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PART IV	
Learners' Production of Multimodal Texts	159
12 The Mediatory Role of Whiteboards in the Making of Multimodal Texts: Implications of the Transduction of Speech to Writing for the English Classroom in Tertiary Settings	161
XIAOQIN WU AND LOUISE RAVELLI	
13 'Reading' Literature Through Drawing: A Multimodal Pedagogic Model for the EAL University Classroom	176
RUMIKO OYAMA	
14 Multimodal Text Making Through Digital Storytelling: EAL Student Teachers' Reflections	190
ANITA NORMANN	
PART V	
Assessment of Learners' Multimodal Texts	205
15 Designing for Assessment as Recognition of Multimodal Work in the EAL Classroom	207
GERMÁN CANALE	
16 The Common Framework of Reference for Intercultural Digital Literacies (CFRIDiL): Learning as Meaning-Making and Assessment as Recognition in English as an Additional Language Contexts	221
MARIA GRAZIA SINDONI, ILARIA MOSCHINI, ELISABETTA ADAMI, AND STYLIANI KARATZA	
17 Assessing Multimodal Listening Comprehension Through Online Informative Videos: The Operationalisation of a New Listening Framework for ESP in Higher Education	238
MARI CARMEN CAMPOY-CUBILLO AND MERCEDES QUEROL-JULIÁN	

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17 Assessing Multimodal Listening Comprehension Through Online Informative Videos: The Operationalisation of a New Listening Framework for ESP in Higher Education

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17.1 Introduction

The assessment of listening in a language learning context should recognise the multimodal nature of communication. However, current assessment practices do not fully acknowledge multimodality in their assessment frameworks. There is a need to examine communicative modes beyond speech, which is usually the main communicative mode taken into account to build assessment criteria for listening events. There is also a common misconception that modes (means of communicating) and media (the channels through which communication is conveyed) are the same thing. This misconception is transferred to assessment frameworks and generates further confusion as to how to deal with the assessment of multimodal texts. Although current assessment frameworks such as the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2018) have started to consider the multimodal nature of communication in their arguments, the move beyond speech and the distinction between mode and media have still not been fully addressed. This chapter analyses the CEFR assessment criteria for listening comprehension and detects niches for improvement, proposing specific multimodal listening descriptors.

On principle, the CEFR replaces the four-skill model (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) by recognising communicative language activities and strategies. These are grouped into four modes of communication, namely: reception, production, interaction, and mediation. Under this framework, it is claimed that (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 56):

In aural reception (one-way listening) activities, the language user receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more

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