

Multimodal English Literacy Training Within The Framework Of Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka Program

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ABSTRACT

This community service program aims to enhance English literacy in Indonesia through the development of multimodal teaching methods. The program trains students of the English Education Study Program at the University of Lampung in the application of multimodal literacy and implements it at SMA YP Unila, Bandar Lampung for the 12th grade students. Activities include intensive training for students, the creation of learning modules, and direct implementation in partner schools, targeting university students and high school students. The results show that the multimodal literacy approach based on the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka Program can improve students' ability to write narrative texts, as evidenced by an increase in the average score from 71.5 in the pre-test to 81.5 in the post-test. This approach, which integrates text, visuals, and audio, provides a more comprehensive learning experience, boosting students' motivation, creativity, and independence in learning English. The program aligns with the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka Program by offering practical and relevant experiences for both university and high school students, while fostering student autonomy in learning.

Keywords: *English Literacy, Creative Writing, Narrative Text, Multimodal Teaching Methods, Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka*

1. INTRODUCTION

English has emerged as a pivotal international language in the era of globalization, wherein cross-border communication is increasingly prevalent. It functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a gateway to accessing knowledge and technology, much of which is predominantly disseminated in English (**Maduwu, 2016**). In Indonesia, while English is classified as a foreign language, its significance within the educational domain continues to expand. English instruction is introduced from elementary education through higher education, with the expectation that students will acquire proficient English skills to compete effectively on a global scale (**Afrianto, 2018**). Despite these efforts, the 2023 English Proficiency Index (EPI) highlights that Indonesia's English proficiency levels remain comparatively low in relation to neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Vietnam, both of which achieved superior scores (**EF EPI, 2023**).

A major challenge confronting English educators in Indonesia is the rapid evolution of technology and communication, necessitating the development of critical literacy competencies **(Bachtiar et al., 2024)**; therefore teachers are faced with new challenges in education which require them to understand and adapt to technology in the digital era **(Zebua, 2023)**. These include the ability to analyze and interpret visual information as an integral component of social literacy **(Warschauer, 2000)**. Literacy in the contemporary context extends beyond the mere decoding of written texts to encompass the interpretation of messages delivered through diverse modalities, including imagery, sound, and motion. Multimodal literacy, which integrates multiple media forms—text, visuals, and audio—has been identified as a pedagogical approach that enhances conceptual understanding and stimulates learner motivation **(Kurnia, 2017)**. Suwandi (2019) posits that 21st-century literacy must incorporate analytical, critical, and reflective thinking abilities, rendering it particularly pertinent in multimodal pedagogical frameworks.

The implementation of audiovisual media in English language pedagogy has demonstrated its efficacy in fostering students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies **(Sidi & Mukminan, 2016)**. By facilitating comprehension of lexical meanings and contextual usage, audiovisual tools contribute to the mastery of vocabulary and syntactic structures. Within this pedagogical paradigm, multimodality is indispensable, enabling learners to engage with diverse communicative resources—such as images, audio, and motion—that collectively enhance and reinforce the intended message **(Herman et al., 2022; Ngongo, 2021)**. The concept of multimodality has garnered considerable scholarly attention in recent years within the fields of linguistics, semiotics, and education **(Emerson et al., 2020)**.

The Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka Program initiative in Indonesia offers a platform for students to acquire applied and contextual learning experiences. This initiative seeks to transcend theoretical knowledge by providing students with opportunities to engage in practical applications, thereby cultivating their critical and creative problem-solving skills in response to real-world challenges. Furthermore, the program facilitates the development of autonomy and essential soft skills, particularly within the context of teaching and learning processes **(Purba et al., 2023)**.

This community engagement program engages students from the English Education Study Program at the University of Lampung (UNILA) and students from SMA YP Unila in Bandar Lampung. University students receive specialized training in the application of multimodal literacy strategies, which they subsequently implement in English language instruction at partner schools. The primary objective of the program is to enhance students' English literacy competencies through a dynamic and interactive pedagogical approach, with the ultimate goal of augmenting both their academic outcomes and intrinsic motivation to learn. Given Indonesia's current challenges in English language proficiency, this initiative aspires to make a substantial contribution to the improvement of English literacy among students, thereby aligning with the objectives of the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka Program **(Mayo, 1995)**.

By facilitating intensive training and the development of multimodal-based instructional modules, university students gain invaluable practical teaching experience while honing pedagogical skills that align with the demands of 21st-century education. In the long term, this program also serves as a resource for educators at SMA YP Unila by introducing innovative and effective teaching methodologies. Consequently, this initiative is anticipated to contribute meaningfully to the enhancement of English education quality in Indonesia, support the advancement of multimodal literacy, and elevate Indonesia's standing in future English Proficiency Index assessments.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Subject

The subjects were university students from the English Education Study Program at the University of Lampung, who participated in training and implemented the teaching methods, and high school students from SMA YP Unila in the grade 12th, who were the recipients of the multimodal teaching approach.

2.2 Object

The objects of the program included multimodal literacy teaching methods, which incorporated text, visuals, and audio into English instruction, as well as learning modules designed to enhance student motivation and improve creative writing skills.

2.3 Method

The program was conducted in two stages. The first stage focused on training university students in multimodal literacy teaching methods and techniques. This training included both theoretical and practical components to equip the students with the necessary skills for classroom implementation. The second stage involved these trained university students applying the multimodal teaching methods at SMA YP Unila. During this stage, the students used specially designed learning modules to facilitate teaching and engage high school students in interactive and motivating learning activities.

The results of the program included improvements in high school students' creative writing skills, as evidenced by their progress in producing narrative texts. Additionally, the program led to the creation of learning modules that effectively supported teaching and enhanced students' motivation and English proficiency. Furthermore, the program disseminated multimodal literacy teaching techniques to university students, high school students, and relevant stakeholders in the education sector.

3. RESULT

In the initial phase of the study, a pre-test was administered to assess the students' baseline writing skills as shown in table 1. The results revealed that the majority of students scored between 71 and 75, with a mean score of 71.5. The highest score achieved was 86, while the lowest was 71. These results indicate that, prior to the intervention, students' writing abilities were at a level that required further development.

Table 1. Pre-test Average Scores of Students

Number of Students	Mean	Median	Mode
20	71.5	75	71

Following the intervention, a post-test was administered to evaluate the impact of the multimodal teaching methods on the students' writing abilities. The post-test results demonstrated a significant improvement, with the average score increasing to 81.5 as shown in table 2.

Table 2. Post-test Average Scores of Students

Number of Students	Mean	Median	Mode
20	81.5	80.5	77

Most students scored between 76 and 90, with the largest group falling between 86 and 90. The highest score in the post-test was 90, while the lowest was 76. The 10-point increase in the average score from the pre-test to the post-test indicates that the teaching method applied significantly enhanced the students' writing abilities as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Average Scores

Average Pre-test Score	Average Post-test Score	Increase
71.5	81.5	10

This improvement suggests that the teaching methods employed during the study were effective in enhancing the students' ability to organize and express ideas in writing. Consequently, the findings of this study demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention in developing students' writing skills, providing valuable insight for educators seeking to implement similar teaching techniques to improve students' literacy capabilities.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Effectiveness of the Multimodal Literacy Training Program

This study examines the effectiveness of multimodal English literacy training within the framework of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), and the findings demonstrate a significant improvement in students' writing abilities. The observed enhancement suggests that the approach, which combines narrative text with interactive media, effectively supports students in developing their English language skills. This method allows students to move beyond passive reception of information, engaging them actively in the learning process, which in turn enhances their interest and concentration (**Rozanda & Maisaroh, 2012**). The incorporation of various media not only makes the learning process more engaging but also aids students in comprehending and internalizing the material in a more creative and interactive manner (**Susilawati, 2023**). Figure 1 shows documentation of the activity.

**Figure 1. Activity Documentation**

The Merdeka Belajar concept, implemented in this training, offers students greater freedom in line with the MBKM framework, where both teachers and students have the autonomy to choose preferred learning systems. It emphasizes the importance of freedom in learning as a solution to the educational challenges faced in Indonesia (**Taher et al., 2023**). This concept also facilitates access to a range of language representations, including visual, textual, and

audio elements, enabling students to achieve a deeper understanding of the material presented. The increase in students' average scores from 71.5 on the pre-test to 81.5 on the post-test further supports the notion that the multimodal approach had a positive impact on students' literacy abilities. These findings align with **Sahidah et al. (2021)**, who suggest that multimodal texts, which integrate two or more modes of language, help students understand material more effectively and efficiently.

4.2 Role of Multimodal Literacy in Enhancing Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

The increase in student performance from the pre-test to the post-test reflects the efficacy of multimodal teaching methods in enhancing literacy skills. This is consistent with other studies, such as those by **Widyaningsih et al. (2024)**, who argue that multimodal learning, which incorporates various media types like text, images, audio, and video, facilitates students' understanding and mastery of learning materials. By engaging students through a range of media, this approach motivates them to become more involved in their learning, thereby improving their literacy skills, including creative writing.

Multimodal methods, which combine visual, auditory, and textual elements, allow students to actively engage in the learning process. Rather than simply reading texts, students experience a more comprehensive learning journey through images, sounds, and interactive activities. Multimodal methods, which integrate visual, auditory, and textual elements, have become a key component in modern education, offering students a more interactive and dynamic learning experience. In the context of exploring media technology, these methods leverage the vast potential of digital tools to engage students across various sensory channels. For instance, multimedia platforms such as educational apps, interactive websites, and virtual learning environments enable students to not only read or hear information but also see it in action through videos, animations, and visual aids. By incorporating these diverse media, learners are exposed to a richer, more engaging array of learning materials that can cater to different learning styles and preferences. This approach aligns with the theory of multimodal learning, which posits that students' understanding and retention improve when they are exposed to multiple types of input. In the context of English literacy, the use of diverse media supports students in better understanding vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures.

The Merdeka Belajar program emphasizes student autonomy in the learning process, thereby fostering creativity and potential in line with individual interests and abilities. This study's training component encourages students to actively participate and think critically while composing narrative texts. The improvement observed in post-test results indicates that students were better able to organize their ideas, demonstrating increased independence and creativity. By offering students the freedom to express themselves and use various media forms, they are empowered to develop their English skills in a natural and creative manner, which aligns with the Merdeka Belajar goal of creating an inclusive learning environment that encourages each student to reach their full potential.

4.3 Feedback from the students

The feedback collected from students after participating in the multimodal literacy training program highlighted a positive and enthusiastic response to the activity. Many students expressed that they felt more engaged and motivated throughout the learning process. One common sentiment shared was that the integration of various media, such as videos, images, and audio, made the lessons more interesting and easier to understand. As one student remarked, "The use of videos and interactive activities made learning feel less like a traditional classroom experience and more like an exciting adventure. I was able to understand the material better because it wasn't just reading text; I could see and hear the concepts in action."

Students also noted that the multimodal approach helped them retain information more effectively. Many students found the training not only beneficial for improving their writing skills but also for boosting their overall confidence in using English. The students expressed great satisfaction with the multimodal literacy training, with many stating that it helped them learn more effectively and enjoyably. They felt that the interactive and varied nature of the activities enhanced their understanding of English and improved their writing skills, which they found both rewarding and inspiring. The feedback from the students underscores the effectiveness of the multimodal approach in fostering an engaging, enjoyable, and fruitful learning experience.

4.4 Implications for Teaching and Future Research Directions

The use of learning media such as images, videos, and audio has proven to increase student motivation. These media not only make the learning process more engaging but also create an enjoyable and relevant learning experience for students. When students are more emotionally and cognitively engaged, they show greater interest in learning and are more likely to participate actively. This emotional and cognitive involvement is evident when students value and engage with classroom activities, recognizing the relevance of the lessons **(Christanty & Cendana, 2021)**. The increase in post-test scores further illustrates that the multimodal approach effectively captures students' attention and motivates them. Motivation is particularly important in language learning, as motivated students are more likely to practice diligently and improve their skills, especially in writing, which requires sustained practice and deep understanding.

This community service program not only directly benefits the students but also contributes to the improvement of English language teaching quality at the partner school. Teachers involved in the training gained firsthand experience in applying multimodal teaching methods and observed their positive impact on students' abilities. The application of this approach is expected to inspire other teachers to adopt similar methods, aligning with the Merdeka Belajar program's objective of improving the quality of education in Indonesia. The significant increase in post-test scores demonstrates that this approach is not only effective but also serves as a model that can be widely implemented to develop students' language abilities through a more comprehensive and interactive approach.

Multimodal literacy is not just about teaching students how to write, but also involves the ability to understand and use various forms of communication. In this study, students were encouraged to think critically about how to structure their texts and choose the appropriate media to convey their messages. This is an essential aspect of 21st-century literacy, which requires individuals to be not only consumers but also intelligent producers of information **(Jones & Flannigan, 2006)**. By using images, videos, and texts effectively, students are trained to comprehend various communication contexts, both in English and in everyday life. This aligns with the demands of modern literacy, where students must possess a broader skill set to understand and communicate information.

Based on these findings, the multimodal literacy training program within the Merdeka Belajar framework should be expanded to include more students and schools. Additionally, the use of digital tools such as language learning apps and online platforms could enhance the effectiveness of this program. Teachers should also be encouraged to stay updated on the latest developments in media and technology that can be utilized in teaching. Furthermore, it is important to conduct further research that includes long-term evaluations of the impact of multimodal literacy on students' academic performance, both in English and other subjects.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results of this community service project demonstrate that this method successfully improved students' writing skills, with the average score increasing from 71.5 in the pre-test to 81.5 in the post-test. The approach, which combines text, visuals, and audio, enriches the students' learning experience, motivates them to be more active, and enhances creativity and independence, in line with the goals of the merdeka belajar initiative. Future recommendations for teachers include the continuous application of the multimodal method, the use of interactive learning media, and the evaluation of the students' learning process. For further research, it is suggested to evaluate the long-term impact of multimodal literacy on various academic skills and to integrate digital technology into learning to assess its influence on student engagement and learning achievement.

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