

**Beyond the Text: Reading, Writing and Multimodal Literacy Integration to Unlock Classroom Communication****Monalisa Pasaribu<sup>1</sup>, Juli Yanti Damanik<sup>2</sup>, Rumondang Miranda Marsaulina<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1,2,3</sup> Institut Teknologi Del<sup>1</sup>monalisa.pasaribu@del.ac.id**ABSTRACT**

Skills of reading and writing are two of the four skills necessary for language learning. However, in promoting communication particularly oral communication, the two skills may be less favoured as less communicative. This study focuses on integrating reading and writing skills as well as multimodal literacy in order to promote oral communication in the classroom. Three lesson plans have been designed for the conversation class. The reading and writing are integrated by conducting activities of pre-reading, while reading and after reading. Moreover, the design also integrated multimodal tools such as pictures and videos online for peer discussion in the classroom. The lesson plans are expected to improve students' second language literacy by accommodating their oral communication effectively. A further study needs to be employed to see how effective the lesson plans are in promoting the communication in the class.

Keywords: reading; writing; multimodal; oral communication; speaking.

**INTRODUCTION**

Oral communication in a classroom, particularly during a language learning like English, is mandatory. Usually, the overall goal of the course is to develop students' skills and knowledge in English oral communication with other peers. Thus, the students who attend the class should have the integrative motivation to communicate in English with peers (Cook, 2016).

However, even if the emphasis of the English course is oral communication involving many speaking and listening activities, reading and writing skills should be integrated with the course. Nation and Newton (2009) pointed out the importance of balancing and integrating four language strands, involving receptive and productive skills, in about the same amount of time each into meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, and fluency development activities, where the learners' focus is on communicating and receiving messages. Likewise, Brown (2014) and Hyland (2019) assert that it is necessary to combine all the four language skills when teaching language, as the four skills are inseparable. Dupont et al. (2020) highly recommend English instructors deliver speaking classes that merge other skills particularly writing activity since both speaking and writing in the classroom allow them to make lessons more dynamic, while stimulating the students to practice through multiple forms of communication.

However, in many conversation classroom teaching, these skills may be neglected. Some studies in foreign and Indonesian contexts demonstrate such a tendency. In their literature review highlighting the background of integrated-skills approach, Pysarchyk and Yamshynska (2015) revealed that during a long period of history linguistic, reading, writing, listening and speaking were regarded as separated language skills and delivered as distinct lesson parts in the language learning process. No efforts were made to integrate the skills for learners to achieve a higher level of their communicative skills. Hirvela and Belcher (2016) noted speaking-reading-writing connections should be looked across in the age of multimodal pedagogy since the connections were treated separately. In Indonesia, a qualitative study exploring the ways English teachers direct their non-native English students in speaking classroom raises a recommendation that the teachers integrate writing into speaking because this strategy will activate passive students and maximizes language use as opposed to rote memorization of facts and grammar rules (Dewi & Muslim, 2024). In a more recent experimental study by Yadi et al. (2026) using pre-test and post-test design on 22 senior high school students, it was found a major factor impacting students' continuingly low speaking proficiency was the shortage of varied linguistic input in their speech training. These inputs comprising vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse patterns were observed to be mostly provided through reading text activities. Thus, the research question for the study is: How should reading and writing skills be integrated with a conversation class?

Therefore, this research focuses on developing lesson plans that integrate the reading and writing skills into the teaching process. It is expected that the findings from this research contribute valuable insights for English teachers and future researchers seeking to develop more effective and engaging approaches to integrating reading and writing to promote classroom communication. Since this is still an on-going research, a further study needs to be employed to see how effective the lesson plans are in promoting the communication in the class.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed the literature review method in designing the lesson plan. Literature review involves identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing scholarly publications on a particular topic to provide a comprehensive understanding of current knowledge and identify gaps for further research (Creswell & Creswell, 2023)

### **Research Subject**

The subject studied in this qualitative research encompasses existing publications that have established views, concepts and theories on why and how reading and writing skills are integrated with multimodal approach and technology.

### **Time and Place Setting**

The literature review was conducted for three months from September to November 2018. No specific place setting was employed for this research. The literature review was carried out using digital academic databases and online library resources, including ERIC, relatable scopes-indexed journals, Google Scholar and other reputable educational research repositories.

### **Instrument and Procedure**

The instrument used in this study was a literature review matrix. The matrix served as a tool to organize and select the chosen publications. The matrix included important

information necessary for the research such as the author(s), year of publication, research objectives, methodology, key findings, and implications for lesson plan development.

The research procedure consisted of the following steps:

1. Identify the relevant keywords related to reading and writing instruction, multimodal learning, technology integration, and lesson planning.
2. Search the relevant literature from reputable academic databases.
3. Review and categorize the data in the matrix such as publications written in English
4. Synthesize the findings to identify effective instructional principles and integrate these principles into the lesson plan design.

### **Data collection and analysis**

As stated previously, data were collected through a literature review of relevant academic articles. The selected publications were examined to identify theories, instructional strategies, technological tools, and multimodal practices that support the integration of reading and writing skills. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis was used to interpret and categorize based on the major themes as multimodal literacy, skills of reading and writing, and integrated literacy instruction.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Lesson plan Meeting One**

The skills for the first lesson focus on reading for skimming and paraphrasing. The objectives of the lesson are for students to be able to skim for keywords identification and to paraphrase an article. These reading skills are important for the learners as they are going to be exposed frequently to reading articles. Knowing how to skim to get keywords helps to get meaning while the paraphrasing skill helps to represent the ideas as well as to avoid plagiarism (Pecorari, 2003). More specifically for reading, the activity is conducted in intensive reading. Since it is crucial to select a text for intensive reading, one article should be selected carefully to support the success of sequencing the lesson in students' on-going literacy development (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009).

As a pre reading activity, the first activity exposes two key targets of reading instruction by Hedgcock and Ferris (2009), which include the activation of students' background knowledge and vocabulary learning. By asking students to respond from the picture, the teacher can find out what the background knowledge of their students is at, so the teaching can be adjusted. In addition, many problems of students learning a second language are rooted from having insufficient background knowledge (Hadley, 1993). Through this activity, students notice other words from their classmates (Nation, 2001) so they share knowledge to their peers. Moreover, it is also unlikely to separate vocabulary learning from reading because when someone learns to read in a second language, it usually involves learning the words (Grabe & Stoller, 1997). The next activities give opportunity for students to practice using the vocabulary in oral communication through interviewing their peers and reporting the results to the class. At this stage, the teacher also prepares students by teaching the skills for skimming and paraphrasing from their peer's opinion.

The following two activities are included in activities for during-reading. The students have the opportunity to practice their reading strategies of skimming the key words and paraphrasing using the top-down approach (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009). Likewise, at the same time, they also practice their oral communication. These skills are also appropriate for the students because they can use the skills when encountering a number of readings. Meanwhile, the final activity, as the after-reading activity, is designed to examine how students respond to the ideas of the text. The class discussion is used to see how students respond to the text.

This lesson also integrates the use of multimodality by using pictures. As part of literacy, images are useful resources in the making and transformation of meaning (Pahl & Roswel, 2006). Specifically building on the literacy sub-skills, this activity focuses on interpreting the image. The image is used to retrieve information, in this case the vocabulary. Following the principle of teaching vocabulary, the picture helps to elicit what vocabulary that students already know (McCarten, 2007) and repeat the words in the next activity (Schmitt, 2000). Overall, the reading activities designed in the first lesson, including skimming, paraphrasing and finding meaning from pictures, reflect the literacy events which usually happen outside the classroom (Barton, 2004).

### **Lesson Plan Meeting Two**

In the second lesson plan, the class was started by reviewing the previous lesson. Particularly for teaching reading, the reading activity in this lesson is aimed at analysing the particular aspect of reading in the text (Nation, 2009), through decoding the print (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009). The objective of the lesson is for students to be able to identify the genre and structure of a text. The two genres introduced in this lesson were the exposition and the discussion genres. These two genres can help the college students in their study because these genres are frequently found in academic writing, particularly in the college and university essay writing.

To help scaffold students' knowledge, all the activities are designed carefully so that students can comprehend the genre. The vocabulary review activity involves oral communication in order to give the students the opportunity to use the language communicatively. After reviewing the vocabulary in the pre-reading, the students are asked to analyse the purpose and structure from the previous lesson's text. Using the previous reading can effectively maximize the aim of intensive reading because students are familiar with parts of the content. Moreover, because students only have one-hour meetings, it can also help to maximize the class time for learning the skills. During the reading, students are asked to find out the purpose and the structure of the text. Through this deconstruction activity, students can identify the genre of the text and the stages of the genre (Rose & Martin, 2012). In order to help learners to understand the strategies to comprehend texts (Nation, 2009), the teaching of the exposition genre is conducted by comparing it with the discussion genre. Therefore, students are aware of the difference between the two genres. By understanding genres of reading and writing, students are aware of how to express ideas differently with different genres.

As an effort to embed digital literacy and technology to the classroom (Warschauer, 2007; Hafner, 2014), the multimodality in this lesson is by getting information from YouTube videos. The students were asked to watch a four-minute video and to list down some information why people should not eat fast food based on the video. Through this video embedding, the students learn the new ways of reading in different multimodal text and to conjoin the meaning (Kress, 2010 in Gillen & Barton, 2010). This

activity also reflects a literacy event, where students get information by finding it from online materials (Barton, 2004).

### **Lesson Plan Meeting 3**

This lesson is designed to focus on teaching writing in an exposition genre. The approach taken to the writing is the functional communicative by first looking at the purpose of writing the text (Nation, 2009). It also integrates the process and product approach by the scaffolding process of the writing and the imitation of a text. From the previous lessons, students have gathered the ideas about the purpose of the writing, which is to write an exposition about unhealthy lifestyle. The next step is to identify the language features to develop control to organize the ideas (Nation 2009). To do so, students are asked to re-arrange the information according to the stages from an article titled “The risk of lack of exercise”. Not only does it help to familiarize the stages of exposition to the students, but group work also gives students the opportunity to identify the language features needed for a particular stage.

The joint-construction in the teaching and learning cycle for genre pedagogy happens in the next activity where students and teacher work together to write the text (Rothery, 1994 in Rose & Martin, 2012). The interaction between the students and the teacher reflects the principles of writing in genre pedagogy that writing and the learning to write are social activities (Hyland, 2007). This also indicates the supportive environment and engaging talks (Nation, 2009) to assist students in the process of meaning making. The following activity gives the opportunity for students to practice writing by constructing a text together with their peers. Due to the demand of oral communication practice in the class, as an alternative students present the result of their writing in a form of presentation. This activity also scaffolds the students to gradually writing individually/independently (Nation, 2009). Therefore, the future meetings can focus on individual writing, as an independent construction (Rothery, 1994 in Rose & Martin, 2012).

Overall, the designs of the three lessons are dedicated for the maximum use of oral communication in the class, as the main goal of the course. Most of the designs of the activities were done in a communicative way by asking and answering questions, discussing and presenting. Therefore, through the integration of reading and writing into a conversation class, the support to improve students’ second language literacy as well as the oral communication is accommodated effectively.

### **DISCUSSIONS**

The lesson plans designed in this study reflect the theoretical principles of integrated literacy instruction, multimodal use, and technology-enhanced language learning discussed in the literature. Rather than treating reading, writing, listening, and speaking as isolated skills, each lesson incorporates these language competencies into communicative tasks that reflect the authentic language use. This integrated approach aligns with the views of Brown (2014) and Hyland (2019) who have argued that communicative language teaching (CLT) promotes meaningful interaction by engaging learners in authentic communication where language skills are naturally employed and that all the language skills are inseparable. The plans connecting reading-writing to

speaking also meet the expectation proposed by Nation and Newton (2009) about balancing and integrating four language strands proportionally and the recommendation of Dupont et al. (2020) on delivering integrated skills-delivered speaking practice. The activities developed in the lesson plans will support students' progress in their speech intelligibility. Unlike the findings on students' less optimal speaking progress shared by Pysarchyk and Yamshynska (2015), Hirvela and Belcher (2016), Dewi and Muslim, (2024) and Yadi et al. (2026) due to isolated language skill teaching tradition, the multimodal strategies integrating the four strands smartly should be able to improve students' oral communication skills more effectively.

Furthermore, the lesson plans which incorporate multimodal resources available by technology, like digital texts, images, videos, and collaborative online tools, support the recommendations of Hafner (2014), Kress in Gillen & Barton (2010) and Warschauer (2007) about the way of achieving broader second language literacy in addition to speaking main goal. By engaging with various modes of representation, students not only strengthen speaking abilities but also enhance reading and writing in authentic contexts.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the designs of the three lessons are dedicated for maximum use of oral communication in the class, as the main goal of the course. Most of the designs of the activities were done in a communicative way by asking and answering questions, discussing and presenting. Moreover, the instructional design supports the development of second language literacy by promoting students' critical thinking, engagement, collaboration, and communication skills. Therefore, the integration of reading and writing into a conversation class becomes imperative because it is expected to improve students' second language literacy in general with the main focus on enhancing their speaking skills. Since this is still an ongoing research, a further study needs to be employed to see how effective the lesson plans are in promoting the communication in the class.

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