CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a brief explanation of some theories that support the study. The theories are related to *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, English learning in *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, and teaching strategies.

2.1 English Language Learning

2.1.1 Definition of English Language Learning

Learning has been defined by many researchers. According to Brown (1994), learning is the process of interaction of students with educators and learning resources in a learning environment. According to Tomlinson (1998), learning is a conscious process involving memory associated with information being studied, for example supporting greetings, using language rules, and vocabulary. Language learning is life enhancing. Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004) stated that language learning can use knowledge about language systems and use of language that involves institutions, instructors, learners, and spending also prioritizes learning experiences, self-appreciation, emotional involvement, connected learning with thought power, communicative language use, and learning materials that encourage learners' creativity. Furthermore, according to Amuta (2019), learning language is the process of acquiring the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in a new language involving mastering vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural nuances.

The importance of English has grown because of globalization, it has led to a demand for individuals to master English as an international language (Tillayeva, 2020). According to Brown (2000), the English learning process is getting knowledge or skill of a subject by study, experience, and instruction. Padwick (2010) claims that the English learning process occurs when the learner acquires knowledge of a topic or subject matter through processing information by reading, listening, thinking, memorizing facts, relating new facts to existing knowledge, analyzing problems, acquiring psychomotor skill. It can be concluded that English language learning is the process of developing English skills through teaching in a

learning environment, which includes using various learning resources to effectively use the language.

The English language in Indonesia is taught as foreign language. English language teaching in Indonesia refers to the structured process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language within the Indonesian education system (Marina & Roni, 2020). It is implemented in schools from primary to higher education levels, with a focus on developing students' skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

2.1.1 Optimal English Language Learning

Optimal English language learning refers to an effective and engaging process where learners develop their language skills in a meaningful and practical way (Yıldız, 2020). It involves a communicative and student-centered approach that encourages active participation, real-world language use, and critical thinking. By integrating authentic materials, technology, and interactive activities, learners are exposed to natural language patterns and cultural contexts, making the learning experience more relevant and enjoyable (Hendrawati, 2017). Additionally, a supportive and inclusive environment, along with constructive feedback, helps students build confidence and improve their proficiency . Therefore, optimal English language learning creates a well-balanced and dynamic experience that enhances both linguistic competence and cultural understanding.

According to Urlica, Andreea, & Stefanović, (2018) creating an optimal English learning environment in the classroom involves several key characteristics that enhance student engagement, motivation, and overall language acquisition. Below are the primary indicators that define an optimal English learning experience.

1) Active Learning Environment

An optimal classroom should be active, where students engage in hands-on activities that promote collaboration and problem-solving. This environment encourages students to take responsibility for their learning and fosters critical thinking skills through group work and interactive tasks.

2) Learner-Centered Approach

Lessons are tailored to students' needs, interests, and proficiency levels, allowing them to take an active role in their learning.

3) Use of Authentic Materials

Exposure to real-world English through news articles, videos, podcasts, and conversations helps learners understand how language is used naturally.

4) Motivation and Engagement

Teachers play a critical role in motivating students by creating engaging lessons that relate to their interests and experiences. Incorporating fun activities, such as games or role-playing scenarios, can make learning enjoyable while reinforcing language skills.

5) Integration of Cultural Aspects

Integrating cultural elements into the learning process can enrich the learning experience by providing context to the language being studied. This approach not only enhances language skills but also fosters global citizenship among learners.

6) Technology-Enhanced Learning

Digital tools, online resources, and interactive platforms provide engaging, accessible, and flexible learning opportunities.

7) Effective Assessment and Feedback

Formative and summative assessments, along with constructive feedback, guide learners in improving their skills and tracking progress.

In summary, optimal English language learning emphasizes meaningful communication, active engagement, and real-world application. By integrating interactive methods, authentic materials, and a supportive learning environment, learners can develop both linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness. Therefore, an optimal approach ensures that students acquire the necessary skills and confidence to use English effectively in diverse contexts.

2.2 Authentic Material

2.2.1 Definition of Authentic Material

Some researchers have defined authentic material. Ricard et.al cited in Joraboyev (2021), stated that authentic learning is the degree to which language

teaching materials have the quality of natural speech and writing. Authentic material is all of the written and spoken text designed for the speakers of the language. According to Harmer (as cited in Anam et al., 2019), authentic texts, either written or spoken, as those which are designed for native speakers and these are real texts designed not for language students but for the native speakers. In addition, authentic materials are not designed for language learning purposes. Authentic materials as samples of spoken and written language that have not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching (Albiladi, 2018). Therefore, authentic material can be defined as either written or spoken texts that are designed for native speakers and not designed for language learning purposes.

In the same line of thought, Srinivas (2019) defines authentic materials as language samples not constructed for the purpose of language learning. Ahmed (2017) gives a clear definition of authentic materials, if it is produced in response to real life communicative needs rather than an imitation of real life communicative needs. Another definition suggested by Peacock cited in Prošić-Santovac and Halas Popovic (2021) is that authentic materials are materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community. In the same word, Nur (2022), states that a text is usually regarded as textually authentic if it is not written for teaching purposes, but for a real life communicative purpose, where the writer has a certain message to pass on to the reader.

It can be concluded that authentic materials can be said to be the kind of materials which are used by native speakers, communicating orally or in writing, and which are not simplified for English learning purposes.

2.2.2 Types of Authentic Material

The resources of teaching materials are now available for everyone. The internet is considered to be a very important and rich source of authentic materials. Jusriwulandari et.al (2022), authentic materials include all of stuffs used for communication. It could be in the form of newspaper, TV, magazines, movie, advertisement, song, podcast and etc. Carefully selected YouTube video clips might become an efficient web-based listening tool as a language teaching resource to assist students in listening activities, and the goal of improving listening

comprehension may be more easily reached. Currently, the use of a variety of genuine short video clips is believed to be a pedagogical resource to benefit and enrich language teaching, and this practice is becoming a new edge tendency in the classroom (Swondo & Tristiana, 2020). Moreover, it is suggested by Berardo (2006) that the internet is considered the most useful source. While printed materials date very quickly, the internet is continuously updated, is interactive, and provides visual stimulation. It provides easy access to endless amounts of different types of material. Moreover, the internet can be the portal to other sources. For example, teachers can obtain articles, audio clips, and videos from the internet.

Rehman and Perveen (2021) gives more examples of authentic materials that EFL/ESL teachers had used. Some of his examples, which might serve as source materials for lesson planning are:

1. Authentic Listening-Viewing Materials: TV commercials, quiz shows, cartoons, news clips, comedy shows, movies, soap operas, professionally audio taped short stories and novels, radio ads, songs, documentaries, and sales pitches.

2. Authentic-Visual Materials: slides, photographs, paintings, children's artwork, stick-figure drawings, wordless street signs, silhouettes, pictures from magazines, ink blots, postcard pictures, wordless picture books, stamps, and X-rays.

3. Authentic-Printed Materials: newspaper articles, movie, advertisements, astrology columns, sports reports, obituary columns, advice columns, lyrics to songs, restaurant menus, street signs, cereal boxes, candy wrappers, tourist information brochures, university catalogs, telephone books, maps, TV guides, comic books, greeting cards, grocery coupons, pins with messages, and bus schedules.

4. Realia (Real world objects) Used in EFL/ESL Classrooms: coins and currency, folded paper, wall clocks, phones, Halloween masks, dolls, and puppets, to name a few. (Realia were often used to illustrate points very visually or for role-play situations).

To sum up, the sources of authentic materials are classified into authentic listening-viewing materials, authentic-visual materials, authentic-printed materials and realia.

2.2.3 Characteristics of Authentic Material

Authentic materials are resources used in language teaching that are not specifically designed for educational purposes but are derived from real-life contexts. They play a crucial role in enhancing language learning by providing exposure to genuine language use. According to Maley, A., & Tomlinson, B. (2017) authentic materials can be identified through several key indicators that distinguish them from traditional textbook-based resources.

1) Created for Native Speakers

   Authentic materials are originally produced for real-world communication among native speakers rather than for language learners.

2) Reflects Natural Language Use

   They contain real-life vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, slang, and spontaneous speech patterns that occur in everyday communication.

3) Contextually Rich

   Authentic materials provide meaningful contexts that reflect actual situations, such as news articles, advertisements, and social media posts.

4) Culturally Embedded

   They convey cultural references, values, and perspectives, helping learners develop intercultural understanding and competence.

5) Unmodified Content

   Unlike graded materials, authentic resources are not simplified for learners, maintaining the complexity and richness of natural language.

6) Multi-Modal Formats

   They exist in various forms, including written texts (newspapers, menus, blogs), audio (podcasts, radio shows), and visual media (videos, movies, advertisements).

7) Engages and Motivates Learners

Since they are taken from real-life sources, authentic materials often capture learners' interest and increase motivation.

8) Encourages Critical Thinking

They require learners to interpret, analyze, and engage with real-world information rather than simply recalling pre-taught content.

In summary, authentic materials are essential in English language learning as they provide real-world language exposure and meaningful contexts for learners. They are characterized by natural language use, cultural relevance, and diverse formats, which enhance engagement and develop students' linguistic and critical thinking skills. Therefore, the use of authentic materials helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life communication, making language learning more effective and relevant.

2.2.4 The Importance of Using Authentic Material

Several experts claim that authentic materials are important to use. According to Albiladi (2018) authentic materials provide an effective means for presenting real language, integrating culture, and heightening comprehension. They bring two reasons for believing that authentic materials are beneficial. Firstly, by exposure to such materials, students will be provided with the opportunity to see language as it is used in the real world to serve a real purpose. Secondly, such materials can be considered as a rich source of cultural content. Joraboyev (2021) indicates that the use of authentic materials are recommended for both cognitive and affective reasons. Moreover, Wondimtegegn (2020) stated that language is functional and must be contextualized. The author believes that it is impossible to understand the real meaning of any interaction without knowing who the participants are or their social distance from the event. For instance, a video drama needs to assist language in a meaningful way. Hence, the teacher is responsible for the balance achieved between input and reapplication.

Anam et al. (2019) also value using authentic materials since they believe that extracting real information from a real text in a new or different language can be extremely motivating. Artha et.al (2020) see the advantage of authentic materials

in the fact that they engage both the learners' and teachers' attention in the language being taught. They have high interest value because of their relevance to the real world keeping the students informed about what is happening in the world they live in. suggest that authentic texts can introduce students to a full range of transactional and interpersonal speech. Amuta, (2019) states that in order to produce awareness of language and its related skills, authentic materials must be used. Swondo and Tristiana (2020) in the same way agrees that using authentic materials are to the benefit of the students because they are more enjoyable and students find a chance to interact with the language and its use.

Alfa (2020) encourages the use of authentic texts since they believe that such texts can provide a connection between the students on one hand and the target language and culture on the other hand. Also the teacher is provided with more opportunities to bring the real world aspects into the class. Citra (2018) states that authentic materials allow the students to hear a much more real act of communication with all the interactional features which are not normally found in scripted materials. It gives them a true representation of real spontaneous speech with its hesitations, false starts and mistakes, which will make them more able to cope with real life speech when they meet it outside the learning situation.

Brosnan cited in Setyowati (2019) justify the importance of the use of authentic material in the classroom in this way:

1. Language is natural. By simplifying language or altering it for teaching purposes (limiting structures, controlling vocabulary, etc.), it risked making the task more difficult. We might, in fact, be removing clues to meaning.

2. Authentic language offers students the chance to deal with a small amount of material which, at the same time, contains complete and meaningful messages.

3. Authentic printed materials provided students with the opportunity to make use of non-linguistic clues (layout, pictures, colors, symbols, the physical setting in which it occurs) to help them discover the meaning more easily.

4. Adults needed to be able to see the immediate relevance of what they do in the classroom to what they need to do outside it, and real-life material treated realistically makes the connection obvious.

To sum up, the use of authentic materials to teach English is very beneficial for the students since they are introduced to the real language used by native speakers.

2.2.5 Drawbacks of Using Authentic Material

There are some significant drawbacks of using authentic materials in comparison with textbooks. The main criticism made to these materials is that they are sometimes too difficult for learners of a foreign language whose ears have been accustomed to an oversimplified and enunciated language (Wondimtegegn, 2020). A mismatch between the material being presented and the learners' learning styles results in a complete loss of interest and motivation. This is mainly due to the fact that authentic materials contain less guidance, an infinite variety of new terminology and structures (Jusriwulandari et al., 2022). Moreover, learners whose level of proficiency is low or who favour more traditional methodologies may find authentic materials difficult, and irrelevant for their needs and motivations (Srinivas, 2019).

The other drawbacks of authentic materials are that authentic materials reflect certain cultural aspects which constitute taboos in the learners' culture. This too culturally biased situation might lead to a feeling of hatred or repulsion towards the target language (Inkova et.al, 2021). It is also true that some teachers are reluctant to exploit authentic materials. The main reason they give for not using them is that such materials are too difficult to be graded and adapted to the learners' levels or needs. In spite of this, teachers can achieve a certain grading by using criteria such as topic, number of speakers, accent, etc.

Akbari and Razavi (2015) as he posited that teachers might find the text with suitable language but spoken in a way which is difficult to follow, or they may have tapes on which the delivery is good, but the language is far too difficult. Jaelani, (2020) stated that the use of authentic materials make especially lower level students confused and demotivated by the complexity of language and performance

conditions unless the simplest authentic texts are carefully selected by the teachers. Hence, the selected material should maintain a sense of learner's response and it should engage the learner's interest.

To sum up, using authentic material in the classroom might be time consuming since it needs time to prepare and select the material. Moreover, the language used in the material might be very difficult to understand by beginners. This difficulty leads students to be demotivated and frustrated during the learning process. However, teachers' role in selecting suitable authentic material is very important. It must meet the learners' needs and situation.

2.3 Teachers' Strategies Using Authentic Material in English Language Teaching

Teachers' strategy is an approach or method that educators utilize to promote student learning and accomplish particular educational objectives. Sarode (2018) stated that teachers' strategies are techniques used to assist students in learning the necessary course material and enabling them to create achievable future objectives. There are various techniques, exercises, and instructional approaches that teachers can employ to foster student interest, comprehension, and skill growth. These techniques are used to facilitate learning and advance academic development. According to Tumanggor, Heriansyah, and Inayah, (2018) adopting the method entails putting the movement rules into practice and tying them to a particular style of structuring teaching and learning situations. Xia, (2020) defines that teachers' strategy places a strong emphasis on the role of teachers as subject matter experts, the dissemination of systematic information, the value of classroom instruction, and the significance of teaching resources. Therefore, it can be concluded that a teacher's strategy is a set of tools that teachers implement in the class that consist of a combination of methods, sequence of activities, media, and time used in the class to help the teacher solve the issue that arouses in the classroom because of the second language input and output.

There are some strategies before choosing and implementing the authentic materials that have to be known by the teachers. The researcher constructs theory from Huda (2017) and Anam et al. (2019) into two main teacher's strategies in using

authentic material in the classroom, there are strategies in selecting authentic material and implementing authentic material. Below are the explanations of each strategy.

1. Selecting authentic material. There are eight criteria of authenticity that need to be considered when choosing appropriate authentic materials.

    1) Relevance to course book and students' needs. The materials align with the goals and objectives of the course book and meet the specific needs of the students. This means the content should reinforce and complement the themes, vocabulary, and structures that are being taught.

    2) Topic interest. The materials should be engaging and interesting to the students. Consider the age, background, and interests of the students when selecting topics.

    3) Cultural fitness. The content should be culturally appropriate and sensitive to the backgrounds of the students. This includes avoiding materials that may be offensive or difficult to understand due to cultural differences.

    4) Logistical consideration. This includes availability, cost, ease of use, and whether the materials can be easily integrated into the teaching environment (e.g., classroom setup, technology requirements).

    5) Cognitive demands. Consider the cognitive load that the materials place on students. The materials should be challenging enough to promote learning but not so difficult that they overwhelm the students. This includes the complexity of the concepts and the amount of new information presented.

    6) Linguistic demands. Assess the language level required to understand and use the materials. The linguistic demands should be appropriate for the proficiency level of the students. This includes vocabulary, grammar, and the overall language structure.

    7) Quality. The materials should be of high quality in terms of content accuracy, presentation, and production. This includes clear audio and

video quality for multimedia resources, as well as well-written and error-free text.

8) Exploitability. The materials should offer opportunities for various types of language practice and skills development. This means they should be adaptable for different activities such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing exercises. Materials that can be used for multiple purposes and activities are especially valuable.

2. Implementing authentic material in the classroom. There are four key aspects that a teacher needs to consider in implementing authentic material in the classroom.

1) Align with learning objectives. Teacher needs to ensure that authentic materials align with the specific learning objectives of the course. Clearly define what students should achieve by engaging with the material.

2) Encourage active participation. Students must be actively engaged with the material through various activities discussions, debates, role-plays, and other interactive activities. Encourage them to ask questions, share opinions, and relate the content to their own experiences.

3) Diversify the types of materials. Teachers need to use a variety of authentic materials to address different language skills and learning styles. This can include articles, videos, podcasts, interviews, advertisements, menus, and social media posts.

4) Assess understanding and progress. Teachers need to regularly assess students' understanding and progress with the authentic materials. Teachers can use a mix of formative and summative assessments to evaluate their comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and ability to apply what they have learned.

5) Foster a supportive environment. Create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. Encourage a positive attitude towards using authentic materials,

emphasizing that making mistakes is a natural part of the learning process.

It can be concluded that to use authentic material effectively in the classroom teachers need to have strategies in selecting and implementing authentic material. In selecting authentic material teachers need to consider eight criteria such as relevance to the course book and students' needs, topic interest, cultural fitness, logistical consideration, cognitive demands, linguistics demands, quality and exploitability. Then, in implementing authentic materials teachers need to consider several aspects such as authentic materials need to align with learning objectives, contextualizing the materials, encouraging active participants, using diversity of types of materials, assessing understanding and progress, and fostering a supportive environment. Therefore, by considering and implementing these strategies, teachers can effectively incorporate authentic materials into the classroom.

2.4 Study of the Relevant Research

Before deciding to perform this study, the researcher reviewed past studies on authentic material in English language learning. Because the study on teachers' strategies in using authentic material of English language learning is still uncommon, the researcher focused on a related topic. The researcher will also discuss five relevant past studies.

Huda (2017), conducted a study to investigate Indonesian EFL teachers' belief regarding the use of authentic materials at State Islamic Junior High School level in South Tangerang. The study involved six English teachers as participants to complete a survey questionnaire and interview. This study used qualitative study and the descriptive statistics was used to display the result of the questionnaire and interview. The result of the study showed that all of the teachers had positive attitudes toward providing authentic material in their classes. The study revealed that teachers preferred using authentic material because it exposes the students to the real English language and also can motivate them in learning English. In addition, teachers used authentic materials for listening classes and the internet is the most used source to obtain authentic materials. Furthermore, the study stated that to select appropriate authentic material there is a need   for guidelines such

as language level of the text and course objectives. Finally, from the study most participants declared a need for such an additional training in using authentic materials especially in designing appropriate assignments.

Jaelani (2020), conducted a study about students' perspective towards the use of authentic material in EFL listening classrooms. This study aims to explore the use of authentic materials in a listening course in EFL classroom and students' perceptions toward it. This study used open-ended questionnaires during the course as collecting data. Then the data were analyzed qualitatively and the result of the study revealed the students have various perceptions toward the use of authentic materials. The results showed that authentic materials have a positive effect on simulating students' motivation, raising cultural awareness, facilitating learners' interest, and giving real exposure. Furthermore, authentic materials enable a gap between the language used in the classroom and the language used in real life by bringing familiar linguistic situations and material into the EFL classroom.

Rehman and Perveen (2021), conducted a study to explore the perception of secondary school teachers about the use of authentic material in Pakistani English language classrooms. This study used quantitative study and the data was collected through questionnaires. There were 40 Pakistani secondary school teachers who responded to the survey questionnaire. The result of the study showed that most of the teachers liked using authentic material in their classroom. The teachers have a good attitude towards the use of authentic material as supplement resources beside textbooks for teaching English language learning in the classroom. Although teachers faced some challenges in applying authentic materials due to curricular and management issues, they claimed that authentic material is important for the students to increase their exposure to natural language. Then to overcome the challenge in using authentic materials they suggest adapting the curriculum and examination systems to facilitate secondary school teachers for using authentic material in English language classrooms.

Inkova et al. (2021), conducted a study regarding authentic materials in online teaching to improve students' involvement. This study aims to explore the impact of implementing authentic materials in virtual ELT classrooms to enhance

students' involvement and improve their overall performance. This study used a descriptive approach combination with self-written reflection and semi-structured interviews. This study was carried out in the context of EFL teaching at university level during Covid-19 pandemic among students' economic courses at Plekhanov Russian University of Economics and there are 60 learners and five instructors. Then the collected data were analyzed and classified on the basis of the research questions. The results showed authentic materials help teachers build a harmonious and lively atmosphere in online teaching and learning classrooms and make both teachers and students feel enthusiastic about the learning process. Nevertheless, the result also showed that appropriate and effective integration of authentic materials in ELT online learning need to be considered.

Nur (2022), conducted a study regarding the benefits and limitations of authentic materials for English language teaching. This study used library research and the data were collected through books and articles related to authentic material. The results showed that authentic materials have a lot of benefits for English language teaching. The result of the study revealed the reason for EFL teachers to employ authentic materials in their classroom because it can integrate classroom activities with the outside world, enhanced students' real world language outside classroom, help students comprehend the students' culture, students will become familiar with a variety of genres, encourage students to bring the material that piques their interest and allow students to influence the lesson's content. Nevertheless, their results also stated some limitations in using authentic material for English language teaching such as taking more time to select authentic materials with specific lessons, may have complex language or dictions for students, and students may have different perspectives on the authentic materials provided in the class. Although, those limitations can be handled if the teachers have high consideration in selecting and applying authentic materials in their English language teaching.