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**Exploring EFL Teachers' Media Literacy in Kazakhstan:
A Case Study**

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Definitions

Definitions are provided for the following terms used in this dissertation:

Creation	Developing media literacy through creation involves enabling students to become active media producers who can express critical ideas, respond to social issues, and engage with real audiences. It promotes purposeful authorship and civic participation through various media formats.
Creating media	The ability to produce and share content purposefully and ethically across various formats and platforms. It involves crafting original works like articles, videos, or blogs, tailoring messages for specific audiences, and engaging in public discourse. This supports civic participation, ethical authorship, and effective multimodal communication.
Critical media literacy	This is the set of the competencies to question, analyse, and challenge the messages, power structures, and ideologies embedded in media texts. It goes beyond understanding how media works by encouraging learners to examine who creates media, whose voices are represented or excluded, and how media shapes beliefs, identities, and society. It involves five key domains: deconstruction, representation, intertextuality, multimodality, and creation.
Deconstruction	Developing media literacy through deconstruction involves teaching students to break down media texts in order to reveal underlying ideologies, assumptions, and power dynamics. It encourages learners to question how meaning is shaped and whose interests are being served.
Intertextuality	Developing media literacy through intertextuality involves teaching students to make connections between media texts, recognising patterns, contrasts, and repeated narratives. This domain supports deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed across different sources and formats.
Listening	Developing media skills through listening involves using spoken media like podcasts, interviews, and news

clips to enhance comprehension, critical thinking, and language abilities. This includes mobile tools for vocabulary support and structured tasks like notetaking, summarizing, or answering questions.

Literacy

The ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that allows a person to communicate effectively and understand the world around them. It involves not only recognising words but also making meaning from language and using it confidently in different situations.

Media

Media denotes the diverse channels utilised for the dissemination of information, ideas, and messages to the public. It encompasses both traditional media (including newspapers, radio, and television) and new media (comprising social media, blogs, and digital platforms). In media literacy education, we do not privilege one type of media over another but use both as forms of mass media to help students understand, analyse, and engage with the mediated world around them.

Media literacy

The ability to access, understand, analyse, evaluate and create media in a variety of forms. It helps individuals think critically about the messages they encounter, recognise bias or persuasion, and participate responsibly in a media-saturated world.

Multimodality

Developing media literacy through multimodality involves helping students understand how meaning is created through a combination of modes such as text, image, sound, and layout. It also supports students in expressing their own ideas using varied media forms. Teacher guides students to decode multimodal elements in media texts by analysing how visuals, sound, and design work together to shape meaning.

Reading

Developing media skills through reading helps students understand, interpret, and evaluate media texts. It includes critical analysis of language and structure, support for navigating digital content, and using media to build academic skills like argument analysis and writing.

Representation	Developing media understanding through representation involves guiding students to critically examine how identities, cultures, and social groups are portrayed in media. It encourages reflection on stereotypes, fairness, and the influence of media on social perceptions, including how identity markers and cultural values are framed or excluded.
Speaking	Developing media skills through speaking involves using spoken language in media-rich settings to enhance communication, fluency, and digital expression. This includes engaging in voice and video interactions on social platforms, creating multimedia content like podcasts or presentations, discussing media texts in class, and adapting speech for different digital formats and audiences.
Using media	This domain involves accessing, understanding, and engaging with different types of media in a responsible way. It includes interpreting messages across text, images, and sound, using media tools safely, recognizing common formats, and developing basic language skills for communication and reflection.
Understanding media	The ability to interpret and evaluate how media messages are created, shared, and received. This includes understanding selective representation, the use of language and multimodal elements to shape meaning, and the influence of political, economic, and institutional forces. It also involves recognising audience targeting, assessing accuracy and credibility, and being aware of the media's psychological impact.
Writing	Writing as a media skill involves using media texts to inspire idea development, argument building, and digital authorship. It includes creating critical responses, collaborating on creative projects, using AI tools for writing, and producing content such as blogs or articles for real audiences.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a foreign language
Gorono	City Education Department
GOSO	State Compulsory Educational Standards
IBL	Inquiry-Based Learning
CML	Critical Media Literacy
ICT	Information Communication Technologies
ML	Media Literacy
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan
NAE	National Academy of Education named after Altynsarin
NAMLE	National Association for Media Literacy Education
NIS	Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools
Oblono	Regional Education Department
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNT	Unified National Testing

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Kazakh philosopher, Abai Kunanbayev, in his Seventh Word of Wisdom, contemplates the natural curiosity of children, repeatedly observed in the following questions: ‘What is this? Why is that?’ He warns that if this curiosity is not cultivated and turned into a lifelong habit of questioning, children may passively receive information, making them vulnerable to external influences (Kunanbayev, 1890). This timeless observation closely aligns with the fundamental principles of media literacy (hereinafter ML), empowering individuals to consume information, question, analyse, and critically consider it (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). In the era of the unprecedented digitalisation and the advancement of artificial intelligence (hereinafter, AI), children are being continually bombarded by media messages, which is making critical inquiry an even more essential life skill.

Teachers' classroom practices are the single most important determinant of students' success in learning (Fullan, 2014). Teachers serve as role models for interacting with media critically and, hence they are classroom practices crucially impact on how students comprehend, judge, and interpret information in an increasingly digitalised world (Hobbs, 2017; UNESCO, 2021). Studies indicate that educators possessing robust ML skills are more inclined to implement critical and ethical strategies in classrooms, thereby they facilitate the development of students' critical thinking, encourage responsible online conduct, and promote active community engagement (Wuyckens et al., 2022; Guggemos & Seufert, 2021). Consequently, teachers need access to quality induction and resources to promote ML in schools (Korona & Hutchison, 2023). Thereby, promoting ML aligns well with school reforms in Kazakhstan, which focus on modernising English language instruction, enhancing students' digital skills, and integrating global competencies (MoES, RK, 2019; OECD, 2025).

1.1 Rational and Significance

I have been teaching English as a foreign language (hereinafter, EFL) for over 20 years in schools and universities in Kazakhstan. Currently, I am working as an English teacher in one of the public schools in Kazakhstan. Through my day-to-day classroom experiences, I have understood that teaching English is no longer about developing language skills rather integrating strategies that enable students' to critically discern real-world challenges, which are largely amplified and created via media platforms. As such, the EFL classrooms are more about empowering learners to transcend beyond basic language skills, which requires fostering critical thinking and informed decision-making.

In 2017, the British Council invited me to serve as the ‘English for Success’ programme trainer, which aimed to promote ML among EFL teachers. I also worked for the Regional English Language Office of the United States of America (hereinafter, U.S.) in Kazakhstan and promoted the ML integration into the EFL classrooms in schools in Kazakhstan. In 2022, I was honoured to become the first and only recipient of the Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) scholarship in my region, which enabled me to teach in the Ohio State schools (US). This international teaching experience substantially improved my understanding of teachers’ role in promoting students’ critical thinking and digital skills. Further on, my collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (hereinafter, UNICEF) as a part of the ‘Volunteering for Education and Internet Security’ project helped me to identify key elements for promoting ML in EFL classrooms (UNESCO, 2022).

In recent years, ML has become one of the widely studied topics (Potter, 2013; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013; Hobbs, 2017). There are studies that explain ML from the following perspectives: ML policy integration (Livingstone & Bulger, 2014; Frau-Meigs, 2019), ML and digital literacy promotion (Mihailidis, 2014; Buckingham, 2015), ML and civic engagement (Kahne et al., 2012; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013), ML and education reform (Hobbs, 2024; McDougall et al., 2021), and ML in teacher education (Bulger & Davison, 2018; Wilson et al., 2011). There is, however, a limited amount of research that would explain the ML integration in the context of EFL teaching (Pederson, 2023; Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016; Erfanian Mohammadi et al., 2018) as well as its promotion in the developing countries, of which Kazakhstan is one (Dadakhonov, 2024; OECD, 2015). As such, this study aims to fill in the research gap by tapping into a wide range of disciplines, including ML, EFL teaching, critical thinking, teacher education, school leadership, school reform and policy development (Yuan et. al., 2024; Rahimi & Sajed, 2014).

1.2 Problem Statement

The ML policy and practice are believed to be well researched in the Global North (Buckingham, 2019; Hobbs, 2017). However, a notable research gap exists in how ML is construed, implemented, and corroborated in developing educational contexts, where policy uptake and pedagogical application often remain inconsistent or peripheral (Pederson, 2023; Neira et al., 2024; Coşkun, 2021). In countries with an inadequate formal ML policy framework, teachers can often resort to basic media competencies, including presenting videos and explaining vocabulary, rather than facilitating students' analytical media skills (Pereira & Moura, 2022; Riparip & Caballes, 2024). Moreover, studies report that poor infrastructure, limited access to professional development, and digital disparity between urban and rural school settings, may

impede the effective integration of ML into classrooms (Liu et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2021).

This study contributes to an ongoing discussions on (1) global challenges in promoting ML and, hence addresses the problem of disparities in teachers' ML competencies across different educational contexts (Bulger & Davison, 2018; Gjerazi, 2024), (2) the status of media studies as a distinct academic discipline (Beetham & Sharpe, 2007; Benade, 2014), and (3) the unyielding ambiguity surrounding ML concepts in academic literature (Buckingham, 2014; Cannon, 2018), (4) the heavy dependence on the civic role of social media (Jenkins & Jie, 2024), (5) the need for participatory media integrated teaching approaches (Kalantzis & Cope, 2023).

1.3 Study Aims and Objectives

This study aims to examine (1) how EFL teachers in Kazakhstan perceive and (2) apply ML within their teaching across rural, urban, and regional schools; (3) identify the key factors that impact teachers' engagement with ML and the conditions for it. Thereby, it offers a contextually grounded and theoretically robust examination of ML amongst EFL teachers in Kazakhstan. Its contribution is novel in a sense that it develops and applies a critical ML framework tailored to the Kazakhstani school context (see Chapter 2), integrating insights from Kellner and Share (2009), the New London Group (1996), and Simons et al. (2017). The framework delineates conventional understandings of ML by incorporating ethical, critical, and civic competencies within language pedagogy. The study addresses a gap in the literature by situating ML within EFL teaching in diverse schools and linking teacher perceptions to pedagogical practices and institutional conditions. The research focuses on theoretical discussions on implementing ML in language education across varied sociocultural and geographic contexts by accentuating ML's cognitive, ethical, and infrastructural dimensions (see Chapter 3).

The study employs a multiple teacher-based case study design and involves six EFL teachers from rural, urban, and regional schools to enable contextual comparison. The data collection instruments include semi-structured interviews with EFL teachers, school principals, classroom observations, teachers' reflective journals and the analysis of teaching materials, including lesson plans, media materials, and school policies. I cross-validated the data to present a rich, contextualised understanding of how ML is perceived and enacted across diverse school settings. Thematic analysis was employed to interpret the data, utilising a conceptual framework that integrates critical ML domains, ethical pedagogy, and language skills development. This methodological approach displays an in-depth examination of individual experiences while presenting patterns across diverse teaching environments (see Chapter 4).

The study has practical implementations for teachers, school leaders, policymakers, and teacher education institutions, who are potential stakeholders. It provides empirically grounded recommendations for elevating ML integration in EFL classrooms through targeted professional development, enriched digital infrastructure, and collaborative school cultures. The developed critical ML framework and tools, including reflective journal templates and categorised ML activities, can support both pre-service and in-service teachers in devising contextually relevant and ethically informed media-based lessons. The findings illustrate practical strategies for embedding ML across the four core language skills and accentuate the importance of school-level support in nurturing sustained and analytical interaction with media (see Chapter 5).

Teachers' ML practices in Kazakhstan are influenced by the interaction of personal beliefs, instructional methods, and organisational frameworks, underscoring the necessity for a holistic and cohesive viewpoint. Second, teachers' self-efficacy and attitudes towards ML notably influence their ability and willingness to develop their ML skills. Third, considerations such as access to technology, school culture, and opportunities for professional development greatly impact the implementation of ML in regional, urban, and rural schools. Fourth, ethical and critical ML is not solely attained through technological access but demands reflective and culturally responsive pedagogy. These practices address social justice, digital citizenship, and civic responsibility. Fifth, the study's conceptual framework provides an effective instrument for analysing and supporting teachers' ML practices, informing the design of future educational programmes and policy initiatives (see Chapter 6).

This research multi-dimensionally contributes to the field of ML in language education by articulating how individual beliefs, pedagogical strategies, and institutional structures converge in implementing ML in EFL classrooms. To this end, the study presents empirical evidence from Kazakhstan, which has not been extensively studied, particularly in the context of rural and regional schools. It illustrates that even though Kazakhstani EFL teachers broadly value ML, factors, including digital infrastructure, professional development opportunities, and local school culture, substantially impact their capacity to integrate it effectively. Moreover, the study promotes theoretical debates by proposing a critical ML framework that incorporates ethical, multimodal, and civic dimensions into EFL pedagogy. The study also offers practical insights into how ML can be embedded in classroom practice and addresses the required structural conditions to maintain its sustainable integration.

Thereby, the aim of this study is to explore the EFL teachers' perception of, practices with and conditions for ML in rural, urban, and regional schools in Kazakhstan. In line with this, the study addresses the following research questions (hereinafter, RQ):

RQ 1. How do EFL teachers in Kazakhstan’s rural, urban, and regional schools perceive the concept and importance of ML in their teaching practice?

RQ 2. How do EFL teachers practice media literacy in their daily teaching across rural, urban, and regional school contexts?

RQ 3. How do EFL teachers’ perceptions and practices of media literacy vary across rural, urban, and regional settings?

RQ 4. What contextual and external factors do EFL teachers identify as influencing their understanding and implementation of media literacy in various school settings in Kazakhstan?

The study outcome can have implications on various aspects of ML development in schools in Kazakhstan, including classroom practice improvement, teacher education, policy and practice development .

This study’s preliminary findings have been published in six research journals, including four Kazakhstan- indexed (Yeleussiz, 2024; 2024; Yeleussiz & Tankibayeva, 2024; Yeleussiz et al., 2025) and two Scopus-indexed Q1 journals (Yeleussiz, 2024; Yeleussiz & Qanay,2025), which contributed to the refinement and validation of research design, conceptual framework, and data collection tools.

1.4 Thesis overview

In Chapter 1, I provide the rationale behind choosing the research topic. In Chapter 2, I present the context in which my study fits within the educational landscape in Kazakhstan and beyond. In Chapter 3, I conceptualise ML in the context of key literature. Chapter 4 focuses on the research methodology and design. In Chapter 5, I present research findings. In Chapter 6, I discuss the key findings of the study. In Chapter 7, I articulate the study’s contribution to knowledge and practice, provide key recommendations, and contemplate my PhD journey.

Chapter 2

The Educational Context: Global and Local Drivers for Media Literacy

In Chapter 2, I examine the educational context for ML development by investigating the interplay between global frameworks and national policies within Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is situated within the broader global initiative to promote media and information literacy. International organisations, including UNESCO, the OECD, and the European Commission, have significantly influenced policy, progressively shaping global education systems' comprehension of digital competencies, critical media engagement, and responsible technology usage. These global perspectives offer invaluable insights for Kazakhstan to frame its own educational priorities and reform strategies. Furthermore, I outline Kazakhstan's education system in this chapter by delineating the country's demographic and institutional landscape, underscoring factors such as rural-urban disparities, student-teacher ratios, and recent infrastructure investments to contextualise the system's capacity to adopt and support emerging educational priorities, including ML.

Additionally, I address teacher education, including pre-service and in-service teacher education, the professional categories of teachers, and the support they receive throughout their careers in Kazakhstan. These issues are especially relevant because teachers' professionalism and confidence have a high impact on the reform, including effective ML integration. Even though ML is not yet a standalone component of the curriculum, policy documents, including the State Programme for the Development of Education and Science and the Model Curriculum for Global Competences illustrate that the need to equip learners with digital and critical thinking skills must be recognised.

Also, Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive educational milieu, and establishes a foundation for deeper inquiry into how ML can be notably incorporated into EFL teachers' practices in Kazakhstan schools, which I discuss in detail below.

2.1 Global Drivers for Media Literacy

As media and digital technologies increasingly shape educational priorities, international policy frameworks have been the key drivers for ML interpretation and integration worldwide. Therefore, I examine several key documents from global and regional bodies, including UNESCO, OECD, and European Commission reports, which directly impact national education strategies, such as those in Kazakhstan (Ball, 2015).

The UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) have reported on how technology has changed, and consequently, the dissemination of false

information and communication in education has evolved (Frau-Meigs, 2023). However, it does not present MIL as a universal solution; instead, it identifies the structural barriers that impede its implementation, which are particularly pronounced in multilingual contexts, where English is taught as a foreign language. Frau-Meigs (2023) frequently cites MIL as a transversal competence, promoting its integration across various subjects rather than treating it solely in one subject area. This finding may have noteworthy implications for EFL education, where English-language media and digital tools are frequently used in classrooms. Nonetheless, the MIL lacks structured pedagogical approaches and critical literacy.

Therefore, the integration of MIL is usually informal and heavily relies on the initiative and preparedness of individual teachers (Frau-Meigs, 2017). The report also stresses the lack of a clear policy that connects fundamental MIL skills, including identifying false information, understanding the impact of algorithms, and interacting with diverse cultures (Shin et al., 2022). As a result, students who engage with global English-language media may lack the critical and ethical skills needed to interpret and respond to the content responsibly (Chenchen, 2024).

Even though UNESCO's MIL for Teachers Framework promotes inquiry-based pedagogy, its practical impact on teacher education has been uneven across contexts, particularly in the Global South (UNESCO, 2021). The assumption was challenged that teachers are ready to integrate MIL, accentuating persistent gaps in training associated with digital and critical ML (Buckingham; 2015; Kalantzis & Cope, 2023). These global critiques align closely with the Kazakhstani context, in which EFL teachers often face the dual burden of developing language skills while supporting students' engagement with media, often without adequate institutional support. As Pereira and Moura (2022) report, in systems lacking coherent MIL policy, integration into classrooms can remain largely superficial.

Similarly, the OECD's Trends Shaping Education (2024) conceptualises digital literacy as a foundational skill, with close alignment with global media and information literacy (MIL) agendas. Nevertheless, the report provides limited direction on how one can incorporate such competencies into EFL instruction, particularly in linguistically diverse and under-resourced contexts. Jenkins and Jie (2024) report that for students learning English as a gateway to digital content, this incorporation may suggest added responsibility on EFL teachers to facilitate critical engagement with online texts, an expectation that policy support or training rarely pursues. In Kazakhstan, MIL is not solidly embedded into teacher education (Dadakhonov, 2024), the burden of implementation falls on individual educators and, hence forcing them to navigate structural and pedagogical gaps (Pereira & Moura, 2022).

The European Commission's Digital Learning Action Plan (2021–2027) outlines a practical strategy for digital education, aiming to ensure the broad

availability of high-quality online materials and resources in multiple languages. The proposed Digital Education Content Framework ensures that English-language materials are pedagogically sound and accessible to diverse learners (European Commission, 2020). However, Stoika (2023) reports that in contexts where teacher training, digital infrastructure, and curricular integration are unreliable, these objectives have been practically unattainable. Due to digital inequalities, it is not clear how the globally endorsed frameworks are interpreted and implemented in Kazakhstan (MediaNet, 2022).

The OECD's Digital Education Outlook (2021) demonstrates that AI and automation can be transformative tools in education; it does not address the linguistic and pedagogical complexities of EFL instruction in the under-resourced educational settings. Tiernan et al. (2023) observe that the rise of AI is altering how people locate, judge and produce information, urging educators to rethink ML as a living practice that evolves alongside technological and philosophical change. Furthermore, most AI tools are predominantly developed in English-speaking contexts, often disregarding the sociolinguistic realities of environments such as Kazakhstan, where English is taught as a foreign language with uneven infrastructural conditions. This universalist perspective risks exacerbating inequities, especially when educators lack access to digital training or culturally responsive resources (Selwyn, 2016; Pereira & Moura, 2022). Additionally, the report underscores efficiency and scalability, neglecting the pivotal interpretive and critical dimensions for language education. EFL teachers are assumed to stimulate student engagement in nuanced, identity-rich, and culturally embedded practices; current AI systems are not adequately equipped to support these tasks (Buckingham, 2019; Jenkins & Jie, 2024).

Likewise, UNESCO's Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research (2023) has introduced policy measures for regulating AI use. These measures encompass critical engagement with AI-generated content, teacher development, and support for linguistic diversity. These concerns are particularly relevant in EFL contexts because English-dominant models may obscure local languages and aggravate cultural asymmetries (UNESCO, 2023; Bender et al., 2021). Moreover, the document highlights the risk of overdependence on AI tools, suggesting issues such as misinformation and the erosion of human interpretation. These issues are especially salient when learners utilise English-language outputs to construct meaning in unfamiliar sociolinguistic contexts. The OECD's forthcoming AI Literacy Framework strives to incorporate AI-related competencies into curricula. Schleicher (2022) notes that this initiative may provide a formal policy reference for incorporating AI literacy into classroom practice, even though the intersection of such frameworks with EFL pedagogy and teacher training in developing systems has remained a topic of debate.

Digital technologies, social fragmentation, and geopolitical uncertainty are rapidly evolving in the global landscape, making literacy not confined to

print but suggesting a framework with multiliteracies (UNESCO, 2008; Hong & Hua, 2020). Accordingly, educators are increasingly asked to incorporate dimensions of social justice, inclusion, and human rights, including access to information and freedom of expression, into their pedagogy (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). This expanded model posits that ML taught through a global competencies perspective can help students interact critically and ethically with diverse perspectives (Harshman, 2018; UNESCO, 2018; Ribble, 2018). Competencies encompass intercultural understanding, empathy, critical reflection, and moral reasoning, which are pivotal for participation in a networked world (Buckingham, 2018; Anderson, 2019; Leite, 2021). Studies also accentuate that ML competencies are foundational for inclusive and peaceful societies (Gregersen-Hermans, 2021; Reimers, 2018).

Fu and Wang (2022) report that the convergence of globalisation and digitalisation poses novel pedagogical demands for EFL educators. As children increasingly access digital media, often surpassing regulatory frameworks, teachers must have technical awareness and capacity to guide critical engagement with online content (OECD, 2020; Hill, 2022). To this end, supporting the integration of global competencies, including ML, is pivotal (Reimers, 2009). Because content creation is decentralised in media-saturated environments, the role of the teacher broadens to incorporate cultivating learners' ability to determine source credibility and interpret multimodal texts. Furthermore, Buckingham (2019) suggests that the growth of participatory media has diversified platforms for self-expression and communication, providing opportunities and posing challenges for language learning and civic engagement.

I now articulate national regulatory policy documents targeted at advancing ML in Kazakhstan.

2.2 Education System in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's education system is highly centralised, with the Ministry of Teaching and Learning (MoT&L) establishing national priorities and overseeing budget approvals, while regional education authorities implement these policies locally. The MoT&L oversees the National Education Academy after Altynsaryn (hereinafter, NAE), sets national educational standards (hereinafter, GOSO), and issues methodological guidance to all schools in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the MoT&L regulate professional development opportunities, monitors and assesses their effectiveness through data analysis and feedback mechanisms via the National Professional Development Centre 'Orleu' (hereinafter, NCPD 'Orleu') (State Programme for Education and Science 2020–2025, MoES, 2020).

In Kazakhstan, school education is comprehensive and includes primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels, and secondary education is both

free and compulsory as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023; Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018). Children begin primary school at the age of six, and this stage lasts four years, focusing on essential subjects such as reading and writing, mathematics, and introductory science. Following this, students move on to lower secondary education, which runs from Grade 5 to Grade 9. During this period, they study a broader range of subjects, including history, foreign languages, and natural sciences. At the end of lower secondary, students sit national examinations that determine their eligibility for either continued academic study or vocational training (OECD, 2018). Both primary and lower secondary curricula place (GOSO) a strong focus on academic achievement, civic responsibility, and cultural understanding, which reflect Kazakhstan's national priorities of strengthening identity and promoting global citizenship (OECD, 2018). In upper secondary education, students are given the chance to specialise in particular areas, such as the humanities, natural sciences, or technology (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Education, 2007).

The Unified National Testing (UNT) is pivotal at this level because it determines university eligibility and links the system to the broader educational reforms associated with the Bologna Process (MoES, 2020). Alongside traditional academic routes, vocational schools offer viable alternatives for students seeking practical and career-oriented training. Kazakhstan has 7,833 schools, of which 5,189 are situated in rural areas. Kazakhstan has 398,900 teachers, with 257,500 serving in rural schools (Bureau of National Statistics, 2024). Women dominate the teaching profession in Kazakhstan, comprising 80% of teachers, with 20% of them being over 50 years old (Bridges & Sagintayeva, 2014).

The recent school-based reform initiatives comprise the updated curriculum, trilingual education, and a novel assessment system. The updated curriculum is targeted at (1) moving to student-centred learning; (2) gradually developing higher-order thinking skills; (3) employing criteria-based assessment; and (4) initiating trilingual education (MoES, 2016, p. 269). These policies have been promoted by the NCPD 'Orleu' and the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools' Centres of Excellence (hereinafter, CoE). Established in 2008, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) have operated as a network of state-funded elite schools that serve as experimental platforms for curriculum innovation (Bridges, 2014; OECD, 2015).

The updated curriculum focuses on developing the functional literacy of schoolchildren through eight types of functional literacy: reading, mathematical, scientific, digital, financial, health, legal, and environmental literacy (NAE, 2023; Kemelbekova, 2016; Kerimbayeva et al., 2024). However, the National Educational Standards (hereinafter, GOSO) (2022) do not provide clear guidelines on teaching ML. Moreover, the updated English language curriculum

requires promoting students' functional skills by incorporating language skills into real-life situations, enabling them to process information from various types of media (Ismagulova et al., 2022). This requirement may indicate the pressing need to update teacher education in Kazakhstan.

2.3 Teacher Education in Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's teacher education system has undergone several waves of reform since its independence in 1991, changing from a Soviet-inherited model to one increasingly aligned with international standards (Tastanbekova, 2018). Even though broader educational reform has long been prioritised, teacher education has only recently attained its strategic prominence (Makoelle & Kurakbayev, 2025). These reforms are targeted at modernising the structure and philosophy of teacher preparation to meet national needs and global benchmarks (Berikkhanova et al., 2024).

The pre-service teacher education system in Kazakhstan is provided in a concurrent model, in which students are trained to become teachers from the first to the fourth year of their university education. Vocational and postgraduate training opportunities complement this four-year undergraduate model (Tastanbekova, 2018; Ospanova, 2024). There are 55 higher education institutions that hold licenses to train teachers, encompassing both public and private universities (Law on Education, 2007/2023). Whilst student-teachers are provided with a three-year long pedagogical training to become pre-school and primary school teachers at the vocational education level, the university-level programmes can last four years, resulting in a full-time bachelor's degree in education. As such, the national system offers different pathways for teacher training and separates training for pre-school, general, and subject-specialist teachers.

Lately, the pre-service teacher education in Kazakhstan has been criticised for its theory-dense academic programmes, which are detached from the real-life classroom problems (Makoelle & Burmistrova, 2025; Turner et al., 2014). In addition, pre-service teacher education in Kazakhstan is thought to reflect characteristics of the Soviet-era system, whereby elements such as critical thinking, inclusive practices, and digital teaching methods may not be fully embedded in current university-level teaching approaches (McLaughlin & Ayubayeva, 2015).

Interestingly, TALIS's results for 2018 indicate that 75% of teachers willingly choose their profession, with 59% of novice teachers receiving mentoring support (OECD, 2019). Many novice teachers struggle with real-world classroom demands due to inadequate practicum experience (Nagibova, 2019; Ospanova, 2024). Student-teachers are typically assigned to pedagogical placements (practicums) by university directives and must develop competency across age levels and subject areas (NAE, 2023). Nevertheless, retaining novice

teachers in urban and rural schools has remained a problem in Kazakhstan (Tajik et al., 2022). Despite the growing demand for ML education worldwide, teacher education systems cannot adequately incorporate ML into their educational programmes (Zagona et al., 2017; Schmeichel et al., 2018; Gómez-Galán, 2020). These growing demands highlight the need for robust mechanisms to ensure teacher quality through initial education and via ongoing assessment and professional development.

Kazakhstan recognises teachers' professional development (PD) as a crucial component of education reform and quality education. Since 2011, in-service teacher education has prioritised student-centred and inquiry-based pedagogies, which align with curriculum modernisation efforts (Tastanbekova, 2018). However, a notable gap exists between the design of PD programmes and teachers' classroom needs, including EFL classrooms (Ismagulova et al., 2023). This gap became more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting digital competence and causing uneven access to online platforms. Teachers struggled with synchronous teaching tools, particularly in rural areas, where infrastructure and support were limited (Durrani et al., 2023; Amirova et al., 2023). Furthermore, at the policy level, unclear implementation strategies and uneven professional development provision impeded teachers' transition to online teaching and learning (Bokayev et al., 2021). Additionally, school leaders lacked system-level readiness to support teachers during the COVID crisis, which suggested broader institutional challenges, such as the lack of autonomy and leadership skills (Durrani et al., 2024). As Sarmurzin (2024) observes, the professional standing of teachers in Kazakhstan is also shaped by the ethical and organisational support provided by school leaders, yet the persistent gap between national policy intentions and their enactment at school level reveals enduring weaknesses in educational governance.

The 2011–2020 education strategy involved training 120,000 teachers, around 40% of the national workforce, wherein PD programmes were designed and cascaded by the NIS Centres of Excellence in collaboration with the Faculty of Education University of Cambridge. Although the model has enhanced teachers' qualifications, concerns persist regarding its long-term effects because it frequently prioritises formal training over more profound changes in teaching practices. Recent research suggests that many short-term professional development programmes, despite being accessible, often fail to meet teachers' actual classroom needs or support reflective teaching practices, thereby hindering their long-term effectiveness (Mukanova & Akifyeva, 2025).

Professional development institutions, including NCPD 'Orleu' and the NIS Centre of Excellence, are the largest providers of professional development in Kazakhstan. Even though the NCPD 'Orleu' specialises in training associated with digital tools and contemporary pedagogy, the NIS Centre of Excellence provides qualification upgrades, postgraduate support, trainer development, and teaching resources (Kanayeva, 2019). The school-based professional

development, such as action research and lesson study, has not been adequately utilised due to the absence of supportive school structures and cultures (Jumabekov et al., 2024).

2.4 Media Literacy Policies in Kazakhstan

The National Academy for Education after Altynsarin introduced ML as a Year 8 elective subject in 2021–2022, which aimed to help students critically evaluate and identify misleading content, with various teachers trained (NAE, 2021; Lazer et al., 2018). Interestingly, the ML's visibility in the national curriculum declined in the 2022–2023 academic year, and it was omitted from the recommended course list. A non-mandatory 'Informative Foreign Languages' course was the replacement, which focused more on creative thinking ('shgarmashylyk oilau') (NAE, 2022). Whereas creativity is valuable, ignoring critical ML may undermine students' ability to think independently in a media-dominated world (Kellner & Share, 2007).

Kazakhstan approved the 'Model Curriculum for Global Competencies' course, developed, aligning with GOSO in 2022 (MoES, 2022). This implemented course was part of the 'Global Competencies' programme to assist students in forming values, establishing communication skills, setting ethical standards, and developing behavioural attitudes, thereby encouraging them to become global citizens. The unit 'Media and Financial Literacy' was devised to assist students in grasping the fundamental concepts and rules concerning media usage, understanding how to utilise media tools, and cultivate critical thinking about the media environment (Model Curriculum for the Global Competencies Course for Grades 5–9, 2022). The 'Global Competencies' programme was targeted at enabling students to interact with the outside world, explore local and global issues, and comprehend and assess various perspectives and philosophies (Koval & Dyukova, 2019). The broader goals of these competencies were directed towards developing global citizenship and fostering education for sustainable development (Shaikenova & Morozova, 2019).

The NAE (2023) reported that by 2023–2024, ML was not explicitly incorporated into the curriculum recommendations but was vaguely integrated under the umbrella of functional literacy and reading literacy. Even though students were expected to interpret graphs, maps, and images critically, the broader multimodal and socio-cultural aspects of ML were ignored mainly (Eisenlauer & Karatza, 2020; Stix & Jolls, 2020). Such small-scale curricular integration was insufficient to incorporate ML into education reform. Whereas the State Compulsory Educational Standards (GOSO, 2022) noted competencies, including innovation and lifelong learning (Kemelbekova, 2016), they did not directly refer to ML or multiliteracies. Likewise, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education set broad educational goals in their policy frameworks, but did not explicitly address notions, such as digital safety, ethical

media use, and ML instruction (Ministry of Science and Higher Education RK, 2023). The absence of clear regulations and consistent curricular support can limit the integration of ML, a risky circumstance in today's digital and information-driven world (Dvorkin, 2021).

Developing ML in secondary schools can foster universal youth literacy because school education is equally accessible and mandatory for all children in Kazakhstan (UNESCO, 2018). MediaNet (2022) study's findings underscore that digital connectivity is increasingly widespread amongst school-aged learners in Kazakhstan. However, the ability to engage with digital content critically and responsibly has remained inconsistent. This misalignment is particularly pronounced in rural and Kazakh-speaking school contexts, where students exhibit lower levels of information verification, suboptimal digital safety practices, and limited critical engagement with online materials (Kerimbayeva et al., 2024). Hence, such disparities reveal more profound structural inequities in digital education that cannot be solely addressed by access. Ahn and Smagulova (2023) likewise illustrate how language-of-instruction patterns in Almaty schools reflect broader socio-economic divisions, with Kazakh-medium institutions serving less privileged groups, thereby reinforcing systemic inequalities across educational contexts.

The 2023 European Neighbourhood Council (ENC) report underlines a noteworthy disparity in access to ML in Kazakhstan, where Kazakh-speaking and rural populations have been disproportionately exposed to misinformation due to limited access to pluralistic media sources and critical digital skills (European Neighbourhood Council, 2023). The disintegration of the information landscape has profound implications for educators, particularly EFL teachers, because they are uniquely positioned to nurture critical engagement with texts and media in linguistically and socially diverse classrooms (UNESCO, 2021).

The international assessments reveal marked disparities in outcomes between rural and urban students in Kazakhstan (OECD 2018, 2021; Chankseliani et al., 2020). Such disparities encompass inferior infrastructure, under-resourcing, and inadequate management (Tajik et al., 2021). Even though access to digital media is widespread, an increasing need exists to equip students with the tools to analyse and interpret media messages critically (Tastanbekova, 2018). Precisely responding to these circumstances, this study examines how EFL teachers perceived and enacted MIL across divergent school milieus, focusing on a peripheral region, away from more abundantly resourced urban centres such as Astana and Almaty, because a need exists to explore how broader MIL deficits manifest in practice, and how teachers operate within contexts marked by systemic limitations (UNESCO, 2021; Liu et al., 2024). My study builds upon this evidence by examining how teachers in peripheral regions, often overlooked in national education policy, perceive and implement ML within their pedagogical practice.

2.4.1 Media Literacy Regulation and Research Gaps

In Kazakhstan, educational policy has received global interest in digital literacy, with specific references to ML remaining limited. Even though documents such as the State Programme for the Development of Education and Science (2020–2025) stress digitalisation, they fail to provide detailed strategies for incorporating ML into classroom practices, including the EFL classrooms.

Standardised testing and exam-oriented curricula are predominant in shaping the context, ML is often overlooked in favour of traditional subjects and measurable learning outcomes (Buckingham, 2019; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013). Moreover, the lack of curricular guidance and teacher development opportunities complicates these issues. ML is not an explicitly defined or assessed competency in most Kazakhstani schools, making its implementation heavily dependent on individual teachers' initiatives, which results in substantial disparities in practice (Yeleussiz & Qanay, 2025).

There are key policy gaps in local and global ML frameworks. Even though international models view ML as a cross-curricular, critical, and participatory competency, Kazakhstan's education system perceives it as a technical or infrastructural challenge (Ismagulova et al., 2024; Yeleussiz, 2024). This discrepancy is primarily observed in the EFL classrooms, where global guidelines encourage linking language learning with media analysis. However, the EFL classroom practice in Kazakhstan schools has centred on grammar and testing. Moreover, the rural-urban disparities can intensify the ML policy implementation gap, which reaffirms concerns on educational equity in Kazakhstan schools (Grizzle, 2018; Yeleussiz & Qanay, 2025). Ultimately, global conversations on ML accentuate the need for education systems in Kazakhstan and worldwide to move beyond surface-level digital engagement. Effective incorporation of ML requires coherent curricular frameworks, comprehensive teacher training, and policy strategies that recognise ML as a foundational part of 21st-century education.

Recent doctoral research in Kazakhstan has produced valuable findings on the development of ML within higher education, particularly in teacher education programmes. Kuanysheva (2021) investigated how university students develop ML during English language instruction and introduced an online course, English and Media, designed to integrate media content into foreign language education. Tajenova (2022) examined the psychological and pedagogical conditions that support the formation of ML and proposed a structural-functional model based on applied educational psychology. Serikbayeva (2022) explored how future pedagogical psychologists learn to use media responsibly, focusing on the relationship between media culture, professional identity, and ethical awareness. Koshanova (2023) developed an instructional model that uses media technologies to encourage creative thinking

among prospective educational psychologists. Kuatbekov (2023) studied the psychological and pedagogical support required to build media competencies in future education managers and proposed a conceptual framework grounded in both national and international educational psychology traditions.

These studies can contribute to the growing body of knowledge on ML in higher education but do not examine how ML is understood and practised in secondary schools in Kazakhstan. There is a lack of research on how in-service EFL teachers engage with media in classroom settings. This study addresses the research gap by investigating how the EFL teachers in schools in Kazakhstan understand, use, and integrate media into their daily teaching. Given the AI advancement and digitalisation of communication in learners' lives, it is necessary to explore how teachers navigate media in practice. Thereby, this study findings can support the development of ML in schools in Kazakhstan and beyond.

2.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I analyse the educational context for ML by examining global frameworks and national developments in Kazakhstan in this chapter. Additionally, I discuss how reports from UNESCO, the OECD, and the European Commission position ML within wider priorities like digital change, equity, and global competence. These frameworks often view ML as a skill usable across multiple subjects, focusing on how it could be incorporated into EFL instruction.

The chapter provides an overview of Kazakhstan's demographics and education system structure, and the size and number of schools, as well as the number of teachers in both rural and urban areas. Teacher education in Kazakhstan has undergone notable changes, transitioning from a Soviet-era model to one more closely aligned with international standards. The pivotal changes encompass the concurrent model of teacher preparation, efforts to make more vocational and postgraduate directions available, and government-led initiatives to elevate the profession's status.

The chapter also briefly addresses national education policies that support ML. Nevertheless, these policies often point out infrastructure and digital access, with limited support for integrating ML or specific subjects. The chapter illustrates information about how ML is employed in daily circumstances in different locations. The chapter suggests that differences in items, such as digital infrastructure, teacher training, and curricular support, have made it challenging for ML to be utilised consistently in both urban and rural schools. Kazakhstan's ML projects have lacked cohesion and primarily depend on individual teachers for receiving items, unlike worldwide models.

In summary, this chapter establishes a basis for understanding how global ML discourses are comprehended and employed in Kazakhstan's developing education system. This reveals both the potential and ongoing difficulties in aligning national practices with international expectations. The next chapter explores key concepts related to EFL teachers' ML.

Chapter 3

Conceptualising the EFL Teachers' Media Literacy

In the previous chapter, I discussed the global and local reform context and the importance of developing ML in Kazakhstan. In this chapter, I explain the conceptual framework of my study. I draw on literature from various fields, including teachers' perceptions and practices, EFL teaching and learning, school structure and culture.

The chapter consists of five interrelated sections. Each section represents the key dimension of the conceptual framework and contributes to a holistic understanding of teachers' roles in implementing ML. First, it outlines the evolution and meaning of ML and distinguishes it from related concepts of digital literacy and information literacy. As a secondary focus, the study investigates how teachers interpret ML, reflect on its role in language education, evaluate their preparedness to teach it, and compare their attitudes towards digital and traditional media. It uses Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (2002) and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1995) to explain how teachers' attitudes, norms, and behavioural control can shape their intentions, perceptions and influence their engagement with ML pedagogy. Third, it focuses on teachers' critical media competencies, which explicates how teachers engage with media content as interpreters, critics, and cultural mediators. Drawing on Freire's critical pedagogy (1970) and the multiliteracies framework proposed by the New London Group (1996), ML is approached as a transformative and ethical endeavour. Particularly, it underscores the importance of teachers' skills in deconstructing bias, recognising ideological and cultural representations, tracing intertextual relationships, working across visual and audio modes, and fostering students' civic voice through media creation.

The fourth point examines how teachers incorporate ML into their everyday teaching by using, evaluating, and creating media, integrating it into language instruction, and paying attention to ethical responsibilities. Fifth, it lays out key conditions that enable or inhibit ML implementation into school practice. These include access to digital tools and infrastructure, the presence or absence of training and professional development, curricular or policy support, and the influence of school culture, and leadership dynamics. The aim here is to map the ecological field in which teachers work, recognising that even strong beliefs and competencies can be constrained or amplified by external factors.

As such, this chapter lays the conceptual framework for the analysis that follows. It offers a layered perspective on what it means to teach ML in the EFL context, not as a fixed method or curriculum add-on, but as a complex, situated, and evolving practice.

I now explain each of these sub-sections in detail.

3.1 Defining Media Literacy

ML has gained recognition as an essential element of 21st century education in the rapidly changing world. ML enhances learners' engagement, questioning, and content creation skills, involving critical skills to access, interpret, and produce media across various platforms (Aufderheide, 1993; UNESCO, 2013). Its educational roots trace back to the 1992 National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy in the USA, which defined ML as:

[...] the ability of a citizen to access, analyse, and produce information for specific outcomes (Aufderheide, 1993, p. 1).

UNESCO (2013) and the European Commission (2020) have both stressed the importance of ML as a right and necessity for all, closely linking it to active citizenship and lifelong learning. Rather than treating media as neutral channels, ML encourages critical engagement with the messages conveyed and the power relations embedded in them (Buckingham, 2003; Giroux, 2010). As Ptaszek (2020) argues, ML involves reflecting on the convergence of information, communication, and digital technologies, whereby media can serve both educational and ideological functions. Similarly, Frau-Meigs (2023) notes that ML equips individuals to decode media logic, question dominant narratives, and participate actively in mediated societies.

In educational settings, ML is particularly relevant to school education. School education cannot be considered in isolation from media environments, as students bring to classrooms habits, assumptions, and experiences shaped by media. As the OECD (2025) report explains, equipping students with ML means enabling them to be 'discerning and responsible users and producers of content in a digital world' (p. 44). ML is thus essential not only for understanding media texts but also for preparing students to take part in democratic discourse and decision-making.

In similar vein, Hobbs (2010) accentuates that ML is a set of life skills including access, analysis, creation, reflection, and action, which is supported by Potter (2022) who accentuates that:

[...] media literacy is a collection of wide range of abilities, including the capacity to read, assess, analyse, envision possibilities, break down messages, identify patterns, question meanings, assess credibility, discern sender intent, refute arguments, search for the truth, avoid influence, and produce messages (p. 41).

Potter (2022) links ML to mental skills, essential knowledge, verifiable facts, and personal beliefs that shape how individuals understand and interact with media. As beliefs may lack a discernible truth value, it is impossible to

objectively verify their veracity; instead, they are considered as the result of subjective perceptions and individual interpretations (p. 31).

Interestingly, the European Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2018) highlights that ML is the ability to interact with media in a responsible and informed way. Understanding that ML is more than just tools and technologies, but more of critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to distinguish fact from opinion (Weinand, 2018). Likewise, Korona (2020) notes that people who acquire strong communication skills in mediated settings are more suited to critically analyse media messages and spot bias or false information.

Developing ML can have a profound societal impact, empowering individuals to form a mental self-defence against manipulation as well as contribute to the foundation of a more informed and participatory democracy (Chomsky, 2013). However, ML cannot be easily defined as a fixed set of skills, nor can its boundaries be clearly outlined (Buckingham, 2007; Potter, 2013). It is better understood as an evolving and lifelong learning process that adapts to changing media landscapes and social contexts (Livingstone, 2003), which makes it central to school education.

ML in school education is generally understood through three key dimensions: (1) education *with* media, (2) education *in* the context of media and media society, and (3) education *about* media (Qvortrup, 2007; Yeh, 2010). While these perspectives may overlap, each has its distinct purpose (Smelser & Baltes, 2001; Fedorov, 2003; Tulodziecki & Grafe, 2013).

The first dimension of ML sees media as a teaching aid that supports learning, where teachers use tools like videos, images, and digital content to engage students and enhance comprehension (Ndlovu et al., 2020; Cakir, 2015; Kaye, 2018). Such strategies can facilitate creativity and interaction in various learning environments and support a more flexible and adaptable classroom instruction (Kuntadi & Hedayat, 2022). The second dimension of ML, which is education *in* media, centres on helping students to critically analyse, evaluate, and create media messages across many platforms (Hobbs, 2004). Third dimension of ML, education *about* media entails knowing how media is produced, assessing its content, and raising awareness of its function in society (Frau-Meigs, 2007). These three elements taken together can offer a thorough framework for integrating ML into school education.

In this study, I refer to ML as *a set of competencies* that enable teachers to reach, interpret, and thoughtfully judge media, make use of digital tools, and produce content across different platforms, all in support of responsible communication and active civic participation. It reflects a wide-ranging skillset necessary for meaningful and ethical interaction with media, including the ability to access, evaluate, produce, and ethically utilise knowledge across various media platforms.

Having said that, there are cases when ML is confused with digital literacy, as these two terms are used interchangeably, but serve different

purposes. It is important to identify the differences between ML and digital literacy.

3.1.1 Media Literacy and Digital Literacy

The concepts, such as e-literacy, digital competency, and multimodal literacy are all used interchangeably to refer to various features of fluency in reading and navigating digital information (Beetham, 2010). The notions, such as computer literacy, information literacy, and network literacy, gave rise to digital literacy and its associated concepts (UNESCO, 2011). Digital literacy, first introduced by Gilster (1997), refers to the skills needed to critically navigate and engage with information in a digital environment. It is closely linked to ML but extends further to include the ethical, safe, and responsible use of digital technologies.

Teachers' digital competences are defined as the ability to understand and apply technology, pedagogical and practical solutions (Tondeur et al., 2019). Digital competence can also refer to the use of ICTs in teaching that is assured, critical, and creative (Ferrari, 2012; Milutinović, 2019). The UNESCO report (2011) states that teachers' digital competency has a direct impact on pupils' ICT skills. Teachers' ability to use ICT in the classroom is key to students' success, future employment, and engagement in public life (Brun & Hinostroza, 2014).

Although in today's increasingly algorithm-driven environment, digital literacy can involve an interpretation of complex issues such as online privacy, platform governance, and the wider social consequences of digital communication (Pangrazio, 2019), it mostly addresses technical skills connected to digital technologies and essentially provides the foundation for ML (Hobbs, 2004). In contrast, ML is closely linked to critical thinking, which includes interpreting, analysing, and evaluating information across different digital and non-digital formats (Paul & Elder, 2019; Chatfield & Chatfield, 2022; Hobbs, 2021).

Developing teachers' ML and digital skills is increasingly recognised as crucial for continuous learning and adapting to technological change (Gjerazi, 2024). Strengthening ML also plays a vital role in fostering critical thinking and combating the proliferation of misinformation in the contemporary information age (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017).

3.1.2 The Importance of Media Literacy

It is suggested that ML can improve individuals' skills of critical media analysis and recognition of cultural perspectives (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2018). Jenkins (2009) accentuates that ML supports the development of discernment by helping individuals differentiate between reliable and false information. Likewise, ML can cultivate the skills needed to assess sources,

detect bias and understand multiple viewpoints (Singh et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2018).

Hobbs (2018) underscores ML's contribution to improving critical judgement in the digital age, while Aufderheide (2018) notes that its effectiveness depends on the context and quality of instruction. However, Jenkins (2018) argues that traditional ML models, focused solely on personal skills and, hence often fail to address broader media issues. Programmes like Canada's Media Smarts illustrate how ML can go beyond technical skills by fostering critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness through dialogue and reflection (DeWaard & Hoechsmann, 2020; O'Sullivan, 2007).

Interestingly, Hobbs (2010) argues that modern understanding of literacy should give active participation in society and foster a mastery of symbolic systems for pragmatic use. Livingstone (2003) groups these elements as (a) power; (b) textuality; and (c) competency, which reflect access to knowledge, textual skills, and interpretative capacity. Competency is interpretative ability; textuality is the symbolic and material representations of knowledge, culture, and values; and power is access to and skilled use of knowledge (Livingstone, 2003). Thereby, ML should include views of intricate symbolic systems, which includes the production of media materials, its language, representation, and audiences (Buckingham, 2003).

The mass-mediated messages can have enormous influence on framing, informing, and influencing the audience's perceptions and understanding of the world (Thevenin, 2020, p. 102). Burnett and Merchant (2019) highlight that the advancement of digital communication is leading to a significant change in how people stay in touch and spread their ideas. Authors make a case for revisiting traditional conceptualisation of literacy development in classrooms in response to this change. ML has become even more crucial, as disinformation and divisive rhetoric have permeated public discourse in recent years and hence put democracy in jeopardy (Higdon & Huff, 2022). As such, one of the most important aims of ML is the formation of critical ML, which may involve questioning media messages and scrutinising their content and structure (Jacobs, 2013; Thoman & Jolls, 2004).

Hence, ML education can be effective when students closely analyse media messages, practices, processes, institutions, and their influence (Allen et al., 2022; Arke & Primack, 2009). This, in turn, requires media literate educators, who can teach students how to engage with media critically (Robertson & Hughes, 2011; Share et al., 2019).

3.2 The EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Media Literacy and Self-Efficacy

The discussion is informed by two interrelated theories of Ajzen's (2020) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Bandura's (1995) Self-Efficacy Theory.

Together, these theories help to interpret how teachers' beliefs, motivations, and contextual conditions can shape their perceptions and confidence in media usage, which I explain in sub-sections below.

3.2.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Media Literacy

Teachers' perceptions of the media are rarely fixed or uniform, but shaped by a combination of their personal beliefs, teaching experience, institutional culture, and exposure to professional development (McLeod et al., 2017; Goodman, 2021). Teachers' beliefs about educational practice encompass their views on effective instruction, classroom interaction, and student engagement (Pajares, 1992; Flores, 2001). A substantial body of research has established that teachers' beliefs, which are shaped by their prior experiences and professional contexts, can significantly influence teachers' decision-making in the classroom (Borg, 2003; Hermans et al., 2008). Borg (2003) introduced the term 'teacher cognition' to capture the complex interplay between beliefs, knowledge, and experience (p. 86). Teachers' understanding of key concepts, such as ML, can inform the pedagogical strategies they adopt. Previous studies have shown that teachers' theoretical conceptions of literacy can influence their teaching practices, their openness to critical and multimodal approaches (Beach, 1994; Grisham, 2001; Maloch et al., 2003; Verloop et al., 2001).

While teacher beliefs can often be deep-seated, they are not fixed. They evolve through professional development, reflective practice, and exposure to new theories and tools (Calderhead, 1996; Richardson, 1996). For example, participation in collaborative professional learning can help teachers revise their instructional approaches and adopt more evidence-based practices. However, ML remains an area where teachers' preparedness and confidence can vary. It is believed that ML is a marginalised field when it comes to teacher education with insufficient training in both its theoretical foundations and practical implementation (Lähdesmäki & Maunula, 2023; Arcus, 2014; Yeh & Wan, 2019). Furthermore, ML can be undervalued in curricular due to the increased focus on literacy and numeracy in schools (Berger, 2023).

These patterns were reflected in my preliminary research, which explored the ways the EFL teachers conceptualise ML in schools in Kazakhstan (Yeleussiz, 2024). While most participants recognised ML as an important element of classroom practice, their definitions were often vague or inconsistently framed. A strong emphasis was placed on receptive skills, such as understanding and interpreting media messages, while productive and critical dimensions, including media creation or analysis of ideological content, were mentioned seldomly. Such a narrow framing may suggest that teachers approach ML more as a technical skill than a critical and participatory practice. As a result, teachers' ability to integrate ML into practice can be constrained by their

beliefs, which are informed by prior education and teaching experience (Yeleussiz & Qanay).

Research in teacher cognition and behavioural psychology indicates that teachers' conceptual understanding of ML can play a foundational role in shaping how they engage with it in practice (Borg, 2003; Ajzen, 2020). According to Ajzen (2020), attitude toward a behaviour can be shaped in part by how that behaviour is understood, which can strongly influence one's intention to perform it. When ML is viewed narrowly, teachers neither perceive it as pedagogically worthwhile nor they align it with curriculum goals, which may weaken their motivation to implement it. Bandura (1995) further suggests that individuals are less likely to adopt practices they do not fully understand or feel capable of enacting. In this context, a limited or ambiguous understanding of ML may reduce teachers' practices, even when they value its potential. Thus, a clear, well-defined understanding of ML is not only pedagogically essential but also a key factor in enabling teachers to act with purpose, consistency, and agency.

The key influence on teachers' professional orientations can be professional development (PD). Teachers who participate in ML-focused professional development often report greater openness to using digital tools and are more confident experimenting with less conventional forms of instruction (McNelly & Harvey, 2021; Weninger et al., 2017). However, PD can also draw attention to institutional shortcomings. As Ranieri et al. (2017) note, when teachers are introduced to innovative media practices but return to rigid or under-resourced school settings, a disconnect may emerge leading to a frustration or resistance. As such, digitally fluent teachers are believed to be more likely to explore interactive, student-centred platforms that mirror learners' media experiences outside school (Tour, 2015; Pangrazio, 2019; Lähdesmäki & Maunula, 2023). These choices reflect broader beliefs about what constitutes meaningful learning and the role of the teachers' ML in a mediated world.

Early media education, especially the inoculation model, treated media as a threat, aiming to shield students rather than promote understanding (Buckingham, 1998; Potter, 2022). Although outdated in theory, this mindset still lingers in many schools today, shaping how teachers and administrators view mobile phones, online content, or media topics perceived as controversial (Pokulyta & Sotska, 2025). This legacy can be seen in the fact that schools still limit how much media students can use in class, usually because they are worried about distractions, commercialism, or inappropriate content. Blocked websites, strict phone policies, or a focus on teaching from textbooks can all unintentionally make it harder for students to develop the critical awareness they need in today's media-rich environments (Samuel-Okon, 2024; Turin & Friesem, 2020). As Valtonen et al. (2019) argue, meaningful ML relies on

structured engagement rather than avoidance, wherein students must be guided to navigate, question, and create media, not shielded from it entirely.

In this regard, Ajzen (2020) provides a useful lens for understanding why teachers may support ML in principle but not act on it in practice. According to this theory, behaviour is influenced by attitude, perceived social expectations (subjective norms), and perceived behavioural control. If teachers feel that colleagues or parents might disapprove, or if they lack time or resources, they may default to safer, more traditional practices, even if they personally value ML. On the other hand, when school supports experimentation and media use, teachers often become more open to trying new approaches (Ajzen, 2020). Bandura (1995) suggests that teachers are more likely to implement practices they view as worthwhile and achievable. Ajzen (2020) also highlights that perceived usefulness of a behaviour can strengthen an individual's intentions to act.

Digital optimists commonly determine technology as empowering and inclusive, focussing on how it can help students get involved, be creative, and work together (Pangrazio, 2019; Lähdesmäki & Maunula, 2023). In contrast, sceptics are often concerned with screen fatigue, misleading data, and issues with overseeing a classroom within online spaces (Potter, 2020; Samuel-Okon, 2024). These points of view are not always static, as they can change because of things such as institutional expectations, past experiences, and levels of training and support (McLeod et al., 2017; Weninger et al., 2017). As such, teachers' interactions with the media can be affected by their beliefs, sense of security, and what they believe is socially acceptable or pedagogically valuable. The views of individuals towards media are not neutral or random; they have a big impact on how ML is understood, taught, or avoided. In order to render ML teaching more inclusive and responsive, it is essential to recognise these underlying positions that support both teacher agency and student learning (Bandura, 1995).

In the context of EFL classrooms, the extent to which teachers integrate ML into their language teaching practice often depends on how relevant they perceive it to be for students' language development. When ML is seen as disconnected from core curricular goals or too distant from exam-oriented content, its implementation tends to be minimal or superficial (Berger, 2023; Marlatt, 2020). Research into language teacher cognition highlights that perceived relevance is shaped by a complex interaction of beliefs, prior experiences, institutional culture, and curriculum demands (Borg, 2003). If ML is presented solely as a digital skill or a tool for technological engagement, teachers may struggle to see its pedagogical value. However, when positioned as a mode of authentic language exposure and a pathway to sociolinguistic and cultural insight, ML takes on increased significance.

This is reflected in the multiliteracies framework by Cope and Kalantzis (2000), which expands the notion of literacy beyond print to include diverse

modes of meaning-making. In their view, media texts are not supplementary, they are fundamental to how language is encountered and used in real-world contexts. The EFL teachers, who perceive ML as a valuable part of language education, often cite its potential to expose learners to authentic language use (Querol-Julián & Fortanet-Gómez, 2025). Media texts, from news articles and video blogs to podcasts and social media, present varied registers, dialects, and genres that extend beyond what traditional textbooks offer (Buckingham, 2003; Kellner & Share, 2005). Such materials can help learners see how English operates across different social settings and communicative purposes, enhancing both comprehension and production skills. This aligns with Fairclough's (2001) understanding of language as socially embedded as inseparable from its cultural and contextual functions.

In EFL classrooms, where opportunities for authentic linguistic immersion may be limited, the value of ML becomes particularly pronounced (Reiber-Kuijpers et al., 2021). Through engagement with real-world media, learners can access diverse discourses and sociocultural perspectives, building awareness of how language reflects identity, intention, and power dynamics (Gee, 2014; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Teachers who recognise this link often regard ML as essential for developing not only language skills but also intercultural competence and critical language awareness. Media platforms expose learners to how language varies by audience, setting, and medium, helping them navigate nuance, tone, and implicit meaning (Crystal, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2011; Schleppegrell, 2004).

Teachers who value this exposure tend to view ML to prepare learners for global communication, where effective interaction depends on cultural adaptability and rhetorical flexibility (Austin & Domgaard, 2024). ML is especially useful for improving advanced literacy skills because it stresses the importance of critically engaging with language (Afrilyasanti et al., 2025b). Learners are encouraged to speculate about how texts are put together, whose points of view are shown, and what ideas are at work through activities like media analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006; Lillis, 2013). Teachers, who determine ML this way, often see it as an instrument to help students become thoughtful and informed users of language. This aligns well with the communicative and analytical goals of EFL instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Theoretical views on what motivates teachers support the idea that perceived relevance affects how teachers make decisions about what to teach. In this way of thinking, teachers are more likely to use ML in their teaching if they think it can assist students learn a language, even if they must deal with outside factors.

3.2.2 Teachers' Self-efficacy and Media Literacy

Self-efficacy, or a teacher's belief in their own ability to teach ML, is a key factor in whether and how they use ML in the classroom. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is how well a person thinks they can plan and carry out the steps needed to reach a specific goal. In this case, teachers who are more confident in their ML capabilities, are more likely to use media texts, accomplish critical and creative ML tasks, and include student-led learning activities (Briggs et al., 2017).

Bandura (1995) identifies four sources that can shape self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and emotional or physiological states. Feedback and encouragement from colleagues can also play an important role in promoting teachers' ML, while negative emotions, such as anxiety around digital tools or fear of failure can significantly diminish teachers' confidence, particularly among less experienced or older educators (Ranieri et al., 2017). Butler (2019) underscores that opportunities for reflection, feedback, and collaborative learning can strengthen teachers' belief in their instructional abilities. However, research shows that teachers feel less media-literate due to limited pre-service or in-service professional learning and development (Arcus, 2014; Yeh & Wan, 2019).

Ajzen (2020) also states that teachers are more likely to employ ML in their teaching if they think they have the proper skillset, tools, time, and support. On the other hand, if they feel unsupported or unprepared, their confidence may drop, even if they have a positive mindset towards ML (Ajzen, 2020). My own research has given me some early evidence that supports these theories (Yeleussiz, 2024). Teachers' confidence in ML can be shaped not only by their own prior experiences, but also the quality of professional learning and support available to them. As such, despite teachers' willingness to use ML in their classrooms, they may not do so if they are missing a strong sense of self-efficacy. Instead, they may stick to more familiar or traditional teaching methods. On the contrary, teachers who feel capable are more likely to take pedagogical risks, get students involved in critical media tasks, and keep up with new technologies (Saptono, 2022). Teachers' beliefs of value and usefulness of different types of media can also have a big impact on how they interpret and employ ML (Schmitz et al., 2024).

In essence, teachers contend that ML has value for language teaching not just because they believe it is, but also because it fits well with what teachers want their students to learn. When teachers see ML as a way to improve the communicative, cultural, and essential components of language education and they believe in their capacity to integrate it into their teaching, ML can become more than just an optional extra to teachers' practices, but an important element of the EFL teaching.

3.3 Teachers' Practices of Media Literacy

This section outlines the key dimensions of teachers' engagement with ML, beginning with a focus on critical ML skills, which includes deconstruction, representation, intertextuality, multimodality, creation, and ethical pedagogy. The section also examines teachers' ML practices in classrooms, focusing on how they use media, facilitate understanding, and support creation. The analysis of teachers' practices in this study is structured across three interrelated but analytically distinct layers. First, critical ML is discussed to explain teachers' broader instructional orientations, which includes practices such as deconstructing media texts or addressing representation embedded in teachers' pedagogical intentions. Second, teachers' classroom practices in relation to ML are described through such categories as using, understanding, and creating media. These dimensions focus on how digital tools and media texts can be operationalised within classrooms. Third, teachers' integration of ML into the EFL classrooms is explained through such key language proficiency areas as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which I explain in detail below.

3.3.1 Teachers' Critical Media Literacy Practices

Drawing from the principles of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) and the multiliteracies framework (New London Group, 1996), this analysis examines how teachers' personal competencies and pedagogical choices reflect their critical understanding of media. It considers how teachers conceptualize and structure lessons that promote media critique, ethical engagement, and alternative production. Teachers thus function not only as content facilitators but also as curriculum designers and critical agents who embed critical ML principles into instructional planning (Morrell, 2008; Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2015).

Critical ML extends the objectives of traditional ML by interrogating the power relations, ideological structures, and systems of representation embedded within media texts (Kellner & Share, 2007; Li, 2025). Crucially, critical ML promotes learners' roles as active producers of media, capable of resisting dominant narratives and contributing to civic discourse through creative expression (Hobbs, 2011). As media environments become increasingly algorithmic, visual, and participatory, critical ML incorporates dialogic, creative, and reflective pedagogies aimed at cultivating both critical awareness and social responsibility (Afrilyasanti et al., 2024). It thus positions ML not merely as a cognitive skill set, but also as a civic and ethical disposition.

To explore how EFL teachers engage with critical ML in their pedagogical practice, this study draws upon established theoretical traditions, namely, Freire's critical pedagogy (1970), the multiliteracies framework

proposed by the New London Group (1996), and Kellner and Share's (2019) model of critical ML (see Table 1 below). The New London Group (1996) was foundational in framing the concept of *multiliteracies*, which advocates for educators' roles in designing learning environments that embrace diverse semiotic modes. Thus, the concept of multiliteracies has expanded the view of literacy that accounts for cultural and linguistic diversity by incorporating the use of multiple modes of communication, including visual, audio, spatial, and digital forms (New London Group, 1996). It accentuates the need to understand and construct meaning across varied social and technological contexts (Howell et al., 2015). While these frameworks have significantly shaped the field of ML education, they are often conceptual in nature and may not directly address the practical demands of classroom teaching, particularly in EFL contexts and under-researched contexts, of which Kazakhstan is one.

Thereby, based on existing perspectives, I organised critical ML into five domains: deconstruction, representation, intertextuality, multimodality and production, and drew on key scholarships that conceptualised both analytical and productive dimensions of ML (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Robertson & Scheidler-Benns, 2016). These contributions connect with the work of Kellner and Share (2009, 2019), who place critical analysis and transformative action at the centre of ML, underscore how learners can interrogate dominant ideologies and produce alternative media. The New London Group (1996) accentuated cultural and linguistic diversity and the integration of multiple modes of meaning, which underpin the intertextuality and multimodality elements of the framework. Together, these perspectives provide a coherent theoretical foundation for the five domains. Each domain is examined in terms of its pedagogical implications, its relevance to language and literacy development, and its potential to empower students as critical interpreters and media authors. Table 1 below outlines how these five domains interact with the existing ML theories. This comparative view illustrates the theoretical continuity underlying the framework, while also indicating its pedagogical focus and contextual relevance.

Table 1 - Teachers' Critical ML Skills Synthesis

Domains of critical media literacy	Kellner & Share (2009/2019) Domain	New London Group Element (1996)
<i>Deconstruction</i>	Examining Media Content and Context	Analytical Perspective on Power and Meaning
<i>Representation</i>	Focus on Societal and Political Influences	Critical Interpretive Approach
<i>Intertextuality</i>	How Audiences Interact	Contextual Learning with

	with Content and Analysis	Explicit Teaching
<i>Multimodality</i>	Content-Based Media Interpretation	Designing with Multiple Modes
<i>Creation</i>	(No direct connection made)	Transformative Practice (Freirean Praxis) + Awareness of algorithmic and platform biases

Now, I will explain each domain in detail.

3.3.1.1 Deconstruction

Within the framework of critical ML, deconstruction refers to the analytical process of breaking down media texts to uncover hidden meanings, ideologies, and intentions. It involves identifying elements such as bias, perspective, audience, and purpose to reveal the socio-cultural and political forces shaping the construction of media. Unlike surface-level comprehension, deconstruction asks learners to interrogate how a message is constructed and why it is presented in a particular way (Kellner & Share, 2007).

In a media landscape saturated with corporate interests, political agendas, and algorithmic filtering, the ability to deconstruct media is essential for informed democratic participation. As Freire (1970) asserts, literacy is never neutral; it is always embedded in power relations. Teachers, therefore, have a responsibility not only to critically understand media themselves but also to support students in engaging with texts that challenge dominant ideologies and recognise marginalisation. Within the Multiliteracies framework deconstruction is defined as a critical framing, which involves interpreting media texts within their cultural, historical, and ideological contexts (New London Group, 1996). This requires educators to go beyond delivering content, actively fostering critical thinking. Thereby, deconstruction is a tool for cultivating critical consciousness (*conscientização*), enabling learners to question assumptions and understand how media reproduces or resists systems of power (Freire, 1970).

Pedagogically, deconstruction can be applied through inquiry-based approaches that promote dialogue and reflective critique. As Giroux (2010) contends, educators should see themselves as transformative intellectuals who not only critique but also cultivate critical agency. Thus, deconstruction functions not merely as an interpretive skill but as an ethical practice, enabling both teachers and learners to interrogate power and contribute to more just and democratic media cultures. Within this framework, deconstruction is further understood as comprising three interconnected dimensions. First, it entails analysing persuasive strategies and ideological framing, where learners examine

how language, imagery, and narrative structure position audiences and reinforce dominant values (Freire, 1970; Kellner & Share, 2007). Second, it involves identifying bias and imbalance in media representation through the critical examination of omissions, selective reporting, and one-sided perspectives (Buckingham, 2003). Third, deconstruction includes analysing the conditions of media production, including authorship, ownership, and institutional control to assess whose interests are served by specific media outputs (Kellner & Share, 2007).

While deconstruction equips learners with critical tools to analyse and challenge media, the subsequent process of media creation enables them to produce alternative narratives that resist dominant ideologies and reflect diverse perspectives (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000). The shift from critical analysis to active production forms a basis for examining how media texts construct and convey meaning, which leads to the consideration of representation as another central domain within critical ML.

3.3.1.2 Representation

In the context of teachers' critical ML, representation refers to the ability to understand and analyse how language, visuals, and multimodal elements are used to construct meaning. Media content cannot be neutral; rather, it is shaped by social and cultural influences (Provorova, 2015). Thereby, teachers can help learners to recognise how identities, events, and social norms are portrayed or distorted through specific semiotic and stylistic choices (Tagg & Seargeant, 2021; Veum et al., 2024).

This skill is increasingly vital in an age of pervasive digital content, where students routinely encounter media messages across platforms that blend text, image, sound, and interactivity. As Freire (1970) argued, literacy must move beyond basic decoding to a deeper awareness of how knowledge and reality are constructed through communicative practices. The New London Group (1996) reinforces this idea by introducing the concept of *design*, which emphasises the intentional selection and orchestration of modes, such as visual design, gesture, spatial layout, and typography to shape interpretation and influence audiences. The multimodal view aids educators in analysing how media influences viewer perspectives (Reiber-Kuijpers et al., 2021).

Studies highlight that when teachers develop critical awareness, they are better prepared to help students deconstruct the ways media texts reinforce stereotypes, power structures, and dominant worldviews. For example, Provorova (2015) illustrates how gender representation in media can be challenged through classroom analysis that foregrounds intersectionality and student agency. Similarly, Alhamdan et al. (2014) examine how media represents teachers themselves. Thereby, teachers' classroom practices should integrate media analysis into language and literacy instruction, where students

are encouraged to explore how headlines frame political protests, how camera angles suggest authority, or how visual tropes in advertising construct cultural norms. As Ilten-Gee and Mirra (2024) argue, such critical engagement with digital texts also supports moral and character education by helping learners evaluate fairness, justice, and representation. Teachers who model this inquiry-based learning can foster students' ability to question not only media content but the systems of value and belief that underpin it (Scheibe & Rogow, 2012).

Moreover, a critical representation in teaching aligns closely with goals of inclusion and social justice. By recognising and challenging reductive narratives, teachers can amplify marginalised voices and affirm diverse identities within classroom materials (Robertson & Hughes, 2011). This practice is particularly important in multilingual or multicultural settings where media representations can either alienate or validate learners' lived experiences (von Gillern et al., 2024; Liu & Zhang, 2025). As Freire (1994) puts it, education must be grounded in ethical dialogue and mutual recognition. Teachers, who understand how language and visuals can shape meaning, are not only advancing students' ML but also cultivating critically conscious, culturally responsive, and socially engaged classrooms (Aslan et al., 2025).

To support such critical awareness, learners must be able to recognize how texts and messages relate to one another across different contexts. This brings us to the role of intertextuality in critical ML pedagogy.

3.3.1.3 Intertextuality

Intertextuality in critical ML means understanding how other texts refer to, respond to, and change texts (Robertson & Scheidler-Benns, 2016). Direct quotations, allusions, pastiches, and parodies are all critical to how meaning can be constructed and comprehended in environments with a lot of media. In the context of critical ML, becoming aware of intertextuality can help students see media as more than just separate things, but as networks of ideas shaped by culture, ideology, and history (Freire, 1970; The New London Group, 1996).

In this study, intertextuality refers to being able to perceive and study how texts are related to each other, especially how they reference, echo, or build on each other. There are two main parts to this domain. First, textual relationships involve students looking at different types of media, like articles, advertisements, or broadcasts, and figuring out how they are connected through common themes, language, or story structures (Portela et al., 2024; Incognito & Tarchi, 2024). To find meanings that connect to each other, you need to place the texts next to each other. Second, ideological links help students find common values, assumptions, or ideological frames across different platforms or sources (Espinás & Chandler, 2024). This can assist students understand better how the media creates and spreads dominant stories in various instances.

Recent studies suggest that helping students become better at analysing and understanding what they read should involve encouraging them to think about how different texts relate to each other. Portela et al. (2024), for instance, underline that textual connections work as heuristic tools to help readers interpret texts by visualising and encoding intertextuality in critical reading. Their study depicts the way critical literacy can be integrated by using, changing, and combining old texts in new ways of communicating. Also, research by Incognito and Tarchi (2024) shows that intertextual integration is closely related to students' ability to find sources and their academic literacy. Students get better at making inferences and judging arguments when they learn to see how different texts are related, how a news article takes language from political speeches or how a movie can substitute a book. Thereby, prior knowledge is important in helping students connect and understand multiple texts (Demir et al., 2024).

Thereby, teachers can help students trace patterns of language reuse, ideological framing, or metaphorical borrowing, thus uncovering how power, identity, and worldview are conveyed through intertextual means (Otaif, 2024; Yulandari & Alfarisi, 2025). Academic writing tasks can benefit from explicit instruction in intertextual strategies, enabling students to build stronger arguments by weaving together textual evidence and diverse perspectives (Yulandari & Alfarisi, 2025). The intertextual approach also connects reading and writing lessons by showing how knowledge is built through conversation. This kind of approach corresponds with the Multiliteracies Framework, which regards students as meaning-makers, who move through layered texts and changing discourses (The New London Group, 1996).

3.3.1.4 Multimodality

Multimodality is the use of more than one way of communicating meaning through text, image, sound, gesture, and spatial layout (Querol-Julián & Fortanet-Gómez, 2025). Thereby, literacy cannot be just about reading and writing anymore. In today's digital world, it also means being able to understand, analyse, and create texts that work in different media formats. As such, multimodality encourages teachers to engage with more complex forms of communication (Ajayi, 2009; Cope & Kalantzis, 2013).

Building on this, Querol-Julián and Fortanet-Gómez (2025) accentuate the necessity for multimodal literacy in English-medium instruction, where students can decode meaning from both verbal and non-verbal cues in academic settings. Similarly, Dada (2025) promotes the integration of technology in English studies to enhance students' awareness of how multiple modalities shape communication. In the EFL settings, multimodal literacy may assist students to understand complicated digital texts such as infographics, websites,

and videos, where meaning comes from a combination of text, images, and audio. Liu et al. (2025) stress the importance of testing students' digital multimodal composing skills as part of a larger set of generative AI (GAI) literacy skills. Authors also point out the need for evaluation tools that can be used on a large scale. Murtadho et al. (2024) state that the 21st century skills built into textbooks often depend on integrating pictures and words, which may indicate how useful multimodal analysis can be for teaching. Tzirides (2024) looks at how AI tools may aid people communicate in more than one language, which helps ML extend across language barriers. These changes mean that teachers need to learn multimodal pedagogies, which involves showing students how to break down and create texts that meet the needs of real-world communication.

Stewart et al. (2025) offer students a critical framework based on intermodal complementarity, which teaches them to examine how different modes can support or contradict each other. Such an approach can be very important for developing critical awareness and the ability to see things differently. Also, Lam and Putri (2024) state that rewriting digital fairy tales allows students a creative space, so to use multimodal tools, change the way they convey traditional stories and improve their critical thinking and enhance their voice. Thereby, multimodal analysis can assist students learn how to create media (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2022). Beltrán-Palanques (2024) shows that studying the narrative structures in video games permits students to think critically about how their functions and storylines add to the meaning. Jiang and Hafner (2024) also suggest a research agenda that focuses on how digital multimodal composing may aid students to work together and think critically in L2 classrooms.

Consequently, to promote multimodal literacy, teachers and students need to be able to comprehend and compose messages in a variety of formats and on a variety of platforms.

3.3.1.5 Creation

Creation is a key element of critical ML, which involves actively assisting students make media while being aware of the ethical, cultural, and political effects of their work. Freire (1970) asserted that education should not only assist learners to understand the world but also change it. In this way, creating media becomes a kind of praxis, the process that involves criticality and meaningful engagement with others. The New London Group (1996) discusses this in terms of transformed practice, where learners are seen as meaning-makers, who do innovative tasks to transform dominant representations and create new stories. Garcia et al. (2013) build on this by showing how critical ML pedagogy lets students create media that permits them to advocate stereotypes and unfairness. In this way, students transform from

passive consumers to active participants of media by encoding media messages and breaking up regular methods of communication.

This critical design perspective is further supported by Tagg and Seargeant (2021), who argue for a context design, which is the ability of understanding media circulation and interpretation. Teachers play a key role in this creative process (Scheibe & Rogow, 2012). But how teachers assist students depends on a number of factors, such as their digital skills, teaching style, access to tools, and support from the school. According to Schmitz et al. (2024), teachers are most likely to include media creation in their lessons if they feel confident, skilled, and supported. In a similar vein, Savage (2025) contends that teachers need to provide students opportunities to create media, which can help boost their confidence and make their teaching more consistent.

Chan (2024) reinforces the importance of developing ML leadership among educators, so that they act as role models in critical digital authorship. Moreover, media creation must be informed by inclusive, ethical, and pedagogically grounded frameworks. Reiber-Kuijpers et al. (2021) point out that digital composition can support second language teaching through contextualising reading and writing within multimodal and meaningful tasks. As such, when students create media that connects to their identities and experiences, their learning becomes more personalised and culturally responsive.

The main focus of media creation is on students' ability to make media messages that are critical and serve a social purpose (Freire, 1970; New London Group, 1996; Garcia et al., 2013). Teachers may encourage students involved in making texts that address their media-related concerns, such as projects that involve misinformation or media bias, where students record critical messages to inform or challenge dominant narratives (Garcia et al., 2013). They might also make short-form content including social media posts, infographics, or videos demonstrating that they are aware of important issues and know how to use technology. This could assist them to share socially conscious messages (Lumanlan et al., 2025).

Hence, creation, as a domain, is not merely about technical production of media, but about voice, agency, and social responsibility. Through intentional and reflective design, students can learn to navigate digital landscapes as critical authors. Teachers, in turn, play a transformative role in guiding this process, when creative expression is aligned with democratic and inclusive values.

3.4 Integrating Media Literacy into EFL Classrooms

This section focuses on the ML practices in EFL classrooms, which includes teacher-student interactions, guided activities, and learner participation. Drawing on the framework adapted from Simons et al. (2017) and the Media Didactica model (Driesen et al., 2014; Meeus et al., 2014b), the analysis

examines how ML is operationalised in real-time classroom settings. It focuses on three interrelated domains of media engagement: (a) using media, (b) understanding media, and (c) creating media, each domain offer insights into the pedagogical and didactic strategies employed in EFL classrooms. This section also explores how these domains of ML are integrated into the teaching of the four core language skills, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing. These macro-skills are fundamental to EFL education and are widely regarded as interdependent elements of communicative competence (Sadiku, 2015; Ali, 2022). Emerging research further underscores the value of multimodal and interactive media in fostering engagement, improving performance, and supporting the development of these skills (Isakova, 2024; Nehe et al., 2025).

I now explain each of them in greater detail.

3.4.1 The Using Media Domain

The using media domain refers to the operational and navigational skills required to access, select, and use digital tools and content effectively (Osikoya, 2025). In classroom settings, this involves purposeful engagement with digital platforms and resources, often requiring both teachers' and students' functional ML. Recent studies accentuate the importance of teacher preparedness, their competences with digital tools, and the integration of educational technologies in classrooms (Siregar & Siregar, 2024; Chauhan et al., 2021). Teachers integrate a variety of media formats, such as videos, podcasts, news articles, and social media texts to enrich linguistic input and expose students to authentic language use. As Dvorghets and Shaturnaya (2015) observe, such integration allows students to interact with real-life communicative contexts, enhancing vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and pragmatic awareness.

The selection and frequency of media use are shaped not only by availability or technological comfort, but also by a teacher's pedagogical intentions and content alignment. Research has shown that media-rich instruction can boost learners' motivation and engagement, particularly when media materials reflect students' interests or popular cultural references (Quinlisk, 2003; Ait, 2016). Media content thus serves as both a linguistic resource and a motivational tool in EFL classrooms. Moreover, EFL teachers often influence students' perceptions and critical engagement with media, further justifying the need for thoughtful integration of diverse media types (Gilakjani & Leong, 2012).

The studies classify effective and ineffective teaching practices in relation to the use of media in classrooms. Hobbs (2006) specifies a number of practices that teachers perform in the classroom that could lead to ineffective use of media, among them: (1) not using the pause, rewind, or review buttons when watching videos for reflection and analysis; (2) teachers mentally disengaging during viewing experiences; (3) using videos as a reward for students; (4) using

media only as a hook to get students' attention; and (5) using media to keep students calm, pass the time, or have fun. Livingstone (2004) asserts that students' capacity to explore and evaluate digital information critically may be hampered if media is not integrated into instructional procedures. According to Jenkins et al. (2016), multidisciplinary approaches to ML education can help students make links between ML and real-world situations.

Building on this, the integration of film and media texts into EFL classrooms has proven effective in developing learners' higher order thinking skills (HOTS) and media awareness. Liu (2019) demonstrates how science fiction films can promote critical literacies by encouraging students to question dominant ideologies and engage in reflective dialogue. Similarly, short films have been shown to enhance students' narrative understanding and writing performance through visual storytelling and multimodal input (Kartika et al., 2017). Recent research emphasises the value of HOTS-based literacy strategies that combine media texts with tasks fostering social awareness and civic reflection (Setyarini et al., 2024). These approaches align with emerging global trends in media and communication education, which advocate for active engagement with diverse media formats as a core component of modern literacy instruction (Almakaty, 2024).

With students immersed in media, EFL teachers are well placed to leverage these platforms to foster critical thinking competencies (Chan, 2024). This involves not only the use of authentic media content but also the application of inquiry-based techniques that prompt learners to question, compare, and interpret media messages across genres and formats (Buckingham, 2003). The key ML skills are developed through activities such as comparing print and screen-based narratives, analysing news coverage, exploring documentary forms, and critiquing film adaptations of literary texts (Bazalgette, 2022; Hobbs, 2024). However, the misuse of these practices can cause misunderstandings among parents and school administrators about the true value of using videos as a learning tool. Teachers should integrate media into classrooms for knowledge or skill acquisition, but not for the purpose of entertainment or filling in time or substitute teachers as well as other inappropriate non-educational purposes (Gill & Stewart, 2024). Moreover, isolating ML from other subjects can reduce students' engagement with critical ML (Stewart et al., 2025; Theodosiadou, 2025).

As the OECD (2025) report suggests, foundational literacy skills and advanced media competencies must be developed in a balanced and complementary manner. When teachers successfully embed media into instruction, it becomes not merely a support tool but a core element of the learning environment.

3.4.2 The Media Analysis Domain

The media analysis domain requires analysing how media is framed, and interpreted, with attention to audience, purpose, and social implications. In the classroom settings, this translates to teachers guiding students to detect bias, credibility, emotional influence, and underlying assumptions embedded in multimodal texts (Maksl et al., 2015; Šuminas & Jastramskis, 2020). Research supports the idea that media-based learning can strengthen analytical thinking and emotional literacy, enriching critical engagement (Dasopang, 2021; Knaus, 2023). Teachers' classroom strategies thus can support deeper awareness of how media shapes understanding and perception.

Critical engagement in this domain can help learners distinguish fact from misinformation and assess ethical and sociopolitical implications (Kustini et al., 2020). Studies show that structured ML instruction improves students' ability to detect fake news and question media framing (Chao-Hsi, 2021; Dianah & Tetep, 2024). Philosophical perspectives further emphasise the media's role in shaping perceptions of truth and reality (Udoudom et al., 2023). These competencies also support broader civic and ethical awareness. Mesquita-Romero et al. (2022) point out that ML must include judgment, responsibility, and reflection. Interactive tools, such as videos, further enhance comprehension of media logic (Matsiola, 2024). As learners analyse diverse texts, they build both receptive skills, such as reading and listening, and critical awareness (Pokulyta & Sotska, 2025).

In EFL classrooms, media analysis activities have proven to be effective tools for advancing both language proficiency and critical literacy. As Hobbs and Frost (2003) note, tasks that require students to examine tone, bias, source reliability, and rhetorical techniques provide authentic contexts for applied language learning. These activities mirror real-world discourse, bridging classroom practice with broader social communication. This is especially relevant in English language teaching, where interpretation and analysis of texts are core components of curriculum design.

Critically, the quality and intent behind media use can influence learning outcomes. Jenkins et al. (2013) argue that passive consumption of media with no analytical engagement, fails to develop students' ML. When media is used only as a visual aid or motivational tool and contains no critical framing, the opportunity for cognitive engagement can be lost. Livingstone (2004) similarly warns that students' ability to evaluate information can be undermined if digital content is not integrated through pedagogically meaningful tasks.

Conversely, well-structured media analysis tasks, those that encourage reflection, critique, and perspective-taking, can significantly enrich learners' cognitive and communicative development. For example, Liu (2019) demonstrates how science fiction films, when analysed critically, can prompt students to question dominant ideologies and engage in thoughtful dialogue.

Kartika et al. (2017) reveal that short films support narrative understanding and writing through multimodal input. Similarly, Setyarini et al. (2024) advocate for literacy strategies that foster higher-order thinking and social awareness by embedding media texts in inquiry-based tasks. These practices align with the broader educational trend of integrating media and communication education into literacy instruction (Almakaty, 2024).

Torres and Mercado (2006) argue that learners must be equipped with skills to question the ideological messages embedded in texts. This involves comparing print and screen-based narratives, evaluating news coverage, analysing documentary forms, and critiquing film adaptations (Bazalgette, 2022; Hobbs, 2024). However, this requires inquiry-driven pedagogy to promote media analysis tasks, which should not be treated as add-ons or occasional enrichment. When teachers isolate ML from core subject teaching, students miss opportunities to apply critical thinking across disciplines (Stewart et al., 2025; Theodosiadou, 2025). Instead, integrating media analysis into language instruction can strengthen both academic and real-world literacies.

In this sense, the thoughtful implementation of media analysis activities in EFL classrooms is not merely an instructional choice but a pedagogical stance. It views learners as active participants in meaning-making, agents capable of critically engaging with the texts that shape their understanding of the world.

3.4.3 The Media Production Domain

The media creation domain in the classroom is about supporting learners' active and participatory engagement with digital tools (Simons et al., 2017). Through activities such as blogging, podcasting, vlogging, and digital storytelling, students practise constructing messages for authentic audiences while developing fluency in speaking and writing. Jin (2024) found that vlogging enhances EFL learners' oral proficiency and motivation, while Pantagakakis (2024) underlines the benefits of short-form video creation for vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation. Similarly, Axelrod and Kahn (2024) demonstrate that multimodal projects, such as digital comics, can strengthen both narrative and visual literacy. These tasks can foster not only linguistic development but also learner agency, creativity, and digital citizenship (Hanh, 2024; Vartiainen et al., 2025).

Creating media centres on facilitating students' production of original, socially meaningful content, whether through storytelling, video-making, digital publishing, or the use of AI tools. In this domain, students not only demonstrate their language and digital skills but also exercise critical agency by designing messages that respond to contemporary issues or personal experiences. Recent classroom innovations emphasize the use of media creation tools such as Videoscribe and AI platforms to improve learning outcomes and engagement

(Zaini et al., 2022; Wang, 2023). This creative process can foster communication, reflection, and participation in public discourse.

Enabling students to produce media materials might also present challenges. Shafirova and Cassany (2024) point out that students often require both technical and linguistic support, making a clear scaffolding an essential element of classroom instruction. Teachers must balance creativity with structure and ensure alignment between tools, pedagogy, and learning goals. When well-designed, production tasks help students understand how media can shape meaning, it can also foster students' expressive and critical competencies in a digitally connected environment. Media production is especially important in bridging the gap between passive consumption and active creation of media. As Ait (2016) argues, ML should enable learners to engage with media not just as consumers, but as contributors who can express themselves in globally communicative spaces.

The creation of media artefacts allows students to practise language through real-world tasks, which enhances not only fluency but also confidence and motivation. He (2019) demonstrates that media production activities significantly support students' writing fluency and speaking skills, particularly when tasks involve collaborative or multimodal outputs. Furthermore, the development of these production-oriented competencies rests on learners' foundational digital and linguistic literacies. According to the OECD (2025) report, media creation tasks reflect higher order thinking skills and rely on a blend of cognitive, technical, and expressive abilities. When integrated effectively into language learning, such tasks can also encourage students to make deliberate rhetorical and stylistic choices, such as adjusting tone for different audiences or combining visual and verbal elements for persuasive effect (Thevenin, 2022).

From the teaching perspective, media production tasks require instructors to integrate content knowledge with pedagogical strategies and appropriate technological tools (Schmitz et al., 2024). These tasks demand not only an understanding of language teaching goals, such as improving writing or speaking, but also the ability to select and use media platforms that support meaningful expression. Whether learners are creating podcasts, blogs, or video narratives, teachers must guide both linguistic construction and technical execution of such projects. As Mishra and Koehler (2006) note, effective technology integration depends on the thoughtful intersection of subject matter, pedagogy, and digital tools, and media production offers a dynamic space in which this integration becomes visible and impactful.

Ultimately, media production in EFL classrooms goes beyond language proficiency to cultivate communicative agency. It empowers learners to take ownership of their voice, participate in public discourse, and understand the social impact of their messages, key goals of both language education and critical ML.

3.4.4 Applying Media Literacy Domains into Language Teaching

ML is not an isolated practice, rather it is most effective when embedded in the development of core language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In the EFL contexts, media serves both as a linguistic and cultural resource, offering an authentic input, multimodal expression, and opportunities for meaningful communication (Afrilyasanti et al., 2024; Shardakova, 2023).

3.4.4.1 Reading Skills

ML significantly enhances reading comprehension in EFL contexts by engaging learners in critical encounters with multimodal texts (Rochanaphapayon, 2024). Through media-integrated instruction, learners can practise decoding, interpreting, and reflecting on complex messages across both digital and print platforms. Teachers who embed ML into reading instruction draw on a variety of strategies, including the use of authentic articles, blogs, videos with captions, and image-text pairings. Research has shown that these approaches can improve both surface-level comprehension and deeper textual analysis. For example, Mariam et al. (2025) found that digital storytelling tools enhanced learners' understanding of narrative texts, while Susanti and Amalia (2025) demonstrated that digital strategies encouraged creativity and interpretation in inclusive classrooms. Rochanaphapayon (2024) similarly reported that EFL learners benefit from ML scaffolds that improve comprehension of complex written materials.

A particularly effective strategy in media-based reading instruction is text analysis. As Jewitt and Kress (2010) accentuate that such analysis deepens critical awareness and promotes what she calls a pedagogy of questioning, teaching students not just to consume media, but to interrogate it. This open, reflective approach is further supported by Icen (2020), who advocates for an interrogative stance toward symbolic texts as central to ML education.

The text-based ML practices not only enhance learner's reading skills but also support language proficiency. As Wright and Cervetti (2016) note, analysing media texts can help students develop vocabulary, grammatical awareness, and academic writing skills, while building research abilities through the evaluation of diverse sources (Kuiper et al., 2004). Uccelli et al. (2020) add that text analysis fosters introspection, allowing students to reflect on their own perspectives in response to media content. Habibi et al. (2020) also accentuate that early exposure to digital texts with guided reading support strengthens reading fluency and comprehension, particularly in younger learners. Together, these studies demonstrate that media-integrated reading instruction, especially when anchored in text analysis, can foster both critical and functional literacy.

3.4.4.2 Listening Skills

Listening skills in EFL classrooms can be significantly enhanced through the integration of ML practices, particularly when authentic and diverse audio formats are employed. Exposure to real-world audio content, such as podcasts, radio news, and multimedia presentations, can sharpen learners' comprehension, discourse recognition, and interpretive skills.

Kung (2016) demonstrated that students engaged with news broadcasts developed improved listening comprehension and discourse awareness. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) also can offer practical benefits, which allow learners to access content conveniently and build their listening capacity at their own pace (Elfiona et al., 2019; Ghanayem & Al-Khawaldeh, 2025). Tools such as interactive videos and audio-visual storytelling help students practise inferencing, detect tone and emotion, and build contextual understanding. Werdistira (2023) argues that digital formats combining text, audio, video, and visuals not only engage learners but also deepen comprehension by reinforcing the connections between linguistic input and multimodal context. Palanisamy (2025) similarly emphasises the narrative power of audio-based learning as a means of deepening learners' reflective listening and empathy through immersive experiences.

Moreover, structured tasks such as note-taking, summarisation, critical discussion, and prediction exercises can cultivate active listening, which is foundational for communicative success (Axrorova, 2025). Studies further show that learners' self-efficacy and motivation increase when they perceive listening materials as relevant and accessible, particularly when delivered via familiar platforms like Spotify or WhatsApp (Liu & Zhang, 2025; Theodosiadou, 2025). Collectively, these studies underscore that listening is best developed when ML tasks are purposefully integrated into instruction through engaging, multimodal, and flexible digital resources.

Maulina et al. (2022) highlight that the use of podcasting, mobile applications, and multimedia materials not only enhances listening accuracy and comprehension but also fosters learner autonomy and sustained engagement. The relevance of this integrated approach is also supported by Strickland (2016), who suggests that media-based instruction reinforces lexical and grammatical systems through exposure to structured, real-world texts. Furthermore, OECD (2025) report highlights that both foundational literacy and advanced ML should be taught in tandem to ensure learners are prepared for the demands of a digitally connected society.

3.4.4.3 Speaking Skills

The integration of ML into EFL instruction can significantly enhance learners' speaking abilities by offering authentic, interactive, and purpose-

driven opportunities for oral communication (Nurarifah et al., 2025; Wahid, 2025). When students engage with real-world media they encounter diverse registers, discourse styles, and communicative functions that naturally foster spoken fluency (Mardiyah, 2025). Social media has emerged as a practical and accessible tool for enhancing oral language use. Platforms like TikTok and Facebook create low-pressure, familiar environments that stimulate speaking confidence, especially among younger learners (Zaitun et al., 2021; Wahyuni, 2024). YouTube also plays a notable role, providing exposure to authentic models of speech and enabling learner-generated content that supports self-expression and fluency development (Kristiani & Pradnyadewi, 2021; Harianja & Fibriasari, 2019).

Neiva Montaña (2021) found that ML-based oral tasks such as dialogue analysis, interpretation, and reflection improved learners' interactional competence and communicative confidence. Muhammadiyah et al. (2021) similarly report a strong relationship between digital literacy and speaking skills, wherein learners with higher digital awareness can articulate ideas more clearly and autonomously. Ospitia et al. (2016) further demonstrate that multimedia projects, which require students to plan, produce, and present content, develop not only oral proficiency but also communicative planning and critical thinking.

As McDougall et al. (2018) argue, classroom dialogue around media must go beyond extracting students' opinions or confirming teacher-led interpretations. Instead, such learning should support the development of reflection, questioning, and collaborative construction of meaning. This aligns with Zezulcova (2015), who highlights how childhood cultures are shaped by shared media discussions both in and beyond the classroom. Jenkins (2009) frames this within today's convergence culture, where meaning is co-constructed through media participation. In such environments, discussion-based ML learning can nurture essential communicative competencies like collaborative problem solving, perspective-taking, and agency (Admiraal et al., 2015; Belova & Eilks, 2015).

Debating can play a vital role in improving language acquisition. Particularly, Bartanen and Frank (1991) describe debate as a vehicle for data evaluation and argument development. More recent studies affirm that debate and role-play promote analysis, reasoning, and presentation confidence (Ghafar, 2024; Saldıray & Doğanay, 2024).

Speaking tasks that include digital participation can help students learn new languages outside of school. Liu and Zhang (2025) state that dialogue tools based on AI make it possible to use language in a more interactive way. According to Harahap et al. (2025), social media sites are places where people can use language in real life. These methods help to make communication more relevant to real life (Khairunnisa et al., 2022).

As such, speaking is most effectively developed through media-integrated, discussion-rich environments that prioritise authentic interaction, critical reflection, and learner agency (Brown & Kelley, 1986; Almulla, 2018).

3.4.4.4 Writing Skills

Writing development remains a central pillar of ML integration into EFL classrooms. A growing body of research highlights how digital tools and media-based practices enhance not only students' technical writing skills but also their critical, reflective, and creative engagement with text production.

Lee (2021) found that media integrated instruction significantly improved writing proficiency across different ability levels. Students who engaged in tasks such as analysing media content, composing reflections, and crafting arguments in response to video texts demonstrated increased fluency and clarity in their writing. These findings are echoed by Afrilyasanti et al. (2025), who argue that critical media literacy fosters both creativity and higher order thinking in EFL writing tasks. Social media platforms and digital storytelling also offer meaningful contexts for written expression. Hadi et al. (2025) reported that learners who wrote short stories via social media apps developed improved narrative structure, vocabulary use, and engagement. The opportunity to share and receive feedback from peers nurtured both communicative competence and authorial confidence.

The integration of artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, has further expanded the potential for supporting writing instruction. Pratiwi et al. (2025) found that such tools can scaffold students' scientific writing by guiding idea organisation, improving coherence, and promoting self-editing. Flynn (2025) also demonstrated that using generative AI to create media infographics strengthened students' abilities to synthesise and articulate complex information. Infographic design, online content creation, and collaborative blog writing are examples of digital project-based learning methods that help to develop not only functional writing skills but also an understanding of media, sensitivity to genre, and a sense of ethical authorship (Beach, 2014; Joseph & Khan, 2020; Tetri et al., 2025). Bal and Öztürk (2025) further point out the potential of deep learning strategies to enhance learners' expressive capacity and writing precision.

Importantly, inquiry-based learning has proven particularly effective in enhancing writing skills through media-rich instruction. This discovery-oriented approach encourages students to formulate questions, collect and analyse diverse sources, synthesise findings, and communicate outcomes through structured writing tasks (Wale & Bishaw, 2020; Theodosiadou, 2025). As learners engage in guided exploration, examining media texts, evaluating arguments, and reflecting on content, they build self-regulation, critical awareness, and rhetorical control.

Onoda and Uemura (2024) suggest that the depth of inquiry directly influences the quality of written expression, pushing learners to develop independent, informed perspectives. Brunner and Tally (1999) describe inquiry as a constructivist strategy, where students actively build knowledge by connecting new media content with prior understanding. When paired with media decoding (Scheibe & Rogow, 2012), such writing tasks deepen not just literacy, but also metacognitive insight.

In sum, media-integrated writing is not a peripheral activity, but a central pedagogical strategy. Through AI tools, collaborative platforms, inquiry models, and genre-diverse tasks, EFL learners can build writing skills that are both linguistically rigorous and socially relevant, thereby laying the foundation for an ethical pedagogy where students engage with media critically, responsibly, and reflectively.

Add here a link to the following sub-section

3.5 Ethical Pedagogy and Practice

Ethical pedagogy in the age of social media networks has become increasingly crucial as educators navigate the complex and dynamic landscape of digital communication and online interaction. According to Selwyn (2016), social media platforms present both opportunities and challenges for educators in contemporary society, which necessitates a critical examination of ethical dimensions of pedagogy in digital environments. Fostering ethical pedagogy in the context of social media networks requires educators to cultivate students' awareness of ethical considerations, privacy concerns, and digital citizenship issues associated with online communication and participation (Hobbs, 2017). The integration of social media into educational settings has underscored the importance of promoting responsible and respectful online behaviour among students and teachers.

The New London Group (1996) underlines that ML can be grounded in ethical pedagogy, where teaching extends beyond technical skills to include critical engagement with power, identity, and social justice. Their multiliteracies framework (the New London Group, 1996) promotes a pedagogy that is culturally responsive, inclusive, and transformative, encouraging learners to question how meaning is constructed and whose interests are served. Ethical pedagogy, in this view, involves creating learning environments, where students can reflect on the impact of media on themselves and others, recognise issues of representation and marginalisation, and take responsibility as both media consumers and producers. Teachers play a central role in modelling these values, guiding students not only to interpret texts critically but also to act with awareness, empathy, and integrity in the digital world (Ghosh et al., 2024).

According to Greenhow et al. (2019), ethical pedagogy underscores the development of digital citizenship competencies that empower individuals to

make informed and ethical choices in their digital interactions, promote digital well-being, and cultivate a culture of responsible and respectful communication in an online environment. Therefore, educators' proficiency in ethical pedagogy is essential for guiding students' ethical decision-making, fostering a culture of digital responsibility, and preparing learners for active and ethical participation in a networked society (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016).

The development of social media platforms has transformed the landscape of communication, information dissemination, and social interaction, necessitating a critical examination of the role and impact of media in education (Boyd, 2014). Jenkins (2016) argues that the emergence of a participatory culture, which is facilitated by social media platforms, has created new opportunities and challenges for educators, which requires adapting their pedagogical practices and engaging students effectively in a media-saturated world.

Furthermore, the integration of social networks and digital technologies into educational settings has necessitated a shift towards more collaborative and interactive pedagogical approaches that foster creativity, critical thinking, and digital literacy skills among students (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). The development of social media has catalysed the emergence of new pedagogical models that emphasise collaborative learning, student engagement, and digital literacy skills development (Almakaty, 2024). The collaborative and participatory nature of digital platforms has transformed educational environments by fostering student interaction, peer collaboration, and shared knowledge construction.

These dynamics are particularly evident in the integration of AI-supported learning tools and digital communities, which enhance learner engagement and promote deeper critical thinking (Jin et al., 2025). Educators are increasingly adopting digital and social media platforms not merely as content delivery tools but as interactive spaces for facilitating self-directed learning, enhancing digital citizenship, and nurturing reflective habits (Wang et al., 2025; Riparip & Caballes, 2024). As these platforms become more integrated into instructional design, teachers' ML competencies must expand to include not only operational fluency but also ethical reasoning, critical evaluation of sources, and responsible engagement in algorithmically shaped environments (Sarkar & Ghosh, 2024; McGrew & Byrne, 2020). This shift highlights the urgent need for teacher training models that prepare educators to navigate digital complexity and promote meaningful media engagement across diverse learning contexts (Hobbs et al., 2022; Nettlefold & Williams, 2021).

Teachers' proficiency in ML is essential for harnessing the educational potential of social media platforms and fostering students' digital literacy skills development (Hobbs, 2010). In addition to enhancing pedagogical practices and fostering teachers' ML competencies, the development of social media has also created new opportunities for professional development, collaboration, and

networking among educators (Rheingold, 2012). Boyd (2010) argues that social media platforms provide educators with access to numerous authentic media. Teachers' engagement with social media platforms and participation in online professional learning networks can significantly contribute to their ML development, pedagogical effectiveness, and overall professional satisfaction (Greenhow et al., 2019).

Educators' proficiency in ethical pedagogy is essential for raising students' awareness of privacy rights, data protection principles, and ethical considerations related to online privacy and security, enabling them to make informed and responsible choices in their digital interactions and safeguard their digital identities (Van Dijck, 2013). Boyd and Crawford (2012) argue that the use of social media platforms in educational settings raises important questions about data privacy, consent, and the ethical implications of data collection, sharing, and its usage. Cultivating ethical pedagogy requires educators to address the ethical implications of media use and empower students as responsible digital citizens, an endeavour influenced by a range of enabling and inhibiting factors that shape the implementation of ML in educational settings (Krishnamurthi & Rhode, 2018).

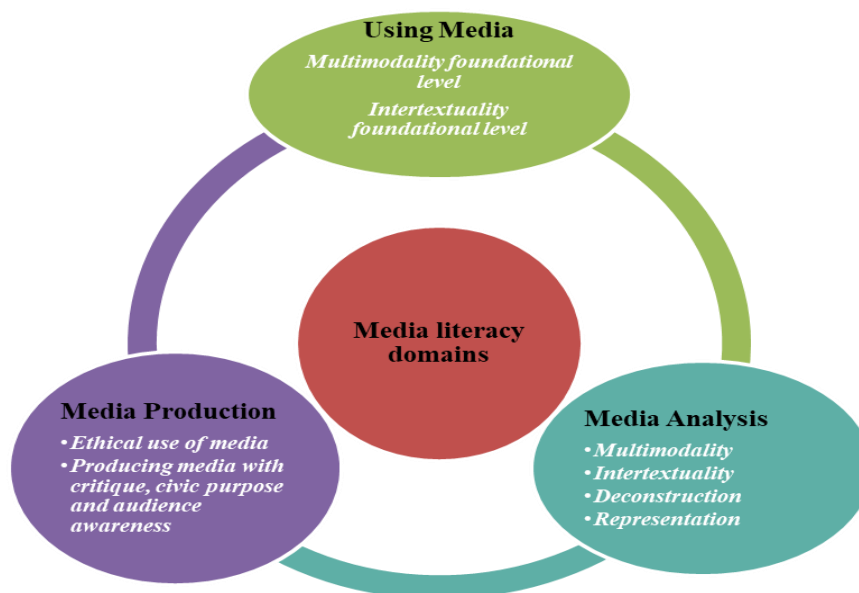


Figure 1- Interrelated Three Domains of Media Literacy

Building on the theoretical foundations established in the earlier sections, I developed an integrated conceptual framework to guide the interpretation of empirical data in this study. Table 2, titled Integrated Media Literacy Domains Framework, brings together key domains identified in the literature and maps them onto observed classroom practices. It offers a coherent structure for

assessing teachers' critical media literacy across three cognitive levels: using media, understanding media, and creating media. Serving as both an analytical tool and theoretical anchor, this framework underpins the findings and discussion chapters by enabling a multi-layered interpretation of the cognitive, ethical, and pedagogical aspects of EFL teachers' media literacy practices in Kazakhstan.

Table 2 - The Integrated Media Literacy Domains

The domains of practicing ML	Critical ML (Critical Media Literacy) Domains		Ethical Use of Media	Language Skills Development
Using media	Multimodality (M1-foundational level)	Being able to access and interpret meaning from different modes of media, including text, image, sound, layout as well as decode information rather than critiquing it.	Being able to introduce responsible media use, which includes an awareness of respectful online behaviour and safe consumption of media content.	Being able to read visual-verbal texts, including ads, posters, listen to digital media, including audio clips, news; speak through guided discussion.
	Intertextuality (I1-foundational level)	Being able to recognise recurring genres, themes, or formats across media, identify how similar events are framed differently and reflect on credibility and truthfulness of information.	Being able to encourage early digital citizenship, which includes an awareness of online representation and recognition of ownership of content.	Being able to access diverse texts across platforms, listen for framing cues, write simple comparisons, speak to share personal interpretations.
Media analysis	Multimodality (M2-analytical level)	Being able to analyse how visual, textual, and auditory elements of media interact, understand rhetorical effects and examine intentional media design.	Being able to encourage ethical awareness in spotting bias and recognising the impact of media design decisions.	Being able to read critically across modes of media, listen for rhetorical intent, speak in analysis-based tasks; write analytical responses,

				such as opinions, reviews, or arguments.
	Intertextuality (I2- analytical level)	Being able to critically evaluate ideological narratives, genre conventions, and symbolic patterns, analyse how the audience is positioned and investigate media intent.	Being able to foster ethical awareness of media, identify misinformation or bias, understand whose voices are heard or silenced.	Being able to read across genres; write comparisons/evaluations; listen and speak in debates and theme-based discussions.
	Deconstruction	Being able to break down media texts to reveal its persuasive techniques, structural bias, ownership and power dynamics.	Being able to support digital responsibility, question media power and influence, critically reflect on equity and access.	Being able to read persuasive texts, write critiques or counterarguments, listen and speak in group analysis and reflection tasks.
	Representation	Being able to investigate portrayals of individuals, groups, cultures, and values and identify stereotyping, exclusion, dominant narratives.	Being able to promote inclusion and integrity, challenge stereotypes and bias and advocate fairness and empathy.	Being able to read character portrayals and stereotypes, write reflections and narratives, speak in empathy-based dialogues and listen to diverse voices and opinions.
Media production	Creation	Being able to create media messages with thoughtful critique, a sense of civic purpose, and awareness of the audience, involving multimodal creation and	Being able to employ total ethical behaviour, credit original sources, promote data protection and digital safety, act responsibly and create	Being able to write scripts, captions, blog posts, speak in podcasts or videos, read and listen for content creation.

		meaningful public interaction.	participatory spaces.	
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3.6 Enabling and Inhibiting Factors for Promoting Teachers' Media Literacy

This section examines four key topics, including professional development, policy support, access to resources and digital tools, and school structure and culture, which can shape educators' capacity to embed ML into their teaching practices. Understanding these enabling and inhibiting conditions is essential for identifying both systemic gaps and opportunities for sustainable pedagogical innovation.

3.6.1 National Policy Framework

National-level support, particularly through coherent policies, professional development initiatives, and practical guidelines, plays a pivotal role in promoting teachers' ML (Ab Kadir, 2023; Liu & Liao, 2024). Among the most critical components of such support are policy frameworks that not only recognise ML as a core educational priority but also provide the structural and curricular conditions necessary for its integration into schools. Professional development efforts alone are unlikely to be effective without being embedded within a broader, policy-driven strategy.

A promising example of policy-informed practice is the Media Literacy Implementation Index (MLI), introduced by Hobbs et al. (2022) in the United States. The MLI provides a research-based framework for assessing how frequently and meaningfully ML learning activities are embedded across primary and secondary schools. Designed to be accessible to teachers, school leaders, librarians, and policymakers, the index helps bridge the gap between policy ambition and classroom reality by offering tangible indicators for school-wide implementation.

Despite the growing international recognition of ML, policy implementation remains uneven and often underdeveloped. In Morocco, for example, government efforts to introduce ML into secondary schools have been noted (Hattani, 2019). Research further underscores that policy frameworks must account for local and individual-level variables that influence how ML is implemented. For instance, teaching level, disciplinary background, and teachers' professional roles within their institutions can shape their ML beliefs and practices (Weninger et al., 2017). Such variation highlights the need for context-sensitive policy support that is adaptable to different school types and teacher profiles.

Where policy initiatives are too vague or fragmented, teachers are left to interpret and implement ML according to their own capacities and resources,

often without adequate training, time, or guidance (Meehan et al., 2015). As Manfra and Holmes (2020) note, more cohesive national strategies are needed to ensure that ML is meaningfully embedded in curriculum standards, instructional design, and assessment frameworks. Without this alignment, even the most motivated teachers may struggle to realise the goals of ML education.

Crucially, policy regulations must also address structural inequalities in access to technology, instructional materials, and professional learning (Eden et al., 2023; Khoyaled, 2023). Investment in infrastructure, digital tools, and curriculum development must accompany mandates for ML integration (Hobbs, 2017; Sayari, 2024). When governments commit to supporting schools in these ways, they enable educators to confidently incorporate ML into their teaching (Costa et al., 2017; Manfra & Holmes, 2020).

In sum, policy regulation is not only a supporting condition but a foundational one for systemic and sustainable media literacy integration. When linked with professional development, resource provision, and curricular coherence, national policy has the potential to empower both teachers and learners, transforming media literacy from a peripheral innovation into a central pillar of education for the media age.

3.6.2 Physical Infrastructure

Schools equipped with up-to-date hardware, educational software, and high-speed internet provide essential conditions for teachers to meaningfully integrate ML into their practice (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). Teachers working in technologically advanced environments tend to develop stronger ML competencies due to consistent exposure to digital tools and media resources (Hobbs, 2010). Moreover, institutions that actively prioritise ML as part of their instructional vision create a culture that supports the growth of teachers' critical digital capabilities (Vissenberg & d'Haenens, 2024a).

Teachers' attitudes towards technology and their confidence in using digital tools are also closely linked to their instructional behaviours (Agyei & Voogt, 2011). A positive orientation towards ICT, understood as the belief that digital technologies enhance learning and support teaching, can predict the extent to which teachers integrate ML into their classroom activities (Knezek & Christensen, 2016; Xu et al., 2024). These attitudes are further strengthened when teachers feel that technology not only improves student engagement but also simplifies their own workload (Lee & Ching, 2025; Petko, 2012). Feelings of ease and enjoyment when using ICT are particularly associated with more sustained and confident implementation of digital literacy practices (Abbasi et al., 2024; Reichenberg, 2024).

Conversely, in the 21st century, schools with outdated infrastructure or limited internet access present considerable obstacles to ML instruction. Such constraints hinder teachers' ability to model digital skills, restrict students'

exposure to meaningful media experiences, and widen the gap between policy aspirations and classroom realities (Zhao et al., 2005; Harvey et al., 2022). Beyond hardware, the report stresses the importance of ensuring that high-quality, pedagogically relevant content is available online (OECD, 2015, p. 123). The OECD (2025) report reinforces this concern by noting that innovation in media education cannot succeed without parallel investment in technology, infrastructure, and access to contextually appropriate content and training.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare these structural inequities. In 2020, school closures exposed major system weaknesses, including poor internet infrastructure, a lack of devices, and insufficient ICT skills among teachers, particularly in rural areas of Kazakhstan (Durrani et al., 2023). This digital divide led to significant disparities in learning outcomes, reinforcing pre-existing inequalities between urban and rural schools. While elite and public urban schools were relatively better prepared for remote instruction, students in peripheral or remote areas were left behind. Specific to English language learning, students reported an overreliance on non-interactive teaching methods, delays in teacher feedback, and reduced motivation during online instruction (Hajar & Manan, 2023). Globally, similar challenges were reported. The pandemic points out widespread gaps in digital readiness, including the lack of devices and poor internet connectivity, particularly in under-resourced education systems (Easterbrook et al., 2023; Haser et al., 2022). These lessons underscore the urgency of closing infrastructural gaps if media literacy is to become a realistic and equitable goal for all students.

As such, while digital tools and infrastructure do not guarantee successful ML integration on their own, their absence is a critical barrier. Equal access to devices, content, and connectivity is a non-negotiable condition for enabling teachers to implement media-rich pedagogies. The next section explores how school culture and structural factors further shape the success of media literacy in EFL classrooms.

3.6.3 Professional Development

Educators often struggle with lesson planning, selecting appropriate media content, and adapting materials to suit diverse learner needs, challenges that are amplified when professional development in ML is lacking (Manfra & Holmes, 2020; Harvey et al., 2022). According to OECD (2022), ML is still not treated as a central component of teacher training. It is frequently sidelined as a digital add-on rather than a core competency, leading to its underrepresentation in pre-service and in-service education.

Research shows that teachers who receive sustained and targeted training are significantly more likely to implement ML in their classrooms (McNelly & Harvey, 2021; Nettlefold & Williams, 2021). National-level professional development strategies, when paired with clear policies and curricular guidance,

can help close the implementation gap. One example is the ML framework developed by Hobbs et al. (2022), which offers schools and policymakers a practical tool for evaluating and improving ML integration across educational settings.

Importantly, teacher education should move beyond familiarising teachers with digital tools. Instead, professional development must also foster broader competencies such as analysing bias, evaluating credibility, and supporting students in media creation (Koltay, 2011; Schmeichel et al., 2018). Manfra and Holmes (2020) recommend interdisciplinary approaches that include exploring misinformation, media ethics, and journalism as part of an action plan for pre-service education.

The barriers persist even when teachers express a strong interest in using media critically and creatively. For instance, Schmeichel et al. (2018) found that despite ongoing collaborative planning, many pre-service teachers still lacked the confidence to implement ML effectively. Thereby, integrating ML into teacher education, especially when combined with reflective and culturally responsive approaches, can help build teachers' ML competence (Felini, 2014; Meehan et al., 2015; Nagel et al., 2023). ML also offers a valuable pathway for exploring themes of social justice, diversity, and digital citizenship (Joanou, 2017; Nagel et al., 2023). However, without strong mentorship or clear curricular expectations, even highly motivated teachers may find it difficult to translate ML knowledge into practice (Stoddard, 2014; Damico et al., 2018).

Additionally, professional development is most impactful when supported by school leadership and aligned with collaborative efforts involving media professionals, parents, and peers (Zhang et al., 2014). Professional development is both a foundational support and a strategic lever for embedding media literacy into EFL classrooms. When well-designed and nationally supported, it strengthens teachers' digital pedagogical skills, empowers critical classroom practices, and helps overcome the systemic barriers that often hinder ML implementation. The following section turns to the role of policy regulation in shaping the institutional conditions for ML in education.

3.6.4 School Culture and Structure

The culture and organisational structure of a school significantly influence the extent to which ML can be effectively implemented. Organisational structure, defined by the school's hierarchy, administrative processes, and decision-making frameworks, shapes not only what is prioritised institutionally, but also the degree of autonomy afforded to teachers. In highly centralised or bureaucratic environments, teachers may have limited scope to exercise creativity or introduce critical, media-rich pedagogies (Sergiovanni, 2005). The lack of institutional support, compounded by the absence of core standards for ML, can further inhibit meaningful integration.

Evidence from classroom-based studies shows that even when teachers are trained well, their ability to apply ML is often constrained by unsupportive school environments. Share et al. (2019) report that teachers who completed critical ML courses still faced barriers such as insufficient leadership support and difficulty embedding ML in the curriculum. Similarly, Baker et al. (2021) found that when ML is implemented inconsistently, on a classroom-by-classroom basis rather than through coordinated, school-wide initiatives, its impact is diminished. These findings point to the need for a more systemic and unified approach to ML at the institutional level.

In contrast, schools characterised by decentralised and flexible structures are better positioned to support innovation. Such structures tend to empower teachers, offering them both the autonomy and collegial support needed to experiment with new teaching approaches and adapt to the evolving digital landscape (Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2009). This is reflected in the development of ML curricula in countries like Australia and Canada, where grassroots efforts by individual teachers and school networks laid the foundation for national-level policy adoption (Considine, 2018).

In the context of Kazakhstan, the integration of ML into schools requires careful consideration of prevailing educational traditions. Yeleussiz and Qanay (2025) point out that the legacy of authoritarian, fear-based pedagogies inherited from the Soviet system continues to influence classroom dynamics. A cultural shift towards student-centred, value-driven, and collaborative approaches is needed to foster critical thinking and ML competencies (Dadakhonov, 2024; Nogaibayeva et al., 2024). Such transformation requires not only policy change but also sustained professional development and ongoing evaluation to ensure implementation is meaningful (Kim, 2018).

School culture, beyond formal policies and structures, can also play a vital role in promoting or impeding ML. Culture is reflected in the informal, everyday practices of schools: the way teachers communicate, share ideas, celebrate achievements, and engage in professional dialogue (Sergiovanni, 1987). As Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) suggest, culture sets the norms for thinking and teaching and deeply influences pedagogical change. However, transforming entrenched cultural patterns requires strong leadership, shared values, and an intentional effort to reorient educational priorities (Fullan, 1982; Torrington et al., 1989; Sarason, 1985).

The artificial approaches, when teachers feel compelled to create technology-laden demonstration lessons, which may not reflect authentic practices, have been widely noted in educational research. Hargreaves (2000) refers to this phenomenon as performative teaching, stressing how external pressures may drive teachers to design lessons that impress rather than deeply engage learners. Ball (2003) discusses similar dynamics in the context of audit cultures, where teachers' professional identities are shaped by accountability measures and the need to demonstrate compliance with innovation agendas.

Lingard (2010) extends this critique by arguing that such exhibitionism can lead to surface-level integration of digital tools, overshadowing sustained pedagogical development and critical literacy practices. This aligns with Apple's (2004) caution that performative cultures often prioritize spectacle over substance, undermining teachers' capacity to foster genuine critical thinking in students. In the context of ML, this exhibition effect can manifest in demonstration lessons that pack multiple ICT tools into a single session, overshadowing opportunities for reflective engagement with media messages and meaning making (Lingard, 2010; Apple, 2004). This dynamic can be especially evident in rural schools, where teachers report preparing demonstrative lessons that showcased every available digital resource, ranging from interactive whiteboards to mobile applications, while their everyday instruction can remain more restrained and dialogue-oriented (Yelessiz & Qanay, 2025). Such practices accentuate the tension between performative pressures and the authentic, iterative development of critical ML in diverse educational settings.

Leadership is key in cultivating a school culture for teachers' ML. Hobbs (2010) underlines the importance of fostering peer collaboration, interdisciplinary connections, and networking opportunities within and beyond the school. When supported by visionary leaders, teachers are more likely to experiment with critical and creative approaches to media, thereby strengthening their ML competencies (Lai & Pratt, 2004). School leaders who embrace distributed leadership and nurture a collective vision for digital literacy can help embed ML within institutional routines and priorities (Zhang et al., 2014; Zhu, 2020). School culture and structure are deeply interlinked and collectively shape the potential for ML to become an embedded part of teaching practice (Nadeem, 2024). Without institutional coherence, cultural openness, and supportive leadership, even the most well-intentioned ML initiatives risk remaining isolated or superficial. Building a school environment that values critical inquiry, collaboration, and professional agency is essential for fostering a generation of educators and learners, who are truly media literate (Idayani et al., 2022).

In conclusion, this final section has explored the contextual factors that either support or constrain the integration of ML in EFL classrooms. By examining the roles of professional development, policy regulation, access to digital tools, and school culture and structure, the discussion has underlined how these interrelated conditions shape teachers' capacity to implement ML meaningfully. Understanding these enablers and barriers provides critical insight into the broader landscape in which EFL teachers operate. The chapter now turns to a summary of the key conceptual insights that underpin this study.

3.6 Conceptual Framework

Based on the preceding discussion, I present the conceptual framework of my study in Figure 1 below. This framework synthesises the key concepts derived from theoretical foundations, including critical ML (Kellner & Share, 2007), multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), and teacher development literature and integrates them with the empirical focus of this research on EFL teachers in Kazakhstan. It reflects both conceptual categories from the literature and analytical insights derived from the research context.

The EFL Teachers' ML Framework of this study is structured around three interdependent dimensions: Teachers' Perceptions of ML, Teachers' Practices, Ethical Pedagogy and Enabling and Inhibiting Factors for ML. Together, these dimensions illustrate the dynamic interplay of personal, pedagogical, and systemic factors that can shape the integration of ML in EFL classrooms.

The first dimension, Teachers' Perceptions of ML, encompasses teachers' self-efficacy and their attitudes towards ML. These perceptions exert a direct influence on teachers' ability and willingness to engage with ML in their practice, shaping how confidently they design and deliver lessons that incorporate media analysis and production. In turn, these perceptions are themselves shaped by teachers' prior experiences, professional backgrounds, and exposure to ML concepts.

Building on these perceptions, the second dimension, Teachers' Practices, includes Critical Media Literacy Practice, Integration of ML into Practice, Applying Media Literacy Practice in Language Teaching, and Ethical Pedagogy Practice. These elements collectively capture the ways in which teachers enact ML in their classrooms, translating their beliefs and knowledge into tangible teaching strategies. Teachers' Practices are directly influenced by their perceptions of ML as well as enabling or inhibiting conditions present within their school contexts. Ethical pedagogy is an essential element that underpins all domains of media literacy, as it guides responsible and respectful engagement with media, encourages critical awareness of issues such as safety, privacy, authorship and social impact, and ensures that analytical, productive and interpretive practices are grounded in civic responsibility.

The third dimension, Enabling and Inhibiting Factors for ML, comprises Policy Support, Physical Infrastructure and Professional Development, and School Culture and Structure. These factors establish the broader institutional and systemic environment within which teachers' perceptions and practices are situated. They can significantly enable or impede the effective implementation of ML by either supporting or restricting access to resources, training, and collaborative opportunities.

Overall, the framework demonstrates that EFL teachers' perceptions, practices, and the enabling conditions within their schools are mutually

influential. Teachers' perceptions shape their practices, and their experiences in the classroom can, in turn, reinforce or challenge their beliefs. Meanwhile, systemic factors exert influence over both teachers' beliefs and their practices, underscoring the importance of addressing policy, infrastructure, and school culture alongside teacher education in order to foster robust and critical media literacy integration in EFL contexts.

This framework not only guides the interpretation of empirical findings but also serves as an organising structure for the data analysis presented in subsequent chapters. It offers a contribution to the field by mapping out how ML can be conceptualised and practised within English language education, particularly in under-explored, secondary education settings in Kazakhstan.

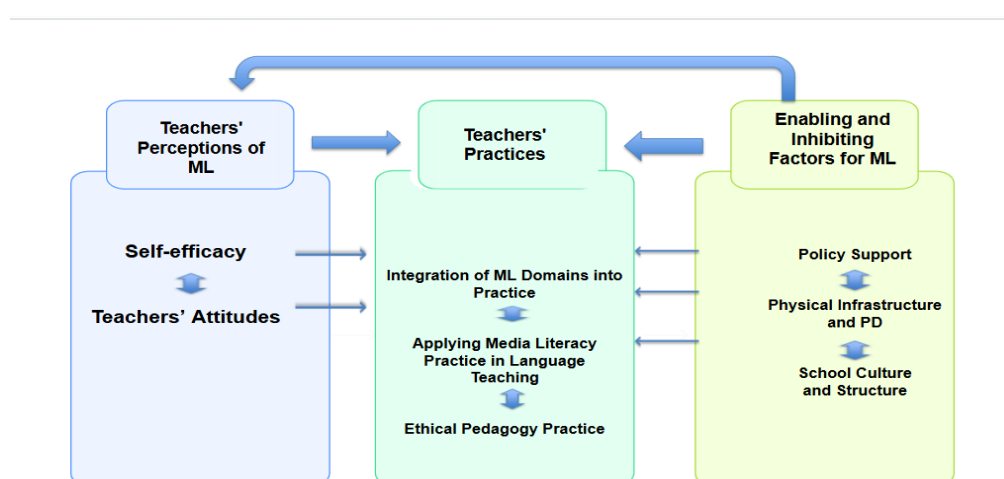


Figure 2 - Conceptual Framework of the EFL Teacher's Media Literacy

The framework illustrates the interrelationship between teachers' perceptions of ML, their enacted practices, and the contextual factors that support or constrain implementation. Teachers' practices reflect both critical engagement with media and integration into language skills. The rectangular frame enclosing the model is not intended to suggest fixed institutional boundaries, but rather to symbolise the integrated and interdependent nature of the components that constitute EFL teachers' media literacy. It reflects the conceptual unity of the study, where perceptions, instructional practices, and contextual factors are mutually influential and situated within the overarching construct under investigation.

3.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has established the conceptual foundations for exploring EFL teachers' ML, beginning with a review of definitions and theoretical

perspectives. It clarified the distinction between ML and digital literacy, which underline passing critical engagement with media texts, production skills, and an understanding of how media shapes knowledge and society. The discussion also underscored the increasing importance of ML in educational contexts, particularly in fostering critical thinking and informed digital citizenship among learners.

The second section examined EFL teachers' perceptions of ML across four key dimensions: their understanding of what ML entails, the perceived relevance of ML to language learning, their confidence in teaching it (self-efficacy), and their attitudes towards using both digital and traditional media. This discussion was informed by Ajzen's (2020) Theory of Planned Behaviour and Bandura's (1995) Self-Efficacy Theory, which together provide a theoretical lens for understanding how teachers' beliefs, motivations, and perceptions of control influence their classroom practices. Teachers' levels of media engagement and personal dispositions were also explored, highlighting how these internal and contextual factors shape the extent to which ML is integrated into their pedagogical approach.

The chapter then explored teachers' practices of ML through two interrelated strands. First, teachers' critical media literacy skills were discussed in detail, drawing on five analytical domains: deconstruction, representation, intertextuality, multimodality, and creation. Second, their instructional practices were analysed, including how they use, understand, and communicate with media in the classroom. Particular attention was given to how ML is integrated into the development of core English language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

The following section addressed the broader enabling and inhibiting conditions that shape ML implementation in schools. Four core factors were identified: professional development, policy regulations, access to digital infrastructure and tools, and the prevailing culture and structure of schools. These contextual elements were shown to either support or constrain teachers' capacity to engage with ML in meaningful and sustained ways.

Bringing these elements together, the final section of the chapter presented the conceptual framework of the study. This framework maps the dynamic relationships between teachers' perceptions, their instructional practices, and the structural conditions within which they operate. It serves both as a theoretical lens and an analytical tool for interpreting the empirical data. The next chapter outlines the methodological design of the study, detailing the research approach, data collection methods, and analytical strategies used to investigate how EFL teachers understand and enact media literacy in practice.

Chapter 4

Research Design

In this chapter I explain research methodology. First, I discuss the study's philosophical underpinnings, including its ontology and epistemology. Second, I explain research methodology, which is a multiple case-study with teachers as a unit of study. Third, I provide the structural basis for examining practices across multiple school sites. Fourth, I outline how research participants and schools were identified and explain the process of selecting cases, EFL teachers across diverse school settings.

A detailed account is then provided of the data collection methods, which were used to generate a rich and layered dataset. These include (1) open-ended questionnaires, (2) interviews with 6 EFL teachers, school principals, and the EFL departments, (3) focus group discussions, (4) classroom observations, (5) research journaling, and (6) document analysis. The subsequent section explains the data analysis procedures, with attention to thematic coding and interpretive strategies.

The chapter then turns to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the management of power dynamics during the fieldwork. This is followed by a discussion of how research quality was ensured through transparency, reflexivity, and careful data management. The chapter concludes by addressing the study's limitations and summarising the key components of the research design.

I now begin with the philosophical stance of this study.

4.1. Philosophical Underpinnings

This study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, which seeks to understand the subjective meanings and experiences of participants within their social and cultural contexts and focuses on the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and participants (Cohen et al., 2018). The interpretivist paradigm can be defined as understanding and interpreting social and human through socially situated and culturally derived interpretations of social lifeworld (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022; Crotty, 2003, p. 67). Therefore, subjective meanings are a key concern of interpretive research since it aims to identify an individual's interpretation and perception of social processes (Schwandt, 1994). Interpretation is inherent in social research, wherein researcher's goal is not only to comprehend social reality but become part of research object and methods (Chowdhury, 2014).

Thereby, the interpretivist research aims to investigate people's perspectives, communicate their meanings, and generate new ideas (Bryman, 2008; Grix, 2004). In contrast to positivism, interpretivism concentrates on knowledge and meaning as an act of interpretation since there is no objective

knowledge that exists outside human thought and reasoning (Schwandt, 1994). Thereby, interpretivist research examines how subjective interpretations can influence societal characteristics by replacing traditional positivist criteria with concepts, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Interpretivism asserts that reality is subjective and that research objects are unable to be seen from the outside (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). As such, interpretivism considers the social aspect of reconstructed reality, which is different from positivism. Interpretivists believe that reality is constructed from social interactions rather than a pre-existing reality. Each person interprets social realities in their own way through interactions with others (Crotty, 1998). Because of this, interpretivists use the theory of *multiple realities*, which suggests that language can change and shape reality instead of just labelling things with the goal of reporting on them (Frowe, 2001, p. 185). Creswell (2007) contends that the words people use are proof of many different realities, and that language and other parts of the world interact to create reality.

Hermeneutical and dialectical research techniques are employed by interpretivists to reach consensus and explain individual constructions (Heracleous, 2004). Both techniques favour qualitative research approaches that concentrate on individuals, as quantitative approaches can be inadequate for comprehending social phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As a qualitative researcher, I contend that human behaviour conforms to socially constructed norms and that reality is socially constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I, therefore, engage with subjective elements of the social phenomena that are being discussed, wherein respondents' perceived reality might be accessed through subjective conversations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

As such, interpretivists maintain that the world does not exist independently of our perception of it and that people's interpretations and involvement can influence the phenomena they observe (Grix, 2004, p. 83). Individual or group perceptions of social phenomena can result in a variety of concepts, theories, approaches, and methods depending on how the researcher interprets them (Bryman 2008; Cohen et al., 2000; Ernest, 1994). By analysing how people interact with their historical and cultural surroundings, interpretivism seeks to understand events from the perspective of an individual (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). This allows me to use a qualitative multiple case-study methodology and explore research participants' subjectivist worldview.

Multiple cases are a part of the case study approach, from which a single set of cross-case conclusions can be derived (Yin, 2011). By embracing such an approach, this study acknowledges the subjective nature of teachers' perceptions of ML, recognizing the importance of exploring their lived experiences and interpretations. The relativist ontology inherent in interpretivism aligns with the belief that reality is context-dependent and shaped by individual perspectives, which justifies my choice of a multiple case study

design to capture the diverse contexts and perspectives of EFL teachers in Kazakhstan.

The subjectivist epistemology of interpretivism emphasises the role of a researcher in constructing knowledge through interactions with participants and interpretations of their experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Thus, by adopting a case study methodology within an interpretivist framework, this study aims to uncover the nuanced understandings and experiences of the EFL teachers in relation to ML in schools in Kazakhstan. It also acknowledges the subjective nature of their perceptions and provides valuable insights on factors that may influence their practices.

I now explain case study methodology in detail.

4.2. The Case Study Methodology

Case study is a research methodology that entails a comprehensive examination of a social phenomenon through the utilisation of diverse data sources (Yin, 2011). A ‘case’ might relate to a person, an occasion, a gathering of people, a group, an organisation, or an establishment (Jupp, 2006). Besides, it represents human beings as the primary research source, which can be of exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive nature. Case study is focused on the detailed study, description, and interpretation of a ‘case’ or ‘situation’ as well as the solution of practical problems (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Therein, case study approach is preferable when: (a) there is very little data and/or (b) researcher aims to get meaningful data on research topic (Mallick & Verma, 2005).

Case study facilitates the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of numerous phenomena and permits the researcher to investigate persons or organisations, simple to sophisticated interventions, relationships, communities, or programmes (Yin, 2003). Due to its flexibility and rigour, this approach is useful in developing theories, assessing programmes, and creating interventions (Baxter & Jack, 2015). According to Yin (2003) a case study design should be taken into consideration when: (a) study aims to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions; (b) it is impossible to control the behaviour of study participants; (c) contextual conditions are important to understand the phenomenon being studied; or (d) boundaries between the phenomenon and research setting are unclear.

Case study is well suited for an in-depth study of a phenomenon within its existing context (Yin, 2011). Problem orientation and a small-scale approach are the main characteristics of a case study approach (Merriam, 1988). The case itself is important, as it can illuminate social components of the phenomenon under consideration. Due to the specificity of its focus, case study is believed to be a good method for solving practical tasks. The choice of a case is determined by the purpose of study and the interests of a researcher (Merriam, 1985). In this study, I seek to achieve a practical goal to build an understanding of teachers’

perceptions and practices in three diverse school settings in Kazakhstan. Thereby, this study is driven by a practical aim to develop a situated understanding of how the EFL teachers interpret and implement ML within their everyday school settings. The focus is not on theory-building for its own sake, but on generating insights that can inform practice, particularly in contexts marked by limited policy guidance and structural inequality.

A multiple case study approach is a qualitative research design that involves in-depth exploration of multiple cases or instances within a particular context to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Yin, 2011). In the context of this study, employing a multiple case study methodology is particularly suitable due to its ability to provide rich, contextualised insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of EFL teachers' educational settings and perceptions of ML. The strength of such an approach, as Yin (2011) puts it, is that multiple case studies enable researchers to analyse similarities and differences across cases, allowing for the identification of patterns, themes, and variations within the data. Furthermore, the flexibility inherent in this approach allows for the exploration of various perspectives and contexts, which align well with the interpretivist philosophical stance adopted in this study.

A multiple case study is particularly appropriate for this inquiry, as it supports both in-depth, within-case analysis and cross-case comparison, facilitating the identification of shared themes and context-specific divergences (Stake, 2013; Yin, 2011). The approach reflects an interpretive research orientation, which foregrounds meaning-making, context, and the lived experiences of participants as central to understanding complex educational phenomena (Schwandt, 1994). As such, I am going to draw results from single cases of EFL teachers and then conduct a cross-case analysis to compare each case.

To this end, the study adopts an exploratory multiple case study design, wherein *the unit of study are* six EFL teachers, who are working in three contrasting school settings in Kazakhstan: urban, regional, and rural. Each teacher is treated as a bounded case, making the individual the primary unit of analysis, while the school context serves as an embedded factor influencing pedagogical choices and professional agency, which helps to triangulate data. This design also enables a detailed exploration of how institutional conditions, curriculum policy, and local resources intersect with teachers' values and strategies in enacting ML. As such, this study can be classified as *a teacher-based multiple case study* (Yin, 2011). Yin (2003) defines this design as one that:

[...] gives the researcher the opportunity to investigate variations both within and between cases. The intention is to repeat results in other cases. Carefully selecting cases is essential since comparisons will be made, enabling the researcher to forecast divergent outcomes based on a theory" (pp. 20–21).

The logic of using multiple and purposefully selected cases is not to produce generalisable findings, but to develop a richer and more nuanced understanding of a phenomenon, in this case, how teachers in different institutional settings engage with ML. The cross-case phase of the analysis involved systematically refining and reorganising the thematic patterns identified in the individual case studies and aligning them more explicitly with the overarching research questions (Stake, 2013). This step enabled the study to move beyond descriptive accounts and toward interpretive synthesis.

Cross-case analysis, as suggested by Merriam (2009), supports the abstraction of common themes and the identification of context-specific divergences, thus enhancing the explanatory power of qualitative findings. Interpretation in this study is understood not simply as identifying similarities, but as a deeper analytic act that involves constructing meaning from the data, explaining relationships, surfacing pedagogical tensions, and linking teacher experience to wider educational structures and discourses (Patton, 2002, p. 480). Through this lens, the research interrogates how EFL teachers negotiate the pedagogical and institutional dimensions of ML. By bringing the cases into conversation with one another, the study offers insight into how global discourses on ML are taken up, reinterpreted, or resisted within Kazakhstan's diverse school contexts.

In designing my study on exploring EFL teachers' ML in Kazakhstan, I adopted Yin's (2003) case study design framework, which unfolds through a series of interconnected stages such as: (1) planning; (2) designing; (3) preparing; (4) collecting; (5) analysing, and (6) sharing. I followed each of these stages to conduct my study.

Beginning with *the planning stage*, I outlined the overarching goals and research questions. Alongside, I identified schools from three different strata, namely: village (hereinafter, *Auyl* school), city (hereinafter, *Qala* school), and regional centre schools (hereinafter, *Oblys* school). Moreover, I established criteria for selecting six EFL teachers, two from each school type.

During the *design stage*, I craft a detailed plan for executing multiple case studies, encompassing procedures for data collection and analysis. I designed data collection methods, including interviews, observations, focus groups, questionnaire, reflective journal and document analysis. This ensured the depth of research data as well as the trustworthiness of study findings.

In the *preparation stage*, I finalised logistical arrangements and obtained necessary permissions, including ethical approval and informed consent from participants. The research instruments such as interviews were piloted prior to the full-scale data collection. The results of the piloting stage are discussed in the sub-sections below.

Once logistical matters were addressed, I proceeded to *the data collection stage*, where I systematically collected data in accordance with the research

plan. Upon completion of the data collection stage, I moved on to the *data analysis stage*. Here, I engaged in coding, categorising, and interpreting the gathered data to identify patterns, themes, and insights. This iterative process of analysis involved revisiting the data to uncover deeper understandings and connections.

Finally, the *sharing stage* included writing up the thesis and disseminating my findings to the academic community and relevant stakeholders. My research findings were presented at the European Conference on Educational Research in Cyprus in 2024 and in Belgrade in 2025 (Yeleussiz & Qanay, 2024) as well as the Society for Central Eurasian Studies (CESS) conference in Almaty in 2024 (Yeleussiz, 2024).

Throughout this sequential process, I recognised the iterative nature of case study research. I revisited earlier stages, refined my approach, and adjusted my focus based on emergent insights and findings, thereby fostering a flexible and adaptive research trajectory. In sum, I selected the multiple case study design to explore EFL teachers' ML, their existing perceptions, and practices in relation to ML within their educational settings and national policies. I now explain how research participants were selected.

4.3 Research Participants

This section lays out the rationale behind my choices of selecting research sites and research participants. First, I explain the rationale behind selecting the schools. Second, I explicate how the six case teachers were selected and provide their characteristics.

4.3.1 Identifying schools

The selection of participants for qualitative research is influenced by the aim of the study, as it seeks meaning instead of numbers and does not imply generalisations of findings (Cohen et al., 2000; Miles et al., 2014). I purposefully selected a research site (cite source on purposeful sampling) in the southern part of Kazakhstan, which is densely populated and located outside well-developed cities such as Astana and Almaty (Patton, 2002).

Three schools were selected to reflect different layers of regional variations in Kazakhstan, including rural, city, and regional schools. The decision to sample both rural and urban schools within a less central region is supported by findings from MediaNet (2022), which reveal significant disparities in ML skills among students, particularly between Kazakh- and Russian-speaking contexts and between rural and urban settings. The sampling strategy, therefore, seeks to capture these contrasts to examine how EFL teachers navigate MIL integration within diverse educational environments,

aligning with the study's concern for contextual equity in MIL education (Pereira & Moura, 2022; Riparip & Caballes, 2024).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I have been serving as a schoolteacher and teacher trainer for the last decade. Thereby, one of three schools was my own school, where I have been serving as English teacher for the last 5 years. Despite the potential personal biases and ethical concerns, I opted to conduct research in my own school due to the accessibility and time contained issues. Having said that, I meticulously followed ethical requirements, which I explain in the subsequent subsections.

By selecting three diverse school settings, I aimed to ensure diversity and representativeness. First, I prioritised geographical diversity to capture variations in ML practices across different schools. Second, I considered the size of schools and student populations. By choosing institutions with diverse enrolment capacities, I was able to explore how teachers' ML experiences varied in different scales and with different resource allocations. Third, I considered the reputation and recognition of schools within their respective communities. Consequently, all three schools were highly regarded for their dedication to innovative educational techniques and for their standing in fostering gifted education programmes.

4.3.2 Identifying EFL Teachers

I utilised purposeful sampling to select research participants (Flick, 2011). The rationale behind purposeful sampling lies in 'information-rich cases', which can provide greater depth and detail to a research phenomenon (Patton, 1990). As Teddlie and Yu (2007) suggest, purposeful sampling provides a greater depth for the study to achieve representativeness, enable comparisons, focus on distinctive cases, and generate theory through gradual gathering of data from various sources.

The purposeful sampling allowed a deliberate selection of participants, who can provide rich and diverse insights relevant to research topics (Palinkas et al., 2015). The importance of purposeful sampling lies in its ability to ensure that research participants possess relevant knowledge and experiences related to research topics.

By selecting EFL teachers from different types of schools, I aimed to gather comprehensive data that reflect diverse realities of ML in education across different educational settings in Kazakhstan. Having said that, the EFL teachers' willingness and voluntary participation was the key criterion, which helped to create rapport with teachers and ensure their genuine involvement in the study (Miles et al., 2014).

As such, 32 teachers from three EFL departments were purposefully selected based on the rationale of a voluntary participation. After focus groups with the EFL department-based teachers, I selected 6 EFL case-teachers based

on their willingness to participate in this study. Each school is represented by two EFL teachers to ensure that schools are evenly represented in the study. Such an approach helped me explore several cases with comparable and contrasting conditions (Cohen et al., 2017). Thereby, six EFL case-teachers' characteristics are outlined in the Table 3 below.

Table 3 - The case-teachers' characteristics

	<i>Professional category</i>	<i>Overall years of teaching experience</i>	<i>Years of working at this school</i>
Aidana	Teacher-expert	21	17
Sabina	Teacher	2	2
Maral	Teacher-moderator	3	3
Saniya	Teacher-expert	12	12
Zhanna	Teacher-moderator	4	4
Begin	Teacher-researcher	12	12

The study of six EFL teachers' cases provides a comparative analysis as in 'multiple case study' design (Stake, 2013). Each of six cases reveals a variety of situations and behaviours with commonalities and differences. I selected EFL teachers from each school type to capture a range of perspectives on ML education in varied educational contexts. Particularly, EFL teachers can have access to a wide range of instructional materials to enhance language learning goals (Hobbs, 2018). Overall, selecting EFL teachers offered a strategic approach to understanding the intersection of language education and critical ML within different educational contexts.

Beyond EFL teachers, the data collection involved key stakeholders' voices on ML, which helped triangulate data (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Stake, 2013). The key stakeholders included 3 school principals and 32 teachers from EFL departments. The data gathered from key stakeholders sought to explore new ideas, highlight problems, raise significant concerns, and most importantly triangulate data. By focusing on a variety of data sources, I aimed to overcome a 'failure to connect with other realities and other voices of range [...]' (Hargreaves as cited in Fullan, 1994, p. 7).

Through this multi-faceted approach, my study aimed to provide insights into the ML practices of EFL teachers across diverse school environments in Kazakhstan. By examining how teachers navigate ML in different contexts, I aimed to contribute to a better understanding of effective strategies for promoting teachers' ML in EFL classrooms.

4.5 Data Collection Methods

I adopted a multi-layered approach to the data collection process, which included: (1) focus groups; (2) classroom observations; (3) semi-structured interviews; and (4) document analysis. The combination of these instruments allowed data triangulation and ensured the reliability of data (Yin, 2009). Research questions relating to ML development, ethics of pedagogy, and school environment are explored in focus groups and observations of interactions among EFL teachers and school administration. Data collection activities were grouped thematically rather than sequentially, as many occurred concurrently and interactively. As shown in Table 4, school-level instruments provided contextual framing for the focal teacher cases, while the case – teacher focused methods enabled deeper exploration of individual practice and interpretation.

Table 4 - Data collection methods

Category	Method	Participants	Purpose
Preparatory	Pilot interviews	15 non-participant EFL teachers	Refine and validate data collection tools
School-Level	Interviews with school principals	3 school principals	Understand institutional context and leadership perspectives
	Focus groups with EFL department teachers	32 teachers Oblys school -11 teachers Qala school -12 teachers Auyl school -9 teachers	Understand EFL teachers' perspectives
	Document analysis (subject programmes, lesson plans, artefacts)	School-level materials	Contextualise instructional practices and align with curricular goals
Teacher-Focused	Semi-structured interviews with focal teachers	6 EFL teachers	Explore evolving perceptions and classroom decision-making
	Classroom observations	6 EFL teachers	Observe enactment of media literacy in context
	Reflective teacher diaries	6 EFL teachers	Track critical reflections linked to observed and experienced lessons

Ongoing	Researcher journal	Researcher	Maintain reflexive insights throughout the research process
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Below I describe each category of data collection in detail.

4.5.1 Piloting

Before commencing the main phase of this doctoral study, I undertook a series of related research projects, resulting in six peer-reviewed publications (Yeleussiz, 2024a; Yeleussiz & Tankibayeva, 2024; Yeleussiz, 2024b; Yeleussiz, 2024c; Yeleussiz et al., 2025; Yeleussiz & Qanay, 2025). These preliminary studies played a crucial role in refining the research focus, piloting data collection instruments, and strengthening the methodological foundation of the thesis. Each publication contributed to a different aspect of the study design.

Yeleussiz & Tankibayeva (2024) and Yeleussiz (2024b) contributed to the validation of the research instruments by piloting initial items, refining their wording, and enhancing clarity and reliability. Yeleussiz (2024c) helped validate the semi-structured interview and focus group protocols. This study tested early versions of the interview questions, ensuring they captured nuanced insights into teachers' perceptions and media-related practices. Yeleussiz et al. (2025) provided a broader perspective by analysing the views of various educational stakeholders regarding ML. The practical implementation of ML's effective and ineffective teacher instructions were observed and categorized during this research. The findings helped shape the themes and categories used for coding and interpreting the qualitative data. Yeleussiz & Qanay (2025) investigated the policy landscape surrounding ML in Kazakhstan. This research illuminated key national drivers and contextual gaps, framing the background for interpreting the main study's results. Yeleussiz (2024a) explored ML engagement in educational contexts and led to the decision to focus specifically on EFL teachers.

The above research revealed that EFL teachers demonstrated enthusiasm toward ML initiatives, positioning them as ideal participants for the main study. This was one of the targeted pilot studies, which involved 15 EFL teachers from rural, urban, and regional schools in Kazakhstan. During this phase, I piloted individual interviews and focus groups protocols as well as questionnaire items to ensure their clarity, contextual relevance, and cultural sensitivity (Creswell, 2013). The piloting process also allowed me to identify potential ambiguities, assess the practicality of the data collection methods, and adjust my approach where necessary (Bryman, 2016; Johnson & Christensen, 2024).

Establishing rapport with participants during the pilot stage proved invaluable, which offered early insights into the specific cultural and

educational environments. These experiences ultimately strengthened the methodological rigour and trustworthiness of this study.

The research outcomes obtained during the pilot stage were published as independent papers, reinforcing the empirical grounding of this thesis. Collectively, these earlier investigations confirmed the relevance of focusing on EFL teachers' engagement with ML and ensured that the main study began with a solid, validated, and contextually attuned foundation.

4.5.2 Interviews

Case study research design involves interviews, which usually takes place in the form of a dialogue between researcher and research participants (Stake, 2013). Interviews allow researchers to pre-designed questions, ensure conversational nature, probe questions, clarify and refine data throughout the data collection process (Gillham, 2000). The interview is a private meeting, which is why it is vital to establish mutual understanding and trust from the beginning (Bell, 2005; Cohen et al., 2017).

Semi - structured interviews are defined as a conversation with a structure and a purpose which is held to generate knowledge and understanding. It is interpersonal conversation between 'partners of mutual interest' that facilitate deep understanding about participants' reality (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 3;123). Unlike surveys or archival data, interviews allow researchers to explore the intricacies of individual experiences, perspectives, and decision-making processes within the specific context of the case study (Swanborn, 2010). This depth of data facilitates a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and enables researchers to uncover nuanced insights that might not be captured through other methods (Schultze & Avital, 2011).

In case study research, interviews play a crucial role in providing researchers with in-depth, contextualised data about the phenomenon under investigation (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). By engaging in open-ended conversations with participants, I uncovered intricate details and understood the complexities of the phenomenon under investigation (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Thereby, in-depth interviews facilitated a comprehensive exploration of each case and, hence, reached a deeper understanding of the research topic (Bryman, 2016).

4.5.3 Interviews with School Principals

It is believed that school principals play a key role in creating a supportive school culture and structure (McLaughlin & Ayubayeva, 2015; Qanay & Frost, 2020). Thereby, school principals' awareness of wider contextual challenges was key to understanding school environment and resources provided for promoting ML (Johnson & Christensen, 2024). It was

important for me to interview school principals to build understanding about their school conditions as well as practices in relation to ML.

Particularly, interviews with school principals aimed to identify the existing school conditions that could promote or impede ML development in the schools (see Appendix A). The interview questions included a general overview of the schools, their characteristics of teaching staff, and school culture and structure. Subsequently, probing questions helped me explore topics such as the characteristics of teachers promoting ML (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes and were held at the school principals' offices.

4.5.4 Focus Groups with the EFL Department's Teachers

Due to my internal-external position to research sites, it was important to build preliminary understanding of EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of ML in a larger group, where they would feel comfortable to share their ideas with me as well as identify the case-teachers in three schools (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Therefore, I conducted focus groups to engage teachers in EFL departments in the discussion on ML. Each focus group involved five teachers (15 teachers overall) from the EFL departments in each school.

During focus groups, I created a comfortable atmosphere by providing some tea and snacks. Such collaborative activities helped me to establish trust-based relationships with participants, and balance power dimension among all participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Each focus group lasted for approximately 60 minutes each (see Appendix B).

4.5.5 Interviews with EFL teachers

This study employed in-depth semi-structured interviews with 6 case-study teachers in rural, urban and regional areas. The interviews concentrated on four domains: educators' perspectives on ML, their pedagogical practices, factors that influence those practices, and ethical considerations related to ML. I employed a three-step approach in an interview (Seidman, 1998). I interviewed each case-teacher three times, and each interview lasted approximately an hour with a set of probing questions to ensure that teachers provide data related to each research question. In total 18 in-depth interviews were conducted with the EFL teachers constituted across three different schools.

The *first individual interview* with 6 case-teachers focused on teachers' conceptualisations of ML and the approaches they use in teaching (see Appendix D). I asked what types of media teachers employ in their daily and professional practices. The *second interview* examined school-level and systemic factors affecting ML practice. Questions explored teachers' motivation, institutional support, training experiences, and resource availability.

Teachers reflected on the extent to which they felt equipped and supported to integrate ML meaningfully in their classrooms.

The *third interview* was more of a reflection - in - practice approach, whereby I was invited to attend the EFL teachers' classes that covered ML-related topics. At this stage I acted more as a critical friend, who was there to help teachers with ML lesson integration. As a researcher-practitioner, such a collaborative approach enabled me to engage the EFL teachers in a deeper reflection on their evolving understandings of ML and explore the affordances and constraints of applying ML pedagogy in practice. As such, this phase included a follow-up interview immediately after each classroom observation. The third interview allowed teachers to critically reflect on the entire cycle of engagement. They discussed the impact of the ML manual, which they co-designed with me to promote ML and evaluate both their students' and own progress, and articulated recommendations for policy and practice. The third interview was structured in three parts: ML perceptions and the manual, classroom practices, and institutional and policy considerations.

4.5.6 Classroom observations

Classroom observation facilitated the comparison between teachers stated beliefs and their observed pedagogical actions (Robson, 2002). I employed open-ended unstructured observation (Hargreaves, 2012), which allowed for flexibility in documenting a range of classroom interactions while maintaining a consistent focus on ML-related teaching. To enhance validity, I discussed the observation outcomes with each of the six case teachers after their lessons. Three observations were conducted with each teacher in different classroom settings, with a focus on how ML was integrated into EFL instruction. An observation protocol was developed collaboratively and confirmed with all participants prior to fieldwork (see Appendix F).

Given that English was taught nine times per week at Oblys School and three times per week at the other two schools, the number of observed lessons varied accordingly. I was able to observe 16 daily lessons for Aidana and 15 for Sabina, while between 8 and 10 daily lessons were observed for each teacher at Qala and Auyl schools. All six teachers also delivered one demonstrative lesson, which is an open -to -public style of lesson when anyone in the school can come and observe the lesson. Prior to the demo lesson, the EFL teachers identified the curriculum topic of their choice, within which they integrated ML.

In total, I conducted 73 classroom observations of six EFL teachers across three different schools, providing a robust and contextually rich dataset for analysis. Table 6 summarises the observed lessons by teacher, school, grade level, and demonstrative lesson title.

Table 5 - Overview of Classroom Observations

Teacher	School	Grade	Daily lessons numbers	Demo lesson titles
Aidana	Oblys	7	16	Ads and equality
Sabina	Oblys	8	15	Clothes and Fashion
Maral	Qala	7	10	Reality TV
Saniya	Qala	8	9	Talking about past
Zhanna	Auyl	8	8	Kyz –Zhibek
Begin	Auyl	7	9	Free time activities.

The observed lessons were built around a shared set of ML activities, developed collaboratively with the teachers in line with the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 3.5. I first reviewed the subject programmes for the relevant teaching grades and, together with the teachers, identified key lesson topics. These were then used to co-construct a sequence of activities that were mapped onto key language skill areas and critical ML domains to support integrated skill development and critical engagement with media texts (see Table 6). One of the sixteen original activities that I created and suggested to teachers is presented as a sample, focusing on using media, language development, and critical media literacy skills. The activity includes clearly defined objectives, a detailed procedure, opportunities for student reflection and action, and a teacher reflection section for evaluating and improving the lesson.

Table 6 - Common themes observed in each classroom

ML Practice	Lesson themes	Language Skill Code	CML Code
Using media	Understanding Media – Traditional vs. New Media	S3, R1	D1
	Bias by Placement	R2, W1	D2
	Fact or Opinion?	S3	D3
Understanding media	Bustling or Crowded?	R1, W1	I1
	Biased or Balanced?	S3, R1	D2
	We Have a Big Sale!	R1	D3
	Hoax	S3, R1	I2
	There's a Nasty Troll in the Media	S3, R3	R2
	5 Essential Media Literacy Questions	W1, R1	D1
	The Importance of Media Literacy	W1, M1	M1
Creating media	News Reporting	S2, W1	C1
	Creating Effective Social Media Posts	W4	C2

	Storytelling	S2, W2	M2
	I Am Your President	S2	C1
	Identity Wheel	W2, R3	R1
	Diversity and Self-Identity	W4, R3	R3

In parallel with the classroom observations, I maintained a semi-structured research journal throughout the fieldwork, which served as an additional tool for reflection and analytic memoing.

4.5.7 Research Journal

Throughout the fieldwork, I maintained a semi-structured research journal as a tool for reflexive inquiry (Appendix G). The research journal allowed me to document my evolving understanding of teachers' ML practices, respond to unfolding events, and interrogate my own assumptions as an insider-researcher (Janesick, 1998).

The format was based on a checklist I developed, including contextual data (e.g., location, time, participants, activity) and key thematic areas informed by the study's conceptual framework (see Chapter 3). These included teachers' perceptions and practices of ML, school-level factors, ethical and pedagogical considerations, and the influence of broader policy and socioeconomic contexts. Following Cohen et al. (2017), the journal also incorporated my reflections to support iterative meaning-making. Entries were written regularly and later triangulated with interview and observation data to support validity and depth in the analysis (Morrison, 2012).

4.5.8 Document Analysis

Document analysis was employed to supplement interviews, observations, and other qualitative data collection tools. As Merriam (1998, p. 112) points out, documents are ready-made sources of data that offer valuable contextual insights, while remaining unaffected by the presence of the researcher (Robson, 2002).

In this study, I analysed official English language subject programmes for Grades 3 to 11, as issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. These included curriculum frameworks approved under Ministerial Orders № 115 (2013) and № 352 (2017). The goal was to identify learning objectives, units, and topic areas that explicitly or implicitly addressed ML or supported related skills such as critical thinking, digital engagement, or multimodal communication. This analysis allowed me to trace how ML was embedded across grade levels and select relevant units for classroom observation. In addition to national curriculum documents, I collected school-level planning materials such as long- and short-term lesson plans, EFL

department schemes, annual reports, and academic portfolios. I also analysed student-produced artefacts (e.g. posters, digital presentations, video projects) to understand how ML was enacted in classroom practice.

Further on, each teacher completed a structured reflective journal (Appendix E) after delivering the ML-integrated lesson (see Appendix F). The journal captured their perceptions of the lesson's effectiveness, the challenges encountered, student responses, and evolving views on ML. This iterative process of interviews, classroom practice, and the case - teachers' written reflections offered both temporal depth and rich data, enabling comprehensive within-case analysis and meaningful cross-case comparison. These artefacts were used to triangulate teacher-reported strategies and observed pedagogical approaches.

Finally, policy documents and internal school regulations, some identified through interviews and focus groups, were reviewed to explore institutional positions on digital literacy and ML. Together, these documents offered insight into both the formal policy environment and the situated practices of EFL educators working across different school contexts.

4.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved the systematic examination, interpretation, and synthesis of data to extract meaningful insights and draw conclusions (Bazeley, 2020). I used inductive and deductive data analysis approaches (Cohen et al., 2002). As a part of the inductive data analysis, I started with the raw data and focused on patterns, themes, or categories to emerge from the data itself through a process of coding and categorisation (Charmaz, 2014). This approach facilitated the exploration and discovery of new insights or relationships within the data without imposing preconceived theories or frameworks. Conversely, deductive data analysis involved testing hypotheses and applying theoretical frameworks to data with the aim of confirming and/or refuting existing theories or expectations (Huberman, 2014).

In qualitative case study research, which is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, the utilisation of both inductive and deductive data analysis methods allows for the comprehensive exploration and understanding of the complexities of the phenomena under investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). The inductive data analysis allowed for the emergence of themes directly from data and explored participants' subjective experience and meanings (Charmaz, 2014). This approach enabled me to capture the richness and diversity of perspectives within the data without imposing predetermined categories or theories. Deductive data analysis, on the other hand, provided a structured framework for examining the data in relation to existing theories or hypotheses, which was essential for critically evaluating the relevance and applicability of theoretical constructs of my study (Engle, 2015). By integrating both inductive and

deductive approaches, I achieved a more nuanced and holistic understanding of research phenomena, generating insights that were contextually situated and culturally sensitive (Miles et al., 2014).

I initially concentrated on each case-teacher within their distinct school environments and conducted a cross-case analysis (Cruzes et al., 2015). I compared coded data across all six teacher cases to identify recurring patterns and category relationships, which were then refined into overarching themes that directly addressed the research questions (Merriam, 2009). The cross-case analysis alternates between inductive and deductive methodologies and allows a deeper level of data examination (Glaser & Straus, 1967). In addition, I used NVIVO 12 to analyse qualitative data, including interviews, focus groups, transcripts, observations, and research journal notes. At the final writing-up stage, I employed the suspense structure (Cohen et al., 2017). I first presented the key findings and provided evidence, analysis, explanations, warrants, and justifications leading to overall conclusions and implications for further actions (Cohen et al., 2017).

I employed a continuous data analysis procedure to guarantee critical, eloquent, and methodical investigation (Feldman et al., 2018). I used both deductive and inductive methods, which emphasised critical thinking, social reality, linked the study framework and investigated new areas (Westhues et al., 2008). I reviewed classroom observations and field notes daily, listened to interview records; transcribed, and noted criticisms, expressions, and statements of participants. I also discussed relevant issues with stakeholders through focus groups. As such, the data analysis in this study included the following steps: (a) continuous interaction between my personal assumptions, data, research questions, and previous studies in this field; (b) comparison of the coded themes and concepts to highlight similarities and differences; and (c) identification of relationship tensions, patterns, and threads; (d) analysing the data's internal components (meaning, purpose, value, source, contradictions, accuracy, and consistency); (e) organising the data into themes, concepts, and categories; (f) exploring the relationships between, prioritising, and selecting themes; and (g) developing higher-level categories and generative explanations (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Cohen et al., 2017; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995; Patton, 1988). The development of themes was supported by a systematic coding process, with detailed code definitions, criteria, and thematic alignment provided for transparency and analytical rigor (see Appendices 8 and 9).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in qualitative research refers to the principles and guidelines that govern the conduct of research involving human participants (Shaw, 2023). It involves protecting rights, dignity, and well-being of participants throughout the research process. This includes obtaining informed consent, maintaining

confidentiality, minimising harm, and ensuring voluntary participation (Mertens, 2015). It was crucial that I treated teachers, schools, and other stakeholders with integrity and respect throughout my study (Macfarlane, 2009). In addition, I made sure that my behaviour aligned with ethical principles (McNiff, 2016). I followed Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research in Kazakhstan that include respect for people, knowledge, democratic values, quality of the study, and academic freedom (KERA, 2019). It is important to note that these five principles may clash, and it is important to maintain balance among them (Pring, 2000).

In case study research there are several ethical considerations that researchers need to consider. They include: (a) issues related to confidentiality and privacy, especially when dealing with sensitive or personal information about individuals or organisations (Yin, 2011); (b) a risk of bias, where the researcher's preconceptions or preferences may influence the interpretation of data or selection of cases (Flyvbjerg, 2011); (c) challenges in generalising findings from a single case to broader populations, though it may not always be the primary aim of case study research (Patton, 1999).

Therefore, I made sure that confidentiality and anonymity issues were made clear and shared with each research participant (Goldblatt et al., 2011). In order to ensure schools' and teachers' confidentiality, I coded their names and details. As a result, each school and teachers were assigned pseudonyms. In addition, teachers' and school administrators' availability and interests were determined and thoroughly discussed with them in advance. I informed all research participants about the aim and nature of this research and obtained their written consent (see Appendix A).

I was granted permission from the Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University Ethical Committee to conduct my study in schools in Kazakhstan. I then obtained an official support letter from my University to access schools, which explained both potential risks and benefits of my study. Prospective participants were informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis and that they could withdraw at any stage of this study. Participants and schools' confidentiality was protected, the research participants' names were anonymised, and their details were coded (Bryman, 2016).

Despite all the ethical considerations, I acknowledge that ensuring the anonymity of research participants can be a challenge, as they can openly share with each other about the details of my research. Having said that, I explained those risks to school administrators and my colleagues, who confirmed their willingness to participate in this study despite potential risks. In general, transparency, integrity, open communication and genuine peer-to-peer collaboration with school stakeholders were crucial for me to ensure the feasibility and ethical conduct of this research.

Conducting research within my own school required ongoing awareness of my potential biases. To address this, I engaged in reflexivity, a process of critically reflecting on how my role, experiences, and assumptions could influence the research (Patton, 1999). This was particularly important given my insider position, which could affect both data interpretation and participant responses. By maintaining a reflective journal and regularly examine my perspectives, I aimed to minimise bias and enhance the credibility of the study, which I explain in the sub-section below.

4.8 Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to a researcher's ongoing critical self-awareness and examination of one's own assumptions, biases, and preconceptions throughout the research process (Finlay, 2002). Qualitative studies are prone to personal biases of a researcher (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). Thereby, reflexivity plays a crucial role in qualitative research.

By being honest about my position in one of the schools, I was able to practise reflexivity, which helped me make sure that my interpretations and conclusions were clear and well-supported. I used the strategy of ongoing self-reflection while I was collecting data (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). By being reflexive, I kept questioning my own assumptions, biases, and interpretations, which made the research results more trustworthy and valid.

As mentioned earlier, I adopted a research journal to record my thoughts, feelings and reflections. By critically reflecting on my role as a researcher and the influence of my own perspectives on the research process, I mitigated the risk of subjective biases and uphold the integrity of the study (Finlay, 2002).

4.9 Research Quality

The quality of interpretivist research is ensured through the trustworthiness of its findings, which comprises four interrelated criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, I ensured credibility through prolonged engagement with participants across multiple interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journaling, allowing for the triangulation of data sources and perspectives. Transferability was addressed by providing rich, thick descriptions of school contexts and teacher experiences, enabling readers to judge the applicability of the findings to other settings. To support dependability, I used consistent interview protocols and data analysis procedures and kept an audit trail through a reflexive research journal. Confirmability was reinforced by inviting participants to review emerging interpretations during follow-up interviews and by reflecting critically on my positionality to minimise the influence of personal bias on data interpretation.

Stake (2013) proposed the notion of intrinsic case study where the focus is on understanding the case, rather than using it to exemplify broader theoretical principles. This approach emphasises the unique qualities and intricacies of individual cases, allowing for a more profound exploration of context-specific phenomena. Hence, quality of research in interpretivist case study is characterised by the depth of understanding, adherence to trustworthiness criteria, and recognition of the unique features of the case under investigation.

Thereby, I ensured the quality of research through the following steps. I adopted multiple data collection methods to ensure trustworthiness of my research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This enabled me to triangulate data from various sources and ensure multiple measures of one phenomenon (Yin, 2009). In interpretivist studies, the meaning of quality in case studies is multifaceted and often contextual, reflecting the subjective nature of interpretivist research paradigms (Smith, 2010). The use of several data sources is a defining characteristic of case study research, as it increases the credibility of data (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). In a multiple case study, we look at several situations to see how they differ and how they are similar. In order to (a) predict similar results/a literal replication or (b) predict contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication), several case studies might be employed (Yin, 2003, p. 47).

Although case study research is generally regarded as strong and trustworthy, its execution can be quite costly and time-consuming (Baxter & Jack, 2015). By selecting six EFL teachers from three different types of school settings, including village, city, and regional centre schools, this research aimed to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings through the exploration of diverse cases. According to Stake (2013), increasing the diversity of cases can strengthen the external validity and allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The case-teachers represented different schools and hence, unique socio-cultural and educational environments, which influenced the EFL teachers' ML practices.

Yin (2014) argues that replication logic across multiple cases enhances the internal validity of a case study, enabling researchers to identify consistent patterns and themes while also capturing variations across cases. In this study, having 2 case-teachers from each type of school enabled comparison and contrast and facilitated a deeper exploration of the factors influencing the EFL teachers' ML in different educational contexts. Moreover, the selection of EFL teachers from varied backgrounds and experiences within each school type added further credibility to the study.

As Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, credibility in qualitative research is established through the triangulation of data from multiple sources and perspectives. By including diverse participants, this study triangulated the data within and across cases, increasing the reliability and trustworthiness of the

findings. Therefore, by adopting a multiple case study design with a diverse selection of schools and EFL teachers, this research enriched the understanding of the EFL teachers' ML practices in Kazakhstan and enhanced the credibility and validity of its findings through rigorous methodological considerations.

The trustworthiness of the study findings was ensured through ongoing reflexivity, considering my and participants' constructs, structural and historical conditions that shaped social phenomena (Anderson 1989). I involved critical friends during data analysis to provide a further challenge to my personal biases (Norris, 1997). According to Berger (2015), maintaining awareness of a researcher's role and fostering reciprocal relationships with research participants can be a crucial component of reflexivity. As such, keeping a reflective journal helped me to ensure transparency of my research, as reflexivity helped me to engage in self-discovery and exploration, not merely recycle preconceived knowledge. Hence, self-reflection was a way of disentangling my personal biases and presumptions in data analysis (Ortlipp, 2008). In the research journal entries, I meticulously documented my biases, past experiences, underlying assumptions, inquiries, emotions, and theoretical frameworks (Morrow, 2005).

I shared the interview transcripts with research participants to ensure data accuracy and corroborate them with participants (Bassey, 1999). It is essential to verify data for accuracy with participants and allow them to revisit it if needed. This allowed for validity assurance of the data and helped me to make research inclusive and participatory (Merriam, 1998). In order to attain dialogic validity, the study involved schools and participants in reviewing research data (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Although generalisation was not the intended outcome of this study, I produced cogent, descriptive, and prescriptive explanations, which allowed for naturalistic generalisation based on vicarious experience (Schofield, 2007). Further on, research quality was ensured through a meticulous data management process as well as ongoing reflexivity, which I explain in detail below.

4.9.1 Data Management

During the data collection process, meticulous attention was given to comprehensive data management, including systematic gathering, secure storage, and organised retrieval of information. A structured approach, comprising consistent file naming, dated field notes, coded digital transcripts, and categorised storage in NVivo, was adopted from the early stages of fieldwork through to analysis and writing to ensure data integrity and traceability (Miles et al., 2014).

Each case was assigned a distinct file, which allowed systemic organisation and retrieval of relevant information (Yin, 2014). This approach enabled me to facilitate the clarity and coherence of data throughout the research process and ensure that data pertaining to each case remain distinct and

readily accessible. With the purpose to address concerns regarding data storage and security, additional measures were implemented. These measures were designed to safeguard the confidentiality and integrity of data management, thus upholding ethical standards, and protecting the privacy of participants (Bryman, 2016).

By employing encryption methods and setting up passwords, I was able to enhance data security and minimise the risk of unauthorised access or breaches. Moreover, I regularly backed up data to mitigate a potential loss of data due to unforeseen circumstances such as technical failures. These backups were stored in secure locations, further bolstering data resilience, and ensuring continuity in the research process (Creswell, 2013).

In summary, the approach to data handling and management adopted in this research adhered to rigorous standards aimed at maintaining the integrity and research quality. By employing systematic organisation, encryption methods, access controls, and regular backups, the research process was conducted in a manner that safeguarded the interests of participants and upheld the credibility of the research findings.

4.10 Study Limitations

The limitations of this multiple case study were varied and complex in nature. First, the sample size and scope of the study was limited, which was not representative of the broader population of EFL teachers in Kazakhstan (Johnson & Christensen, 2024). Thereby, sampling bias may have been present in the selection of participants, which had a potential to skew the perspectives and experiences represented in this study (Smith, 2010). Moreover, the focus on one region in Kazakhstan may not adequately capture the diversity of the EFL teachers' perspectives and practices across the entire country (Johnson & Christensen, 2024). Second, while the study primarily relied on a qualitative research method, it is bounded by a short-term data collection approach (Johnson & Christensen, 2024). Thereby, a longitudinal study could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of ML among EFL teachers (Creswell, 2013).

Whilst acknowledging its potential limitations, the goal of case study is not to achieve generalisability but rather provide rich, detailed insights into a particular phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2011). This allowed for detailed exploration of the intricacies and nuances of the EFL teachers' perceptions and practices in relation to ML in schools in Kazakhstan, which provided valuable insights that can inform the ML practices and policies in other developing educational contexts (Peters, 2014). In the case study methodology, generalisation is not appropriate due to the emphasis on understanding specific contexts and phenomena in depth rather than making broad generalisations to larger populations (Yin, 2011). Each case was unique, and findings were

interpreted within the context of the specific case rather than being generalised to other contexts.

4.11 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explained my choice of research methodology, which was underpinned by my professional values and my concern to explore the EFL teachers' ML and construct a real picture of ML development in schools in Kazakhstan. The study design was based on a multiple teacher-based case study and used multiple data collection methods. The main data collection methods included interviews, focus groups, observations, research journal, school portrayal instrument, and document analysis. I guaranteed the research quality by utilising various data collection methods, verifying my observations, engaging in self-reflection. I maintained ethical standards by respecting professional norms of the educational context. This fits an exploratory nature of the study and enabled me to uphold an interpretivist attitude to the research data.

I now present the study findings.

Chapter 5

Findings

The chapter is structured around key discussions starting from the stories of case study teachers, institutional challenges towards individual teachers' perceptions and practices of ML through a cross-case analysis. This progression reflects the layered nature of the inquiry, beginning with broader educational settings and culminating in a comparative interpretation of individual pedagogical practices.

The chapter focuses on six individual teacher-cases, two from each school, which provide detailed portraits of the EFL teachers' engagement with ML. Their perceptions and practices trace the personal and professional trajectories, which sheds light on teachers' pedagogical priorities, the challenges they encounter, and the strategies they employ to integrate ML into their classroom practices. By presenting these cases as situated stories, the analysis foregrounds the influence of teacher agency, school culture, and regional positioning on the enactment of critical media education.

The final section presents a cross-case analysis, drawing together thematic patterns and key differences across the three schools. It examines shared understandings and divergent interpretations of ML as well as the range of pedagogical practices used to support students' media-related learning. This analysis also considers school settings: urban, regional, or rural. Particular attention is paid to the structural, cultural, and institutional factors that either enable or inhibit teachers' efforts to cultivate critical engagement with media in the EFL classrooms.

I now explain each of these findings in detail.

5.1 Introducing the Six EFL Teachers' Stories

This section presents six in-depth cases of EFL teachers from three school contexts in Kazakhstan: regional (hereinafter, Oblys School), urban (hereinafter, Qala School), and rural (hereinafter, Auyl School). Two teachers were selected from each school to illustrate the nuanced realities of ML integration within their professional practices and environments. The cases include Aidana and Sabina from Oblys School, Maral and Sania from Qala School, and Zhanna and Begim from Auyl School. Each teacher's case is structured around three core sources of data: individual interviews, classroom observations, and teachers' reflective journal entries. Together, these narratives provide a rich, contextualized account of how the EFL teachers perceive, interpret, and apply ML in their instructional approaches, while also revealing the institutional and infrastructural factors that shape their everyday work.

5.1.1 Aidana and Sabina from Oblys school

Aidana and Sabina work at Oblys School, a state-run institution for gifted students. The school is perceived as academically prestigious and caters to high-achieving learners but operates within a traditional institutional culture marked by conservative values and limited innovation. While the school is equipped with a projector and whiteboard, its digital infrastructure remains underdeveloped. Internet access is frequently unstable and unreliable, which at times forces teachers to rely on mobile phone hotspots to display or stream media content during lessons.

5.1.1.1 Aidana's story

Aidana possesses a bachelor's degree in two foreign languages, along with a teaching qualification in English. Aidana's professional designation is a teacher-expert, which reflects a recognised level of experience and competence. She has 17 years of teaching experience within a school setting and has previously spent over a decade working at a rural mainstream school. Additionally, Aidana served for ten years as a methodologist at the NCPD 'Orleu', where she was involved in supporting in-service teacher education (see Chapter 2).

Aidana perceives ML as the ability to critically evaluate information, underlining its reliability and usefulness. She focuses on discerning reliable content and media intentions rather than utilising technological instruments. She explains ML as:

ML is the ability to obtain accurate information, distinguish between false and true content, and filter what I, as a teacher, bring into the classroom (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This orientation reflects a strong alignment with a critical and ethical understanding of ML. She further underscores source evaluation, emotional manipulation, and ideological bias in both interviews and reflective writing. As she stated:

ML means checking information, not causing psychological or any other harm to the learner, and guiding their thinking (Reflective Journal, Aidana, Oblys School).

Aidana gives considerable attention to the psychological well-being of her students, viewing media content as a significant factor in shaping learners' perspectives and cognitive development. This emphasis is reflected in her deliberate selection of teaching materials, as she consistently prioritises accuracy and trustworthiness from legal and credible outlets. As she explains in her interview:

I always try to choose videos or articles that are not only reliable but also emotionally safe for students; the wrong content can stay with them for a long time (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This comment underscores her belief that media exposure carries psychological weight and can deeply influence students' values and worldview. In her classroom, media is not employed merely as a tool for engagement but as an ethical medium through which learners can be protected from harmful messages:

Allowing students to create videos or digital narratives enables them to comprehend the principles of media, but the point isn't just in creating; it's to think critically about what they make and why (Reflective Journal, Aidana, Oblys School).

These reflections may underscore her conceptualisation of ML as grounded in thoughtful analysis and ethical responsibility rather than the promotion of digital production for its own sake.

In her classroom, authentic media materials are routinely employed to improve reading comprehension, expand vocabulary, and stimulate argumentative writing. She notes that students become more engaged and retain information better when they work with real-world texts, observing that when learners encounter news or advertisements in English, she puts it as follows:

[...] they start to ask questions, they try to find the answers to the questions, they understand the need for cross-checking information, and they remember more (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Despite recognising ML as essential to EFL education, Aidan acknowledges that it is marginalised in the official curriculum:

The English syllabus does not include any specific content on media literacy, so I must find my own way to incorporate it (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Despite these challenges, Aidana continues to embed ML informally in her practice, guided by her belief in its linguistic and civic relevance:

Even if it's not in the syllabus, I still bring in media tasks because they help students practise language and think about real-life issues (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Several limitations were evident in Aidana's understanding of ML. These relate to the perceived age-appropriateness of ML, a limited conception of its technical dimensions, and the lack of explicit teaching strategies. Aidana viewed ML as more appropriate for older students and did not consider it suitable for her middle school learners. This perception suggests a limited understanding of ML's developmental relevance across age groups. As she noted:

Media literacy is better for high school learners, not for middle school. They are too young to analyse media properly (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

In relation to technical aspects of ML, Aidana distanced herself from the teaching of digital content creation. While acknowledging its relevance, she placed responsibility for technical skills on students and did not see it as part of her teaching role. She explained:

I don't teach how to make videos or other content because I don't know it myself. Students are better with technology than me, and my job is to focus on language and literacy (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This perception effectively narrows the scope of ML in her practice, reducing it to critical analysis and linguistic development while excluding production-orientated dimensions that are considered integral in contemporary ML frameworks. Although she completed a professional development course on ML, her confidence was largely based on this single online learning experience, which may not fully equip her for comprehensive ML instruction. She remarked:

I took an online course called English for Media Literacy. It gave me confidence, but I still feel there's a lot I don't know about teaching it (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This perception effectively narrows the scope of ML in her teaching, reinforcing a model grounded primarily in content selection and textual critique. The absence of media creation as a pedagogical focus limits opportunities for students to engage with media as both consumers and producers.

The *Use of Media domain* in Aidana's ML practices was consistently observed. She integrates various media types into her EFL instruction, making pragmatic use of the limited digital infrastructure available in her school. Her typical toolkit includes a projector, printed worksheets, a notebook computer, and a portable voice amplifier to support listening activities and classroom audibility.

As a traditionally oriented teacher, Aidana primarily uses listening activities to support language development, especially in preparation for standardised exams such as Key English Test (KET). Listening tasks in her classroom generally focus on comprehension, vocabulary recognition, and familiarisation with spoken English in alignment with textbook content. The dominant type of listening was used for gist and interpretation, rather than comprehension of detail or accuracy. Students were frequently asked to recall precise information or complete gap-fill exercises. However, elements of critical ML occasionally emerged in Aidana's classroom practice. In one lesson on advertising and representation, she played a short video clip and asked students not only to identify the main idea but also to reflect on the tone of voice and message framing. She prompted:

Why do you think the speaker sounds so certain? What effect does that have? The voice pitch, tone, words they choose all determine the final message of the speaker (Classroom Observation, Aidana, Oblys School).

This shifted the focus from decoding to interpreting speaker intent. In another instance, students listened to a short youth podcast about digital privacy. Instead of summarising the content, they were asked to select one statement they found questionable or powerful. A student brought forward the quote:

Once it's online, it's forever," and questioned its truthfulness. *Is that always true?* (Classroom Observation, Aidana, Oblys School).

As such, Aidana facilitated a brief discussion, encouraging students to consider the implications of online permanence. Reading lessons were typically structured around a three-stage process, though the purpose of each stage was inflected by her ML goals. In pre-reading, students often began with visual prompts or partial texts. In a lesson focused on media headlines, for instance, students were given a selection of front pages with only titles and images visible. Aidana prompted:

Look at these headlines, what do they want you to think before you read the article? (Classroom Observation, Aidana, Oblys School).

Students responded by identifying tone words and emotive phrasing.

One student commented:

This one wants you to feel afraid. It uses 'danger' and red letters. Another added, the font is shouting. It makes it look urgent (Classroom Observation, Aidana, Oblys School).

These early observations set the stage for what Aidana called *reading with suspicion* (Reflective Journal, Aidana, Oblys School), a stance she actively encouraged in the classroom.

Deconstruction was a central and consistently enacted domain in Aidana's critical ML pedagogy. As a veteran EFL teacher, she utilised deconstruction to foster students' capacity to question, interpret, and unpack the hidden ideologies embedded in media texts. This focus on critical reading extended beyond simple comprehension tasks and moved decisively into the realm of power, representation, and voice. A key illustration of her teaching practice comes from a classroom observation during a lesson titled "*Ads and Equality*." Students explored stereotypes in advertisements and analysed how media shapes perceptions of gender roles.

Lesson Episode "Ads and Equality":

Teacher: "What do you see in this ad?"

Students: "A woman is washing dishes."

Teacher: "And here?"

Students: "A man is driving a car."

Teacher: "Do these roles always have to be like that?"

Students: "No, it's a stereotype."

Teacher: “Exactly. The media can influence how we see roles in society. Let’s think how it could be different” (Classroom observation, Aidana, Oblys school).

The finding illustrates how the representation domain was used to question gender stereotypes through critical media analysis. During her lesson called ‘*Advertisements and equality*’, she guided learners to reflect on how gender is portrayed in advertising.

I brought in different toys: blocks, dolls, cars, puzzles. I then asked children who can play with what and why. I wanted them to see how the media mostly shows boys with cars and girls with dolls. But in real life, everyone should feel free to play, learn, and dream without limits (Reflective Journal, Aidana, Oblys School).

This reflection reveals the teacher’s intention to confront stereotypes often reinforced by media representations. By designing the task around everyday play objects, she created space for students to question norms and express more inclusive, equitable views, thus promoting fairness and critical thinking about representation. Aidana also demonstrated a firm belief in the iterative nature of deconstruction. She reported that when students brought in news headlines for classroom analysis, she encouraged them to trace the source, identify tone, and evaluate perspective.

The students said that they mostly get their news from TengriNews... They said they only trust official news sites (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Her insistence on source-tracking and tone analysis further underscores her operationalisation of deconstruction as a process of unveiling bias and promoting critical citizenship.

The *Intertextuality* domain featured strongly in Aidana’s lesson design, especially through the use of text comparisons to help students recognise how language constructs meaning across different media sources. Her approach encouraged learners to identify both surface-level textual contrasts and deeper ideological differences in how events or issues are represented.

When I prepare my lessons, I often bring two sources on the same topic – for example, one from a local newspaper and one from an international blog. I compare tone, word choice, and what’s included or left out. This helps me show students how texts reflect different agendas (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This quote reflects Aidana’s strategic use of intertextual resources as part of her critical media preparation. Her focus is on designing lessons that reveal how media communicates differently depending on source and audience, making intertextuality a core element of her own teaching process. Ethical inquiry and media responsibility were visible threads throughout Aidana’s practice. She consistently raised questions about truth, harm, inclusion, and impact. Her lessons foregrounded the responsibilities of both media consumers

and producers. In the lesson on *Trolling and Commenting*, students analysed YouTube comment threads and categorised entries as “*supportive*,” “*harmful*,” or “*neutral*.” They discussed how tone affects perception. One student said:

Even if you don't say bad words, your message can be mean. Another one added: *If you're famous, people copy your tone.* Aidana posed a follow-up question: *What would happen if this comment was on your post?* (Classroom observation, Aidana, Oblys school).

A class debate emerged on anonymity, accountability, and digital footprints. In her interview, she stated:

I always tell them, if your media can hurt someone, change it. If it teaches something true and useful, share it (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Her lessons often ended with ethical debriefs. After a campaign video task, she asked:

Did your message respect everyone? Would you say this in real life, not just on a screen? (Classroom observation, Aidana, Oblys school).

The result was a classroom climate where ethics were not abstract principles but lived, practiced, and negotiated, especially through language. The *Creation* domain was the least addressed domain in Aidana's practice. While she valued critical engagement with media texts, she did not design tasks that involved student-led media production. This absence appears linked to her cautious approach to technology use and concerns about maintaining academic control. During the classroom observation, Aidana encouraged her students by saying:

Students know how to edit videos and add music better than I do. I focus on helping them think in English, not on teaching them how to make a film. It's better we analyse something already made. (Classroom Observation, Aidana, Oblys School).

This statement illustrates her preference for analysis over creation, prioritising interpretation of existing texts rather than guiding students to compose their own. One further reason for Aidana's limited engagement with media creation lies in how she prepares lessons:

I do not feel confident creating materials myself. I prefer using ready-made content from trusted websites or English news. Not all videos match the lesson topic perfectly, but I show short extracts that work (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This comment reflects a pragmatic approach grounded in caution and professional boundaries. For Aidana, the priority was providing authentic input while maintaining control over content relevance and linguistic quality, even if it limits deeper integration of media creation in her planning. Aidana's engagement with ML was shaped by a nuanced interplay between professional agency, external validation, and institutional constraint. Her approach reflected a balance between principled commitment to critical pedagogy and practical alignment with school structures, community expectations, and available resources:

I try to stay true to what I believe is important, but I also have to consider the school's goals and what parents expect. I can't always go too far outside the lines (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Nonetheless, her practice was constrained by limited curricular and policy support. Aidana's school does not formally prioritise ML, and she described institutional focus as heavily geared towards exam preparation. As she noted:

They ask us to help weak students with grammar, not to teach about media (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Parental expectations further limited her autonomy; concerns about media use and technology in class often led her to approach ML discreetly and cautiously. While she values ML pedagogically, she implements it only when confident there will be no objections from leadership or families:

Some parents still think using videos or online content means the lesson isn't serious, so I have to be careful, I usually include media only when I know it won't raise questions (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Technological limitations also hinder full integration of ML in her classroom. Although her classroom has a projector and whiteboard, internet access is unreliable, often requiring her to improvise:

[...] she adapts by using printed materials and offline resources, maintaining lesson continuity despite disruptions. Her trust in printed textbooks and preference for structured instruction further reflects her pragmatic stance: she adheres to the curriculum first, adding ML content only when time allows (Field Note, Research Journal, 14 November 2025, p. 17).

Aidana explains the central role of English in the school's overall academic approach and the institutional structures that support high quality teaching.

At our school, English is considered the most important subject, and all other subjects are also taught mostly in English. We have English classes every day, even two lessons daily, and we divide groups into three smaller groups to achieve better results. Being a highly selective school and working under the regulations of the international fund is a clear advantage, as we receive structural feedback from them every term (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

The prioritisation of English across subjects and using it as medium of instruction reflect the school's strong commitment to language proficiency. Small group teaching ensures focused support for students, while schools' selective nature and ongoing collaboration with international funds provide both accountability and continual professional feedback, fosters sustainable improvement in teaching practices.

As a senior teacher, Aidana does not advocate for systemic ML change but models principled implementation within existing constraints. Her case illustrates how critical media pedagogy can emerge within a traditional school

environment through incremental and values-driven choices. While she fosters ethical reflection, the practice lacks consistent digital citizenship competencies such as data privacy, consent, or online identity, which are crucial to ethical pedagogy in a network society.

5.1.1.2 Sabina's story

Sabina, with just two years of experience, represents a new generation of EFL teachers bringing innovation into a traditionally conservative environment. While digital infrastructure at the school is limited, Sabina compensates through mobile devices, cloud platforms, and AI tools. Sabina holds the professional category of a teacher, which is the entry-level designation in Kazakhstan's national teaching certification system (see Chapter 2). Now in her second year of teaching, she is recognised as a novice educator beginning to develop her professional identity and classroom practice.

She holds a master's in educational technology and is known for integrating apps like Padlet, Synthesia, and Canva into lessons. As a novice teacher from a family of educators, Sabina blends inherited values with a progressive, tech-centered pedagogy. Though she holds no formal leadership role, she is seen as a digital mentor among staff.

Sabina believes ML is essential for empowering student voice and digital citizenship. As she puts it:

The media is where our students live. It's not extra to teach them to question, remix, and produce media; it's the most important part of language learning today. (Interview, Sabina, Oblys school).

Sabina perceives ML as dynamic and transformative, shaped by her education, digital competencies, and cultural perspective. She defines ML:

[...] the ability to navigate, critique, and create media in ways that are ethical, expressive, and culturally aware (Interview, Sabina, Oblys school).

Her definition moves beyond functional decoding and critical filtering to underscore productive authorship. For Sabina, ML involves remixing content, questioning algorithmic influence, and using digital platforms to communicate responsibly. She explains it:

It's not just about spotting fake news. It's about knowing how to speak back, how to post, present, and participate (Interview, Sabina, Oblys school).

Her approach frames students as media agents, not just media analysts. Sabina demonstrates a strong and emerging sense of self-efficacy in teaching ML, rooted in both her academic background and early teaching experiences. As a recent university graduate, she attributes much of her confidence to a foundational course in critical thinking, which shaped her belief that she can foster similar analytical skills in her students:

We had a strong critical thinking course at university, that's why I believe I can also teach my students to question, to analyse, to think deeper (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

Her confidence is further strengthened by positive classroom outcomes. Implementing student-led media projects, such as video creation and debates, has led to visibly increased engagement, particularly among previously passive learners. These experiences provide Sabina with a sense of mastery, reinforcing her belief in her ability to plan and execute effective ML instruction:

I saw students who usually stay silent suddenly taking the lead, they were motivated because it felt real and connected to their lives (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

Although Sabina demonstrates strong confidence and adaptability in teaching ML, her approach remains largely intuitive and shaped by personal experience rather than formal pedagogical frameworks. There is no indication that she draws on established models of ML or uses systematic assessment to guide instruction. As she explained:

I just try different things and see what works best for my students—it depends on the group and the moment (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

While this flexibility reflects responsiveness to learners' needs, it also points to the absence of a structured approach grounded in theoretical principles or curricular alignment. Without explicit pedagogical framing or evaluation strategies, the long-term development and transferability of students' ML skills may be limited. Sabina's ML practices, presented in three dimensions, Using Media, Understanding Media, and Creating Media, followed by how these are integrated across the four core language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Sabina makes deliberate and frequent use of diverse media formats to build students' operational and navigational media skills within the EFL classroom. With full access to digital infrastructure, including interactive whiteboards, tablets, and multimedia resources, she integrates both traditional materials (e.g., print advertisements) and digital content (e.g., podcasts, social media texts, online news) to enhance language input and real-world engagement:

I mix online and offline materials because students need to learn how to read all kinds of media, from posters to Instagram posts, that's part of language now (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

Learners routinely work with iPads and other devices to complete tasks such as categorising media types, analysing promotional language, or creating platform-specific advertisements. These activities support the development of foundational media skills, such as selecting appropriate formats, accessing content purposefully, and using tools for communication. Sabina explains it as follows:

We teach them how to use media to make and share their own ideas, not just watch or read it (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

The key illustration of Sabina's teaching practice comes from a classroom project titled "*We Have a Big Sale!*", which focused on the intentional creation of advertisements across media formats. Students were challenged to apply persuasive language and design strategies while reflecting on audience impact and credibility:

Lesson Episode – "We Have a Big Sale!"

Teacher: "Each group will choose a platform, poster, radio, or Instagram story. Think about who your audience is and how you'll persuade them."

Students: "Can we use words like 'amazing' and 'ultimate'?"

Teacher: "Yes, but be careful. Does it sound trustworthy or exaggerated? That's your decision as a creator."

(Student creates poster with slogan: "Buy now, be the best version of you.")

Teacher: "Great slogan. Now, ask yourself, would you believe this if you saw it online?"

(Students revise to: "Try our product, feel the difference.")

Teacher: "That's more balanced. You've made a real media choice here."

(Classroom observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

Reflecting on these tasks, Sabina noted that:

Students understood that they should take responsibility for the content they created and shared (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

She views creation not only as a linguistic exercise but as a platform for agency, civic participation, and ethical reflection. By positioning learners as media creators, Sabina cultivates both their linguistic proficiency and their critical understanding of how media shapes perception and dialogue.

Sabina's integration of ML into the four core language skills demonstrates how each skill is developed through tasks that promote critical thinking, ethical reflection, and real-world communication. Sabina incorporates listening activities into her media literacy instruction with a focus on helping students critically assess spoken media content. This pedagogical choice reflects a commitment to ML as a form of critical engagement, not merely linguistic decoding. The key classroom episode illustrates this approach. Students listened to two promotional audio texts about chocolate and were guided to identify persuasive techniques and assess the credibility of health-related claims. During the activity, Sabina prompted:

Are these claims supported by evidence, or are they designed to make the product sound more appealing? (Classroom Observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

Rather than asking students to repeat or summarise what they heard, she facilitated a discussion in which learners evaluated vocabulary choices such as "*rich in antioxidants*" or "*boosts your mood*", underscoring the use of vague or emotionally charged language. This positioned listening as a critical interpretive act and introduced students to the idea that spoken content can be biased or misleading. Her reflective journal reinforces this intention. Sabina notes that listening tasks serve as a basis for critical thinking and ethical judgement:

Listening helps students analyse how speakers use tone and vocabulary to influence us. It encourages them to question what they hear (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

These results show how Sabina teaches students to think critically about spoken media by showing them how language and tone can change meaning and affect how people see things. Sabina's instructional design consistently incorporates pre-listening prediction tasks, interpretive listening prompts, and post-listening reflection or production activities. These are not treated as isolated exercises, but as steps in a coherent learning cycle that supports media literacy. As she noted in her interview:

Listening is not just understanding the words. It's about understanding intention, why something is said, and how it makes us feel or react (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

Through this approach, Sabina positions listening as a critical and ethical practice. Her students learn to engage with spoken texts not only as language learners, but as informed and reflective media users. One prominent example comes from a lesson on biased reporting, where students were divided into groups representing opposing perspectives, such as park managers and animal rights activists, and tasked with presenting news reports from their assigned point of view. This required them to adopt the language and tone of a specific stance while reflecting on how media framing influences audience perception. During observation, Sabina prompted:

What would a journalist supporting your side include or leave out? What language would they use to sound convincing? (Lesson Observation, Oblys School).

Students responded with statements such as "*They would use words like 'dangerous' for the animals*" or "*We should sound calm and responsible,*" showing awareness of rhetorical strategies in spoken media. Sabina also uses student presentations as a key speaking practice. Learners often present analyses of media texts, explain their design choices in media projects, or lead peer discussions on ethical issues raised by advertisements or news stories. In her reflective journal, she noted:

Public speaking became more purposeful when students had something real to say. They were not just performing language, they were defending ideas (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

This shift from speaking for performance to speaking for persuasion positions students as media participants rather than passive learners. Sabina's speaking activities encourage not only linguistic development but also media critique, civic voice, and ethical awareness.

Sabina actively engages students in examining how individuals, groups, and events are portrayed in media texts, encouraging them to question whose perspectives are amplified and whose are left out. In one lesson, students compared two short articles about the same community protest; one described participants as "*local activists*," while the other labelled them "*disruptive demonstrators*." Sabina asked:

What picture do these words paint? Who seems reasonable? Who seems dangerous? (Classroom Prompt, Lesson Observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

Students discussed how language subtly shaped sympathy or blame, leading to reflection on how media can reinforce stereotypes or frame public opinion. In her reflective journal, Sabina noted:

They began to see that even small word choices show which side the writer is on (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

Through such tasks, Sabina helps students recognise that media representations are never neutral, they are constructed, selective, and often ideological. Sabina encourages students to recognise and analyse how media texts relate to and influence one another. In one lesson, learners explored environmental messaging by comparing a government awareness video, a corporate advertisement, and a student-made campaign poster, all addressing plastic pollution. Sabina asked:

What messages are repeated? What's changed? Who do you think copied from whom? (Classroom Prompt, Lesson Observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

This comparative reading helped students identify recurring language, imagery, and rhetorical techniques across texts, fostering awareness of how ideas circulate and are reshaped across media forms. In her journal, Sabina reflected:

They started to notice that media doesn't exist alone, it borrows, adapts, and reframes (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

By foregrounding intertextual connections, Sabina helps students understand how media meaning is constructed not in isolation but in dialogue with wider cultural narratives. Sabina integrates multimodal analysis and production throughout her lessons, helping students understand how meaning is conveyed through the interaction of text, image, sound, and design. In one activity, learners examined public health posters, focusing on how font size, colour schemes, and imagery shaped the urgency and emotional tone of the message. Sabina prompted:

If we removed the image, would the words have the same effect? What changes if we change the colours? (Classroom Observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

Students engaged in redesigning posters using Canva, experimenting with visual layout and language to communicate alternative tones. In her reflective journal, Sabina noted:

They understood that visual choices, like colour and shape, carry messages just like words do (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

Through this approach, Sabina helps students develop a nuanced awareness of how multimodal elements work together to influence interpretation and how intentional design decisions shape audience response. Creation is central to Sabina's ML pedagogy, where students are routinely tasked with designing original media texts that reflect critical awareness and communicative purpose. Her lessons move beyond analysis to empower learners as media producers who make strategic choices about language, tone, format, and audience. In a project titled "Reframe the Message," students redesigned emotionally charged advertisements into neutral, informative campaigns. Sabina guided them with questions like:

How would you say this if your goal was to inform, not to persuade? (Classroom Prompt, Lesson Observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

Students created posters, social media slides, and short audio messages using Canva and iMovie, often revising based on peer feedback. In her reflective journal, Sabina wrote:

They realised that creating media is not just about design, it's about intention, ethics, and the effect on the viewer (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

While she views ML as integrated into everyday practice, her description of media use mostly aligns with viewing videos as a reward for students rather than as a critical learning opportunity. As she noted:

I told students if they succeed in the tests and behave diligently, they will watch videos. I let them watch short videos at the end of the lesson if they worked well, it helps them relax and they enjoy it (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

This approach risks limiting students' opportunities to develop the critical thinking and evaluative skills that are central to robust ML education.

Sabina's teaching is grounded in ethical pedagogy, where ML is framed not only as a cognitive skill but as a moral and civic responsibility. She consistently models critical reflection on digital behaviour, emphasising respectful representation, responsible sharing, and awareness of bias and misinformation. Students created social awareness campaigns on environmental topics. Sabina reminded them:

Before you post or publish anything, ask yourself, could this mislead someone? Could it be harmful? (Classroom Observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

She encouraged learners to revise language that was overly emotional or misleading and to consider diverse perspectives when designing content. Her reflective journal reinforces this value:

Media literacy isn't just about analysing texts, it's about teaching students to be thoughtful, responsible communicators (Reflective Journal, Sabina).

By embedding ethical reflection into creation and critique, Sabina helps students develop a sense of accountability in their media use, preparing them to participate critically and conscientiously in a digital society.

Sabina's ML teaching is enabled by strong digital infrastructure and her own academic grounding in critical thinking and educational technology. At Oblys School, she has access to iPads, smartboards, and multimedia tools, which she uses confidently to support creative and critical tasks. Sabina stresses several favourable structural and contextual factors that support the integration of ML into their English lessons:

We teach English nine hours a week in the 7th grade, and divide each class into three sub-groups, resulting in only 7-8 students. The curriculum also allows me creative freedom to implement innovative practices, as we have plenty of elective components. (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

The generous number of instructional hours and small group sizes create an ideal environment for personalised learning and deeper engagement with media literacy topics. Flexibility within the curriculum further empowers the teacher to promote ML practices.

Though infrastructure is available, the school internet is unreliable, prompting Sabina to use her own laptop and mobile data to maintain lesson continuity. ML is not formally supported by the curriculum, and she receives little pedagogical guidance. Media production is present, but it is with limited opportunities for real-world engagement. Likewise, Aidana's practices reveal critical interpretation but inhibit becoming media creators. As a result, neither teacher fully reaches the applicational level of ML, and both require transformative competencies the framework demands.

5.1.2 Maral and Saniya from Qala school

Maral and Saniya are employed at a large public school located in the city, which caters to students from preschool through to high school. This Kazakh-language school offers selective classes and is supervised by the City Department of Education. It maintains a competitive academic environment. Maral, a teacher with two years of experience, is dedicated to her role and believes that research-based learning is essential for both children and adults. In contrast, Sania, with 12 years of teaching experience, is a highly ambitious English teacher. She does not only bring broad teaching expertise but has

extensive experience in sales, actively incorporating modern digital devices and tools into her work to enhance both her teaching and entrepreneurial activities.

5.1.2.1 Maral's story

Maral, a novice teacher with two years of experience, works at a comprehensive city school and holds the qualification of pedagogue (see Chapter 3). She prefers to complete her grading, lesson planning, and preparation at school to maintain a clear boundary between her work and personal life:

I think it's good to leave work at work" (Interview, Maral, Qala school).

Maral is deeply reflective about the evolving nature of teaching, particularly the role of technology in education. Particularly, she is deeply engaged with the changing demands of modern education and is especially interested in the role of digital media and technology in reshaping how students learn. Though still building her confidence with new tools, she is open to experimentation and advocates for innovation in classroom practices. Her emerging ML pedagogy reflects a blend of creativity, ethical awareness, and student-centred design. Maral defines ML as a foundational part of everyday teaching practice, embedded in routine classroom activities and not treated as a separate skill. As she puts it:

ML is a component present in every lesson, we use interactive whiteboards, process information, and I consider it an information filter (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

This definition reflects a practical and integrative view of ML. For Maral, ML is not limited to critical analysis of media texts but includes the everyday digital routines that require students to interact with, evaluate, and navigate information. Her metaphor of the "information filter" (Reflective Journal, p. 25) suggests a view of ML as a cognitive process, one that helps learners distinguish relevance, reliability, and purpose in the digital content they encounter. It also positions ML as a constant, embedded element of her pedagogical approach, directly linked to the tools and technologies used in the modern classroom. Her approach reflects a dual purpose: developing both linguistic competence and the ability to interpret and navigate mediated information. This perspective is rooted in her belief that traditional methods are no longer sufficient in isolation:

It's no longer the time when you can just teach with a blackboard inside four walls. We need to keep up with technology and bring innovation into the classroom (Reflective Journal, Maral, Qala School).

Maral's stance reinforces her broader pedagogical vision: language teaching is not just about mastering rules, but about learning how to read, interpret, and respond to the world through media. This makes ML indispensable to her English instruction. For example, Maral's self-efficacy in

using ML can be described as grounded in a reflective, growth-oriented mindset. Although she modestly recognises her limitations with digital tools:

I feel like I do not know many technologies. Sometimes I see other teachers use interactive platforms or editing apps, and I feel behind. But I try to learn slowly and include new trends from Tiktok each term so that my students benefit (Reflective Journal, Maral, Qala School).

At the time of data collection, she was preparing for the CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) examination, viewing it as an opportunity to deepen her instructional skills and refine her classroom practice. Alongside this formal training, she actively engages with diverse teaching methodologies, aiming to build lessons that are not only effective but also emotionally resonant and relevant to her students' experiences:

I want to find methods that bring me closer to the children, to understand how they think and what matters to them (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

Her confidence grows through reflective practice and classroom experimentation. Creative projects like “Biased Pizza” and “Reporters in Pajamas” have affirmed her ability to design meaningful, student-centred tasks that blend language and media. Rather than relying solely on technical expertise, Maral's self-efficacy emerges from her relational insight, pedagogical curiosity, and belief in continuous learning.

Having said that, Maral openly acknowledged limitations in her ability to differentiate between factual and misleading information, which may reflect a gap in one of the core competencies of media literacy. She recalled experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown in which she struggled to verify information and was misled by online hoaxes. As she explained:

Even though I was sometimes fooled by things online during the pandemic, there was so much information, I didn't know what to believe (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

While she recognises the importance of accuracy and cross-checking, she admitted that time constraints often prevent her from verifying sources, and that she sometimes defaults to the most popular or widely shared interpretations. This self-perceived vulnerability may influence how confidently she teaches students to evaluate media content, potentially weakening the critical dimension of her ML instruction.

The *Using media* is actively integrated into Maral's daily practices, as she uses digital tools like Kahoot, Quizizz, and interactive videos into her lessons to enhance engagement and information processing:

We need to keep up with technology and bring innovation into the classroom (Reflective Journal, Maral, Qala School).

While her digital fluency is still developing, she demonstrates moderate but effective technical competence, confidently operating classroom technologies such as projectors, tablets, smartphones, and interactive whiteboards. She makes deliberate choices between platforms depending on

instructional goals, for example, selecting online quizzes for formative assessment or short video clips to contextualise new topics.

She also begins to incorporate broader media sources, including AI tools and social platforms, for content discovery and lesson preparation. Her approach is habitual but mindful, grounded in pedagogical purpose rather than novelty. Even when technical issues occur, such as equipment failure, Maral adapts quickly to oral questioning without losing lesson continuity. Her use of media is thus embedded in routine classroom practice, supporting students' functional literacy and readiness for digitally mediated

Although Maral seems to incorporate media into her lessons regularly, she might not consistently facilitate critical engagement during video viewing:

During the lesson, Maral played a video clip straight through without stopping at any point. There was no pausing to ask questions, highlight key moments, or invite student reflection. It felt more like background content than a learning tool (Researcher Reflective Journal, Qala School, 23.10.2024).

Although the teacher incorporated video in her lesson, it functioned primarily as a classroom management tool rather than as a medium for developing students' critical engagement with media. This may indicate that her understanding of media use is limited to maintaining attention and controlling behaviour, reflecting a functional rather than critical approach to digital media. One possible explanation is that limited professional development or institutional support has not equipped her to use video for deeper analysis, discussion, or student agency. Thus, the use of video serves to manage the classroom rather than to promote critical thinking about representation, message construction, or audience influence. Maral uses authentic audio-visual materials to support critical listening and develop interpretive awareness. In her Reality TV lesson, students watched a short video and then discussed its ethical implications:

Do you think reality TV is cruel or entertaining? What ethical issues can you identify? (Classroom Observation, Maral, Qala School).

This format engaged learners not only in listening for gist but in evaluating tone and message. The listening served as a catalyst for reflective discussion, framing listening as a thinking skill, not just a comprehension task.

Multimodality featured as a key dimension in Maral's lesson planning and media preparation, shaping the way she designed instructional content. Her teaching involved the careful integration of multiple communicative modes including visual, textual, and auditory elements, which allowed her to present media in a form that mirrored real-world digital communication. This approach enabled her to model complex meaning-making and scaffold students' critical engagement through carefully layered content:

My students used Canva to design posters about online safety, then added voiceovers to explain their ideas. They combined visuals, text, and sound to make meaning (Reflective Journal, Maral, Qala School).

This quote may reflect how Maral's own practice as a teacher relied on constructing input that used multimodal features not only for engagement but to support deeper analysis. By assembling lesson materials across formats, she prepared students to encounter and interpret media as a composite, situated practice, reinforcing the need to read meaning across rather than within modes. Although her school does not provide formal ethical guidelines for the use of digital media, Maral demonstrates a personal sense of responsibility by modelling respectful behaviour online. This self-regulation highlights an internalised form of ethical pedagogy, where moral and civic values guide her media practices despite the absence of institutional frameworks. Her actions suggest that teachers' ethical engagement with the media can stem from personal conviction rather than external enforcement. However, the lack of formal guidance also places the burden of ethical decision-making on individual teachers, which may lead to inconsistencies in how digital responsibility is modelled across classrooms. This underscores the need for schools to establish shared ethical standards and professional development on digital citizenship to ensure that ethical media use is embedded across all teaching practices. When sharing student-created content on platforms such as YouTube or Instagram, she routinely seeks verbal consent from pupils. As she noted:

I always ask students if it's okay before posting anything. If even one student says no, I don't upload. It's their work and their faces (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

This practice indicates an emerging awareness of digital ethics and a commitment to protecting student agency. However, the approach remains informal and unregulated, relying solely on verbal agreement without institutional oversight or documented protocols. Such reliance may not adequately safeguard learners' rights or ensure their full understanding of how their work is disseminated in online environments. While Maral's actions reflect genuine concern, they are guided more by instinct than by a structured pedagogical framework. As a result, opportunities to cultivate a deeper and more systematic understanding of digital privacy, authorship, and accountability among students seem to remain limited.

Having said that, Maral's approach to ML reflects a deep commitment to cultivating students' ability to analyse, question, and ethically engage with media texts. Her lessons regularly address the core dimensions of critical ML, guiding students to interrogate how meaning is constructed, whose voices are represented, and how audiences are shaped by form and function. In her Bias by Spin lesson, students compared two reports on environmental pollution in their city. One article highlighted "*community-led clean-up efforts*," while the other

pointed out *"government inaction."* Students examined how headlines, tone, and supporting graphs created different impressions of the same issue:

Look at this graph, why do you think the Y-axis starts at 60 instead of zero? (Classroom Prompt, Maral, Qala School).

They noticed that omitting the full scale exaggerated the appearance of change. In group discussion, they identified what facts were included or omitted in each article and reflected on how this shaped the audience's perception. Maral's approach teaches students that media messages are selectively constructed and visually framed, not simply factual. Maral treats reading and listening as critical literacy skills to some extent, using media texts to help students uncover how language can shape perception and frame reality. Her lesson: *Bustling or Crowded?* teaches students to decode spin and bias in media texts. They read multiple articles about the same city, analysing how language shaped perception:

The bustling city has a positive spin... 'Crowded city' has a negative spin (Classroom Observation, Maral, Qala School).

Students pointed out vocabulary that conveyed bias, identified omitted viewpoints, and created their own neutral headlines. Reading becomes an interpretive process where language is viewed as choice and persuasion, not just content.

Maral consistently used reading tasks to develop students' critical awareness of how written language constructs reality. Through guided reading strategies, such as annotation, prediction, and headline rewriting, students learned to question not only what is written, but how and why it is written that way. This transforms reading into an act of critical inquiry and helps students recognise media as a rhetorical and selective medium.

An additional insight into Maral's multimodal planning revealed her attention to how different media formats complement one another in lesson preparation. Rather than relying solely on listening or reading tasks, she actively constructed lessons that combined modes to accommodate learner preferences and support comprehension:

I think that only listening or only reading hinders us as we have a lot of students, most of them nowadays are visuals but in a video, they could not understand words, that is why some difficult words are given as a help to reading (Reflective Journal, Maral, Qala School).

This shows that Maral's instructional preparation involved anticipating barriers students might face when encountering authentic media. By layering audio with visual and textual support, she created accessible, multimodal input that supported comprehension and critical engagement, demonstrating her understanding of how various modes contribute to meaning making.

Maral integrates media creation into her teaching as a way for students to engage actively and critically with content. Maral devotes time to student-led media production to deepen critical understanding and expressive skills. In her

‘Reporters in Pajamas’ project, students scripted and recorded their own news segments from home, focusing on clarity, tone, and audience impact. They were encouraged to think about how their language, visual setting, and delivery shaped the viewer’s perception of credibility and message:

When they recorded their reports, I told them, think about your voice, your expression, and what makes your story believable (Reflective Journal, Maral, Qala School).

Maral integrates ethical reflection throughout her ML teaching, encouraging students to consider the impact of their communicative choices. She prepares digital posters, selects campaign formats, and models how language and visuals can communicate deliberate meaning. Her own creative involvement becomes a scaffold for students, demonstrating that every communicative choice, from wording to structure, carries intention and impact. In this way, creation in her teaching is reflective and purposeful, shaping not only the lesson content but also how learners begin to author media messages with greater awareness and critical thought.

Maral’s commitment to ML was shaped by both her personal initiative and the limitations of her institutional environment. She often relied on her own laptop and mobile devices to conduct lessons:

We have a few interactive whiteboards, but I usually bring my own devices. It’s the only way to make sure the lesson goes as planned (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

In addition to these material constraints, Maral notes the absence of clear guidelines or support for ML within the curriculum, leaving her to develop content and ethical practices independently. She expressed a need for more structured guidance and professional development to deepen her integration of ML strategies:

There is no one to ask or check how to do these media things. We don’t have a special course, and I just look for ideas myself online or test it with the students. I think we need more help to do it correctly and not waste time. Our teaching hours are limited to only 3 lessons per week, and no autonomy to shift from the prescribed curriculum (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

Despite these challenges, Maral’s resourcefulness and reflective mindset allow her to implement meaningful ML instruction.

5.1.2.2 Saniya’s story

Saniya is a highly experienced teacher-expert with 12 years of teaching experience, all at Qala School. Her expertise as a teacher-expert reflects deep subject knowledge and advanced teaching skills, allowing her to contribute significantly to both curriculum delivery and professional development at her school. According to her colleagues in the focus group discussion, Saniya is

appreciated for her openness and active participation in school activities, which strengthens her position as a mentor and role model for both colleagues and students.

Saniya noted that she had a limited understanding of ML prior to participating in this research. She stated that only after participating in interviews, delivering ML-integrated lessons, and reflecting on her teaching, did she begin to grasp what ML entails:

I have come to understand the deeper meaning of media literacy through this study (Interview, Saniya, Qala school).

She referred to classroom practices as collecting student feedback, sharing hyperlinks among colleagues, and using digital content in pair work as a form of ML, even though she had previously not labelled them as such. Saniya demonstrated a growing awareness of ML importance in EFL classrooms. She defined ML as the ability to evaluate and present ideas clearly, akin to how learners share personal stories on social media. In her own words:

I encourage students to talk about their personal experiences. They need to express their ideas clearly, just like they would when sharing stories or making posts on social media (Reflective journal, Saniya, Qala School).

During classroom observations, she came to see ML not as an isolated skill but as embedded in authentic classroom practices. For example, she began to critically evaluate the reliability of media materials shown in class, transitioning from streaming random YouTube videos to pre-selecting content from reputable sources like the British Council and Cambridge platforms to ensure quality and reduce distractions.

In the *using media domain* (see Chapter 3), though a computer and a projector were only technologies available, Saniya made use of digital platforms such as Learning APPs and YouTube clips to support vocabulary development and interactive tasks. However, infrastructural limitations often constrained these efforts. During classroom observations, a failed internet connection required her to substitute a digital activity with a traditional whiteboard task:

I planned to use Learning APPs (an interactive online platform) for this task, but since the internet wasn't working, we switched to writing answers on the board (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

This practical limitation underscores the tension between digital ambition and the realities of resource-constrained environments. In her Grade 9 lesson on “Charity and Conflict,” implemented an inquiry-based approach that supported the development of both language and critical ML skills. The learning objectives from the NAE State Subject Programme (see Chapter 2) helped her to guide students in analysing perspectives and engaging in group dialogue around social justice issues. The lesson began with activities including visual and conceptual tasks, which asks students to reflect on the meaning of “charity” and identify examples in their community, prompting personal connections and activating prior knowledge.

This integration of discussion-based speaking tasks with critical ML goals underscores the importance of creating dialogic spaces in classrooms. Such practices not only develop students' communicative competence but also empower them to become critical consumers and producers of media:

I like when students argue with each other, but with respect. It shows they are thinking, not just repeating. When they discuss media topics, they start to notice what is hidden or not said directly (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

Students worked collaboratively to examine short media texts and teacher-curated prompts on various charitable initiatives. Saniya encouraged open discussion by posing reflective questions as she commented:

I wanted them to see even positive media like charity ads can have another side. So I asked, 'Who benefits from this charity? What might be some unintended effects? The aim is to make students think critically and not accept everything at face value (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

This can enable learners to evaluate not only the content but also the motivations behind charitable actions. Through these interactions, students actively negotiated meanings, identified speaker intentions, and presented group responses, thus demonstrating both critical listening and analytical engagement.

Saniya's teaching practice at Qala School revealed a thoughtful approach to ethical pedagogy, particularly in her stress on digital safety and responsible online behaviour. During my observation of her lesson on "There's a Nasty Troll in the Media," Saniya guided students through a discussion about how to navigate negative comments and online harassment in social media spaces. Her lesson foregrounded the importance of maintaining personal safety, showing empathy, and responding constructively to online challenges, an essential dimension of critical ML in today's digital landscape.

In her lesson, Saniya invited students to share their experiences of encountering negative or hurtful comments online. She then provided clear, practical strategies for managing such situations, emphasizing the importance of personal boundaries and mental health. As she explained to the class:

When you see a nasty comment, don't just react right away. Take a breath, think about why someone might say that, and remember you can choose how to respond, or even not to respond at all. You have the right to protect yourself online (Classroom observation, Saniya, Qala school).

This moment may depict Saniya's ethical commitment to empowering students with skills to navigate digital spaces safely and responsibly. By normalising discussions about online negativity, she fostered an environment where students could share concerns without fear of judgment.

Saniya's teaching methods, including elicitation, group discussion, and critical questioning, aligned with ML principles by fostering evaluation, interpretation, and collaborative inquiry. Though not overtly framed as ML instruction, the lesson clearly developed students' capacity to critically engage

with socially relevant content. This case reflects how inquiry-led, dialogic pedagogy can support ML within the broader EFL curriculum, especially when guided by social themes and authentic communication tasks.

During Saniya's classroom observations, I was struck by how she integrated language skills, including listening, reading, speaking, and writing into their lessons as a means to foster students' critical ML. This approach transformed language instruction into a powerful vehicle for engaging with, questioning, and producing media texts:

I asked them to listen to two people talking about the same topic and then write whose opinion they trust more and why. I wanted them to notice tone and attitude, not only words (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

Saniya consistently designed tasks that went beyond surface comprehension, prompting learners to interact with media messages critically and creatively. The most prominent practice across the observed lessons was the development of students' speaking skills through discussion-based learning. She frequently organised activities that required students to articulate their ideas, question assumptions, and share perspectives with their peers. For example, during a lesson on media bias, Saniya prompted learners to compare headlines from different news sources and then facilitated a lively class discussion:

Now, let's talk about what you noticed. Who do you think the article is trying to convince? Why do you think they chose those words? Share your thoughts with your partner, then let's hear from the whole class (Classroom observation, Saniya, Qala school).

This moment reveals her deliberate use of discussion-based speaking tasks to scaffold students' critical thinking. By engaging students in sustained dialogue, she created an interactive learning environment where learners develop their speaking skills alongside their ability to critically analyse media texts. This helped students move beyond passive consumption and use spoken language to question and critique the messages they encountered. Through carefully designed activities, she guided learners to identify hidden ideologies, biases, and the persuasive techniques embedded in media content. Saniya used critical questioning to prompt students to question the underlying messages and power relations within advertisements:

Look at this perfume ad, who do you think benefits from this message? What does it make you feel, and why? Let's talk about who created it and what they want us to believe (Classroom observation, Saniya, Qala school).

This deliberate focus on deconstruction enabled students to peel back the surface layer of media texts and analyse how meaning is constructed. Such practices are essential for cultivating critical awareness of how media shapes perceptions, values, and societal norms. Another key observation in Saniya's classroom was her emphasis on developing students' multimodal literacy skills, when she encouraged learners to engage with texts that combined images,

sounds, and written language. This approach allowed her students to analyse how different modes of communication can work together in conveying meaning. For example, Saniya integrated visual memes and audio clips into a lesson on online safety:

I want you to look at the image and the text together, how does the colour make you feel? What do the sounds add to the message? Discuss with your partner what you think the creator wants you to notice (Classroom observation, Saniya, Qala school).

Throughout my observations, I also noted a strong focus on representation, where she prompted learners to analyse how different groups, identities, and cultural values were portrayed in media texts (Research Journal, p. 35). Saniya often used videos and advertisements to highlight issues of stereotyping and identity construction:

This ad shows young people as always having fun, but is that real life? Who gets left out of this picture? Let's talk about how these images shape our ideas of success (Classroom observation, Saniya, Qala school).

Through this emphasis on representation, students were encouraged to challenge stereotypes and reflect on how media representations can both reflect and shape social realities, deepening their critical ML. Saniya demonstrated consistent intertextual thinking in how she selected and prepared media for lessons. Her approach involved examining the same event or theme across different media sources during planning, using this comparative reading to determine relevance, tone, and bias before bringing materials into the classroom:

When I prepare a lesson, I always check how the same story is told in different places. I look at a local article, then find how it is covered internationally. It helps me see what each source wants to say, and what it leaves out (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

This practice reveals a strategic use of intertextual comparison to uncover implicit perspectives in media content, shaping her judgement on what to include or exclude from instruction. Her intertextual awareness also shaped how she evaluated instructional texts, including textbooks and digital resources:

Even textbooks present one version. So I try to pair them with videos or stories that show a different side. Then I ask myself: which one brings more balance? (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

These quotes illustrate that Saniya used intertextuality not simply to diversify materials, but to critically assess how different narratives construct meaning. Her method reflects a deliberate, interpretive practice that precedes classroom delivery and supports ethically grounded resource selection. She regards ML not only as analysis but also as content creation, aiming to embed this dual focus into her lessons. In her lesson titled “Your Weekend,” Saniya incorporated a ML prompt into a listening activity, asking students to consider the realism of weekend vlogs on YouTube:

Teacher: “Listen carefully to the conversation between two people. What did they do over the weekend? When you watch weekend vlogs on YouTube, is everything real, or do they edit it to make their lives look more exciting?”

Students: “It’s edited. Not everything is real.”

Teacher: “Exactly. The media might present an idealised version of reality” (Classroom observation, Saniya, Qala School).

Saniya also attempted to integrate the Creation Domain (see Chapter 3) through participatory content creation. Students were asked to record dialogues or simulate social media posts in English. As she noted:

Sometimes, I ask students to record their dialogues on their phones as if they are making a social media post. It motivates them and makes the lesson more engaging (Reflective journal, Saniya, Qala School).

Yet, classroom observations suggest that the implementation of these tasks lacked critical depth. Students often read from pre-prepared scripts rather than engaging in spontaneous or reflective communication, limiting the development of creative ML. As she herself stated:

Media literacy is not just about analysing media but also about creating it” (Reflective journal, Saniya, Qala School).

However, this principle was not fully enacted in her classroom practice. The gap appeared to stem from a reliance on performance-based outputs. Without explicit scaffolding or iterative creation processes, the focus remained on surface-level production rather than encouraging students to question, revise, or reflect on their media messages. This suggests that while Saniya valued creation in theory, her pedagogical strategies did not fully support its deeper critical or transformative dimensions. Creation was not explicitly present in Saniya’s instructional practice. In the observed lessons, she relied on ready-made media materials and curated resources rather than engaging in tasks that involved producing original media content. There were no activities where she designed or modelled purposeful creation of media texts for civic or critical engagement. Saniya’s lessons centred on discussion, comprehension, and comparison. Her use of media remained interpretive rather than productive.

Beyond the classroom, Saniya’s personal engagement with digital media was notable. She shares educational content and poetry on YouTube and tries to create podcasts, aligning with the school’s requirement for teachers to post open lessons online:

All our demonstrative lessons had to be recorded and uploaded to the school’s YouTube channel, the full forty-five minutes. Consent was not obtained, neither from me nor from the students. The administrator simply instructed us, and we had to agree. Since COVID, we have to do this every year, and it still feels uncomfortable (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

This quote may reveal a significant ethical concern regarding the institutional handling of digital content and privacy in educational settings. The compulsory publication of full-length classroom recordings without obtaining consent from either the teacher or students reflects a top-down approach that disregards fundamental principles of informed participation and data protection. Saniya's discomfort underscores the emotional and professional strain such practices can impose, particularly in contexts where regulatory frameworks are absent.

Saniya expressed strong criticism of the inaccessibility and ineffectiveness of state-sponsored professional development related to ML. She explained that:

[...] official seminars are frequently scheduled during regular class hours, forcing teachers to log in just for the record without being able to fully engage or benefit from the training. They say we need to take 72- or 84-hour courses [...] but we receive no real support from authorities (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

Teachers reported that these programmes were often asynchronous, consisting of pre-recorded video materials with no interactive component, leaving them without opportunities for feedback or clarification. Due to the limited PD opportunities, Saniya had to pay for additional online courses, many of which lacked subject-specific relevance and failed to meet attestation requirements. This experience may indicate a gap between top-down policy demands and the on-the-ground realities that teachers face daily:

We are not allowed to add my own topics into the given long-term plan. I integrate ML components to the topics that are in the plan. Only 3 teaching hours per week with 14-15 students makes my job difficult. I think more teaching hours would be beneficial to students and teachers (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

This finding underscores the limitations teachers face when curriculum flexibility is restricted. Although the teacher creatively integrates ML within existing topics, the rigid structure of the long-term plan prevents them from fully tailoring content to students' needs. Additionally, the combination of limited teaching hours and relatively large group sizes poses challenges to effective implementation. Compared to Oblys schools, three times less teaching hours with twice larger group sizes give additional barriers for ML practices.

In sum, Saniya's case presented the profile of a digitally motivated and socially engaged educator, whose growing ML potential is clear. Her case underscored the importance of structured teacher training and methodical guidance to bridge the gap between digital usage and transformative ML pedagogy in EFL classrooms.

5.1.3 Zhanna and Begim from Auyl school

Zhanna and Begim work at Auyl School, a state-run comprehensive school serving students from pre-primary to high school. The school enrolls between 500 to 1000 students and is administered by the District Department of Education. The school maintains Kazakh as the primary language of instruction and reflects the local community's educational needs. Zhanna has been teaching for 4 years, whilst Begim has 2 years of experience. Both are dedicated to the profession, contributing to the development of the students in rural communities.

5.1.3.1 Zhanna's story

Zhanna, a teacher-moderator (see Chapter 2), committed to guiding and supporting other teachers, through lesson planning or methodology workshops. Despite her relatively short teaching experience, Zhanna was recognized for her openness and proactive attitude, making her a valuable contributor to her school community. Zhanna, a dedicated English teacher from Auyl School, brought a blend of traditional teaching values and evolving digital practices into her classroom. Her teaching style reflected a steady transition toward integrating ML, shaped by both her rural school context and personal efforts in professional growth. With years of experience, she strives to adapt to changing educational demands while maintaining strong community ties and cultural relevance in her pedagogy. Zhanna graduated from a university in the western part of the country in 2018. In her interview, she reflected on her university experience, noting that most of her access to information was through mobile phones, which reduced the frequency of library visits. During her final year, she studied Business English and received practical ICT training in English, which introduced her to some aspects of ML:

At university, we had one course where we used digital tools to present business cases in English. It was the first time I thought about how we can use media seriously, not just for fun. That course helped me realise that ML matters (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

Zhanna defined ML in more student-centred terms and explained that:

ML is about using different media formats to explain difficult topics more easily (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

Given students' dependence on phones and social media, she believed that using familiar media formats increased lesson engagement. Furthermore, she linked ML to legal and safety awareness: *"Everyone should know their legal rights. There are scammers online, and children should be protected from that."* This framing reflects a protective orientation, often shaped by experiences of digital misinformation and a heightened concern for student vulnerability. In several cases, teachers admitted to having been misled by

online content themselves. This tendency may be connected to the sociocultural context of small, close-knit communities, where information is often accepted at face value rather than critically verified. As she reflected:

In our village, people mostly believe what is said, not many check if the information is real or from a reliable source. Even in our school WhatsApp group, the administration had to send messages like: 'Do not participate in the contest, it is fake mockery. If you already registered, withdraw (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

Such incidents suggest that for Auyl teachers, ML is understood not as an empowering tool for critique and expression, but primarily as a defence mechanism against deception and digital harm. The *Using media* domain was actively enacted by Zhanna. Classroom observations revealed that Zhanna integrates ML concepts into her teaching by helping students critically assess digital content, particularly from social media. She uses examples from her personal experience to explain the importance of verifying information. She shared in her interview:

For example, to distinguish whether information spread via social media or other media platforms is true or false, we certainly teach children how to do this. Even in my own experience, I receive various messages in chats, and when I see false information, I mark it as spam or fake. I apply the same approach when teaching my students, making sure to expose the falsehoods and help them recognise misinformation (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl school).

She also underscores the need for students to learn how to identify false information, especially on social media. In her journal, she reflected on her practical view of ML:

For me, media literacy is not just about theory but about practical skills, knowing how to check sources, spot fake news, and use technology safely. I always tell my students that it's not enough to know how to use a phone; they must know how to use it wisely (Reflective journal, Zhanna, Auyl school).

During a classroom activity, she divided the class into three teams, each representing a profile on a simulated Instagram account. Each team created a profile name and a description reflecting their group identity. Zhanna used the Instagram format as a game-based learning tool, awarding points for every correct answer to simulate social media engagement. She explained her approach:

I wanted to make the lesson engaging, so I created a class activity where each team had its own Instagram profile. For every correct answer, I gave the team a heart, just like likes on social media. Everyone nowadays wants to gain likes in the form of hearts, so this keeps them motivated and eager to participate (Classroom observation, Zhanna, Auyl school).

Zhanna actively used ICT tools in her teaching to engage students and simplify complex topics. During classroom observations, she was seen incorporating videos from YouTube to make lessons more relatable and understandable. In her interview, she explained her approach:

[...] delivering lessons in digital format makes the material more understandable to them. We need to relate to students in a way that speaks their language. Otherwise, they become bored if we rely solely on books or writing (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl school).

Zhanna also used social media for her professional development. In her reflective diary, she highlighted how platforms like YouTube and teacher communities on social media help her find creative ideas and teaching strategies. She believes that social media not only connects teachers but also helps them design more engaging lessons. As she noted in the interview:

All teachers can access social media to exchange ideas and find inspiration for interesting lessons. It helps us make lessons more engaging, especially since there's a constant battle for students' attention (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl school).

In her classroom practices, Zhanna consistently demonstrated an ethical pedagogy rooted in care, respect, and sensitivity to the local context of Auyl School. Her commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom environment was evident in her approach to lesson planning and interactions with students. Zhanna's ethical pedagogy extended beyond the lesson content itself. She often encouraged students to collaborate respectfully, listen to one another and challenge ideas without personal attacks. She underscores the importance of ethical media consumption and creation, the responsibility that comes with sharing media messages:

Before we share anything online, we talk about how it might affect others. I always ask them to think: 'Would you want someone to say this about you?' (Reflective Journal, Zhanna, Auyl school).

This approach underscored her belief that critical ML is not just about analysis but also about accountability and empathy. Zhanna structured the lesson to encourage learners to actively engage with extended fiction texts by guiding them through the analysis of the story "Kyz Zhibek" (a famous Kazakh epic). Through techniques like the "Sticker Story Bag" and "Prompts in a Jar," students worked collaboratively to understand the plot, characters, and themes of the story while connecting them to broader social and cultural meanings. These strategies facilitated students' critical reflection on narrative elements and fostered deeper text comprehension. During reading discussions, students evaluated narrative intent and character motivation, an entry point into analysing authors' purposes and underlying messages, which I reflected on in my classroom observation note:

[...] students created posters that summarised the key elements of the story, allowing them to engage in visual media production (Classroom observation, Zhanna, Auyl school).

These practices demonstrate Zhanna's commitment to fostering participatory media competencies and offering students meaningful opportunities to communicate ideas through multimodal formats. These lesson activities illustrated how Zhanna blends reading comprehension with ML skills, aligning her practice with the creative and reflective domains of the ML framework while maintaining relevance to students' linguistic and cultural contexts. Zhanna complements this by facilitating speaking activities in which students respond to these recordings through small-group discussions and by producing their own short-spoken reflections, thereby developing both oral fluency and critical engagement. Reflecting on her practice, she noted:

Even without advanced equipment, the voice recorder is sufficient. When students hear real voices discussing issues that matter, they feel included in the conversation and are more inclined to express their own views (Reflective Journal, Zhanna, Auyl school).

Through this integration of listening and speaking, Zhanna supported her students' basic engagement with media texts. However, tasks were predominantly aimed at foundational language skill development. Because teaching hours were limited to only three lessons per week, her focus remained on completing prescribed curriculum topics, which left little space for the intentional development of critical media literacy skills.

During my observations and interviews at Auyl School, Zhanna demonstrated a strong commitment to nurturing students' ability to deconstruct media texts. She often reflected on the importance of guiding students to look beyond the surface of media messages and question underlying ideologies:

When I showed my students a local news clip about rural life, I asked them, 'Why do you think they chose these images? What are they trying to show about us as villagers?' I wanted them to see that the media often presents us in limited ways, and that's something worth questioning (Reflective Journal, Zhanna, Auyl school).

Through such critical questioning, Zhanna empowered her students to analyse how media representations can reinforce stereotypes or conceal alternative narratives. This approach positioned her students to become critical consumers of media rather than passive recipients. Zhanna also recognised the importance of intertextuality, teaching students to connect ideas and representations across different media sources. She frequently juxtaposed multiple texts to foster critical comparison and discussion:

I showed students two TikTok videos about village life—one funny, one serious. I asked them to think about why these videos show different sides of our culture and what messages they send. Then, we discussed how

those messages might affect what people think about us (Reflective Journal, Zhanna, Auyl school).

While this task introduced students to differing portrayals of rural identity, the framing was addressed in only a superficial way, without structured analysis of media construction or intent. The video content served primarily as a hook to spark interest, rather than a subject for guided deconstruction. This approach falls short of ML, as it lacks the critical scaffolding needed to help students interrogate media messages. As such, it illustrates an emerging, but still undeveloped, conception of critical ML.

Zhanna acknowledged that her own skills in distinguishing fact from fiction in media are limited, especially when encountering persuasive or emotionally appealing content. Reflecting on several personal experiences, she shared:

When you hear some advertisements that promise too much, at first, I believe. Even in your mind you believe and want to gain more with less effort. I wanted to invest in Local Bank shares and was caught by mockery. This also happened with paid contests that later became illegal, and offers about author programmes were fake. I was caught by this in social media and WhatsApp messages (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl school).

This admission underscores her limited engagement with verification practices and reveals how familiarity and emotional appeal can override critical judgment. It suggests that while she values ML, her own conception remains underdeveloped, with minimal application of evaluative strategies in real-life contexts. Zhanna integrated writing and reading tasks strategically to support her students' development of critical ML. Through reading activities, she exposes students to a range of media texts from local news articles to social media posts and guides them to identify biases, perspectives, and missing voices:

During news framing, she asked students to highlight emotionally charged words in a short report and reflect on how language shapes readers' perceptions. Following this, she scaffolded writing tasks that required students to rewrite headlines and compose short commentaries critiquing the framing techniques they had analysed (Classroom observation, Zhanna, Auyl school).

Zhanna underscored the importance of both reading and writing as interconnected skills, explaining in her reflective diary:

When they see how words can twist meaning, they become more careful with their own words too (Reflective diary, Zhanna, Auyl School).

This approach ensured that writing was not just a mechanical exercise but a critical tool for deconstructing and responding to media, which empowered students to actively shape their own media messages with ethical and analytical awareness.

Creation and multimodality were not observed in Zhanna's critical media literacy practices. As a teacher in a rural school with limited access to digital devices and infrastructure, she faced practical constraints that made multimodal integration difficult to realise. Her lessons were based largely on printed or single-mode materials, and there was no evidence of tasks that required combining different media formats such as visuals, audio, or interactive tools. In terms of media creation, Zhanna did not appear to conceptualise this domain as essential to her pedagogy. Rather than designing or modelling the production of media texts, her focus remained on basic evaluation and protective strategies. This emphasis reflects her early stage of professional development, where critical analysis is still developing and confidence in media creativity remains low. Her current priorities lie in navigating and filtering media, rather than producing it for public or social engagement.

Classroom observations also highlighted the infrastructural challenges Zhanna faced. During one observed lesson, she had planned to conduct an online quiz to assess students' understanding using a digital platform. However, due to the technical issues, she had to change her plans:

The internet was not working, so Zhanna switched to a paper-based assessment. It was not what she planned, but the students still engaged well with the questions (Classroom observation, Zhanna, Auyil school).

Despite technical limitations, Zhanna used creative approaches to engage students and make lessons relatable. Zhanna's story revealed both the opportunities and challenges of implementing ML education in the rural schools settings in Kazakhstan, where digital access is not common, and structured ML programmes and reliable technological infrastructure were lacking. Despite Zhanna's efforts to foster critical ML in her classroom, there were several inhibiting factors that constrained her classroom practice. First, the lack of infrastructure significantly limited her ability to implement digital tasks. Her school had no stable internet connection, and she frequently noted the absence of basic equipment such as functioning projectors or student-accessible devices. Second, a limited access to diverse and updated media texts often restricted the range of perspectives she could present in her classroom, whereas traditional expectations of her rural school community resisted critical questioning approaches that she aimed to introduce. Third, time constraints with only three lessons per week with big class size. The core exam preparation left little flexibility to consistently embed ML lessons, which reduced opportunities for sustained critical engagement. These challenges highlighted the structural and cultural barriers that can hinder the development of ML practices in rural school contexts.

5.1.3.2 Begim's story

Begim is a teacher-researcher with 12 years of teaching experience at Auyl School. As a teacher-researcher, she applied reflective and creative methods, likely influencing curriculum work and school-based research. A graduate of a regional pedagogical university, she previously studied finance in English at an international university in Almaty City. She attributed her analytical mindset and independent research skills to the influence of a political science professor who emphasized critical inquiry skills, which she consciously integrated into her teaching practice:

We used to spend long hours in the library; it became a habit to seek answers beyond the textbook (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

This indicates how important initial teacher education is for developing not only teaching skills but also intellectual habits that help people become more media literate. Begim framed ML as a digital life skill essential for protection:

ML is being able to understand, analyse, and critically evaluate information (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

She accentuated the importance of ML in a world increasingly shaped by digital media. Her primary digital aid was her personal laptop, through which she integrated video and audio materials, especially such as YouTube clips to introduce and reinforce language content. Despite the lack of infrastructure with three interactive whiteboards for the entire school, she has adopted flexible approaches to media integration, noting that smaller class sizes (e.g., 12 students) allowed her to foster deeper engagement, while larger classes (up to 23 students) limited opportunities for individual attention.

Begim viewed ML not just as a set of analytical skills but as a vital means of empowering students to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. She believed that developing critical awareness of media messages was essential for protecting oneself from online manipulation, misinformation, and harassment. As she explained in her interview, she wanted her students:

[...] to be able to see through what the media shows them, so they don't just believe everything at face value and so they know how to protect themselves from the bad sides of social media too (Interview, Begim, Auyl school).

As such, it seemed that for Begim ML was inseparable from digital citizenship, equipping learners to engage thoughtfully, critically, and safely in online spaces.

She consistently designs lessons that require students to interpret and produce meaning across multiple modes, including visual, textual, auditory, and spatial. In her "Five Essential Questions" lesson, students analysed a news article on urban pollution accompanied by an image of smog over a city. They

were asked to interpret the message conveyed not just through language, but through visual framing, colour, and composition:

Before they even read the headline, they said, 'It looks dangerous'—the photo already gave them a feeling (Reflective Journal, Begim, Auyl School).

Begim used this moment to show how media meaning is constructed not only through words, but also through visual cues that guide emotional and interpretive responses. She encouraged learners to question how layout, font, colour, and imagery work together with language to influence perception.

During classroom observations and interviews, Begim demonstrated a distinctive form of ethical pedagogy grounded in the principles of inclusivity and democratic participation:

Her commitment to creating an equitable learning environment was evident in her efforts to amplify student voice and ensure that every learner had the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to classroom discussions. This approach not only fostered a sense of belonging but also reflected a deep respect for students' diverse perspectives and experiences (Classroom Observation, Begim, Auyl School).

While Begim has not yet adopted AI tools or advanced digital editing software, her pedagogical commitment is evident in her adaptive teaching methods and her strong focus on media ethics. She pays attention to how young people interact with the media:

I see how my daughter processes content on WhatsApp, it's the same with my students. [...] Sometimes they over trust what they see, other times they dismiss real facts. Helping them distinguish valuable information is crucial (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

Through this culturally responsive approach, Begim demonstrated an ethical pedagogy that not only developed students' critical thinking but also honoured their lived experiences and local identities.

Begim consistently integrated questioning strategies to cultivate students' critical engagement with information sources. As underscored in classroom discussions and reflected in her teaching philosophy, she encourages students to interrogate content credibility:

When one student shares information, a rapid discussion begins, with everyone agreeing, 'Yes, that is how it is.' They do not verify the reliability of the information; instead, they accept it as presented (Interview, Begim, Auyl school).

This concern shapes her lesson design, where students are prompted to consider whether the media they consume is trustworthy and accurate. However, her approach often relied on general discussions rather than explicit modelling or structured tasks. In her reflective journal, she acknowledged this gap:

I always tell students to be careful about what they read online, but sometimes I feel I do not explain how exactly they should check the source. I think I need better examples myself (Interview, Begim, Auyl school).

This admission suggests that while she values source evaluation, the pedagogical strategies to teach it explicitly remain underdeveloped, limiting students' ability to engage in deeper critical media analysis.

Her teaching of representation encourages students to question media portrayals not only for what they show, but for what and whom they leave out. Begim encourages students to recognise how media texts relate to and borrow from one another. In the lesson on “Free time activities”, students compared a local Kazakhstani show to a global franchise such as Survivor. The task pointed out shared elements, such as elimination rounds, suspenseful editing, and character archetypes, while prompting analysis of cultural variation in narrative style and values:

It's like they copied the format, but the local version shows more teamwork, less drama between people (Reflective Journal, Begim, Auyl School).

By guiding them to compare across formats and cultures, she helped students see media as a network of references not isolated messages. In the domain of Communicating with Media, Begim guided students in content creation tasks, such as designing posters and crafting short presentations:

These activities fostered student engagement and introduced them to the basic principles of message construction. As part of one assignment, students presented short news reports mimicking online media formats—a strategy that also contributed to the development of productive language skills (Classroom observation, Begim, Auyl school).

While such tasks supported expressive practice, Begim acknowledged that some students needed more support to transition from reproduction to creativity. As noted in her reflective journal:

Students improved in critical thinking, but more structured activities could help them engage more deeply with media creation tasks (Reflective journal, Begim, Auyl School).

Classroom observation evidence further supported these reflections. In her lesson on world's current affairs, students created short news summaries in groups, which was followed by peer discussions:

Although the presentations were well-structured, observation notes indicated that most students relied on written scripts and minimal improvisation, highlighting a gap between intended participatory ML goals and actual classroom implementation (Classroom observation, Begim, Auyl school).

Nonetheless, these efforts marked an important step toward integrating authentic communicative practices into media-based learning. In another lesson

on “News Bias” students rewrote short articles by shifting headlines and subheadings, exploring how subtle language changes affect reader interpretation:

Begim extended this by asking students to write brief commentaries on whose voices were missing from these articles and why. Through these varied writing tasks, Begim emphasized writing as a tool for both self-expression and critical examination, enabling students to navigate media messages thoughtfully and ethically (Classroom observation, Begim, Auyl School).

Her activities blended language development with critical reflection, encouraging students to produce writing that is both expressive and analytical. In Begim’s case, the creation domain was the least evident in her own teaching practice. While she actively used a range of media materials in lessons, she did not regularly engage in creating her own media resources for classroom use:

I would like to prepare my own materials, but I do not have the digital tools or training for that. It takes too much time, and I am not confident enough to design something from scratch (Reflective Journal, Begim, Auyl School).

She also expressed caution about allowing students to share their created content beyond the classroom:

And when I ask students to make media, it takes longer than we can allow, so it's usually left as a homework assignment. We never publish it online to share. We just show it in class (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

Her approach remained firmly within the classroom boundaries, oriented toward pedagogical safety and control rather than external engagement or public advocacy.

Nonetheless, some aspects of Begim’s practice encouraged emerging digital literacies. Despite lacking formal training in ML pedagogy, Begim’s teaching reflected a growing awareness of the competencies outlined in the conceptual framework:

[.....]additional teacher development in this area, stating that more structured training, access to curated materials, and cross-teacher collaboration would enhance both my preparedness and classroom outcomes (Reflective Journal, Begim, Auyl School).

Begim faced several inhibiting factors that limited the full realization of her pedagogical goals. Working within the resource-constrained context of Auyl School, she often encountered challenges such as limited access to up-to-date media technologies, unreliable internet connectivity, and the lack of professional development opportunities specifically focused on integrating critical ML into the curriculum:

[.....] students are interested in English learning, but we have few teaching hours, to devote to some creation activities. There are too many students in one class, sometimes when you give an opportunity to tell a couple of sentences to each of them already the lesson finishes (Reflective Journal, Begim, Auyl School).

Additionally, the prevailing exam-oriented culture and rigid curriculum requirements sometimes left little room for in-depth exploration of critical media analysis. These constraints made it difficult for Begim to consistently incorporate diverse media texts, sustain collaborative projects, or extend learning beyond the classroom walls, which were essential for developing students' critical ML skills holistically.

Begim and Zhanna both demonstrate limited and cautious engagement with ML. Their approaches remain confined to safe, protective strategies, focused on avoiding misinformation rather than fostering deeper critical thinking. Zhanna's activities are mostly surface-level and lack analytical depth, while Begim, supports creative media production. Neither teacher treats ML as a transformative or civic practice. Their pedagogy stays within the boundaries of exam preparation and infrastructural limitations, showing early-stage understanding rather than fully developed critical ML.

5.3 Cross-Case Analysis of EFL Teachers' Media Literacy

This section presents a cross-case analysis of the six EFL teachers' cases introduced in the previous part. I provide a deeper understanding of how EFL teachers' perceptions and practices of ML differ within their specific institutional contexts.

The analysis is structured around three broad thematic clusters. The first focuses on EFL teachers' *perceptions of ML*, exploring how they conceptualise media literacy, perceive its relevance to language education, assess their own confidence and self-efficacy in teaching it, and reflect on their personal engagement with media in everyday life. This cluster highlights the diverse ways in which teachers make sense of media literacy, ranging from technical familiarity to broader ethical and pedagogical orientations.

The second thematic cluster examines *teachers' classroom practices*. It interrogates how critical ML skills are demonstrated in practice, particularly through activities involving media deconstruction, representation, intertextuality, multimodality, and creative production. In addition, this part analyses how teachers *embed ML* within core language learning areas such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Classroom-level decisions about the use, understanding, and communication of media are explored alongside examples of ethical pedagogy, offering insight into the pedagogical strategies that support or at times, constrain the integration of ML into EFL instruction.

The final cluster considers the *enabling and inhibiting conditions* that shape teachers' capacity to engage with ML meaningfully. This includes the availability and quality of PD opportunities, the clarity and applicability of policy directives, access to digital tools and infrastructure, and the influence of school culture and organisational structures. Together, these factors illustrate how broader systemic and institutional conditions can intersect with teacher agency, ultimately informing how ML is approached in the classroom.

By presenting these themes across all 6 teachers' cases, the section seeks to move beyond individual experience to reveal structural patterns and contextual dynamics. In doing so, it offers a nuanced portrait of the current landscape of ML integration into English language teaching across three contrasting school environments.

5.3.1 EFL Teachers' Perceptions of Media Literacy

Teachers consider how relevant they perceive ML to be in language teaching, with some valuing it for linguistic input and others for critical thinking development. Teachers' confidence and self-efficacy in teaching ML are shaped by prior training and institutional support, while their own media habits influence how actively they engage with media in the classroom. Overall, the section accentuates how varied and context-specific these perceptions are, which helps understand the ways ML is integrated into practice.

The teacher's perspectives across Oblys, Qala, and Auyi schools underscores that ML is not a singular or uniformly understood concept but one that is deeply shaped by contextual realities, pedagogical beliefs, and infrastructural conditions. While all participating teachers recognise the relevance of media literacy to English language teaching, their interpretations and practices vary significantly. A shared recognition emerged across all schools that ML holds significant relevance for modern English language teaching. Teachers collectively acknowledged that in an era marked by digital saturation and students' growing reliance on media, ML is not optional but necessary. Despite differences in context and resources, all participants agreed on the fundamental functions of ML. These include helping students analyse media texts critically, filter reliable information, engage meaningfully with media content, and protect themselves from online risks. This shared understanding provides a common foundation upon which more context-specific approaches are developed.

Distinct contextual differences shape how teachers from the three schools conceptualise and implement ML. Teachers from Oblys school, such as Sabina and Aidana, adopt a critical and constructivist orientation toward ML. They actively integrate media into their teaching to encourage student inquiry, foster engagement, and amplify learner voice. This approach is underpinned by their strong academic preparation and relatively better access to digital tools.

In contrast, teachers from Qala school, including Saniya and Maral, approach ML through a relational and evaluative lens. While they acknowledge its significance, their practices often remain tentative and intuitive. Teachers from Auyl school, namely Begim and Zhanna, tend to interpret ML through an ethical-protectionist perspective. Their focus lies in safeguarding students from digital harm and misinformation. However, the absence of technological infrastructure and minimal institutional guidance restrict their ability to engage with ML at a deeper critical level. Their pedagogical choices reflect a cautious and pragmatic response to systemic constraints rather than an expansive or transformative engagement with media. Teachers such as Sabina and Aidana frame ML as a means of fostering critical thinking, and participation in knowledge construction. Their stress lies in equipping learners with the tools to navigate, analyse, and create media confidently and autonomously.

At Qala school, ML is viewed primarily as a form of responsibility. Teachers like Saniya and Maral recognise the importance of ML in preparing students for digital life but approach it through a lens of care, relational awareness, and evaluative practice. Their pedagogical efforts are guided by a desire to meet students' needs and encourage reflection, even if these efforts remain constrained by limited training or confidence.

In Auyl school, the dominant philosophy is one of a protection. Here, ML is closely associated with shielding students from online harm, misinformation, and exploitation. Teachers such as Zhanna and Begim focus less on critical media production or analysis and more on cultivating cautious engagement and digital safety. This reflects both a moral commitment to student wellbeing and the constraints of a rural educational environment.

Collectively, this philosophical divergence illustrates that ML practice is shaped not only by teachers' technical knowledge, but by their underlying values and the structural and cultural conditions in which they work.

The narratives of the participating teachers reveal a nuanced and evolving sense of confidence in their ability to teach ML. Rather than a static or uniform level of self-efficacy, what emerges is a developmental trajectory, marked by reflection, discovery, and growing awareness of existing competence. This progression is neither linear nor identical across participants; instead, it is shaped by individual experiences, levels of prior exposure, and the degree of conscious engagement with ML as a pedagogical construct. For example, Saniya's case (Qala school), while still developing her understanding of ML, shows growing confidence as she begins to recognise how her everyday practices align with its core principles. Her evolving awareness marks the early stages of building self-efficacy through reflective engagement.

In the case of Begim and Zhanna from Auyl school, their confidence in teaching with digital media emerges from necessity rather than design. The digital practice is shaped by an environment marked by infrastructural scarcity and institutional neglect. This not only signals a lack of systemic support but

also reveals the burden placed on individual teachers to compensate for systemic gaps. As she acknowledged:

There's no equipment here. I just bring my own laptop and try to find something that can help the students understand better. I mostly learn by doing. (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

While she demonstrates adaptability, her engagement with media remains largely technical and constrained, rather than critical or intentional in terms of pedagogy. Zhanna's experience further illustrates the constraints on professional development in rural contexts. Although she attempted to enrol in a media literacy course offered by a local university, logistical challenges hindered completion. As she explained:

I started the course, but it was too far away, and we had our regular classes at the same time, so I could not finish it (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

This partial and interrupted exposure to ML reveals how geographic and institutional limitations restrict teachers' access to sustained training, resulting in practices that prioritise media comprehension and safety rather than deeper critical engagement.

In contrast to teachers from Qala and Auyl schools, Aidana and Sabina from Oblys school demonstrate a more explicit and confident enactment of media literacy, a distinction that can be attributed to their prior exposure to ML-focused training and international engagement. Aidana participated in the American Councils' English for Media Literacy course and subsequently developed and delivered a lesson with an ML component that earned her second place in a national teaching contest:

I participated in the English for Media Literacy course online. There, I learned specific strategies for promoting media literacy in the classroom, like asking students to question sources and reflect on what they watch. It really helped me structure my lessons better (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Sabina likewise attributes her confidence in teaching ML to a robust critical thinking foundation acquired during her university education. Their professional development has been enriched through greater exposure to international advisers and digital resources, which has shaped their integration of ML as both a cognitive and civic practice in the classroom:

We had a strong critical thinking course at university, that's why I believe I can also teach my students to question, to analyse, to think deeper (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

Compared to their peers in Qala and Auyl schools, whose engagement with ML tends to be intuitive or limited by structural constraints, Aidana and Sabina's practice reflects a clearer alignment with ML education.

Maral and Saniya from Qala school represent a more tentative and exploratory engagement with media literacy, shaped less by institutional support

or prior ML-specific training and more by personal reflection and relational pedagogies. Maral openly acknowledges her limited technological confidence, stating, *“I feel like I do not know many technologies”* (Interview, Maral, Qala School). Yet her active efforts to enhance her practice, including preparing for CELTA and experimenting with student-led projects like “Biased Pizza” and “Reporters in Pajamas,” demonstrate a growing belief in the pedagogical value of media-rich tasks. Her emerging self-efficacy is grounded not in technical proficiency, but in a commitment to understanding her students’ interests and fostering connection through classroom innovation. As she explains:

I want to find methods that bring me closer to the children, to understand how they think and what matters to them (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

Similarly, Saniya’s sense of competence in teaching ML emerges not from structured training but from a cultivated habit of independent inquiry. Reflecting on her university experience, she shared:

We would often spend hours buried in the library, searching, comparing, and questioning. Over time, it became second nature to go beyond the textbook and think more critically about the information we found (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

This research-oriented mindset, while valuable, has yet to translate into a fully confident application of ML principles in the classroom. Her integration of media remains cautious and sporadic, often shaped by curricular demands and limited by institutional constraints. Together, Maral and Saniya illustrate a case of evolving but context-bound teacher agency. In contrast to the more confident and resource-supported practices seen in Oblys school, their ML enactments are exploratory, relational, and developing, suggesting that without systemic training and infrastructural support, even reflective teachers may struggle to transform intent into ML pedagogy.

The participating teachers articulate a rich and multifaceted understanding of ML, grounded in their everyday classroom practices and informed by the specific sociocultural context in which they work:

ML, in my view, is the ability to find the right information when searching. It means knowing how to identify what is true or false and filtering the information I bring into the classroom (Interview, Aidana, Oblys school).

Her focus is on protecting learners from misinformation, reflecting a sense of ethical responsibility that is more evaluative than exploratory. Maral, also from Qala school, echoes this protective stance, though with a more relational lens. While she admits:

The most difficult part is actually myself, not to be one-sided or fooled. That’s why I try to prepare more carefully when I bring authentic materials to class. I avoid controversial topics (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

Their practices reflect a careful, evaluative stance shaped by concerns about misinformation and a desire to maintain trust in the classroom. In the rural setting of Auyl school, teachers such as Begim and Zhanna adopt a distinctly protectionist approach to media literacy, viewing it as a means to safeguard students from digital misinformation and harmful content. As Begim stated:

In WhatsApp messenger, they never check what is sent, once one person shares it, everyone just forwards it. There were a lot of instances where people could not protect their personal information and were simply fooled (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

Zhanna's perspective underscores a deeply rooted concern for student safety in digitally unsupervised environments:

We need protection, even banning phones is good [...] at home there should be parental controls. But in villages, we mostly live in extended families, and grandparents often just give their phones to children, so there's no control. As ML skills are low, students are vulnerable (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

Her stress on regulation both in school and at home reflects a belief that students' media literacy remains low and, in the absence of adult mediation, poses real risks, particularly in rural settings where generational gaps in digital awareness can leave young users vulnerable.

Taken together, these perspectives illustrate a shared understanding that ML involves more than just technical skills. It requires teachers to critically engage with the media, make informed decisions about the materials they use, and consider the ethical and psychological implications of those choices. Importantly, their views reflect a culturally grounded approach, shaped by the educational realities and social concerns of their local context. These culturally embedded understandings naturally inform how teachers perceive the relevance of media literacy within the specific pedagogical demands of language teaching.

Across the three schools, teachers share a foundational belief that media literacy is vital to contemporary English language teaching. It is not perceived as an isolated skill, but as an embedded pedagogical practice that shapes lesson planning, content selection, and student engagement. This shared recognition, however, manifests differently depending on teachers' pedagogical orientations, training histories, and institutional environments.

At Qala School, both the principal and EFL teachers conceptualise media literacy as an evolving necessity within contemporary education, though their understandings vary in specificity and depth. The principal presents a broad and affirmative view of ML, positioning it as vital for both students and staff in adapting to digital transformation. She links ML with institutional transparency and community outreach, reflecting on how social media has replaced traditional communication methods:

Twenty years ago, we only shared our teaching experience through seminars... now, anyone can follow the life of the school through social networks (Principal, Qala school).

This shift illustrates her recognition of how digital platforms have altered the role of media in educational leadership and school visibility. EFL teachers similarly regard ML as important, though their perspectives reflect differing emphases. Teacher 2 framed ML primarily in terms of technical proficiency, describing it as the ability *“to use digital platforms effectively in the classroom.”* In contrast, Teacher 5 offered a more critical interpretation, stating that ML involves *“teaching students not to believe everything they read, especially on social media.”* This comment reveals a concern with helping students navigate misinformation, suggesting that for some, ML encompasses both evaluative and ethical dimensions of media use.

ML at Oblys School is articulated by both the principal and individual EFL teachers as a vital intellectual skill set necessary for critical engagement in a digital age. Teachers emphasize its cognitive dimensions, particularly the ability to evaluate and filter vast quantities of online content. Teacher 3, reflecting on the changing media environment, remarked: *“In the past we lacked information, and now we are experiencing information overload.”* This succinctly illustrates her awareness of the shift from information scarcity to a saturated media landscape and the consequential need for discernment.

Other educators explicitly define ML in analytical terms. Teacher 6 stated: *“I believe it is about analyzing and critically evaluating information correctly.”* Her interpretation aligns with broader educational goals of fostering independent, evaluative thinking among students. Similarly, Teacher 8 viewed media literacy as universally indispensable, noting:

I think media literacy is a necessary skill for everyone today, because without the filtering messages people will be easily misled and unable to develop (Teacher 8, Oblys school).

At the leadership level, the school principal situates ML within a broader socio-educational urgency, stating: *“The very concept of media literacy has become a highly relevant issue; I believe it is necessary.”* This acknowledgement from the principal underscores a systemic recognition of ML as an essential competency in light of accelerating technological developments and their implications for pedagogy.

Together, these statements reflect a shared institutional awareness that media literacy is not a peripheral digital skill but a foundational academic and civic competency in contemporary education.

Together, these perspectives point to an emerging institutional awareness of ML’s importance, albeit one that remains informal and varied. While both leadership and teaching staff acknowledge its relevance, there is as yet no unified pedagogical framework guiding its implementation. This reflects a wider trend in schools where ML is recognised as urgent but underdefined, and

where professional experience, rather than systemic support, shapes educators' understandings.

In Oblys school, Aidana and Sabina approach media literacy through a critical and constructivist lens. Their teaching promotes student inquiry and independent evaluation of information. This approach is shaped by their prior participation in international programmes and ML, specific training, which contributes to their confidence and ability to apply media critically:

We were taught to question everything, why a text was created, by whom, and for what reason. That became a habit for me in lesson planning, and it helps students think deeper too (Interview, Sabina, Oblys school).

Aidana's classroom practice reflects a cautious and disciplined approach to media use. While she gained confidence through her participation in the American Councils' online course, which taught her to build purposeful, task-based lessons around media, she continues to rely primarily on printed textbooks and hardcopy materials. She perceives these as more trustworthy and ethically appropriate for classroom use, particularly in safeguarding students from unsuitable content:

When I use media in lessons, I mostly rely on textbooks and printed materials. They are reliable and appropriate for students. If I use anything digital, it must be age-appropriate and fit the lesson. I do not show anything random or controversial (Interview, Aidana, Oblys school).

When she does incorporate digital materials, she is careful to ensure they are strictly age-appropriate and relevant to the lesson aims. This selective use of digital media reflects her belief in maintaining a controlled and responsible pedagogical environment.

Maral articulates a forward-looking yet pragmatic view of media engagement. Acknowledging students' shifting attention patterns and affinity for short-form content, she sees platforms like TikTok not as distractions but as cultural texts that can be pedagogically repurposed. Her use of ICT is grounded in empathy and student connection, with the aim of bridging popular media habits and sustained academic focus. Her reflective journal entries suggest a growing belief in the media's potential to shape meaningful learning if employed intentionally. Begim captures this balanced perspective when she states:

Sometimes they over trust what they see, other times they dismiss real facts. Helping them distinguish valuable information is crucial (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

As a response, she foregrounds media analysis as an ethical responsibility, rooted in careful judgement rather than enthusiasm or avoidance. Her attitude reflects a belief in slow, deliberate teaching that privileges discernment over novelty. Saniya's engagement reflects a transitional phase. Initially unsure about media literacy's role, her growing exposure has shifted

her stance from passive adoption to more deliberate incorporation. Her attitude is now one of cautious optimism, as she begins to see media not just as a supplementary resource but as an integral part of her evolving teaching identity.

Synthesising these accounts, it becomes clear that teachers' attitudes toward media are not polarised between rejection and embrace but lie along a continuum from cautious gatekeeping to creative integration. What unifies these perspectives is a shared recognition of the media's pervasive role in learners' lives and a commitment to mediating that role in pedagogically and ethically responsible ways. Whether through critical restraint, enthusiastic experimentation, or adaptive pragmatism, each teacher engages with the media in a manner reflective of their broader educational values, professional confidence, and institutional realities. This nuanced spectrum of attitudes offers valuable insight into the complex ways media is negotiated, rather than merely used, in language education.

The teachers' reflections reveal a consistent and strongly held belief in the centrality of ML to effective language education. Far from viewing ML as an optional or supplementary element, the participants see it as deeply intertwined with the communicative goals and practical demands of EFL instruction. Their perspectives reflect an understanding that language learning today necessarily unfolds within a media environment. What becomes clear across the narratives is that ML is not viewed as an additional burden or a separate content strand. Rather, it is understood as an existing pedagogical practice that underpins and enhances the teaching of language. This embeddedness is especially evident in the ways teachers use real-world media to contextualise vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. The inclusion of current, authentic sources allows students to encounter language in use, to interpret meaning in context, and to engage with content that is both linguistically rich and culturally relevant.

Furthermore, this growing recognition of ML as integral to their work appears to have a motivational impact. Teachers express a renewed sense of purpose and confidence, realising that they are already practicing ML and now have a framework to build on it more deliberately. This shift from unconscious competence to intentional application represents a meaningful evolution in their professional identity and instructional design.

In sum, the perceived relevance of ML to language teaching is not only affirmed but deeply internalised by the participants. It is seen as an enabling force, both a methodological tool and a pedagogical imperative, that strengthens the effectiveness, engagement, and authenticity of EFL instruction in a digital age.

5.3.2 Teachers' Practices of Media Literacy

The findings on teachers' ML practices, presented across three interconnected domains driven from the conceptual framework. The first domain, Using Media, explores how teachers' access, select, and adapt media texts for instructional purposes, reflecting foundational engagement with multimodality and intertextuality. It considers how teachers use media to support language instructions while promoting responsible and ethical media consumption. The second domain, Understanding Media, examines how teachers assist students in thinking critically about media. This includes critically analysing multimodal content, breaking down persuasive techniques, and questioning representational and ideological aspects. Finally, data focus on teachers' media production and interaction. It captures how teachers create media texts with ethical and critical awareness, and how language skills are integrated into participatory tasks. I present findings drawing on the domains outlined in the Table 2 to evaluate how ML is enacted through ethical pedagogy and core language skills.

5.3.2.1 The Using Media Domain

Teachers discussed how they incorporate digital tools and platforms into their classrooms to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. A teacher from the city school mentioned the use of social networks to make lessons more interactive, engaging students through questioning and collaborative inquiry. This demonstrates a proactive approach to integrating technology into the learning process, making lessons more relevant and accessible to students. Another significant code was "Communication," where ICT is employed as a tool to facilitate communication between teachers, students, and parents. As Maral teacher from the city school emphasized the role of ICT in ensuring that everyone involved in the educational process is informed and engaged, underscoring the importance of maintaining strong communication channels, particularly in a digital age where information can be disseminated quickly and effectively.

However, teachers in rural areas highlighted several challenges in accessing media and technology. A teacher from Auyi School shared:

We have limited internet access, and sometimes even downloading simple educational videos takes a long time. I often rely on offline resources because I cannot always guarantee a stable connection during lessons (Interview, Begim, Auyi School).

This lack of reliable internet makes it difficult for rural teachers to fully integrate digital tools into their classrooms, limiting students' exposure to diverse media content.

In contrast, teachers from Oblys Schools, while facing fewer challenges than their rural counterparts, still reported difficulties. Aidana, a teacher from Oblys School, note:

Our school has better access to the internet than some rural schools, but there are still times when connectivity issues disrupt our lessons. I try to prepare backup materials, but it can be frustrating when I want to use online resources for media analysis (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This indicates that while regional schools have relatively better infrastructure compared to rural areas, challenges in consistent access to media resources remain.

Teachers from Qala School, representing urban settings, acknowledged the challenge of keeping pace with technological advancements despite having better access. Maral, a city schoolteacher, stated:

We are trying to develop and transform our lessons in accordance with the pace of ICT development (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

This underscores the continuous effort required to stay updated with new tools and platforms while ensuring that technology is effectively integrated into the curriculum.

A recurring theme across all three school settings was the influence of teachers' age and experience on their engagement with digital tools and media literacy instruction. The data revealed a clear generational divide, particularly in how teachers approached the integration of technology in EFL classrooms. Aidana, the most experienced teacher from Oblys school, exemplified a more traditional approach. Despite supporting students' exposure to media, she deliberately excluded teaching digital tools in her lessons, believing students were already more capable in that area. She stated:

They know better than me how to do video editing or make presentations as they are digital natives. I focus on the content—I give the task, and they complete it in the way they know. My job is to teach the language and content, not the technology. Students' results are usually amazing, myself cannot do such appealing presentations (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Another notable case is that of a mid-career teacher, Saniya from Qala school, who also refrained from teaching the technical aspects of media production. Like Aidana, she believed that students were already digitally adept:

I don't teach the technical part of doing presentations. They don't need me for that, they know how to make slides, use AI tools, and create more engaging presentations than I can. Sometimes I even learn from them, they show me new apps and tricks (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

Saniya's case suggests that the generational gap may not be strictly tied to age, but also to mindset and teacher identity. While she is younger than Aidana, she shares a similar belief that media creation skills are intuitive for students, and therefore not a necessary focus of classroom instruction. This reinforces a

broader pattern where even tech-aware teachers may underestimate the pedagogical value of explicitly teaching digital competencies, assuming that students' surface-level fluency equates to deeper media literacy. While this perspective acknowledges student autonomy, it may limit opportunities for structured and critical engagement with media.

In contrast, teachers such as Sabina and Maral demonstrated a more hands-on approach, actively guiding students through the process of digital media creation. Sabina, a novice teacher from Oblys school, explained:

I show them how to make their presentations using Canva and help them record their audio clips for storytelling. Many students don't actually know how to do this properly, they need guidance (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

Similarly, Maral from Qala school described teaching students both the linguistic and technical elements of media production:

I include time in my lessons to teach how to structure their presentation, use design tools, and edit their videos. It's all part of learning how to communicate effectively (Interview, Maral, Qala School)

These contrasting perspectives underscore the generational gap not only in digital confidence but also in assumptions about students' needs. While experienced teachers like Aidana viewed digital production as beyond their scope, younger teachers integrated media literacy as a core component of EFL instruction.

The classroom observations and teacher interviews revealed that ineffective use of media was present to varying degrees across all three school settings, including urban, regional, and rural contexts. While access to digital tools was generally seen as a positive development, the pedagogical use of media often lacked the critical, guided structure necessary for meaningful engagement with content.

At Qala School, Maral, an urban EFL teacher, explained that she often shows English-language films as a form of classroom reward:

I show movies in English classes as a reward for children when no one fails exams. As children ask for it, sometimes it is good just to tune in and enjoy movies in English. (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

Although this practice may foster a relaxed and motivating environment, the use of films in this context was not integrated into instructional objectives. There was no structured pre-viewing, guided viewing, or post-viewing analysis, which limited students' opportunities to engage critically with the content or develop media literacy skills. Similarly, at Oblys School, Sabina reported using English films after completing unit tasks, especially when students appeared fatigued:

I show English films when children are tired and all the tasks for the unit are finished. I don't give while or pre-viewing tasks, but I give post-

viewing tasks such as free writing or creative writing about ideas seen in the film (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

While Sabina's approach attempts to connect media use with student output, the lack of structured engagement during the viewing process suggests missed opportunities for deeper analysis of themes, language use, or media messaging. Post-viewing activities were creative but did not explicitly guide students in interpreting the film's messages, audience, or cultural context, key aspects of critical media literacy.

Zhanna used a short video clip in her lesson at Auyl School. Even though the media seemed to be part of the lesson plan, important parts of ML, like tasks to do before watching, prompts to do while watching, critical questioning, or talking about the purpose and framing of the content, were missing. There was no reverse listening, no stopping to get students involved, and no encouraging them to think about what the video was trying to say. As the lesson went on, I waited for the teacher to go back to the video to look at it again or think about it some more, but that never happened. These kinds of activities, whether they are used as rewards, to fill time at the end of a unit, or just to show how to use technology, do not encourage the kind of critical inquiry that is essential for good ML education.

Teachers use digital tools in different ways depending on the type of school they work in, whether it is urban, regional, or rural. Regional schools like Oblys have more chances to use advanced digital platforms, but rural schools like Auyl have a lot of problems because they do not have the appropriate infrastructure. Qala Schools, which are in the middle of the two, have moderate access but still face some problems from time to time. These differences affect how much students can learn about media. Oblys schools have a clear advantage when it comes to using a variety of media resources.

Intertextuality was a moderately employed domain, mostly demonstrated by Aidana and Saniya, who are also the most experienced teachers in the sample. Their use of guided text comparison and source analysis suggests that this skill may require more pedagogical confidence and planning, which less experienced teachers have yet to develop. This points to the need for targeted support to integrate intertextuality more widely across practice.

In Aidana's Grade 7 lesson titled "*Bias by Placement*" (Table 6), students compared the layout and headline structure of two newspaper pages presenting the same story in different positions. As outlined in her lesson notes, students first described what caught their attention visually, then discussed how content placement might reflect perceived importance. This lesson, textual relationships (Table 7), required students to move beyond literal reading into structural interpretation. In her reflection, Aidana noted, "*Students began asking why certain stories are put at the top—one said, 'They want us to care more about that one.'*" Such insights reflect the growing awareness that presentation shapes perception.

Teachers' engagement with multimodality reflected a deliberate instructional strategy rooted in the realities of contemporary media use, where communication depends not solely on language but on the orchestration of visual, auditory, and textual modes. Across the observed classrooms, teachers designed tasks that positioned multimodal literacy not as a peripheral skill, but as central to media literacy instruction. This was particularly evident in the ways teachers prepared students to decode and produce meaning through layered, mode-rich texts that mirror authentic digital communication.

In Zhanna's Grade 8 lesson "Kyz-Zhibek", students were asked to compare traditional oral storytelling with its modern media adaptation in a short, animated video. Rather than focusing purely on content, Zhanna encouraged them to evaluate the combination of visual imagery, music, and dialogue. As noted in her reflective journal:

We talked about why the same story feels different when you watch it and when you read it. What the music adds. What the visuals do (Reflective journal, Zhanna, Auyl school).

This reflects Understanding multiple modes, an exploration of how distinct semiotic elements collaborate to create narrative effect. The lesson helped students perceive that meaning is not fixed in text but shaped dynamically across media forms.

In the observed classrooms, ML was not treated as a parallel focus to language instruction but was interwoven into the development of core EFL skills. Teachers integrated ML through reading, listening, speaking, and writing in varying degrees, with some skills more prominently used as vehicles for critical engagement. This section traces that integration from the most to least commonly employed modalities, underlying how ML concepts were embedded in language-based tasks.

In Aidana's Grade 7 lesson "Bias by Placement", students compared two newspaper front pages with reordered stories to examine how layout influences perceived importance. As noted in her reflective journal, the discussion evolved into a critique of editorial choices and implicit messaging. She noted one student's interpretation, which encapsulated the depth of their engagement:

They want us to think this story is more important... If the story about pollution is at the bottom and the celebrity story is at the top, what does that suggest about what matters in society? (Reflective Journal, Aidana, Oblys School).

This moment exemplified how reading in the classroom was transformed into a site of ideological critique, where learners not only extracted meaning from text but interrogated its constructed nature. In the participating classrooms, ethical pedagogy emerged as a defining dimension of ML practice, one that consistently linked analysis and production to broader questions of responsibility, harm, and representation. Teachers positioned media not simply

as a linguistic or informational field, but as a space where ethical judgement must be cultivated.

Sabina framed her lessons around a similar ethos, presenting ML as both a cognitive and moral competence. Her students produced digital campaigns on environmental awareness, and she prompted revisions with the question:

Before you post or publish anything, ask yourself, could this mislead someone? Could it be harmful? (Lesson Observation, Sabina, Oblys School).

Her reflective journal reinforced this stance:

ML isn't just about analysing texts, it's about teaching students to be thoughtful, responsible communicators (Reflective diary, Sabina, Oblys school).

Her pedagogy modelled care, encouraging students to weigh the societal impact of their choices in both content and tone.

5.3.2.2 Media Analysis Domain

Media analysis tasks were a key feature of the observed classrooms, designed to help students interpret, question, and understand media messages critically. These tasks appeared consistently across urban, regional, and rural schools, with teachers adapting their approaches based on context and available resources. In these lessons, students engaged in comparing media texts, identifying persuasive language, and reflecting on framing and bias.

Grouping similar practices, Aidana, Saniya, and Begim consistently implemented comparative language analysis tasks in their lessons, though they varied in depth and technological integration. At Oblys School, Aidana leveraged interactive slides and projector-based discussions to support nuanced comparisons, providing immediate visual cues for analysis. Saniya at Qala School employed simpler methods, using printed articles and worksheets but ensuring thorough exploration of bias and framing. Begim at Auyl School relied on notebook-based exercises, focusing on basic text comparisons without technology. Despite differences in resources, all three teachers aimed to develop students' ability to question the reliability and tone of media texts.

In contrast, Sabina, Maral, and Zhanna concentrated on media analysis tasks that involved identifying persuasive language and visual strategies. Sabina at Oblys School, teaching in a well-equipped setting, used magazine covers and social media posts on digital boards to highlight how visual design influences readers. Maral at Qala School used limited technology but structured lessons to discuss how reality shows shape viewers' understanding through editing and emotional appeal.

A third group of media analysis tasks appeared in unique lessons that integrated creative elements. For example, Maral's role-play assignments allowed students to simulate news reporting, encouraging them to adopt

multiple perspectives and critically reflect on media production. Sabina's tasks included designing short social media posts that challenged stereotypes, blending analytical skills with creative outputs.

In rural areas, game-based learning takes a more traditional approach due to resource limitations. This practice I observed during Begim teacher's lesson, here the episode:

I used a fly swatter game to teach students how word choices carry different connotations. When they compared 'bustling' and 'crowded,' they clearly saw how language can shape emotional meaning

(Interview, Begim, Auyl School)

Zhanna noted the educational value of classic games, stating that:

I use a message-passing activity where students relay information through a chain, demonstrating how details can become altered along the way. This playful exercise engages students while teaching them about the challenges of maintaining communication accuracy (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

Besides, Zhanna, with minimal digital tools, worked with printed materials and the occasional use of a projector and computer, guiding students to reflect on how layout and colour choices affect message interpretation.

Text analysis was also a common approach, frequently incorporating activities that involve questioning media content, analysing diverse text topics and styles, and examining linguistic features. In urban schools, text analysis often includes structured examination of different media forms. As Saniya teacher explained:

Students are encouraged to ask critical questions about news articles or online posts, which helps them identify bias and understand media messages more deeply (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

I observed Saniya using authentic newspapers and magazines in her classes, placing significant emphasis on guiding students to understand and analyse texts:

In one lesson, we analysed a news article about social media. I asked students why the writer used words like 'harmful' and 'addictive.' They understood it was to create concern. This helped them see how language shapes opinion (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

Rural schoolteachers also adapted text analysis to local resources, focusing on traditional printed materials due to limited digital access. Zhanna rural teacher observed:

With limited access to digital media, we work with newspapers and local magazines, helping students develop skills in recognising persuasive language and separating fact from opinion (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

Discussion-based methods, such as debates and small group conversations, were also widely employed. In city schools, teachers integrated

discussion to foster critical engagement among students. As Maral teacher noted:

We use structured debates to encourage students to express their views on current events, which not only builds their language skills but also enhances their critical thinking. Debates develop all 4 language skills plus media literacy (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

In rural schools, discussion often takes the form of collaborative group work due to limited class resources. One teacher shared:

Group discussions allow students to learn from each other and build confidence in expressing their thoughts on issues relevant to their community (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

In rural schools, group discussions help students build confidence and engage with community issues despite limited resources.

Finally, research-based teaching, including projects, scientific inquiries, and polls, was utilised by teachers. In urban settings, research-based methods typically involve projects that integrate technology and independent inquiry. As one teacher described:

Students conduct mini-research projects on social issues, collecting data and presenting findings, which fosters both media literacy and research skills (Interview, Saniya, Qala School).

In rural settings, research-based learning takes a simpler form, focusing on surveys or local observations. One teacher explained:

We conduct basic surveys or observations around the school or village, teaching students to gather and analyse information systematically (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

Teacher stressed the importance of inquiry-based learning within the context of activities notes:

I start with an inquiry question, then guide students through small-group discussions and problem-solving tasks. Finally, they share findings with the class and reflect on their learning, which I find more useful than simply explaining the content (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

This example underscores how Maral integrates media analysis into her lessons by embedding it within an inquiry-based learning approach. By prompting students to discuss and solve problems collaboratively, she creates space for critical questioning and interpretation of media texts, aligning with Hobbs (2024) who argues that media literacy must involve active analysis, reflection, and dialogue. This method supports deeper learning by positioning students as active investigators of media messages, rather than passive recipients of information.

Teachers across all schools adapted media analysis tasks to their contexts while maintaining a consistent focus on helping students detect bias, identify framing, and understand the persuasive techniques in media texts. This practice

not only supported language learning but also fostered critical engagement with media—an essential goal of media literacy education.

Critical ML domains. Deconstruction, as operationalised in classroom planning and instruction, emerged as a core pedagogical strategy across the case schools. It was not limited to spontaneous classroom talk but was embedded in lesson planning, long-term instructional sequences, and formal teaching programmes.

In Oblys school Aidana's practice exemplifies deconstruction as an intentional approach aimed at revealing the ideological work of media texts. In her mid-term plan for Grade 7 English, she included lesson objectives such as exploring how advertising shapes consumer perception and identifying emotional appeals in product messaging:

I wanted them to see how language and emotion are used not just to inform, but to influence. I wanted them to understand that the media does not simply give information. It uses language and emotion to shape how we think and feel (Reflective Diary, Aidana, Oblys school).

Sabina, also from Oblys School, adopted a similar approach to Aidana:

I chose to show two TikTok videos on the same issue. I asked students to identify what information was included and what might have been left out. This helped them understand how different media frame the same topic in different ways (Reflective Diary, Sabina, Oblys school).

This illustrates how Sabina guided her students to compare narratives and critically assess the ways in which media shape meaning. Her teaching moved beyond comprehension into analysis, drawing attention to how editorial choices affect audience perception. During the observed session, Sabina guided learners through structured reflection questions, prompting them to note not only what was said, but how and why it was presented in that way. This clearly aligns with focus on encouraging critical awareness of selective framing.

Begim and Zhanna, both based at Auyl School, implemented deconstruction through lessons that examined structural and multimodal aspects of media influence. While Begim focused on institutional bias and the politics of ownership, Zhanna extended the concept into the interplay of message and form, using culturally relevant narratives. Begim's contribution to deconstruction also included original, interactive methods that bridged creative practice with critical reflection. One example involved students analysing media coverage of a local success story through comparative and hands-on activities:

They compared how the story of 'Olympiad winner Aisha' was told in a national and a regional website and social media, after creation of their own biased pizzas (Reflective Diary, Begim, Auyl school).

This approach allowed students to explore how language and presentation vary across outlets and to link media framing with audience targeting. Zhanna guided her Grade 7 students through basic questions about media control and ownership using simple and relatable examples. Her aim was to help them

understand that news does not always reflect an objective truth, but can be shaped by the people behind it:

We talked about who made the video and why. I told them that what we see online often depends on who created it and what they want us to think (Reflective Diary, Zhanna, Auyl school).

By connecting media content to its source, Zhanna encouraged her students to begin questioning what lies behind the messages they consume, even at a basic level suited to younger learners.

At Qala School, both Saniya and Maral engaged with aspects of deconstruction in their ML teaching, but their approaches were less structured and less explicitly focused on power or ideology compared to teachers from Oblys and Auyl schools. Their efforts showed early-stage integration of critical thinking, primarily through class discussion and comparison tasks, rather than through formalised analysis.

Saniya introduced the idea of media bias through a Grade 8 lesson titled “Hoax.” Students viewed three versions of the same story: a news report, a satirical video, and a social media thread. This allowed them to notice differences in tone and purpose, but the focus remained at surface level. As she explained:

They saw how the news sounded serious, but the video made them laugh. I asked, ‘Why does it feel different?’ We talked about how messages can change depending on who shares them (Reflective Diary, Saniya, Qala school).

In a unit on advertising, the teacher guided students to reflect on emotional language and visual cues, but not necessarily on who creates the messages or why. As she described:

I ask them, ‘Why do you think this ad is so convincing?’ and ‘What words make you want to buy it?’ It is more about seeing how language works than about who is behind it (Reflective Diary, Maral, Qala school).

Unlike the teachers from Auyl and Oblys who embedded deconstruction within broader themes of power and representation, Saniya and Maral focused on how media feels and functions rather than on its social or ideological construction. Their work illustrates the beginning stages of critical engagement, where classroom attention is on message impact rather than deeper structural critique.

Representation emerged as a key strand of teachers’ critical ML practice, reflecting their commitment to engaging students in discussions around identity, culture, and ideology in media texts. These practices were evident in both lesson planning and instructional delivery, where teachers used visual, textual, and digital materials to prompt critical reflection on how individuals and groups are portrayed. Cultural Portrayal was central to Maral’s strategy for broadening student understanding of cultural representation. In lessons on digital identities, she selected Kazakhstani Instagram accounts showcasing diverse expressions of

national identity, from traditional attire to youth-led political activism. In her interview, she explained:

I used these examples to show how culture is never shown in just one way and can be misrepresented (Interview, Maral, Qala school).

These examples were not randomly chosen but drawn from a curated teaching resource bank noted in her mid-term plan (Qala School, Grade 8), which listed one of the aims as “*Critically examine the visual presentation of Kazakh identity in digital media.*”

Ideological Portrayal was a prominent element in Begim’s lessons on consumer culture and media aesthetics. Using magazine covers for classroom analysis, she encouraged students to question repetitive representations of wealth, body image, and race. As she wrote in her reflective journal:

We explored magazine covers that repeatedly feature the same kinds of people, wealthy, light-skinned, thin. I asked students, ‘What does this tell us about success and beauty?’ (Reflective Journal, Begim, Auyl school).

Together, these examples demonstrate that teachers approached representation not as a passive description of content but as a constructed and contested site of meaning. They intentionally selected media texts that raised questions about how identities are shaped, and which voices are amplified or erased. Importantly, their pedagogical strategies went beyond simple recognition of stereotypes; they actively facilitated student reflection, critique, and in some cases, counter-representation. Through these practices, representation became both a topic of analysis and a methodological orientation. Teachers used it to surface broader social ideologies, encourage cultural reflexivity, and equip students with tools to challenge reductive or exclusionary narratives.

Multimodality and intertextuality were the least implemented among the other critical ML domains. Even though some practices were observed. Maral’s Grade 7 lesson “*Reality TV*” exemplified using multiple modes, where students actively engaged in multimodal production. Following a class discussion on the conventions of reality television, students were tasked with scripting and recording short mock interview segments, incorporating tone, body language, and set design. In her planning notes, Maral included objectives such as:

Students will use voice and visual cues to simulate media genres and reflect critically on audience impact. The point was not just to perform, but to understand how different elements persuade or entertain (Reflective journal, Maral, Qala school).

Her use of digital tools like Canva and mobile video editors supported this process, allowing students to experiment with layering voiceover, text, and images. Even in seemingly text-focused tasks, multimodality surfaced through teacher design. In Aidana’s “*Hoax*” lesson, although primarily grounded in deconstruction, students analysed not only language in advertisements but also colours, facial expressions, and layout. This illustrates how teachers embed

multimodal awareness even within analytically focused lessons, drawing students' attention to how persuasive effect is enhanced through visual composition.

The principal, drawing on her extensive administrative experience, emphasises that ML is crucial not only for academic advancement but also for preparing students to participate responsibly in public discourse. She points to the double burden many students face: *"They are digital users, but they don't know how to think critically about what they see."* This duality, technological familiarity without interpretive depth, makes the teaching of ML especially urgent in the school's context.

From the teachers' perspectives, the relevance of ML is strongly shaped by the school's sociolinguistic and residential context. Located in a newly built microdistrict populated primarily by Kazakh-speaking families from low-income backgrounds, the student body has limited exposure to English outside the classroom. In this setting, EFL teachers view media not only as a source of critical literacy but also as a necessary tool for language acquisition. Since students lack interaction with native speakers or English-speaking environments, media becomes a key vehicle for encountering authentic language use.

Teachers consistently underlined the media's role in providing access to natural English input—especially in terms of pronunciation, intonation, and colloquial usage. One teacher remarked:

Our students don't hear English at home or in the street, so they need to hear it somewhere—the media gives them that voice
(Teacher 12, Qala school).

This perspective frames ML as a bridge to immersive language experiences. Teachers described using English-language videos, podcasts, and social media content as both pedagogical resources and as models of real-world communication.

These examples illustrate that multimodality in the observed classrooms was neither superficial nor isolated. It was strategically embedded into lesson structure and learning outcomes, designed to equip students with tools for navigating the communicative demands of a media-saturated world. By preparing students to both interpret and compose multimodal texts, teachers advanced a critical literacy that aligns with both EFL objectives and broader digital fluency.

Listening and reading skills were widely used, especially through exposure to authentic and unscripted media, allowing students to analyse tone, framing, and ideological positioning. In Saniya's Grade 8 lesson *"Hoax"*, students listened to three short audio segments reporting on the same misinformation incident: one from local news, one from an international broadcaster, and one from a satirical podcast. The task was not to extract details but to evaluate how each version framed the event. During the post-listening

discussion, one student observed, *“The podcast makes fun of it, but the news says it’s serious, it’s the same story, but they want us to feel different things.”* Saniya guided students to link tone and intent, asking, *“Who do you think each message was written for, and why?”* The activity demonstrated how listening tasks, when designed with comparative and evaluative prompts, can serve as a powerful entry point into ideological critique and audience analysis.

Speaking was less frequent but used meaningfully to support interpretive and reflective dimensions of ML, often through structured discussion or student-created content. In Sabina’s *“Clothes and Fashion”* lesson (Grade 8), students examined two contrasting fashion advertisements, one portraying traditional Kazakh dress and the other featuring Western high-street branding. After analysis, they were asked to record short video responses using school tablets, expressing their views on cultural representation in advertising. One student recorded: *“This advert only shows one type of beauty, why not include different styles?”* Sabina commented in her reflective journal that this task, while supporting oral fluency, *“also made students think about how identity and culture are shaped by the images they see.”* Here, speaking became a platform for articulating media critique, enabling students to use their voice both linguistically and socially.

5.3.2.3 Media Production Domain

Though many teachers support the idea of fostering student expression through media, they also acknowledge that creation remains the most limited competency in their own practice. Across contexts, teachers point to lack of technical skills, training, and confidence as significant barriers. This self-identified gap reflects a wider need for professional development and structural support to enable purposeful, critical media creation:

We try to involve students in creating content, but honestly, most of us are still unsure how to do it right. We did not learn this ourselves, and it takes tools, time, and a clear understanding of what makes it meaningful (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

Zhanna’s comment reflects a broader pattern among rural teachers, where structural limitations and self-perceived gaps in media knowledge constrain the integration of creation practices. While she values critical engagement with media texts, her focus remains on evaluation and safe interpretation rather than production. In this way, media creation is acknowledged as important but not yet fully attainable within her current teaching environment:

I want to try more creative tasks, but in our school, we don’t have the devices or software. Also, I do not feel confident to teach something I’m not fully trained in. It’s easier to use ready-made materials and focus on analysing them together (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl School).

This approach not only ensures that students develop technical skills in projects but also a critical component of ML education. A teacher from a city school explained:

Students are taught about copyright and the importance of using media legally in their projects (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

The focus on legal compliance helps students navigate the complexities of media creation, ensuring they are aware of the implications of using copyrighted material without permission or acknowledgement. Additionally, teachers in rural schools stress the balance between encouraging creative expression and ensuring that students remain within the boundaries of responsible media creation. As teacher noted:

I give students clear criteria on how they should create media content. I say that it is necessary to indicate where they got pictures, and sources must be cited (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

The multi-channel strategy enables educators to reach students in environments where they are most active, creating more dynamic and interactive learning experiences. Begim from Auyl School shared that she actively contributes to the school's digital presence by creating video content for social media:

I help prepare video content about our school to post on Instagram. I had taken an online course on mobilography, so now I can create videos myself. Before, during events like English Week, we used to pay mobilographers from the city for filming and editing. But now, I can produce decent videos on my own (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

The excerpt illustrates the efforts undertaken by the school to leverage in-house expertise in digital media creation, thereby enhancing their online presence and communication channels. Additionally, resource development through AI-generated materials has become a popular trend in regional and city schools. As noted:

AI generated resources, such as reading materials and exercises, complement our existing teaching and assessment materials (Interview, Sabina, Oblys School).

Most of the teachers supported using AI generated content, as it helps to combat cheating during assessment, pictures and videos become more engaging with AI tools. This in its turn helps to raise the interest of students and keep their attention. Alongside general digital integration, some schools have also experimented with podcasting and digital storytelling projects to develop students' media literacy and language skills. In Qala School, an urban teacher described initiating a student podcast project:

Our students worked in small groups to produce short podcasts on social topics. They wrote scripts, practiced speaking skills, recorded episodes on school tablets (Interview, Maral, Qala School).

Moreover, across all sites, many teachers express discomfort with producing media themselves. They cite limited skills, fear of error, and time constraints as key reasons for avoiding this dimension. Still, a shared belief is emerging that students need to hear about Kazakhstan in English, created by their own voices. As Aidana teacher recalled:

When we were children, we never heard anything about Kazakhstan in English from Kazakhs. But we wanted that. It matters for motivation (Interview, Aidana, Oblys School).

This recognition signals an awareness of the motivational and cultural value of student-created content, even if it remains underdeveloped in practice. Teachers understand the potential of such work but do not yet feel equipped to lead it with confidence.

Critical ML domains. Creation as a critical ML was the least practised domain across the observed schools, with creative production incorporated more regularly by Sabina and Maral, while others engaged with it occasionally or not at all. Their approaches included designing critical messages, developing posters and campaigns, and encouraging public-facing media tasks. Sabina supported short-format content creation, helping students craft concise and emotionally resonant posts on digital wellbeing. These practices were supported by better access to digital tools and infrastructure, particularly at Qala and Oblys schools.

Maral's Grade 7 lesson on News Reporting, students created posters warning against online fraud, but the process was grounded in a prior discussion of visual rhetoric. As she noted:

Before starting, I led a discussion on tone, font choice, and credible image use... your design must not just inform, it should make someone think (Interview, Maral, Qala school).

This framing positioned visual and textual decisions not as decorative elements but as purposeful acts of persuasion that reflect ethical awareness. Similarly, Sabina employed a homework task titled Creating Effective Social Media Posts, guiding students to combine factual content with emotional tone when composing digital wellbeing messages:

My goal was to help them practise communicating important messages concisely and impactfully. I also wanted them to see that they can lead their community toward change. We created a hashtag activism campaign during the flood charity event to show them how their voices can make a difference (Interview, Sabina, Oblys school).

By linking digital media production to a charity event, she framed media creation as a tool for civic engagement and student agency. Begim also attempted to introduce a creative media task by asking her students to post their reflections on social media following a class discussion on stereotypes:

I believe ML should empower learners to speak beyond the classroom (Interview, Begim, Auyl school).

However, the task was ultimately not realised, as students expressed hesitation and uncertainty. This outcome points to a lack of readiness and confidence among learners to engage critically and publicly, suggesting that while the pedagogical intention was there, the necessary support structures for empowering student voice through public media were not yet fully in place.

These examples show that media creation was not treated as a decorative task but as a vehicle for purposeful, audience-aware communication. Whether designing posters, posts, or blogs, students were guided to align content, form, and intent, underscoring a pedagogical approach that values creation as both a critical skill and a meaningful act of expression.

Applying core language skills and ethical pedagogy. Writing was the least frequent but was used to consolidate critical reflection and extend engagement beyond the classroom, particularly in project-based or homework settings. In Begim's "Free Time Activities" unit (Grade 7), a pair of students voluntarily developed a blog post reflecting on gender stereotypes in television shows discussed in class. The post, which they published on a student-run platform, included personal commentary, examples from Kazakh TV, and a call for more diverse representation. In her reflective diary, Begim noted, *"I did not assign this, but I supported it because it showed how they applied critical thinking through writing, in a real context."* This example illustrates how writing served as a tool for public-oriented expression, allowing learners to enact ML as social critique. Begim's Grade 7 class at Auyl School. During a digital storytelling project, she noticed that a student wanted to include personal photos of classmates in their project. Begim intervened immediately:

I explained to them: If you want to use someone's picture, you need to ask for their permission first. Even though it's for school, that's a rule we must follow, people have a right to control how their image is used (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

This practice shows how Begim integrated ethical digital citizenship into her lessons, teaching students to respect others' privacy and consent when working with media. Her approach fostered a culture of responsibility and care within the classroom, preparing students to navigate digital media thoughtfully and with respect for others. Begim brought an additional layer to ethical pedagogy, underscoring safety and data privacy. She treated consent as non-negotiable, particularly regarding students' names, images, or personal content. In her interview, she explained:

We cannot publish your names or photos unless we have permission. Social media can be dangerous, if you reveal personal information, there are people who can use it for criminal purposes (Interview, Begim, Auyl School).

Her approach transformed media creation into a site of protective awareness, particularly important in rural settings where digital literacy may be limited. The lack of acquaintance with ethical norms and guidelines offered by

educational departments is a result of educators' awareness and application of national regulations linked to ML. Teachers often mentioned this disparity:

We don't know any educational departments' ethical standards or policies about sharing student images or videos on social media (Interview, Zhanna, Auyl school).

The relevance of ML within Oblys School is reinforced by its institutional profile—an academically ambitious, regional school serving a diverse and high-performing student population with strong international affiliations. EFL teachers consistently frame ML as a necessary response to students' digital behaviors, particularly their uncritical consumption of online information. Teacher 5 observed: *"Students said they used Wikipedia and thought it was a reliable source."* This statement reflects pedagogical concern over students' tendency to conflate accessibility with credibility, underscoring the need for ML instruction to include verification and source evaluation.

Educators also highlight the generational gap in attention and information processing, which further validates the pedagogical imperative of ML. As Teacher 3 noted: *"The Alpha generation values speed, and even I find it hard to stay focused while listening—I want to go browse the internet or do something else."* Her comment evidences how both teachers and students are immersed in fast-paced media environments that demand conscious strategies for sustained engagement and critical thought.

At the leadership level, the principal situates ML within the broader socioeconomic landscape, arguing that: *"Society is developing so rapidly that even we can hardly keep up."* This assertion illustrates a recognition of ML not only as an academic priority but also as a social equalizer, especially for students navigating competitive academic trajectories with varying levels of digital capital.

Together, these perspectives affirm that within the context of Oblys School, media literacy is not viewed as supplementary but as a central pillar of contemporary education, essential for both academic integrity and informed digital citizenship.

In Auyl School, the limited presence of mobile devices among students and the absence of native English speakers in the community significantly influence how media is perceived and utilized. Most students come from Kazakh-speaking households and have minimal access to digital resources outside school. As a result, teachers view media as a vital source of authentic linguistic input, particularly for improving listening and speaking skills. Teacher 6 remarked:

ML is about working with different types of media, using various ICT tools, and incorporating YouTube lessons to simplify difficult topics. Since children today are so dependent on phones and social

media, presenting lessons in those formats makes them easier to understand (Teacher 6, Auyl school).

This statement depicts the belief that adapting instruction to students' digital realities helps bridge the gap between formal learning and their everyday experiences. Despite the value placed on digital tools, the lack of widespread student access means teachers still play a central role in curating and delivering media-enhanced learning, with print materials remaining important in practice.

The principal adopts a ML stance rooted in safeguarding and institutional compliance, prioritising risk management over instructional innovation. While she acknowledges the usefulness of platforms like YouTube and Facebook for showcasing school activities, her focus centres on controlling media exposure due to concerns about misinformation and age-inappropriate content: *"Most content is not aligned with the age of the children—it's often aimed at adults."* This perspective is enacted through strict mobile phone bans—students deposit devices in a locked cabinet—and the implementation of a QR-coded anti-bullying system that ensures swift administrative response. Her approach reflects a regulatory, security-driven model aligned with external policy demands.

This suggests a misalignment between the formulation of national policy and its implementation or understanding at the local level. This gap was further illustrated by Sabina from Oblys school, who explained that nine lessons were recorded and uploaded to YouTube without obtaining consent from students or parents, as it was not required by the administration. However, during the Republican Olympiad, signed consent was mandatory. This contrast led the teacher to conclude that consent is enforced only for events at the national level.

This code's recurrence points out the disconnect between understanding policies and putting them into practice in the educational setting. Additionally, a different educator from the city school said:

Although we informed the kids beforehand that this lecture would be recorded on camera, we did not obtain their consent to record school functions. Pictures of students are posted on the school's official Instagram account, and I don't believe that parents' consent is being obtained (Interview, Saniya, Qala schools).

The other situations in which teachers accept the existence of guidelines, albeit ambiguously. A city schoolteacher stated that the National Academy of Education provided training and ethical guidelines for a code of behaviour in the era of social media development, but acknowledged:

I remember getting some materials or instructions, maybe during training, but I cannot recall what exactly they were or how I used them. Maybe I just saved them somewhere, but they did not really stay with me (Interview, Maral, Qala schools).

In rural areas, low confidence and lack of resources made production even more difficult. Overall, ML remains underdeveloped and calls for more

targeted support and training to build stronger teaching practices. This grounding in ethical practice set the conditions under which media literacy could either flourish or falter, depending on the enabling and inhibiting factors present in each school context.

5.3 Enabling and Inhibiting Factors for Media Literacy

This section explores the broader institutional and contextual conditions that shape the integration of ML in EFL classrooms, focusing on both enabling and inhibiting factors. The discussion is organised around four key dimensions. First, national guidance and regulatory frameworks are examined to understand how national curricula, school-level guidelines, and digital use restrictions either support or constrain ML practice. Second, attention is given to the availability and reliability of digital tools and resources, which continue to create disparities in implementation across schools. Third, the role of professional development and school environment are considered, particularly in relation to how training opportunities, whether formal or informal, equip teachers with the conceptual tools and pedagogical strategies necessary for critical ML. Taken together, these interrelated factors provide a comprehensive picture of the structural affordances and limitations that condition ML enactment in Kazakhstan's secondary EFL settings.

5.3.1 National Guidance on Media Literacy

The most commonly occurring code in this category, *"inclusion of ML in curriculum,"* indicated a notable deficiency of ML principles in the current national curriculum. Concerns were raised by educators from different schools over the lack of explicit guidelines or media literacy-focused curricula. As the EFL teacher mentioned:

As far as we know, the Altynsarin-named National Academy of Education has not issued guidelines for teaching media literacy, at least I haven't heard about them (Focus group discussion, Teacher 2, Qala school).

At Auyl school, a teacher pointed out that institutional focus remains on technical digital skills rather than ML. This indicates a gap between operational tool use and the development of students' critical thinking and ethical understanding of media content:

The government has not provided any ML training or guidance. Much of our attention is on digital skills, which is not the same as ML (Focus group discussion, Teacher 1, Auyl school).

In Qala school, the principal acknowledged that although ML is recognised as a relevant concern, no formal structures have been developed to address it. The absence of clear institutional policies or guidance from the local

educational department reflects a broader systemic gap, leaving schools to navigate the issue independently. Maral of the city school comments:

The local educational department has not issued any ML guidelines. It is something we are aware of, but there is no formal structure to address it (Interview, Maral, Qala school).

This suggests a larger effort to increase students' exposure to these crucial abilities by integrating ML into a variety of topics. Instructors also draw attention to the time constraints for ML, pointing out that:

Each class has 3 English lessons a week. We are not given many other extra hours; we only teach the exact hours that are given. We cannot deviate from the topic, we first study according to the plan, and only if there is time, we study ML. Class division if it is 24 students we divide in two (Focus group discussion, Teacher 3, Auyl school).

This comment demonstrates the severe constraints teachers operate under in terms of time and curriculum flexibility. With only three English lessons per week and no additional hours allocated, teachers are limited to delivering content set out in the formal curriculum. This is echoed in Qala school as well:

We teach standard three lessons per week for all grades and divide one grade into two sub-groups from this year (Focus group discussion, Teacher 8, Qala school).

ML is seen as secondary and only considered when time is available. Furthermore, class sizes remain relatively large even when allocated, suggesting that limited instructional time and classroom structure pose significant barriers to meaningfully incorporating ML into daily teaching. However, Oblys school practices three times teaching hours and smaller class size. As school principal commented:

Other schools divide one class into two, but we need to divide the teaching into three, and then our state supported it. It was great for teachers, classes were held with 4-5 students, and the number of hours increased. We have more hours as it is a selective school, and we use English as a medium of instruction (Interview, School Principal, Oblys school).

Oblys School's approach to education provides a highly effective model that other schools can adopt. By dividing classes into three smaller groups and providing government support to increase instructional hours, the school has created the optimal environment for targeted, high-quality learning. With classes of just 6-8 students and English as the medium of instruction, teachers have more time and flexibility to meaningfully implement ML. This practice stands out as a promising example of how structural adjustments can significantly improve learning and should be considered for wider implementation across the education system.

Given the lack of explicit institutional guidance on ML observed across all three case study schools, this section examines the extent to which ML-related competencies are embedded within the national curriculum. The analysis draws on official subject programmes, midterm and short-term planning documents, and a selection of lesson plans to evaluate how learning objectives align with the core dimensions of media literacy.

The analysis of learning objectives from grades 3 to 11 reveals that a total of 39 objectives directly contribute to developing media literacy, while 35 objectives support it indirectly by fostering related skills such as critical thinking, digital responsibility, and intercultural awareness. This distribution demonstrates a structured and progressive integration of media literacy within the national curriculum, aligning with the eight core dimensions of media literacy.

The direct learning objectives are concentrated in three key dimensions: Processes of Comprehension (19 objectives), Technology Use and Adaptation (5 objectives), and Management of Information (15 objectives). These objectives aim to develop students' ability to analyze media content, effectively utilize digital tools, and evaluate information sources. The indirect learning objectives, totaling 35, fall within five additional dimensions: Processes of Production and Dissemination (11 objectives), Civil Participation and Digital Responsibility (10 objectives), Interaction and Emotional The curriculum also includes objectives related to broader developmental domains, with 3 objectives supporting student well-being, 4 aimed at enhancing language use and aesthetic appreciation, and 7 fostering intercultural understanding. These objectives, while not explicitly focused on media literacy, develop essential competencies that support media literacy skills.

The dimension of Processes of Comprehension, which includes 19 learning objectives, is central to media literacy development. It ensures a progression from foundational to advanced analytical skills.

The Technology Use and Adaptation dimension, which comprises 5 objectives, highlights the growing importance of digital literacy within media literacy education. The dimension of Management of Information, with 15 learning objectives, directly supports the development of media literacy competencies by fostering students' ability to search, evaluate, and organize information. This dimension spans from basic information identification skills in lower grades, such as 4.3.6.1 – Understand specific information in simple texts, to advanced evaluative skills in higher grades, such as 10.4.6 – Recognize the attitude or opinion of the writer. These skills are essential for evaluating the credibility and reliability of information in digital and media sources.

Overall, the quantitative findings illustrate a well-structured and progressive approach to media literacy education within the national curriculum. The 39 direct learning objectives explicitly build students' skills in critical analysis, digital literacy, and information management, while the 35

indirect objectives enhance essential supporting competencies such as argumentation, emotional intelligence, and intercultural awareness. Together, these learning objectives systematically scaffold media literacy development from foundational skills in lower grades to advanced competencies in upper grades. This alignment reflects the national policy goals of fostering critical, responsible, and informed media engagement among students in Kazakhstan.

This analysis of the English subject curriculum from grades 3 to 11 highlights that while ML is not explicitly addressed as a standalone goal, a number of learning objectives nonetheless contribute to its development. A total of 39 objectives were identified as directly supporting ML, with a further 35 indirectly fostering relevant skills such as critical thinking, digital responsibility, and intercultural awareness. Although this represents only a fraction of the total curriculum objectives, it suggests that, at minimum, ML-related competencies could be systematically addressed in at least one English lesson per week, if purposefully implemented.

The findings point to a modest yet structured presence of ML within the English curriculum. However, the extent to which these objectives are activated in classroom practice remains uncertain and depends heavily on individual teacher agency, interpretation, and available support. To better understand how these curriculum-based potentials translate into pedagogical action, the next section introduces the cases of selected EFL teachers. These cases explore how teachers engage with, adapt, or overlook ML-related components in their everyday teaching, shedding light on the practical realities of integrating media literacy into English language education.

5.3.2 Physical Infrastructure

Significant disparities in access to digital resources emerged across the three school settings. Teachers and the principal of Oblys school reported that all classrooms were fully equipped with modern interactive whiteboards and digital devices. This was largely attributed to their independent budgeting system, which granted the school autonomy from centralised procurement procedures. In addition, Oblys school benefitted from external sponsorships, including support from an international education fund, which allowed them to upgrade and maintain their technological infrastructure more effectively compared to Qala and Auyl schools, as pointed by the school principal:

Our budget allows us to equip all classrooms with interactive whiteboards (40-50 whiteboard), and printers for publishing additional teaching aids and worksheets in the Teachers' room. We do not have common high quality wi-fi for all yet, but are working to improve this (Interview, School Principal, Oblys school).

In Auyl schools, in contrast, teachers often had to compensate for infrastructure gaps using their own personal resources and devices. As I

observed in Zhanna and Begim teachers' practices, focus group discussions with EFL teachers also confirmed the restricted conditions. For example, Teacher 9 shared:

I use my personal laptop and the Internet connection at my lessons because I do not have access to an interactive whiteboard. We have three interactive boards at school, but they do not belong to English language departments, they are in Chemistry, Biology, and Physics classrooms (Focus group discussion, Teacher 9, Auyl school).

In contrast, the school principal at Auyl school demonstrates more positive attitude toward availability of ICT equipment:

Yesterday we received 40 new computers, and when we get them, there will be 1 computer per every 9 children. As a principal, I consult with the teachers and make a request to the higher authorities. This will be considered by the education department. We don't have accounting in our school, decisions are made by the education department (Interview, School Principal, Auyl school).

At Auyl School, Zhanna's Grade 8 lesson on "Kyz-Zhibek" vividly illustrated the infrastructure challenges in rural settings. During the observation, she taught using a single projector connected to her personal laptop, moving the projector between classrooms as needed. She explained:

Since we have no interactive whiteboard in my classroom, I bring my own laptop and borrow the projector when it's free. I just wish every class had a proper screen or device to make lessons smoother (Classroom Observation, Zhanna, Auyl School).

This underscores both the ingenuity of teachers in overcoming equipment shortages and the logistical difficulties of relying on shared resources. At Qala School, teachers had access to 15 interactive whiteboards, but demand often exceeds supply:

There are few whiteboards in the whole school, but with so many teachers needing them, sometimes we have to wait our turn or teach without them (Focus group discussion, Teacher 7, Qala school).

This indicates moderate infrastructure that is better than in rural schools but still constrained by high demand and shared usage. As Saniya described, staff relied on personal mobile data or created hotspots for students, since Wi-Fi was either restricted to specific classrooms or passwords were unavailable. Leadership perspectives also revealed structural barriers. Overall, while Oblys school's autonomy and external support enabled a stronger infrastructure for ML initiatives, Qala and Auyl schools continued to struggle with limited technological access, thus constraining their efforts to integrate ML in a meaningful way.

5.3.3 Professional Development

The findings reveal a widespread recognition among teachers of the importance of structured, research-informed training that is responsive to both technological advances and local cultural contexts. Teachers consistently emphasised the need for dedicated ML training programmes, mentorship opportunities, and ongoing support to build their confidence and pedagogical competence. Despite isolated efforts, the lack of systematic and context-sensitive professional development remains a significant barrier to embedding ML into EFL instruction. The examples presented illustrate both the current limitations and the potential of professional development to transform ML from a peripheral concern to a core component of teacher practice. The data show a strong demand for structured ML training programmes. Aidana from an Oblys school underscored the growing need for systematic teacher training and her concern is supported by the findings of the focus group discussion:

Society is advancing rapidly, even our IT teachers are amazed at the daily technological changes. Media literacy is essential. Some people may find the right answers on their own, but others need guidance. It would be a great benefit if ML training was provided to teachers (Focus group discussion, Teacher 4, Oblys school).

Similarly, teachers from Auyl school reflect on the lack of formal ML courses:

We need to hold seminars on how to find correct content [...] I can be easily misled. Besides, I do not know effective ways of teaching media literacy (Focus group discussion, Teacher 7, Auyl school).

While isolated efforts existed, such as requiring teachers to produce digital content for YouTube channels, these initiatives remained fragmented. Some teachers mentioned that ML was occasionally discussed during annual pedagogical seminars but without dedicated curricula.

The disparities in ML professional development opportunities were also evident in the quality of training. The Oblys schoolteachers reflected positively on attending an extended training program, where a dedicated ML module enhanced their digital communication skills, including writing professional social media posts. However, teachers in Qala and Auyl schools mostly reported attending general digital literacy courses with little specific focus on ML. As Qala school EFL teachers also stressed the need for professional development in ML:

I learned a lot just from reading and reflecting on my own. But it would be better if we had mentorship, someone to discuss lesson plans with, someone who understands media literacy (Focus group discussion, Teacher 7, Auyl school).

Her emphasis on mentorship highlights the importance of dialogic, process-oriented learning models, rather than one-off workshops or standalone presentations.

Teachers from Qala school revealed the need for culturally relevant approaches to ML instructions:

ML in English is not the same as in Kazakh or Russian. We need examples that speak to our students' and our local realities (Focus group discussion, Teacher 10, Qala school).

Despite emerging efforts to embed ML into teaching, Qala School continues to face infrastructural and systemic constraints. Limited access to digital tools and unreliable internet connectivity restrict teachers' ability to integrate media consistently across lessons. While some educators independently adapt to these conditions, broader implementation of ML remains uneven and dependent on individual initiative rather than institutional capacity.

At the staff level, gaps in professional preparedness around ML were noted by the principal, particularly with regard to evaluating digital content credibility. This observation highlights the teacher's personal acknowledgment of both a generational gap in digital confidence and a broader pedagogical uncertainty surrounding media literacy. Her statement reflects not only concern about vulnerability to misinformation but also a lack of clarity on how to teach ML effectively, signalling an urgent need for targeted, practical training to build both critical media competencies and instructional confidence among staff.

Finally, although the principal personally monitors school media content to avoid ethical missteps, the absence of formal regulatory documents or guidelines presents a vulnerability. She acknowledged: *"There are no explicit media behaviour codes for our teachers or students—we act based on our own judgement"*. This reliance on informal discretion, while pragmatic in the short term, may expose the school to reputational and legal risks in the longer term, especially as it increases its digital footprint through social media and public platforms.

The principal, drawing on her extensive administrative experience, emphasises that ML is crucial not only for academic advancement but also for preparing students to participate responsibly in public discourse. She points to the double burden many students face: "They are digital users, but they don't know how to think critically about what they see." This duality, technological familiarity without interpretive depth, makes the teaching of ML especially urgent in the school's context.

From the teachers' perspectives, the relevance of ML is strongly shaped by the school's sociolinguistic and residential context. Located in a newly built microdistrict populated primarily by Kazakh-speaking families from low-income backgrounds, the student body has limited exposure to English outside the classroom. In this setting, EFL teachers view media not only as a source of critical literacy but also as a necessary tool for language acquisition. Since students lack interaction with native speakers or English-speaking environments, media becomes a key vehicle for encountering authentic language use.

This perspective frames ML as a bridge to immersive language experiences. Teachers described using English-language videos, podcasts, and social media content as both pedagogical resources and as models of real-world communication.

This insight suggests the need for locally contextualised training materials that move beyond international models and support culturally responsive ML pedagogy. Professional development must be aligned with teachers' linguistic and cultural contexts. In sum, the absence of systemic professional development in ML represents a significant constraint on implementation. Where training exists, its impact is evident, not only in classroom strategies but in teacher agency and confidence. However, for ML to become a sustained feature of EFL education, professional development must shift from peripheral support to a central, ongoing element of teachers' pedagogical growth.

5.3.4 School Culture and Structure

The integration of ML in EFL classrooms was significantly shaped by school culture and internal organisational structures, which either facilitated or constrained collaborative pedagogical innovation. Across the three case study sites: Auyl, Qala, and Oblys. At Auyl School, where both Zhanna and Begim work, a strong professional culture of research and mentorship underpinned ML efforts. The school operates a designated teacher collaboration room within a shared auditorium space, structured to support regular methodological associations, mentoring schemes, and lesson study cycles. As described by the principal:

Our mentoring is officially mandated. Mentors provide feedback to teachers, conduct PD seminars, and coordinate research work. Younger teachers also help aged colleagues with technology. Most aged teachers require assistance in working with computers and modern devices. This is where professional culture begins (Interview, School Principal, Auyl school).

Teachers gather routinely for collaborative inquiry, developing and iterating ideas in themed cycles and action research groups. Such collegial infrastructure has cultivated a supportive professional climate where innovative practices like ML are embedded in everyday dialogue and experimentation. This performative approach to teaching, where the stress is on impressing colleagues:

Once a year, you have to do a show lesson to demonstrate your best, so you bring in everything, videos, slides, or AI tools, colourful visuals. In an open discussion of your lesson, I do not want to lose my face (Focus group discussion, Teacher 5, Auyl school).

Teachers may feel compelled to “outdo” each other, focusing on dazzling presentations rather than sustainable, context-appropriate strategies.

This dynamic, while intended to foster professional growth, paradoxically reinforces competitive tendencies and may discourage authentic risk-taking and iterative improvement in everyday practice.

Almost the same competitive culture as observed at Qla school as well, the principal stressed a culture of collaboration and joint ownership over innovation. The leadership invested in separate, comfortable staff rooms to foster informal collaboration, spaces intended to encourage the sharing of media-related ideas, ethical dilemmas, and instructional strategies beyond formal meetings. However, during the post-lesson discussion following Saniya's demonstrative lesson on *Talking about Past*, which analysed media bias, the conversation among teachers revealed a more competitive mindset. Instead of sharing insights or collaborative feedback, several colleagues focused on comparing results and expressed scepticism about the value of critical literacy tasks:

Instead of offering constructive feedback, several teachers questioned the relevance of the lesson's ML focus. Comments such as 'But how does this connect to the learning objectives in the standard?', 'I would rather stick with grammar guidelines; they are more predictable', and 'Creative tasks take too much time, so it is better to use controlled activities' dominated the post-lesson discussions (Research Journal, Qala school, 21 November 2024, p. 212).

This dynamic exposed a tension between the principal's vision for collaborative innovation and the reality of entrenched competitive practices among staff, limiting opportunities for the collective growth of ML skills.

In Oblys School, where Sabina and Aidana teach, the culture of care and teacher wellbeing was foundational to instructional risk-taking and creativity. Despite its modest size, the school had invested in gender-specific staff rooms, refreshment areas, and coffee dispensers to encourage relaxation and community. According to the principal:

No one in the school is allowed to discourage or demoralise teachers. I always remind my deputies: do not criticise them harshly or show disapproval. Teachers are the drivers of the school. We need a friendly atmosphere, where teachers come to work with high spirit and motivation. We organise team building activities, joint tours to foreign countries and other cities (Interview, School Principal, Oblys school).

This emotional protection contributed to the creation of a professional environment in which teachers felt trusted and supported. As a result, both Sabina and Aidana reported feeling confident in implementing lessons with ethical implications or using media, knowing that the administration would support their decisions.

At Oblys School, where a supportive and collaborative culture thrived, Sabina described a pivotal moment during a staff meeting that reshaped her approach to teaching ML. The principal, known for fostering trust and open

dialogue, initiated a “*Media Showcase*” afternoon where teachers were encouraged to share their most innovative lessons involving digital media. Sabina presented her class’s social media campaign project, where students designed Instagram posts promoting environmental responsibility. The principal’s positive feedback:

Your lesson empowers students as both creators and critical thinkers. I support your creative initiatives. We can justify the need of ML for parents and create a separate course on ‘English and Media Literacy’ (Interview, School Principal, Oblys school).

The positive feedback reinforced Sabina’s confidence to further integrate ML into her curriculum. This supportive, recognition-based culture gave teachers a sense of value for their efforts, which encouraged a more creative and risk-taking approach to teaching ML that might otherwise be stifled in a more rigid, hierarchical system.

At Auyl School, media-related initiatives are developing gradually, supported by a small number of digitally proactive staff and pragmatic leadership decisions. Institutionally, the school maintains an active presence on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, as well as its own website. Digital responsibilities are delegated to the ICT deputy, but the entire leadership team has access to post and manage content. She also identified several teachers particularly the informatics teacher and three English language educators as highly capable in using media-rich, inquiry-based teaching approaches. This indicates a targeted, though informal, culture of digital competence led by a few key figures, reflecting the school’s resource-conscious and collaborative strategy for integrating ML.

ML initiatives are modest and primarily teacher-driven, shaped by limited technological infrastructure and a strong emphasis on traditional pedagogical approaches. Teachers integrate media selectively into lessons to make complex topics more accessible and engaging. This reflects a pragmatic strategy to adapt teaching to students’ media habits while maintaining educational focus.

The ML context at Qala School reflects a developing but uneven landscape shaped by both innovation and constraint. Teachers and the principal share a growing awareness of ML’s importance, particularly in supporting students from predominantly Kazakh-speaking, low-income households with limited exposure to English beyond the classroom. Media is valued as a source of authentic language input and a tool for enhancing pronunciation and listening skills. However, interpretations of ML among staff vary, ranging from technical competence to critical engagement with online content.

School-based ML initiatives have emerged largely through teacher-led practices and alignment with regional mandates to increase digital visibility, such as creating a YouTube channel for instructional content. The delegation of digital responsibilities to an ICT teacher signals the school’s transitional stage in establishing a sustainable digital governance model. Collaborative culture is

emphasised as foundational, particularly given the school's recent establishment and its role in serving a vulnerable community.

Nonetheless, significant limitations persist. Infrastructural shortages, including limited access to functional digital equipment and unstable internet connectivity, constrain broader integration of media into teaching. Additionally, teachers express a lack of preparedness and confidence in teaching ML, highlighting the need for structured professional development, especially for more senior staff. Overall, Qala School demonstrates a positive orientation toward ML, but its full realisation will depend on capacity-building efforts and clearer institutional support.

The Oblys School case reveals a high level of conceptual awareness and institutional endorsement of ML among both leadership and teaching staff. ML is understood not merely as a technical skill, but as a critical and civic literacy necessary in a saturated information society. While formalised structures and curricula for ML are absent, the school demonstrates emergent best practices through teacher-driven initiatives, technological experimentation, and a leadership model that supports pedagogical autonomy. However, systemic barriers, particularly technological limitations, procurement constraints, and ethical ambiguities, continue to impede the school's capacity to institutionalise ML at scale. These findings suggest that in well-resourced but structurally constrained environments, ML thrives most effectively when driven by grassroots innovation and ethical reflection, albeit within a framework still in need of systemic scaffolding.

In all sites, ML integration was not determined solely by individual teacher initiative, but was shaped by the relational, spatial, and cultural conditions specific to each school. Teacher agency appeared to be most enduring where it was supported by supportive peer networks, administrative trust, and a shared commitment to the pedagogical importance of ML.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the empirical findings of this study and, hence it was structured across two main levels of analysis: individual teacher cases and cross-case thematic synthesis. It began by situating the stories of six cases - teachers within their distinct school settings. The cases of Aidana and Sabina at Oblys, Maral and Saniya at Qala, and Zhanna and Begim at Auyl showed how ML practices varied across schools, which was shaped by their prior experiences, educational backgrounds, their beliefs about the purpose of language education and the schools' access to resources.

A cross-case analysis showed that EFL teachers' understandings of media literacy varied across three main domains: using media, analysing media, and producing media. Most teachers confidently used media to support language learning, but fewer engaged students in critical analysis of media texts or

encouraged media creation for communicative or civic purposes. These differences reflected uneven access to resources and limited policy guidance, with many teachers calling for more targeted and coherent professional development. The uneven access to resources between schools as well as the inconsistent policy recognition indicates a limited opportunities for ML implementation in schools. Teachers expressed a clear need for structured professional development tailored to ML, with existing opportunities perceived as fragmented and insufficiently specialised. Policy ambiguity, infrastructure disparities, and school culture further mediated teachers' capacity to implement ML meaningfully within their classrooms.

Overall, the findings reveal a complex interplay of institutional, individual, and systemic factors that are shaping the ML practices in schools in Kazakhstan. Teachers navigated these dynamics with varying degrees of autonomy and innovation, which offered informed perspectives on the opportunities as well as challenges in relation to ML integration in diverse school settings in Kazakhstan. In the next chapter I present discussion of these findings.

Chapter 6

Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss key findings in relation to the study research questions and the conceptual framework (see Chapter 1 and 3). Based on the key findings presented in Chapter 5, the concepts such as teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes and the relevance of ML to language teaching have been identified as important factors that can shape teachers' classroom practices.

The study findings highlight the importance of ML policy development, its integration into teacher education, access to resources, supportive school structures and cultures. As such, this chapter consists of the following sub-sections: (1) the EFL teachers' perceptions of ML, (2) teachers' practices with ML, (3) enabling and inhibiting factors for ML integration.

I now explain each of these sections in detail.

6.1 Teachers Perceptions of Media Literacy

The study findings revealed that both teachers and school administration confuse ML with ICT-related competencies and digital literacy. Particularly, the EFL teachers conceptualised ML as being able to prepare PowerPoint slides, playing online videos, or searching for information that intend to support teaching rather than promote critical evaluation of media content and/or create it (see Chapter 5). These findings resonate with international studies (Albardía et al., 2025; Afrilyasanti et al., 2023, 2025; Pederson, 2023), which demonstrate that when teachers equate ML with access or factual accuracy, its transformative potential can be underused.

This may reflect an instrumental view of ML, where the stakeholders focus on the operational aspects of digital technologies to support lesson delivery rather than develop learners' ability to interpret, question, or critique media messages (UNESCO, 2011; Ferrari, 2012; Toma et al., 2023). Toma et al. (2023) points out that ICT integration can enhance classroom interaction and access to resources, it does not necessarily support critical thinking. Similarly, Yunus and Suliman (2014) argue that technology can improve motivation and resource availability in the EFL classrooms, but the development of higher-order literacies depends on the intentional pedagogical design. The teachers in this study often rely on digital content to present topics but do not extend tasks to encourage reflection on media authorship, bias, or audience. For example, video clips are shown to stimulate interest, but students are rarely invited to interrogate their communicative intent (see Chapter 5). Moreover, the EFL teachers described ML from the perspective of digital literacy, which includes evaluating online content, and navigating web platforms (see Chapter 5).

In this study, teachers consistently refer to online platforms such as YouTube and Google as examples of media, while printed textbooks, environmental signage, or classroom visuals were rarely acknowledged. In contrast to ICT skills, digital literacy involves tasks, which may reflect an evolving awareness of digital environments (Beetham, 2010). Nevertheless, it often privileges digital media while overlooking the traditional and non-digital forms of media (Bateman, 2021). Thus, teachers can frequently equate media exclusively with digital formats, narrowing the conceptualisation of ML and overlooking its analytical, participatory, and ethical dimensions (Hobbs, 2021). Lee et al. (2020) underscores that teachers' understanding of media is often shaped by their exposure to digital content. Whilst both ICT and digital literacy competencies can be valuable for accessing and navigating information, they represent only one facet of the broader ML framework (Simons et al., 2017). Studies point out that when ML is equated to merely being able to use technology, classroom practices tend to centre on delivery rather than critique (Koltay, 2011; Frau-Meigs et al., 2017; McDougall et al., 2018).

Having said that, both ICT skills and digital literacy can support teachers' ML, as they provide the operational and evaluative foundations for critical engagement (Msafiri et al., 2023). ICT skills, for example, can enable access, while digital literacy fosters informed navigation of content (Kumar, 2023; Panda & Kaur, 2024). There are studies that point out the targeted ICT integration as a means to enhance teachers' inquiry skills and pedagogical reasoning, improve digital literacy and ML instructional strategies (Thibault, 2019; Lie et al., 2020). However, without a conceptual understanding of ML, which involves critical analysis, reflective production, ethical judgement, and civic participation, as a distinct pedagogical goal and classroom practices can become fragmented (Buckingham, 2003; Kellner & Share, 2007). For example, Gjerazi (2024) underlines that ML integration requires explicit modelling not just access to tools.

With the emergence of adjacent frameworks, such as new definitions of ML and the repaid development of AI, there is a pressing need for more precise conceptualisations of ML that empower teachers to meaningfully adopt and adapt it in their teaching practices (Tierman, 2023). This urgency is underscored in the processed critical ML in Ai framework, which introduces a ML model responsive to AI's biases and operational dynamics (Stewart & Rodgers, 2025). Similarly, integrative reviews of AI literacy within educational contexts accentuate ambiguity in current definitions and underline the necessity for literacy frameworks that clarify functional, critical, and social-technical competencies in teaching (Gu & Ericson, 2025).

In this study, the EFL teachers frequently referred to digital sources, such as videos and search engines as media sources, but rarely mentioned traditional forms such as books, posters, or physical signage (see Chapter 5). While some frameworks deliberately focus on digital media, foundational aspects of ML

underscore its broader scope, which includes both digital and non-digital forms of media (Buckingham, 2003). Without a firm conceptual grounding, teachers may struggle to differentiate between overlapping literacies, which can limit their ability to integrate ML comprehensively into classroom practice (Albardía et al., 2025; Wuyckens et al., 2022).

During classroom observations, teachers used digital content to initiate discussion but seldom facilitated critical explorations of their content. This aligns with findings by Nogaibayeva et al. (2024), who report that ICT use among language instructors in Kazakhstan largely remains confined to routine and administrative purposes rather than serving as a medium for deeper pedagogical engagement. In rural school, for example, limited digital access led to a frequent use of posters, hand-drawn visuals, and printed worksheets. These were pedagogically purposeful but were rarely recognised by teachers as media. Hobbs (2021) notes that educators often fail to identify non-digital artefacts such as maps, signs, or packaging as forms of media, which restricts learners' understanding of the media's range and potential.

Teachers' self-efficacy is a decisive condition for the promotion of ML in schools, yet my findings point to the existing gaps in knowledge and practice. Bandura's (1997) theory shows that efficacy beliefs influence whether teachers attempt unfamiliar pedagogical practices, and this is echoed in Ajzen's (2020) assertion that perceived resources support confidence in implementation. In the context of ML, studies suggest that limited preparation undermines teachers' efficacy, which leaves them hesitant to integrate critical analysis tasks and develop ML (Arcus, 2014; Yeh & Wan, 2019). Particularly, the EFL teachers in this study admitted uncertainty in their ability to teach ML and, crucially, avoided media creation, a dimension often treated as peripheral but central to participatory and critical ML. While Ranieri et al. (2017) identify collaboration, feedback, and motivation as pathways to stronger self-efficacy, the EFL teachers in this study described a persistent absence of such professional structures. Their reliance on familiar routines reflects what Saptono (2022) describes as a conservative pedagogical orientation that prevails when self-efficacy is low. The contrast between the potential of ML, framed by Schmitz et al. (2024) as valuable for communicative and cultural learning, and teachers' reluctance to engage with it illustrates the extent to which weak self-efficacy act as a barrier. Without a stronger conceptual and practical foundation, teachers' low confidence can restrict ML to surface-level practices rather than its fuller critical and creative scope.

The study results indicate that the teachers' limited understanding of ML can shape their classroom practices, which prioritise media consumption, access, and surface-level evaluation, rather than encouraging critical inquiry or deeper reflection on it. Teachers in this study rarely address how media messages are constructed or whose perspectives do they represent, and most did not frame media as a tool for dialogue, critique, or democratic engagement

(Felton et al., 2023; Marmol, 2024; Muringa & Adjin-Tettey, 2024). Although teachers showed confidence in incorporating such ML domains as using media, content creation is not mentioned by the EFL teachers at all. The concept of ML encompasses media creation, which is an essential component that allows learners to construct meaning, question dominant narratives, and participate in public discourse (Buckingham, 2003; Kellner & Share, 2007).

Without engaging learners in media creation, teachers can limit their classroom practices to a passive consumption, thereby undermining the potential of ML to foster civic responsibility, global awareness, and participatory culture (Mihailidis & Thevenin, 2013; Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017). Simons et al. (2017) claim this domain can facilitate students' engagement in community and global issues as active participants. The studies point out that technical fluency and digital tools only become pedagogically effective when embedded within critical frameworks that promote active engagement (Rocca, 2024; Simon, 2025). Interestingly, although the EFL teachers highlighted the role of ML in raising awareness of global or social issues, they provided few examples of instructional approaches that would support such claims. Urkunova et al. (2025) report that whilst teachers value global competencies, they feel unprepared to implement them in schools in Kazakhstan.

In an evolving media environment, including AI, teachers need capacity to expand their conceptualisation of ML. Studies have consistently shown that teachers across various educational levels and settings often receive little formal preparation in ML instruction (Hobbs, 2008; Scull & Kupersmidt, 2011; Gretter & Yadav, 2018). As a result, teacher education and structural support should address the needs of all teachers across rural, urban and regional schools (McNelly & Harvey, 2021; Korona, 2024). The study findings reveal that prior engagement in ML courses or ML events can also have a positive effect on expanding teachers' conceptualisation of ML. The teachers in this study also varied in their conceptualisation of ML with teachers, who had prior exposure to the ML, having broader understanding of ML compared to their counterparts with little to no exposure to such opportunities. McNelly and Harvey (2021) suggest that professional development opportunities can significantly extend teachers' understanding of ML and enrich their practices.

A substantial number of teachers in this study acknowledge the importance of ML in the EFL instruction, whereby they consistently incorporate various types of media into their lessons as a means to enhancing students' exposure to native English and, hence developing their communicative skills (see Chapter 5). Tour (2015) claims that integrating ML into language teaching can facilitate inquiry, depths and criticality in classroom instruction. Particularly, the EFL teachers in this study perceive ML as necessary for EFL instruction, mainly because they believe it can provide authentic exposure to English and strengthens communicative competence. This perception corresponds with Pederson's (2023) argument that critical ML should be treated

as a core dimension of EFL pedagogy, since it encourages learners to interrogate language, culture, and ideology rather than treat texts as neutral. Albardía et al. (2025) similarly point out that the integration of technology and critical ML in education holds great potential but remains limited when teachers do not fully grasp its conceptual and pedagogical complexity.

The study findings also resonate with Afrilyasanti et al. (2023), who show that teachers often perceive critical ML through the lens of factual versus fake news. Such a narrow view risks restricting its transformative capacity, whereas broader understandings of critical media literacy, as demonstrated in their later work (Afrilyasanti et al., 2025), can foster creativity and critical thinking when teachers are supported to use it in engaging and sustained ways. A further challenge relates to the ways teachers connect their personal and professional uses of technology. Cementina (2019) argues that teachers' digital mindsets are shaped by everyday technology practices, which in turn influence their professional confidence to integrate new literacies into language classrooms. This perspective explains why some EFL teachers in this study recognise the value of ML but hesitate to employ it beyond basic consumption tasks.

Moreover, the EFL teachers' perceptions of ML can be also linked to broader professional and psychological factors. Cao and Zhang (2023) show that value congruence and enthusiasm play a significant role in shaping teachers' engagement with innovative practices. Their findings suggest that unless teachers perceive ML as compatible with their pedagogical values and as something they can deliver with enthusiasm, its adoption in EFL contexts remains partial and inconsistent. Taken together, these insights demonstrate that teachers' perceptions of ML are not static but mediated by conceptual clarity, technological confidence, and motivational alignment, which explains both the perceived importance of ML and the uncertainty around its full integration in EFL classrooms.

Overall, EFL teachers across rural, urban, and regional schools perceived ML as important, but their views were largely instrumental. Rural teachers associated it with posters and worksheets, while urban and regional teachers linked it with online resources, yet in both contexts ML was understood as a tool for lesson delivery rather than a framework for inquiry, critique, or participatory culture. Consequently, while Kazakhstani teachers valued ML for its role in language exposure, their limited conceptual grounding constrained them from exploiting its broader pedagogical possibilities. The EFL teachers focused on exposure and comprehension of ML rather than treating it as a means for critical analysis or reflective dialogue. The following section explores how these conceptual limitations can shape the EFL teachers' practices as well as the types of ML domains they engage with in their classrooms.

6.2 The EFL Teachers' Practices in Integrating Media Literacy

The integration of ML into classroom instruction can be especially important in the 21st century, not just for adapting to digital environments but for fostering critical pedagogy and empowering learners to interrogate dominant narratives (Afrilyasanti, 2023; Neira et al., 2024; Freire, 1970). Janks (2010) positions ML as a means of analysing power, identity, and representation, while Banks (1993) links it to cultivating empathy and intercultural competence. The critical pedagogy aspect of ML is represented in the Integrated Media Literacy Framework, which include such domains as Media Use, Media Analysis and Media Production (see Table 2, Chapter 3). This framework provides a structured foundation for the EFL teachers' engagement with ML in their classroom practices.

The study results reveal that the EFL teachers' existing classroom practices can largely be represented at the basic Media Use domain level, whereby the Media Analysis and Media Production domains have little to no representation in the EFL teachers' classroom practices (see Chapter 5). Particularly, the EFL teachers integrated the classroom activities that aimed to recognise meaning across visual, audio, and textual modes as well as identify intertextual references and genres. In their classroom practices the EFL teachers integrated ML in reading, listening, and speaking tasks. Although the EFL teachers consistently incorporate media and other multimodal materials to support the language acquisition, its use reflects a narrow and instrumental focus. As such, media resources in the EFL classroom function as a stimulus for classroom interaction rather than an object of critique or inquiry. Buckingham (2019) challenges such a technocentric approach to classroom instruction, wherein media is reduced to delivery mechanisms rather than a critical inquiry. As such the EFL teachers' classroom practices lack a sustained attention to how media sources, including texts, can construct meaning, reflect ideology, or shape representation. Thereby, core ML competencies, such as interrogating authorship and audience positioning, remain absent from all six cases, teachers' instructional practices limiting students' roles to a passive consumption of media rather than an active interpretation of discourse (Scheibe & Rogow, 2012).

The EFL teachers' practices lacked the conceptual scaffolding that would support students in questioning bias or exploring ideological dimensions of texts (see Chapter 5). Such pedagogical choices are believed to conflict with the principles of constructivist decoding, which require learners to engage analytically with content and reflect on its social implications (Sperry & Scheibe, 2020; Sezgin Büyükalaca et al., 2025). Media education demands structured questioning (Potter, 2013; Kellner & Share, 2007), yet the study results show that the EFL teachers' instruction prioritised recall and comprehension over reflection and critique. Hobbs (2021) contends that

surface-level media tasks fail to support civic reasoning or interpretive capacity. As such, without pedagogical frameworks grounded in ML, digital engagement may reinforce uncritical language use. These findings have implications for teacher education and policies that would enable teachers to apply ML critically in their classroom contexts. For instance, the study by Erdem and Erişti (2022) within Turkish secondary schools revealed that when ML was delivered through a coherent curriculum, students began to interpret media texts with greater critical depth, while teachers appeared more confident in designing reflective tasks. Their action research involved deliberate instruction in decoding media bias, analysing representations, and supporting student-led production. These strategies allowed learners not merely to consume content but to interact with it in more questioning and participatory ways (Robertson & Scheidler-Benns, 2016). This contradicts the current study findings, where no institutional structure guided the teachers' ML practice, and as a result, classroom activities remained scattered and tended to dwell at the level of surface comprehension.

In similar vein, insights from another recent research in Türkiye indicates that prospective Turkish language teachers often used media in rather mechanical ways unless their training explicitly introduced them to interpretive approaches (Coşkun, 2021). In Korkmaz and Akçay's (2024) investigation, primary school teachers were found to possess satisfactory digital proficiency, yet that alone did not prepare them to support students in navigating ethical or analytical aspects of media, which seems to require more than familiarity with tools. Pala (2024) contributed further to this discussion by showing that students' ML could be meaningfully predicted by their communication abilities. This suggests a need for pedagogy that cultivates dialogic reasoning and interpretive flexibility, not simply digital fluency. At the level of national curriculum policy, Gürhan (2025) noted that although ML appeared in reform discourse, its classroom impact remained limited unless policies were tied to concrete curricular actions. Where such connections were absent, teachers reported uncertainty about implementation. These findings bear a close resemblance to the Kazakhstani context, where the absence of policy alignment has left the ML integration marginalised and unstructured. As such, these studies offer compelling evidence that ML cannot be sustained through individual effort alone, as without institutional coordination such practices can be too easily lost in the noise of routine teaching.

The study results indicate that the EFL teachers employ media in their classrooms as a linguistic resource more than as discursive artefact (see Chapter 5). In contrast to the present study, where media served mostly as input for vocabulary and comprehension, other research reveals the transformative potential of media when approached through critical pedagogy. Kapranov (2021) illustrates how digital artefacts, when used dialogically, can open space for learners to position themselves, question dominant narratives and construct discursive identities. Similarly, Erfanian et al. (2019) show that involving

learners in producing classroom materials fosters multimodal awareness and interpretive agency. The findings here, however, show little evidence of such critical or participatory engagement. Media remained bound to receptive skills, and the classrooms offered few invitations for learners to explore authorship, bias or representation.

This instrumental use of media, devoid of critical orientation, risks perpetuating implicit ideologies beneath the surface of seemingly neutral content. Babaii and Sheikhi (2018) uncover such patterns in English materials shaped by neoliberal values, often unnoticed unless examined through critical discourse analysis. Yet no such interrogation was evident in the current context. The disconnect between advocacy and practice is not unique. Barahona et al. (2025) reveal that even teacher educators committed to critical literacy frequently struggle to realise those commitments in practice, constrained by institutional and structural forces. The absence of pedagogical scaffolds in this study mirrors that challenge. Without curricular support or sustained professional learning, EFL teachers may rely on the media to teach language while leaving its ideological functions unexplored.

Teachers introduced podcasts, news articles, videos, and social media excerpts to develop comprehension, vocabulary, and communicative competence (see Chapter 5). These choices support authentic language input and task-based learning, which aligns with a functional interpretation of ML (Fang et al., 2021). However, such a use of ML can be seldomly moved beyond linguistic goals, as the EFL teachers in this study selected media texts based on topic relevance or skill alignment and, hence, did not address the ways media messages are shaped by perspective, genre, or sociopolitical framing. Young and Son (2023) caution that such a model of ML integration can increase students' motivation, but bypass critical literacy. Therefore, in such educational contexts, media serves as a tool for access not as a means for questioning. Simons et al. (2017) underscore that instrumental view of ML can lead to technical rather than reflective practices in classrooms.

Having said that, there are instances when the EFL teachers' instructional practices involve interviews, podcasts, and news reports, which encourage students to identify bias, framing, and tone (see Chapter 5). These tasks correspond with conceptualisations of reading as socially situated and multimodal skill (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020; Wright & Cervetti, 2016). Moreover, it became evident that classroom activities such as comparing headlines or evaluating information sources can prompt learners to analyse power relations embedded in texts, which aligns with critical ML frameworks and have a potential to empower student agency (Stewart & Rodgers, 2025; Bakar & Teng, 2021).

While the current study observed that listening tasks occasionally encouraged students to consider speaker stance and communicative intent, this practice remained sporadic and lacked systematic pedagogical framing (see

Chapter 5). By contrast, Rahmi et al. (2025) present compelling evidence that podcast-integrated instruction, when structured and intentional, enhances learners' inferential listening skills and sensitivity to communicative context. Their study demonstrated that students in the experimental group performed significantly better than their peers on tasks requiring content prediction and the interpretation of implicit meaning, particularly in relation to speaker perspective and tone. This may suggest that well-designed audio-based interventions can cultivate more than basic media comprehension. Similarly, Axrorova (2024) notes that podcast-mediated learning fostered "improved critical listening skills, enhanced contextual understanding, and development of metacognitive strategies" (p. 16), allowing learners to engage reflectively with what they heard rather than passively receive information. In the present study, however, such cognitive demands were rarely embedded within classroom practice. The comparison points to a missed opportunity: while audio materials were available and occasionally used, they were not embedded within instructional models that foster discursive engagement or reflexive thinking (see Chapter 5). The potential for media to serve as a site of ideological inquiry and interpretive dialogue remains underrealised unless paired with critical pedagogy and sustained teacher support. These classroom practices lacked consistency and theoretical grounding, as the EFL teachers rarely connected these episodes to broader discussions of representation or ideology (see Chapter 5). Portela et al. (2024) argue that students need tools for evaluating sources and reasoning through information to engage with media critically. The study results confirm that understanding media as a domain requires deliberate instructional framing to enable teachers and students to interpret and reshape the dominant narratives.

The study findings also indicate that the EFL teachers applied the *Media Analysis* domain in ways that supported analytical reasoning but lacked sustained depth (see Chapter 5). Whilst the EFL teachers developed activities to help learners filter information and assess credibility, such analysis remained largely surface-level, typically involving the identification of main ideas or the verification of factual accuracy. What remained absent was a deeper engagement with how media constructs meaning, a central concern of critical ML. Austin and Domgaard (2024) argue through the Message Interpretation Process (MIP) model that ML requires learners to interrogate media content by examining intent, realism, and identification, all of which influence how messages are internalised. Their framework suggests that without decoding the constructed nature of media, students are likely to accept representations as neutral or truthful. Similarly, Pederson (2023) insists that media within EFL should not serve merely as a vehicle for linguistic input but as a discursive site where power, ideology, and representation demand scrutiny. Such pedagogical orientation, however, was absent in the current study's observed classrooms, where media was employed primarily to illustrate content or enhance engagement. This disconnect between media use and critical interpretation

reduces learners' opportunities to develop critical awareness of how discourse operates within multimodal texts, an ability Pérez-Escoda et al. (2021) identify as fundamental for full ML. Without sustained reflection on how messages are encoded and how they shape audience perception, media activities risk becoming procedural tasks that reinforce rather than challenge dominant narratives.

Potter (2013) argues that ML requires students to interrogate the intentions behind content and the strategies used to influence audiences. Kellner and Share (2007) further contend that critical ML depends on a recognition of power structures embedded in texts. The teachers in this study introduced relevant media content, yet they rarely created the conditions for such interrogations to occur (see Chapter 5). Pederson (2023) shares this concern, observing that EFL classrooms often stop short of fostering the kind of critical reflection necessary for students to perceive and question the socio-political agendas within texts. Wei et al. (2023) offer a related insight, showing that the ability to detect misinformation improves when ML involves not just content verification but an understanding of how persuasion and narrative framing operate. Similarly, Xiao et al. (2021) argue that ML needs to expose the underlying ideologies and value systems encoded in media discourse, as surface-level understanding leaves learners vulnerable to subtle manipulation. Walter et al. (2020) provide evidence that corrective efforts, when devoid of deeper inquiry into intent and representation, tend to produce only temporary shifts in awareness. This calls for instruction that moves beyond passive consumption toward an active confrontation with ideology. Vraga et al. (2020) confirm that the placement and nature of corrections in media matter little unless students possess the tools to unpack media motives and power dynamics independently. These findings collectively underline the importance of designing ML pedagogy that not only builds discernment but cultivates resistance to dominant narratives that perpetuate shallow understandings of media.

The study outcome indicates the need for developing stronger alignment between media *deconstruction* and civic inquiry, which is only partially visible in the observed practices. Waghid (2024) states that critical literacy must extend beyond textual features and confront the sociopolitical context of media, which includes the inquiry of *who* controls information, *whose* voices are excluded, and *what* narratives are privileged. The classroom observations indicate that the EFL teachers occasionally initiate such discussions, and their instructional choices lack the conceptual scaffolding to sustain them. The lack of clear-cut theoretical framing, the EFL teachers' practices are limited to engaging with media deconstruction as an exercise of comprehension rather than interpretation. Van Schalkwyk and Blitz (2024) suggest that unless educators consider enabling students to own media and set an agenda for it, they cannot fully grasp how media can influence public discourse. Whilst the EFL teachers

initiated ethical reflection, they did not consistently connect media analysis with its civic learning goals (see Chapter 5). As such, for critical ML to function as a tool for democratic engagement, it should be taught through a framework that foregrounds ideology, and participation (Share & McBride, 2022; Yelubayeva, 2023; Zadorin et al., 2023).

To cultivate such a stance, instruction should allow students to confront the rhetorical and ideological dimensions of media content. One effective approach can involve exposing learners to manipulative or misleading content in controlled settings, helping them to develop resistance before real-world exposure. Research demonstrates that simulated encounters with misinformation can strengthen cognitive resilience and critical awareness (van der Linden & Roozenbeek, 2020). However, these practices demand intentional integration into curriculum and cannot function as isolated activities. A review of intervention designs found that placement, repetition, and learner engagement significantly affect the impact of ML programmes (Roozenbeek et al., 2020).

These findings support the idea that comprehension alone is insufficient. Learners need structured, repeated experiences of analysing intent, bias, and manipulation. Tully et al. (2019) observe that even short ML interventions can succeed when they encourage students to explore not just truth but the motivations behind how that truth is constructed. The importance of embedding such practices across age groups and educational levels is further supported by recent assessment tools that frame ML as developmental and context-sensitive (Purington Drake et al., 2023; Ye & Mahizer, 2025). The absence of such systemic framing in this study's classrooms suggests a missed opportunity to align media analysis with democratic education.

While the EFL teachers made efforts to support comprehension and fact-checking in their lessons, the instructional framing showed little awareness of how media constructs meaning through language, form, and narrative positioning. This narrow view of ML reduces it to information recall and verification, bypassing the ideological tensions and structural power embedded in texts (Machete & Turpin, 2020). Research grounded in misinformation studies confirms that without exposure to the persuasive strategies that operate within media, learners are likely to misrecognise manipulation, mistaking style for neutrality and bias for balance (Maertens et al., 2021; McKay & Tenove, 2020). Particularly concerning is the absence of curricular space for learners to challenge dominant cultural scripts, explore representational politics, or identify systemic framing devices, elements that have been linked to long-term resistance to disinformation and civic disengagement (Markowitz et al., 2021; Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017). Although international scholarship supports gamified or narrative-based inoculation strategies that simulate manipulative content to build reflective capacities, such approaches remained untried in the classrooms observed (Modirrousta-Galian & Higham, 2023). In the absence of

such structural interventions, ML remains conceptually fragmented and pedagogically underpowered.

The study also reveals that the EFL teachers rarely engaged with *representation* in the media (see Chapter 3). The EFL teachers integrate magazine covers, advertisements, and social media posts, which help students to build an understanding on how media can shape their perceptions of race, gender, class, and language. The teachers' strategies were introduced in ways that fostered awareness of identity and cultural messaging, though such classroom practices occurred inconsistently. Veum et al. (2024) explain that representation in media encodes social meaning through multimodal cues. Reiber-Kuijpers et al. (2021) describe these cues as shaping audience assumptions about normality and difference. Interestingly, during classroom observations, there were instances when students' lived experiences did not align with dominant media portrayals (see Chapter 5). Having said that, the absence of a sustained pedagogical focus on ML integration limited the impact of such practices.

Interestingly, during classroom observations, there were moments where students lived realities conflicted with dominant representations in the media. These instances offered rich openings for critical engagement, yet the absence of a sustained pedagogical focus on ML prevented such opportunities from deepening into meaningful critique (see Chapter 5). Research has shown that unless learners are supported to interrogate inconsistencies between personal experience and media narratives, their ability to detect misinformation remains limited (Khan & Idris, 2019). In fact, the literature cautions that simply being exposed to diverse information does not automatically lead to better judgement unless ML is explicitly developed (Jones-Jang et al., 2019). This is particularly urgent in contexts where health, political or social media can circulate with speed and emotional appeal, shaping beliefs and behaviours long after the original content is disproven (Krishna & Thompson, 2019; Lewandowsky & Cook, 2020). In the absence of such instructional scaffolds, students may feel dissonance but lack the conceptual tools to unpack it. Without a systematic challenge to dominant narratives, misunderstanding continues to exert influence, even in the presence of contradictory evidence (Angwald & Wagnsson, 2024). Therefore, ML in the classroom should move beyond occasional moments of critique and become embedded as a reflective habit of mind.

The EFL teachers in this study reported difficulty in aligning *Media Creation* tasks with curriculum expectations (see Chapter 5). Shafirova and Cassany (2024) observe that when assessment structures ignore creativity and authorship, media work becomes marginalised. In this study, teachers treated *Media Creation* as a technical task rather than a platform for argument, identity, or engagement. Jenkins et al. (2016) argue that production without purpose undermines critical learning. Rohs et al. (2019) also show that rhetorical

framing is key to cultivating ethical authorship. Without these elements, students responded to formats, not ideas, and media literacy lost its democratic function. Tong et al. (2024) note that novice teachers often replicate delivery-based models that restrict dialogic learning. This pattern was visible in the classrooms studied, where media activities rarely supported student voice or collaborative authorship. Neiva Montaña (2021) stresses that *Media Creation* must be dialogic to cultivate critical communication. The absence of this framing points to the need for professional development that treats media not merely as a resource, but as a tool for civic dialogue and identity exploration (Neag & Sefton-Green, 2021; Huang et al., 2024). Also, in rural classrooms, weak infrastructure and unreliable connectivity reduced opportunities for collaborative or multimodal design. Riparip and Caballes (2024) argue that learners require ongoing digital exposure to develop complex design skills. However, without pedagogical models, even well-equipped classrooms failed to use media tasks for critical learning. Fernández-Otoya et al. (2024) underscore that *Media Creation* should rest on sustained teacher training, not merely digital access. Similarly, Thomas and Drew (2022) argue for practice-based mentoring that supports instructional transformation. The findings suggest that without infrastructure and instructional support in tandem, ML remains limited in scope and impact.

In the context of ML integration into language instruction, this study reports stronger emphasis on *receptive skills* than productive ones in the EFL teachers' classroom practices. For example, the EFL teachers embedded ML in reading tasks, often with the aim of improving vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension with little space for critical evaluation. The EFL teachers' reading strategies were limited to promoting literal understanding rather than challenging the existing norms. Rochanaphapayon (2024) notes that media texts can support decoding and inferencing, but critical literacy only emerges when learners question source reliability and authorial intent. Susanti and Amalia (2025) point out that reading in media-rich environments can support both comprehension and interpretation when framed critically. Similarly, listening activities, which were integrated in the EFL classrooms, focused on using podcasts and video clips to support language comprehension, yet rarely addressed tone, perspective, or communicative purpose. Palanisamy (2025) warns that listening without reflection may reproduce passive habits rather than cultivate interpretive listening. The study results underscore that whilst media is a part of the EFL classrooms, they are rarely used to leverage critical engagement. Teachers appeared confident in using media to support language goals but required further training to link these goals with conceptual demands of ML.

Teachers appeared confident in using media to support language goals but required further training to connect these goals with the conceptual demands of ML. Zarei and Parhizari (2017) found that although Iranian EFL learners

improved their listening comprehension through media exposure, this did not extend to reflective or analytical uses of media in the classroom. In a similar context, Suh (2019) showed that critical engagement only emerged when reading tasks were deliberately framed to interrogate social perspectives and message construction. Yi and Angay-Crowder (2016) argue that TESOL teacher education often fails to include sufficient preparation for fostering critical and multimodal literacies. As a result, many teachers may lack the pedagogical repertoire to position media as a site for ideological reflection (Zarei & Parhizari, 2017; Suh, 2019; Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016). More broadly, Pennycook (2021) critiques the narrow linguistic focus within applied linguistics and advocates for an orientation that attends to power and discourse in classroom language practices. Lee et al. (2019) provide compelling evidence that multimodal problem-based learning enables deeper meaning-making and language growth when students explore how texts construct reality. Lee and Suh (2022) further show that the use of animation in the EFL classroom, such as Disney films, can lead to critical literacy outcomes when lessons are designed to question underlying values. Kim (2017) illustrates how structured media analysis helps learners uncover issues of identity and representation. Meanwhile, Huh and Suh (2017) underline the emotional dimensions of ML, proposing that affective engagement, when guided, can support critical awareness. These findings collectively affirm that ML in EFL contexts demands not just digital exposure but explicit instructional design that develops students' interpretive and ideological insight (Lee & Suh, 2022; Kim, 2017; Huh & Suh, 2017).

The limited presence of critical ML in speaking and writing further supports this interpretation. During classroom observations, the EFL teachers' speaking activities often involved opinion sharing, but few extended into argumentation or collaborative interpretation. McDougall et al. (2018) argue that classroom dialogue should move beyond personal views and create space for shared meaning-making. Zezulcova (2015) stresses that oral interaction around media texts should foster critical questioning, not just expressive language. In this study, the potential for critical oral literacy remained underdeveloped neither did the writing tasks. The typical classroom instruction strategies include summarising content rather than composing reflective or argumentative responses. The typical classroom instruction strategies observed in this study relied heavily on summary-based tasks rather than fostering reflective or argumentative responses. Students were asked to recall content, identify main ideas, or report what was seen or heard, with little scaffolding for deeper meaning-making (see Chapter 5). This aligns with broader research that critiques such reductive approaches. Harshman (2018) notes that although globally minded, critical ML aims to empower learners to interrogate structures of power, many classrooms still reduce engagement with texts to basic comprehension. Similarly, English language educators often support the idea of

critical pedagogy but rarely translate this into practice, defaulting to low-level tasks that limit critical reflection (Wyatt & Faez, 2024). Designing tasks that explicitly address the social and political dimensions of texts is essential to achieving the goals of ML, yet such efforts remained absent in the data collected for this study (Da Silva et al., 2018). As Lacković (2020) stresses, digital and visual media require explicit guidance to move students beyond observation to interpretation, yet such instructional moves were largely absent here. This suggests that even when teachers incorporate media into EFL instruction, a conceptual gap persists between media exposure and critical production, leaving ML underdeveloped both as a literacy and as a civic tool.

The EFL teachers may have lacked time, resources, or training to build writing tasks around critical media objectives. Yet without such integration, ML may remain as a peripheral element of rather than foundational to the EFL classroom instruction. Attempts to implement media-based communication appeared in Oblys and Qala schools, though these efforts remained inconsistent and lacked conceptual clarity. EFL teachers introduced tools such as social media dialogues, video responses, and digital presentations. However, these tasks lacked depth, coherent learning objectives, and assessment structures. Effective media communication requires rhetorical modelling, guided practice, and reflection (Flynn, 2025; Harahap et al., 2025). The absence of these components in the observed classrooms limited the development of audience awareness and multimodal competence. Rather than acting as intentional communicators, learners completed procedural tasks that failed to foster agency or ethical reasoning. This finding aligns with Weninger et al. (2017), who critique superficial uses of digital tools that replicate traditional classroom discourse. Without feedback and assessment mechanisms, communicative media tasks offered limited pedagogical value.

Studies indicate that digital tools such as wikis, collaborative platforms, and AI-supported writing tools can improve language fluency and structural awareness (Pratiwi et al., 2025; Teng & Zhang, 2024). In this study, such tools were rarely embedded in authentic communication or linked to real audiences (see Chapter 5). Shafirova and Cassany (2024) warn that writing without scaffolding can become mechanical and detached from critical purpose. While productive tasks improved grammar and vocabulary, they failed to support students as public authors or civic participants. Stewart and Rodgers (2025) argue that learners need production spaces to cultivate voice and rhetorical agency. In these classrooms, a narrow view of ML, coupled with limited training and resources, prevented media creation from becoming a critical and participatory practice. Bulger and Davison (2018) caution that such reductive models turn ML into a technical skill. Hobbs (2024) insists that ML can enable ethical engagement and active citizenship. Without structural changes, the potential of media production in EFL classrooms will remain theoretical.

The lack of metacognitive instruction weakens students' ability to interrogate their design choices and communicative positioning (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). Alfaifi (2022) links this gap to the lack of explicit instruction in metacognitive strategies. The proper classroom scaffolding may improve learners' decision-making and capacity for critical engagement (Ahmad et al., 2019; Berenji, 2021). In this study, students engaged with media sources without considering audience, purpose, or power. Consequently, media was used functionally, not reflectively, which limited its transformative potential.

Overall, the findings suggest that EFL teachers possess a promising foundation for integrating ML into their instruction, but they require clearer conceptual tools to do so critically. Simons et al. (2017) describe this as instrumental literacy, which may help learners understand content but does not prepare them to analyse or resist persuasive media techniques. The EFL teachers demonstrated openness to new teaching strategies and designed lessons with authentic materials. However, without professional development that aligns language instruction with critical inquiry, these practices may remain fragmented. Hobbs (2022) argues that ML should move from accessing and using language towards interrogating and creating the content in it. Portela et al. (2024) similarly insist that students must learn to produce and critique media as part of participatory culture. However, the progression from understanding media to creating it may involve not only technical skills but ethical reasoning and civic responsibility (Huda & Bakar, 2024; Huda & Hashim, 2021). This suggests that bridging the gap between media analysis and production requires pedagogical attention to ethics and civic purpose, shaping how teachers embed ML in ways that foster reflective and socially responsible engagement.

6.2.1 The EFL Teachers' Media Literacy Practices and Ethical Pedagogy

The integration of new technologies into classroom practice has expanded access to participation but has simultaneously exposed unresolved tensions around ethical pedagogy (see Chapter 3). The absence of coherent ethical guidelines for media use was evident across all schools, irrespective of location or available resources. The EFL teachers introduced students to online materials and digital tools but rarely accompanied these practices with structured norms for safety, source credibility, or respectful interaction (see Chapter 5). This gap did not result from individual oversight but from institutional and policy-level shortcomings that shape how ML is implemented in the education system. In the absence of formal training or curriculum support, the EFL teachers relied on personal judgements rather than clear regulations. As Portela et al. (2024) accentuate that without systemic guidance in schools, stakeholders can remain vulnerable to online risks and uncritical media consumption. Hobbs (2022) similarly warns that media ethics cannot develop in fragmented instructional environments. The lack of coordinated policy may therefore reflect a broader

misalignment between national aspirations and the classroom realities in which EFL teachers operate.

While EFL teachers in this study made practical decisions, such as asking for consent or crediting sources, these actions emerged in isolation, unanchored by institutional policies or structured training. Ethical decision-making remained reactive, shaped by individual discretion rather than coherent pedagogical frameworks. Livingstone and Third (2017) describe it as a marginalisation of ethical dimensions in school-level planning. Teachers found themselves negotiating concerns such as misinformation, digital identity, or student privacy without access to clear guidance. As Kapoor et al. (2023) argue, without sustained professional learning, educators struggle to translate abstract principles into classroom routines. The result is inconsistent application, where digital ethics function more as managerial protocols than as opportunities for reflective inquiry. The literature suggests that treating ethical literacy as a peripheral task deprives students of critical opportunities to explore justice, accountability, and power in digital environments (Huda & Hashim, 2022; Hobbs, 2024).

The study outcomes indicate that ethical reasoning within ML remained superficial and rarely extended beyond procedural classroom rules. Although some teachers promoted respectful communication or required source attribution, these efforts failed to initiate deeper reflection on algorithmic bias, surveillance, or the commodification of data (see Chapter 5). Boyd and Crawford (2012) claim that without critical interrogation, media-related practices reinforce rather than challenge systemic inequities. In this study, ethical pedagogy in ML was seldom integrated into broader discussions of civic responsibility or digital agency. The absence of such dialogue restricts students' development as morally aware media users.

Joshi et al. (2025) note that teachers often operate without institutional backing when addressing complex ethical dilemmas, which can discourage sustained inquiry into media power structures. When ethical engagement is confined to individual effort, it fails to meet the transformative aims of ML. To bridge this gap, policy must align with pedagogical vision, ensuring that ethical reflection is not episodic but embedded within the curriculum as a core dimension of critical literacy.

Ethical aspects of ML remained largely peripheral to the EFL classroom practices (see Chapter 5). The EFL teachers often equated media competence with ethical readiness, favouring tool proficiency over critical engagement. This conflation, also noted by Mercado and Shin (2024), reduces ML to a technical skillset and ignores the ethical, cultural, and civic dimensions essential for responsible digital participation. Savitz et al. (2023) critique this narrow framing, arguing that it undermines learners' ability to navigate digital spaces reflectively and responsibly. Teachers rarely facilitated inquiry into power, justice, or accountability, and ethical issues were typically addressed through

procedural rules rather than critical reflection. Pangrazio and Sefton-Green (2021) similarly warn that without structural critique, ethical teaching risks reinforcing passive compliance. While curriculum discourse may promote media fluency, its implementation tends to sideline the moral and political dimensions of ML (Livingstone et al., 2024). As Hinrichsen and Coombs (2013) argue, a critical ML framework must embed ethical inquiry across all domains to cultivate informed, questioning participants in media cultures. Without this orientation, ethical literacy in EFL classrooms may remain underdeveloped and conceptually fragmented.

The lack of ethical policy guidance has also led to inconsistent decisions around the use of student content in media-related tasks. Teachers described situations involving public use of student work without explicit consent, that underline institutional gaps in regulatory frameworks. Sarmurzin et al. (2025) similarly observe that teachers in Kazakhstan face ethical tensions between professional responsibility and personal autonomy online, pointing to the absence of clear institutional policies that safeguard educators' rights and guide responsible digital behaviour. Miao et al. (2021) argues that effective digital instruction requires ethical clarity alongside technological access. Wuyckens et al. (2022) note that ML loses its critical function when reduced to ICT use without reflective scaffolding. The study confirms that without institutional support, ethical considerations remain peripheral and rely on teacher intuition. This weakens the civic dimensions of ML and leaves students vulnerable to unsafe or superficial engagement with media. As Hobbs et al. (2022) suggest, robust ML pedagogy depends on inquiry, dialogue, and critical interrogation of media systems.

In general, the advancement of AI and social media fosters the need for strengthening the ethical aspect of pedagogy. The study findings revealed a tendency to focus on the functional aspect of teaching rather than interrogating issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, or knowledge legitimacy. This reactive stance reflects broader systemic delays in aligning digital innovation with ethical preparedness (Hobbs et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2025). While AI's appeal often centres on personalisation and efficiency, such narratives may obscure structural risks and dilute opportunities for civic reflection (Holmes et al., 2023; Kucirkova & Leaton Gray, 2023). Mulkiyah (2024) identifies a similar challenge in the Indonesian EFL settings, where teachers adopt AI tools without addressing their ideological or epistemological implications. The absence of robust frameworks not only restricts students' critical engagement with emerging technologies but also limits teachers' ability to guide ethical inquiry. Where ethical education is reduced to troubleshooting or classroom discipline, it cannot prepare learners for the complex moral demands of digital citizenship. Adams et al. (2023) stress that without institutional coordination, ethical pedagogy depends on individual effort, which leads to inconsistency and uncertainty. For ML to fulfil its transformative potential, ethical pedagogy must

be central to teachers' classroom practices. This shift may demand curricular coherence, sustained professional learning, structures and organisational cultures as fundamental to ML.

6.4 Factors Influencing the Implementation of Media Literacy

This section examines the multifaceted factors that influence the effective integration of ML within the EFL classroom settings, focusing on their interrelated impacts on teachers' practices and students' learning experiences. First, it begins by considering the role of policy regulations, investigating how national and local educational policies can either support or constrain teachers' capacity to implement ML effectively. Second, it explains how school infrastructure and professional development can underscore the importance of comprehensive training and ongoing support in fostering teachers' confidence and skills. Third, it explores how school culture and organisational structure can influence the adoption of ML practices, which include school leadership, collaboration, and institutional norms.

The national curriculum frameworks have not institutionalised media literacy within EFL instruction in Kazakhstan, as confirmed by the absence of any reference to ML or critical media engagement in the latest NAE methodological recommendations (NAE, 2025). The policy documents make no formal reference to ML as a required component, and teachers receive no systematic guidance on how to incorporate it into their lessons. As a result, ML appears fragmented across schools and relies heavily on individual interpretation. The stakeholders in this study, including school principals and teachers, described uncertainty about ML's objectives and expressed concern over the lack of policy support (see Chapter 5). Although internationally ML is recognised as an essential skill (Koltay, 2011), its role in Kazakhstan remains undefined. Marmol (2024) observes that when critical literacy lacks structural anchoring in curriculum design, implementation becomes ad hoc and inconsistent. Chiang et al. (2023) refers to this as policy reconfiguration, where abstract ambitions fail to reach the classroom due to missing frameworks. In this study, teachers made isolated efforts to incorporate media-related activities, but without policy alignment, these efforts lacked conceptual depth. Weninger et al. (2017) argue that vague curriculum guidance undermines the transformative aims of ML and reduces it to technical execution. Hobbs et al. (2022) warn that without ethical framing and inquiry; media education cannot realise its civic mission. The findings show that Kazakhstani schools face a policy vacuum that leaves ML on the margins of EFL practice.

Teachers in this study operated without models for inquiry-driven pedagogy or access to sustained professional learning (see Chapter 5). Policy rhetoric often promotes creativity and digital fluency, but the national curricular guidelines, which are usually designed by the NAE, provide little guidance on

its implementation. Indriyani (2025) reports similar issues in Indonesia, where teachers received policy instructions without contextualised strategies. Wang et al. (2025) observe that development programmes in English medium instruction tend to ignore institutional realities, reducing training to abstract goals. In this case, EFL teachers complied with policy requirements but lacked the theoretical grounding to embed media creation meaningfully. As a result, production tasks remained surface-level and disconnected from the reflective aims of ML.

The model curriculum for English language instruction in Kazakhstan stipulates a minimum of three academic hours per week in mainstream state schools, a provision outlined in the official Ministry of Education documents for primary and secondary levels. While specialised schools may increase instructional hours through elective modules, most institutions adhere to the standard minimum without significant expansion (Order No. 348, 2022; Order No. 399, 2022, Annexes 23, 23-1, 49, 98, 99). Collins (2016) explains that minimal contact time in foreign language education impedes progression, especially in settings without additional practice opportunities. Apart from limited English classes, teachers in rural and urban schools have to manage classes that comprise of 25 and more students. This arrangement restricts personalised feedback and sustained dialogue, which are critical for ML development. Potter (2022) underscores that ML education requires space for ethical reasoning and discourse. Hobbs (2024) notes that isolated exposure to media concepts cannot cultivate critical understanding. Kendrick (2022) found that smaller class sizes support deeper engagement with digital texts and narrative exploration. In contrast to this, the regional school expanded its instructional hours and group divisions, which created better conditions for ML practice. This example illustrates how structural variations between school types in Kazakhstan can support or impede ML education.

The disparities between urban and rural schools further entrench inequality in ML development. For example, teachers in urban, a better-resourced school, demonstrated more reflective and frequent media use, while those in rural areas navigated infrastructural constraints and limited training (see Chapter 5). While national policy sets uniform curriculum standards, implementation capacity remains uneven. Smanova (2021) shows that rural students perform lower on international assessments due to limited school resources. Kopeyeva (2020) attributes this gap to unequal infrastructure, teacher availability, and access to digital tools. Nurbayev (2021) argues that rural students cannot acquire critical literacies without targeted policy intervention. These structural inequities emerged clearly in Qala and Auyt, where teachers lacked professional development and technological resources. The findings do not indicate teacher resistance but rather systemic neglect. Unless policy aligns with material realities and allocates resources accordingly, ML will remain aspirational rather than actionable in under-resourced schools.

Access to digital infrastructure remains uneven across the three research sites, directly affecting the feasibility of ML integration (see Chapter 5). Oblys school benefits from independent budget control and provides each classroom with an interactive panel. In contrast, Qala school owns thirteen whiteboards for the entire school, while Auyl has only three. These disparities stem from the financial autonomy of schools. Unlike Oblys, Qala and Auyl cannot make independent resource decisions, which limits their ability to address local infrastructure needs. Teachers in under-resourced schools reported difficulty conducting lessons that required consistent digital access (see Chapter 5). In such conditions, ML becomes marginal, as technological constraints hinder continuity and innovation. Sörensen et al. (2023) argue that unequal infrastructure restricts access to critical pedagogies and deep learning. Although Hossain (2023) underscores the potential of school-level autonomy to address inequality, this study shows that autonomy alone cannot compensate for structural underinvestment. Without targeted policy and financial support, decentralisation can reinforce existing disparities rather than resolve them (Ahmad et al., 2008; Bray, 2003; Cascio, 2021)

It became evident that infrastructural limitations can also impact ML integration. Qala and Auyl teachers frequently relied on personal devices or printed materials as substitutes for digital tools (see Chapter 5). These improvised solutions often lacked coherence and limited students' exposure to media-rich environments. Zhang (2023) suggests that teachers' practices are often shaped by institutional constraints rather than pedagogical aims. Keddie et al. (2023) caution that without equity-driven planning, schools with limited capacity can fall further behind their counterparts. Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) stress that reliable access to technology enables deeper curriculum integration. Hobbs (2010) maintains that when tools align with pedagogical purpose, ML can move beyond technical training toward critical engagement. Teachers also need confidence and training that links technology with subject-specific learning goals. Agyei and Voogt (2011) show that when professional development supports this connection, teachers are more likely to implement digital practices with confidence and clarity. These findings underline the need for policy models that coordinate infrastructure investment, autonomy, and training to make ML both feasible and equitable.

Teacher education remains a foundational but underdeveloped element in the integration of ML within Kazakhstan's EFL classrooms. Teachers in this study consistently described a lack of structured training on ML both at pre-service and in-service levels. Most PD programmes they attended focused on basic digital literacy rather than critical analysis, ethical reasoning, or support for student media production (see Chapter 5). These limitations confirm international concerns that without pedagogically embedded training, ML collapses into tool-based functionality and loses its critical purpose (McNelly and Harvey, 2021; Hobbs et al., 2022). Koltay (2011) underscores the

importance of equipping teachers not only with operational skills but also with frameworks for evaluating media, guiding civic dialogue, and supporting ethical authorship. In this study, no participating school offered consistent preparation for these responsibilities. Instead, ML remained peripheral, wherein teachers are left on their own to improvise content and strategies without institutional or conceptual guidance.

Although some of the EFL teachers were exposed to short-term modules addressing digital communication or online safety, these sessions were isolated and rarely connected to broader curricular aims (see Chapter 5). This pattern reflects wider international trends in teacher education, where professional development often appears as fragmented events rather than embedded instructional support (Manfra and Holmes, 2020). Teachers expressed a clear preference for long-term and practice-oriented models that align with local teaching conditions. Particularly, they highlighted that in-service teacher education must be iterative, context-sensitive, and rooted in collaborative inquiry if it is to support critical literacies like ML (Meehan et al., 2015; Gretter & Yadav, 2018). The findings suggest that one-off workshops and top-down training formats fail to generate sustained change. Without reforming PD as a central, ongoing process linked to pedagogical innovation, ML can remain inconsistently delivered and conceptually marginal in EFL classrooms. The success of any PD initiative depends not only on its design but also on the internal culture of the school, which determines whether teachers feel empowered to implement what they learn.

The integration of ML within EFL classrooms depends not only on the initiatives of individual teachers but also on the cultural and structural frameworks at the school level that can either promote or obstruct innovation (Sergiovanni, 2005; Share et al., 2019). While all three schools acknowledged the significance of ML, only Oblys School cultivated the collaborative and supportive environment essential for ongoing engagement. Its leadership fostered a culture of peer mentoring, shared planning, and recognition through initiatives like the “Media Showcase”, where teachers showcased and discussed their digital projects (see Chapter 5). These practices are supported by research suggesting that distributed leadership and a robust sense of professional community can enhance pedagogical innovation (Fullan, 2001; Zhang et al., 2014). Roberts et al. (2023) further contend that leadership in education should be understood as a living, context-responsive process that grows from professional trust and shared reflection, qualities that were clearly present in the way Oblys School’s leaders supported their staff. Rather than enforcing top-down mandates, it was the presence of relational trust that inspired teachers to embrace risks and view media literacy as a valid curricular objective (Hobbs, 2010).

The findings from the Qala and Auyl schools point to a school culture where competition and performance seem to overshadow the deeper aims of

ML. While the provision of shared spaces might suggest a collaborative ethos, in practice, teachers described feeling under pressure to present polished lessons for the sake of observation (see Chapter 5). Ball (2003) notes how performativity can reshape teaching into showcasing practices rather than fully comprehending and engaging with it in practice. Apple (2004) claims that systems shaped by neoliberal logics reward surface performance rather than substantive engagement and discourage pedagogical risk. Lingard (2010) also warns that public accountability frameworks often remove the space needed for critical or reflective work in the classroom. As a result, ML practice may appear confident and coherent, yet it often lacks the depth required to question assumptions or confront structures of power (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017; Pederson, 2023).

It became evident that the schools' senior leadership teams can play a key role in promoting ML in schools. At Only school, for example, the principal supported teacher autonomy, emotional wellbeing, and curriculum experimentation. Fullan (2001) identifies such leadership conditions as conducive to sustained professional learning. Zhang et al. (2014) argue that teachers require trust and flexibility to engage in meaningful innovation. The organisational environment at Oblys school aligned with these principles, and teachers there expressed greater willingness to explore new instructional approaches. In contrast, school leadership in Qala and Auyl schools maintained a strong focus on performance metrics and bureaucracy. Such a leadership style left little room for creative risk or conceptual expansion in the EFL instruction (see Chapter 5). When leadership imposes hierarchical control, teachers often feel constrained and less inclined to reimagine practice (Schnellert, 2024). The divergence observed in this study suggests that leadership does more than set priorities; it directly influences whether ML becomes a critical pedagogy or remains peripheral to teachers' classroom practices.

The observed patterns also shaped how teacher autonomy operated across school contexts. In Oblys school, for example, teacher autonomy took the form of professional trust and responsibility. In Qala and Auyl schools, a symbolic autonomy was evident, as teachers expressed a sense of constraint by hierarchical expectations and limited support. Teachers adapted ML activities to suit local needs, supported by the assurance that their decisions would be respected (see Chapter 5). Hargreaves (2000) argues that autonomy only fosters innovation when it is situated within a culture of mutual respect and shared purpose. Dadakhonov (2024) similarly maintains that without such cultural and structural conditions, teacher autonomy risks becoming symbolic rather than functional. These findings suggest that collaboration, leadership, and autonomy function not as isolated variables but as interdependent conditions for ML to prosper in the EFL classrooms. Together, they determine whether ML serves as a meaningful pedagogical commitment or remains confined to superficial technological displays.

6.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined how Kazakhstani EFL teachers perceive and implement ML in their classrooms and explored the structural, institutional, and pedagogical factors that influence this process. The analysis unfolded in three sections: teacher perceptions, classroom practices, and systemic conditions. It established that many EFL teachers confused ML with ICT skills or basic digital literacy. This confusion resulted in a narrow and functional understanding of ML, focused on operational tasks rather than critical engagement. Teachers reported limited confidence in teaching ML due to a lack of prior knowledge and formal training. A critical omission in their understanding was media creation, a core component of participatory and ethical ML. Despite these conceptual gaps, teachers recognised the potential of media to support language learning, particularly in multilingual and non-native English contexts like Kazakhstan. However, media was predominantly used to deliver linguistic content rather than to develop students' critical awareness or global competencies.

It analysed classroom practices across four domains of ML: application, analysis, production, and ethics. Media use was the most prominent practice, centred on digital tools and multimodal resources that facilitated vocabulary and grammar acquisition. However, these applications lacked critical depth and often relied on input-driven approaches. The understanding domain appeared in the form of source filtering and basic analysis, but without sustained critical interrogation. In some schools, particularly Oblys and Qala, teachers introduced media-based communication tasks. These initiatives remained limited in scope and rarely included assessment or reflective components. Rural schools depended on traditional methods due to technological constraints, and awareness of advanced tools such as AI was almost non-existent. Across all sites, ethical education lacked coherence. Teachers had no consistent framework for addressing online safety, misinformation, or responsible sharing. This problem pointed to broader institutional gaps that reveal a systemic absence of ethical standards in national policy and school regulation.

It examined the structural factors influencing ML implementation. The national curriculum contains no formal reference to ML, and teachers operate without clear guidelines or policy support. This omission has resulted in inconsistent delivery and reliance on individual judgement. Rigid instructional schedules, with only three hours per week allocated to English, further restricted integration. Large class sizes limited the possibility of dialogue, creativity, and differentiated instruction. Infrastructure disparities between urban and rural schools deepened these challenges. Many rural classrooms lacked basic digital equipment, internet access, or appropriate learning spaces. Professional development opportunities were rare and primarily focused on digital tools rather than critical or ethical dimensions of ML. School culture also played a

decisive role. At Oblys, leadership encouraged collaboration, experimentation, and teacher autonomy. In contrast, Qala and Auyl schools operated under performance-oriented cultures, where accountability culture stifled innovation in classrooms. These findings confirm that leadership, autonomy, and collaborative culture must align with institutional conditions to support meaningful ML integration.

Chapter 7

Conclusion:

Implications, Recommendations and Contribution to Knowledge

In this study, I aimed to examine how EFL teachers in Kazakhstan perceive and apply ML within their teaching across rural, urban, and regional schools. The study focused on the six EFL teachers' perceptions of ML and its incorporation into everyday classroom practices. By examining differences and similarities across various school contexts, I aimed to identify the key factors that impact teachers' engagement with ML and the conditions for it.

The rapid education reform initiatives in Kazakhstan, which aimed at increasing international competitiveness of the country, resulted in updating the national curriculum and the promotion of global competencies. As such, there is a need for systemic integration of ML into schools, which include the development of new policies and practices, updated teacher education programmes as well as school infrastructure. Moreover, the advancement of new technology, including AI, is escalating the need for ML development in schools in Kazakhstan, so that future generations can critically judge and create information i.e. act as critical agents of change rather than remain passive recipients of media and AI driven (mis)information.

In this chapter, I present key implications of this study, its recommendations and contribution to knowledge.

7.1 Study Implications

These study results have implications for theory improvement, methodology development and policy design. The study implications can contribute to the ongoing academic discourse on how ML can be meaningfully integrated into diverse educational contexts.

7.1.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of ML by framing it as a holistic and context-sensitive pedagogical process, which should become part of EFL classrooms. Rather than view ML as a set of technical or cognitive skills, the findings position it as a multidimensional practice that integrates ethical reasoning, critical analysis, and civic engagement and language competencies within everyday classroom realities. The study synthesises critical ML domains, ethical media use, and language skills development into a coherent conceptual framework (see Chapter 3, Table 2), which can be further refined as a part of future studies, act as a framework for teacher education programmes and the ML policy development. This framework captures how the EFL teachers move across domains of *using, understanding, and*

communicating media, and supports progression from basic access to deeper analytical engagement. It brings together multimodality, intercultural awareness, source analysis, and media production into a unified structure that reflects both the challenges and possibilities of ML in the EFL settings in schools in Kazakhstan. The framework also introduces a practice-based lens for understanding how the EFL teachers can enact ML not only as a language comprehension practice, but as an ethical and communicative act. In doing so, this research offers a theoretically informed yet practically adaptable model that supports ML as a core component of foreign language education.

7.1.2 Methodological Implications

The methodological approach of this study, using case studies across urban, regional, and rural school contexts, demonstrates the value of capturing the situated realities of teachers' ML practices. By combining interviews, lesson observations, and document analysis, the research provides a detailed account of how policy, infrastructure, and professional development can shape classroom implementation. The inclusion of teachers' reflective journals added a further dimension, allowing insight into the ongoing and iterative nature of pedagogical adaptation. This method shows the importance of documenting teachers' shifting understandings and classroom strategies as they evolve over time. The structured teachers' reflective diary used in the study supported this process and now stands as a practical tool for teachers to use in their professional development and self-evaluation. This approach may guide future research seeking to explore the internal reflections that accompany change in the EFL teachers' instructional practices. Moreover, document analysis of the EFL teachers' classroom materials helped to design and develop methodological recommendations on integrating ML development strategies.

As a result, these EFL classroom materials can be published as a *Methodological Recommendations for Integrating Media Literacy into English Language Classrooms* (hereinafter, the Methodological Recommendations), which can benefit both EFL teachers and teacher education institutions to adopt and adapt the ML teaching practices. The Methodological Recommendations include original classroom materials such as teaching activities, which were co-designed with the EFL teachers. The research observation tools and teachers' reflective journal templates further helped to refine these activities. The Methodological Recommendations can also serve as a tool for translating research into the classroom and supporting the EFL teachers' professional growth.

By combining rich qualitative data with tools for teachers' reflective practice, the study offers a model for research that not only investigates practice but also directly supports it in diverse and evolving EFL teaching environments.

7.1.3 Policy Implications

This study underscores the critical need for coherent, context-sensitive policies to support the integration of ML into national educational standards in Kazakhstan. Despite teachers recognising the value of ML, its implementation remains uneven due to limited curricular guidance, inconsistent professional development, and resource disparities. Policymakers should develop clear national frameworks that embed ML as an essential component of school education, address both pedagogical and ethical dimensions, and ensure equitable access to digital tools. Additionally, sustained professional development tailored to diverse school contexts are vital to empower teachers to integrate ML confidently and effectively. By aligning policy frameworks with the realities of classroom practice, Kazakhstan can foster a more equitable and comprehensive approach to ML.

Equally important is the need to secure curricular alignment. In the absence of clear frameworks, teachers interpret ML integration on their own, which produces fragmented and inconsistent practice. Formal guidelines should position ML as an essential skill integrated across all types of schools, rather than as an optional add-on to gymnasiums or selective schools. This requires links to ML to broader educational priorities, such as critical thinking, digital citizenship, and linguistic competence.

By foregrounding the lived experiences of the EFL teachers, this study provides a critical foundation for reimagining national strategies that align ML education with broader educational reforms. In doing so, it offers a practical blueprint for building a generation of learners prepared to navigate both local and global digital realities.

7.2. Recommendations for Policy and Practice

This section builds on the insights and limitations of the study to offer targeted recommendations for integrating ML systematically into school education in Kazakhstan. Each recommendation addresses the persistent gap between policy and classroom realities that place ML at the centre of language instruction rather than on its fringes. The subsections that follow present specific and context-aware strategies at school, local educational authorities, teacher education institutes and policy development levels, which include the following:

Recommendations to schools:

- ML focused support systems, including mentorship schemes and professional development opportunities, should be provided within schools
- ML development requires school infrastructure, including digital tools and the access to internet, which may require more funding to rural schools and financial autonomy

- ML integration within schools requires clear school-based guidelines and ethical principles that are shared by all teachers and school leadership teams
- Schools should also develop policies on the new technology integration into teaching, including mobile phones
- School leadership teams need to create structures and cultures that support teacher autonomy, innovation, and professional learning.

Recommendations to local educational authorities (hereinafter, LEA):

- LEAs should prioritise equitable allocation of resources to reduce infrastructural disparities between urban, regional, and rural schools with a focus on ensuring access to modern digital devices, reliable internet, and relevant teaching materials
- LEAs should invest in targeted school-based technology provision for under-resourced areas, particularly rural schools where teachers currently rely on personal devices or borrowed equipment
- LEAs should coordinate the delivery of ongoing, localised professional development opportunities that reflect the technological realities of schools and teachers' learning needs
- LEAs should adopt ongoing school-based professional development models that include reflective dialogue and mentorship as well as align closely with teachers lived experiences
- LEAs should establish collaborative teacher networks across schools to share best practices, co-develop materials, and collectively address ML implementation challenges
- LEAs should facilitate the sharing of ML integration tools through supporting teacher professional networks.

Recommendations for teacher education institutions:

- The initial teacher education (hereinafter, ITE) should integrate ML as a core component of their academic programmes
- The ITE academic programmes should include modules that equip future teachers with both technical and critical dimensions of ML, including analysing bias, evaluating sources, creating digital content, and understanding and evaluating AI -mediated information and tools
- The ITE academic programmes should prioritise reflective practice to help pre-service teachers examine their beliefs, biases, and pedagogical strategies
- The ITE institutions should collaborate with schools to co-design field-based learning experiences that allow future teachers to apply ML within authentic classroom contexts
- The in-service PD programmes should move beyond surface-level ICT training to foster deeper, critical engagement with media texts
- The in-service PD programmes should ensure that ML is recognised as an essential element of EFL teacher education, not an optional enrichment

- Both ITE and the in-service PD programmes should promote the development of confident, critically aware, and adaptable educators, who can empower students to engage with media responsibly and reflectively.

Recommendations for policymakers:

- Integrate ML into the school curriculum as a core component, not an optional activity
- Develop a national ML framework as a priority, ensuring it provides clear guidance on ML integration at every level of schooling
- Develop guidelines for schools for ML integration and ethical use of technology
- Position ML as an integral component of critical thinking, digital citizenship, and language learning
- Prioritise sustained and embedded ML development within AI tools integration and teaching
- Ensure national policies address the schools' specific needs, which can enable schools to align ML practices with their specific contexts and resources
- Balance top-down policy directives with bottom-up agency to empower teachers and schools to drive meaningful ML integration.

7.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes a multi-layered contribution to knowledge on how EFL teachers conceptualise and implement ML across rural, urban, and regional school contexts of Kazakhstan. First, the study offers empirical insights into teachers' perceptions, their classroom practices, and factors that shape those practices, which is particularly important in the context of AI advancement and the era of misinformation. Second, this study provides a conceptual grounding for exploring the EFL teachers' practices through ML domains. Third, the study also provides a cross-case analysis of ML integration into the EFL classrooms in three diverse school settings with distinct structural and cultural variations.

The study findings show that teachers' perceptions of ML remain emergent and partial. The EFL teachers often associated ML with ICT and digital skills rather than an ability to critically evaluate and create media. The study is also unique as it conceptualises the EFL teaching not as mere language acquisition but as the process of enabling learners to critically navigate the modern information environment. Despite the EFL teachers' centrality to ML advancement, their perceptions of ML have limited reference to media production, ideological analysis, or civic engagement. These omissions may indicate a narrow conceptual scope that is shaped by the EFL teachers' limited exposure to theoretical models and insufficient professional training. Although the EFL teachers generally recognised the potential of ML to enhance

communicative competence and learner engagement, this perceived value of ML is commonly grounded in the instrumental use of media to support learners' vocabulary acquisition, grammar practice, and listening comprehension. Interestingly, the EFL teachers recognise media as a tool for language acquisition, but they pay limited attention to how it can construct meaning or shape learners' perception.

While some EFL teachers expressed awareness of deeper critical goals, their classroom practices indicate a limited engagement with ML in language teaching. The study also found that teachers' self-efficacy in applying ML into their classroom practices can be shaped by reflective experience rather than formal instruction. The EFL teachers, who have experience with integrating ML into practice, can articulate ML and apply it into their classrooms with greater intention and confidence. Interestingly, the EFL teachers, who embrace inquiry-based and student-centred approaches, are more likely to engage with ML in meaningful ways. As such, their self-efficacy grew through experimentation, collaboration, and learner response.

The study identifies that the EFL teachers in Kazakhstan can utilise three domains of ML, which included *using media*, *understanding media*, and *communicating through media*. The EFL teachers are more comfortable with *using media* to expose learners to authentic language input, support student motivation and language comprehension. However, the EFL teachers' practices are rarely accompanied by critical inquiry into the nature of media content. As such, the *understanding of the media* domain took place in very limited occasions, when a couple of the EFL teachers integrated strategies such as bias identification, analysis of representation, and critical questioning of media texts. The domain of *communicating through media* was the least developed. While some EFL classrooms include media production, including digital storytelling or podcasting, they are often disconnected from critical or ethical goals of ML. As such, the EFL teachers engage with the media to enable students to demonstrate language skills rather than explore authorship, purpose, or audience positioning. As such, the absence of clear ML pedagogical frameworks can limit the potential to foster media agency or civic voice, which may account for the urgency of more structured policies and clear ML frameworks for the EFL teachers to engage with ML meaningfully. The lack of national policies and school-based guidance on ML may indicate that school education reform in Kazakhstan should address these challenges before it integrates AI-related education into school curriculum, which is a key aim of the current government.

Despite the government's bold intention to integrate AI into school education, the study reports significant disparities across school types. Teachers in the rural school operate under constrained conditions, including limited digital infrastructure, large class sizes, and restricted access to professional development. Their use of media was often functional, aimed at supplementing language instruction, with little opportunity for critical engagement. In contrast,

the urban school offers its teachers' greater access to resources and occasional training opportunities. As such, the teachers' ML practices varied depending on the school's leadership and pedagogical culture. In some cases, teachers explored critical analysis or media creation, but such practices were inconsistent and often shaped by institutional expectations or administrative pressure. The regional school represented a contrasting case, as a selective institution, it benefited from rich infrastructure, small class sizes, and greater autonomy over teaching and budgeting. Supported by mentoring from international partners, teachers in the regional school demonstrate a more integrated and critically informed approach to ML integration. The EFL teachers in the regional school address ethical concerns, encourage media critique, and support students in producing texts with civic relevance. The school's environment allows for deeper engagement with all three domains of the ML framework. As such, the regional school EFL teachers can provide a transferable model of ML integration that can inform practice across other school types in Kazakhstan.

The study also identified a set of contextual and structural factors that influence teachers' ML within EFL instruction. The lack of national guidelines affected teachers' ability to plan, deliver, and assess ML activities in a coherent manner. Moreover, it fosters a protective school culture, where stakeholders, including the EFL teachers, believe that limiting students' access to gadgets and the technology during classes can shield them from misinformation. The structural limitations, such as the lack of access to modern digital technology, the financial autonomy, and professional development play a key role in advancing ML in schools in Kazakhstan. The school culture and leadership influenced the extent to which teachers could integrate innovative practice, as schools that encourage collaboration, reflection, and professional autonomy created more opportunities for teachers to experiment with ML approaches. In contrast, schools that focus on performance metrics or rigid compliance can discourage deeper engagement with critical or ethical dimensions of media use.

In response to these findings, the study contributes two central outputs. First, it proposes the *Integrated Media Literacy Practices Framework* (hereinafter, the framework), which brings together the domains of critical analysis, ethical media use, and language development. This framework provides a flexible structure for teachers to plan and reflect on ML instruction. It supports progression from basic use to critical and participatory engagement and can be adapted to varied classroom contexts. The framework offers a practical and adaptable tool for teacher educators, researchers, assessment bodies, and policymakers. This framework provides a foundation for evaluating and designing pedagogical approaches that move beyond basic literacy skills to embrace the demands of critical media engagement. In a world increasingly shaped by digital information flows, ML is no longer optional. The ability to critically analyse and respond to media messages is essential not only for understanding content but also for participating ethically and thoughtfully in the

contemporary highly digitalised society. Second, the study contributes to a further development of a practice-oriented manual titled *Methodological Recommendations for Implementing Media Literacy in the EFL Classrooms*. These methodological recommendations translate the research into classroom resources, including sample activities, workshop outlines, observation tools, and reflective journals. It offers teachers a structured approach to integrating ML into their instruction and supports schools in building a shared understanding of media pedagogy. Together, the framework and recommendations provide an applied model that addresses gaps in policy, theory, and classroom implementation. ML should be implemented in education as a necessary and foundational element of ethical, critical, and communicative language teaching.

This study demonstrates that ML should be treated as a core element of EFL teaching, where language proficiency, global communication and complex media environments can intersect with each other. The findings underscore that EFL teachers play a pivotal role in how learners navigate a highly digitalised world. Therefore, this study provides a concrete foundation for further research, institutional assessment, and policy development to equip both teachers and students with the tools necessary for critical participation in a media-saturated world.

7.4 Final Reflections and Future Actions

Reflecting on my doctoral journey, I can confidently say that it has been one of the most transformative experiences of my personal and professional life. Growing up with a deep respect for education, I always viewed teaching EFL as a way of opening doors to different cultures as well as innovating teaching practices. However, it was through this research that I developed a deeper, more critical understanding of the broader role that teachers can play in empowering students to navigate in an increasingly complex and digital world.

This PhD study has profoundly changed how I view the profession of teaching. Previously, I approached language education as primarily about linguistic competence. Now, I see it as equally about fostering critical thinking, digital responsibility, and active citizenship. This expanded vision positions teachers not only as knowledge transmitters but as facilitators of critical engagement and independent inquiry. I have come to appreciate that teachers are pivotal agents of change who, when supported by appropriate policies and professional learning opportunities, can cultivate critical ML that students urgently need today.

During the early stages of my research, I struggled with uncertainty, questioning whether my voice as a researcher could contribute meaningfully to the scholarly community. My interactions with the EFL teachers like Aidana, Sabina, Saniya, Maral, Begim, and Zhanna taught me the importance of listening deeply and collaborating respectfully. They also made me more

sensitive to how contextual factors, such as school infrastructure, access to technology, and language barriers, can shape teachers' capacities to integrate ML meaningfully.

Throughout this journey, I also developed strong interpersonal and research skills. Engaging with participants required empathy, flexibility, and strategic thinking, I often needed to navigate between different languages and cultural nuances to ensure that participants' perspectives were truly heard. Recognising and adapting to the teachers' existing school reality deepened my understanding of the linguistic and cultural contexts that frame educational practices in schools in Kazakhstan.

This study has heightened my awareness of the systemic structures that influence classroom practices. I now better understand how broader policy reforms, school leadership support, and professional development directly impact teachers' engagement with ML. It has become clear to me that fostering ML competencies among EFL teachers requires more than simply to provide digital tools, it demands thoughtful integration of critical pedagogical frameworks, ongoing support, and empowerment of teachers as reflective practitioners.

As a researcher, I have grown more appreciative of a case-based context-sensitive inquiry. Through this study, I was able to reflect critically on Kazakhstan's evolving educational context and contribute to knowledge through an empirically informed perspective on how ML can be better integrated into EFL classrooms.

Looking forward, I am deeply committed to continuing research in the field of ML and EFL education. Specifically, I aim to:

- Advocate for the inclusion of ML policy development as well as its implementation into as a core component of EFL curricula at national and school levels;
- Conduct longitudinal studies to track how ML policies and practices evolve in Kazakhstani classrooms over time;
- Explore the pedagogical implications of emerging technologies such as AI in language and media education;
- Promote equitable access to ML education in rural and ungraded schools

I believe that by fostering critical ML skills among EFL teachers, we can contribute to building a more informed, resilient, and empowered society. With continued research, action, and collaboration, I am hopeful that teachers in Kazakhstan, and beyond, can be supported in their efforts to equip the next generation with the competencies they need to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and mediated world.

Reflecting on the starting point of this journey, Abai Kunanbayev's wisdom about nurturing children's natural curiosity resonates even more deeply

after completing this research. By equipping teachers with stronger conceptual and practical tools to foster critical engagement, this research aspires to contribute to Abai's vision by empowering learners not just to absorb the world around them, but to question it, interpret it, and act on it with discernment and responsibility, which has become even more important in the era of AI advancement. Thus, the journey that began with a philosophical reflection has culminated in a practical call to action, to support educators in nurturing a new generation of thoughtful, critical, and resilient learners.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Consent from Interview Participants

INFORMED CONSENT

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Exploring EFL Teachers’ Media Literacy in Kazakhstan: A Case Study.”

Description of the Research

Participants will be asked to take part in interviews, focus groups, and document sharing. Teachers may also be asked to share documents (such as subject programmes, lesson plans, and artefacts) to contextualise instructional practices and align with curricular goals. Additionally, some EFL teachers will participate in semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to explore their evolving perceptions and classroom decision-making. Finally, these teachers may also be asked to keep reflective diaries to record their thoughts and experiences related to teaching media literacy.

Risks

Potential risks of participating in the research include the time spent on participation and the possibility of answering questions that you may find uncomfortable. Other risks may include the possibility of harm to the participant, such as the risk of breach of confidentiality, time spent participating in the research, and so forth.

Expected Benefits of Participation

The benefits of participating in the research may be seen by the organization, society, the academic field in general, and in some cases, by the participants themselves.

Compensation

You will not receive material compensation for your participation in the research. You will be able to access the research results after they are published in articles and reports.

Confidentiality

Participants’ names will not be requested during the study. Only an email address may be collected. The research team will make every reasonable effort to protect your personal data and maintain confidentiality. Any information collected during the research will be kept as confidential as possible. However, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

All data will be stored on the project supervisor’s password-protected computer and on Google Drive. The data will also be accessible to members of the research team who have completed research ethics training. Risks to data confidentiality may arise due to server or hard disk vulnerabilities or illegal hackers attempting to steal information.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary. If you decide to withdraw your consent to participate, you may do so at any time during the project without providing any reason and without any negative consequences.

Doctoral Student Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the researcher: Aigul Yeleussiz, +77021114823, a.yeleussiz@qyzpu.edu.kz. For other questions, you may contact the University's Ethics Committee at jumakulov.zakir@qyzpu.edu.kz.

If you would like to file an official complaint about the conduct of the research, you may contact the Department of Scientific Administration and Development at Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University at the following address: 99 Aiteke Bi Street, Almaty. Email: sciencedepartment@qyzpu.edu.kz, phone: +7 (727) 237 00 64

If you are willing to participate in the research project titled “Exploring EFL teachers’ media literacy in Kazakhstan: a case study”

CONSENT FORM

Please complete and sign this form.

1. I confirm that I have read the accompanying information sheet for this project and that I have had the opportunity to review the information, ask questions, and receive satisfactory answers.	
2. I understand that my participation in the research is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
3. I understand that my data will be kept confidential.	
4. I understand that the interview will be recorded on a voice recorder.	
5. I agree to the use of my responses as anonymous quotations.	
6. I agree that my data may be retained indefinitely for further research on this topic. I also agree that any data collected in the archive may be used as anonymized data as part of additional data analysis processes.	

I agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

Participant's Name	Date	Signature
Researcher's Name	Date	Signature

ЗЕРТТЕУГЕ ҚАТЫСУҒА КЕЛІСІМ

Кіріспе

Сізге “Қазақстан мектептеріндегі ағылшын тілі пәні мұғалімдерінің медиа сауаттылығы:

кейс стади әдісі негізіндегі зерттеу” атты зерттеу жобасына қатысу ұсынылады.

Зерттеу сипаттамасы

Зерттеуге қатысушылардан сұхбаттар мен фокус-топтарға қатысу, сондай-ақ кейбір мектеп құжаттарын (мысалы, пәндік бағдарламалар, сабақ жоспарлары, оқу материалдары) бөлісу сұралады. Мектеп директорларымен сұхбат өткізіліп, олардың мектептегі жағдайы мен басшылық ұстанымдары зерттеледі. Ағылшын тілі пәні мұғалімдері фокус-топтарға қатысып, медиа сауаттылық туралы ойларымен және тәжірибелерімен бөліседі. Сондай-ақ кейбір ағылшын тілі пәні мұғалімдерінен медиа сауаттылыққа қатысты сабақ беру тәжірибесін түсіну үшін сұхбат және сабақтарға бақылау жасау сұралады. Қосымша, осы мұғалімдерден сабақ беру барысында медиа сауаттылыққа қатысты өз ойлары мен тәжірибелері туралы күнделік жүргізу сұралады.

Тәуекелдер

Зерттеу жұмысына қатысу үшін уақыттың шығындалуы, сізге ұнамайтын сұрақтарға жауап беру тәуекелдерін

Зерттеуге қатысушыға зиян тию тәуекелдерін көрсетіңіз, мысалы, құпиялылықтың бұзылу қаупі, зерттеу қатысуға уақыттың шығындалуы, т.б.

Зерттеуге қатысудан күтілетін пайда (игілік)

Зерттеуге қатысудың игілігін ұйым, қоғам, жалпы, ғылым саласы, кей жағдайда қатысушылар көруі мүмкін.

Өтемақы

Зерттеуге қатысқаныңыз үшін Сізге материалдық өтемақы төленбейді. Зерттеу нәтижелерімен Сіз мақалалар мен есептер шыққан соң таныса аласыз.

Құпиялылық

Зерттеу жұмысында сауаланама қатысушылардың аты-жөндері сұралмайды. Тек электронды поштасы ғана алынуы мүмкін. Электронды пошта мәліметтерін жарияламауға және Сіздің жеке деректеріңізді құпия сақтау үшін зерттеу командасы ақылға қонымды барлық күш-жігерін жұмсайды. Зерттеу барысында алынған кез келген ақпарат барынша құпия сақталады. Алайда толық құпиялылыққа кепілдік беру мүмкін емес.

Барлық деректер жобаның ғылыми жетекшісінің құпиясөзбен қорғалған компьютерінде және Google дискісінде сақталады. Деректер зерттеу әдебі бойынша оқудан өткен зерттеу командасының мүшелеріне де қолжетімді болады. Деректерді сақтау құпиялылығын бұзу қаупі сервердің немесе қатты дисктің осалдығына, ақпарат ұрлайтын заңсыз бұзушылардың әсерінен орын алуы мүмкін.

Зерттеуге қатысу еріктілігі

Зерттеуге адам өз еркімен ғана қатыса алады. Егер Сіз зерттеуге қатысуға берген келісіміңізден бас тартқыңыз келсе, бұл шешіміңізді жобаның кез келген уақытында себебін түсіндірместен, ешқандай салдарсыз мәлімдей аласыз.

Зерттеушінің байланыс деректері

Аталмыш зерттеуге қатысты сұрақтар болған жағдайда, зерттеушіге хабарласуыңызға болады: Елеусіз Айгүл, +77021114823, a.yeleussiz@qyzpu.edu.kz Басқа сұрақтарыңызбен Университеттің Этикалық комитетіне хабарласуыңызға болады jumakulov.zakir@qyzpu.edu.kz.

Егер зерттеу жүргізу барысы туралы ресми шағым жасағыңыз келсе, Алматы қаласы, Айтеке би көшесі, 99-үй мекенжайында орналасқан Қазақ ұлттық қыздар педагогикалық университетінің Ғылымды әкімшілендіру және дамыту бөліміне хабарласа аласыз. Email: sciencedepartment@qyzpu.edu.kz, тел.: +7 (727) 237 00 64.

“Қазақстан мектептеріндегі ағылшын тілі пәні мұғалімдерінің медиа сауаттылығы: кейс стади әдісі негізіндегі зерттеу” атты зерттеу жобасына

КЕЛІСІМ

Қатысуға дайын болсаңыз, осы форманы толтырып, қол қойыңыз.

1. Мен осы жоба бойынша қоса берілген ақпараттық парақпен танысқанымды және ақпаратты қарап шығуға, сұрақтар қоюға және қанағаттанарлық жауаптар алуға мүмкіндік алғанымды растаймын.	
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2. Зерттеуге қатысуым ерікті екенін және кез келген уақытта себепсіз бас тартуға құқығым бар екенін түсінемін.	
3. Менің деректерім құпия сақталатынын түсінемін.	
4. Мен сұхбаттың диктофонға жазылатынын түсінемін.	
5. Жауаптарымды анонимді дәйексөз ретінде пайдалануға келісемін.	
6. Менің деректерім осы тақырып бойынша әрі қарай зерттеу үшін шексіз сақталуы мүмкін екеніне келісемін. Мұрағатта жиналған кез келген деректерді қосымша деректерді талдау процесінің бөлігі ретінде анонимді деректер ретінде пайдалануға болатынымен келісемін.	

Мен жоғарыда аталған жобаға қатысуға келісемін.

Қатысушының аты-жөні

Күні

Қолы

Зерттеушінің аты-жөні

Күні

Қолы

Appendix B - Interview Questions and Protocol with School Administration

Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the research. Emphasize the importance of the study.

Ask for permission to record the interview and explain the consent form and the use of the voice recorder.

Explain how ethical standards will be maintained.

One signed copy of the consent form will be given to the participant, and one will be kept by the researcher.

Main Questions

Additional Questions

1. What is the total number of students and teachers in your school?
What is the general socioeconomic background of your students?
How would you describe the social and cultural context of the city/district/village your school is located in?
How many deputy principals do you have? How many methodological associations are there?
How many teachers work in the English language department?
How would you describe the socio economic status of your teachers?
Has the "Teacher Status Law" had a positive impact?
2. How many years have you worked as a school principal?
What is your total leadership experience? And your teaching experience?
What are the most common challenges you face as a school leader?
What are the greatest achievements you've reached as a school principal?
3. Has the rapid development of information technologies, digital pedagogy, and social media affected teachers' work and school education? How?
Can you describe the positive and negative impacts?
How is it different from when you were a student?
4. What is the level of access to ICT tools in your school (e.g., computers, projectors, tablets, smartphones, interactive whiteboards, etc.)?
What do you think should be done to improve access to these tools?
When was the last time they were updated in your school?
What challenges do you face with procurement under the public purchasing law?
5. How would you rate your teachers' ICT skills in today's fast-evolving digital world?
Is there a difference between older and younger teachers?
What professional development opportunities have your teachers had so far?
6. Has the local education department issued ethical codes/guidelines regarding posting students' photos/videos on social media?
Are such documents implemented at your school? How?

7. Have you received any guidelines from the local education department or the Y. Altynsarin National Academy of Education regarding media literacy education? If so, what were they?
8. How would you evaluate the professional culture in your school?
How frequently do teachers collaborate?
9. What is the average workload of your teachers?
How often do they have time to meet and share professional knowledge?
Do teachers have access to a dedicated staff room for such gatherings?
10. What can you say about the state educational program (GOSO)?
How is the curriculum designed?

At the end of the interview, I informed the participant that the interview had concluded.

I expressed my gratitude for their participation, contribution, and time.

I explained what will happen during the research process, outline the necessary steps to be taken, and assure them that I am available to answer any questions they may have.

Мектеп директорлерімен сұхбат хаттамасы

Өзімді таныстырып, зерттеу мақсатын түсіндіру. Зерттеудің маңыздылығын атап өту.

Сұхбатты жазуға және келісім формасын түсіндіруге және диктофонды қосуға рұқсат сұраңыз.

Этикалық нормалардың қалай сақталатынын таныстырыңыз

Екі жақтан қол қойылған форманың бір данасы қатысушыға беріледі, бір данасы зерттеушіде қалады.

Медиа сауаттылық - медианың әртүрлі түрлерін (бұқаралық ақпарат құралдары, әлеуметтік желілердегі ақпарат,, жарнамалар, фильмдер, бейне роликтер, сурет, газет, журналдардың электрондық немесе қағаз түрлері) түсіну, анализдеу және жасап шығару сияқты құзыреттерге ие болу дегенді білдіреді.

Негізгі сұрақтар

Қосымша сұрақтар

1. Мектебіңіздегі оқушылар мен ұстаздардың жалпы саны қандай? Оқушылардың негізгі бөлігі қандай әлеуметтік жағдайдан келеді? Мектебіңіз орналасқан қала/аудан/ауылды әлеуметтік және мәдени жақтан қалай сипаттар едіңіз? Қанша орынбасарларыңыз бар? Қанша методикалық бірлестігіңіз бар? Ағылшын тілі бірлестігінде қанша мұғалім қызмет етеді? *Мұғалімдеріңіздің әлеуметтік жағдайын қалай сипаттар едіңіз? “Мұғалімдердің мәртебесі туралы” заңның пайдасы болды ма?*

2. Осы мектепте басшы болып қанша жыл жұмыс атқарып келесіз? Жалпы *басшылық* тәжірибеңіз қанша жыл? Оның ішінде *педагогикалық* тәжірибеңіз қанша жыл? *Мектеп басшысы ретінде жұмыста жүйі*

кездесетін кедергілерді сипаттап берсеңіз? Мектеп басшысы ретінде жеткен ең үлкен жеңістеріңізді сипаттап берсеңіз?

3. Ақпараттық технологиялар, цифрлық педагогика мен әлеуметтік желілердің жылдам дамуы мұғалімдердің жұмысы мен мектептегі білім беруге қандайда бір әсерін тигізіп жатыр ма? Қандай? *Аталмыш әсердің жағымды және жағымсыз тұстарын сипаттап бересіз бе? Сіз мектепте оқыған кезеңмен салыстырғанда айырмашылық бар ма? Қандай?*

4. Мектептегі АКТ құралдарына (мысалы, компьютер, проектор, планшеттер, смартфон, интерактивті тақта және т.б.) қол жетімділік қандай? Аталмыш құралдарға қол жетімділікті арттыру үшін не істеу керек деп олайсыз? *Аталмыш құралдар мектебіңізде соңғы рет қашан жаңарды? Оларды мемлекеттік сатып алу заңы (госзакуп) аясында сатып алуда қандай қиындықтармен кездесесіз?*

5. Цифрлық әлемнің қарқындап дамып жатқан кезінде мұғалімдеріңіздің АКТ дағдыларына қандай баға берер едіңіз? *Жастары үлкен және жас мұғалімдердің арасында айырмашылық бар ма? Жалпы осы күнге дейін мұғалімдеріңізде қандай кәсіби біліктілікті арттыру курстарына қатысуға мүмкіндіктері болды?*

6. Білім басқармасынан этикалық кодекстер/нұсқаулықтар берілді ме? Мектебіңізде ондай құжаттар көзделген бе? *Қалай?*

7. Жалпы жергілікті білім басқармасынан немесе Б. Алтынсарин атындағы Ұлттық білім академиясынан медиа сауаттылықты оқыту туралы нұсқаулықтар берілді ме? *Қандай?*

8. Мектебіңіздегі кәсіби мәдениетті қалай бағалар едіңіз? Мұғалімдердің бір-бірімен ынтымақтаса жұмыс істеуі қаншалықты жиі орын алады?

9. Мұғалімдердің орташа жұмыс жүктемелері қандай? Мектепте бас қосып, кәсіби біліммен алмасуға уақыттары қаншалықты жиі болады? Мұғалімдердің бас қосуына арнайы мұғалімдер бөлмесі қол жетімді ме?

10. Оқу бағдарламасы (ГОСО) туралы не айта аласыз? Оқу бағдарламасы қалай құрылады? Сіз оған элективті компоненттеріңізді, мысалы медиа сауаттылықты қоса аласыз ба?

Уақыт бөліп осы сұхбатқа қатысқаныңыз үшін рахмет!

Сұхбат соңында сұхбаттың аяқталғанын хабарлаймын. Сұхбаттасушыға қатысқаны, қосқан үлесі және уақыты үшін алғыс айтамын. Сондай-ақ, мен зерттеу процесінде не болатынын, орын алатын қажетті шараларды сипаттаймын және сұрақтар туындаған жағдайда жауап беремін.

Appendix C - Focus Group Interview Questions for Foreign Language Teachers

Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the research. Emphasize the importance of the study. Request permission to record the interview and explain the consent form and the use of the voice recorder. Explain how ethical standards will be maintained. One signed copy of the consent form will be given to the participant, and one will be kept by the researcher.

Main Questions

Additional Questions

Teachers' ML perceptions

Please introduce yourselves and share how many years you have been working as teachers. How many teachers are in your English department? How long have you been working together?

Has the rapid development of information technologies and social media affected your work? What about your students? How?

Could you describe both the positive and negative aspects of this influence?

Are there any differences compared to when you were in school? What kind?

How would you rate your students' media literacy skills? Is it necessary to teach media literacy in schools? Why?

What social media platforms or messaging apps do you most often use personally and professionally? For example: WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, etc. Why?

Have you used AI (artificial intelligence) tools? For what purpose? Any examples?

Teachers' ML practices

What textbooks do you use when teaching English (e.g., English File)?

Do these books include topics related to media or communication?

When teaching such topics, do you get the opportunity to analyze whether the information from social media is true or false?

Do you have opportunities to teach students how to create media content independently? Examples?

Can you share any experiences of developing students' media literacy skills in the classroom?

What methods do you use?

Have you heard of research-based or project-based learning?

What media resources do you use when teaching English (e.g., computers, projectors, tablets, smartphones, interactive boards, etc.)?

What are the main obstacles in using these tools?
Have you ever had to purchase such tools with your own money for work?

School conditions

What is the general accessibility of media/ICT resources within your school (e.g., internet, computers, projectors, tablets, smartphones, interactive whiteboards, etc.)?
What other resources do you think are needed to make your work easier?
What resources are needed to enhance your students' media literacy?
What conditions are provided in your school to develop teachers' media literacy?
Think back to your time in university — did you take any courses related to media literacy?
Do you think there is a need to include such a course?
In the last five years, have you had the opportunity to participate in any professional development programs related to media literacy?
What kinds of professional development courses have you attended up to this point?
Does the school leadership raise the topic of media literacy? How often?
Do they support teachers' image on social media? Do they monitor teachers' activity on social media?
How would you assess the professional culture at your school?
How frequently do teachers collaborate with one another?
What is the average workload of teachers at your school?
How often do you have time to gather and share professional knowledge?

National Policies

What can you say about the state education curriculum (GOSO)?
Are you allowed to include elective components such as media literacy?
How often are English language teachers' initiatives considered when designing the curriculum?
Have you received any guidelines from the local education authority or the Y. Altynsarin National Academy of Education regarding teaching media literacy?
If so, what were they?
Are there any ethical codes or guidelines from the local education authority regarding posting student photos/videos on social media?
Are such documents implemented at your school? How?
Do you have anything else to add regarding the media literacy of teachers or students at your school?

Шет тілі мұғалімдерімен фокус-топтық сұхбат сұрақтары

Өзімді таныстырып, зерттеу мақсатын түсіндіру. Зерттеудің маңыздылығын атап өту.

Сұхбатты жазуға және келісім формасын түсіндіруге және диктофонды қосуға рұқсат сұраңыз.

Этикалық нормалардың қалай сақталатынын таныстырыңыз

Екі жақтан қол қойылған форманың бір данасы қатысушыға беріледі, бір данасы зерттеушіде қалады.

Негізгі сұрақтар

Қосымша сұрақтар

Медиа сауаттылық туралы түсінік

Өздеріңізді таныстырып, қанша жыл ұстаз болып қызмет еткендегіңізді айтып өтсеңіздер? *Жалпы мектептеріңіздегі ағылшын тілі бірлестігінде қанша мұғалім қызмет етеді? Бірге қызмет еткендеріңізге қанша жыл болды?*

Ақпараттық технологиялар мен әлеуметтік желілердің жылдам дамуы жұмыстарыңызға әсерін тигізіп жатыр ма?

Оқушыларыңызға ше? Қандай? *Аталмыш әсердің жағымды және жағымсыз тұстарын сипаттап бересіз бе? Сіз мектепте оқыған кезеңмен салыстырғанда айырмашылық бар ма? Қандай? Әлеуметтік желі немесе басқа да медиа көздері арқылы тарайтын ақпараттың шын немесе жалған екендігін ажырата алу қабілеттеріңізді қалай бағалар едіңіздер? Оқушыларыңыздың ше? Неге?*

Оқушыларыңыздың бойында медиа сауаттылық дағдыларына қандай баға берер едіңіздер? *Медиа сауаттылықты мектепте оқытудың қажеті бар ма? Неге?*

Жеке мақсатта және жұмыс барысында ең жиі қандай әлеуметтік желі немесе мессенджер қолданасыздар? Мысалы, what's app/TikTok/Facebook/YouTube etc. *Неге?*

AI – жасанды интеллект құралдарын қолданып көрдіңіздер ме? *Қандай мақсатта? Мысалы?*

Тәжірибе

Ағылшын тілін оқытуда қандай оқулықтар қолдансыздар (e.g. *English File*)? Оқулықтарыңызда *media* немесе *communication* туралы тақырыптар көтеріледі ма? Аталмыш тақырыптарды оқыту барысында әлеуметтік желідегі ақпараттың шын немесе жалған екендігін талдауға мүмкіндік болады ма?

Оқушыларыңызға өз беттерімен медиа контент жасауға үйретуге мүмкіндіктеріңіз болады ма? *Мысалы?*

Сыныпта оқушылардың медиа сауаттылығын дамытуға бағытталған тәжірибеңіз туралы айтып беріңізші? Қандай әдістер қозданасыздар? *Зерттеу немесе жоба негізінде оқыту туралы естігендеріңіз бар ма?*

Ағылшын тілін оқытуда қандай медиа ресурстарды пайдаланасыздар (мысалы, компьютер, проектор, планшеттер, смартфон, интерактивті тақта және т.б.)? *Аталмыш ресурстарды қолданудағы басты кедергілер қандай? Аталмыш құралдарды жұмыста қолдану үшін өз қаражаттарыңызға сатып алған кездеріңіз болды ма?*

Мектептегі жағдай

Жалпы мектеп ішінде медиа/АКТ ресурстарға (мысалы, интернет, компьютер, проектор, планшеттер, смартфон, интерактивті тақта және т.б.) қол жетімділік қандай? Жұмыстарыңызды жеңілдету үшін тағы қандай ресурстар қажет деп ойлайсыздар? *Оқушыларыңыздың медиа сауаттылығын арттыру үшін қандай ресурстар қажет? Мектебіңіздегі мұғалімдердің медиа сауаттылығын дамыту үшін қандай жағдайлар жасалған?*

Жоғарғы оқу орында оқыған кездеріңізді еске алаңыздаршы, сол кезде медиа сауаттылық туралы курстар оқыдыңыздар ма?

Қажеті бар ма ондай курсты қосудың?

Соңғы бес жылда медиа сауаттылықты бойынша кәсіби білікті арттыру бағдарламасына қатыса алдыңыздар ма? *Жалпы осы күнге дейін қандай кәсіби біліктілікті арттыру курстарына қатыстыңыздар?*

Мектеп басшылығы медиа сауаттылық туралы сөз қозғайды ма?

Қаншалықты жиі? Мұғалімдердің әлеуметтік желідегі имиджін қолдайды ма? Әлеуметтік желідегі белсенділігін қадағалайды ма?

Мектебіңіздегі кәсіби мәдениетті қалай бағалар едіңіздер?

Мұғалімдердің бір-бірімен ынтымақтаса жұмыс істеуі қаншалықты жиі орын алады?

Мұғалімдердің орташа жұмыс жүктемелері қандай? Мектепте бас қосып, кәсіби біліммен алмасуға уақыттары қаншалықты жиі болады?

Мемлекеттік саясаттар

Оқу бағдарламасы (ГОСО) туралы не айта аласыз? Оған элективті компоненттеріңізді, мысалы медиа сауаттылықты қоса аласыздар ма? *Оқу жоспарын құруда ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің бастамалары қаншалықты жиі ескеріледі?*

Жалпы жергілікті білім басқармасынан немесе БІ. Алтынсарин атындағы Ұлттық білім академиясынан медиа сауаттылықты оқыту туралы нұсқаулықтар берілді ме? *Қандай?*

Оқушылардың фото/видеоларын әлеуметтік желіге салуға қатысты жергілікті білім басқармасынан этикалық кодекстер/нұсқаулықтар берілді ме? Мектебіңізде ондай құжаттар көзделген бе? *Қалай?*

Жалпы мектебіңіздегі мұғалімдердің немесе оқушыларыңыздың медиа сауаттылығы туралы алып қосарыңыз бар ма?

Appendix D - The Individual In-depth Semi- structured Interview Questions with Case Study Teacher

The individual in-depth semi- structured interview questions with EFL teachers

Have you attended any professional development courses or events promoting media literacy education?

If yes (specify what kind of courses you attended)

What is your teaching philosophy and approach to learning?

What is your instructional style, how would you describe it?

What kind of resources do you use in the classroom to engage students?

Do you use films or YouTube videos during the lessons? Can you comment on the types of the tasks you create?

What types of media have you encountered for today?

As we say media is everywhere, and we consume it everyday, what types of it you have consumed so far.

What is the purpose of bringing them into your lessons?

What does the word “literacy” mean in the modern education system?

Has the meaning of the term literacy changed since your school years? How can you observe those changes?

On average, in the past 6 months, how often have you assessed Media

Literacy in your teaching of English via the following?

(student surveys/ quizzes, criteria and rubrics, Storytelling, reports or reviews, creative tasks (creating a poster, an advertisement, a display board, comics, student blogs, journals, reflective essays, inquiry projects or research, debates or mini debates, or discussions)

How well is the attitude of the administration members of the school to media literacy incorporation during and after the lessons?

What about the other stakeholders’ attitude, for example the parents, students?

In your opinion, what challenges hinder the development of media literacy education in schools?

Do you feel as if you need some help in developing your own and students' media literacy?

If yes, what kind of help is necessary? How can we develop students and teachers media literacy in our educational context?

Ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерімен жеке жартылай құрылымдалған

сұхбат сұрақтары

Медиа сауаттылыққа қатысты білім алдыңыз ба?

Иә болса, қандай курстарға қатысқаныңызды нақтылаңыз.

Сіздің оқыту философияңыз және оқуға деген көзқарасыңыз қандай?

Сабақ беру стиліңізді қалай сипаттар едіңіз?

Сабақ барысында студенттердің қызығушылығын арттыру үшін қандай ресурстарды пайдаланасыз?

Сабақтарда фильмдер немесе YouTube бейнелерін қолданасыз ба? Қандай тапсырмалар түрін қолданатыныңызды сипаттап бере аласыз ба?

Бүгінгі күнге дейін қандай медиа түрлерімен кездестіңіз?

Медиа күнделікті өміріміздің бір бөлігіне айналғанын ескерсек, сіз қандай түрлерін тұтынып жүрсіз?

Сабаққа медианы қосудағы мақсатыңыз қандай?

Қазіргі білім беру жүйесінде "сауаттылық" ұғымы нені білдіреді?

Бұл ұғымның мағынасы сіз мектепте оқыған кезден бері өзгерді ме? Сол өзгерістерді қалай байқайсыз?

Соңғы алты айда, ағылшын тілі сабағында медиа сауаттылықты бағалауды қаншалықты жиі жүзеге асырдыңыз?

(мысалы, студенттік сауалнамалар/тесттер, критерийлер мен рубрикалар, хикая айту, есептер немесе шолулар, шығармашылық тапсырмалар – постер, жарнама, көрме, комикс, блог, күнделік, рефлексивтік эссе, зерттеу жобалары, дебаттар немесе пікірталастар)

Мектеп әкімшілігінің медиа сауаттылықты сабақ барысында және одан кейін қолдануға деген көзқарасы қандай?

Ал басқа мүдделі тараптардың – ата-аналар, оқушылардың – көзқарасы қандай?

Сіздің ойыңызша, мектептерде медиа сауаттылықты дамытуға қандай қиындықтар кедергі келтіреді?

Сіз өзіңіздің және оқушыларыңыздың медиа сауаттылығын дамытуда көмек қажет деп санайсыз ба?

Иә болса, қандай көмек қажет деп ойлайсыз? Біздің білім беру жүйемізде оқушылар мен мұғалімдердің медиа сауаттылығын қалай дамытуға болады?

Individual Interview Questions: Exploring English Language Teachers' Use of Media in Classroom Practice

How do you usually include videos, images, audio, or online texts in your English lessons?

When students work with media, how do you help them understand meaning beyond just the written words?

Can you describe a lesson where students worked with different types of materials, such as text and video or image and audio?

How do you talk to students about appropriate and respectful behaviour when they use digital or online materials?

In your lessons, how do students notice similarities or differences between texts or media that talk about the same topic?

How do you help students decide whether information they see or hear in the media can be trusted?

Do you ever discuss who created a text or media piece and why it was created? If so, how?

How do you encourage students to think about how images, sounds, and language influence their understanding of a message?

Can you give an example of how students learn to notice hidden messages, bias, or persuasion in media materials?

How do you connect work with media to speaking or writing tasks in your English lessons?

When different sources present the same event or issue in different ways, how do you help students compare them?

How do you help students notice whose perspectives are shown in media texts and whose perspectives might be missing?

What strategies do you use to help students recognise misleading or unfair information?

In what ways do you encourage students to ask critical questions about who benefits from a media message?

How do classroom discussions around media support respect, empathy, or fairness among students?

How does working with media help your students develop reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills together?

Have students ever created their own materials, such as posters, videos, or short online texts? What was your role in this process?

How do you guide students to use information and media responsibly when they create something themselves?

What difficulties do you experience when working with media in English lessons?

How do school rules, resources, or your own experience shape the way you use media in your teaching?

Жеке сұхбатқа арналған сұрақтар: ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің сыныптағы тәжірибесінде медианы қолдануы

Сіз ағылшын тілі сабақтарында бейнематериалдар, суреттер, аудиожазбалар немесе онлайн мәтіндерді қалай қолданасыз?

Оқушылар медиаматериалдармен жұмыс істегенде, мәтіннен тыс мағынаны түсінуіне қалай көмектесесіз?

Әртүрлі материалдармен (мысалы, мәтін мен бейне немесе сурет пен аудио) жұмыс жүргізілген бір сабағыңызды сипаттап бере аласыз ба?

Сабақ барысында цифрлық немесе онлайн материалдарды қолдану кезінде оқушылармен жауапты және сыйластыққа негізделген мінез-құлық туралы қалай әңгімелесесіз?

Бір тақырыпты қамтитын әртүрлі мәтіндер мен медиаматериалдардың ұқсастықтары мен айырмашылықтарын оқушылар қалай байқайды?

Оқушыларға медиадағы ақпараттың сенімді немесе сенімсіз екенін ажыратуға қалай көмектесесіз?

Сабақта мәтіннің немесе медиаматериалдың авторы және оның қандай мақсатта жасалғаны туралы талқылау жүргізесіз бе? Егер жүргізсеңіз, қалай?

Сіз оқушыларды сурет, дыбыс және тілдік құралдардың хабарламаны қабылдауға қалай әсер ететінін ойлауға қалай жетелейсіз?

Оқушылардың медиаматериалдардағы жасырын мағынаны, біржақтылықты немесе ықпал ету тәсілдерін байқауына көмектескен бір мысалды келтіре аласыз ба?

Медиаматериалдармен жұмыс істеуді сөйлеу немесе жазу тапсырмаларымен қалай байланыстырасыз?

Бір оқиға немесе мәселе әртүрлі дереккөздерде әрқалай ұсынылған жағдайда, оқушыларға оларды салыстыруға қалай көмектесесіз?

Медиаматериалдарда кімдердің көзқарасы көрсетілгенін және кімдердің дауысы ескерілмей қалғанын оқушылар қалай байқайды?

Оқушылардың жаңсақ, әділетсіз немесе бұрмаланған ақпаратты тануына қандай тәсілдер қолданасыз?

Сабақ барысында оқушыларды медиахабарламадан кімнің пайда көретінін ойлауға қалай ынталандырасыз?

Медиаматериалдарға негізделген сыныптағы талқылаулар оқушылардың құрмет, эмпатия және әділдік құндылықтарын қалыптастыруға қалай әсер етеді?

Медиамен жұмыс оқу, тыңдау, сөйлеу және жазу дағдыларының бірлесіп дамуына қалай ықпал етеді?

Оқушылар өздері постер, бейнежазба немесе қысқа онлайн мәтіндер жасаған жағдайлар болды ма? Бұл үдерісте сіздің рөліңіз қандай болды?

Оқушылар өз өнімдерін жасаған кезде ақпарат пен медианы жауапкершілікпен қолдануға қалай бағыттайсыз?

Ағылшын тілі сабақтарында медиамен жұмыс істеу кезінде қандай қиындықтарға кезігесіз?

Мектептегі ережелер, қолжетімді ресурстар немесе өз тәжірибеңіз медианы қолдану тәсіліңізге қалай әсер етеді?

Appendix E - Teachers' Reflective Journal on Their Media Literacy Practices English Version

Teachers' Reflective Journal on their Media Literacy Practices

1. How do you feel about your ML lesson? In your opinion, what went well and what did not? Reflect on the strategies you used to promote students' ML in your classroom. In your opinion, which strategies have been effective and which ineffective? Explain why

2. Reflect on how you incorporated ML tools including digital media, social media, or the other forms such as blogging, posters, presentations, digital storytelling ? If not, please explain why.

3. Reflect on how your perception of ML has changed after this lesson. How has your understanding about ML evolved, and what factors have influenced this shift? If not, explain why?

4. Reflect on how your students' ML skills have changed after this lesson. How has your understanding of their ML abilities evolved, and what factors have contributed to this shift? If not, explain why?

5. What challenges did you encounter in integrating ML tools into your lesson? What were they, and how did you address them?

6. What additional support do you feel is necessary to enhance your teaching of ML?

7. How do you

feel about the future of ML education in your classroom, school and educational system?

Next Steps

8. What needs to be improved in your classroom, school and education system for you to facilitate your students' ML skills?

9. Reflect on

how global trends, such as digitalization and the growing emphasis on media literacy, have influenced your teaching practices. To what extent do these trends shape the way you approach your lessons?

Place for Additional Notes for Teacher

This section is for recording any additional thoughts or observations after the lesson. Use this space to note interesting comments made by students, moments of insight, or ideas for improving future lessons. Reflect on specific improvements in students' skills or any significant reactions to the activity. Please use this space freely to capture any ideas that do not fit neatly into the structured reflection sections.

Мұғалімдердің медиа сауаттылық тәжірибесіне арналған рефлексивті күнделік

1. Медиа сауаттылық (МС) сабағыңыз туралы не ойлайсыз? Сіздің ойыңызша, не сәтті өтті және не сәтсіз шықты? Сыныпта оқушылардың медиа сауаттылығын дамыту үшін қолданған стратегияларыңыз туралы ойланыңыз. Сіздің ойыңызша, қай стратегиялар тиімді болды, ал қайсысы тиімсіз болды? Неліктен екенін түсіндіріп беріңіз.

2. Сабақ барысында медиа сауаттылық құралдарын (цифрлық медиа, әлеуметтік медиа немесе дәстүрлі медиа, мысалы, газеттер, теледидар) қалай қолданғаныңыз туралы жазыңыз, (мысалы, блог жүргізу, постер, презентациялар, цифрлық әңгіме құрастыру) үлесі туралы мысалдар келтіріңізші. Егер қолданбаған болсаңыз, неліктен екенін түсіндіріп беріңіз.

3. Осы сабақтан кейін медиа сауаттылыққа деген көзқарасыңыз қалай өзгерді? Медиа сауаттылық туралы түсінігіңіз қалай дамыды және бұл өзгеріске қандай факторлар әсер етті? Егер өзгеріс болмаса, неліктен екенін түсіндіріп беріңіз.

4. Осы сабақтан кейін оқушыларыңыздың медиа сауаттылық дағдылары қалай өзгерді деп ойлайсыз? Олардың медиа сауаттылық қабілеттері туралы түсінігіңіз қалай дамыды және бұл өзгеріске қандай факторлар әсер етті? Егер өзгеріс болмаса, неліктен екенін түсіндіріп беріңіз.

5. Сабаққа медиа сауаттылық құралдарын енгізу барысында қандай қиындықтарға тап болдыңыз? Олар қандай болды және оларды қалай шештіңіз?

6. Медиа сауаттылықты (МС) оқытуыңызды жетілдіру үшін қандай қосымша қолдау қажет деп ойлайсыз?

7. Медиа сауаттылықты оқытуыңызды жетілдіру үшін қандай қосымша қолдау қажет деп ойлайсыз?

қадамдар

8. Оқушыларыңыздың медиа сауаттылық дағдыларын дамыту үшін сіздің сыныбыңызда, мектебіңізде және жалпы білім беру жүйесінде не нәрсені жақсарту қажет деп ойлайсыз?

9. Ғаламдық

үрдістер, мысалы, цифрландыру мен медиа сауаттылыққа деген қызығушылықтың артуы, сіздің оқыту тәжірибеңізге қалай әсер етті деп ойлайсыз? Бұл үрдістер сіздің сабақтарыңызға қалай ықпал етеді?

Мұғалімнің

қосымша ескертулері үшін орын

Бұл бөлім сабақтан кейін қосымша ой-пікірлер мен байқауларды жазу үшін арналған. Бұл жерде оқушылардың айтқан қызықты пікірлері, ерекше әсер еткен сәттері немесе болашақ сабақтарды жетілдіруге арналған идеяларды жазуға болады. Сондай-ақ оқушылардың дағдыларындағы нақты жетістіктер немесе іс-әрекетке байланысты маңызды реакциялары туралы ойларыңызды бөлісіңіз. Бұл орынды құрылымдалған рефлексия бөлімдеріне сыймайтын кез келген идеяларды жазу үшін еркін қолданыңыз.

Appendix F - Lesson Observation Protocol

English version

Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University
The Institute of Kazakh and World Languages
The department of methods of foreign language teaching
2023-2024 academic year

Lesson Observation Form

Name of class teacher: _____

Discipline: _____

Date _____ time _____ room number _____

Location: _____

Lesson topic _____

##	Indicators	Comments <i>Describe objectively without interpretation</i>
1	<p>The setting What is the context? (e.g., regular class period, special project, demonstration lesson)</p> <p>What is the physical setting around? (e.g., classroom layout, resources, technology available)</p> <p>Who is observed? (e.g., teacher, group of teachers, students)</p>	
2	<p>What are the relevant characteristics of the teacher observed? (e.g., teaching experience, confidence, attitude)</p> <p>How many students are participating?</p>	
3	<p>Classroom practices recorded</p> <p>Educators' views on media literacy</p> <p>Context for integrating media literacy in EFL instruction</p> <p>Comprehension of key ideas</p> <p>Responsible teaching practices related to media literacy</p>	
4	<p>Teachers ML practices</p> <p>Media-literacy based activities</p> <p>What ML competencies of teachers are observed?</p> <p>Using media</p> <p>Understanding media</p> <p>Contributing medially</p>	
5	Integration of the Language skills:	

	Reading Listening Speaking Writing	
6	Teacher's critical ML practices: Deconstruction Representation Intercontextuality Multimodality Creation	
7	Using tools and media	
8	Ethical pedagogy implementation During the lesson, the teacher treats students with respect and creates a safe and supportive learning environment. The teacher's language, feedback, and questioning techniques are non-discriminatory and supportive in nature. The tasks and media materials used are selected in accordance with students' age characteristics and with sensitivity to cultural and social contexts. Students are given opportunities to express their own opinions, while respect for others' perspectives is consistently encouraged. When using digital and media materials, the teacher pays attention to issues of copyright, data privacy, and responsible online behaviour. Ethical pedagogy is reflected through pedagogical practices aimed at developing students' sense of responsibility, empathy, and civic awareness.	

Time of Observation: _____

Additional Notes: _____

Observer's Initial Reflections (optional): _____

Сабаққа бақылау парағы

Сынып мұғалімінің аты-жөні: _____

Пәні: _____

Күні _____ уақыты _____ кабинет нөмірі _____

Орналасқан жері: _____

Сабақтың тақырыбы: _____

##	Көрсеткіштер	Ұсыныстар <i>Субъективті пікірсіз объективті түрде сипаттаңыз:</i> <i>Оқиға өтіп жатқан жерді сипаттаңыз</i>

1	Оқиға өтіп жатқан жерді сипаттау Қандай контекст бар? (мысалы, әдеттегі сабақ уақыты, арнайы жоба, көрсетілім сабағы) Қандай ортада өтіп жатыр? (мысалы, сынып бөлмесінің орналасуы, ресурстар, қолжетімді технологиялар)	
2	Кімді бақыладыңыз? (мысалы, мұғалім, мұғалімдер тобы, оқушылар) Бақыланған мұғалімнің қандай маңызды ерекшеліктері бар? (мысалы, оқыту тәжірибесі, сенімділігі, көзқарасы) Сабаққа қанша оқушы қатысып отыр?	
3	Бақыланған әрекеттер Мұғалімдердің медиа сауаттылық туралы көзқарастары Ағылшын тілі сабағында медиа сауаттылықты оқытуға дайындық Тұжырымдамаларды түсіну Этикаға негізделген педагогика және медиа сауаттылық	
4	Мұғалімдердің медиа сауаттылықты қолдану тәжірибелері	
5	Тіл дағдыларын оқыту: Оқылым Тыңдалым Сөйлесім Жазылым	
6	Мұғалімдердің сыни медиа сауаттылық тәжірибелері: Деконструкция Репрезентация Интерконтекстуалдық Мультимодалдылық Жасау (немесе құру)	
7	Медиа құралдарды қолдану мен жабдықтар	
8	Этикалық педагогиканы жүзеге асыру Сабақ барысында мұғалім оқушыларға құрметпен қарайды, қауіпсіз және қолайлы оқу ортасын қалыптастырады. Мұғалімнің сөйлеу мәнері, кері байланысы және сұрақ қою тәсілі кемсітусіз, қолдаушы сипатта болады. Қолданылған тапсырмалар мен медиа материалдар оқушылардың жас ерекшелігіне сай, мәдени және әлеуметтік тұрғыдан сезімтал түрде таңдалады. Сабақта жеке пікір білдіруге мүмкіндік беріледі, алайда өзгелердің көзқарасына құрмет көрсету	

	<p>талап етіледі. Мұғалім цифрлық және медиа материалдарды пайдалану кезінде авторлық құқық, жеке деректердің құпиялылығы және жауапты онлайн мінез-құлық қағидаттарына назар аударады.</p> <p>Этикалық педагогика оқушылардың жауапкершілігін, эмпатиясын және азаматтық санасын дамытуға бағытталған педагогикалық әрекеттер арқылы көрініс табады.</p>	
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Бақылау уақыты: _____

Қосымша ескертпелер:

Бақылаушының алғашқы ой-пікірлері (қалауыңыз бойынша):

Appendix G - Research Journal Checklist

Kazakh National Women's Teacher Training University
The Institute of Kazakh and World Languages
The department of methods of foreign language teaching
2023-2024 academic year

Research Journal Checklist

Name of class teacher: _____

Discipline: _____

Date _____ time _____ room number _____

Location: _____

Lesson topic _____

Key Themes	Activities: (Brief description of the main activities that took place during the observation/interview)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Teachers' ML perceptions- Background to teaching ML in EFL classrooms- Ethical pedagogy and media literacy- Teachers' ML practices- Teachers' critical ML practices- Integration of ML into language skills- Ineffective use of media- Effective ML practices:- Media literacy in schools (challenges and benefits)	

Reflection on My Role:

How did I feel about it? (Personal reflections on your own role and experiences during the observation/interview)

Additional Notes:(Use this section to capture any unexpected insights, interesting quotes, or key observations that don't neatly fit into the above sections.)

Next Steps:(What will you do next? Plans for follow-up, additional questions, changes to your approach.)

Зерттеу журналының бақылау тізімі

Сынып мұғалімінің аты-жөні: _____

Пәні: _____

Күні _____ уақыты _____ кабинет нөмірі _____

Орналасқан жері:

Сабақтың тақырыбы:

Негізгі тақырыптар	Іс-әрекеттері: (Бақылау немесе сұхбат барысында орын алған негізгі іс-әрекеттерді қысқаша сипаттаңыз)
<i>Мұғалімдердің медиа сауаттылық туралы көзқарастары</i> <i>Ағылшын тілі сабағында медиа сауаттылықты оқыту негіздері</i> <i>Этикалық педагогика және медиа сауаттылық</i> <i>Мұғалімдердің медиа сауаттылықты қолдану тәжірибесі</i> <i>Мұғалімдердің сыни медиа сауаттылықты қолдану тәжірибесі</i> <i>Тіл дағдыларына медиа сауаттылықты кіріктіру</i> <i>Медиа құралдарын тиімсіз қолдану</i> <i>Медиа сауаттылықты тиімді қолдану тәжірибесі:</i> <i>Мектептегі медиа сауаттылық (қиындықтары мен артықшылықтары)</i>	

Өз рөлім туралы рефлексия:

Мен бұған қалай қарадым? (Бақылау/сұхбат барысында өз рөліңіз және тәжірибеңіз туралы жеке рефлексияңыз)

Қосымша ескертпелер:

(Осы бөлімде күтпеген ойлар, қызықты дәйексөздер немесе жоғарыда көрсетілген бөлімдерге толық сәйкес келмейтін маңызды бақылауларды жазыңыз.)

Келесі қадамдар:

(Келесіде не істейсіз? Қосымша сұрақтар, бақылау жоспары, әдісті өзгерту туралы жоспарлар.)

Appendix H - Code Glossary: Critical Media Literacy Domains

Code	Definition (Teacher-focused)	Coding Criteria / Rules	Role in Framework
D1	Teacher facilitates deconstruction of hidden ideologies in media texts.	Includes teacher-led questions or tasks prompting students to examine persuasive techniques, power relations, or narrative framing.	Central to teachers' ideological orientation within critical ML.
D2	Teacher designs tasks that guide students to identify bias or imbalance in media.	Instruction encourages critical awareness of partial narratives or selective framing.	Supports critical media interpretation.
D3	Teacher introduces analysis of media production, ownership, or interests.	Lesson content or discussion includes attention to who creates media and whose interests are served.	Connects media interpretation to wider societal systems.
R1	Educator guides analysis of identity representation, such as gender and ethnicity.	Teaching materials involve analysis or reflection on how identities are depicted.	Promotes examination of how media shapes social roles and positions.
R2	Teacher highlights cultural framing and media portrayals of tradition or norms.	Teacher facilitates exploration of how cultural contexts are framed across media.	Supports intercultural ML.
R3	Teacher leads analysis of ideologies embedded in media (e.g., success, beauty, norms).	Includes classroom discussion or tasks on implicit values in media narratives.	Encourages ideological critique.
I1	Teacher prompts learners to compare and contrast multiple texts.	Requires instructional planning with explicit juxtaposition of related media.	Develops intertextual analytical capacity.
I2	Teacher scaffolds recognition of recurring ideological frames across sources.	Teacher highlights patterns across media platforms (e.g., protest coverage).	Builds meta-awareness of media systems.
M1	Teacher guides students to decode multimodal elements in media.	Instruction focuses on meaning-making through image, sound, layout, etc.	Supports multimodal ML comprehension.
M2	Teacher facilitates the use of multiple modes for classroom outputs.	Teachers assign or model tasks involving text, image, audio, or video combinations.	Reinforces media production as multimodal practice.
C1	Teacher supports students in designing critical media messages.	Instruction includes content creation with intentional social messages or critique.	Connects ML to purposeful authorship.
C2	Teacher encourages production of short-format posts with critical intent.	Classroom activities involve creation of concise posts with digital awareness.	Supports succinct digital expression.
C3	Teacher supports learners in sharing media beyond the classroom context.	Evidence of teacher facilitating outreach-oriented or civic media activities.	Links ML with public engagement.

Appendix I - Illustration of the Data Analysis Process for Theme 2: Teachers' Critical Media Literacy Practices

Categories	Codes	Illustrative interview and/or reflective diary excerpts
Deconstruction		
<i>Unpacking ideology</i>	D1	In one lesson, I used a perfume advertisement and asked students, ‘Why do you think this is appealing?’ and ‘Who benefits from these messages?’ I wanted them to see how language and emotion are used not just to inform, but to influence. (Aidana, Reflective Diary)
<i>Unpacking ideology</i>	D2	When planning a lesson on social media, I chose to show two TikTok videos on the same issue. I asked students to identify what information was included and what might have been left out. The aim was for them to recognise how selective framing can distort reality. (Sabina, Reflective Diary)
<i>Unpacking bias</i>	D3	I designed a task where students had to compare a news story from two different websites—one state-run and one independent. We discussed who owns the media, who controls the message, and how this affects what is reported and how. (Begim, Interview)
Representation		
<i>Identity portrayal</i>	R1	“While reviewing a short video, I noticed it showed rural children as shy and passive. I paused the video and asked, ‘Is this how rural students really are?’ I encouraged them to challenge that stereotype and reflect on how such portrayals shape public perception.” (Aidana, Reflective Diary)
<i>Cultural portrayal</i>	R2	“In lessons on social media, I intentionally selected Instagram accounts that portray Kazakh culture in diverse ways—from traditional dress to modern youth activism. I used these examples to show how culture is never shown in just one way and can be misrepresented.” (Maral, Interview)
<i>Ideological portrayal</i>	R3	“We explored magazine covers that repeatedly feature the same kinds of people—wealthy, light-skinned, thin. I asked students, ‘What does this tell us about success and beauty?’ I wanted them to see how ideology is embedded in everyday media.” (Begim, Reflective Diary)
Intertextuality		
<i>Textual relationships</i>	I1	“I gave students two news articles reporting on the same event but with very different headlines and leads. In class, we dissected both and talked about how word choice and

		structure influence the reader. It helped them realise that news is not neutral.” (Aidana, Interview)
<i>Ideological links</i>	I2	“During a media analysis task, we watched three different videos about climate protests—one from local news, one from an activist channel, and one from an international broadcaster. I asked them to identify patterns in how protesters were portrayed. We discussed how ideological framing can remain consistent across platforms.” (Saniya, Interview)
Multimodality		
<i>Understanding modes</i>	M1	“In a grammar revision activity, I encouraged students to create memes. I guided them to think about how image, colour, and text work together to make the message more memorable. We also discussed why some memes went viral and what that says about communication today.” (Zhanna, Reflective Diary)
<i>Using multiple modes</i>	M2	“When students worked on a project about online safety, I showed them how to combine visuals with voice narration using Canva. I modelled how using tone and imagery enhances the impact of a message. The aim was to develop their confidence in expressing ideas across modes.” (Maral, Interview)
Creation		
<i>Designing critical messages</i>	C1	“I assigned a media task where students created posters to warn about online fraud. Before starting, I led a discussion on tone, font choice, and credible image use. I told them, ‘Your design must not just inform — it should make someone think.’ This pushed them to approach creation critically.” (Maral, Interview)
<i>Short-format posts</i>	C2	“For one homework task, I asked each student to make an Instagram-style post about digital wellbeing. I provided guidelines on combining facts with emotional appeal. My goal was to help them practise communicating important messages concisely and impactfully.” (Sabina, Interview)
<i>Public media engagement</i>	C3	“After discussing gender stereotypes, I encouraged two students to expand their work into a blog post. They shared it publicly and even received feedback from classmates and others. I supported this because I believe media literacy should empower learners to speak beyond the classroom.” (Begim, Reflective Diary)

Illustration of the Data Analysis Process for Theme 2: Media Literacy in language skills

Code	Skill	ML focus	Indicators / teacher practices	Illustrative interview excerpts	Frequen cy (teacher s)	Data source
R1	Read ing	Critical text analysis	Close reading of articles, identifying bias	“I want them to question what’s written—who wrote it, for what reason, and if it’s biased.” (Aidana)	3 (Aidana, Begim, Sabina)	Interview, lesson observatio n
R2	Read ing	Digital comprehens ion scaffolding	Visual aids and scaffolded comprehension using videos	“Sometimes I use a comic or a short animation with subtitles to support weaker readers.” (Zhanna)	2 (Zhanna, Maral)	Lesson observatio n, artefacts
R3	Read ing	Academic literacy via media texts	Grammar/vocab ulary tasks with blog texts	“They learn new words from blog posts and practice grammar using online reviews.” (Aidana)	1 (Aidana)	Reflective diary
L1	Liste ning	Authentic audio engagement	Use of podcasts or YouTube to build comprehension	“I let them listen to a podcast from Spotify— it helps them hear real English.” (Begim)	4 (Begim, Aidana, Sabina, Saniya)	Interview, student work
L2	Liste ning	Mobile- assisted language learning	Use of WhatsApp/Spoti fy for listening tasks	“Sometimes I send them audio on WhatsApp. It’s easier for them to access it at home.” (Begim)	2 (Begim, Maral)	Interview, reflective diary
L3	Liste ning	Structured listening tasks	Prediction and summarising exercises	“We listened to a news report, and they filled in a table about what they understood.” (Saniya)	3 (Saniya, Begim, Maral)	Lesson observatio n, student work
S1	Spea king	Interactive social media	TikTok or other media-based	“They record short videos explaining a topic or replying to a	2 (Sabina,	Reflective diary,

Code	Skill	ML focus	Indicators / teacher practices	Illustrative interview excerpts	Frequency (teachers)	Data source
		speaking	speaking tasks	question—like a challenge.” (Sabina)	Zhanna)	artefacts
S2	Speaking	Multimedia production and oral fluency	Creating podcasts or storytelling videos	“My students worked in pairs to make a podcast episode about school rules.” (Begim)	2 (Begim, Sabina)	Interview, student work
S3	Speaking	Discussion-based media learning	Debates and reflection on controversial media	“After reading, we always discuss the message and who benefits from it.” (Aidana)	3 (Aidana, Begim, Saniya)	Lesson observation, interview
S4	Speaking	Digital fluency and multimodal adaptability	Infographic or AI-aided speaking tasks	“Some girls made infographics and explained them in front of the class, using AI to design them.” (Maral)	2 (Maral, Sabina)	Artefacts, reflective diary
W1	Writing	Critical writing through media texts	Opinion or argument essays about media	“I give them two online articles on the same topic and ask them to write whose side they support.” (Aidana)	3 (Aidana, Begim, Saniya)	Interview, student work
W2	Writing	Collaborative/creative digital writing	Group work using digital writing tools	“They wrote a group story using a story app—it had pictures and a shared narrative.” (Sabina)	2 (Sabina, Maral)	Lesson observation, artefacts
W3	Writing	AI/inquiry-based digital composition	Essay planning and structuring via AI	“They used AI tools to make essay plans, and we discussed which suggestions were accurate.” (Maral)	2 (Maral, Begim)	Interview, reflective diary
W4	Writing	Civic writing and digital authorship	Blog posts on social issues and representation	“Two students blogged about gender stereotypes they noticed on TV and posted their reflections.” (Begim)	1 (Begim)	Student work, reflective diary