

Literacy Practices in EFL Context: Insights from English Teachers in Rural Areas of Maluku

Felicia Miranda Lekatompessy^{1*}, Jeny Lekatompessy², Jusak Patty³

^{1,3} English Education, Pattimura University, Indonesia

² Marine Agritourism, Politeknik Perikanan Negeri Tual, Indonesia

Article History:

Received:

June 1, 2026

Accepted:

June 13, 2026

Published:

June 14, 2026

Keywords:

EFL;
Literacy practices;
Rural Areas

ABSTRACT

Literacy practices in EFL contexts within geographically marginalized regions remain understudied, particularly in eastern Indonesia. This study examined how English teachers in rural areas of the Aru Islands Regency, Tual City, and Southeast Maluku Regency enact literacy practices in their classrooms. A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was employed, with quantitative data collected through an adapted PISA 2018 Language Teacher Questionnaire administered to 19 teachers, followed by semi-structured Zoom interviews with five participants to deepen the survey findings. Descriptive and thematic analyses revealed that teachers demonstrated meaningful commitment to students' literacy development through pre-lesson reading routines, vocabulary enrichment tasks, and integration of digital tools such as Canva and Quizizz. Nevertheless, most teachers held a narrow view of literacy, associating it predominantly with reading skills. Limited infrastructure and students' declining reading motivation posed persistent challenges. Future research should incorporate students' perspectives to provide a more comprehensive account of literacy outcomes.

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Corresponding Author:

Felicia Miranda Lekatompessy,
English Education
Pattimura University, Indonesia
Email: * felicialeka@yahoo.com

How to cite this article:

Lekatompessy, F. M., Lekatompessy, J., & Patty, J. (2026). Literacy Practices in EFL Context: Insights from English Teachers in Rural Areas of Maluku. *Huele: Journal of Applied Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 6(1), 36-48. <https://doi.org/10.30598/huele.v6.i1.p36-48>

Journal Homepage : <https://ojs3.unpatti.ac.id/index.php/huele>

Journal E-mail : journalhuele@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Student literacy remains a significant challenge within the Indonesian education system (Driana, 2012, as cited in [Herawati, 2020](#)). In response to this issue, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the School Literacy Movement, *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*, in 2016 to encourage students' reading and writing. One of its primary initiatives is the 15-minute reading activity conducted before lessons begin, which allows students to engage with non-textbook materials while fostering literacy skills and character development. However, research suggests that the effectiveness of this practice is often limited when reading materials do not align with students' interests or proficiency levels ([Sakhiyya & Hapsari, 2021](#)). Furthermore, reading activities that lack opportunities for discussion, reflection, and critical engagement tend to produce only superficial comprehension. These challenges indicate that developing a sustainable literacy culture requires approaches that are responsive to students' needs and learning contexts ([Jalaludin, 2021](#); [Sakhiyya & Hapsari, 2021](#)).

The importance of literacy development is further reinforced by the growing role of English as a global language. English proficiency has become increasingly essential for academic achievement, professional advancement, and intercultural communication. Consequently, English language instruction should not only focus on language acquisition but also support the development of literacy skills that enable learners to access, evaluate, and communicate information effectively. Nevertheless, efforts to strengthen English literacy often face several obstacles. Students frequently perceive English as difficult, which can reduce their motivation to learn. Limited exposure to the language, inadequate learning resources, and insufficient educational facilities further constrain literacy development. In addition, teachers may encounter challenges in implementing learner-centered approaches that align with the demands of 21st-century education. These concerns are evident in Maluku, where literacy development remains a challenge. According to the 2019 Study on Reading Culture in Indonesian Society, Maluku placed 26th out of 34 provinces, with a reading interest index of 52.90, categorized as "moderate" ([Saimima, 2022](#)). This condition is particularly concerning in an era of rapid technological advancement and increasing demand for critical thinking skills. Observations in higher education settings also suggest that many students struggle to analyze information critically and express their ideas effectively. While digital technologies have expanded access to information, they have not necessarily encouraged deeper reading practices. Instead, students often engage with information superficially, limiting their ability to evaluate, synthesize, and communicate knowledge. Such tendencies may be linked to literacy experiences developed during earlier stages of schooling.

Given these circumstances, educational institutions play a crucial role in fostering a stronger literacy culture ([Saimima, 2022](#)). Strengthening English literacy is especially important for preparing students to participate successfully in broader academic and professional communities. This need is particularly evident in the Aru Islands Regency, Tual City, and Southeast Maluku Regency, where geographical conditions and limited educational resources can restrict learning opportunities. As several of these areas are categorized as underdeveloped, frontier, and outermost regions (*3 T: Terdepan, Terluar dan Tertinggal*), according to Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 63 of 2020, students often face challenges accessing qualified teachers, learning materials, and technological infrastructure.

Despite the growing body of research on literacy in EFL education, existing studies have largely concentrated on teachers' beliefs, digital literacy, multiliteracies, and literacy instruction in relatively accessible educational settings ([Agustina et al., 2026](#); [Maja & Nabhan, 2022](#); [Sujariati et al., 2025](#); [Suwastini et al., 2025](#); [Widiati et al., 2026](#); [Zhang, 2023](#)). Consequently, little is known about how literacy practices are shaped by the realities of teaching in Indonesia's rural regions, where geographical distances, resource limitations, and contextual challenges may significantly influence classroom implementation. The scarcity of research conducted in Maluku further underscores the need for empirical inquiry into literacy practices in this underrepresented context. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the literacy practices of English teachers in rural areas of Maluku to provide insights into how literacy is promoted and sustained within challenging educational environments. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of contextually relevant strategies for improving literacy outcomes in geographically disadvantaged regions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literacy, Multiliteracies, and Multimodal

The concept of literacy has evolved considerably, influencing its implementation in educational contexts and encompassing both knowledge and skill. Literacy is no longer viewed merely as the ability to read and write; it also includes the capacity to access, comprehend, analyze, and critically evaluate information, construct meaning from various texts, regulate their thinking and emotions, articulate ideas and viewpoints, engage effectively with others, and participate actively in both academic and everyday activities and educational contexts (Maja & Nabhan, 2022). Therefore, in response to rapid technological advancements and the demands of 21st-century learning, teachers are expected to adopt a multiliteracies perspective that recognizes the diverse ways meaning is constructed in culturally and digitally connected societies (Tan et al., 2023). Originally proposed by The New London Group (1996), this perspective is closely associated with multimodality, which highlights the integration of multiple communicative modes, including language, visuals, audio, gestures, and spatial design in the meaning-making process.

Literacy Practice in English Language Teaching (ELT)

Barton & Hamilton (2000) conceptualized literacy as a social practice embedded within relationships, values, and ideologies that shape how literacy is interpreted and enacted (Farisan, 2025; Ungureanu, 2024). From this perspective, literacy is not a universal set of skills but a contextually situated practice that differs across cultural, economic, and institutional settings. This highlights the role of literacy in enabling individuals to engage meaningfully with written and spoken language within their specific social and educational contexts. Drawing on this framework, the literacy practices in the present study are understood as the instructional activities and pedagogical approaches English teachers employ to foster students' literacy development in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) instruction. The implementation of these contextualized practices is influenced by a range of factors, including teachers' personal and professional competencies, their understandings of literacy, and their recognition of literacy as a crucial foundation for students' academic development and active participation in society.

Previous empirical research revealed that integrating multimodal approaches into literacy instruction for tertiary-level EFL students can enhance learning outcomes by addressing the limitations of traditional text-based comprehension activities (Stankić & Jakovljević, 2022). By combining various modes of meaning-making, such as written, visual, audio, and digital resources, multimodal instruction promotes deeper engagement, comprehension, and language development. Moreover, the use of a multimodal problem-based approach encourages students to analyze information critically, apply language skills in authentic contexts, and develop greater learner autonomy (Lee et al., 2021). As a result, students are better equipped to produce meaningful, creative, and contextually relevant projects while strengthening their literacy and language competencies.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis within a single research design (Frankel et al., 2016) to investigate English teachers' literacy practices. Specifically, an explanatory sequential design was adopted, in which quantitative data were first gathered through a survey to provide an overview of teachers' literacy practices. Subsequently, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews to further explore, clarify, and enrich the survey findings, thereby enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Research Site and Participants

The participants of this study were English teachers from junior and senior high schools in the Aru Islands Regency, Tual City, and Southeast Maluku Regency. Participant recruitment was facilitated through coordination with the *Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran* (MGMP) and the professional network

of English Education alumni from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences (FKIP), Pattimura University. Their involvement provided valuable insights into current English language teaching practices, particularly those aimed at fostering students' literacy development.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was adapted from the Teacher Questionnaire for the PISA 2018 Test Language Teacher developed by the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#), (2017). The instrument was translated into Bahasa Indonesia and administered via Google Forms to ease completion. It explored multiple aspects of teachers' professional profiles and practices, including educational backgrounds, engagement in professional training and development, collaboration with colleagues and stakeholders, beliefs and attitudes toward teaching, instructional practices, and school environmental conditions. The questionnaire was used to investigate and evaluate English language teaching practices, particularly those related to integrating literacy-oriented learning standards. In addition, interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed information and to clarify responses that could not be fully explored through the questionnaire. A total of 19 English teachers completed the survey, and five teachers voluntarily participated in the interview sessions, enabling a more in-depth exploration of literacy practices and instructional experiences in the research setting. By employing descriptive and thematic analyses, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive portrayal of literacy practices within the research setting.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study were derived from questionnaires and interviews on the implementation of literacy practices in schools in the Aru Islands Regency, Tual City, and Southeast Maluku Regency.

The Quality of English Language Instruction in Developing Student Literacy

Data on the quality of English language instruction in fostering students' literacy development were collected through a survey involving 19 English teachers from Aru Islands Regency, Tual City, and Southeast Maluku Regency. The participants completed a Google Forms questionnaire consisting of 35 items. The questionnaire explored several major aspects, including teachers' educational and professional backgrounds; pre-service education and ongoing professional development; collaboration with colleagues and parents; teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward learning, instructional practices, and the characteristics of the schools in which they teach.

Survey data showed that 68% of the respondents were female teachers, while 32% were male teachers, with ages ranging from 26 to 55 years. The majority of participants taught at the junior high school level (63%), whereas the remaining respondents were senior high school teachers. Most respondents (74%) were employed as full-time teachers and had 11–20 years of teaching experience. In contrast, 21% were categorized as part-time teachers, working approximately 71–90% of full-time teaching hours. Regarding educational background, 89% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, while 11% had completed only secondary education.

The teacher professional development revealed that 63% of the respondents had participated in professional development activities during the previous 12 months. These activities primarily focused on enhancing English language proficiency and language-related competencies (63%), improving instructional approaches such as reading comprehension strategies, text organization, and literature instruction (68%), as well as strengthening general pedagogical competencies, including classroom management, teacher–student interaction, and assessment practices (53%). The pathways through which respondents obtained teaching qualifications also varied. Approximately 42% reported participating in training programs related to other pedagogical professions, 32% attended in-service teacher education or *Pendidikan Profesi Guru (PPG)*, and 21% completed formal teacher education programs at universities. However, only 5% had experience with work-based teacher education or training programs, suggesting relatively limited engagement in this form of professional preparation. A particularly encouraging finding is that the majority of respondents (74%) viewed professional development as a professional responsibility that should be consistently fulfilled.

Regarding teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward their profession, the findings revealed that most respondents (53%) held positive perceptions of teaching, viewing it as offering more advantages than disadvantages. This positive outlook was reflected in their strong sense of commitment and dedication. When asked whether they would choose the same career path again, none of the respondents expressed regret about becoming teachers. Instead, they indicated that they would either continue working as teachers or pursue other professional roles while remaining committed to serving in their current educational institutions. Their attachment to the schools where they work also fostered a strong sense of pride, as reflected in the fact that 84% of respondents would recommend their schools as favorable workplaces. In addition, between 32% and 53% of respondents believed that the teaching profession is adequately respected within society. As a result, most teachers reported satisfaction with both their professional performance at school and their overall work as educators. These findings suggest a relatively high level of job satisfaction among the respondents.

Results on teaching practices and classroom challenges indicate that most teachers (58%) attempted to adapt their instructional approaches to students' needs and provided individualized feedback to support learning. Nevertheless, respondents also reported several classroom-related challenges. Between 53% and 63% of teachers experienced disruptions during lessons, including difficulties in maintaining students' attention and managing classroom behavior, which often required them to pause instruction until the class became conducive to learning again. Despite these challenges, the majority of teachers (79%–84%) consistently implemented effective instructional practices in every lesson. These practices included communicating clear learning objectives, asking questions to assess students' understanding, reviewing material from previous lessons at the beginning of class, and informing students about the learning targets they were expected to achieve.

With specific reference to the teaching of reading literacy, 58% of respondents reported spending between one and three hours per week reading educational resources, including articles, journals, books, guidebooks, and online materials, to support their instructional practices. This engagement appears to shape their professional beliefs, as more than half of the respondents (53%) agreed that all teachers should be trained to teach reading comprehension and should share responsibility for improving students' reading comprehension abilities. Despite this positive perspective, several challenges remain. About 26% of respondents reported uncertainty in recognizing students' reading comprehension challenges, which, in turn, reduced their confidence in choosing and applying effective strategies to support reading comprehension development. In addition to reading instruction, all respondents emphasized the importance of teaching other language skills, including writing, listening, and oral communication. In teaching reading comprehension, most respondents reported regularly incorporating various literacy practices into classroom instruction. These practices included teaching summarizing strategies, connecting texts to students' prior knowledge, monitoring students' comprehension, adapting reading models to students' needs, and guiding students in locating and selecting relevant information from online sources. Nevertheless, the findings also revealed that 16% of respondents had never taught students how to evaluate the credibility of information available on the internet.

In line with reading comprehension practices, the majority of respondents (53%) consistently encouraged students to express their opinions about the texts they read. Teachers also helped students relate the content of texts to their personal experiences (42%), demonstrated how new information in a text connected with students' prior knowledge, and posed questions designed to promote active classroom participation (58%). Furthermore, in developing students' reading comprehension skills and strategies, teachers reported implementing a range of instructional activities once or twice each week. These activities included guiding students to identify the main ideas of a text (42%), explain or justify their understanding of what they had read (53%), draw conclusions based on textual information (58%), analyze the style and organizational structure of texts (47%), and identify the author's perspective or communicative purpose (53%).

Regarding digital literacy practices in schools, 79% of respondents reported teaching students how to use keywords effectively when searching on Google and Yahoo. In addition, 74% of teachers reported guiding students in evaluating the trustworthiness of information obtained from the internet,

while 68% taught students about the potential consequences of sharing information publicly on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Despite these efforts, several aspects of digital literacy instruction were reported less frequently. Approximately 47% of respondents reported not teaching students how to identify subjective or biased information on the internet. Similarly, some teachers reported limited instruction in practical digital communication skills, such as writing appropriate emails and comparing information across different websites to determine which sources were most relevant and reliable for academic assignments (42%). Nevertheless, the findings revealed that digital devices, including tablets, computers, smartphones, and e-readers, had been integrated into English language instruction by the majority of respondents (84%), while only 16% reported not using such technologies in their classrooms. The specific purposes for which these digital devices were used are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Purposes of Using Digital Devices

Purposes of Using Digital Devices	Yes	No
Searching for subject-related information online	68%	32%
Completing extended projects (e.g., over several weeks)	63%	37%
Completing short-term assignments (e.g., within one week)	95%	5%
Working at students' own pace	58%	42%
Completing individual learning tasks	53%	47%
Planning their own sequence of learning activities	58%	42%
Submitting homework or classroom assignments	89%	11%
Practicing and reinforcement activities	84%	16%
Coordinating school tasks with other students	58%	42%
Following up on missed lessons or materials	63%	37%
Reading texts electronically rather than in printed form	79%	21%
Writing texts such as blogs or works	16%	84%

With continued reference to teachers' reading literacy practices, the findings reveal considerable variation in the ways teachers engage with reading materials. More than half of the respondents (53%) reported reading books more frequently on digital devices, such as e-readers, tablets, smartphones, and computers, whereas only 11% preferred printed books. A similar trend was observed in the consumption of news related to politics, culture, sports, and local events. The majority of respondents (74%) accessed news primarily through digital platforms, while 11% relied mainly on audio or audiovisual media, including radio, television, and podcasts. Notably, none of the respondents reported regularly reading printed news sources such as newspapers or magazines.

The study found that teachers are actively engaged in a variety of reading-related activities, particularly those conducted on digital platforms. The highest level of engagement was found in online communication activities, with 84% of respondents reporting that they participated in online conversations through applications such as WhatsApp and Messenger several times a day. Similarly, 63% of teachers stated that they searched for information online daily, while 47% reported reading online news several times a day. The data also suggest that digital reading practices have become an integral part of teachers' daily routines. Reading online news and searching for practical information, such as schedules, events, tips, and recipes, were common activities performed several times a week or several times a day by most respondents.

In contrast, participation in online discussion forums was relatively low, with 37% engaging only several times a month and 16% reporting that they never or seldom participated. Although email use was generally frequent, the intensity varied among respondents. Around 37% reported reading emails several times a month, while 32% and 26% did so several times a week and several times a day, respectively. Overall, the findings demonstrate that teachers are highly accustomed to accessing digital information and engaging in online communication, although their participation in collaborative online discussions remains comparatively limited.

The point about collaboration and school policies reveals that teachers are actively engaged in professional collaboration with their colleagues. This collaboration primarily involved discussions on

assessment design (68%) and the exchange of teaching strategies and instructional practices (63%). In addition, most respondents (68%) reported involving parents by providing information about the English language curriculum and students' learning activities. The findings also indicate that digital technology has been formally integrated into school policies. A large majority of schools (89%) had established official regulations or guidelines for the use of digital devices in teaching and learning. Furthermore, 74% of schools provided specialized support programs for students experiencing reading difficulties. However, the data also revealed that 68% of schools did not offer specific educational programs or services for students with special needs, suggesting that inclusive support systems remain limited in many schools.

Effective Literacy Practices for Developing Students' Literacy Based on Evaluations of English Language Teaching

An investigation into literacy practices in English language teaching was carried out through interviews with teachers. In this study, five teachers were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate in the interview. There were approximately 13 open-ended interview questions about English language teaching practices designed to support students' literacy development in schools.

Before discussing literacy practices in greater depth, the participants were asked to explain their understanding of literacy. The interview findings revealed varying perspectives among the teachers. Some participants demonstrated a broad understanding of literacy, viewing it as more than merely the ability to read and write. However, several teachers still associated literacy primarily with reading skills and reading activities, as reflected in the following excerpt:

"Literacy is the ability and understanding to read, both orally and in written form." (Teacher H)

"Literacy is not simply reading in general; it also involves understanding the meaning contained in a text or story. In other words, literacy is closely related to reading comprehension—not merely the ability to read words, but the ability to understand what is being read." (Teacher F)

"Literacy is a program aimed at developing students' reading skills." (Teacher N)

"Literacy is not limited to reading activities alone. It also involves searching for references and information." (Teacher O)

"Literacy has a broad meaning. It is not only about reading written texts but also about interpreting images, listening to audio, watching videos, and seeking information across various media. All of these are part of literacy." (Teacher Y)

All respondents emphasized the significant role of literacy in the learning process, particularly in English language education. Reading was widely perceived as a "window to the world" that enables students to gain knowledge, broaden their understanding, and access information on a wide range of topics. For this reason, literacy was viewed as an essential component of students' everyday lives and learning experiences. Despite recognizing its importance, the teachers observed that many students currently demonstrate low interest in reading activities. According to the respondents, students are more inclined to spend time on smartphones watching videos or movies than engaging with reading materials. In addition, teachers noted a growing tendency among students to rely on shortcuts when completing academic tasks, particularly by using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to obtain answers quickly rather than developing their own understanding through reading and critical thinking.

Despite various challenges, teachers consistently sought to promote students' literacy development through a range of classroom practices. These included implementing a 15-minute literacy activity before lessons, conducting vocabulary-building exercises, using printed reading materials, and using teacher-created videos or social media content as learning resources. Teachers also integrated technology into English instruction to enhance student engagement and motivation. Digital platforms such as Canva, Quizizz, and online dictionaries were considered valuable tools for supporting participation and improving access to learning materials. These practices contributed to a more interactive, collaborative, and learner-centered classroom environment.

Support from schools and parents was also identified as an important factor in promoting students' literacy development. Schools have introduced a range of literacy-related initiatives, including

School Literacy Week programs, expanding book collections in school libraries, and involving parents in teaching Local Content subjects in regional languages. These context-based initiatives were regarded as effective strategies for strengthening students' literacy skills. Nevertheless, despite the implementation of these literacy programs, the findings also revealed persistent challenges, particularly in remote areas, where limited facilities, inadequate infrastructure, and restricted access to information continue to hinder literacy development efforts. These limitations may reduce the effectiveness of literacy programs, as not all students have equal access to essential learning resources, including quality reading materials and technological tools that support digital learning. In addition, one respondent noted that student participation in the School Literacy Week program remained relatively low, indicating limited awareness among students of the importance of literacy activities in supporting their academic development (Teacher H).

To address challenges in literacy development, teachers emphasized the need for professional development through training programs and seminars. They highlighted the importance of developing practical teaching strategies to make English learning more accessible and engaging, particularly for students with limited prior exposure to English. Teachers also stressed the value of teaching reading strategies such as skimming and scanning to improve students' ability to locate, understand, and interpret information effectively. In addition, integrating technology into literacy instruction was viewed as essential for enhancing learning experiences and helping both teachers and students meet the demands of the digital age.

DISCUSSION

The quality and professionalism of teachers play a pivotal role in determining the quality of English instruction, which significantly contributes to the development of students' literacy competence (Moyo & Mwanza, 2025; Parrila et al., 2024; Porter et al., 2024). Teachers with higher educational backgrounds generally demonstrate stronger mastery of subject content and instructional strategies, which can contribute positively to the development of students' literacy skills. In the context of language learning, the importance of language teaching methodologies, particularly reading and writing strategies, is a key factor in improving students' literacy achievement (Graham et al., 2018; Lijuan, 2025). Teachers who possess a deeper understanding of language teaching methodologies and teaching strategies, such as *The Reading to Write* and SQ3R (*Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review*), are effective pedagogical suggestions in improving students' literacy development in English classes by integrating four core skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Riyanti & Fauziyyah, 2025; Xu, 2025).

Nevertheless, the limited provision of special education training continues to reveal shortcomings in teachers' capacity to effectively respond to the diverse learning characteristics, needs, and abilities present in inclusive classrooms. Such limitations may affect the quality of instruction and students' academic achievement, particularly for learners who require more specialized educational support (Crispel & Kasperski, 2021; Zagona et al., 2017). These findings imply that continuous, practice-oriented professional development programs positively impact teachers' instructional competencies, particularly by fostering the adoption of more innovative teaching approaches that are responsive to students' needs (Jeptepkeny & Keter, 2025; Padmavathi S M et al., 2025; Sherly et al., 2022; Sunggingwati et al., 2026). This suggests that although teachers in the present study had participated in various training programs, greater involvement in work-based and practice-oriented professional development activities is still needed to strengthen the practical application of teaching strategies in classroom contexts, thereby fostering educational innovation in under-resourced areas (Habibulloh, 2025). Teachers who regard professional development as an integral part of their professional responsibilities are generally more innovative in their instructional practices and more responsive to students' learning needs. In other words, teachers who hold a positive view of their profession tend to be more motivated and better able to create a learning environment that supports students' literacy development.

Furthermore, teachers' perceptions reflected a broad understanding of literacy, extending beyond traditional concepts of reading and writing to encompass digital and multimodal dimensions. As Garcia & Flores (2012) argue, literacy should not be viewed solely as an autonomous skill centered on reading and writing. Rather, it involves the capacity to communicate effectively, locate and evaluate information,

generate new knowledge, and apply information strategically to address diverse challenges (Frankel et al., 2016; Searle, 2020; UNESCO & NCLIS, 2023). Consequently, literacy instruction should emphasize the development of competencies that are meaningful within specific social contexts and real-life situations. The findings of this study underscore the importance of adopting an integrated, flexible, and context-responsive approach to literacy education in order to foster more engaging and relevant learning experiences. In this regard, English literacy serves not only to enhance academic achievement but also as a foundation for students' broader personal, social, and intellectual growth.

The instructional practices identified in this study also reflect a text-based approach that encourages students to think critically and express their personal interpretations of texts. Such practices align closely with Rosenblatt's (1978) Reader-Response Theory, which holds that meaning is constructed not only from the text itself but also through the interaction between the text and the reader's experiences and background knowledge. By encouraging students to connect reading materials to their own lives, teachers help create more meaningful learning experiences that can increase students' engagement, interpretation, and reading comprehension, as well as critical reading skills (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016; Ilyas et al., 2025; Momeni et al., 2026).

In addition to reading literacy, the findings highlight the growing importance of integrating technology and developing digital literacy in English language teaching. These results support that digital literacy has become a fundamental component of contemporary education. Digital literacy in education extends beyond the acquisition of technological skills. It plays a crucial role in equipping future generations with essential competencies such as critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, and creativity in an increasingly digitalized and globalized world (Khan et al., 2022; Pradana et al., 2024). However, given the limited availability of reading materials and reference resources in 3T (*Tertinggal, Terdepan dan Terluar*) or in underdeveloped, frontier, and outermost regions in Maluku, the use of digital books that align with students' interests and proficiency levels can be a practical and effective solution. Platforms such as www.letsreadasia.org and www.literacycloud.org provide access to a wide range of reading materials that can support students' literacy development while addressing the challenges of resource scarcity in remote educational settings.

The integration of digital literacy into educational settings supports the development of innovative, efficient learning models and instructional media that meet contemporary technological demands. Furthermore, the use of digital applications that incorporate local wisdom not only enhances the relevance of learning experiences but also helps students navigate and thrive in a future characterized by pervasive technological connectivity. In the digital era, students are expected not only to access information but also to evaluate the credibility of online sources and identify potential bias in digital content. Therefore, strengthening the digital competence of both teachers and students is crucial to foster the effective integration of digital literacy skills into educational practices, thereby promoting learning experiences that are more interactive, collaborative, and contextually relevant (Arifin et al., 2025; Xujanova, 2025).

As education increasingly responds to the demands of the digital era, the development of multimodal literacies has become a significant aspect of teaching and learning. The multimodal approach emphasizes the integration of various communicative resources, such as text, visuals, sound, gestures, and spatial elements, to support meaning-making in educational settings. From this perspective, multimodality involves the purposeful organization of multiple semiotic modes, each serving as a resource for constructing and communicating meaning (Diana et al., 2026; Kustini et al., 2020; Patty et al., 2026; Tan et al., 2023). This situation underscores the need for teachers to integrate technological knowledge, pedagogical strategies, and subject-matter expertise effectively, as conceptualized in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, to facilitate meaningful literacy development. By balancing these interconnected domains, teachers can create learning experiences that enhance students' engagement with texts and support the development of essential literacy skills in diverse educational contexts.

At last, the findings of the present study indicate that parental and community involvement play a crucial role in supporting educational development and preparing students to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world (Eden et al., 2024). In particular, parental engagement contributes significantly to

children's literacy development by enhancing their reading motivation, reading skills, and self-confidence (Annisa et al., 2024). However, literacy achievement is influenced not only by parental support but also by the quality of classroom instruction (Lamaclamac & Opina, 2025). This highlights the importance of continuous teacher professional development, innovative teaching practices, and strong home–school partnerships to foster students' literacy growth and academic success.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that literacy practices in English language teaching across the selected remote areas of Maluku are generally satisfactory, reflecting teachers' professional commitment to fostering students' literacy development. To strengthen literacy learning, teachers employed various pedagogical approaches, including allocating time for pre-lesson reading activities, conducting vocabulary enrichment tasks, and incorporating digital resources, teacher-produced instructional videos, and school-based literacy programs. Collectively, these practices illustrate teachers' efforts to provide engaging and relevant literacy experiences despite the challenges associated with teaching in remote educational contexts. Despite these positive practices, the findings reveal that literacy instruction was predominantly oriented toward reading and vocabulary development. This suggests that teachers may still hold a relatively narrow view of literacy. Accordingly, future professional development programs should promote a more comprehensive understanding of literacy as a socially situated practice, enabling teachers to integrate its critical, multimodal, and communicative dimensions into English language teaching. In addition, as the findings are based primarily on teachers' perspectives, they may not fully represent students' actual literacy development. Future studies should therefore involve students and expand the number of teacher participants to provide a more comprehensive understanding of literacy practices and outcomes.

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