

REIMAGINING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING THROUGH MULTILITERACIES PEDAGOGY: A SCOPING REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES (2015–2025)

By

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Abstract:

Multiliteracies pedagogy addresses complex communication issues in the digital world by promoting diverse literacy practices, multimodal meaning-making, and critical engagement with texts. Many studies have explored how multiliteracies pedagogy is applied in language learning from multiple perspectives, yet comprehensive reports remain limited. To address this gap, this scoping review synthesizes empirical studies on the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy in English language teaching across primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Guided by PRISMA framework, 526 records were retrieved from the Taylor & Francis database, selected for its extensive coverage of Scopus-indexed journals in humanities and applied linguistics. Based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 23 articles published between 2015 and 2025 were included in the final analysis. The analysis identified seven key themes: identity and cultural expression; multimodality and technology integration; multiliteracies and pedagogical innovation; power, equity, and resistance; language and academic literacy development; challenges in implementing multiliteracies pedagogy; and intercultural understanding and global English. Findings reveal that multiliteracies pedagogy supports learner identity, inclusivity, intercultural awareness, and academic development, while also indicating gaps in geographical coverage, primary-level research, and methodological diversity. This review complements previous studies by providing a cross-level synthesis of empirical research across different educational contexts.

Keywords: *A scoping review, English language teaching (ELT), multiliteracies pedagogy, multimodality.*

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Abstrak:

Pedagogi multiliterasi menjawab persoalan komunikasi kompleks di era digital dengan mempromosikan praktik literasi yang beragam, pemaknaan multimodal, dan keterlibatan kritis terhadap teks. Berbagai studi telah mengeksplorasi penerapan pedagogi multiliterasi dalam pembelajaran bahasa dari beragam perspektif, namun kajian komprehensif yang merangkum temuan-temuan tersebut masih terbatas. Untuk mengisi kesenjangan tersebut, tinjauan scoping ini mensintesis studi-studi empiris tentang implementasi pedagogi multiliterasi dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris di jenjang pendidikan dasar, menengah, dan tinggi. Dengan mengacu pada kerangka PRISMA, sebanyak 526 artikel berhasil diidentifikasi dari basis data Taylor & Francis yang dipilih karena cakupannya yang luas terhadap jurnal-jurnal terindeks Scopus di bidang humaniora dan linguistik terapan. Berdasarkan kriteria inklusi dan eksklusi yang telah ditetapkan, 23 artikel yang terbit antara tahun 2015 hingga 2025 dianalisis lebih lanjut. Analisis mengungkap tujuh tema utama: identitas dan ekspresi budaya; multimodalitas dan integrasi teknologi; multiliterasi dan inovasi pedagogis; relasi kuasa, keadilan, dan resistensi; pengembangan bahasa dan literasi akademik; tantangan implementasi pedagogi multiliterasi; serta pemahaman antarbudaya dan bahasa Inggris global. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa pedagogi multiliterasi mendukung identitas pembelajar, inklusivitas, kesadaran antarbudaya, dan pengembangan akademik, di samping mengindikasikan adanya kesenjangan dalam cakupan geografis, riset di jenjang pendidikan dasar, serta keragaman metodologis. Tinjauan ini melengkapi studi-studi sebelumnya dengan menyajikan sintesis lintas jenjang dari riset empiris di berbagai konteks pendidikan

Kata kunci: *Scoping review, pengajaran bahasa Inggris (ELT), pedagogi multiliterasi, multimodalitas.*

INTRODUCTION

Within the past few decades, there has been a significant transformation on the concept of literacy which is substantially driven by several factors including the advanced development of communication technologies, the rise of cultural mobility, and the awareness of multilingualism as impacted by globalization (Walsh, 2017). The former concept, traditional literacy views literacy limitedly as individual's ability to read and write (Larson & Marsh, 2005), yet it is no longer relevant to apply in this technologically-rich, culturally-diverse, and multilingually dynamic era. In response to the worldwide global shift, currently, literacy is more understood as a multifaceted and socially situated practice (Barton, 2007; Barton & Hamilton, 2005) which goes beyond the basic practice of reading and writing as represented by the traditional literacy. The shift is particularly evident in the field of language education where language learners engage with diverse linguistic repertoires and deal with the process of navigating complex multimodal texts both in their academic and social settings (Kress, 2010; Rowsell & Walsh, 2011; Walsh, 2010). Despite this theoretical recognition, there is limited synthesis of how these multiliteracies principles have been applied across different education levels in English language teaching, leaving questions about trends, contexts, and methodological approaches in the field. This gap highlights the need for a systematic mapping

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of the existing literature to provide clearer insight into the current state of ELT research on multiliteracies pedagogy.

The traditional view of literacy and its orientation on print-based media are no longer adequate to capture the diverse demands of communicative competences within this contemporary language teaching and learning practices. It brings to an absolute consequence that language teachers and researchers are looking for appropriate pedagogical approaches that sufficiently address the multimodal, multicultural, and even multilingual nature of modern communication. Responding to this urgent issue, multiliteracies pedagogy seamlessly aligns with the demand of a new literacy framework that extends beyond a single focus on reading and writing to cover wider dimensions including multiple range of modes, cultures, and languages (Cope & Kalantzis, 2013). The integration of multiliteracies has become increasingly essential across various levels of language education, as learners are expected to critically engage with texts that are often multimodal and culturally diverse. This shift signals a move away from traditional, print-centric instruction toward more inclusive pedagogical frameworks that emphasize meaning-making across multiple modes and cultural contexts (Newfield, 2011; Walsh, 2010). By situating these developments within the ELT context, it becomes clear that a structured review of empirical studies is needed to understand how multiliteracies pedagogy informs teaching and learning practices and to identify gaps for future research.

A number of studies have been researching the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy in English language teaching with several foci including teacher training (Maia, 2022), teacher perception (Lim et al., 2022; Mirhosseini & Emadi, 2022), student perception (Alghamdi & El-Hassan, 2016; Burke & Hardware, 2015), instructional design (Kaur et al., 2012; Kiss & Mizusawa, 2018), material analysis (Rowland et al., 2014), and curriculum (Guo & Feng, 2015; Pang, 2020). Additionally, previous reviews have examined multiliteracies pedagogy in specific contexts, such as primary classroom practices with a focus on multimodal meaning-making and learner diversity (Kulju et al., 2018), the pedagogical possibilities for adult language learners (Barroso & Mora, 2023), and theoretical and practice trends related to multiliteracies in general classroom settings (Hong & Hua, 2020). However, these studies are restricted in scope, limited to particular educational levels or theoretical concerns, and do not provide a comprehensive synthesis of empirical research

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on multiliteracies pedagogy across different educational levels within ELT context. Given this research gap, this study tries to report a number of existing studies reporting the empirical evidence on the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy in ELT across different education levels including primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The result of this scoping review significantly contributes to provide a structured literature mapping and potential research area under the issue of multiliteracy pedagogy and ELT for further research.

To understand these empirical patterns and their implications, it is important to revisit the origin and theoretical foundations of multiliteracies pedagogy, which provide the conceptual lens underpinning these studies. The origin of multiliteracies pedagogy can be traced back from the mid-1990s where a collective of ten scholars coming from different disciplines and countries, called the New London Group, published their seminal work, *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures* (New London Group, 1996). The seminal work was the groundwork that promoted the need for rethinking the traditional concept of literacy in response to the technological, cultural, and cultural shifts. According to group, the conventional approach to literacy, which was formerly known as traditional view of literacy focused primarily on a mere of reading and writing activity within print-based modality was inadequate to meet the demand of the complexity of digitally-globalized communication which massively involves multiple modes and cultural diversity (New London Group, 1996, 2000).

Principally, in the multiliteracies pedagogy, there is a key concept called “design” referring to the intentional creation and orchestration of meaning using various modes of representation such as language, visual, gestural, special, and digital elements (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Design consists of three components namely available design, designing, and redesigned (Kalantzis et al., 2016). Design refers to any semiotic resources that individuals can use to produce meaning and designing is the efforts or works performed to produce meaning. Meanwhile, redesigned illustrates results of the meaning-making process involving several kinds of transformation on the understanding of semiotic resources. Basically, the pedagogy of multiliteracies is grounded in the principle of *design*, where meaning-making is seen as an active process of transforming existing resources into new forms of expression. This concept aligns with the recognition that learners are not just consumers but also designers of meaning, capable of reshaping texts and messages according

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to new purposes and audiences (Kress, 2003). Furthermore, the introduction of the term “multiliteracies” by the New London Group was intentionally to capture two key phenomena contributing to affect the complex contemporary communication. They are the increasing employment of multiple modes to create the meaning-making process and the increasing diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds among learners. In short, multiliteracies pedagogy seeks to redefine literacy in terms of its social function and contextual relevance, promoting an inclusive and equitable education that prepares learners to participate fully both in their academic and social settings.

Furthermore, the concept of multiliteracies pedagogy primarily consists of four components namely situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice forming a compact pedagogical framework to guide teachers to view literacy in a classroom context and make learners engaged with their learning experiences (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). Firstly, situated practice refers to the immersion of learners into meaningful learning activities derived from the learners’ own daily practices, experiences, cultures, and social contexts. This approach aims at valuing students’ social and cultural backgrounds as one student may have different literacy practices from the others. In the literature, this situation is called “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al., 2006). Primarily, situated practice allows teachers to provide their students with more effective learning by connecting learning materials to what students already know and care about. Secondly, overt instruction relates to the deliberate teaching of metalanguage to explicitly guide learners in describing and analyzing how meaning is made through multiple modes. This allows students to be more aware of how language and other semiotic system works that lead to more effective understanding of information. For example, teachers teach students to analyze digital storytelling by analyzing the text structure (e.g., orientation, complication, and resolution) and visual aids (e.g., salience, imperative, and modality). Thirdly, critical framing represents teachers’ effort to guide students critically examining texts by relating them to broader contexts including social, cultural, ideological, and even political contexts. Basically, this component becomes the foundation of critical literacy (Freire, 1970) where learners are involved in questioning power relations and dominant discourses in society directing them to analyze whose voices are represented in the texts and how meaning is shaped by cultural assumptions. The last component, transformed practice involves learners applying what they

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have learned in new and innovative contexts. It reflects the idea that literacy education should empower students to be active participants in the creation of meaning, not just passive recipients. This component emphasizes agency and adaptability, skills that are essential in rapidly changing digital and global landscapes (Mills, 2010).

Generally, multiliteracies pedagogy serves great implications for language education, particularly in ELT context where learners receive and produce language through multiple modes and within diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In line with the idea proposed by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), multiliteracies covers the demand of contemporary communication where EFL, ESL, and EAL students have to deal with not only printed-textbooks but also a wide range of digital platforms that contains multiple modes of representation and complex semiotic systems. (Mills, 2010). Thus, the integration of multiliteracies pedagogy in ELT context means transforming the landscape of classroom teaching and learning practices to include the use of multimodal texts, acknowledge different cultural diversity, and employ technologically integrated approaches. For example, the implementation of multimodality-based tasks such as digital storytelling, video blogging, and collaborative online writing could enhance not only students' language skills but also build their digital literacies and critical awareness (Hafner et al., 2015). These innovative tasks align well and support the fourth component of multiliteracies pedagogy (transformative practice) in which learners have their own independence to do the process of meaning-making through selecting particular tools, modes, and genres in regards with intended communicative purposes (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

Another significant contribution of multiliteracies pedagogy in ELT is its emphasis on critical literacy. A study on critical multimodal literacy with moving-image texts found that students were engaged with multimodal texts and could develop their structural and ideological perspective to examine CNN Freedom Project promotional video deeply (Huang, 2017). In this case, the structural perspective represents how the students analyzed images, sounds, and words in regard with their purposeful organization to convey specific meaning. Meanwhile ideological perspective relates to how students critically considered who produced the text, for what purpose, and how power and corporate agendas were embedded in the message. Again, the centrality of multimodal communication in the current era demands both English language teachers and learners to prepare with the integration of linguistic, visual,

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audio, gestural, and spatial resources rather than solely print-based resources (Kress, 2010). Finally, it can be concluded that multiliteracies pedagogy plays an important role in ELT as a robust and flexible pedagogical framework that brings the teaching of English to be relevant in the era of globalization and digital transformation by promoting multimodal, inclusive, and critical classroom practices.

Finally, this scoping review is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the common profiles, research questions, contexts, and methodologies employed in existing studies on the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy in ELT across different education levels?
2. What are the key thematic findings identified in the existing studies on the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy in ELT across different education levels?

METHOD

Design

This study is categorized as a scoping review, a type of study specifically intended for mapping the substantive and methodological features of primary studies on a particular research topic (Arksey & O'malley, 2005). This approach is particularly well-suited for unveiling emerging and interesting research issue where the existing literature has not provided a comprehensive review due to its complexity and heterogeneity (Tricco et al., 2016). As the attention to research multiliteracies pedagogy, especially in the context of English language teaching is growing significantly, while at the same time comprehensive studies offering the literature map of the issue are still limited, a scoping review study was deemed relevant and appropriate to be carried out. This scoping review study synthesized both quantitative and qualitative data although the final report of the findings was primarily based on thematic and qualitative synthesis approach. To guide well-structured synthesis process, this study followed a research synthesis framework developed for TESOL and Applied Linguistics (Chong & Plonsky, 2021) by which supported the identification of themes systematically through thematic analysis of diverse empirical studies. The framework consists of five sequential stages for conducting reviews presented as follows.

1. Designing research questions

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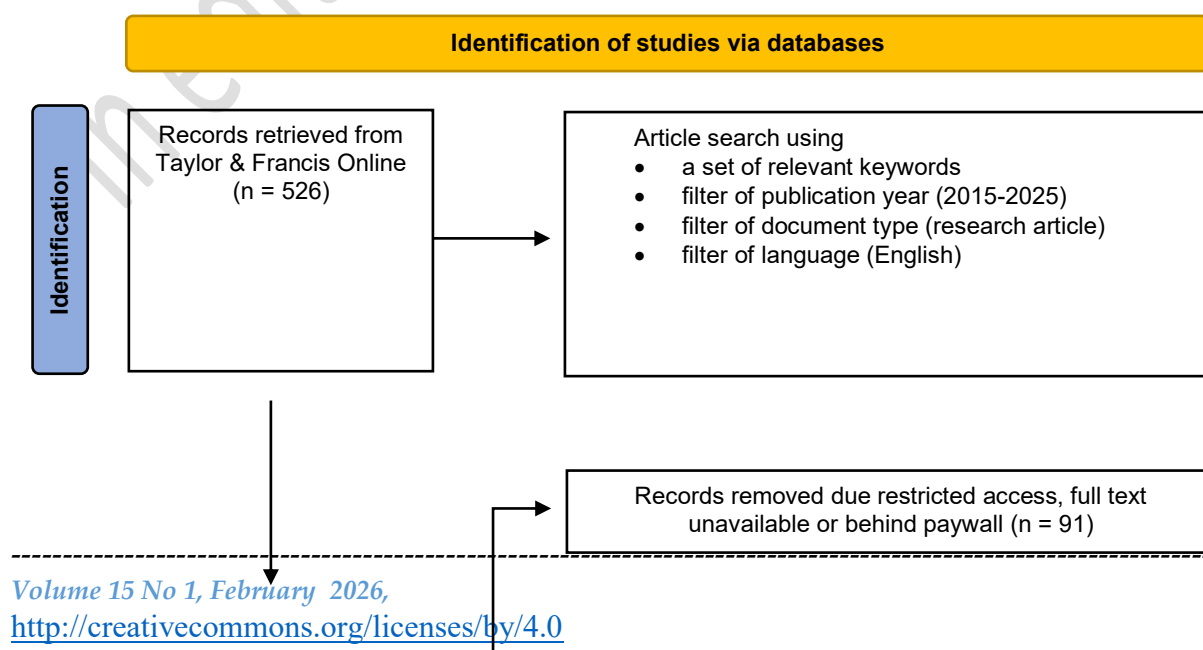
This scoping review was guided by the aforementioned research questions (in the introduction section) seeking for two areas namely 1) the report of the typology of the reviewed articles covering article profiles, research questions, theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and participant context, and 2) key thematic findings reported across the reviewed articles.

2. Identify keywords for conducting literature search

To capture the relevant literature, a set of keywords was employed to guide the literature search process. The keywords included “multiliteracies”, “multiliteracies pedagogy”, “English language teaching”, “ELT”, “EFL”, “ESL”, “EAL”, “primary school”, “secondary school”, and “tertiary education”. The keywords were utilized through multiple different combination to maximally reach wider coverage of articles.

3. Conduct literature search

The literature search was conducted following the PRISMA framework (see Figure 1) and accessed the Taylor & Francis database, yielding a total of 526 articles. The search was limited to research-based articles published between 2015 and 2025, written in English, and filtered by journal type, language, and publication year. The Taylor & Francis database was intentionally selected due to its extensive coverage of high-quality, Scopus-indexed journals in the fields of humanities and applied linguistics, where research on multiliteracies pedagogy is predominantly situated. Subsequently, the collected articles were further assessed based on abstracts, keywords, theoretical framework, methodology, and findings to determine relevance. This process resulted in 23 eligible articles for inclusion in the review.



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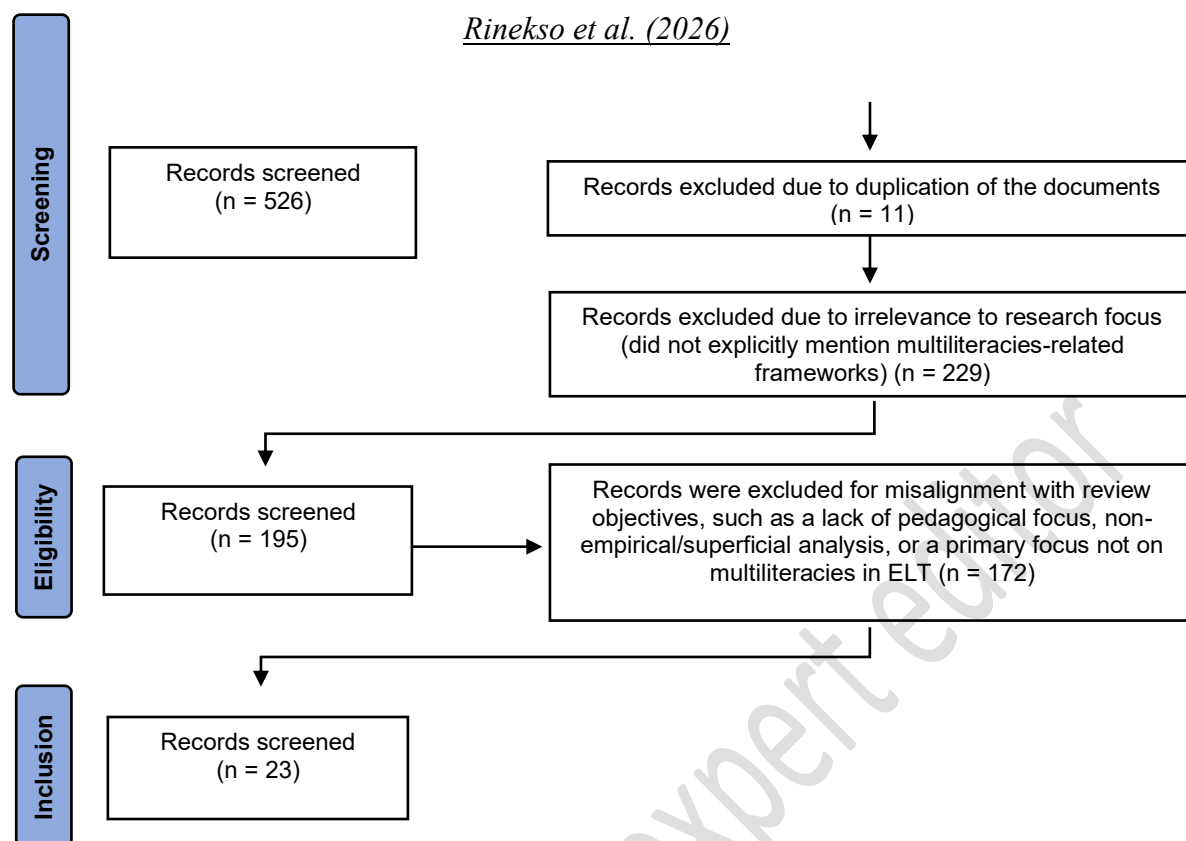


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 framework guiding the literature search of this study

4. Evaluate literature using inclusion and exclusion criteria

To ensure rigorous article selection, predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied during the literature search (see Table 1). All identified studies were screened against these criteria by the first and third authors independently. Any discrepancies in assessment were discussed until consensus was reached, thereby enhancing reliability and minimizing subjective bias.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

<i>Inclusion criteria</i>	<i>Exclusion criteria</i>
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- *Empirical research articles reporting primary data*
 - *Employing clearly stated quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods*
 - *Written in English*
 - *Situated in ELT-related contexts (ELT, EFL, ESL, EAL, ESP)*
 - *Conducted in primary, secondary, or tertiary education*
 - *Grounded in multiliteracies frameworks or related perspectives (e.g., multiliteracies pedagogy, critical literacy, multimodality, multimodal literacy)*
 - *Published in Scopus-indexed journals (Q1–Q4)*
 - *Non-empirical publications (e.g., book reviews, book chapters, review articles)*
 - *Unpublished theses or dissertations*
 - *Studies with unclear or unspecified research methods*
 - *Non-peer-reviewed articles*
 - *Articles published before 2015*
-

5. Extract and synthesize data

A structured data extraction and synthesis was carried manually over the eligible articles (n=23). The data extraction captured the metadata of the articles comprising article profiles (e.g., authors, year of publication, country, journal names) and body of articles (e.g., research aims, research questions, theoretical frameworks, contexts, participants, and methods). Meanwhile, data on the findings of the reviewed articles were synthesized thematically following the three stages of coding namely open, axial, and selective coding (Saldaña, 2015). The themes were generated inductively, emerging directly from the findings of the reviewed studies rather than being imposed by pre-existing theoretical frameworks. Additionally, the synthesis was intended to identify potential research gaps. The emerging themes were then reported and discussed in this study.

RESULT

RQ 1: Publication Trends

Studies by authors, years of publication and journals

An overview of the reviewed articles (n = 23) is presented in Table 2, summarizing authors, years of publication, and journal outlets. The publication timeline spans from 2015 to 2025, reflecting sustained scholarly attention to multiliteracies pedagogy over nearly a decade. A noticeable increase in publications occurs from 2020 onwards, indicating heightened research interest, particularly in response to expanding digital, multimodal, and multilingual demands in language education.

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The studies were published across a range of journals indexed in the Taylor & Francis database, encompassing language education, literacy studies, identity, technology, and pedagogy. This distribution highlights the interdisciplinary nature of multiliteracies research. Notably, several journals recur, including *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education*, and *Language and Education*.

Table 2. List of authors, year of publication, and journal names

No.	Author(s) & Year	Journals	Quartile per 2025
1.	(Lenters, 2016)	<i>Literacy Research and Instruction</i>	Q1
2.	(Humphrey, 2021)	<i>Language and Education</i>	Q1
3.	(Takeuchi, 2015)	<i>Journal of Language, Identity & Education</i>	Q1
4.	(Lam, 2024)	<i>Language, Culture and Curriculum</i>	Q1
5.	(Mirhosseini et al., 2022)	<i>Journal of Language, Identity & Education</i>	Q1
6.	(Querol-Julián, 2024)	<i>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development</i>	Q1
7.	(Su et al., 2021)	<i>Changing English</i>	Q1
8.	(Burgess, 2020)	<i>Discourse</i>	Q1
9.	(Cárdenas Curiel et al., 2023)	<i>Language and Education</i>	Q1
10.	(Tan et al., 2019)	<i>Educational Media International</i>	Q2
11.	(Holloway, 2021)	<i>Pedagogies</i>	Q2
12.	(Lee et al., 2016)	<i>Technology, Pedagogy and Education</i>	Q1
13.	(Liang & Lim, 2021)	<i>Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching</i>	Q1
14.	(Vorobel et al., 2020)	<i>Journal of Educational Research</i>	Q2
15.	(Seglem & Garcia, 2018)	<i>Theory into Practice</i>	Q1
16.	(Aridasarie & Rohmah, 2024)	<i>Cogent Education</i>	Q2
17.	(Kearney & Tangney, 2023)	<i>Irish Educational Studies</i>	Q2
18.	(Mizusawa, 2021)	<i>Asia Pacific Journal of Education</i>	Q1
19.	(Burke & Hardware, 2015)	<i>Language, Culture and Curriculum</i>	Q1
20.	(Stewart, 2024)	<i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i>	Q1
21.	(Elmiana, 2019)	<i>Pedagogy, Culture & Society</i>	Q1
22.	(Kiss & Mizusawa, 2018)	<i>Changing English</i>	Q1
23.	(Mirhosseini & Emadi, 2022)	<i>Journal of Educational Research</i>	Q2

Studies by geographical distribution and education levels

As illustrated in Figure 1, the reviewed studies demonstrate wide geographical representation, though unevenly distributed. Canada emerged as the most represented context (n = 5), followed by the United States (n = 4) and Singapore (n = 3). Other contexts, including Indonesia, Iran, Australia, and Taiwan, were represented by one to two studies. Several

studies adopted cross-national designs, involving collaborations across regions such as Spain, Colombia, and Ecuador (Querol-Julián, 2024), China and Indonesia (Su et al., 2021), and Australia, China, and Indonesia (Tan et al., 2019). Despite this diversity, African and South American contexts remain notably underrepresented. Meanwhile, in terms of educational levels (Figure 2), secondary education was the most frequently investigated (n = 11), followed by tertiary education (n = 8). Primary education accounted for the fewest studies (n = 4).

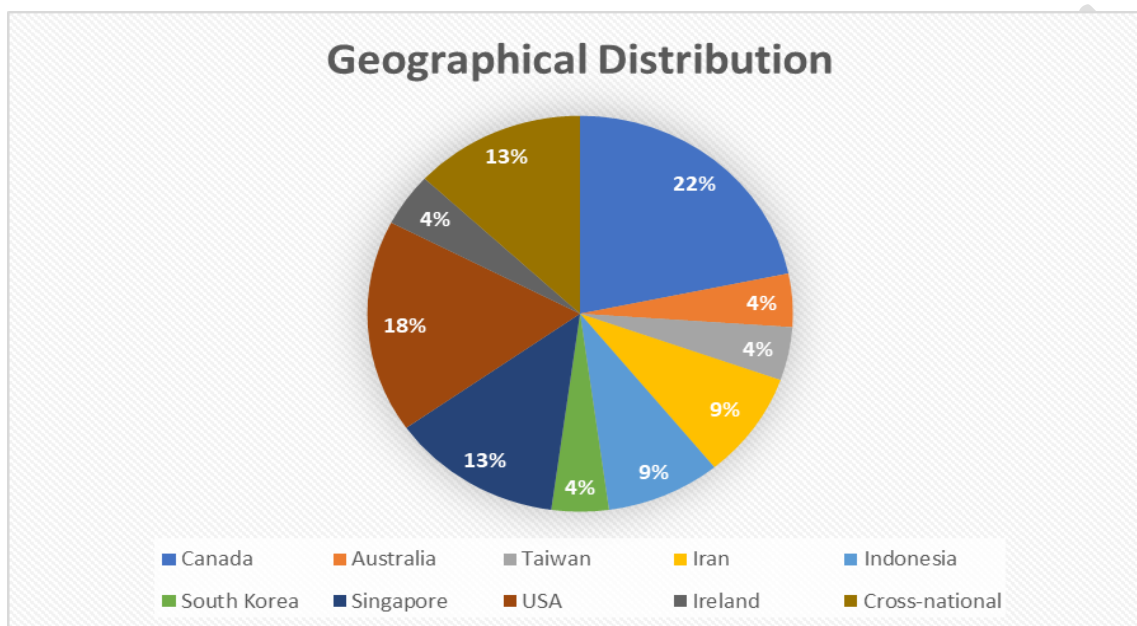


Figure 1. Geographical distribution

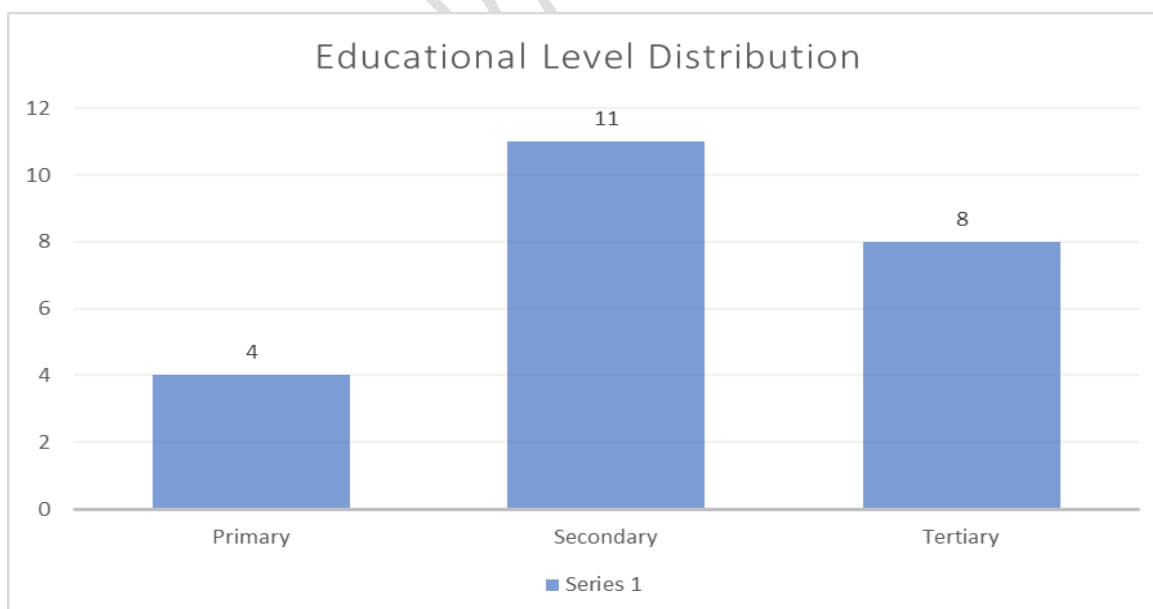


Figure 2. Educational level distribution

Studies by research questions and participant contexts

Table 4 synthesizes the core research questions and participant contexts of the reviewed studies. The dominant research focus centers on pedagogical design and teacher-related dimensions, including instructional innovation, professional development, and classroom enactment of multiliteracies pedagogy. Many studies explore how multiliteracies intersects with complementary frameworks such as multimodality, translanguaging, affect theory, New Literacy Studies, and glocalization to support English language teaching and learning.

By contrast, comparatively fewer studies prioritize learner-centered outcomes such as longitudinal language development, assessment practices, or comparative effectiveness across instructional contexts. Policy-level analyses and curriculum alignment are also limited. Regarding participants, most studies are situated in formal educational settings involving teachers and learners in EFL, ESL, bilingual, or multilingual contexts. Marginalized or linguistically diverse populations such as immigrant students, refugees, and bilingual pre-service teachers feature prominently. Early childhood settings, informal learning environments, and monolingual mainstream classrooms remain underrepresented, with most studies adopting small-scale qualitative designs.

Table 4. The summary of research questions and participant context

No.	Author(s) & Year	Research Question (Core Focus)	Participant Context
1.	(Lenters, 2016)	<i>Affect in multiliteracies learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th-grade ELLs (n=49), 4 teachers
2.	(Humphrey, 2021)	<i>Systemic Functional Linguistics/semiotics in science multiliteracies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 teacher & students (n=15), Australia
3.	(Takeuchi, 2015)	<i>Multimodal/multilingual support for English Language Learners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th-grade math; 2 newly-arrived ELLs
4.	(Lam, 2024)	<i>Multiliteracies & glocalization in English for Specific Purposes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University English majors (n=28)
5.	(Mirhosseini et al., 2022)	<i>New Literacy Studies in General English: opportunities/challenges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iranian undergraduates (n=66)
6.	(Querol-Julián, 2024)	<i>Online Professional Development for CLIL teachers' translanguaging understanding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-service CLIL teachers (n=200), Spain
7.	(Su et al., 2021)	<i>Virtual fieldwork for Intercultural Communicative Competence & multiliteracies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesian (n=3) & Chinese (n=6) students
8.	(Burgess, 2020)	<i>Affect theory explaining resistance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adult refugees/immigrants, Canada
9.	(Cárdenas Curiel	<i>Translanguaging in art lessons</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual pre-service teachers

	<i>et al., 2023)</i>		(n=16)
10.	(Tan et al., 2019)	Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge for multimodal literacies	• Pre-service teachers (n=220), 3 countries
11.	(Holloway, 2021)	Multiliteracies lessons with digital tools	• Pre-/in-service teachers (n=37), various subjects
12.	(Lee et al., 2016)	Pedagogy's effect on English as a Foreign Language experiences	• Korean (n=23) & Iranian (n=22) students
13.	(Liang & Lim, 2021)	Systemic Functional Linguistics-design thinking in Digital Multimodal Composing	Singapore secondary teacher & students (n=39)
14.	(Vorobel et al., 2020)	Identity expression through multiliteracies	• Adolescent ELL (14), Creole L1, US
15.	(Seglem & Garcia, 2018)	Inquiry-based pedagogy for engagement	• Grade 8 English teacher, Illinois
16.	(Aridasarie & Rohmah, 2024)	Puppetry for speaking skills	• Elementary students (n=6), Indonesia
17.	(Kearney & Tangney, 2023)	Tech model for new literacy skills	• Students 15-17 (n=73), Ireland
18.	(Mizusawa, 2021)	Challenges shifting to multiliteracies writing	• Secondary English teachers (n=6), Singapore
19.	(Burke & Hardware, 2015)	Expressing lived experience/culture	• ESL students (n=8, age 13), Canadian immigrants
20.	(Stewart, 2024)	Defining writing with digital tools	• High school teacher & students (n=26)
21.	(Elmiana, 2019)	Textbook visuals for language learning	• Analysis of 3 Indonesian EFL textbooks
22.	(Kiss & Mizusawa, 2018)	Pedagogy in multicultural writing classes	• Secondary English teachers (n=6), Singapore
23.	(Mirhosseini & Emadi, 2022)	Possibilities/challenges in English as a Foreign Language teaching	• Students (n=10) & coaches in theatre program

Studies by theoretical frameworks

As summarized in Table 5, multiliteracies pedagogy dominates as the primary theoretical framework across the reviewed studies. Most articles either adopt multiliteracies as the central analytical lens or integrate it with related frameworks, particularly multimodality, New Literacy Studies, translanguaging, social semiotics, and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Meanwhile, technology-related frameworks such as TPACK and CALL appear less frequently and mainly function as supplementary pedagogical lenses rather than core theoretical foundations. More critical or emergent perspectives including affect theory, assemblage theory, and ecological approaches are present but remain marginal. By comparison, cognitive, psycholinguistic, and assessment-oriented frameworks are largely absent.

Table 5. Theoretical framework used across the reviewed studies

No.	Author(s) & Year	Theoretical Framework(s)
1.	(Lenters, 2016)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, assemblage theory, affect theory
2.	(Humphrey, 2021)	Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), multiliteracies pedagogy, Disciplinary Semiotic Knowledge (DSK)
3.	(Takeuchi, 2015)	Sociocultural theory (Vygotsky), multiliteracies pedagogy, situated learning theory.
4.	(Lam, 2024)	Multiliteracies, glocalised marketing, disciplinary literacy
5.	(Mirhosseini et al., 2022)	New Literacy Studies (NLS), multiliteracies pedagogy
6.	(Querol-Julián, 2024)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, translanguaging, trans-semiotizing, semiotic awareness
7.	(Su et al., 2021)	Cultural linguistics, exploratory practice, team learning, English as an International Language (EIL)
8.	(Burgess, 2020)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, affect theory
9.	(Cárdenas Curiel et al., 2023)	Critical bilingual literacies, translanguaging, multimodal pedagogy
10.	(Tan et al., 2019)	Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), social semiotics
11.	(Holloway, 2021)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, learning by design, discipline literacy
12.	(Lee et al., 2016)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)
13.	(Liang & Lim, 2021)	Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), design thinking, multiliteracies pedagogy
14.	(Vorobel et al., 2020)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, ecological perspective, and
15.	(Seglem & Garcia, 2018)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, inquiry-based learning
16.	(Aridasarie & Rohmah, 2024)	Social semiotics, multimodal literacy
17.	(Kearney & Tangney, 2023)	New Literacy Studies (NLS), bridge21 pedagogical model
18.	(Mizusawa, 2021)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, functional literacy, multimodality
19.	(Burke & Hardware, 2015)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, multimodality
20.	(Stewart, 2024)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, multimodality, power structure theory
21.	(Elmiana, 2019)	Multimodal discourse analysis, Kress van Leeuwen (KvL) framework for analyzing visual images.
22.	(Kiss & Mizusawa, 2018)	Multiliteracies pedagogy, functional literacy
23.	(Mirhosseini & Emadi, 2022)	New Literacy Studies (NLS), multiliteracies pedagogy.

Studies by research methods

Table 6 shows that qualitative approaches overwhelmingly dominate the methodological landscape, with 21 out of 23 studies employing qualitative designs. These include case studies, ethnography, grounded theory, autoethnography, professional development interventions, and teaching-based projects. Descriptive qualitative approaches, particularly content analysis of instructional materials, are also represented. Only one study employed a quantitative method, focusing on survey validation of pre-service teachers'

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TPACK implementation, while one adopted a mixed-methods approach combining questionnaires and content analysis.

Table 6. Research method distribution

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Types/ Specific Designs</i>	<i>(f)</i>
<i>Qualitative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Case/single case/multiple case study</i> • <i>Professional learning intervention (like action research)</i> • <i>Ethnographic</i> • <i>Grounded theory</i> • <i>Teacher professional development program</i> • <i>Teaching program/project</i> • <i>Autoethnography</i> • <i>Descriptive qualitative (content analysis)</i> 	<i>21</i>
<i>Quantitative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Survey validation</i> 	<i>1</i>
<i>Mixed-method</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teaching project (open & closed-ended questionnaire, content analysis)</i> 	<i>1</i>

RQ 2: Key thematic findings

The synthesis of findings across the 23 reviewed articles resulted in seven recurring themes, as presented below.

1. Identity and Cultural Expression

This theme captures the role of multiliteracies pedagogy in supporting learners' identity construction and cultural expression. Several studies report learners' engagement in storytelling, translanguaging, and multimodal composition aligned with their linguistic backgrounds and lived experiences in ELT classrooms (Burke & Hardware, 2015; Cárdenas Curiel et al., 2023; Vorobel et al., 2020). Other studies document how affective dimensions, including emotion and resistance, shape learners' positioning within literacy classrooms (Burgess, 2020; Lenters, 2016). Collectively, these studies report that multiliteracies-based activities are associated with identity negotiation in multilingual learning contexts.

2. Multimodality and Technology Integration

This theme reflects the use of multimodal tools and digital technologies in multiliteracies-oriented instruction. The reviewed studies report the use of comics, puppetry, video production, digital storytelling, and photography to support learners' creative expression and oral language use (Aridasarie & Rohmah, 2024; Burke & Hardware, 2015; Lenters, 2016; Liang & Lim, 2021). One study additionally reports the use of the TPACK

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framework to assess teachers' readiness for multimodal instruction (Tan et al., 2019). Overall, multimodal and computer-assisted practices are described as central components of multiliteracies pedagogy across instructional contexts.

3. *Multiliteracies and Pedagogical Innovation*

Several studies situate multiliteracies pedagogy as a foundation for pedagogical innovation. Instructional models such as learning by design, inquiry-based learning, and bridge21 are reported to structure classroom practices emphasizing collaboration and learner participation (Holloway, 2021; Kearney & Tangney, 2023; Seglem & Garcia, 2018). In addition, one study documents online professional development designed to enhance CLIL teachers' use of translanguaging and semiotic resources (Querol-Julián, 2024). Across these studies, multiliteracies pedagogy is operationalized through student-centred instructional designs.

4. *Power, equity, and resistance*

This theme addresses how multiliteracies pedagogy intersects with issues of power, voice, and equity. Two studies drawing on affect theory report how emotional and embodied dimensions inform teachers' understandings of students' literacy engagement (Burgess, 2020; Lenters, 2016). Other studies describe tensions between multimodal classroom practices and institutional expectations that prioritize traditional text-based literacy (Mirhosseini & Emadi, 2022; Stewart, 2024). These findings document how multiliteracies practices are enacted within, and sometimes constrained by, institutional and policy contexts.

5. *Language and Academic Literacy Development*

Several studies report the use of multiliteracies pedagogy to support language and academic literacy development. One study integrates Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly Disciplinary Semiotic Knowledge (DSK), to support bi/multilingual students' academic literacy practices (Humphrey, 2021). Other studies describe the use of multimodal and glocalised approaches to support disciplinary literacy in ESP and STEM-related contexts (Lam, 2024; Mirhosseini et al., 2022; Takeuchi, 2015). These studies associate multiliteracies-based instruction with access to academic meaning-making across subject areas.

6. Challenges in Implementing Multiliteracies Pedagogy

Despite its reported applications, several studies identify challenges in implementing multiliteracies pedagogy. Exam-oriented and functional literacy-focused classroom cultures remain dominant in some contexts, particularly in Japan and Singapore (Kiss & Mizusawa, 2018; Mizusawa, 2021). Additional constraints include limited teacher training, time, and institutional support, as well as curricular and policy expectations favouring traditional literacy instruction. These challenges are reported as recurring conditions across contexts.

7. Intercultural Understanding and Global English

The final theme concerns the role of multiliteracies pedagogy in intercultural learning within global English contexts. One study reports virtual fieldwork activities involving Balinese and Chinese EFL students exploring culturally situated concepts such as *manying*, *sajiao*, and *amae* (Su et al., 2021). Other studies grounded in English as an International Language (EIL) similarly document the use of multiliteracies practices to engage learners with culturally diverse meanings and communicative practices across linguistic and national contexts.

Discussion

What do these findings mean for ELT theory?

The findings of this scoping review reaffirm multiliteracies pedagogy as a theoretically robust and contemporary framework for ELT, particularly in response to sociocultural, digital, and multilingual realities of language use (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, 2015; New London Group, 1996). Across the reviewed studies, English language learning is consistently conceptualized not as isolated linguistic skill acquisition, but as socially situated, multimodal, and identity-mediated meaning-making, echoing sociocultural theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, a clear theoretical pattern emerges when multiliteracies is compared with established ELT paradigms. While earlier structuralist methods focused primarily on accuracy and grammatical systems, and even the subsequent Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) model prioritized fluency and standardized communicative competencies (Richards & Rodgers, 2014), multiliteracies-oriented ELT represents a further shift by foregrounding design, agency, and semiotic choice (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015). This shift can be understood not merely as pedagogical but as

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epistemological, as it calls into question long-standing assumptions in ELT that linguistic competence can be meaningfully separated from social identity, power relations, and semiotic resources. By foregrounding learners' agency as designers of meaning, multiliteracies repositions English learning as a site of social participation rather than skill transmission. This theoretical move is particularly significant in global English contexts, where standardized notions of proficiency often marginalize locally situated communicative practices.

Moreover, the reviewed studies demonstrate how the four pedagogical components of multiliteracies: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice which was originally articulated by the New London Group (New London Group, 1996) and further developed by Cope and Kalantzis (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, 2015) provide a flexible pedagogical framework for English language education that moves beyond traditional skills-based instruction toward multimodal, culturally responsive, and learner-centred practices (Rajendram, 2020). Importantly, several studies extend ELT theory beyond cognition by foregrounding affect, embodiment, and emotion as integral to literacy learning (Burgess, 2020). This aligns with emerging affective and posthuman perspectives in applied linguistics, which argue that language learning is shaped by emotional, material, and relational forces rather than purely mental processes (Lenters, 2016). Crucially, this orientation also exposes a tension within mainstream ELT theory, which has historically privileged cognitive processing models while treating affective and embodied dimensions as secondary variables. The reviewed studies suggest that multiliteracies pedagogy does not simply complement existing theories of language learning, but actively unsettles their underlying assumptions about what counts as legitimate knowledge and learning in ELT. As such, multiliteracies pedagogy contributes to a more holistic theoretical reconceptualization of ELT, integrating linguistic, semiotic, cultural, and affective dimensions of learning.

How do these findings extend multiliteracies scholarship?

Beyond reaffirming established claims, the findings extend multiliteracies scholarship by illustrating its pedagogical adaptability and theoretical hybridity within ELT contexts. While early multiliteracies work was largely conceptual (New London Group, 1996), the reviewed studies provide empirical evidence of how multiliteracies principles are enacted through concrete instructional practices such as multimodal composing, inquiry-based learning, translanguaging pedagogy, and digital storytelling (Aridasarie & Rohmah, 2024;

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Seglem & Garcia, 2018; Stewart, 2024). A notable extension lies in the systematic integration of multiliteracies with adjacent theoretical frameworks, including New Literacy Studies (Gee, 2015; Mirhosseini et al., 2022), Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Humphrey, 2021), translanguaging theory (Cárdenas Curiel et al., 2023), and glocalization (Lam, 2024). This convergence positions multiliteracies not as a closed theory, but as a theoretical nexus capable of accommodating diverse epistemological traditions within ELT. This hybridity is theoretically consequential because it signals a shift from viewing multiliteracies as a bounded pedagogical model toward understanding it as an open, dialogic framework that gains explanatory power through interdisciplinary alignment. Rather than diluting the theory, such convergence strengthens its analytical reach by allowing multiliteracies to respond to complex linguistic, cultural, and ideological conditions in contemporary ELT classrooms.

At the same time, the findings reveal a methodological pattern that both strengthens and constrains the field. The dominance of qualitative, small-scale, and classroom-based studies aligns with the interpretive nature of multiliteracies and its emphasis on meaning-making processes (Kress, 2010). However, the relative absence of quantitative, longitudinal, and assessment-oriented studies mirrors critiques in the broader multiliteracies literature that empirical generalizability and learning measurement remain underdeveloped. In other words, the theory of multiliteracies in ELT is now well-developed and strong. The field's current limitation is not in its ideas, but in its methods of research. This points to a clear path forward: instead of requiring new theories, the field needs to broaden the types of studies it conducts. This methodological imbalance also raises questions about how evidence is valued within multiliteracies scholarship. While rich qualitative insights have advanced theoretical understanding, their dominance may unintentionally reinforce the perception that multiliteracies is pedagogically innovative but empirically fragile. Such perceptions may limit the framework's legitimacy within policy-driven and assessment-oriented ELT environments.

Why do the identified gaps matter for teachers, policy, and curriculum?

The gaps identified in this review carry significant pedagogical and institutional implications. Geographically, the concentration of multiliteracies research in North America, Asia, and Australia reflects broader inequalities in knowledge production within applied linguistics (Canagarajah, 2002; Pennycook, 2010). The underrepresentation of African and

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South American contexts risks reproducing regionally bounded interpretations of multiliteracies, limiting its applicability to linguistically and socioeconomically diverse ELT settings. At the classroom level, the limited focus on primary education is particularly consequential. Early literacy development plays a foundational role in shaping learners' semiotic repertoires and attitudes toward language (Bearne & Wolstencroft, 2007; Rowsell & Walsh, 2011). The lack of empirical attention to elementary ELT contexts means that teachers have insufficient guidance on how multiliteracies principles can be developmentally scaffolded for young learners, despite children's early immersion in digital and multimodal environments. For teachers, this gap translates into a practical dilemma: while multiliteracies pedagogy is often promoted as responsive to learners' lived realities, the lack of contextually grounded guidance in underrepresented regions and educational levels limits teachers' ability to enact its principles in sustainable ways. As a result, multiliteracies risks remaining aspirational rather than actionable for many ELT practitioners.

From a curriculum and policy perspective, the predominance of qualitative methodologies may partly explain the persistent tension between multiliteracies pedagogy and exam-oriented educational systems. While multiliteracies advocates argue for flexible, process-oriented, and multimodal assessment (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Mills, 2015), the fundamental logic of standardized assessment, with its demands for reliability, scalability, and comparability, often remains at odds with the contextual, creative, and design-based competencies that multiliteracies aims to foster. Without stronger empirical evidence linking multiliteracies pedagogy to measurable learning outcomes that are recognizable and valued within such constraints, policymakers and curriculum designers may remain hesitant to institutionalize its principles. This hesitation reflects not only methodological concerns but also ideological ones. Multiliteracies pedagogy implicitly challenges assessment regimes that prioritize error, standardization, and monolingual norms, which continue to shape language education policy, and when these tensions remain unexamined, efforts to scale multiliteracies within formal curricula risk remaining partial or symbolic.

Consequently, these gaps matter because they shape whether multiliteracies pedagogy can transition from innovative classroom practice to systemic educational reform. Addressing them is essential for empowering teachers, informing inclusive language policies, and designing ELT curricula that align with the communicative, cultural, and semiotic demands of

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global English in the 21st century. Taken together, these findings position multiliteracies pedagogy at a critical juncture within ELT: theoretically mature, pedagogically innovative, yet institutionally constrained. The challenge ahead lies not in refining its conceptual foundations, but in negotiating the epistemological, methodological, and ideological conditions that determine its uptake beyond isolated classrooms.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

Conclusion

This scoping review examined how multiliteracies pedagogy has been implemented in English language education across different educational levels. Synthesizing findings from 23 peer-reviewed studies, the review identified seven key themes: (1) identity and cultural expression, (2) multimodality and technology integration, (3) multiliteracies and pedagogical innovation, (4) power, equity, and resistance, (5) language and academic literacy development, (6) challenges in implementing multiliteracies pedagogy, and (7) intercultural understanding and global English. Taken together, these themes demonstrate that multiliteracies pedagogy plays a significant role in supporting learner identity, cultural and intercultural awareness, pedagogical innovation, inclusivity, and academic literacy development through multimodal and technology-mediated practices. Across primary, secondary, and tertiary contexts, multiliteracies emerges as a flexible pedagogical framework capable of responding to the demands of globalized, multilingual, and media-rich English language classrooms. Rather than functioning as a single method, multiliteracies operates as an adaptable orientation to teaching and learning that accommodates diverse learners, modes of meaning-making, and sociocultural contexts. At the same time, this review highlights structural imbalances in the existing literature. The findings indicate that multiliteracies research in ELT remains unevenly distributed across geographical regions, educational levels, and research methodologies. These gaps suggest that while multiliteracies pedagogy has been widely theorized and qualitatively explored, its implementation and impact have not yet been comprehensively examined across broader contexts and research designs.

Limitation

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, this scoping review was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles written in English and indexed within a single database, Taylor & Francis. As a result, relevant studies published in other databases, non-English

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journals, or grey literature may have been excluded. This database and language restriction potentially limits the representation of research from underexplored regions and contexts. Second, as a scoping review, this study aimed to map patterns, themes, and research trends rather than to evaluate the effectiveness or quality of interventions. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as indicative of research directions and emphases rather than as evidence of pedagogical outcomes. Future reviews adopting systematic or meta-analytic approaches may provide more evaluative insights into the impact of multiliteracies pedagogy on learning outcomes.

Implication

Pedagogical Implication for ELT Teachers. The findings suggest that ELT teachers can meaningfully integrate multiliteracies pedagogy to support learner identity, engagement, and multimodal meaning-making. Classroom practices such as storytelling, multimodal composition, translanguaging, and digital projects enable learners to draw on their linguistic, cultural, and semiotic resources. Teachers are therefore encouraged to move beyond print-centric instruction and design learning environments that value multimodality, student agency, and culturally sustaining practices.

Implication for future studies. This review reveals the need for greater geographical diversity, particularly studies situated in African and South American contexts, as well as increased attention to primary education settings. In addition, the strong dominance of qualitative research highlights opportunities for more quantitative and mixed-method studies to examine learning outcomes, assessment practices, and longitudinal effects of multiliteracies pedagogy. Such approaches could strengthen the empirical base of multiliteracies scholarship and enhance its applicability across contexts.

Policy and Curriculum Implications. At the policy and curriculum level, the findings point to the necessity of aligning curriculum frameworks, assessment systems, and teacher education programs with multiliteracies principles. Rigid, exam-oriented literacy models may constrain the implementation of multimodal and culturally responsive pedagogies. Policymakers and curriculum developers should therefore consider more flexible assessment criteria that recognize multimodal, process-oriented, and context-sensitive learning. Embedding multiliteracies into curriculum guidelines and teacher professional development can support more inclusive and future-oriented English language education

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