The Utilization of Authentic Materials in Indonesian EFL Contexts: An Exploratory Study on Learners’ Perceptions

Heri Mudra
English Language Education Department
Islamic State College of Kerinci (STAIN Kerinci), Indonesia

The aims of this study were to find out the kinds of preferred authentic materials (AMs) utilized by EFL learners at Islamic State College of Kerinci (STAIN Kerinci), Indonesia; and, to explore the learners’ perceptions on the utilization of preferred AMs in EFL classrooms. This study was carried out through focus-group interviews towards seven learners selected by using snowball sampling technique. The findings of the study show that the EFL learners utilize various kinds of AMs including internet-mediated AMs, printed AMs, audiovisual (video) AMs, and audio AMs. It was reported that each kind of materials has either advantages or disadvantages. The advantages of AMs included: improving and developing skills or abilities on listening, reading, speaking, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. The materials also make the learners aware of the importance of native-speaker cultures through which real English is learnt. However, the disadvantages of AMs included: unlimited in length and lack of academic instructions. It is recommended that EFL teachers should provide various AMs in EFL classrooms. The AMs should be selected and balanced with EFL learners’ English abilities or levels.

Keywords: Authentic Materials, EFL learners, EFL classroom, Indonesian EFL Learners, Snowball Sampling Technique

1. Introduction

The importance of Authentic Materials (AMs) in EFL/ESL contexts has been revealed in several studies. AMs provide real cultural exposure and discourse (Kilickaya, 2004; Martinez, 2002; Morrison, 1989; Peacock, 1997), and become appropriate sources for learning since AMs bring EFL learners into real contexts (Spelleri, 2002; Swan, 1985; Kilickaya, 2004; Vigil, 1987; Wong, Kwok, & Choi, 1995). EFL learners are able to figure out the kinds of AMs for their learning. The kinds of AMs are selected based on learners’ need and learning goals. In this case, EFL teachers are to select appropriate AMs for learning. Having selected and provided AMs, the EFL teachers can either directly use the selected AMs or adapt AMs based on EFL learners’ abilities. If EFL teachers select AMs accurately, then EFL classrooms will be, of course, influenced and make the classroom successful.

Lecturers’ creativity and ability in utilizing selected AMs have been a part of responsibility in EFL classrooms at Islamic State College of Kerinci (STAIN Kerinci), Indonesia. The English lecturers at STAIN are to write a syllabus and enclose kinds of AMs for EFL learners to find. In the teaching process, the lecturers ensure that each EFL learners are ready with their AMs since they are asked to select themselves. However, the use of AMs in the EFL classrooms is always as successful as is expected. Several problems in EFL classrooms still remain, though advantages of AMs are more dominant. One of the problems is whether or not the selected AMs meet the EFL learners’ needs and interests. This problem is a background of why this study was done. As the EFL learners attend classes for many subjects and use AMs for learning, the study focused on analyzing any possible answers out of the following questions:
1) What kinds of authentic materials are preferable to Indonesian EFL learners?
2) What are the advantages and the disadvantages of authentic materials for Indonesian EFL learners?

2. Literature review

Authentic materials (AMs) are any product or thing designed or produced by native speakers for native speakers’ daily activities. In ESL or EFL contexts, they are called authentic materials consisting of highly qualified or well-designed authenticity. However, authentic materials are not designed and produced for English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. The materials, consisting of texts or audios, are intended for being used by native speakers (Martinez, 2005; Nunan, 1989; Young, 1993). Authentic texts are written by native speakers and to be used by native speakers as a daily consumption. They are especially designed for native speakers or community (Peacock, 1997; Widdowson, 1990, Sanderson, 1999; Rogers & Medley, 1988). AMs are materials that are ‘attested, actual, and have real authentic instances of use” (Stubb, 1996). Morrow (1977) states that “an authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort” (p.13). The definitions summarize that AMs are designed and created by native speakers for native speakers. In this case, AMs are created based on native cultures which include languages, ways of life, lifestyles, economy, politics, education, custom, technology, and the like. AMs designed have either advantages or disadvantages.

2.1 Advantages of the use of Authentic Materials

The use of AMs in EFL classrooms can be both advantageous and disadvantageous. One of the advantages of AMs is that AMs expose cultures of native speakers that will directly influence on EFL learners’ knowledge on how the native speakers behave and use English language contextually (Gebhard, 1996; Hwang, 2005; Peacock, 1997; Martinez, 2002). The use of AMs in EFL classrooms is useful for increasing EFL learners’ abilities on real English usage. The materials like English newspapers, magazines, online news, and movies provide real practices of native cultures and habits in using English language. EFL teachers are to choose the materials that are directly related to English skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. AMs which consist of materials can be directly used or adapted by EFL teachers based on teaching and learning goals.

Another advantage of AMs is that AMs provide various natural, authentic, applicable, and ready-to-use materials for use in EFL classrooms (Hwang, 2005; Chase, 2002). AMs are said to be natural since AMs reflect on what has really happened, what is really happening, or what will happen. Since AMs are not designed for any language learning and are especially designed as parts of people's daily activities, AMs are authentic and applicable. By using AMs in teaching and learning English, EFL learners are exposed to direct contact of real English discourses and real practice of genuine communication in the target language (Breen, 1985; Geddes & White, 1978).

Even though AMs are considered to be used by advanced learners (Swinscoe, 1992; Huijzena & Thomas-Ruzic, 1994), AMs can be selected based on EFL learners’ level and needs (Huijzena & Thomas-Ruzic, 1994; Mejia & O'Connor, 1994). AMs are not only used by advanced learners, but also by lower-level learners. The strategy for using AMs for different levels of learners is by determining EFL learners’ level and selecting appropriate AMs that fit with learners’ level.

2.2 Disadvantages of the use of Authentic Materials

The use of AMs also has some disadvantages. AMs can cause lower-level EFL learners lack of motivation in learning English as AMs consist of complex, difficult texts, vocabularies, sentences, and language varieties (Peacock, 1997; Martinez, 2002). Lower-level learners become stressful when they are introduced with AMs for the first time (Nunan, 1989). This problem is not, of course, faced by advanced EFL learners. They have high abilities to understand complex structures and difficult words of AMs. If so, the focus of enhancing lower-level learners’ English abilities is by employing good learning strategies (Rubin, 1975; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Stern, 1975). Employing learning strategies when using AMs for lower-level EFL learners are believed to be a good strategy for preventing this problem.

Another disadvantage of AMs is that since AMs are not designed for language learning purposes, then EFL learners of different levels are not able to understand and catch meaning of AMs which are not edited, rewritten, and redesigned based on EFL learners’ level or abilities (Kilickaya, 2004; Rogers, 1988; Dumitrescu, 2000; Petraglia, 1998). EFL teachers find AMs difficult to adapt or select as AMs are not rewritten and redesigned for language learning purpose. Fortunately, teachers can adapt AMs based on the levels of EFL learners (Westwood, 2005; Deschenes, Ebeling, & Sprague, 1999; Lovitt & Horton, 1994). Adapting and rewriting AMs mean that teachers are able to select appropriate AMs and adjust AMs for a purpose of EFL
classrooms. For Lower-level EFL learners, it will be easier to understand AMs if the materials are adapted. Therefore, these problems can be overcome.

3. The Present Study

3.1 Methodology

This study focused on exploring Indonesian EFL learners’ point of views, experiences, and suggestions towards the use of AMs in learning English skills which include listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The study was exploratory and took place in Islamic State College of Kerinci (STAIN Kerinci) in order to gather detailed information concerning the use of AMs qualitatively. The researcher, in exploring the learners’ perceptions, sought to study their entire experiences on utilizing the AMs. To get the clear, detailed data, the exploration on their “thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptive worlds” (Marshals & Rossmans, 1999, p.57) towards the utilization of AMs was done accurately. Having gathered the information, an interpretive analysis of the learners’ perceptions was used in order to discuss their views, experiences, and suggestions towards the AMs.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the study were seven EFL learners at Islamic State College of Kerinci (STAIN Kerinci), who were selected through a purposeful sampling. This kind of sampling was used, because through the qualitative sampling technique, “a researcher selects individuals or groups to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2012, p.206) and “the groups or individuals are information rich” (Patton, 1990, p.169). The participants of the study studied English subjects such as Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing, Sociolinguistics, Pronunciation Practice, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The learners were believed to be highly active in finding out the effectiveness of using AMs for learning English. They were using both print and online AMs as sources of learning for four years. Therefore, they had more experiences on the use of AMs for their learning sources. They were also believed to have utilized the AMs for learning the English subjects. In line with this study, the participants were expected groups for gathering information on the use of AMs in EFL classrooms.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

In order to gather more detailed information, semi-structured interviews were employed as the instrument of this exploratory study. The reasons for choosing the interview were two folds. First, it gave the participants a chance to think of answer deeply as it was not static on one type of question only. Second, the interviewer was able to explore the participants’ answers to other possible responses or explanations. This enabled the interviewer in collecting detailed, specific data on the use of AMs in EFL contexts. The semi-structured interviews were administered through focus-groups interviews. Creswell (2012) states that “Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other” (p, 218). In this study, the selected participants were asked to answer several questions related to their views, experiences, and suggestions on the use of AMs at STAIN Kerinci, Indonesia. Such number of learners were optimal and normal as Creswell noted that the number of interviewees in a focus-group is “typically from four to six interviewees” (p, 218). In this case, the
researcher selected 7 learners as the interviewees because more responses yielded in a variety in possible answers. The analysis became more comprehensive when more possibilities of responses were employed.

4. Data Analysis, Findings and Discussions

In analyzing the data of the study, the researcher used content analysis approach. The reason of using such type of data analysis was that it enabled some interpretation of personal experiences (Smith, 1995). Smith also states that content analysis is also used for exploratory research. Content analysis is a technique for explaining what verbal materials contain in details (Stone, Dunphy, Smith, & Ogilve, 1966; Holsti, 1969). In analyzing the contents of qualitative data, the researcher used interpretation by thinking of an object deeply, making sense of data, and describing major concepts of the phenomenon based on personal views, comparisons with past studies, or both (Wolcott, 1983; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tierney, 1993; Creswell, 2012).

The data of the study, in forms of interview results on the use of AMs, were categorized and then analyzed based on what the participants have responded during the interview. The analysis was accomplished by views of related references or previous studies in order to meet a qualified analysis on the data. The data analyzed were grouped into three points namely, views, experiences, and suggestions of the learners studying at STAIN Kerinci towards the use of AMs in their EFL classrooms.

4.1 Findings

The findings of the study are divided into the following parts: the kinds of AMs preferable to Indonesian EFL learners at STAIN Kerinci; and, the advantages and disadvantages of AMs among Indonesian EFL learners at STAIN Kerinci. Each part is followed by an analysis which focuses on the content of the interview results on the use of AMs among Indonesian EFL learners at STAIN Kerinci.

4.1.1 Kinds of AMs preferable to Indonesian EFL learners

Based on the results of the interviews, each participant (P) tended to choose different types of AMs for different subjects or courses. P1 responded:

“I like many kinds of authentic materials when I study many classes at campus. From all kinds of the materials, I do prefer BBC news, CNN, and VOA for listening class. For speaking class, those sources of materials are also possible. That is because we can study listening integrated with speaking. I like an integrated learning since I think it is enjoyable, especially if we listen to online radio stations. I want to say that I always like online broadcasts”.

Based on the interview results, the kinds of AMs that P1 preferred were categorized into those used for listening, speaking, and integrated ones. For listening and speaking skills, the preferable AMs were BBC news, CNN channel, and VOA. These radio stations were used as media for improving listening skill. Besides, the stations can also improve speaking as the listener retells some topic or main idea of what is broadcasted. CNN channel, as one of the news channels, provides both pictures and voices. It is another kind of AMs that P1 preferred. Both TV channel and online radio stations are used for an integrated learning.

P2 had another opinion about the kinds of AMs he preferred

“As I began thinking about reading, I used to read anything beside me. Now, when I am about read something, it must be English magazines and newspapers. I read them one by one every month, find the points of the articles, and finally write the summary. Those steps are what I usually do every month. I have lots of articles collected from English newspapers and magazines. Beside reading them, I also listen to English news on TV channels such as CNN, NHK world, and Al Jazeera. I
always do that thing all the time because it really helps”.

The most preferable AMs that P2 preferred were English magazines and newspapers. P2 used both print and online materials for the learning of reading skill. The reading, which is done every month, is done by finding out the main ideas of each article of the materials. Since that was P2’s hobby, P2 collected the materials that have been read. Besides, reading is not the only skill that P2 was used to doing, but P2 also listened to English news on TV channels such as CNN, NHK world, and Al Jazeera. These AMs are all broadcasted in English.

P3’s views were not much different from P1’s:

“In my mind, learning sources taken from the internet are really helpful. What I like to use for my sources is some sort of materials from internet such as BBC news and VOA. They are good for me to listen. I do not only listen to the stations, but I also read some articles from the internet and write some important points from each article I read”.

P3’s preferences for AMs were not different from P1’s. P3 preferred the internet from which P3 can browse and listen to online BBC news and online VOA news. The focused skill was not only limited on listening, but also reading and writing. P3 browsed and read some articles from the internet. P3 also wrote main ideas from the articles read.

P4 had another views:

“I do not want to say that I am a diligent learner, but I always browse academic websites and download more books and journals. That is not a mere hobby, but I read them every time. I want to be honest that I do prefer books and journals from the internet. They are really up-to-date materials. I can find the newest today, and I can probably other newest ones the next days. I read them and figure out what the books and articles are about. I do not feel bored to do it”.

The kinds of AMs that P4 preferred were the internet-mediated materials such as books and journals. It can be said that the skill focused is reading. The materials were browsed and downloaded from some academic websites such as international journals’ websites, educational organization websites, and university websites. One of the reasons given by P4 was that these AMs were up-to-date.

P5 also had different views:

“My hobby is chatting on the internet. I do not only chat with my friends from Indonesia, but also those from other countries whose languages are English. Some of my friends are not native speakers, but they do master good English as I expect. In doing this, I catch some point. One of the points is that I can improve my written English and my grammar as I continue chatting with foreigners. Well, I might not like reading, but at least I can read what I see during the chatting time. I can learn how to read and understand the sentences”.

P5 preferred online chat as the AMs with the aim of improving speaking, reading, grammar, and writing abilities. Chatting with native speakers or foreign acquaintances forced P5 to use English. P5 did not chat without reason. Both native speakers and non-native speakers have good English. That is why P5 preferred such online materials.

P6 gave different opinion:

“I prefer reading articles either taken from the internet or print articles. The articles I prefer are about soccer and health. When I open the internet, I prefer reading English news on soccer. I also listen to English songs. I prefer slow-rock songs. They are really enjoyable”.

The kinds of AMs P6 preferred were both internet-mediated materials and print materials. The articles preferred were those related to soccer and health. Besides, P6 listened to English songs. So, the focused abilities P6 preferred were reading, listening, and vocabulary.

P7 responded that:

“Listening to music is my hobby. I listen to English songs before sleeping and in my relaxed time. I also like watching English movies, especially those with British accent such as Harry Potter, Lords of
the Rings, Pirates of the Caribbean, and Hobbits. I do not only like the plots of the movies, but also the way they speak using the accent. Beside watching the movies, I also read their English-version books. I think I just want to learn English through that way”.

The kinds of AMs P7 preferred were internet-mediated materials, audio-visual materials and print materials. The materials taken from the internet were English songs and books. P7 also watched British movies such as Harry Potter, Lords of the Rings, Pirates of the Caribbean, and Hobbits. So, the focused skills P7 preferred were listening, reading, speaking, and pronunciation.

The interview results above show that the participants preferred different AMs for learning English. Each kind of AMs consists of various forms such audio, visual, audio visual, and print. The skills or abilities such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation follow the kinds of AMs that the participants preferred. The following table presents the summary of the kinds of AMs used by EFL learners at STAIN Kerinci, Indonesia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Kinds of AMs</th>
<th>Sources (Examples)</th>
<th>Skills or Abilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Internet-mediated AMs</td>
<td>Radio stations (BBC news, VOA news), ebooks, online newspapers, online journals, online magazines</td>
<td>Listening, reading, speaking, writing, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Print AMs</td>
<td>Books, newspapers, journals, magazines</td>
<td>Reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Audio-visual (video) AMs</td>
<td>English movies (Harry Potter, Lords of the Rings, Pirates of the Caribbean, Hobbits), English news (CNN, NHK world, Al jazeera)</td>
<td>Listening, pronunciation, speaking, writing, grammar, vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Audio AMs</td>
<td>English songs (slow-rock songs)</td>
<td>Listening, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, writing, pronunciation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the four kinds of AMs that were preferable to EFL learners at STAIN Kerinci, Indonesia, namely, internet-mediated AMs, print AMs, audio-visual AMs, and audio AMs. The sources of AMs, together with several examples of the materials, are qualitatively adapted from the participants whose choices of AMs were different one another. Some participants preferred listening to online radio stations such as BBC news, while the others preferred listening and watching English movies or English songs. There were also participants whose hobbies were reading books or journals from the internet, while the others preferred the print ones. Such differences are contextual since each participant used the preferable materials for different purposes of learning English skills.

4.1.2 Advantages and disadvantages of AMs for Indonesian EFL learners

The interview was also conducted in order to get response to the question- “What are the advantages and disadvantages of AMs for Indonesian EFL learners?”. To this, the following responses were obtained.
P1 had the experience, opinion, and suggestion who responded that:

“The AMs are both good and bad materials for me in learning English. Even though I love listening to online news in the internet, I still face many problems related to the materials until now. The first problem is that I cannot understand any topic discussed as I listen to the news. I think they sometimes talk about particular areas, habits, cultures, and discoveries that I have never heard before. The second problem is that it takes a long
time to listen to the news since they are too long or even continued. Fortunately, listening to the stations and channel give me special advantages. I was not able to pronounce English words correctly years before, but now I am like a native. I do pronounce words correctly and I enjoy doing it. I have been using English like a native speaker since I can speak very well. My suggestion is listening to English news should be continued”.

P1 believed that online AMs have disadvantages. The topics broadcasted or discussed were sometimes difficult to understand as the speakers were talking about a specific place or habit which are not the participant’s cultures. Another problem was that the length of the time needed for listening to the news was unlimited. It means that the news does not have the end.

P1 asserted that online AMs have advantages also. The AMs motivated P1 to practice pronouncing English words every time until P1 became successful or could pronounce the words correctly. P1 was also motivated to practice speaking skill like the native speakers. P1 was able to use good English as is expected. So, according to P1, online news should always be the materials for learning English.

P2 replied that:

“For me, all kinds of AMs have both advantages and disadvantages. For example, books, articles either from the internet or the print ones and movies or news contain natural English and native cultures that can be the right sources for us to study the real English and cultures that follow. The disadvantage of AMs is that it probably wastes time to select one of those that fit with our lesson or course.”

P2 thought that the advantages of using AMs for learning English are two folds. One of the advantages is that AMs present real, natural English which is suitable and appropriate for learning English. Besides, the cultures including the way the express ideas or talk about a topic are good for enhancing EFL learners’ knowledge. However, AMs are disadvantageous also since AMs are not designed for language teaching. It causes difficulties to select appropriate ones for EFL classroom.

P3 stated that:

“I think by using AMs in EFL classroom, we can learn English like native speakers. This is also like acquiring English in an English country. It is so natural. However, using AMs might be hard task for us since the structures are complex and the diction is not a simple one”.

According to P3, the advantage of AMs is that the materials contain natural English that helps EFL learners not only in learning English, but also in acquiring it if the learners are in an English speaking country in which language is naturally acquired. The disadvantage of AMs is that the materials contain complex sentence structures and choices of words.

P4 had different views on this:

“Based on my experience in using AMs such books and journals from the internet, I believe that I have been motivated to improve my English. That is because using AMs is like learning English directly from real sources. I do not have to study basic grammar or memorize words, but I just read and get a point out of everything I read. I find my English skills are increasing days to days. I do not really figure out any bad sides of AMs so far except the level of signals. My suggestion for this is teachers should provide various kinds of AMs such as news podcasts or English movies because I find myself difficult to access such sources”.

P4 focused on the use AMs from the internet. According to P4, the advantage of AMs is that the materials directed P4 to get a gist out of the articles or books read. Reading and figuring out main ideas and details increased P4’s knowledge in using grammar and vocabulary. Due to the use of real English, P4 thought that AMs are appropriate sources for learning. P4 does not exactly think that AMs are disadvantageous. The problem of signal quality is technical that teachers probably have another solution.

In the opinions of P5:

“Online materials motivate me to learn better English. I am now able to use good English like
other speakers or non-native speakers. I just find it easy to learn English through online materials because I can get more stuff such as the way of expressing opinions, asking questions, complaining, inviting, and so on. I can also learn how to understand written speech. They are very challenging for me. I think AMs are cultural-based. I cannot understand each idea talked and I do not want to know all cultures because they are perhaps unacceptable to ours. A good strategy for using AMs is teachers should select them carefully.

P5 benefitted from certain advantages from AMs. One of them is that by using AMs, P5 was motivated to learn English and in improving English communication skills such as how to express ideas, asking questions, etc. Online chat, as an example of AMs, enabled P5 to learn grammar, reading, and writing. Moreover, P5 learnt how to understand written speech. The disadvantage of AMs is that some contents are cultural-based and some cultures do not fit with P5’s cultures. Teachers are expected to select appropriate AMs which could be used for learning and are not contrary to cultures.

P6 had another views:

“M y point in using AMs is that I can learn English the way good learners learn. The good learners usually use AMs for learning English because AMs have good contents such as vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. The disadvantage is that it takes time to understand the materials. So, what I want to say is teachers’ guidance is really expected to help us using AMs.”

P6 believed that the use of AMs reflects the way good language learners learn English. AMs provide native vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation for which good language learners expect. In order to recognize the contents of AMs, P6 believed that time needed was too long. So, teachers have to participate in each activity in which AMs are used.

P7 believed that online AMs are advantageous as the materials are always published in latest versions and forms. English movies and songs were also advantageous for P7 because P7 could learn English like native speakers through the materials. The disadvantage of AMs is that the availability of AMs can be a problem.

Based on the interview results above, it can be concluded that there advantages and disadvantages of using AMs in EFL classrooms. The participants also give their suggestions on using the materials. These can be best summarized in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Kinds of AMs</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Internet-mediated AMs</td>
<td>- Improvement in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar&lt;br&gt;- Improvement in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills&lt;br&gt;- Knowledge on native cultures&lt;br&gt;- Up to date&lt;br&gt;- Easy to access</td>
<td>- Not intended for EFL learners&lt;br&gt;- No version for different level of EFL learners&lt;br&gt;- The length of materials&lt;br&gt;- Time-consuming tracks&lt;br&gt;- Unavailability of guidance&lt;br&gt;- Different cultures&lt;br&gt;- Problem on internet signals</td>
<td>- Careful selection&lt;br&gt;- Teachers’ guidance&lt;br&gt;- Adapted materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Print AMs</td>
<td>- Improvement in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar</td>
<td>- Not intended for EFL learners</td>
<td>- Careful selection&lt;br&gt;- Teachers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio-visual AMs</td>
<td>Improvement in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar</td>
<td>Not intended for EFL learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement in listening, speaking, and writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge on native cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Careful selection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adapted materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio AMs</td>
<td>Improvement in listening, speaking skills</td>
<td>Time-consuming tracks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary</td>
<td>Mostly presented in long versions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge on native cultures</td>
<td>Different cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Careful selection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers’ guidance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adapted materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 2 above shows that there are advantages, disadvantages, and strategies towards the utilization of AMs among EFL learners at STAIN Kerinci, Indonesia. Each kind of materials has similar or different advantages, disadvantages, or strategies for using them. The advantages of AMs are mostly related with the improvement in listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation abilities. Besides, knowledge on native cultures is also an advantage. The disadvantages of AMs are related to the versions of AMs available either in internet, print, audio-visual, or audio forms. The versions are not designed for EFL learners unless the learners use them for learning English. Different cultures are also a problem since the participants’ cultures may be different from the natives. Another problem, a technical one, is on the quality of signals. The strategies of the problems are selecting AMs carefully and appropriately, adapting the materials, and providing guidance for each materials used.

4.2 Discussion

The utilization of AMs among EFL learners at STAIN Kerinci, Indonesia has been developed through the use of several kinds of AMs. Each kind has advantages, disadvantages, and solutions towards the problems. Even though AMs are designed in long formats and can be really difficult for EFL learners to comprehend (Rogers, 1988; Lund, 1990), the problem is described along with the advantages and strategies of utilizing AMs in EFL classrooms. AMs are created for public use such as news, entertainment, games, talk show, experience, etc. Each material has communicative contents through which English abilities are trained. The use of AMs is useful for increasing EFL learners’ ability in English since the materials are communicative in purpose (Hwang, 2005; Filice & Sturino, 2002). Communicative purposes enhance EFL learners’ abilities in using English either for listening, reading, writing, or speaking. Abilities in grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation are no exception. In order to get the abilities improved, EFL learners are to use different kinds of AMs such as internet-mediated

materials, print materials, audio-visual materials, and audio materials.

Internet-mediated AMs are appropriate and interesting materials for ESL/EFL classrooms (Miller, 2003). One reason to prove this is that the materials enable learners to access communication sources in order to improve their English language abilities and enhance their motivation to learn English (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Szendeffy, 2005; Blake, 1997; Lafer, 1997; Hare, 1998). The materials from the internet are presented in various versions; EFL learners can find past, new, or even the newest issues or materials.

There are various materials taken from the internet such as e-books, journals, newspapers, online broadcasts, and podcasts. Each kind can be easily found, browsed, downloaded in the internet. One of them is podcast. The availability of online audio materials or podcasts on the internet has given valuable opportunities for EFL learners to access global listening, new language, and different voices or accents along with the reading of transcripts available (Constantine, 2005). The importance of using transcripts in listening skill has been promoted (Lynch, 2007; Constantine, 2005). A good way to utilize internet-mediated materials such as podcasts is by providing transcripts that can make an integrated learning.

EFL learners are enthusiastic to use the oral texts in learning English. Authentic oral texts show that EFL learners as listeners achieve positive results when they are tested by using the materials (Shrum & Glisan, 1999). A study proved that EFL learners whose learning used authentic radio tapes showed significant improvement in listening skill compared to those whose learning did not use the materials (Herron & Seay, 1991). Video materials such as Television can be used for helping learners in improving their pronunciation and intonation (Manning, 1988) and for teaching native speakers’ cultures in natural way (Saito, 1994; Bacon, 1992; Nostrand, 1989; Herron & Seay, 1991). Movies as video materials are helpful for EFL learners since the materials provide sound effects, pictures, and emotion that reflect real input (Wood, 1999).

The use of audio and video materials either via online or offline access in EFL classrooms may vary depending on teachers’ choices. There are several principles to follow when the materials are used. The first principle is to setting a goal of learning materials through which teachers write a purpose of teaching and learning that can be exploited (Jacobson et.al, 2003; Nuttall, 1996; Brown, 2001; Berardo, 2006) and make a context out of a task that will be achieved either for a short-term period or a long-term one. The second principle is that since audio and video materials are designed for native speakers, the languages and contexts used must be based on the native speakers’ cultures which are difficult for most EFL learners. In this case, teachers should pay attention on the language level of each material (Jacobson et.al. 2003; Kelly et.al, 2003). Both audio and video materials should be adjusted based on EFL learners’ abilities. In doing this, explanation and tutorials throughout doing tasks are necessary. The teachers’ intervention is needed for determining input quality (Rost, 2007). The third principle is that the tasks must be achievable or must not be too difficult for the learners to accomplish. The fourth principle is that EFL learners are involved in guessing meaning and predicting what is happening or what will happen inside the audio and video materials.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the utilization of preferred AMs for learning English at STAIN Kerinci, Indonesia varies depending on learning goals and EFL learners’ interests. AMs are advantageous for EFL learners whose goal is to improve English abilities. However, AMs are also disadvantageous that the materials are specific and have higher difficulties for EFL learners. Though there are certain problems while using various materials which are helpful for EFL classrooms, the solution of the problems can be found by the teachers and learners by using AMs as main sources of materials. Wise and tactful EFL teachers and learners can accomplish every task and materials provided. Therefore, both teachers and learners have their own roles in the classrooms. Based on the roles on utilizing AMs, an important point to note as the conclusion of this paper is that EFL teachers should provide various kinds of AMs in EFL classrooms and ensure that all EFL learners are able to utilize the materials for their needs.

The study has certain limitations also which need to be acknowledged. This study was limited on describing the views, experiences, and suggestions of Indonesian EFL learners studying at STAIN Kerinci towards the utilization of AMs in EFL classrooms. Therefore, the researcher focused only on that topic because of two reasons. First, the limited topic enabled the researcher to explore the findings more deeply and appropriately. Second, it enabled the analysis to be more accurate and the interpretation to be more comprehensive.

However, the study has its own significance and can make certainly make a noticeable contribution in the research field investigated in the context on Indonesia. The results of this study are useful for: 1) stakeholders in Indonesia, to provide the use of AMs for EFL curriculum; 2) learners, to select and use the appropriate AMs based on needs, importance, and purpose; 3) other researcher, to conduct similar or other studies on AMs; and 4) readers, to use the results of the study in increasing knowledge on the use of AMs in EFL classrooms; and 5) teachers, to select, provide, and use appropriate AMs as main sources of EFL classrooms.

About the Author:
Heri Mudra is a faculty member at Islamic State College of Kerinci (STAIN Kerinci), Indonesia. He holds an M. Ed (Master of Education) degree in TESOL from State University of Padang (UNP), Indonesia. His research interests include: ELT methods, learning strategies, teaching English with technology, and Classroom Action Research (CAR).

Works Cited


Kelly, C., Kelly, L., Offner, M., & Vorland, B. (2002). Effective ways to use authentic materials with ESL/EFL students. The Internet TESL Journal, 8(11), 1-5.


Petrakia, J. (1998). The real world on a short leash: the (mis)application of constructivism to the design of
**Rubin, J.** (1975). What the “Good Language Learner” can teach us. TESOL Quarterly, 9(1), 41-45.
**Vigil, V.** (1987). Authentic texts in the college-level Spanish I class as the primary vehicle of instruction. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin.