

AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' PRACTICE IN USING AUTHENTIC  
MATERIAL FOR THE 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE STUDENTS AT SMPN 1 BLANGPIDIE  
ACEH BARAT DAYA

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> Received: June 29, 2024 Revised: July 10, 2024 Accepted: August 12, 2024 Published: August 15, 2024</p> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Authentic Material Teachers' Practice Reading Skill Material Development</p>	<p>This research was conducted to investigate the way teachers teach and apply the lesson using authentic materials in learning reading at SMPN 1 Blangpidie Aceh Barat Daya. This research was also influenced by the background of students who have just learned English in junior high school, that make English as a language is difficult for them. This research used descriptive qualitative as the research method. The instruments used to collect data are classroom observations and interviews. Data analysis in this study is analysis Data Reduction, Data Display and draw conclusions. The results showed that the teachers have carried out differentiated learning using authentic materials. Authentic materials in the classroom is derived from genuine exposure to real-world sources. In the development of reading using authentic material, the material sources in reading lessons that teachers most often use are newspapers, articles and social media, updated and accessed via the internet. In Conclusion, using authentic material improves students' reading translation skills, vocabulary, pronunciation, and motivation to learn English in the classroom at SMPN 1 Blangpidie Aceh Barat Daya.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC BY-SA</a> license.</i></p> 
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## INTRODUCTION

English is studied as a foreign language in Indonesia. Currently, in Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language in junior high school and high school level, teaching English to children in Indonesia has different challenges than teaching English in other countries. Due to the lack of use of English in students' real-life situations and do not understanding how to use the alphabet or write sentences differently between English and Indonesian, the use of English by teachers in the classroom will have more influence on students, and teachers' practices when teaching English are crucial for students' learning and understanding.

The practice of teaching is a crucial component of the journey to becoming an educator. Marais and Meier emphasized that teaching practices represent a series of experiences of teachers and students when they work in classrooms and schools (Kiggundu & Nayimuli, 2009). Teaching is an activity carried out by a teacher to instill knowledge in students. In teaching, the role of a teacher is to help students learn. The teacher is responsible for various aspects of the classroom, including the curriculum content, utilization of resources, activity types and their sequencing, classroom management, assessment methods, feedback provision, correction processes, and beyond. Teaching English encompasses not only proficiency in pedagogy but also requires talent, experience, and adaptability to engage students effectively, creating a dynamic and enjoyable learning environment. It involves not just imparting knowledge but also ensuring that lessons are tailored to students' abilities and interests, fostering enthusiastic participation through interactive teaching methods.

Furthermore, a pleasant learning atmosphere will also influence the understanding of the material and the values that students will later obtain, and it is hoped that the teacher can create fun learning and observe the behavior and even the abilities of each student. Spatial planning and attention to the environment outside the classroom can create a natural atmosphere without pressure, and efficient teaching can support students to learn effectively (Santiara & Abdullah, 2022). The teacher is the party most responsible for managing learning in the classroom, and at the same time, teachers can also create a fun learning atmosphere or even make learning boring. A teacher certainly wants an active and enjoyable learning process; the main key to making this happen is to master the teaching materials.

On the other hand, teaching materials provide many conveniences to the teacher's ability to convey messages to students accurately, precisely, clearly, and easily understood. Teaching materials discuss one subject from all learning materials to increase the efficiency of activities so that students must study and master the learning materials (Susilaningsih et al., 2022). All materials and resources utilized to foster students' desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values fall under the umbrella of teaching materials; this underscores the crucial role of teaching materials in guiding students toward success (Halil Ibrahim SAGLAM, 2011). Therefore, teaching materials are regarded as the primary resources that can bolster the teaching and learning process and are believed to be instrumental in enhancing the quality of student learning (Kusmartini et al., 2019). Teaching and learning are two basic processes that underline the current activities of students and teachers. The English teaching materials used

are highly considered when selecting materials because the teaching materials must be based on the learning objectives and students' needs. To teach English successfully, students are directed to master four essential skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

One of the skills that is very important to learn in English is reading. Mastering reading is crucial as it serves as the foundation for acquiring information and is essential for learning across various subjects in school, where reading skills have an important role in improving an individual's life (Ni Kadek Yuli Cahyani et al., 2022). Reading plays a pivotal role and is a daily necessity for anyone seeking to acquire essential information, particularly students who require it for their learning needs. Mastering reading is essential in learning English as it is crucial in fulfilling daily communication needs (Ismail, 2017). The purpose of reading for students is to aid them in comprehending both written and unwritten texts; this means that through reading, students can accurately extract information from textual or verbal sources. By reading, students can also improve memory, vocabulary and writing. When reading, the brain must think, analyze various problems, look for solutions, and discover new things. Reading is useful for language learning with the main aim of understanding the content of the text, and the more students read, the more detailed information they earn (Yuni & Amran, 2022). Reading texts in English serves as a crucial bridge to comprehending textbooks. Understanding a text is a problem-solving process to unite the main ideas so that conclusions can be drawn about the content of the text, in which the reader utilizes thoughts, memories, and information generated by the words in the text.

The students are categorized as good readers if they can understand text information. Reading difficulties are a big challenge for students when solving problems or understanding their meaning (Arif Taboer & Rochyadi, 2020). Thus, Patel and Jain asserted that reading entails understanding the meaning of written words or recognizing the symbols that constitute a language (Ismail, 2017). Every student has difficulties reading a text. The greatest difficulty for students is in the learning process of English reading text, where students are faced with various difficulties in understanding reading, which impact understanding the text and makes it difficult to achieve actual meaning from reading. Students also need help to differentiate types of text and understand the purpose of the text they read. This problem is due to the background of students who have just learned English in junior high school, which makes English as a language difficult for them.

Reading teaching materials plays a significant role in facilitating students' path to success. Materials are crucial in teaching and learning, playing a pivotal role in facilitating successful learning outcomes (Wulanjani, 2018). Generally, two primary types of materials are commonly utilized in classroom teaching: textbooks and authentic materials. In this case, the researcher proposes using authentic reading material as a good way to attract students' attention to lessons and help them understand the text. (Ilham, 2016) informs that authentic materials are teaching materials specifically sourced from internal use, photos, and videos. Authentic material is exposure to real language and one's community (Sari, 2016).

Interestingly, using authentic materials in the learning process has been proven to positively impact students (Bagus Semara Putra et al., 2021). A study found that effectively employing authentic materials can bring real-world contexts into the language classroom (Albiladi, 2018). Authentic materials can be an effective strategy for teaching reading to enhance students' English language skills. Authentic material in reading classes is also based on the consideration that the teacher presents open material in such a way that it creates a conducive classroom atmosphere. Next, according to (Azizah, 2023) Authentic texts should be selected based on their appropriateness of content. Besides that, (Artha et al., 2020) also stated several advantages of authentic materials, including saving time in material selection. Consequently, Authentic materials greatly encourage students to use their English skills in real-world contexts.

Based on the explanation above, enjoyable learning is linked to how the teacher presents teaching materials. In creating understanding, English learning can be influenced by the authentic materials that the teachers use. Therefore, this research investigates how teachers teach and apply the lesson with authentic materials in reading at SMPN 1 Blangpidie Aceh Barat Daya.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Descriptive research is a method that is typically supported by a qualitative approach. Qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups attribute to social or humanitarian issues (Creswell, 2008). This is supported by (Furidha, 2023) Descriptive research aims to provide a clearer picture of social situations by describing and depicting them in detail. This aims to state the aims and objectives of the research by including quotes from the text that highlight key elements of the research.

This research was conducted at SMP 1 Blangpidie in Geulumpang Payong Village, Southwest Aceh. The English teachers at this junior high school consist of 8 English teachers and one teacher as a sample. This teacher was chosen because she met the criteria for obtaining systematic research results. Researchers obtained data using instruments in the form of classroom observations and interviews. To collect data, the researcher observed the teacher's activities during classroom instruction by recording class sessions using a video recorder from the smartphone OPPO A15s device. Furthermore, direct interaction with the teacher was conducted through interviews to determine whether authentic materials were employed in teaching reading skills throughout the learning process. In analyzing the research data, the researcher took advice from Miles and Huberman: First, data reduction techniques (extracting the essence) focus on simplifying the data, for example, extracting themes through coding. Second, data display (organizing for meaning) identifies meaning into several parts according to their categories to make it easy to analyze and draw conclusions. Third, drawing conclusions (explaining the findings) verifies research data to test the validity of the finding (Suter, 2011).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted on SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie teachers from 29 – 30 May 2024. The research subjects were class 8B teachers who were selected directly. The observation and interview process took place in the morning based on the schedule of the English teacher in class 8B. This research examines teachers' use and implementation of authentic teaching materials.

Based on observations conducted by researchers, the findings revealed that teachers at SMPN 1 Blangpidie Aceh Barat Daya school utilized authentic materials with a frequency similar to their use of textbooks. The teacher provides learning material in class regarding procedure text, where the material provided is in the form of authentic material. The teacher orders students to look for topics related to text procedures outside of class. Then, the teacher discusses a small quantity of the previous lesson. In the observation, the teacher asked the students, "What is procedure text?" one student answered, "Procedure text is the steps in doing something". Next, the teacher asked the students to sit in groups to see the students' progress. The teacher ordered the students to leave the classroom to take something related to the procedure text, such as how to plant and care for flowers. This explanation supports the idea that the teacher and students have real interactions. After the students get something outside of class, the teacher asks each representative from the group to read what they have learned by practicing using English. In the last hour, the teacher gave the students a homework assignment to repeat the correct and correct pronunciation and send it via WhatsApp. This explanation refers to the teacher encouraging students to engage in real interaction (Bagus Semara Putra et al., 2021). In providing authentic materials during learning, teachers carry out diagnostic assessments, face-to-face interviews, and questionnaires based on the Merdeka curriculum. The implementation is carried out to determine the student's interest in the authentic materials that will be provided whether students want to learn using authentic materials or not.

Furthermore, SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie Aceh Barat Daya is classified as a "Freedom to Learn" school, where teachers and students enjoy freedom in the learning process. In such schools, teachers implement differentiated learning approaches. According to teacher interviews, the initial step in utilizing authentic materials is carefully selecting original resources. Before teaching, teachers meticulously prepare lesson plans outlining the material to be covered and the direction of learning activities. Teachers must tailor authentic resources to meet student's needs when selecting materials, fostering an engaging and stimulating learning environment. Teachers prioritize authentic materials that encourage students to be active, creative, innovative, and motivated learners.

In using authentic material, the teacher first conducts class observations to determine what material is appropriate by adjusting the students' abilities, which have been analyzed using a diagnostic assessment; with these results, the teacher can provide appropriate material topics. Basic considerations in choosing authentic topics that are relevant and interesting with the aim of helping students relate directly to real experiences (Widyastuti, 2017). Authentic material can be in the form of text, visual or audio material, but the authentic material

teachers often use in teaching reading is newspaper articles, some of which are taken from the internet. As said by the teacher:

*“Saya mengajar di kelas 8 dengan pelajaran narrative text, saya ambil cerita melalui media social seperti cerita dogeng daerah aceh, biasanya saya bawakan ke kelas menggunakan Infocus Jadi siswa bisa membaca sekaligus mendengar apa yang disampaikan dari video tersebut”*

*“I teach class 8 with narrative text lessons; I take stories through social media, such as fairy tales from the Aceh region, and I usually bring them to the class using Infocus so students can read and hear what is conveyed from the video.”*

Based on the answers to this interview, reading using authentic materials focuses on books and can be done outside of books. This means that using authentic material can develop students' reading skills on social media, which they often use. This explanation also refers to the teacher's next interview answer:

*“Menurut saya authentic material berperan penting terhadap siswa karena siswa tidak hanya mampu memahami materi pada buku tapi juga bisa mengetahui materi di luar buku seperti di media social, koran, artikel dan sebagainya sehingga mereka bisa memahami apa kejadian yang sedang terjadi”*

*“In my opinion, authentic material plays an important role for students because students are not only able to understand the material in the book but can also find material outside the book, such as on social media, newspapers, articles, and others, so that they can understand what is happening.”*

This answer shows that the teacher also chooses the latest digital news to be used for learning in the classroom. This shows that news is also included in authentic material. (Fitria, 2022) asserted that news articles constitute authentic materials, and integrating such materials into reading activities significantly enhances students' reading and translation skills.

After selecting or looking for authentic material, the next step is teacher implementation in teaching. As stated by (Fhathulloh et al., 2019), the Implementing learning encompasses a learning stage involving utilizing information, tools, and textual resources. Teachers implement learning using materials. Learning materials are very influential in supporting students to learn as much as possible to increase student achievement significantly (Nor et al., 2022). Providing material cannot be separated from the teacher's goals, where the material must be developed to enable students to improve language performance and competence.

In teaching English at SMPN 1 Blangpidie, Teachers are crucial in facilitating learning activities to aid students' comprehension. Additionally, teachers are vital in sourcing teaching materials beyond textbooks to enhance the learning experience. In providing the material, the teacher carries out a diagnostic assessment, which in this assessment is a component of the independent curriculum which aims to identify and understand student characteristics and examine students' talents and interests (Aringka & perpisa, 2023). Moreover, the teacher believes that supplying authentic materials to students is equally effective as providing textbooks, especially given the presence of independent classes that necessitate differentiated

learning approaches. This was revealed when the teacher was interviewed where. The teacher utilized authentic material from various sources. This is where teachers can contribute collaboratively and effectively to developing the school curriculum by organizing and compiling materials, textbooks and learning content (Daga, 2021). This interview highlights that teachers often use various authentic materials, such as reading material via social media, articles, newspapers and photos sourced from trusted websites on the internet. In learning English in reading skills, teachers also use authentic materials.

At SMPN 1, Blangpidie teachers use various authentic materials to encourage students to be enthusiastic about teaching reading. Enthusiasm is a factor known to influence learning (Yusriyah et al., 2021) greatly. When students are interested and enthusiastic about learning, it will create a fun class, and they will become more active in reading activities. Furthermore, in providing authentic material, the teacher considers the aspects of the material that will be used; the teacher states this:

*“tipe siswa saya adalah tipe yang selalu ingin tahu ketika ada materi yang berikan guru selalu menggunakan media pembelajaran yang menarik, karena itu mereka senang ketika belajar reading material”.*

*“My type of student is the type who is always curious when there is the material provided by the teacher, who always uses interesting learning media; because of that, they enjoy learning to read the material”*

Teachers recognize that their students are interested and enthusiastic in learning. Teachers should prioritize incorporating authentic learning elements into reading instruction, especially when utilizing educational media. This highlights the importance of integrating authentic materials with learning media to enhance students' motivation and engagement in learning English. Authentic materials positively influence student motivation, provide authentic cultural information, and introduce students to real language (Fansury, 2019). Learning materials that teachers often use to introduce students to the real world, such as announcement lessons, the teacher said:

*“Pelajaran announcement, biasanya saya meminta siswa untuk mengambil atau menggunting pengumuman yang ada di koran kemudian meminta mereka untuk mengartikan ke dalam bahasa Inggris sehingga mereka paham kira-kira Pengumuman apa ya sekarang yang sedang ada di koran”*

*“In announcement lessons, I usually ask students to take or cut out announcements in the newspaper and then ask them to interpret them in English so they understand what announcements are currently in the newspaper.”*

In response to this perspective, teachers emphasize that native speakers of the target language often create authentic materials not specifically designed for teaching purposes. An announcement is a text that aims to announce information about something published in newspapers, magazines and public places. Teachers accessing newspapers means that this

material is real-life material in the real world, and students can access reading skills and study reading material with events. And this material is believed to mean that students can absorb information quickly and well so that student's interest in reading increases.

In the overall interview statement, the teacher also said that there were several challenges in implementing authentic materials. For example, the vocabulary used in the text is unfamiliar, and the pronunciation needs to be recitable for students. This perspective is driven by the observation that students' lack of exposure to English instruction from elementary school onwards leads to difficulties in understanding English lessons. For students, learning English is a task they must do (Aprillita et al., 2022). For example, with material from newspapers, teachers can modify authentic learning so that the language spoken is appropriate to the student's ability level.

Materials are indeed fundamental prerequisites in teaching and learning activities. In this process, selecting materials that suit the student's category is necessary. This material selection consists of books and originals. The selection of materials can be categorized into three aspects: suitability of content, which aims to capture students' attention; exploitation, which is geared towards developing students' competence; and readability, which involves a combination of structural and lexical difficulties (Bagus Semara Putra et al., 2021). The use of real books often makes students bored in lessons, so the teacher's job is to modify the lesson material so that students do not just learn with solutions using authentic material that is made to relate to real life. Authentic materials are very effective in student progress, such as the research results from (Nurjanah et al., 2023). The authentic materials chosen are directly related to students' real-world experiences and events, making them easily understandable for students. Authentic material also provides reading opportunities to get real information about what is happening around the students (Azizah, 2023).

After the teacher has collected, selected and matched the material, the teacher's next task is implementing authentic material in the classroom. Based on (Kamariah et al., 2018), authentic materials are intricately linked to executing the prepared learning plan. Implementing this learning involves knowledge, attitudes, skills, and the implementation of planning in real terms. With this planning, the lesson will be directed and will run well. Examples of teacher implementation in the materials used are regional announcements and stories. This material is categorized as authentic because the way the teacher uses it is taken from real stories or events taken from the internet and has been modified to become a lesson.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research results at SMP Negeri 1 Blangpidie Aceh Barat Daya, teachers have carried out differentiated learning using authentic materials. Teachers develop authentic materials based on student needs. Authentic materials in the classroom is derived from genuine exposure to real-world sources. In the development of reading using authentic material, the material sources in reading lessons that teachers most often use are newspapers,



articles and social media, updated and accessed via the internet. The teacher believes that the material taken based on real events will improve students' reading translation skills, vocabulary, pronunciation, and motivation to learn English in the classroom.

The selection and application of authentic material in reading lessons is a point that is needed in learning to create an interesting and not boring learning atmosphere. Providing material cannot be separated from the teacher's goals, where the material must be developed to enable students to improve language performance and competence. Choosing the right material will make students active, creative, innovative and motivated. Another aspect is that using authentic material is very positive for students to improve their reading comprehension in class.

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