

## Travel narrative texts in Indonesian language education: An examination of pedagogical relevance and media presence



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### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 6 December 2025

Received in revised form

13 April 2026

Accepted 15 April 2026

#### Keywords:

Travel narrative texts

Indonesian language education

Teacher perceptions

Curriculum gap

Digital literacy

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the pedagogical status and perceived importance of travel narrative texts in Indonesian language education. Although this genre is widely available in public media, it is not well integrated into school instruction. A descriptive qualitative approach was used. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 32 Indonesian language teachers from junior and senior high schools in Central Java. These data were supported by document analysis of national Learning Outcomes (*Capaian Pembelajaran*, CP) and government textbooks, as well as observations of travel-related content in mass and social media. Data collection took place over three months, and the data were analyzed thematically through processes of reduction, organization, and interpretation. The findings show that most teachers do not teach travel narratives as a separate genre. Those who include them usually combine them with general narrative or descriptive lessons. Textbook analysis also shows a lack of clear explanations, sample texts, and learning activities related to travel writing, even though the CP framework supports experiential, reflective, and publication-oriented writing. In contrast, travel narratives are highly visible in newspapers and digital platforms, offering many examples that students encounter outside school. Teachers generally believe that this genre is valuable for developing narrative skills, descriptive accuracy, reflective thinking, and digital literacy. However, they report challenges such as limited teaching time and a lack of appropriate materials. The study concludes that travel narrative texts are culturally important but educationally underused, and it recommends stronger curriculum support through improved textbooks and teacher training.

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## 1. Introduction

Travel narrative, as a form of narrative writing, has long been recognized as a medium that integrates experiences, reflections, and cultural representations in a textual construction that encourages the formation of social and emotional literacy. In the context of language education, travel narrative is seen not only as a literary genre but also as a literacy practice that requires the ability to observe, describe, and articulate experiences in a multimodal manner. The development of digital


ecology places travel writing in a new landscape that blends text, visual, audio, and the practice of sharing experiences through social media (Lund et al., 2018; Pop et al., 2022). These dynamics make travel narrative relevant to the needs of the 21st century, including strengthening creativity, digital literacy, and the ability to present experiences in a meaningful communicative format. However, academic discussions about the position of travel narrative in language learning are still limited, especially in developing countries, including Indonesia (Al-Ma'ruf et al., 2024). This condition shows the need for a study that places travel writing as a potential pedagogical space in contemporary literacy. Thus, research on its existence in curriculum and learning practices is becoming increasingly urgent.

Various recent studies confirm that the teaching of narrative genres plays a major role in developing critical thinking skills, cultural literacy, and student

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<https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2026.04.015>

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identity construction (Mansfield et al., 2025). However, most research focuses more on fictional narratives, folklore, or autobiographies, while travel narratives receive less attention in the pedagogical realm, even though their potential is very broad. On the other hand, the development of digital media has caused travel writing to become one of the most dominant forms of content, especially in the form of user-generated content that affects the way the younger generation consumes and produces text (Arica et al., 2022; Sufanti et al., 2021; Sultan et al., 2021). This phenomenon opens opportunities for educational institutions to integrate travel narratives as an authentic multimodal literacy tool. However, until now, there is still minimal research linking students' digital literacy competencies with travel writing practices in the school context. This theoretical vacuum reinforces the urgency of a more comprehensive analysis of the pedagogical status of travel narrative. Therefore, an in-depth study of this genre can make a significant contribution to the development of literacy theory and genre pedagogy.

In the Indonesian context, the existence of travel narrative as a teaching material has not gained strong legitimacy both in textbooks and teacher practice, although its elements are in line with the Learning Outcomes (CP) in phases D and F, which emphasize the ability to write based on experience, facts, and digital publications. The lack of representation of these genres in textbooks indicates a gap between curriculum policies, the availability of learning resources, and pedagogical practices, a condition that is also found in international studies of the incompatibility between curriculum and genre representation. In addition, there has been no research that triangulatively connects teachers' views, national curriculum textbooks, and the emergence of travel narratives in mass media and social media. In fact, the mainstream media shows that travel narratives are produced consistently and widely for the benefit of cultural communication, tourism, and the creative economy (Lund et al., 2018; Pop et al., 2022). This gap between media practices and educational practices shows the potential for neglected literacy in the Indonesian learning ecosystem. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study that relates to social contexts, curriculum, and classroom practices holistically. This approach can explain the learning space that may be occupied by travel narratives in language education.

Based on these theoretical and empirical gaps, this study seeks to answer two key issues regarding the position of travel narrative in learning. First, this study aims to describe the existence of learning travel story texts in schools, including how teachers understand them and how this genre is accommodated in textbooks and curriculum policies. Second, this study analyzes the urgency of travel narrative as a teaching material through its relationship with the development of mass media, social media, and students' digital literacy needs in the creative economy era. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with source

triangulation as a basis to obtain a more comprehensive picture. Thus, this study is expected to enrich the discourse on the integration of nontraditional genres in language education, while offering a theoretical contribution to strengthening narrative and digital literacy. In addition, the findings of this study can be a reference for policymakers in formulating curriculum development based on contemporary literacy needs. In the end, this study provides a new understanding of the pedagogical relevance of travel narrative as a bridge between personal experience, digital media, and language learning.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in genre-based pedagogy, which conceptualizes writing not merely as an individual cognitive skill but as a socially situated practice shaped by communicative purposes, audience expectations, and cultural contexts. Rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), genre theory emphasizes that texts are staged, goal-oriented social processes through which writers negotiate meaning within specific discourse communities (Borg, 2003). In educational contexts, genre-based pedagogy provides explicit scaffolding that enables learners to recognize rhetorical structures, linguistic choices, and communicative functions of genres, including narrative and travel writing. Within this framework, travel narratives function as a genre that integrates experiential meaning, evaluation, and cultural representation, allowing learners to articulate place-based experiences while developing control over narrative organization and language resources.

To extend genre pedagogy into contemporary literacy practices, this study draws on multimodality and multiliteracies theory, which posits that meaning-making in the digital age occurs through the orchestration of multiple semiotic modes such as text, image, layout, and spatial design. Multimodal literacy shifts the focus of writing instruction from alphabetic text alone toward the integration of visual and digital modes that reflect learners' lived communicative environments. In the context of travel narratives, multimodality enables students to construct richer representations of place, identity, and experience by combining linguistic narration with photographs, visual symbolism, and digital design elements. Prior studies indicate that multimodal composition enhances learners' engagement, authorial voice, and critical awareness of how meaning is shaped across modes.

Finally, the theoretical foundation of this study is reinforced by experiential and place-based learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge construction emerges from learners' direct interaction with their social and cultural environments. Travel narratives serve as pedagogical spaces where experience, reflection, and cultural interpretation intersect, enabling students to transform personal encounters with place into

structured academic discourse. When aligned with genre-based and multimodal frameworks, experiential learning supports deeper meaning-making by situating writing tasks within authentic contexts that are culturally resonant and personally meaningful. This triangulation of genre pedagogy, multimodality, and experiential learning provides a robust theoretical lens for understanding how students develop multimodal travel narratives as both linguistic artifacts and cultural texts.

### 3. Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach that is oriented towards an in-depth understanding of pedagogical practices and the representation of travel story texts in the context of Indonesian language education. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena naturally through the interpretation of participants' meanings, experiences, and perspectives (Creswell and Poth, 2016). Qualitative research is also considered appropriate to analyze the phenomenon of literacy, curriculum, and text production in the media ecosystem, which cannot be reduced to quantitative variables (Tisdell et al., 2025). Thus, qualitative design provides space to understand the relationship between teacher practice, genre representation in learning documents, and the development of digital media. Epistemologically, this research is based on a constructivist paradigm that views reality as the result of social construction that can be interpreted through the interaction between data and the researcher's analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

#### 3.1. Research design and participants

The research data sources include three main components: (1) Indonesian teachers, (2) policy documents and textbooks, and (3) mass media and social media. The research participants consisted of 32 teachers who taught at the junior and senior high school levels in Central Java. The selection of participants uses purposive sampling, as this technique allows researchers to select informants who have experience and competencies relevant to the research objectives (Tisdell et al., 2025). Participant criteria include at least three years of teaching experience, active involvement in writing learning, and understanding of the Indonesian curriculum. The number of participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which is when the interview no longer produces substantive new information (Guest et al., 2020). In addition, the study analyzed official documents such as Indonesian Language Learning Outcomes, government-issued textbooks, and media content from Kompas, Jawa Pos, Suara Merdeka, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to assess the existence of travel story texts in public spaces.

This study focused on teachers in Central Java due to practical access considerations and the

concentration of participating in schools within the researchers' institutional network. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as context-sensitive and reflective of the Central Java setting, rather than as nationally representative of all Indonesian regions. Nevertheless, by triangulating teacher perspectives with policy documents, textbooks, and media artefacts, the study provides analytically transferable insights into the pedagogical positioning of travel narrative texts.

#### 3.2. Data collection techniques

Data were collected using three techniques: semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and media content observation. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because this technique provides a balance between question guidance and the flexibility of thematic exploration, thus allowing for detailed recording of teachers' perceptions and experiences (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview questions are designed based on narrative literacy theory, curriculum, and the use of digital media. Document analysis was carried out on CPs, textbooks, and mass media articles using systematic document analysis techniques (Bowen, 2009). Content observation was applied to examine the characteristics of travel texts in digital media, following qualitative content analysis procedures (Schreier, 2021). All data were collected over a three-month period and documented through audio recordings, field notes, and verbatim transcriptions.

#### 3.3. Data analysis techniques

Data analysis was carried out using the interactive analysis model, comprising (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. In operational terms, thematic development followed a structured coding workflow. First, all interview transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve immersion, and initial open codes were generated inductively through line-by-line coding that remained close to participants' meanings. Second, codes were consolidated into a codebook containing code labels, operational definitions, inclusion-exclusion criteria, and exemplar quotations. Third, the codebook was piloted on several transcripts and refined by merging overlapping codes, splitting broad codes, and clarifying coding boundaries. Fourth, the finalized codebook was applied to the full corpus (interviews, policy documents/textbooks, and media artefacts), and axial coding was used to cluster related codes into higher-order categories. Candidate themes were then reviewed for coherence and distinctiveness and verified through constant comparison across data sources. To enhance trustworthiness, a code-recode procedure was conducted after a two-week interval to confirm coding stability, and analytic decisions (e.g., codebook revisions and theme refinement) were documented in an audit trail. Data displays (e.g., thematic matrices and cross-source comparison

tables) were used to support pattern identification and facilitate conclusion drawing and verification.

### 3.4. Data validity and validity

The validity of the research is maintained through the application of the trustworthiness framework from Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is obtained through triangulation of sources, which is comparing interview findings with documents and media. Transferability was supported by providing sufficient contextual information about the Central Java setting and participant characteristics, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to other regional contexts. Member checking is carried out by asking participants to review the summary of the interpretation to ensure the suitability of the meaning. Peer debriefing was carried out through analytical discussions with two Indonesian education experts to assess the consistency of the analysis process, as recommended by Tracy (2010). To improve dependability, the entire research process is recorded in a trail audit that describes the procedure, analytical decisions, and research dynamics. This procedural consistency ensures that research findings can be traced and accounted for.

## 4. Result

The findings of this study are organized into four interrelated subsections that together provide a comprehensive picture of the position of travel narrative texts in Indonesian language education. The first subsection examines the extent to which teachers currently include travel narratives in their classroom practice. The second explores how these texts are represented— or omitted—within national curriculum documents and widely used Bahasa Indonesia textbooks. The third subsection turns to the broader media landscape, analyzing the presence of travel narratives in mass and social media as an out-of-school literacy resource. The fourth focuses on teachers' perceptions of the urgency and pedagogical value of teaching this genre. Taken together, these subsections illuminate the systemic

relationships between policy, materials, media ecologies, and teacher agency in shaping the fate of travel narrative instruction.

### 4.1. The existence of learning text travel stories in teachers' practice

Data analysis from interviews shows that the learning of travel story texts has not been institutionalized in Indonesian language teaching. Most teachers (54%) stated that they had never taught this text, while 46% taught it but not as an independent category, but integrated in the learning of narrative or descriptive texts. These findings show a fragmentation of teachers' understanding of the pedagogical position of travel story texts, as well as indicating that the teaching of this genre is highly dependent on personal initiative, not curriculum direction or textbooks. To clarify the pattern of teacher perception, Table 1 presents the distribution of teaching practices.

Qualitative thematic analysis further indicates three explanatory patterns behind the limited classroom presence of travel narrative instruction: curricular ambiguity, dependence on textbooks, and individual initiative in practice. These themes suggest that teachers' decisions are shaped more by the visibility of the genre in official learning outcomes and textbooks than by a stable curricular mandate. Representative excerpts are provided in Table 2, which presents the full thematic matrix and reduced interview quotations. To increase the strength of the results, the findings can also be visualized in pie charts such as Fig. 1.

This visualization provides a directly visible comparison and strengthens the argument that the existence of travel story texts in schools is still very limited. Overall, these findings suggest that the existence of learning travel story texts is at a marginal position in pedagogical practice. The lack of representation in curricula, textbooks, and learning tools causes this genre to not be understood as a stand-alone literacy competency. In addition, interviews show that teaching this genre appears more because of certain activities (e.g., study tours) than as a systematic literacy practice.

**Table 1:** Distribution of teachers' practices in teaching travel narrative texts

| Category of teaching practice | Percentage | Description of findings  |
|-------------------------------|------------|--|
| Never taught                  | 54%        | Teachers are unfamiliar with the genre in the curriculum or textbooks; instruction focuses on narrative and descriptive texts instead. |
| Have taught                   | 46%        | Teachers introduce it as a form of experiential narrative rather than as an independent genre.   |

**Table 2:** Interview themes related to the existence of travel narrative instruction

| Main theme                        | Sub-finding   | Reduced teacher excerpt  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Curricular ambiguity              | Teachers do not find the label "travel narrative text" explicitly stated in the Curriculum (CP) or school modules | "It is not explicitly mentioned in the CP, so we categorize it under narrative texts." |
| Dependence on textbooks           | Textbooks do not provide examples or theoretical explanations of travel writing                                   | "If it is not included in the standard textbook, we usually do not teach it."          |
| Individual initiative in practice | Some teachers introduce the genre independently based on their own pedagogical judgment                           | "I decided to teach it because students were enthusiastic during the school trip."     |

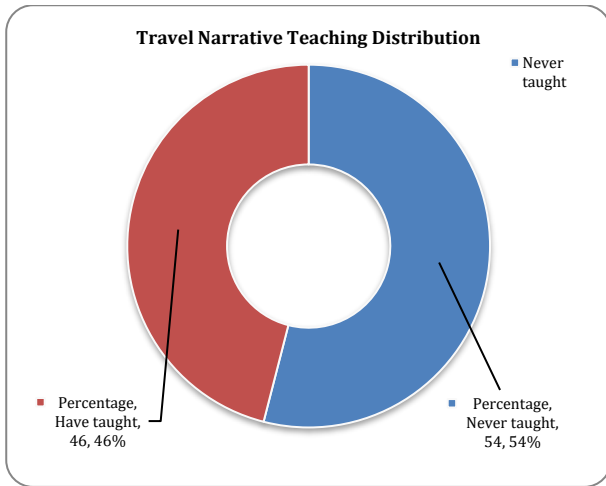


Fig. 1: Percentage of teachers who teach travel story texts

**4.2. Existence of travel narrative texts in textbooks and the curriculum**

A comprehensive analysis of Indonesian language textbooks used across the lower and upper secondary levels reveals a complete absence of travel narrative texts as a recognized instructional genre. Widely circulated national textbooks—including Bahasa Indonesia Kelas VII, Bahasa Indonesia Kelas VIII, Bahasa Indonesia Kelas IX, and Cerdas Cergas Berbahasa dan Bersastra Indonesia Kelas X—do not provide a single conceptual explanation, model text, or pedagogical activity pertaining to travel. This absence is not merely a textual omission; it demonstrates a systemic

invisibility of the genre within the primary instructional resources relied upon by teachers nationwide. In turn, teachers lack authoritative benchmarks for genre features, teaching strategies, and assessment indicators, which restricts the genre’s classroom presence and limits pedagogical consistency.

An analysis of the national Learning Outcomes (*Capaian Pembelajaran*, hereafter CP) documents indicates that the curriculum implicitly accommodates the pedagogical logic of travel narrative writing, despite the absence of explicit genre labeling in textbooks. In Phase D (Grades 7–9), students are expected to produce texts grounded in personal experience, factual observation, and reflective interpretation, while Phase F (Grade 11) emphasizes the publication of written products across digital and print platforms with attention to audience, purpose, and multimodal expression. These curricular expectations closely align with the structural and communicative features of travel writing; however, the lack of explicit genre exemplars and teaching sequences in officially sanctioned textbooks creates a misalignment between curricular intent and instructional implementation. Consequently, teachers must independently interpret CP-related curricular aims, resulting in uneven instructional practices and a marginal classroom presence of travel narrative texts. The key themes emerging from the textbook and curriculum analysis are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3: Themes derived from textbook and curriculum analysis**

| Analytical theme                  | Enhanced interpretation   | Evidence source   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Genre absence in textbooks        | Travel narratives are not represented as a genre, nor as a sub-genre; no definitions, structural models, vocabulary patterns, or guided activities are provided.                      | Review of four national Indonesian language textbooks (SMP-SMA) |
| Implicit curricular compatibility | Although unnamed, the CP emphasizes experiential, descriptive-narrative, and publication-oriented writing, all of which align with the core logic of travel narrative composition.    | Analysis of CP phase D and phase F                              |
| Policy-material misalignment      | Curricular intentions are not translated into instructional materials, resulting in an absence of scaffolding for teachers and uneven access for students.                            | Cross-check between CP requirements and textbook content        |
| Pedagogical consequences          | Teachers must rely on improvisation or personal initiative to introduce the genre, leading to inconsistent conceptual understanding and uneven instructional practice across schools. | Comparison with teacher interview data                          |

The integration of curriculum and textbook findings points to a significant structural gap in the Indonesian literacy teaching ecosystem. Although the curriculum encourages experiential and reflective writing that naturally aligns with travel narratives, the absence of explicit genre representation in textbooks results in instructional fragmentation. As the primary mediational tools between curriculum and classroom practice, textbooks play a decisive role in determining whether a genre becomes pedagogically visible. Their omission, therefore, situates travel narrative texts in a liminal position—conceptually valid yet materially unsupported.

This tension reflects a broader phenomenon in curriculum enactment: when policy-level competencies are not reinforced through concrete textual models, teachers’ agency becomes the determining factor, often leading to variability in

genre exposure and literacy outcomes across different educational contexts.

**4.3. The presence of travel narrative texts in mass media and social media**

Analysis of mass media and social media content shows that travel narrative texts are highly visible and culturally influential in the Indonesian public sphere, standing in sharp contrast to their marginal presence in school instruction. Major newspapers such as *Kompas*, *Jawa Pos*, *Suara Merdeka*, and *Solopos* regularly publish travel-related features that combine descriptive storytelling, personal reflection, and multimodal imagery, while social media platforms—particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube—further amplify the genre through user-generated travel diaries, vlogs, and short-form cinematic narratives. Across both traditional and

digital media, travel narratives function as experiential, multimodal texts that support cultural exploration, tourism promotion, identity expression, and creative economic activity. This strong media visibility positions travel narratives as part of a parallel public literacy ecosystem, exposing students

to the genre extensively outside school while remaining largely absent from textbooks and classroom practice. The key analytical themes derived from media and social media analysis are summarized in [Table 4](#).

**Table 4:** Themes derived from media and social media analysis

| Analytical theme                | Enhanced interpretation  | Evidence source   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| High media visibility           | Newspapers consistently feature travel narratives as part of lifestyle and destination-focused journalism, indicating strong public readership and editorial demand. | Review of Kompas, Jawa Pos, Suara Merdeka, and Solopos (July–August 2025) |
| Multimodal public narratives    | Social media content integrates visual, textual, and auditory elements, producing highly engaging travel storytelling formats unavailable in classroom materials.    | Analysis of Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube travel posts                   |
| Cultural and Economic Functions | Travel narratives support tourism promotion, cultural preservation, and creative economy growth, demonstrating their broader societal relevance.                     | Content analysis of media depictions and themes                           |
| School–media literacy gap       | Students are highly exposed to travel narratives in digital environments but receive no structured instruction or critical engagement in school.                     | Comparison between school materials and media findings                    |

The stark contrast between the abundance of travel narratives in mass and social media and their near absence in educational materials exposes a significant literacy misalignment. While media ecosystems cultivate rich experiential storytelling practices, schools fail to harness this culturally embedded narrative form as a literacy resource. This discrepancy suggests missed opportunities for integrating authentic, real-world texts into the curriculum, particularly those aligned with digital literacy, multimodal communication, and narrative competence.

Furthermore, the dominance of user-generated travel content on social media highlights a shift from institutionally curated literacy (school-driven) to participatory cultural literacy, where individuals actively construct meaning and identity through narrative documentation of place. In this environment, the absence of travel narrative instruction in formal schooling not only limits students' genre awareness but also distances classroom practice from contemporary communicative realities. The findings thus strengthen the argument for repositioning travel narratives as strategically relevant texts in modern literacy education.

#### 4.4. Teachers' perceptions of the urgency of teaching travel narrative texts

Teacher interviews reveal a strong consensus regarding the pedagogical significance of travel narrative texts: 95% of participants rated the genre as important or highly important to introduce in the classroom, despite its limited explicit presence in textbooks and routine instruction. Teachers emphasized that travel narrative writing develops linguistic accuracy, descriptive elaboration, narrative coherence, critical observation, reflective thinking, and creativity, while also connecting naturally to students' lived experiences (e.g., school trips, family travel, community events), making it personally meaningful and contextually grounded. Beyond core language competencies, participants highlighted cross-literacy benefits, including digital literacy,

multimodal composition, and early exposure to journalistic/content-creation practices aligned with students' everyday engagement with travel content on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. The remaining 5% did not dispute the genre's value but raised feasibility concerns related to limited instructional time and competing curricular priorities, suggesting that resistance is driven more by structural constraints than by pedagogical disagreement. The thematic summary of teacher perspectives is presented in [Table 5](#).

The overwhelmingly positive teacher perceptions highlight a significant disconnect between teacher belief and institutional practice. While teachers recognize the genre's potential to cultivate multiliteracy skills, including narrative competence, multimodal communication, and digital authorship, these beliefs do not translate into systematic implementation due to curricular ambiguity and material gaps identified in earlier findings. The teachers' recognition of the genre's alignment with real-world literacy environments (mass media and social media ecosystems) indicates that the pedagogical rationale for travel narrative instruction is both culturally grounded and educationally justified. However, the presence of structural barriers—time limitations, textbook absence, and lack of explicit curricular guidance—reveals that the urgency perceived by teachers is not supported by structural affordances within the educational system. This tension underscores the need for curriculum designers and educational policymakers to more intentionally integrate authentic, culturally embedded genres into instructional frameworks to bridge the gap between school-based and public literacy practices.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate a significant gap between the theoretical potential of travel narrative texts and their actual realization in Indonesian language teaching. As multimodal texts, travel narratives naturally integrate linguistic, visual, and experiential elements, aligning with

contemporary literacy frameworks that emphasize multilayered meaning-making (Prastikawati et al., 2025). Teachers, however, seldom capitalize on this potential because the genre remains absent from major textbooks, resulting in inconsistent or improvised instructional practices. This echoes global concerns that curriculum intentions are often diluted when not supported by explicit textual models and systematic genre scaffolding (Al Masjid and Pamungkas, 2024). Despite the lack of representation in instructional materials, the

curriculum itself clearly embraces experiential, reflective, and publication-oriented writing, which is conceptually compatible with travel narrative writing. The misalignment between policy intention and classroom materialization thus forms a structural barrier that limits genre visibility in school practice. Such tensions underscore the need to re-evaluate material development to ensure that curriculum goals translate effectively into classroom resources.

**Table 5:** Themes derived from teachers' perceptions of urgency

| Analytical theme                         | Interpretation   | Evidence source   |
|--|--|---|
| Strong pedagogical support (95%)         | Teachers view travel narratives as beneficial for linguistic, cognitive, and creative development; the genre supports multiple competencies. | Teacher interview data  |
| Relevance to students' lived experiences | Teachers believe the genre motivates students because it aligns naturally with their travel-related experiences and observations.            | Teacher examples of school trips and personal student stories |
| Alignment with digital and youth culture | Teachers acknowledge that students encounter travel narratives regularly on social media, making the genre culturally resonant.              | Interview references to Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube usage  |
| Institutional constraints (5%)           | A few teachers cite lack of time, curricular density, and absence of textbooks as barriers, not lack of value.                               | Teacher concerns about instructional load                     |

The strong visibility of travel narratives in newspapers and social media highlights a striking contrast between public literacy practices and school-based literacy activities. Mass media consistently publish travel-related features that blend narrative, description, and evaluative reflection, illustrating the genre's cultural and informational value (Lund et al., 2018; Mansfield et al., 2025; Pamungkas et al., 2023; Zakirova and Vlasova, 2024). Social media platforms intensify this presence by enabling multimodal and user-generated travel storytelling that is particularly appealing to youth (Arica et al., 2022; Pop et al., 2022). This robust media presence suggests that students are deeply immersed in this genre outside of school, often reading or producing travel-related content in informal digital environments. The persistent exclusion of travel narratives from school instruction, therefore, widens the disconnect between institutional literacy practices and the literacies that young people encounter. Such findings further support current pedagogical arguments that schools must integrate authentic media-based texts to remain relevant within digital communication ecologies (Sultan et al., 2021; Surata and Vipriyanti, 2018). Without such integration, formal literacy education risks becoming increasingly detached from the realities of twenty-first century meaning-making.

Teachers' overwhelmingly positive perceptions toward the pedagogical value of travel narrative instruction provide additional insight into the genre's unrealized potential. Most teachers recognize that travel narrative writing strengthens observation, critical reflection, descriptive precision, and narrative coherence—skills central to language literacy (Dietz, 2019). They also highlight its relevance to students' lived experiences, particularly in relation to school excursions or personal travel, which enhances motivation through personal connection and authentic expression. Furthermore, teachers emphasize its suitability for multimodal and

digital literacy development, noting that travel narratives readily translate into digital stories, photos, and vlogs. The small minority expressing reservations attributes their concerns not to the genre's value but to structural constraints such as time allocation and the absence of textbook support. This indicates that teacher agency alone is insufficient without supportive curricular and material ecosystems. Such findings reinforce the call for educational systems to provide clearer guidance and genre-specific instructional resources.

Taken together, the four sets of findings position travel narrative texts as a uniquely strategic yet underutilized resource for advancing literacy education in Indonesia. Their strong presence in media, alignment with curriculum competencies, and positive teacher perceptions provide a compelling rationale for their integration into school-based instruction. The current lack of systematic implementation reflects broader challenges in curriculum enactment, where meaningful genres fail to enter classrooms due to material gaps and structural constraints. Addressing these gaps requires coordinated efforts in curriculum refinement, textbook development, and teacher professional learning. More broadly, integrating travel narratives into language teaching would enhance multimodal literacy, bridge institutional and public literacy practices, and support students' engagement with culturally relevant and real-world text forms (Venketsamy et al., 2025). In doing so, Indonesian language education would not only modernize its literacy practices but also align more closely with the communicative realities of contemporary society.

This study involved teachers from Central Java, which may limit the geographical breadth of the perspectives captured. Indonesia's educational contexts can vary across provinces in terms of school resources, local literacy cultures, and implementation dynamics. Therefore, while the findings offer meaningful insights into the

pedagogical relevance and public presence of travel narrative texts, they should not be interpreted as fully generalizable to all Indonesian regions. Future studies are encouraged to adopt multi-site designs across diverse provinces (e.g., western, central, and eastern Indonesia), include different school typologies, and compare regional patterns to strengthen the robustness and national interpretability of the evidence base.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate a clear misalignment between the strong cultural visibility of travel narrative texts and their limited pedagogical presence in Indonesian language education. While the curriculum implicitly supports experiential and reflective writing, the genre is absent from major textbooks, resulting in inconsistent and unsystematic instructional practices. Teachers generally recognize the substantial linguistic, cognitive, and creative potential of travel narrative writing, yet structural constraints prevent its meaningful integration. At the same time, mass media and social media platforms provide abundant authentic models of travel narratives, indicating that students' everyday literacy environments are already saturated with this genre. Collectively, these patterns highlight a systemic gap between curricular intentions, material representations, and classroom enactment. Travel narrative texts, therefore, occupy a paradoxical position: highly relevant in public discourse yet marginalized in formal literacy instruction. This study thus contributes by revealing how culturally significant genres can remain pedagogically peripheral when curriculum and instructional materials do not fully align.

The implications of these findings underscore the need for curriculum designers, textbook authors, and policymakers to intentionally incorporate travel narrative texts into instructional frameworks. The genre provides a powerful vehicle for enhancing multimodal literacy, critical observation, reflective thinking, and digital authorship—competencies essential for contemporary learners. However, the study's scope is limited by its reliance on selected textbooks, media sources, and teacher interviews from a specific regional context, which may not fully capture nationwide variation. Future research should expand to comparative analyses across regions and include classroom-based interventions to examine how travel narrative instruction can be operationalized effectively.

Professional development initiatives are also needed to equip teachers with genre-based pedagogical strategies that align with curricular goals. Strengthening the integration of culturally embedded genres such as travel narratives can ultimately bridge the gap between formal schooling and the rich literacy ecologies students engage with beyond the classroom.

## Acknowledgment

Thank you to Diktilitbang PP Muhammadiyah for funding this research in the regular fundamental research scheme II with Contract Number 0259.851/I.3/D/2025. The authors also thank Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta for its support throughout all stages of this research.

## Compliance with ethical standards

### Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review body at Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

### Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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