

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The widespread implementation of information and communication technology (ICT) has transformed the ways people learn, communicate, collaborate, and interact through digital environments. Improvements in ICT have also enabled communication to occur across multiple modes, including text, images, audio, video, and other multimedia resources rather than through printed texts alone (Arslantas & Gul, 2022). Scholarly literature on language education confirms rapid advancements in ICT have brought significant changes in education and educational systems, requiring language teachers to cope with the challenges of this technological development alongside ongoing pedagogical reforms (Moradi, 2025). Within this transformation, ICT integration into language teaching is understood to demand more careful planning and design than in other disciplines, since teachers must continually adapt materials and activities to meet learners' evolving needs (Ardıç & Çiftçi, 2019, as cited in Moradi, 2025). Complementing this, a review of ICT's role in education concludes that ICTs have a profound impact on the way education is designed, delivered, and received, with the potential to transform education by making it more accessible, personalized, and effective, thus responding to contemporary educational challenges and preparing students for the demands of an increasingly digitized world, while also noting persistent challenges such as uneven access to technology and educator resistance to change (Gazi et al., 2024). Consequently, individuals are expected not only to read and write printed

texts but also to interpret and create meaning across multiple modes. Therefore, the traditional concept of literacy, which primarily emphasizes reading, writing, listening, and speaking, is considered insufficient to meet the complex communication demands of the twenty-first century (Huot et al., 2025).

In response to the rapid transformation of communication practices driven by globalization and digital technologies, the New London Group (1996) introduced the concept of multiliteracies to broaden the traditional understanding of literacy. The framework was proposed to address two major developments: the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of societies and the growing multiplicity of communication channels, media, and modes through which meaning is constructed and shared. Building on this perspective, Cope and Kalantzis (2015) describe multiliteracies as a framework that extends literacy beyond conventional reading and writing by emphasizing a broad range of competencies. These competencies include the ability to access, interpret, analyze, critically evaluate, create, and communicate meaning across multiple semiotic modes, such as linguistic, visual, audio, spatial, gestural, and digital forms, while participating effectively in diverse social and cultural contexts. Rather than viewing literacy as a single set of language skills, multiliteracies recognize that individuals must be able to engage with complex, multimodal forms of communication and adapt their meaning-making practices to different audiences, purposes, and cultural settings.

Multiliteracy covers verbal, visual, audio, and spatial literacy, and requires individuals to be able to move and interact critically and creatively between these different modes of communication (Rinekso et al., 2026). Rather than viewing literacy solely as the ability to read and write printed texts, multiliteracies recognize

that meaning is created through the interaction of linguistic, visual, audio, spatial, gestural, and digital resources. In educational settings, the integration of multiliteracies plays an important role in preparing learners to communicate effectively in increasingly globalized, culturally diverse, and digitally connected societies (Misa, 2023). Through multiliteracy-based learning, students are encouraged to become active participants who are capable of interpreting complex information, collaborating across cultures, and utilizing digital media responsibly and creatively (Mandarani et al., 2024). Therefore, implementing multiliteracy in education not only strengthens students' communicative competence but also equips them with the skills necessary to participate meaningfully in 21st-century social and professional environments (Farahiba, 2025). In conclusion, multiliteracy reflects an expanded and dynamic view of literacy that equips individuals with the critical and creative capacities needed to engage effectively in complex multimodal communication environments.

In the Indonesian context, the relevance of multiliteracies is increasingly reflected in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which promotes student-centered learning, competency development, and meaningful learning experiences. Studies on the implementation of the curriculum in English language classrooms indicate that teachers are encouraged to design learning activities that integrate diverse learning media, digital technologies, project-based assessment, and contextual learning experiences while fostering students' critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills (Sari & Fatmawati, 2024; Aprilia et al., 2024). Furthermore, recent research highlights that the integration of ICT has become an important component of English language learning under the Merdeka Curriculum,

requiring teachers to utilize digital resources that support interactive and meaningful learning experiences (Yahya et al., 2025). These pedagogical characteristics closely correspond to the principles of multiliteracies, which emphasize meaning-making through multiple modes of communication and participation in diverse digital, social, and cultural contexts. Consequently, the successful implementation of the curriculum depends largely on teachers' ability to integrate multiliteracy practices into classroom instruction.

The increased relevance of multiliteracy has important implications for language education. English language learning is no longer limited to traditional classroom activities such as reading printed texts or practicing grammar structures (Rinekso et al., 2026). Instead, students often interact with multimedia resources, digital platforms, visual materials, and collaborative online environments as part of their learning experience (Mandarani et al., 2024). This learning environment requires students to interpret multimodal texts, evaluate digital information, and communicate ideas through various formats. Therefore, integrating multiliteracy practices into English language education is necessary, because it can support students in developing not only linguistic competence but also critical thinking, creativity, and intercultural awareness (Dewi et al., 2023).

Within this context, the role of teachers becomes crucial. Teachers are expected not only to deliver language content but also to design learning experiences that integrate digital tools, multimodal texts, and culturally responsive pedagogies. Understanding and practicing multiliteracy enables teachers to design learning experiences that are not only responsive to students' digital and multimodal needs but also reflective and contextual (Andriyati et al., 2025). Teachers who are

able to pedagogically integrate various media and technologies, such as digital texts, instructional videos, infographics, and platform-based collaborative assignments, create more engaging, authentic, and contextually relevant learning environments (Ajani, 2024).

Therefore, in teacher education programs such as the Bachelor of English Language Education (BELE), developing multiliteracy competence is particularly important because they are expected to become future English teachers who can respond to the evolving demands of language education. As future educators, BELE students must be capable of designing instruction that integrates digital tools, multimodal texts, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Prospective teachers' readiness to design multiliteracy instruction depends heavily on the quality of teacher education they receive. However, preparing prospective teachers for these challenges requires teacher education programs to design learning experiences that are aligned with students' actual needs and professional expectations.

Understanding students' needs is an important step in designing effective educational programs. In the field of language education, needs analysis has been widely used as a systematic approach to identifying students' requirements, difficulties, and learning preferences (Kusuma et al., 2023). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explain that student needs can be understood through three main components: necessities, lacks, and wants. Necessities refer to the knowledge and skills required to function effectively in the target situation, lacks refer to the gap between current abilities and required competencies, while wants refer to learners' perceptions and preferences regarding what they want to learn. By analyzing these three components, educators can gain a more comprehensive understanding of

learners' learning needs and design more relevant educational experiences.

In the context of English language teacher education, conducting a needs analysis can provide valuable insights into the extent to which existing learning experiences support the development of competencies needed in the future (Gawa, 2022). Without a clear understanding of students' needs, lacks, and wants, teacher education programs may struggle to design an effective learning environment that prepares students for the demands of contemporary language teaching.

Several studies have examined the integration of multiliteracy in educational contexts. A study conducted by Nabhan & Hidayat (2018) explored the implementation of multiliteracy-based learning in English language classrooms and found that the use of multimodal learning resources can enhance students' engagement and critical thinking skills. The study emphasizes that integrating multiliteracy practices can help learners better understand complex information presented in different modes. In addition, a study by Özyer and Özcan (2020) explored the implementation of the multiliteracies framework into the classroom and found that multiliteracy learning can help students of English as a foreign language (EFL) understand the cultural aspects that support multicultural education. Another study by Dewi et al. (2023) examined the implementation of multiliteracy in the EFL speaking class and the findings indicate that multiliteracy enables students to practise speaking in authentic contexts, develop language skills through conceptualising and analysing their narratives, and engage in reflective learning through peer and teacher feedback, thereby enhancing both linguistic competence and higher order thinking skills. In addition, Sujiati et al. (2023) explored the teachers' experience towards multiliteracy practice in junior high

school and found that multiliteracy helps to improve teacher-student interaction, making students more active in learning. In addition, multiliteracy also allows students to develop their critical thinking skills.

Although prior studies have shown that multiliteracy can transform teaching practices, improve students' understanding of cultural contexts, and provide authentic opportunities, most of the studies focus on the implementation of multiliteracy in language classrooms. Studies that examine multiliteracy from the perspective of student needs, particularly in the context of teacher education, are relatively few. Research that specifically examines the needs, lacks, and wants of prospective teachers related to the development of multiliteracy is still limited, especially in the Indonesian context. As a result, the development of a multiliteracies-based curriculum in teacher education programs may not be aligned with the actual needs of students, leading to learning experiences that are less relevant and less effective. Furthermore, the lack of a clear needs analysis can hinder the optimal development of prospective teachers' multiliteracies competencies, leaving them inadequately prepared to implement multiliteracies practices in their future classrooms. Therefore, investigating the multiliteracy needs of prospective English teachers is important to support the development of more relevant and responsive teacher education programs.

In Bachelor of English Education (BELE) programs specifically at Universitas Negeri Jakarta, students are exposed to a variety of learning activities and utilize various digital resources throughout their studies. These learning experiences reflect key competencies within the multiliteracies framework. The program's vision of producing graduates who are globally oriented, critical,

collaborative, communicative, and creative aligns closely with the development of critical and socio-cultural literacy. Similarly, its mission to prepare graduates who are adaptive to advances in science and technology highlights the importance of digital literacy. This orientation is further reinforced through the integration of technology into teaching and learning, as well as the implementation of project-based and case-based learning, both of which encourage students to engage with diverse modes of communication and authentic learning contexts. At the level of the Graduate Learning Outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran Lulusan), critical thinking competencies are explicitly stated, while digital, multimodal, and socio-cultural competencies are embedded across broader learning outcomes and course objectives.

This commitment is reflected in the curriculum through several courses that foster the development of multiliteracies competencies, including ICT in Education, English Learning Media, Designing e-Learning, and teaching practicum courses. These courses provide opportunities for students to develop digital competence, design and interpret multimodal texts, critically examine educational issues, and apply these competencies in authentic teaching contexts. Collectively, they demonstrate that the BELE curriculum has incorporated important elements of multiliteracies into prospective English teachers' learning experiences.

Although the BELE curriculum has incorporated multiliteracies-related learning opportunities across several courses, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how effectively the curriculum develops students' multiliteracies competencies. More specifically, little is known about how students perceive the importance of different multiliteracies competencies, the extent to which their

current learning experiences have supported the development of these competencies, and the kinds of learning experiences they believe are needed to strengthen their preparation as future English teachers. Although students participate in coursework, teaching practicum, digital learning activities, and classroom projects throughout the program, it remains unclear whether these experiences adequately address their multiliteracies needs.

This gap becomes particularly important considering the evolving demands placed on English teachers in increasingly digital, multimodal, and culturally diverse educational environments. To prepare graduates who are capable of responding to these demands, teacher education programs must ensure that the intended curriculum aligns with students' actual learning needs and professional expectations.

Therefore, conducting a needs analysis is essential to identify the multiliteracies needs of students in the Bachelor of English Education (BELE) Program. By examining students' necessities, lacks, and wants, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multiliteracies competencies required by prospective English teachers, identify gaps between the intended curriculum and students' perceived learning experiences, and explore students' expectations for strengthening the integration of multiliteracies across the curriculum. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence that informs curriculum refinement and supports the development of more responsive learning experiences, thereby strengthening the preparation of future English teachers for contemporary educational contexts.

1.2 Research Questions

This study aims to address its purpose through the following research questions:

1. What are BELE students' necessities regarding multiliteracy competencies in English language education?
2. What lacks do BELE students perceive in their current multiliteracy practices?
3. What are the learning preferences of BELE students regarding multiliteracy practice in their courses?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the multiliteracy needs of students in the Bachelor of English Language Education (BELE) program. Specifically, it identifies the multiliteracy competencies required for prospective English teachers, analyzes the gaps between these required competencies and students' current abilities, and explores students' preferences and expectations regarding multiliteracy practices in their courses.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing the multiliteracy needs of students in the Bachelor of English Language Education (BELE) program. The analysis is conducted using the needs analysis framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987), which categorizes learners' needs into three components: necessities, lacks, and wants. This study focuses on undergraduate students enrolled in English Language Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Jakarta particularly students from the 2022 to 2025 cohorts. This study is limited to self-reported data

from students, which reflect their perceptions rather than objectively measured competencies. Also, this study examines multiliteracy needs within the context of one teacher education program, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study provides insights into the application of needs analysis in examining pre-service teachers' preparation for multiliteracy-oriented teaching. By integrating the needs analysis framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987) with the multiliteracy dimensions developed by Nabhan & Habók (2025), this study provides insights into how the concepts of necessities, lacks, and wants can be used to examine students' multiliteracy needs within a teacher education context.

Practically, the findings of this study may provide valuable information for teacher education programs in designing or improving courses that prepare pre-service English teachers for multiliteracy-oriented classrooms. By identifying the areas in which students perceive insufficient preparation, the study may help curriculum developers and teacher educators better align instructional practices with the demands of contemporary language teaching. In particular, the results may inform the integration of multiliteracies into English language teacher education.

1.6 State of Art and Novelty of the Study

Research on multiliteracies has grown rapidly in language education over the past few decades. An early discussion of multiliteracies was introduced by Cope and Kalantzis (2009), who emphasized that literacy practices in modern societies extend beyond traditional reading and writing skills to encompass the ability to

interpret and produce meaning across multiple communication modes such as visual, digital, and multimodal texts. This perspective highlights the need for educational practices that prepare learners to navigate increasingly complex communication environments.

Previous studies have shown that multiliteracy-based learning can enrich students' understanding of literary texts by connecting them with broader cultural, social, and practical contexts. Several studies have examined the integration of multiliteracy in educational contexts. Nabhan and Hidayat (2018) found that the use of multimodal learning resources in English language classrooms can enhance students' engagement and critical thinking. Similarly, Özyer and Özcan (2020) reported that the implementation of a multiliteracies framework helps EFL students understand cultural aspects that support multicultural education. In another study, Dewi et al. (2023) showed that multiliteracy practices in EFL speaking classes enable students to develop language skills through authentic speaking activities and reflective learning. In addition, Sujiati et al. (2023) revealed that multiliteracy practices improve teacher and student interaction and encourage students to participate more actively in the learning process.

Although these studies have contributed valuable insights into the benefits of multiliteracy in language classrooms, most of them primarily focus on the implementation of multiliteracy practices in teaching and learning activities. Research that specifically examines multiliteracy from the perspective of students' learning needs, particularly in the context of teacher education, remains limited. Moreover, only a few studies have explored how prospective English teachers perceive their preparedness and expectations regarding multiliteracy competencies

during their teacher education programs. The lack of empirical studies examining the multiliteracy needs of prospective teachers can hinder the development of teacher education curricula that effectively support multiliteracy-oriented teaching practices. Without understanding current BELE students' experience, perceived gaps, and learning preferences, English teacher education programs may struggle to align their learning design with the competencies required in modern language education.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining multiliteracy from the perspective of students' necessities, lacks, and wants using the needs analysis framework proposed by Hutchinson & Waters (1987). In addition, this study integrates the four dimensions of multiliteracy competence proposed by Nabhan and Habók (2025) to explore BELE students' experiences and perceptions regarding multiliteracy practices in their courses. By focusing on prospective teachers in a teacher education program, this study offers a learner-centered perspective that contributes to understanding how multiliteracy competencies can be better integrated into English teacher education.