in integrating images and written language coherently in analytical exposition writing.

To ensure analytical rigor and consistency in the qualitative multimodal analysis, inter-coder reliability procedures were conducted during the coding process. Two researchers independently analyzed 20% of the data, focusing on the classification of linguistic features, particularly transitivity process types such as material, relational, and mental processes, as well as visual representational structures and intersemiotic relations across the selected texts. The inter-coder agreement for the Systemic Functional Linguistics analysis reached 92%, while the overall agreement for multimodal coding reached 87%, indicating a high level of analytical consistency. Any

disagreements in coding or interpretation were discussed collaboratively until consensus was achieved. These procedures strengthened the reliability, credibility, and trustworthiness of the study.

Trustworthiness in this study was ensured through several qualitative validation strategies. First, prolonged engagement with the data was conducted through repeated reading and detailed examination of the verbal, visual, and intersemiotic components of the selected multimodal texts. Second, peer debriefing was carried out through discussions with colleagues familiar with Systemic Functional Linguistics and multimodal discourse analysis to review interpretations and analytical decisions. Third, thick description was applied by providing detailed explanations of the analytical procedures, coding categories, and examples from the texts to enhance transparency and allow readers to understand how interpretations were developed. Finally, member checking was conducted where appropriate by confirming selected interpretations with participants to ensure that the analyses accurately reflected the intended meanings of the multimodal texts. These procedures strengthened the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the study.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the study. Participants' consent was obtained prior to data collection, and all texts were anonymized to protect participants' identities and confidentiality. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the institutional review board of the university. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any academic or personal consequences. All collected data were used solely for research purposes and stored securely to maintain confidentiality and research integrity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study concerning how images and written language interact to construct intersemiotic meaning in multimodal academic writing produced by EFL pre-service teachers. Drawing on qualitative multimodal discourse analysis, the analysis focuses on the semantic relationships between visual and verbal modes within three selected multimodal analytical exposition texts. Although one representative text is presented in detail to illustrate the clause-by-clause analytical procedure, the findings and interpretations were derived from recurring patterns identified across all analyzed texts. The findings are organized around patterns of intersemiotic relations, including alignment, complementarity, and occasional misalignment, to illustrate how meaning is distributed and negotiated across modes. The discussion interprets these cross-text patterns in relation to Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis and intersemiotic complementarity, highlighting their implications for multimodal academic literacy in EFL teacher education contexts.

This is one of the multimodal text was produced by one of the pre-service teacher. This text is analyzed using O'Halloran's Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis to examine the intersemiotic relationships between visual images and written language.

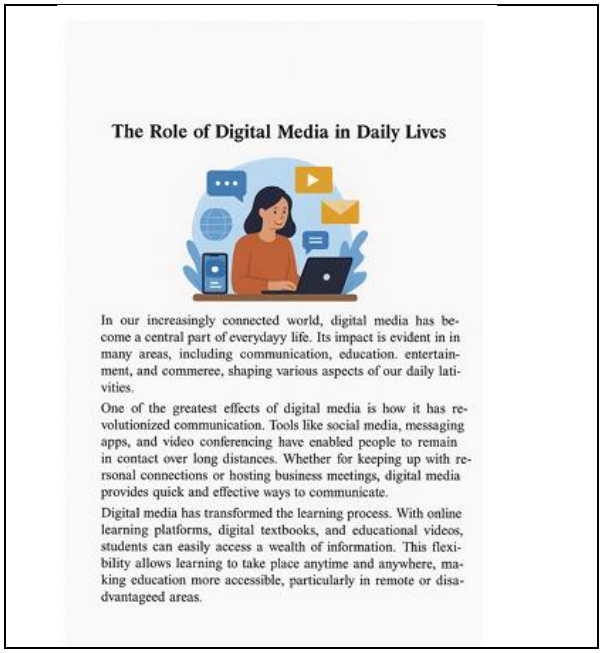


Figure 1. *Multimodal analytical exposition text*

Analysis of ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions (verbal mode analysist)

From the text above first analysis used Clause-by-Clause SFL Analysis consisted of Theme/Rheme, Transitivity, MOOD/modality and Conjunction (O'Halloran, 2011)

Table 1. *Clause-by-clause SFL analysis*

SFL Feature	Dominant Pattern	Function in the Text

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Mood Type	Declarative mood	Creates an authoritative, informative, and persuasive tone typical of analytical exposition texts
Process Type	Material processes	Emphasizes actions, impacts, and transformations caused by digital media
Supporting Process	Relational processes	Defines and evaluates the role and significance of digital media
Modality	High-certainty modalization with limited medium-certainty expressions	Strengthens argumentative confidence while maintaining academic objectivity
Theme Pattern	Predominantly topical unmarked themes	Maintains thematic consistency and supports textual coherence
Conjunction Use	Limited use of conditional and temporal conjunctions	Organizes logical relations between arguments
Lexical Focus	Topic-related vocabulary (digital media, communication, education, learning)	Reinforces field construction and thematic relevance

Based on the clause-by-clause SFL analysis tables, there are some results showed:

Frequent use of declarative mood

The analysis shows that almost all clauses are constructed in the declarative mood, which indicates that the writer presents information in a factual, informative, and explanatory tone rather than questioning or commanding. This choice is consistent with the social purpose of analytical exposition texts, which aim to present logical arguments and persuade through evidence and clarity. The declarative pattern also ensures coherence, giving the text an authoritative and academic style.

Use of modalization (probability and usuality)

The text employs modalization of high certainty (e.g., "digital media has transformed...", "provides quick and effective ways..."), which strengthens the reliability of the arguments. Some medium-certainty modalization appears, for example with the modal operator can ("students can easily access..."), showing possibility and ability. This balance of high and medium certainty: (a) Reinforces confidence in the positive role of digital media, (b) Highlights practical usability (can easily access) without overstating. Thus, the arguments are presented as convincing but not exaggerated, maintaining academic objectivity.

Dominance of material processes

The text heavily features material processes (e.g., has transformed, provides, allows, enables), which emphasize actions and concrete impacts of digital media on daily life. This dominance reflects the ideational metafunction, showcasing how digital media actively brings changes to communication, learning, and accessibility. Relational processes (e.g., is evident, is how it has revolutionized) appear as support, but the material processes dominate, foregrounding tangible actions and transformations.

From the analysis of ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions by using clause by clause Systemic functional linguistics (Emilia, 2005) .The clause analysis reveals that: (1) Declarative mood dominates, supporting an authoritative and explanatory style typical of analytical exposition texts. (2) Modalization balances high certainty with some expressions of ability, producing a confident yet reasonable tone. (3) Material processes dominate, foregrounding the practical and transformative effects of digital media.

These linguistic choices demonstrate how the student's text aligns well with the genre's purpose: presenting factual, well-structured arguments to explain and persuade readers about the significant role of digital media in daily life.

Analysis of topic-related words employed.

The text "The Role of Digital Media in Daily Lives" employs a number of technical or topic-related words that are strongly connected to the field of digital media, communication, and education. These lexical choices highlight the author's ability to stay focused on the topic while ensuring clarity in delivering arguments. Below is the breakdown:

Core technical words (directly related to the topic of digital media)

(1) Digital media (repeated 4 times throughout the text, serving as the central theme). (2) Communication (repeated 2 times, central domain where digital media plays a role). (3) Education (3 times), learning (3 times), educational videos (1 time), digital textbooks (1 time). (4) Commerce (1

time, reflecting digital media's role in trade/marketplace).

These words construct the ideational field of discourse and anchor the text within the analytical exposition genre.

Sub-technical/supporting words (specific tools, platforms, or practices) only once repeated.
(1) Social media (2) Messaging apps (3) Video conferencing (4) Online learning platforms (5) Personal connections and business meetings

These terms are not only topical but also practical instantiations of digital media. Their inclusion makes the argument more concrete and relatable. It has been repeated once.

Academic/analytical vocabulary (words that show stance and evaluation)
(1) Revolutionized (2)Quick and effective (3) Transformed (4) Flexibility (5) Accessible

The text makes effective use of technical and topic-related vocabulary, maintaining relevance to the central theme of digital media. By combining core terms (digital media, communication, education), practical instantiations (social media, video conferencing, online platforms), and evaluative vocabulary (revolutionized, accessible, flexibility), the student successfully constructs arguments aligned with the genre of analytical exposition.

Analysis of arguments presented aligned with the topic
Here's the analysis of the text based on how the arguments presented aligned with the given topic ("The Role of Digital Media in Daily Lives"):

Relevance to the central topic
The text consistently aligns with the central theme. The title emphasizes the role of digital media in everyday life, and every paragraph expands on this idea: (1) Paragraph 1: Introduces digital media as a central part of daily life. (2) Paragraph 2: Argues its role in revolutionizing communication. (3) Paragraph 3: Explains its contribution to education and flexible learning.

This shows a logical alignment between the arguments and the main topic. No argument meanings outside the scope of "digital media in daily lives."

Clarity and strength of arguments
Argument 1 (Communication): Supported with concrete examples such as social media, messaging apps, and video conferencing. These examples strengthen the claim by connecting digital media directly to daily practices. Argument 2 (Education and Learning): The text highlights online platforms, digital textbooks, and educational videos, which illustrate how digital media improves accessibility and flexibility in learning.

Both arguments are clear, relevant, and evidence-based, reinforcing the social purpose of analytical exposition texts.

Cohesion and thematic progression
The arguments progress logically: (1) General statement: Digital media as part of everyday life. (2) Specific effect: Its revolutionizing impact on communication. (3) Extended effect: Its transformative role in education.

This thematic progression ensures that the arguments remain aligned with the thesis and contribute to the overall purpose of showing digital media's importance in daily lives.

The arguments in the text are well-aligned with the given topic, supported by relevant examples, and organized coherently. Each paragraph stays within the scope of "digital media in daily life," moving from general impact to specific areas (communication and education). This alignment demonstrates the writer's ability to construct an analytical exposition that is both focused and persuasive.

Analysis of image using representational visual structure (visual mode analysist)



Figure 2. *The role of digital media in daily lives*

The analysis of the visual image from the text "The Role of Digital Media in Daily Lives" using Representational Visual Structure (van Leeuwen & Kress, 2006):

Process elements (action / event)
The visual shows a young woman sitting at a desk with a laptop, engaged in online activity. Around her, there are icons of digital communication tools (video play button, message bubble, email, phone). This represents the action process of accessing and

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using digital media for learning and communication.

Participants (who/what is involved)

Human Participant: The woman represents users of digital media, symbolizing the learner or individual in everyday life. Technological Participants: The icons (play button, chat, phone, email) symbolize different forms of digital media tools that provide access to communication and learning resources. Together, they connect the relationship between human users and digital platforms.

3. Circumstances (Context of Learning and Communication)

The woman is positioned in a personal learning/working space with digital symbols around her. This reflects the circumstance of convenience and accessibility, as emphasized in the text. It highlights that users can access information and communication from anywhere.

4. Analytical Process (Whole–Part Relationship)

The laptop and the digital icons represent the whole system of digital media. Each icon (video, chat, message) represents the parts that provide specific functions (learning, communication, entertainment). This mirrors how the text breaks down the different roles of digital media in daily life.

5. Symbolic Process (Abstract Meaning)

Symbolically, the image conveys empowerment and digital literacy. The calm and focused woman symbolizes independence and self-directed learning. The surrounding icons act as abstract representations of opportunities offered by digital media. This reflects the paragraph's theme that digital media has become central to communication, education, and everyday life.

The visual image strongly aligns with the written text. It represents the ideational meaning (digital tools for communication and education), supports textual coherence (linking to the theme of digital media in daily lives), and provides symbolic value (empowerment and accessibility). Thus, it is not merely decorative but functions as a meaningful multimodal resource to reinforce the argument of the text.

Overall based on the analysis of ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions, analysis of topic-related words employed, analysis of arguments presented aligned with the topic and analysis of image using representational visual structure it shows that the student's text aligns well with the genre of analytical exposition. The frequent use of declarative mood establishes a factual and authoritative tone, while balanced modalization (high certainty with some expressions of ability) reinforces confidence without exaggeration. Material processes dominate, highlighting the tangible impacts of digital media on communication and education. The vocabulary is consistently topic-related, combining core terms (digital media, communication, education) with practical examples (social media, online platforms) and evaluative lexis (revolutionized, accessible). The arguments are clearly organized and remain focused on the central theme, moving from general statements to specific impacts. The accompanying image complements the text by symbolically and analytically reinforcing the role of digital media in daily life. Together, these features demonstrate a coherent, persuasive, and genre-appropriate exposition.

Intersemiotic Integration in Multimodal Analytical Exposition Writing (Intersemiotic Analysist)

Above analysis demonstrates that the student's multimodal analytical exposition text aligns strongly with the generic, linguistic, and multimodal expectations of the analytical exposition genre. The clause-by-clause Systemic Functional Linguistics analysis shows that the dominance of declarative mood supports an authoritative, factual, and explanatory stance, which is central to the social purpose of analytical exposition texts—namely, to present logical arguments and persuade readers through evidence rather than interrogation or command. This finding is consistent with SFL-based genre descriptions, which emphasize the role of declarative clauses in constructing objective and reasoned academic discourse (Emilia, 2005; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013).

In terms of interpersonal meaning, the use of modalization reflects a balanced evaluative stance. High-certainty modalization strengthens the writer's claims about the transformative role of digital media, while medium-certainty expressions of ability (e.g., *can*) introduce a sense of possibility without exaggeration. This balance contributes to academic credibility by combining confidence with caution, aligning with previous findings that effective academic argumentation avoids both overgeneralization and excessive hedging (Emilia, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Such modal choices position the writer as informed and persuasive while maintaining an appropriate level of objectivity.

From an ideational perspective, the dominance of material processes foregrounds the tangible and practical impacts of digital media on communication and education. By emphasizing actions such as *transform*, *provide*, *enable*, and *allow*, the text constructs digital media as an active agent of change in daily life. This finding supports SFL claims that material processes are particularly effective in representing experiential meaning in explanatory and argumentative genres (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). Relational processes function as supportive resources, but the prominence of material processes highlights action, impact, and transformation, reinforcing the persuasive force of the arguments.

Lexically, the consistent use of topic-related and technical vocabulary anchors the text firmly within its field. Core terms (e.g., *digital media, communication, education*), sub-technical examples (e.g., *social media, video conferencing, online platforms*), and evaluative lexis (e.g., *revolutionized, accessible, flexibility*) collectively contribute to field construction and lexical cohesion. This pattern reflects effective control of disciplinary vocabulary, which is a key indicator of successful academic writing and genre mastery (Eggins, 2004; Royce & Bowcher, 2013).

The analysis of arguments further confirms that the text demonstrates strong thematic alignment and logical progression. Arguments remain consistently focused on the central topic—digital media in daily life—and develop from general claims to more specific domains, such as communication and education. This progression supports textual coherence and reflects effective thematic development, a feature emphasized in SFL-based analyses of academic texts (Emilia, 2005).

Importantly, the visual image, analyzed through representational visual structure, complements the written text by reinforcing ideational meaning and supporting multimodal coherence. The image represents action processes, participants, and circumstances that parallel those expressed linguistically, while also conveying symbolic meanings related to empowerment, accessibility, and digital literacy. In line with visual grammar theory, the image functions not as decoration but as a meaning-making resource that re-realizes and extends the written arguments (O'Halloran, 2011; Royce & Bowcher, 2013; van Leeuwen & Kress, 2006). The analysis found strong intersemiotic alignment between the visual and verbal modes in this particular text, as the image consistently supported the central arguments presented in the written discourse. No significant instances of intersemiotic misalignment or divergence were identified in the analyzed text. Rather than indicating that all student-produced multimodal texts achieve similar coherence, this finding should be understood as a characteristic of the selected text, which demonstrated effective integration of visual and verbal resources to support argumentative meaning. This intersemiotic alignment demonstrates how visual and verbal modes can work together effectively to construct meaning in multimodal academic writing.

Unlike previous studies suggesting that EFL students often treat images as decorative additions rather than meaning-making resources (Eisenlauer & Karatza, 2020; Salih, 2021), the student text analyzed in this study demonstrated relatively strong integration between visual and verbal modes. The visual elements were coherently aligned with the written arguments and functioned to reinforce ideational and symbolic meanings rather than merely providing illustration. This finding may reflect the participant's relatively advanced academic writing proficiency or the influence of the instructional context, which emphasized multimodal composition and analytical exposition writing. The result suggests that explicit exposure to multimodal academic literacy practices may support more effective intersemiotic integration in EFL writing contexts.

Overall, these findings confirm that the student's text exemplifies a coherent, persuasive, and genre-appropriate multimodal analytical exposition. The integration of linguistic choices (mood, modality, processes), lexical resources, argument structure, and visual representation illustrates how intersemiotic meaning can be effectively constructed through the interaction of images and written language. Consistent with previous multimodal and SFL-based studies (Emilia & Martin, 2023; Royce & Bowcher, 2013), the results underscore the importance of explicitly teaching both linguistic and visual meaning-making resources in EFL teacher education to support the development of multimodal academic literacy.

CONCLUSION

Across the analyzed multimodal analytical exposition texts, recurring patterns suggested that intersemiotic meaning was constructed through the coordinated interaction of visual and verbal resources rather than through their mere combination. Using Systemic Functional–Multimodal Discourse Analysis, the findings

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indicated that the dominance of declarative mood, balanced modalization, and material processes contributed to the social purpose of analytical exposition texts by establishing an authoritative, factual, and persuasive stance. Lexical choices remained consistently aligned with the field of digital media, while arguments were organized coherently from general claims to specific impacts, reinforcing textual cohesion. Importantly, images functioned as meaning-making resources that re-realized and extended ideational meanings expressed linguistically through representational visual structures, symbolically reinforcing themes of accessibility, empowerment, and digital literacy.

This case study suggests that effective multimodal academic writing depends on strong intersemiotic alignment between visual and verbal modes. The findings highlight how linguistic and visual resources can work together to construct coherent and persuasive multimodal analytical exposition texts. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that explicit instruction in Systemic Functional Linguistics, particularly transitivity and modality analysis, can help students construct more persuasive and logically organized arguments in multimodal academic writing. In addition, teaching visual grammar (van Leeuwen & Kress, 2006) may improve students' ability to design images as meaning-making resources rather than merely decorative elements. The findings also indicate that assessment practices for multimodal academic writing should include criteria evaluating intersemiotic alignment between visual and verbal modes to support more coherent and effective multimodal compositions. However, because the study focused on a limited number of texts, further research involving larger datasets and broader educational contexts is needed to confirm whether these patterns consistently emerge in EFL multimodal academic writing. Future research should analyze larger corpora of student multimodal texts to identify broader cross-student patterns of intersemiotic meaning-making. Comparative studies across genres, such as analytical exposition, discussion, and recount texts, may also provide deeper insights into how intersemiotic relations vary according to genre purposes and structures. In addition, longitudinal research is needed to examine the development of students' multimodal literacy and intersemiotic competence over time. Future studies may also compare multimodal texts produced by pre-service teachers with those created by in-service teachers or expert academic writers to better understand differences in multimodal meaning-making practices across levels of expertise.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, although three multimodal analytical exposition texts were analyzed, only one representative text was presented in detailed clause-by-clause discussion, which may limit the breadth of textual comparison presented in the findings section. Second, the study focused exclusively on the analytical exposition genre; therefore, the findings may not be transferable to other multimodal academic genres such as discussion texts, reports, or argumentative essays. Third, the data were collected from a single Indonesian EFL teacher education program, which may limit the contextual generalizability of the findings to other educational settings or cultural contexts. Fourth, the qualitative case study design emphasized analytical depth rather than statistical generalization, meaning that the identified intersemiotic patterns should be interpreted cautiously. Finally, the study employed a cross-sectional analysis of completed texts and did not examine the longitudinal development of students' multimodal writing abilities over time. Future research involving larger datasets, multiple institutional contexts, different academic genres, and longitudinal designs is needed to provide broader insights into intersemiotic meaning-making in EFL multimodal academic writing.

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