

MULTIMODAL TEXT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This study examines the use of multimodal texts in English language teaching, with a focus on both instructional steps and the challenges encountered in practice. Employing a case study research design in an Islamic school in Banjarmasin-South Kalimantan, data were mainly collected through classroom observation and interviews with one English teacher and six students. The findings demonstrate that the teacher used a range of multimodal media—including YouTube videos, students' worksheet, WhatsApp group, and Google Forms—across different stages of instruction to enhance student engagement and comprehension. While these multimodal media proved effective in motivating learners, the teacher faced significant barriers such as inadequate technological infrastructure, inconsistent internet access, and limited digital proficiency. Students also reported challenges, particularly regarding disengagement with less visually appealing materials and distraction during digital activities. These results highlight the importance of equipping English teachers with both the technical resources and training necessary to maximize multimodal learning. Future implementations should prioritize systemic support to optimize pedagogical impact in digital learning environments.

Keywords: Case study; English Language Teaching; Multimodal text

INTRODUCTION

With the high-speed advancement of technology in this digital age, the field of education is undergoing significant transformation. One major shift is the integration of various digital devices that support and enhance the learning process. Technology has also revolutionized communication patterns, particularly among younger generations who actively use social media as a primary means of information exchange. In this context, the creativity of teachers plays a critical role in continuously innovating and developing more effective teaching strategies, particularly in language instruction. One promising approach is the use of multimodal texts as instructional materials in English language learning, which has the potential to enhance student motivation. Kummin et al. (2020) pointed out that multimodal texts involve the use of diverse information and communication technology (ICT) tools to develop learning materials that are engaging and adaptive to students' various learning styles and sensory preferences. These materials may include videos, audio recordings, narrated presentations, interactive simulations, and visual-based quizzes. By incorporating such elements, teachers can create a more dynamic and immersive learning environment, ultimately supporting student comprehension and encouraging them to interpret and retell messages more effectively. Ryu and Boggs (2016) highlighted that multimodal approaches are

particularly beneficial for English language learners with limited proficiency, as they provide diverse path for participating in literacy activities, including reading and writing. Additionally, multimodality contributes to the inclusion of underrepresented voices and aligns with critical literacy approaches that encourage learners to analyze and question dominant communication.

Eksi and Yakisik (2015) argued that multimodal texts are inherently connected to digital technologies, as digital content often combines various modes—such as sound, image, motion, spatial design, and language—simultaneously to create meaning. Multimodal literacy, therefore, encompasses understanding how different semiotic resources (e.g., language, gesture, visuals) work together to convey information and how these modalities interact to form a coherent and meaningful whole. As noted by Kress (2010, as cited in Januarty & Nima, 2018), multimodality involves the integrated interpretation of elements such as visuals, video, graphics, animation, sound, music, movement, and facial expressions to construct meaning.

Traditional, rigid teaching methods and monotonous classroom environments are increasingly seen as outdated. In contrast, multimedia technologies, with their integration of audio, visual, and animated content, offer a more natural and human-centered approach to learning. These technologies not only expand access to information but also overcome temporal and spatial limitations, resulting in more effective and immersive educational experiences. Shyamlee and Phil (2012) mentioned such rich multimedia environments significantly boost students' motivation, interest, and engagement in classroom activities. Duncum (2004) also asserted that learners today are immersed in multimodal environments. They no longer rely solely on printed texts but regularly engage with digital content on smartphones, tablets, and computer screens. Verhoeven and Perfetti (2008, as cited in Hamzah, 2023) argued that ICT enables English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners to access English more conveniently through multimodal texts. These texts help students make inferences by linking new information with prior knowledge. Furthermore, exposure to a variety of sources leads to a deeper understanding than that gained from reading traditional print-only materials. While multimodal texts may include vibrant visuals and audio elements, they differ significantly from conventional books. Their individual components—such as images, phonetic sounds, and video clips—work together to enhance the message and create a broader semantic field. However, these elements can sometimes convey contradictory information. Because they incorporate physical appearance, gestures, and expressions, multimodal texts often resemble spoken discourse more closely than written text. Visual aids, in particular, are central in shaping digital communication.

Cocchetta (2018) found that instructional approaches based on systemic functional multimodal text analysis can significantly improve students' communicative competence in multimodal contexts. Through structured analytical tasks, students learn to recognize and interpret various semiotic resources, including language, images, and movement. They also develop a metalanguage—the ability to discuss how meaning is constructed in multimodal texts and relate this to social and cultural contexts. The study found that students became more critical and reflective in interpreting digital content and better understood the role of each semiotic element in shaping meaning. Next, research by Yi et al. (2019) demonstrated that implementing multimodal literacy in K–12 English language instruction offers several notable benefits. These include the enhancement of students'

English language proficiency, the development of metalanguage awareness, opportunities for authentic writing, expression of student identity and agency, and the cultivation of critical understanding of social issues. However, the study also identified significant challenges, such as the absence of standardized curricula, difficulties in assessing multimodal work, and limited professional training for teachers in designing and applying multimodal literacy practices effectively.

Similarly, Sakulprasertsri (2020) found that university-level English lecturers in Thailand had integrated multiple semiotic modes into their teaching. This approach not only improved students' English language skills but also enabled them to apply their language knowledge in real-life contexts, thereby enhancing the relevance and practicality of their learning experiences. Further evidence from Kummin et al. (2020) indicated that the use of multimodal materials promotes students' analytical and creative thinking, as well as their English fluency. The study emphasized the importance of utilizing auditory and visual modes—such as video texts—to support EFL learners' achievement and classroom satisfaction. Findings revealed several key outcomes: students became more proactive in managing their learning, demonstrated more critical and creative language use, and exhibited overall improvement in their English language skills.

Al Farabi and Rohmah (2023) also reported positive outcomes from using multimodal literacy instruction through integrated advertising texts. Their study showed improvements across the four core language skills—listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Students not only gained a deeper understanding of advertising text structures but also demonstrated the ability to produce such texts in both written and spoken formats, incorporating visual, linguistic, and persuasive elements. Moreover, student engagement in the learning process increased, fostering greater confidence and collaboration in analyzing and creating multimodal texts.

Despite these promising findings, a review of the current literature reveals a research gap regarding the use of multimodal texts in teaching English as a foreign language at the tertiary level. This gap highlights the need for further investigation, particularly into how teachers integrate multimodal texts into English language instruction and the specific challenges they and their students encounter in classroom implementation.

METHOD

This research employed qualitative research method with a case study approach since it used to explore and understand the meaning given by individuals or groups to social or humanitarian problems. In this research, there is a process that includes developing questions and procedures, data collected at the participant's place, inductive data analysis, which builds general themes from specific facts, and researchers who provide interpretations of the meaning of the data (Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, 2017). This research was conducted at *Madrasah Aliyah Negeri* (MAN) 1 Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, specifically in the XI Advanced Level 3 class, in January to April 2025.

The participants in this research were one teacher who had used multimodal texts in teaching English in the classroom and six representative students from the XI Advanced Level 3 class at MAN 1 Banjarmasin. In this research, the researchers gathered

information on how multimodal texts were used in teaching English in the XI Advanced Level 3 class by the teacher and what challenges were faced by both the teacher and students in implementing multimodal texts in the English classroom.

The data in this research were obtained from classroom observations and interviews with the teacher who implemented multimodal texts in teaching English, as well as with the students taught in the XI Advanced Level 3 class. In this research, the researchers used an observation sheet to collect data on how the teacher used multimodal texts in teaching English and the implementation process. The challenges faced by both the teacher and students in using multimodal texts in the classroom were identified based on interviews with the teacher and six students from the XI Advanced Level 3 class at MAN 1 Banjarmasin, who were active participants in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the English teacher at MAN 1 Banjarmasin extensively utilizes digital and internet-based multimodal texts throughout the teaching process, from the pre-activity to the post-activity phase. The teacher intentionally adapts instructional strategies to align with the technological habits and preferences of today's students. As Lin et al. (2015, as cited in Haryadi & Rohmah, 2023) noted, many adolescents today are growing up surrounded by interactive, internet-based media applications, which significantly shape their learning styles and expectations.

The Multimodal Text Implementation in English Language Teaching (ELT)

The implementation of multimodal texts in the English classroom can be categorized into three key phases: Pre-Activity, Main Activity, and Post-Activity.

Pre-Activity

The pre-activity phase plays a crucial role in setting the atmosphere for the lesson and preparing students to engage actively in the learning process. During this stage, the teacher typically begins the session with a warm greeting, such as: *“Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Good afternoon class, how are you today?”*. Students generally respond enthusiastically, which contributes to creating a positive classroom atmosphere. This is followed by taking attendance and reciting a short prayer together, establishing a routine that fosters discipline and focus.

Main Activity

During the main activity phase, the teacher introduces the core content of the lesson using multimodal resources, particularly videos from YouTube. The lesson typically begins with an apperception—a brief review or introduction—to help students connect prior knowledge to the new material. The teacher then instructs students to observe the multimedia content, which serves as a stimulus for discussion and comprehension.



Figure 1. Teacher Displays a Video from YouTube

After students have engaged with the video, the teacher facilitates a reflective discussion by asking students what information they were able to gather from the material. This strategy encourages active participation, promotes critical thinking, and ensures that students are not passive recipients of information but instead interact with the content in meaningful ways.

Post-Activity

In the post-activity phase, the teacher typically assigns individual exercises to reinforce learning. These tasks are usually delivered via Google Forms, with the link shared through the classroom's WhatsApp group.

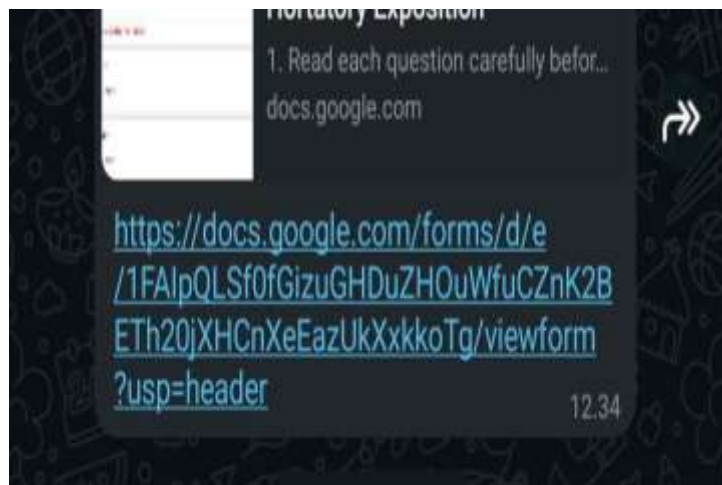


Figure 2. A Capture of the Quiz Link

This method not only reinforces the material covered during the main activity but also promotes autonomous learning through technology, allowing students to complete assignments outside the classroom at their own pace.

Although the teacher's use of multimodal texts was primarily limited to picture books, web links, and videos, these resources proved beneficial in enhancing student engagement and supporting the explanation of instructional content. This finding aligns

with Yunita and Harahap (2024), who asserted that multimodal texts help students develop critical thinking skills when interpreting messages across different media. For instance, when presented with an image, students are encouraged to interpret its visual meaning. Similarly, during online presentations, students are better able to grasp and process the intended information. Moreover, the use of multimodal texts contributes to improved reading comprehension and motivates students to learn foreign languages. This is largely due to the ability of multimodal materials to communicate messages through a combination of visual, auditory, and kinetic elements. Examples of such materials include YouTube videos, blogs, social media content, movies, series, and webinars, all of which offer valuable learning opportunities.

During interviews, the teacher emphasized the usefulness of multimodal texts—particularly videos and images in teaching English. She noted that these resources enhance students' understanding of English concepts, accelerate their learning, and foster increased classroom engagement. These observations are consistent with Siefert et al. (2019, as cited in Lestari, 2022), who noted that the digital age is broadening how educators engage students across disciplines. The teacher also expressed that digital multimodal texts simplify the instructional process, especially in assigning and assessing student work efficiently, while also encouraging innovative teaching practices. This supports the view of Wisneski et al. (2017, as cited in Lestari, 2022), who argued that digital tools can facilitate authentic and engaging learning experiences customized to students' needs. Furthermore, the teacher observed that multimodal texts increase student involvement during lessons—a claim that aligns with Kummin et al. (2020), who stated that multimodal texts enhance student engagement and investment in the learning process, making them a valuable pedagogical tool.

In addition, Eksi and Yakisik (2015, as cited in Trisanti et al., 2022) emphasized that multimodal texts foster students' cognitive development and enhance creativity, focus, participation, and overall learning outcomes. These insights are supported by findings from the current study, which showed that the use of visual materials particularly videos in English language instruction stimulated students' creativity, attention, engagement, and academic performance. Rather than passively listening to lectures, students actively contributed to the learning process, demonstrating greater involvement and interaction when multimodal texts were incorporated into classroom activities.

Challenges Faced by Teachers and Students in Using Multimodal Texts in English Class

The study identified several challenges that hinder the effective use of multimodal texts in English language teaching and learning. These obstacles were experienced by both the teacher and students at MAN 1 Banjarmasin.

1. Challenges Faced by the Teacher

a. Difficulties in Preparing Teaching Materials

One of the primary challenges for the teacher is the complexity involved in preparing multimodal teaching materials. Designing effective multimodal content requires not only a thorough understanding of the subject matter but also the ability to

select, adapt, and integrate appropriate visual, auditory, and audiovisual elements to support students' comprehension. This finding is consistent with Abdullah et al. (2020), who stated that teachers are expected to adopt diverse pedagogical strategies using various semiotic resources to enhance students' understanding through multimodal teaching techniques.

b. Limited Availability of Facilities and Infrastructure

Another significant challenge is the lack of sufficient technological infrastructure. According to the teacher, not all classrooms at MAN 1 Banjarmasin are equipped with essential digital tools such as projectors, computers, or high-speed internet. The absence of these resources makes it difficult to implement multimodal instruction effectively. This aligns with the findings of Widyawati and Sukadari (2023), who emphasized that access to adequate technological infrastructure is critical for the successful integration of technology-based learning media.

c. Limited Technological Skills

The teacher acknowledged that proficiency in digital tools is increasingly essential in today's educational environment, particularly for creating interactive and engaging learning experiences. However, she also noted that certain digital platforms and devices remain unfamiliar to her, which restricts the full utilization of multimodal texts. This challenge is echoed by Shyamlee and Phil (2012), who highlighted the importance of multimedia tools in making learning more dynamic and accessible. Furthermore, Rudianti et al. (2024) stressed that ongoing professional development—through training, workshops, and collaboration with peers—is necessary to build educators' digital competencies. Without these opportunities, technological limitations can become systemic barriers that hinder effective teaching.

2. Challenges Faced by Students

a. Lack of Interest in Video-Based Learning

Although videos have the potential to make English learning more engaging, some students reported losing interest when the video content was not sufficiently engaging or relevant to the lesson. Monotonous or overly lengthy videos often led to distraction and reduced classroom focus. This observation supports Flynn's (2016) view that videos can enrich learning by offering real-life context and improving comprehension—provided they are well-chosen and pedagogically aligned. As Bakhtiar et al. (2024) also emphasized, selecting interesting and relevant materials is crucial to maintaining student attention.

b. Inadequate Facilities

Students also encountered limitations in accessing the required digital tools and infrastructure. Essential devices such as projectors, computers, and stable internet connections were not always available or accessible to all students. This finding is in line with Shofiah (2019, as cited in Rosmalah et al., 2022), who found that adequate school facilities are vital in fostering student motivation and supporting technology-enhanced learning environments.

c. Difficulty Maintaining Focus in Technology-Based Learning

While mobile technology facilitates flexible learning, it also poses challenges in terms of student concentration. Based on interview data, students often struggled with self-discipline when learning independently via smartphones. Distractions, procrastination, and reduced enthusiasm were common. These issues align with Ari Rahmanto's (2021, as cited in Zulfa & Mujazi, 2022) findings, which indicated that unsupervised use of mobile devices can negatively affect student engagement and learning outcomes. Signs of disengagement included inattentiveness, excessive socializing, or even falling asleep during lessons.

d. Limited Access to Devices and Internet Connectivity

The success of digital multimodal learning also depends heavily on access to reliable internet and compatible devices. Interviews revealed that not all students had consistent access to such resources, which hindered their participation and learning. This challenge is supported by Najib et al. (2022, as cited in Hanifah et al., 2024), who emphasized that adequate internet connectivity and access to digital tools are essential for effective online and multimedia-based instruction.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the use of multimodal texts in English language instruction is effective in enhancing student engagement, comprehension, and classroom interaction. The teaching process typically begins with greetings and prayer to set a positive tone, followed by the use of digital media such as YouTube videos, images, and web links during the core activities to present the material in a more visually accessible manner. Post-lesson assessments are conducted via Google Forms, enabling teachers to measure student understanding efficiently.

The integration of multimodal texts contributes to a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. Students exhibit increased interest, reduced boredom, and greater participation, while teachers benefit from a more engaging and efficient method of delivering content. However, several challenges were identified during the implementation of this approach. From the teacher's perspective, challenges include difficulties in preparing appropriate multimodal materials due to limited time, technological skills, and access to facilities such as devices and reliable internet. In some cases, teachers must bring their own equipment to class to ensure lesson delivery. Students also face several obstacles, including diminished interest when videos are not engaging, limited access to digital tools, and distractions when learning through mobile devices. Technical issues, such as low battery power and poor internet connectivity, further hinder the learning process.

Therefore, to optimize the use of multimodal texts in English instruction, it is essential to provide adequate technological infrastructure, offer ongoing professional development and digital literacy training for teachers, and implement strategies to help students manage technology use responsibly. Addressing these factors will enhance the effectiveness of multimodal learning and support improved educational outcomes. In addition, future research could explore the long-term impact of multimodal text integration on students' language proficiency, critical thinking, and academic

performance across different grade levels. Comparative studies between schools with varying levels of technological access may also yield insights into equity and effectiveness. Additionally, research examining students' and teachers' digital literacy development over time, as well as studies on best practices for teacher training in multimodal pedagogy, would provide valuable contributions to the field of English language education.

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