

Implementing Multimodal Literacy-Based Instruction in EFL Classrooms: Teachers' Practices and Challenges

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Abstract

This study aims to explore teachers' practices and challenges in implementing multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms. The study employed a qualitative research design involving two EFL teachers from two senior high schools in South Sulawesi. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers implemented multimodal literacy-based instruction through adaptive communication practices, collaborative classroom interaction, and the integration of various multimodal resources during learning activities. Teachers adjusted communication modes, instructional approaches, and classroom activities based on students' learning needs and classroom situations. The findings also showed that multimodal classroom practices encouraged students' participation through discussion, role play, presentations, and peer interaction during learning activities. In addition, the study identified several instructional and institutional challenges experienced by teachers, including difficulties related to classroom interaction, students' participation, instructional preparation, technological adaptation, and limited classroom facilities. Overall, the findings suggest that multimodal literacy-based instruction involves not only the integration of multimodal resources but also teachers' adaptive communication practices and continuous instructional adjustment during classroom learning activities.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning; EFL Classrooms; Multimodal Literacy-Based Instruction; Multimodal Learning; Teachers' Practices

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1. Introduction

English language teaching has experienced significant changes as different communication modes and instructional resources are increasingly incorporated into classroom learning. In EFL classrooms, learning activities are no longer restricted to printed materials and teacher-centered verbal instruction, but also include visual, audio, digital, and interactive resources to support students' learning (Choi & Yi, 2016; Sakkir, 2025). Recent studies in language education indicate that multimodal classroom practices play an important role in facilitating classroom interaction and students' engagement during learning activities (Shu et al., 2024; Mohammadi Zenouzagh, 2023). Consequently, EFL learning increasingly involves multimodal communication practices that integrate multiple communication modes during instructional activities.

Within this context, multimodal literacy-based instruction has gained increasing attention in EFL learning environments. Multimodal literacy is commonly understood as the ability to interpret and express meaning through various modes of communication, including language, images, audio, gestures, and digital media (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010; Abduh, 2022). In language learning contexts, multimodal classroom practices can facilitate classroom interaction and enhance students' engagement by incorporating visual, auditory, and digital resources into learning activities (Eliya & Nuthihar, 2025; Rohi & Nurhayati, 2024). Therefore, teachers have an important role in managing classroom interaction and adjusting communication approaches according to students' learning needs and classroom conditions.

Previous studies have explored the implementation of multimodal approaches in language learning contexts. Several studies reported that multimodal classroom practices could support students' engagement, collaborative learning, and classroom interaction in EFL classrooms (Al-Jarf, 2024; Lei & Zhang, 2024). Other studies also highlighted the increasing use of digital media and multimodal resources in language teaching practices (Pikhart et al., 2024). In

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addition, previous studies on multimodal learning in EFL contexts have frequently focused on students' language learning outcomes, the integration of instructional media, and the effectiveness of digital multimodal resources (Rahmanu & Molnár, 2024; Hendrawaty et al., 2024). Comparatively less attention has been given to teachers' classroom practices and challenges during the implementation of multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms.

In addition, the implementation of multimodal literacy-based instruction may involve various instructional and institutional challenges in EFL classrooms. Krongyut & Srijongjai (2024) explained that teachers may experience difficulties related to classroom interaction, students' participation, instructional preparation, technological adaptation, and limited classroom facilities during learning activities. Exploring teachers' experiences and instructional practices is therefore important to gain a deeper understanding of how multimodal literacy-based instruction is implemented in EFL learning contexts (Almusharraf & Engemann, 2020).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore teachers' practices and challenges in implementing multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms. The study specifically focuses on how teachers organize classroom interaction, adapt communication practices, and experience instructional and institutional challenges during multimodal learning activities in two senior high schools in South Sulawesi.

2. Literature Review

Multimodal literacy is generally understood as the ability to interpret and express meaning through multiple communication modes, such as language, images, audio, gestures, and digital media (Jewitt, 2008; Kress, 2010). In EFL learning contexts, multimodal literacy allows students to engage with different communication resources during classroom interaction and learning activities (Walsh, 2010). The use of multiple communication modes may encourage students' participation and engagement throughout the learning process. Multimodal literacy is also closely related to communication-centered learning activities in which students interact not only with written texts, but also with visual, audio, gestural and digital resources during classroom learning. Consequently, multimodal literacy-based instruction has become increasingly relevant in supporting interactive learning practices in EFL classrooms.

Multimodal classroom practices refer to the integration of various communication resources and learning activities during instructional processes. Nfor (2020) stated that multimodal learning activities may involve classroom discussion, role play, collaborative tasks, presentations, and the use of audio-visual materials during classroom learning. These classroom practices may encourage students to participate more actively during classroom interaction and collaborative learning activities. Previous studies have shown that multimodal classroom practices can support students' engagement and classroom interaction in EFL learning contexts (Tian & Deng, 2024; Nfor, 2020). The incorporation of visual, auditory, and digital resources may also help create more interactive learning environments during instructional activities. Therefore, multimodal classroom practices are increasingly associated with participatory and communication-centered learning in EFL classrooms (Sutrisno, 2024).

The implementation of multimodal literacy in EFL classrooms involves several interconnected stages during the learning process. Hornberger (2005) identifies three important components of implementation, namely planning, action, and evaluation. These components are closely related to one another and support the development of effective learning activities in classroom instruction. In implementing multimodal literacy-based instruction, teachers may provide different ways of presenting information during classroom learning. According to Bouchey et al. (2021), teachers can integrate multimodality by using diverse input methods and various communication resources during instructional activities. Through this approach, students are exposed to different forms of communication during the learning process.

However, teachers often experience several challenges during classroom learning activities. Kizildag (2009) classifies these issues into three main categories: institutional, instructional, and socio-economic challenges. Institutional challenges refer to limited organization and support from schools or educational authorities. Instructional challenges involve difficulties in creating effective learning environments. Meanwhile, socio-economic challenges are related to limited parental understanding of the importance of learning a foreign language. These challenges may influence the implementation of learning activities and classroom interaction in EFL learning contexts.

3. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore teachers' practices and challenges in implementing multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because

the study focused on understanding teachers’ experiences, classroom interaction, and communication practices during instructional activities. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research enables researchers to explore participants’ perspectives, experiences, and social practices within natural contexts. This study was conducted in two senior high schools in South Sulawesi. The participants were selected through purposive sampling (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), comprising two EFL teachers based on their teaching experiences and involvement in multimodal instructional practices in EFL classrooms.

Table 1. Participants’ Profile Information

Participant	Teaching Experience	School Setting	Available Technological Resources
Teacher BT	More than 10 years	Public Senior High School in South Sulawesi	LCD projectors, internet access, students’ smartphones, presentation media
Teacher F	More than 8 years	Public Senior High School in South Sulawesi	LCD projectors, classroom multimedia equipment, students’ smartphones, limited supporting devices

Table 1 provides contextual information regarding the participants’ professional backgrounds and instructional settings. The profile information was included to provide a clearer understanding of the teaching environments and technological conditions that may influence teachers’ implementation of multimodal literacy-based instruction. This contextual information also supports the interpretation of challenges experienced by teachers during instructional practices.

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews to explore teachers’ experiences, instructional practices, and challenges related to multimodal literacy-based instruction. The interviews provided information about teachers’ classroom practices, communication strategies, and instructional adjustments during learning activities. The data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2023). The interview data were transcribed and organized before coding was conducted to identify patterns related to teachers’ multimodal instructional practices and challenges. The codes were then grouped into broader themes representing the main findings of the study. During the analysis process, the themes were continuously reviewed and refined to ensure that they reflected the participants’ experiences and classroom practices.

4. Findings

The analysis of the interview data identified several themes related to teachers’ practices and challenges in implementing multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms. The following section presents the themes identified from the data analysis.

4.1. Teachers’ Practices in Implementing Multimodal Literacy-Based Instruction

4.1.1. Adaptive Multimodal Communication in Classroom Interaction

The findings revealed that the teachers continuously adapted communication modes and instructional interaction based on students’ learning needs and classroom situations. The participants demonstrated flexible pedagogical practices by adjusting classroom communication, instructional delivery, and multimodal resources to support students’ participation and engagement during learning activities.

Extract 1

“I adjust it based on the classroom situation and students’ needs.” “Some materials are more suitable in the form of texts, videos, or images.” (Interview with Teacher BT, 2025).

Extract 2

“Sometimes one type of media works well in one class, but not in another class.” “They respond better when I become the speaker myself.” (Interview with Teacher F, 2025).

The extracts show that the teachers adjusted communication modes according to students’ needs and classroom situations. The use of texts, videos, images, and direct oral explanation reflects how teachers selected different multimodal resources during classroom interaction.

The data also suggest that multimodal instruction was not only related to the use of media, but also to teachers' responsiveness in choosing communication approaches that were considered more suitable for particular classroom contexts. In some situations, direct oral interaction from the teacher was viewed as more effective in encouraging students' participation and classroom responses.

4.1.2. Collaborative and Interactive Meaning-Making Practices

The findings indicate that teachers implemented collaborative and interactive learning activities to promote students' participation and meaning-making during multimodal classroom practices. During the learning process, students actively engaged in discussion, role play, presentation, and peer interaction in EFL classrooms.

Extract 3

"I show them a video, then I ask them to discuss what they see." "I ask them to do role play and present the dialogue in front of the class." "I also organize question-and-answer sessions with other groups." (Interview with Teacher BT, 2025)

Extract 4

"I give them opportunities to discuss and complete the tasks." "All students should be able to report the discussion results." "I encourage students who understand better to help and engage their friends." (Interview with Teacher F, 2025)

The extracts suggest that the teachers encouraged students to participate actively through discussion, role play, presentation, and classroom interaction. These activities allowed students to communicate, share ideas, and engage with other group members during the learning process.

The data also show that students developed understanding through peer discussion and collaborative classroom activities. Students were encouraged not only to complete classroom tasks, but also to present discussion results, respond to peers, and support other students during classroom interaction. Overall, the activities encouraged students to participate more actively during multimodal learning practices in EFL classrooms.

4.2. Challenges in Implementing Multimodal Literacy-Based Instruction

The findings revealed that teachers encountered various challenges in implementing multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms. These challenges were associated with instructional practices, such as maintaining classroom interaction, organizing learning activities, adjusting instructional approaches, and addressing students' diverse learning needs during the learning process. Furthermore, institutional and infrastructural issues, including limited facilities, classroom resources, and technological support, also affected the implementation of classroom activities.

4.2.1. Instructional Challenges in Implementing Multimodal Literacy-Based Instruction

a. Managing Diverse Student Participation and Classroom Interaction

The findings indicated that teachers encountered difficulties in managing students' participation and sustaining classroom interaction during multimodal learning activities. Variations in students' abilities, classroom responses, and levels of attention affected the implementation of classroom interaction throughout the learning process.

Extract 5

"Not all students in the group have the same level of understanding." (Interview with Teacher BT, 2025)

Extract 6

"The challenging part is getting all students' attention." "The larger the class, the more challenging it becomes." "Gadgets sometimes distract students' concentration." (Interview with Teacher F, 2025)

The extracts suggest that teachers needed to continuously manage students' focus and involvement during collaborative classroom activities. Different levels of understanding and participation sometimes made classroom interaction more difficult during group discussions and learning activities.

The data also show that large classroom situations and the use of gadgets occasionally distracted students' attention during the learning process. As a result, maintaining active classroom interaction became one of the challenges during multimodal learning activities.

b. Time Management and Instructional Preparation

The findings further revealed that teachers encountered challenges related to time management and instructional preparation during multimodal classroom practices. Organizing learning activities and selecting suitable multimodal resources required additional time and continuous adjustment based on classroom situations.

Extract 7

"Sometimes we run out of time because the students are still in the learning process." "Designing the activities takes a lot of time." "Choosing the media is not easy either." (Interview with Teacher BT, 2025)

Extract 8

"Sometimes we need to adjust the media and activities based on the students' conditions." (Interview with Teacher F, 2025)

The extracts show that teachers required additional time to prepare classroom activities and adjust learning materials during multimodal classroom practices. Organizing classroom activities and selecting suitable media became more demanding because teachers needed to consider students' responses and classroom conditions.

The findings also suggest that instructional activities were not always implemented according to the initial plan during the learning process. Teachers occasionally modified classroom activities and communication approaches based on students' participation and classroom situations, which influenced instructional time management during multimodal learning activities.

c. Teachers' Technological Adaptation and Professional Readiness

The findings revealed that teachers experienced challenges in adapting to technological changes and classroom needs during multimodal learning activities. The participants emphasized the importance of continuously learning and developing their skills in selecting instructional media and classroom approaches.

Extract 9

"Teachers really need to keep learning." "Teachers need to learn more so they can adjust the methods and media." (Interview with Teacher F, 2025)

Extract 10

"Teachers are expected to be more creative in selecting learning media." (Interview with Teacher BT, 2025)

The extracts show that teachers believed continuous learning was necessary during multimodal classroom practices. The participants highlighted that teachers needed to improve their knowledge and adapt instructional methods and media according to classroom situations and students' learning needs.

The interview data further indicate that multimodal classroom practices required teachers to become more creative and flexible in selecting learning media and organizing classroom activities. As a result, teachers needed to continuously adjust their classroom practices during the learning process.

4.2.2. Institutional Challenges in Implementing Multimodal Literacy-Based Instruction

a. Limited Technological Facilities and Classroom Resources

The findings revealed that limited classroom facilities and technological resources also posed challenges during the implementation of multimodal literacy-based instruction. The availability of instructional equipment and classroom resources affected classroom activities throughout the learning process.

Extract 11

"Facilities and infrastructure are definitely one of the challenges." "Sometimes we need to connect this and connect that." (Interview with Teacher BT, 2025)

Extract 12

“Sometimes the equipment is being used by another teacher.” “The LCD is available, but the HDMI cable is missing.” (Interview with Teacher F, 2025)

The extracts indicate that limited facilities and technological equipment occasionally influenced the preparation and implementation of classroom activities. Teachers sometimes encountered difficulties in accessing and preparing the equipment required for multimodal learning activities.

In several situations, technological limitations demanded additional preparation before classroom activities could be conducted. In certain situations, the availability of classroom equipment affected the implementation of multimodal classroom practices.

b. Limited Institutional Support for Multimodal Instruction

The findings also revealed that institutional support influenced teachers’ implementation of multimodal literacy-based instruction. Limited facilities and classroom support sometimes created additional challenges during classroom preparation and learning activities.

Extract 13

“Each classroom should already have its own facilities.” (Interview with Teacher F, 2025)

Extract 14

“If the school support were more complete, the learning process could be more optimal.” (Interview with Teacher BT, 2025)

The extracts show that teachers expected more adequate classroom facilities and institutional support during multimodal learning activities. The participants believed that better classroom resources could help support learning activities more effectively.

The findings also suggest that limited institutional support sometimes affected the implementation of multimodal classroom practices. In some situations, insufficient classroom facilities created additional challenges during classroom preparation and learning activities.

5. Discussions

The findings of this study demonstrate that multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms was implemented through adaptive communication practices and collaborative classroom interaction. The teachers adjusted communication modes, instructional approaches, and classroom activities based on students’ learning needs and classroom situations (Lian, 2024; Sadikin & Apsari, 2025). These findings support the view that multimodal instruction is not merely related to the use of technological media, but also involves teachers’ ability to adapt communication practices and organize classroom interaction during the learning process (Karatza, 2022). It is consistent with Hornberger's (2005) concept of implementation, which involves planning, action, and evaluation during instructional processes. In multimodal learning environments, teachers are responsible for selecting communication modes, implementing classroom activities, and continuously adjusting instructional practices based on classroom situations and students’ responses.

This study also revealed that multimodal classroom practices encouraged more collaborative and interactive learning activities in EFL classrooms. Students participated in discussion, role play, presentations, and peer interaction during learning activities. It is consistent with previous studies suggesting that multimodal learning environments may support collaborative classroom interaction and students’ active participation during language learning activities (Jiang, 2017; Maruf et al., 2023). Through collaborative classroom practices, students were encouraged to communicate, exchange ideas, and engage with peers during the learning process (Sadikin & Apsari, 2025). These findings indicate that multimodal literacy-based instruction may create more interactive classroom environments that support students’ involvement in EFL classrooms.

Another important finding of this study is that multimodal literacy-based instruction required teachers to continuously adapt instructional practices according to classroom situations and students’ learning responses. The teachers emphasized that different classrooms required different communication approaches and instructional adjustments

during learning activities. Lian (2024) suggests that multimodal instruction involves flexible classroom practices in which teachers continuously negotiate communication modes and learning activities during the instructional process. Therefore, multimodal literacy-based instruction should not be understood only as the integration of instructional media, but also as adaptive pedagogical practices during classroom interaction.

In addition to adaptive instructional practices, this study also revealed several instructional and institutional challenges experienced by teachers during the implementation of multimodal literacy-based instruction. Kizildag (2009) explains that instructional challenges are related to difficulties in creating effective learning environments, while institutional challenges involve limited organization and support from schools or educational authorities. In this study, teachers experienced difficulties in maintaining students' participation, managing classroom interaction, preparing learning activities, adapting instructional approaches, and adjusting classroom activities based on students' needs and classroom situations. Daulay & Dewi (2025) stated limited classroom facilities, technological resources, and institutional support sometimes affected the implementation of multimodal learning activities. These findings suggest that multimodal classroom practices may require continuous instructional adjustment, technological adaptation, and adequate classroom support during the learning process.

The challenges identified in this study also reflect broader national and global trends in multimodal literacy instruction reported in recent studies. Similar to the findings of Sadikin and Apsari (2025), teachers in this study experienced difficulties in balancing technological integration with instructional realities in classroom practice. Although digital multimodal resources can enhance students' participation and communication, teachers still require pedagogical flexibility and continuous adaptation to accommodate diverse classroom situations. Furthermore, the findings are also consistent with Rahmanu and Molnár (2024), who reported that multimodal learning implementation often depends on contextual factors such as technological accessibility, institutional support, and teachers' readiness. While their review primarily focused on broader higher education contexts, the current findings suggest that teachers in South Sulawesi encounter comparable challenges despite differences in educational settings. This indicates that multimodal literacy implementation involves not only technological opportunities but also practical instructional adjustments across different educational contexts.

Overall, the findings indicate that multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms involves not only the use of multimodal resources, but also teachers' adaptive communication practices and collaborative classroom interaction during learning activities. The findings further indicate that the implementation of multimodal learning practices may involve instructional and institutional challenges related to classroom interaction, students' participation, and classroom facilities in EFL contexts.

6. Conclusions

This study revealed that multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms was implemented through adaptive communication practices, collaborative classroom interaction, and the integration of various multimodal resources during learning activities. Teachers continuously adapted instructional approaches and communication modes according to students' learning needs and classroom situations, while promoting students' participation through discussion, role play, presentations, and peer interaction. However, the implementation of multimodal instruction also involved several challenges related to classroom management, students' participation, instructional preparation, technological adaptation, and limited classroom facilities and institutional support.

This study contributes to the understanding of multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL learning contexts by emphasizing teachers' adaptive instructional practices and classroom experiences during multimodal learning activities. The findings may offer useful insights for teachers, researchers, and educational institutions in supporting more interactive and flexible learning practices in EFL classrooms.

However, this study was limited to two EFL teachers from two senior high schools and mainly relied on interview data. Therefore, future studies may involve wider participants, different educational settings, and additional data collection methods, such as classroom observation and students' perspectives, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of multimodal literacy-based instruction in EFL classrooms.

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