

English Language Education Departement of Universitas Muhammadiyah  
Yogyakarta Students' Perception on the Use of Authentic Materials in Reading  
Class

Nisfi Diah Kumala

Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FPB UMY

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** There are some types of teaching materials that can be used by lecturers in reading class, and one of them is authentic material. Authentic material is considered to be interesting teaching material since it shows real-life situation. This research aims to reveal the students' perception on the use of authentic material in reading class. The researcher was interested to investigate kind of interesting authentic materials, advantages and challenges in using authentic materials as teaching material in the classroom.

**Purpose:** This study's purpose is to figure out the kind of interesting authentic materials, advantages and challenges in using authentic materials as teaching material in the classroom.

**Methods:** This research used descriptive qualitative research design. Therewith, the interview was employed to collect the data. This research was conducted at English Language Education Department of UMY batch 2016 with six participants.

**Results:** The findings of this research showed that novel, film, and journal article are interesting for students. Using authentic materials as teaching material is interesting for the students in reading because they think that authentic materials used by their lecturers are enjoyable. Besides that, participants stated that authentic materials develop their vocabulary mastery, show cultural situation on the other side of the world, develop their grammar and structure mastery, and reveal some features that rarely appear in non-authentic material. On the other hand, authentic materials contain difficult language and vocabulary, contain difficult grammar structure, and too culturally biased.

**Conclusion:** English Language Education Department of UMY students are interested in using novel and journal article as teaching media. In their opinion, authentic materials have advantages and challenges for them in reading activity.

**Keywords:** reading, teaching materials, authentic materials

## **Introduction**

Developing reading skill requires students to be able to comprehend the text (Apsari, 2014). The foreign language teachers normally use two kinds of learning sources; textbooks and authentic texts.

According to Richards (2001), textbooks are created for education purpose only. The language of textbooks have usually been modified and adjusted according to the learning objectives and level of learners and their ability

Authentic materials are used in the real life. As Tomlison (1998) defined the authentic materials as the materials which are not written for language teaching purposes since they are designed for the real communication.

Since the English Language Education Department (ELED) of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta University aims to prepare good English teachers, it certainly trains its students to have good reading skills. In the first year, the students

study about several subjects of basic skills in language learning.

Based on the researcher's experience, in the teaching learning process, authentic materials have been commonly used in the first year of reading class in ELED UMY. When having reading activities, the lecturer involved the students in reading the various kinds of authentic texts. There were many different reactions of students in that class. Some of the students read the texts excitedly. Rest of them read only few parts of the article, even some of them did not read the article at all. Considering the phenomenon above, the researcher would like to explore deeply about what kind of authentic materials which motivate the students to read, students' opinion on authentic materials based on their experience, and what are the challenges of reading an authentic text based on their experience.

## **Research Methodology**

The purpose of this research was to get the information about the ELED UMY students' perception on authentic materials

in reading class. The researcher designed this research using descriptive qualitative. Creswell (2012), explained that qualitative method explores a problem and develops a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon. This was the researcher's reason for choosing qualitative research design since it provided detail information which would be needed in exploring the students' opinion. This research took place at English Language Education Department of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta University. The participants of this research were the students of English Language Education Department of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta University (ELED of UMY) batch 2016 because they had learned English using authentic reading materials as teaching materials in some subjects in reading class. The researcher chose six students to be interviewed by using snowball technique. In the interview process the researcher asked several questions related to the research questions using interview guidelines as the direction. Next, the researcher used a recording application on her mobile phone to record the interviews and takes a note to

write down some important keywords based on respondents' answer. Each participant spent 10 up to 15 minutes in the interview. The researcher conducted the interview using *Bahasa Indonesia*. There were four steps used in this research to analyze the data, namely transcribing the data, doing member checking, coding the data, and categorizing the data.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **The kinds of interesting authentic material used in reading class of ELED UMY**

Based on the data, all of the participants perceived that they feel enjoy and enthusiastic in learning by using novel as teaching media in the classroom. Tsai (2012) found that "Novels, by addressing to complex situations, life dilemmas, and other universal themes that the readers can relate to, intrigue the readers to read on for meaning and pay less attention to form. As the readers experience the joy and satisfaction from reading the novels, they are motivated to read further". (p.104). According to Puspitasari (2016) some

students felt frustrated and anxious at the beginning in reading a novel, but after reading several pages, students started to be interested in reading the book. Those statements from the experts were similar to activity that happened in reading class of ELED UMY. Although the students of ELED UMY found some challenges in reading a novel, but they were motivated in reading that novel.

Participants enjoyed reading journal article in reading for academic purpose since reading journal article can improve their vocabulary mastery. Some participants said that they were interested in the journal article with familiar topic and simple language. Nation and Newton (1997) as cited in Iswara (2016) stated that to remember a word, a learner has to keep meeting the word by doing reading in large amounts which was made possible by the reading journal article. In other words student can learn new vocabulary from reading journal article.

**The advantages of using authentic materials in reading class of ELED UMY.**

The finding showed that there are five advantages of using authentic material as a teaching material. First, authentic materials are interesting. Based on the finding, students were enjoying authentic materials rather than the non-authentic materials or textbooks. Second, Authentic material develops students' vocabulary mastery. Some of the students claimed that by reading and watching authentic materials they found unfamiliar words that they never understand the meaning before and it is useful for their reading comprehension. Third, authentic materials show cultural situation on the other side of the world. Based on the data after using authentic reading materials, participant knew some daily activities did in another country with a different culture with the participant's. Forth, authentic materials develop students' grammar and structure mastery. Some participants said that reading authentic materials could improve their grammar and structure mastery. Last, authentic materials reveal some features that rarely appear in non-authentic material. Based on the interview did by the researcher

participant found slang words that they never found in non-authentic materials.

### **The challenges of using authentic materials in reading class of ELED UMY**

There are three challenges of using authentic material as a teaching material for teaching reading in ELED UMY. First, authentic materials contain difficult language and vocabulary. Based on the data, some students confirmed that some authentic materials they have read in reading class sometimes contained unfamiliar words and complicated language structures. It was stressed them in reading activity. Then, authentic materials contain difficult grammar structure. Sometimes students found sentences with difficult grammar structure. It challenged them, moreover sometimes it made them giving up for reading the materials. Last, authentic materials may be too culturally biased. The data showed that authentic materials caused difficulty for students in understanding some cultural terms.

### **Conclusions**

There were some pros and cons in the use of authentic materials as teaching media. There are so many advantages of authentic materials as teaching media, authentic material not only an interesting teaching material, but also help students in building students' knowledge about unfamiliar vocabulary. In contrast, sometimes using authentic material is challenging for students since authentic material contain difficult language or complex language structures.

### **Recommendations**

This research exposed the kind of authentic material that can motivate students to read. Moreover this research revealed some advantages of reading an authentic text in the classroom. The students can find an interesting material for developing their reading comprehension by their self. In addition by reading this research, students should be aware that using authentic reading material has some advantages for them.

The lecturers should pay more attention on their preparation when using authentic materials as teaching media in the

classroom. Therefore, the lecturers should select the authentic materials before they use those materials for teaching reading considering some criteria and the students' difficulties on reading authentic materials. So there is no problems that will be addressed to the lecturer while giving an authentic material in the classroom.

The further researcher are recommended to conduct the research regarding the topic of this research with the other discussion and other context. Besides, the reseacher really hope that other future reseacher do more research about authentic material as teaching media in general and more extensively, because when this research is developed, it will be great benefit to the others.

## References

Ajzen, I. (2005). *Attitude, personality and behavior* (2nd ed.). New York: Open University Press.

Akbari, O., & Razavi, A. (2016). Using authentic materials in the foreign language classrooms: Teachers'

perspectives in EFL classes.

*International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, 5 (2), 105-116.

Al-Musallam, E. I. (2009). *College instructors' and learners' attitudes to authentic EFL reading materials in Saudi Arabia*. A Thesis. Riyadh: King Saud University.

Apsari, Y. (2014). The use of authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension. *ELTIN Journal*. 2(2). 88-94.

Arikunto, S. (2006). *Prosedur Penelitian Suatu Pendekatan Praktik*. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta.

Astari, A. K. (2013). *ELEPS students' perceptionon the use of authentic materials in Basic Reading I class*. Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta.

Berardo, S. A. (2006). The use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. *The Reading Matrix*. 6(2). 60-69.

Brinton, D. M. (1991). *The use of media in language teaching*. In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.), *Teaching English as*

- a Second or Foreign Language*, Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.
- Brown, H.D. (1994). *Teaching By Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Burns, A. and Joyce, H. (1997). *Focus on Speaking*. Sydney: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Cresewell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J.W., (2014). *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. California: Sage publication Inc.
- Desitarahmi, R. (2013). *Using authentic materials to improve reading comprehension of grade eight students of smp 15 Yogyakarta*. Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta.
- Firmansyah, E. (2015). Students' perception on the use of authentic materials in senior high school. *Bahasa & sastra*, 15 (1), 1-8.
- Gebhard, J. (1996). *Teaching English as a foreign or second language. A teacher self-development and methodology guide*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Cambridge Journals*, 40 (2), 97-118.
- Grundy, P. (1993). *Newspaper*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guariento, W., & Morley, J. (2001). Text and task authenticity in the EFL classroom. *ELT Journal*, 55 (4), 347-353. Retrieved February 25, 2013 from [eltj.oxfordjournals.org/content/55/4/347](http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/content/55/4/347).
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited

- Herawati, H. (1996). Utilizing authentic materials in EFL reading classes. *Edisi Khusus September. Widya Dharma*. 81-92.
- Ismaili, A. (2013) . The effectiveness of using movies in the EFL classroom – a study conducted at South East European University. *Academic journal of interdisciplinary studies*, 2(4), 121-132.  
doi:10.5901/ajis.2012.v2n4p121.
- Iswara, C. H. (2016). *The correlation between the habit of reading journal articles and 2013 ELED of UMY students' vocabulary mastery*. Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta.
- Kamil, M. L. & Hiebert E. H. (2005). *Teaching and learning vocabulary: perspectives and persistent issues*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kilickaya, F. (2004). Authentic materials and cultural content in EFL classrooms. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 10 (7). Retrieved Februari 5, 2017, from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kilickaya-AuthenticMaterial.html>.
- Kustaryo, S. (1998). *Reading English for college students*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi Pengembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan.
- Lancouchová, B. (2006). *Using magazines and newspapers in ELT with interpersonal and intrapersonal types of students*. Masaryk University.
- Martinez, A. (2002). *Authentic materials: An overview. Karen's Linguistic Issues*. Retrieved Februari 5, 2017, from <http://www.telus.net/linguisticissues/authenticmaterials.html>.
- Melvin, B.S. and Stout, D.S. (1987). Motivating language learners through authentic materials. In W. Rivers (ed.) *Interactive Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 44-56.



- Milal, A. D. (2010). *Interactive reading using authentic materials in an EFL context*. IAIN Sunan Ampel, Surabaya.
- Miller, L. (2003). Developing listening skills with authentic materials. *ESL Magazine*, 6(1), 16-19.
- Mishan, F. (2005). *Designing Authenticity into Language Learning Materials*. Protland: Intellect Books.
- Nunan, D. (1988). *Principles in designing language teaching materials: Guidelines*. 10 (2). Singapore: RELC.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. (1999). *Second language teaching & learning*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Nuttal, C. (1996). *Reading Skills in a foreign Language*. Oxford: Heineman.
- Peacock, M. (1997) *The Effect of Authentic Materials on the Motivation of EFL Learners*. English Language Teaching Journal, 51 (2), 144-156.
- Puspitasari, E. (2016). Literature-Based Learning to Build Students' Vocabulary. *Journal of Foreign Language, Teaching & Learning*, 1 (1), 49-60.
- Rahmawati, P. D. (2015). *Using authentic materials to improve reading comprehension of grade eight students of smp 15 Yogyakarta*. Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta.
- Richard, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rojas, A. (2008). *Using authentic materials to teach reading comprehension*. Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica.
- Santos, M. B. (2009). *Authentic materials in English language classes*. Eugene: University of Oregon.

- Sasongko, P. A. (2012). *Students' attitudes toward the use of authentic materials in SMPN 2 Ampel*. Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana, Salatiga.
- Shrum, J. L. & Glisan, E. W. (2000). *Teacher's handbook: Contextualized language instruction*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Špirochová, A. (2014). *Using authentic materials in teaching english in secondary classrooms*. University of West Bohemia.
- Štaralová, E. (2016). *Teaching Grammar Using Authentic Materials*. Masaryk University.
- Tomlison, B. (1998). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tsai, Chih-hsin (2012). Students' Perceptions of Using a Novel as Main Material in the EFL Reading Course. *English Language Teaching*, 5 (8), 103-112.
- Underwood, A. J. (1997). *Experiment in Ecology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vahid, Z. Z. (2011). A review on the effectiveness of using authentic materials in ESP courses. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 31(10).
- Velazquez, A. C. & Redmond, M. L. (2007). *The use of authentic text in the K-12 Spanish program*. In McCoy, L. P. (Ed), *Studies in Teaching 2007 Research Projects Presented at Annual Research Forum: NC*, Winston-Salem.
- Widdowson, H. (1990): *Aspects of Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zoghi, M., et al. (2014). The effects of authentic materials on vocabulary development. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW)*, 5 (4), 155-16