

EFL Teachers' Perceptions Toward the Use of Authentic Material in Teaching Reading Comprehension

Wildanum Mukhalladun¹⁾, Nidawati²⁾, and Muhammad AR³⁾

¹⁾ Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry, Aceh, Indonesia
Email: 160203188@student.ar-raniry.ac.id¹⁾, Nidawatimag@gmail.com²⁾,
muhammadelbandaraini@gmail.com³⁾

Abstrak: Pemahaman membaca adalah salah satu keterampilan bahasa Inggris yang tidak dapat diabaikan. Sebagian besar siswa menghadapi kesulitan dalam memahami teks bahasa Inggris. Oleh karena itu, peran guru dan bahan ajar sangat penting. Guru, sebagai fasilitator, memiliki tanggung jawab besar untuk menyediakan dan menggunakan bahan ajar selain buku pelajaran, yang merupakan bahan otentik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi guru Bahasa Inggris terhadap materi otentik dalam pengajaran membaca. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dimana datanya dikumpulkan secara kualitatif melalui kuesioner dan wawancara. Sampel yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini yakni 20 guru Bahasa Inggris dari beberapa Sekolah Menengah Atas yang ada di Aceh Besar yang memiliki lebih dari tiga tahun pengalaman mengajar untuk mengisi kuesioner yang diberikan melalui formulir google. Kemudian, tiga guru dipilih untuk diwawancarai untuk tambahan informasi melalui wawancara semi terstruktur. Berdasarkan kedua instrumen, guru Bahasa Inggris menunjukkan persepsi positif terhadap penggunaan bahan otentik dalam pengajaran membaca. Semua telah menggunakan bahan otentik dalam mengajar. Alasan mereka menggunakan bahan otentik karena dapat meningkatkan motivasi, minat dan pemahaman siswa terhadap teks tertulis berbahasa inggris. Di samping itu, mayoritas guru menemukan beberapa tantangan dalam menggunakan bahan otentik seperti kurang menguasai kosakata, masalah teknis dan waktu. Secara keseluruhan, guru percaya bahwa bahan otentik bermanfaat dalam pengajaran pemahaman membaca.

Kata kunci: Persepsi, Bahan otentik, Pemahaman membaca

Abstract: Reading comprehension is one of the English skills that cannot be neglected. Most students faced difficulties in understanding English written text. Therefore, the role of teachers and teaching material is significant. Teachers, as facilitators, have a big responsibility to provide and use teaching material besides textbooks, which are authentic materials. This research aims to find out EFL teachers' perceptions of authentic materials in teaching reading. This research employed a qualitative research approach in which its data were qualitatively collected through questionnaires and interviews. The sample is 20 English teachers from several Senior High Schools in Aceh Besar who have more than three years of experience in teaching to fill questionnaires distributed via google form. Then, 3 teachers was chosen to interview to get some additional information via semi-structured interview. Based on both instruments, EFL teachers showed positive perceptions of using authentic materials in teaching reading. All of them had used authentic materials in their teaching. The reasons they used authentic materials because it could increase students' motivation, interest and understanding English written text. Besides, the majority of teachers found some challenges in using authentic materials including lack of vocabulary, technical problem and time-consuming. Overall, teachers believe that authentic materials are beneficial in teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: Perception, Authentic materials, Reading Comprehension

A. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that is very important in the global association. Many people use it for socializing with each other. It has become the main requirement for people worldwide, especially when they want to get a job. Almost all top films, books, music, and even internet contents are published in English by people. Harsono (2006) said that English has some functions like developing the state and nation, building relationships with other countries, and running foreign policy. It means that mastering English makes us quickly access an incredible amount of relevant information, entertainment, and work.

Learning English at the school level, especially in Junior and Senior High School, is an obligation that has been set by the government in the Government Regulation of Republic Indonesia, number 20, 2013. Students should master four primary English language teaching skills: listening, writing, speaking, and reading. However, Indonesia, in fact, still has low English Proficiency. In 2019, with the 50.06 English Proficiency Index (EFI), Indonesia got the 61st position from 100 countries (English Proficiency, 2019). Indonesia is below Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. In order to improve English skills effectively, there is one of the skills that cannot be neglected by students is reading skills.

Reading is a complex activity that concerns both perceptions and thought in understanding English written text (Pang et al. 2003). By reading English texts, students can improve their knowledge about the world and add more experiences. Based on the Curriculum 2013 revision, one of the essential competencies in teaching English is students can understand written text. To achieve this goal, the role of teachers and teaching material is very crucial. According to Wulandari (2018), the use of inappropriate learning materials in the classroom can be one of the problems that can be occurred during teaching reading and students spend long hours in classroom with poor achievement. Moreover, she also stated that teaching and learning material aims to prepare teachers efficiently and successfully delivering lessons to students. Thus, the teacher should offer the students with materials that can encourage them to keep reading.

Many experts have written on choosing relevant material for learners to support learners in learning a language. According to Tomlinson (1998, as cited in Mannong, 2016), there are two kinds of materials that can be used by teachers in teaching reading: Authentic materials and non-authentic materials. Non-authentic materials refer to those which are designed for language teaching and learning purposes. such as: textbooks, students' worksheet, supplementary readers,

etc. In comparison, authentic materials are the materials that were taken from real-life communication and not intended for language teaching and learning purposes. for examples: newspaper, magazines, shopping flyers, advertisements, brochures, product wrapping, menus, train schedule, e-mails, announcement, invitations cards, poems, short stories, novels, journals, etc.

According to Apsari (2014), authentic materials refer to those taken from real-life sources, and were not designed for teaching and learning purposes. One of the primary purposes of using authentic materials in the classroom is to expose students to real-life phenomena. Therefore, authentic materials can make students interested in reading because they can gain real information and know what is going on around them. It also stated by Apsari (2014) that the use of authentic material affects the students' reading comprehension.

Berardo (2006) also stated that authentic material has a positive value that makes students highly motivated in the teaching-learning process. Moreover, using authentic material will help students understand more about English in the real context of the language use, because the materials are directly designed for native. It is also help teachers in delivering lessons accurately in the real context of language based on how they used it in real life. Due to the materials are authentic, teachers can find and choose the appropriate activities in teaching reading. The materials can be available around daily life like newspapers, pictures, advertisements, movies, brochures, magazines, etc. which could be found on the internet. While the use of textbooks as non-authentic material usually made the students bored in learning if not combine with authentic materials. Teachers sometimes find difficulties creating various learning activities using textbooks because the teaching material is limited and monotonous. Based on Dina and Ciornei (2014), teachers who use traditional textbooks for teaching material will provide outdated information. Therefore, in order to create active and various teaching activities that are joyful, interesting, and up to date, teachers can use authentic materials for teaching reading besides using textbooks.

The use of authentic material is not something new in teaching English, especially reading. There are some studies related to the use of authentic materials that have been conducted by some scholars. One of the studies was conducted by Wulandari (2018) about using authentic materials to enhance students' reading comprehension achievement at the first grade of SMAN 2 Metro. This research found a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension after they were taught by using authentic material. Students had positive perceptions of authentic material; they enjoyed

the reading activities and highly motivated. Another study was conducted by Mannong (2016) about the authentic materials' effect on improving students' reading comprehension of SMPN 36 Makassar's ninth grade. This study was found that the use of authentic materials is more effective than non-authentic material; the students' mean score proves it was higher.

However, the study above focused on the implementation of authentic material in improving reading comprehension at school. From those findings of the studies, there is limited information about teachers' perception on using authentic materials. Hence, the researcher felt interested in conducting this study to find out EFL teachers' perceptions of authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension.

Based on the explanation above, the research questions can be formulated as how teachers perceive toward the use of authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension and what are the challenges faced by teachers of using authentic materials. As for the purpose of this research is to investigate teachers' perception towards the use of authentic materials and to find out significant information on any challenges faced by teachers of using authentic materials. While the significances of this study are to give some insights and information, and to increase knowledge of English teachers and students on the use of authentic materials.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In conducting this study, the researcher used a qualitative data because the result of data from this research are in the form of text and statement only. In this study, the researcher tried to collect, analyze, interpret, and describe the data about EFL teachers' perceptions of using authentic material in teaching reading comprehension. This research participants were 20 English teachers from several senior high schools in Aceh Besar. The researcher used purposive sampling in choosing respondents who have more than three years of experience in teaching and also teachers who had used authentic materials in their teaching especially when teaching reading.

They were given a questionnaire through a close-ended question. According to Acharya (2010), close-ended questions have sufficient alternatives to select or fit the respondent's information. There are 10 questionnaires related to teachers' perceptions of using authentic materials and distributed to teachers via google form before the researcher conducting the interview. The questionnaire analyzed using this formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \% \text{ Sudijono (2008).}$$

Where,

P : Percentage

F: Frequency of Respondents

N: Number of Sample

100 % : Constant Value

Then, the last step is the interview. An interview plays a role as an additional data collection instrument. In this research, the researcher carries out a semi-structured interview. Galletta, A. (2013) assumed that semi-structured interview means questions are predetermined, but the interviewer is free to ask for clarification and even add follow up questions. The interview list contains 3 questions about the use of authentic material in teaching reading. The researcher chose 3 English teachers to interview to answer research question number 2. It covers the teachers' understanding of authentic material, the difficulties or challenges in teaching using authentic material, and the types of authentic material used in teaching reading. While doing the interview, the researcher recorded the participant's answers. And for interview, the result data of interview was transcribed in narration.

C. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Questionnaire analysis

According to Sudijono (2011), the result of questionnaire will be analyzed by using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100 \%$$

Table 1.1: *I Using authentic materials to support teaching strategies and materials beside textbooks.*

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Strongly agree | 8 | 40% |
| | Agree | 8 | 40% |
| | Disagree | 4 | 20% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | | 20 |

As shown in the table above, the teacher gave more various perceptions. Here based on the data there was 8 teachers or 40 % strongly agreed and 8 teachers or 40 % agreed to the statement above. Most teachers used authentic materials to support their teaching strategies and teaching materials. While the other teacher, which consist of 4 teacher or 20% disagreed to that statement.

Table 1.2: When authentic materials are used, students are more concentrate in reading and analyzing written text.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2 | Strongly agree | 15 | 75% |
| | Agree | 3 | 15% |
| | Disagree | 2 | 10% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

As shown in table above, the teachers gave more various perceptions. Here based on the table above, there were 2 teachers or 10% of the teacher disagreed with the statement. It means that not all of the teacher believe that authentic material can encourage students' concentrate in reading English written text. However, the table shows us that more than half of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement. There are 15 teachers or 75% of students who strongly agreed with the statement.

Table 1.3: The use of authentic material can make students enjoy reading and comprehending English written text easily.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 3 | Strongly agree | 10 | 50% |
| | Agree | 7 | 35% |
| | Disagree | 3 | 15% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

Based on the data shown on the table, it appeared that exactly half of the teachers or there were 10 teachers or 50% of teachers strongly agree with the statement given. Then, there are 7 teachers or 35% agree with the statement given. A slight difference between the number of the teachers who strongly agreed and the number of teachers who agree with the statement was shown on the table. In contrast, there were 3 teachers who chose the option “disagree” to the statement and no one of them who chose the last option “strongly disagree” to the statement. So, regarding to the result of the teachers’ perceptions toward the statement which are shown on the table, the researcher surely understood that authentic materials made students much more relax and gave them more enjoyment.

Table 1.4: The students paid better attention to the authentic materials than non-authentic materials or textbooks.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 4 | Strongly agree | 15 | 75% |
| | Agree | 4 | 20% |
| | Disagree | 1 | 5% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

Based on table above, it can be seen that 75% or 15 teachers chose strongly agree to that statement. Then 4 teacher or 20 % chose agree, while only 5% or 1 teacher disagree to that statement. It means that authentic materials were more attracted students’ attention than non-authentic materials.

Table 1.5: Students are highly motivated in learning when authentic materials are used.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 5 | Strongly agree | 10 | 50% |
| | Agree | 8 | 40% |
| | Disagree | 2 | 10% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

As we see on the table, half of teacher which is 10 teachers or 50% are strongly agree while 8 teachers or 40% are agree that students are highly motivated in learning. In contrast there are 2 teachers or 10% chose disagree to that statement. It means that most of teachers agreed that students are highly motivated in learning when authentic materials are used.

Table 1.6: When using authentic materials, teacher can determine the students' level understanding of the text.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 6 | Strongly agree | 12 | 60% |
| | Agree | 8 | 40% |
| | Disagree | - | - |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

According to the table above, 100 % teacher or 20 out of 20 teachers responded positively concerning the item through authentic material teacher can determine students understanding of the text (12 teachers or 60 % chose strongly agree while 8 teachers or 40 % chose agree). However there none of them gave negative respond for this statement.

Table 1.7: Authentic materials could give students update and meaningful informations.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 7 | Strongly agree | 9 | 45% |
| | Agree | 8 | 40% |
| | Disagree | 3 | 15% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

As we see on the table above, half of teacher which is 9 teachers or 45% are strongly agree while 8 teachers or 40% are agree that using authentic materials students can get more and meaningful information While the rest are choosing disagree which consist of 3 teachers or 15%.

Table 1.8: Class atmosphere tends to be fun and comfortable through the use of authentic materials in teaching reading.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 8 | Strongly agree | 10 | 50% |
| | Agree | 5 | 25% |
| | Disagree | 5 | 25% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

As shown on the table above, half of teachers chose strongly agree which consist of 10 teachers or 50% and 5 teachers or 25% chose agree to that statement about using authentic materials makes class more fun and comfortable. In contrast, there are 5 teachers or 25% chose disagree, means that using pedagogical materials also makes class more fun.

Table 1.9: It is easy to find authentic materials that are used in teaching reading.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 9 | Strongly agree | 10 | 50% |
| | Agree | 5 | 25% |
| | Disagree | 5 | 25% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

Based on the data shown on the table above, 10 teachers or 50% are strongly agree and 5 teachers or 25% are agree that is easy for them in finding authentic materials for teaching reading even from internet or from environment. While the rest, 5 teachers or 25% are disagree to the statement. They felt hard to find authentic materials it is because of some reasons.

Logo UIN Ar Rahiry Banda Aceh

Table 1.10: The use of authentic materials in teaching reading can help teachers in conveying messages and information.

| Questionnaire Item | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 10 | Strongly agree | 7 | 35% |
| | Agree | 10 | 50% |
| | Disagree | 3 | 15% |
| | Strongly disagree | - | - |
| | Total | 20 | 100% |

As shown on the table above, there is 7 teachers or 35% chose strongly agree while 10 teachers or 50% are agree that through authentic materials teacher are easy to convey messages and information. And there are 3 teachers or 15% who disagreed to the statement above.

2. The Analysis of Interview

Based on the interview that was given to all participants, almost all participants had similar answers or perceptions towards the use of authentic materials in teaching reading. They stated that authentic materials are very good and essential in developing their teaching strategy in the classroom. They also defined that authentic materials are materials that they prepare and find purely by themselves for their teaching, which those are not provided by education ministry (textbook). Similarly, Polio (2014, as cited in Belaid , 2015) defined that authentic materials are materials that are not purposely created for educational language purposes, it produced for real life purposes and communication of native speakers which refers to spoken and written materials

Even though the teachers are agreed on the authentic materials used in teaching reading, but they are not always using authentic materials in every teaching. They used authentic material in some conditions when students are bored dealing with textbooks. It is also because in the school, they must follow with the textbook curriculum, so the authentic materials are only the supplementary materials in their teaching. In the textbooks, teachers just need to follow the materials and lesson plan while using authentic materials, they would have some difficulties. It includes technical problems, lack of vocabulary, and time- consuming.

Firstly, based on the interviewed three teachers, two teachers out of three teachers said that technical problem is the most challenging part in using authentic material. It might relate to

unworkable media like projector and electricity that caused difficulties in presenting materials. They need many tools to support the teaching process. When the schools do not support a good media, the teaching process will be failed. Moreover, some teachers difficult in getting media like newspapers, magazines, etc. There are very few printed newspapers written in English, and the schools do not provide freely, they must spend their money just to buy the real newspaper to provide in the classroom.

Secondly is the lack of vocabulary. The result showed that one of the difficulties found by the participants in using authentic material is lack of vocabulary mastery. It caused students hard to read and understand advanced material because of the language feature used. Students were not familiar with the words. They interested, but sometimes it is hard for them to understand text quickly. So, the teacher must find materials that suitable to students' level, ability and appropriate to the curriculum. Guariento and Morley (2001 as cited in Silvani 2018) also stated that the use of authentic materials should be suitable to students' level. They said that authentic materials are available for post-intermediate level, meanwhile for the use at lower level may cause students feeling demotivated and frustrated since the less mastering lexical items and have not mastered more vocabularies and structures used.

Thirdly is time-consuming. The result of the interviewee of three teachers is that using authentic materials took more time to be used in the English classroom. There were many preparations and activities needed to do and finish in the teaching and learning process. it is also supported by Anam (2012), he stated that teachers have to prepare and filter the authentic materials as good as possible, so the teacher need much time to do that. Meanwhile, its time was not enough. Furthermore, the school must follow with the textbook curriculum, so the authentic materials are only the supplementary materials in their teaching.

Even though the teacher faces some challenges, there are many advantages of using authentic materials in teaching English, especially reading. Regarding the perception of using authentic materials in teaching reading, they had different perceptions about authentic materials benefits. Based on the interviewee's result, these were several benefits of using authentic materials according to the participants. They said that students are more interested in learning and understanding English written text and improving students' motivation in learning. They did not get bored quickly in analyzing the text and enjoyed doing the tasks given. It is in line with Marwan (2014), he stated that authentic materials have a positive effect on learners' motivation because

they provide cultural information, exposure to real language, and relate more closely to learners' needs. Overall, the teachers suggest to all EFL teachers to use authentic material in teaching reading beside textbooks.

In implementing authentic materials, the teachers have such perceptions on types of authentic materials that should be used in teaching reading. From the result of the interview, they usually use visual and printed media like pictures, magazines, reading texts, and videos and the most common use is internet because internet is always updated. It is in line with Berardo (2006), he stated that the source of authentic materials that can be used in classroom are infinite, but the most useful is from the internet. Whereas newspaper and any other printed materials date very quickly while the internet is continuously updated.

In preparing the authentic materials, teachers should choose the appropriate materials. Teachers have to analyze the students' abilities, the students' like, and the curriculum itself. It is in order to make the students get easy to understand and enjoy during the lesson in the class. If the materials too tricky and do not interested, they will even be demotivated and bored in the class. Akbari, O., & Razavi, A. (2016) stated that the use of authentic materials at lower levels causes students frustrated and demotivated since students at this level still lack many lexical items and structures used in the language. It means that teaching materials should be appropriate to students' level.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The data analysis result shows that EFL teachers had positive perceptions of authentic materials in teaching reading even though there are some challenges faces by teachers, but it beneficial in teaching reading comprehension.

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher wants to propose three suggestions as follows:

1. For EFL teachers. By knowing the result of the data analysis of this research, it can be suggested to EFL teacher that must be more selective and innovative toward the teaching materials. Using authentic materials can be one alternatives way in teaching reading, because it makes students more interested and motivated in reading English text.
2. For Students. Nowadays, students do not have to depend on English materials that teachers provided at classroom, they could find their own materials or reading text on internet. So, their reading skill will automatically improve and get up to date information.

D. REFERENCES

- Acharya, B. (2010). Questionnaire design. *Central Department of Population Studies*.
- 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.
- Apsari, Y. (2014). The use of authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension. *ELTIN Journal*, 2(2), 88-94.
- Belaid, A. M. (2015). Using Authentic Materials in the Foreign Language Classroom: Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions in Libyan Universities. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 5 (3), 25-37.
- Berardo, S. A. (2006). The use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. *The reading matric*, Vol. 6 (2), pp. 60-69.
- Ciornei, S. I. & Dina, T. A. (2015). Authentic text in teaching English. *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 274-279.
- English Proficiency. (2019). Indeks Kecakapan Bahasa Inggris EF. Retrieved from <http://www.ef.co.id/epi/regions/asia/indonesia/>.
- Galletta, A. (2013). *Mastering the semi-Structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication*. Vol. 16, NYU press.
- Harsono Y.M. (2006) English Language Teaching in Indonesia: Facts, Problems and Possible solution. *English Education Journal*, 5(2).
- Mannong, M. B. A., (2016). The effect of using authentic materials to improve the reading comprehension of the ninth-grade students of SMPN Makassar. Skripsi. Makassar: State University of Makassar.
- Marwan, F. K. (2014). Improving the students' English Reading Comprehension through Authentic Materials in SMKN 1 Godean Grade XI in the Academic Year of 2013/2014.

English Education Study Program Faculty of Languages and Arts State University of Yogyakarta.

Silvani, N. (2018). English Teachers' Perception Toward the Use of Authentic Materials in Teaching English at School. Skripsi. Banda Aceh: University of Ar-Raniry

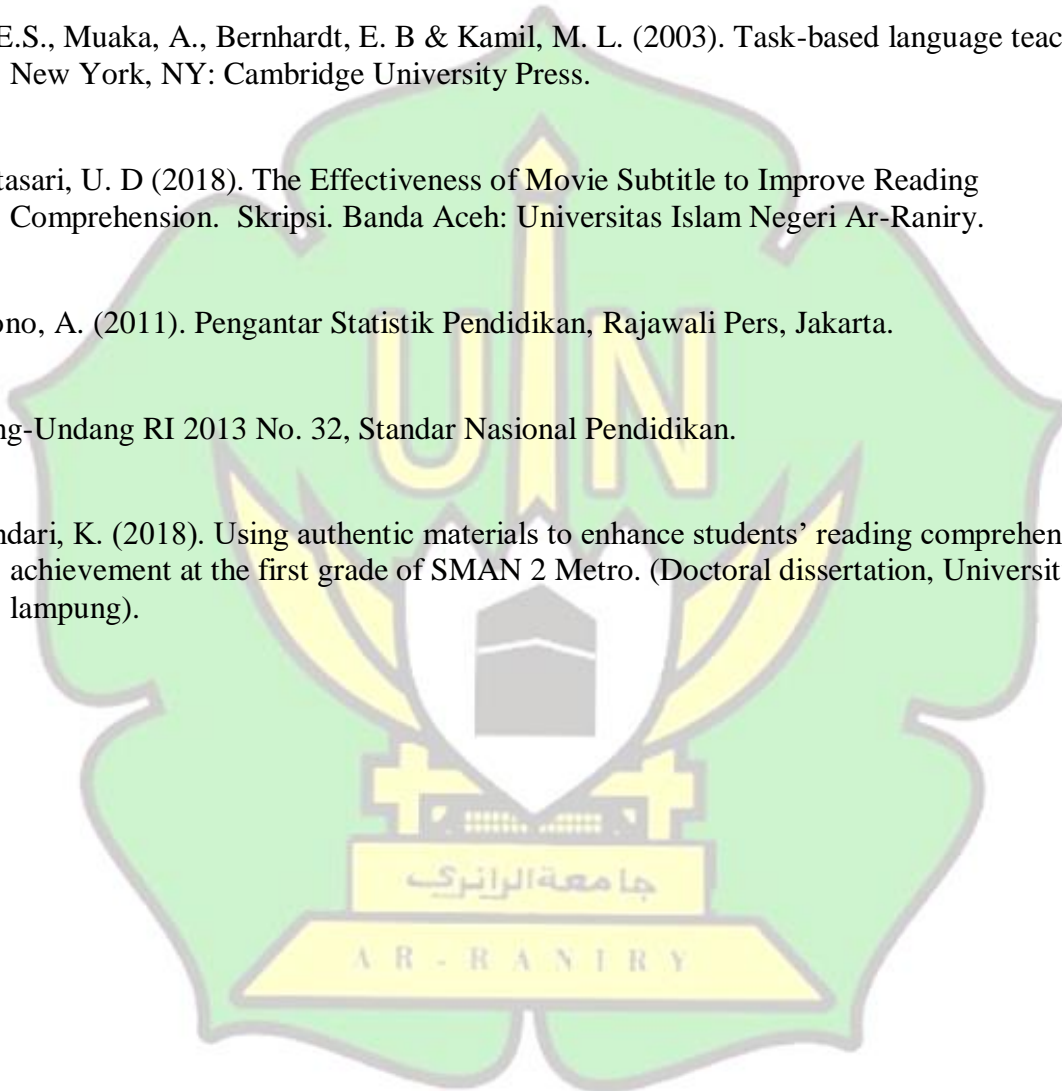
Pang, E.S., Muaka, A., Bernhardt, E. B & Kamil, M. L. (2003). Task-based language teaching. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Permatasari, U. D (2018). The Effectiveness of Movie Subtitle to Improve Reading Comprehension. Skripsi. Banda Aceh: Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry.

Sudijono, A. (2011). Pengantar Statistik Pendidikan, Rajawali Pers, Jakarta.

Undang-Undang RI 2013 No. 32, Standar Nasional Pendidikan.

Wulandari, K. (2018). Using authentic materials to enhance students' reading comprehension achievement at the first grade of SMAN 2 Metro. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Lampung).



Logo UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh