Optimizing Reading Comprehension through Authentic Texts to Seventh-Grade Learners

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Abstract: Reading comprehension is a vital component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, yet Indonesian junior high school students often struggle due to limited exposure to authentic language use. Traditional textbooks, while aligned with curriculum standards, frequently lack contextual richness, reducing engagement and comprehension. Although previous research underscores the benefits of authentic materials, most studies emphasize digital resources or quantitative outcomes, with little exploration of classroom processes in rural, and resource-limited contexts. This study investigated the impact of printed authentic texts specifically brochures and restaurant menus on the reading comprehension of seventh-grade students in Ciamis, Indonesia, and examined the strategies and challenges in their implementation. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving one English teacher and six students of varying proficiency levels. Thematic analysis revealed that authentic texts enhanced engagement, contextualized vocabulary learning, and encouraged collaborative meaning-making. Challenges included unfamiliar vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, varying proficiency levels, and time constraints, which required scaffolding strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary, segmenting texts, using visual aids, and fostering peer support. The findings suggest that printed authentic materials, when culturally and linguistically adapted and paired with effective instructional scaffolding, can significantly improve reading comprehension and motivation, making them a valuable tool for student-centered EFL instruction in similar educational contexts.

Keywords: *authentic texts; reading comprehension; EFL; junior high school; qualitative case study.*

INTRODUCTION

English has progressively evolved into the most widely used international language, functioning as a crucial medium for global communication, economic transactions, academic discourse, and digital engagement (Crystal, 2019; Jenkins, 2015). In the twenty-first century, its role as a lingua franca has become increasingly pronounced, influencing cross-cultural interactions, professional collaboration, and access to scientific knowledge (Graddol, 2022; Seidlhofer, 2018). Consequently, English proficiency has emerged as a core skill for individuals seeking to participate fully in the interconnected global community, including in countries where it is taught as a foreign language such as Indonesia (Hamied, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2020). Achieving proficiency requires mastery of the four core language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing each of which plays a distinctive role in enabling learners to communicate effectively (Nation, 2019). Among these, reading holds a particularly central place because it functions both as a fundamental linguistic skill and as a gateway to advanced cognitive processes, such as critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving (Ahmed & Farooq, 2023; Rohayati, 2026; Rohayati et al., 2022; Rohayati, & Kosasih, 2023; Smith et al., 2021).

Reading comprehension is more than the mere decoding of printed symbols into spoken words. It involves a complex interplay between recognizing lexical forms, interpreting syntactic structures, activating prior knowledge, and constructing meaning within a given context. Effective comprehension requires readers to integrate new information with what they already know, to draw inferences beyond the literal meaning, and to evaluate the reliability, relevance, and implications of the text. In the Indonesian educational context, the development of strong reading comprehension skills has taken on renewed urgency due to the nation's increasing integration into the global economy and the rapid flow of information in the digital era (Suryanto & Widodo, 2019). However, despite significant curriculum reforms, national and international assessments suggest that many Indonesian students still struggle to achieve proficient reading levels. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the OECD (2018) revealed that Indonesia's reading literacy scores were below the international average, with students encountering difficulties in locating information, interpreting meaning, and making evaluative judgments (Yapp et al., 2021).

Persistent challenges in reading achievement have been attributed to a combination of systemic, pedagogical, and resource-related factors. One of the most frequently cited issues is the continued reliance on traditional textbook-based instruction in the classroom (Widodo, 2016). While textbooks are designed to align with national curriculum standards and are often adapted to match learners' proficiency levels, they typically rely on simplified and decontextualized texts. These materials, although pedagogically convenient, often lack the diversity, richness, and cultural authenticity found in real-world language. As Widianti, Rifa'i, and Herlina (2021) observe, such artificial materials tend to limit students' exposure to natural syntax, idiomatic expressions, and varied vocabulary, which in turn restricts opportunities for meaningful engagement with authentic communication. Furthermore, textbook content is frequently repetitive, culturally neutral, or detached from students' lived experiences, making it harder for learners to form personal connections with the material (Masuhara, Mishan, & Tomlinson, 2017). This disconnection can lower student motivation and diminish their willingness to actively participate in reading tasks.

In contrast, authentic texts materials originally created for genuine communicative purposes and intended for native speakers offer a more dynamic and contextually rich alternative (Namaziandost et al., 2022; Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024). Examples of such materials include

brochures, advertisements, restaurant menus, newspapers, travel guides, and other real-life print or digital resources. Unlike adapted texts, authentic materials present language in its natural form, reflecting the complexity, variability, and cultural nuances of real-world communication. They introduce learners to genuine discourse patterns, idiomatic phrases, and lexical diversity that cannot be easily replicated in artificially simplified materials. By engaging with authentic texts, learners not only enhance their linguistic competence but also develop cultural literacy, gaining insights into the social and pragmatic norms of the target language community.

A growing body of empirical research supports the integration of authentic materials into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction as a means to increase learner motivation, improve comprehension, and foster communicative competence (Ahmed & Farooq, 2023; Ilahi et al., 2024). Exposure to real-world language use allows learners to perceive classroom activities as more relevant and meaningful, thereby strengthening their intrinsic motivation (Li & Wang, 2023; Kuru Gönen & Zeybek, 2022). When students recognize that the skills and vocabulary they acquire in class can be directly applied to everyday situations such as reading a restaurant menu, interpreting a bus timetable, or navigating a tourist brochure, they are more likely to invest sustained effort in the learning process. In addition, authentic materials create opportunities for functional language use, requiring students to process information, make decisions, and produce responses in ways that closely mirror actual communicative situations.

However, the successful use of authentic materials depends heavily on pedagogical mediation and instructional scaffolding. Abi and Kömür (2018) emphasize that without appropriate guidance—such as pre-teaching essential vocabulary, structuring comprehension activities, and providing visual or contextual aids learners may struggle with the unfamiliar linguistic and cultural content often present in authentic texts. Banditvilai (2020) further argues that explicit instruction in reading strategies, including skimming, scanning, and inferencing, is essential for enabling learners to navigate challenging materials with confidence. These strategies help students focus on meaning-making rather than becoming overwhelmed by unfamiliar vocabulary or complex grammatical structures.

From a theoretical standpoint, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory offers valuable insights into the role of authentic materials in language learning. This framework emphasizes that learning is socially mediated and that cultural tools such as texts serve as mediators of cognitive development. By operating within the learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), teachers can provide scaffolding that enables students to engage with materials beyond their independent capabilities (Lasmawan & Budiarta, 2020). In this way, authentic texts become not just sources of language input but also instruments for collaborative meaning-making and cognitive growth.

Several previous studies shown the beneficial value of authentic texts in improving reading comprehension. Namaziandost et al. (2022) found that authentic resources heighten learners' motivation and reduce the affective barriers often associated with language learning. As Widianti et al. (2021) note, authentic resources can be perplexing for learners because it is produced for native or fluent speakers and therefore often contain idiomatic expressions, cultural references. However, Kuru Gönen and Zeybek (2022) emphasize that the impact of the authentic resources usage depends on the teacher's ability to adapt them to the learners' needs; thus careful instructional planning is needed to ensure objectives that are met within limited classroom periods (Ilahi et al., 2024). Rossi and Brunfaut (2021) have reported that task authenticity is as important as text authenticity in enabling the transfer of skills from classroom to real-world contexts. It is supported by Mitrulescu and Negoescu (2024) who argue that authentic resources accelerate learners' language acquisition if learners are exposed to realistic linguistic forms with the condition that they are carefully matched to learners' proficiency levels and cultural familiarity.

Despite the documented benefits, the current body of research on authentic materials reveals important gaps. Much of the existing scholarship concentrates on digital resources such as online news, blogs, and multimedia platforms, which are readily available in urban schools but less practical in rural or low-technology environments (Støle et al., 2020). Moreover, many studies adopt quantitative designs that measure performance outcomes, such as test scores, but fail to investigate the qualitative processes and learner experiences that contribute to these results (Creswell & Poth, 2023). This leaves a limited understanding of how authentic materials are implemented in diverse classroom contexts and how students interact with them on a day-to-day basis.

Another underexplored area is the differential impact of authentic materials on learners with varying proficiency levels. High-achieving students often adapt quickly to the complexity and lexical richness of authentic texts, while lower-proficiency learners may feel discouraged or overwhelmed without targeted support. Elleman (2017) underscores that skills such as inferential comprehension crucial for interpreting authentic materials develop unevenly and require explicit, sustained instruction. Without differentiated teaching approaches, authentic materials may inadvertently widen the gap between stronger and weaker students. In addition, affective factors such as enjoyment, confidence, and anxiety reduction remain insufficiently researched (Liu & Chan, 2023; Rossi & Brunfaut, 2021), despite their strong influence on student engagement and persistence in reading activities.

Teachers are central to bridging these gaps. They are responsible for selecting suitable authentic texts, adapting them to match student needs, and designing learning activities that maximize comprehension and engagement. Anggrayani (2015) highlights the creativity and contextual awareness required for teachers to transform everyday materials into effective teaching resources.. Namaziandost et al. (2022) also note that teacher mediation can help reduce anxiety and sustain learner interest, even when materials are linguistically challenging. In contrast to the previous studies aforementioned, it is worth conducting to carry out the study which adopts a qualitative case study approach to examine how printed authentic materials, specifically brochures and menus, affect reading comprehension among junior high school students in Ciamis, Indonesia. Mainly, the study seeks to capture both learning outcomes and the processes, interactions, and perceptions that accompany authentic text use in the classroom.

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach because it seeks to explore and interpret the meanings individuals or groups assign to a social or human issue (Creswell and Poth, 2023) and facilitate a systematic examination of complex educational contexts, revealing nuances that quantitative approaches may overlook (Mayring , 2021). The case study strategy was chosen as it allows for an in-depth investigation of a bounded system over time, drawing upon multiple sources of evidence to provide a comprehensive account (Naeem et al., 2023). In this study, the case examined was the use of authentic materials in a seventh-grade English classroom at a junior high school in Ciamis during the 2024/2025 academic year, with the aim of examining both the classroom dynamics and the reactions of the teacher and students to authentic text integration for enhancing reading comprehension.

The research was conducted at a public junior high school in Ciamis Regency, West Java, Indonesia. This sampling method was used to ensure that participants were directly relevant to the research aims and could provide rich, detailed data (Munn et al., 2020). Participant selection was carried out with assistance from the teacher, who based her recommendations on students' reading

performance and prior classroom observations, a process consistent with Natow's (2019) emphasis on targeted participant selection in qualitative research.

Data collection took place between May and June 2025, employing three main instruments: classroom observation, interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted during two separate lessons and followed a non-participant format, meaning the researcher did not interfere with the teaching process but instead documented and analyzed what occurred (Morgan, 2022). An observation checklist was prepared in line with the lesson plan and learning objectives, containing categories such as the integration of authentic materials, student participation, vocabulary acquisition, interaction patterns, instructional techniques, and learner responses. To ensure thorough documentation, the sessions were also video recorded using a smartphone, allowing for the capture of subtle interactions and accurate review during analysis.

The authentic texts chosen for the lessons consisted of printed brochures and English-language restaurant menus. These materials were selected for their everyday relevance to students' lives and their potential to enrich vocabulary in meaningful contexts (Ilahi et al., 2024; Mitrulescu & Negoescu, 2024). The teacher used these resources to conduct guided reading sessions, pronunciation drills, and vocabulary-building exercises. Students were tasked with reading the texts, identifying key words, matching images to terms, and answering comprehension questions based on the material.

Following semi-structured interviews, observation were held with the teacher and the six selected students. As Naeem et al. (2023) point out, semi-structured interviews balance flexibility with focus, enabling participants to share detailed narratives while ensuring key themes are addressed. Another primary data is document analysis which was also carried out to complement and cross-verify the findings from observations and interviews. The documents reviewed included completed worksheets, vocabulary-matching exercises, comprehension responses, and notes or reflections produced during and after lessons. The analysis sought evidence of comprehension, including accurate vocabulary use, contextual interpretation, information retention, and inferential reasoning. Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as a structured process for examining documents to derive empirical understanding and generate meaning. Similarly, Morgan (2022) and Mayring (2021) emphasize that evaluating written artifacts can reveal aspects of learning outcomes not fully evident through observation or verbal reports.

All data gathered observation records, interview transcripts, and analyzed documents were triangulated to enhance the study's credibility and validity (Natow, 2019). Thematic analysis was applied, generating codes from the collected data, which were then organized into overarching themes such as "student motivation," "instructional strategies," "vocabulary development," and "reading challenges." These themes were examined in direct relation to the research questions. As Naeem et al. (2023) highlight, combining triangulation with thematic analysis strengthens the trustworthiness of qualitative findings by corroborating results across multiple sources. Throughout the research process, reflective practices were maintained to monitor potential biases and ensure methodological transparency, in line with Munn et al.'s (2020) recommendations for rigor in qualitative case studies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered through classroom observations, teacher and student interviews, and document analysis were systematically examined to address the study's two guiding research questions. The first question investigated the effect of authentic texts on the reading comprehension skills of seventh-grade learners. The second question explored the instructional strategies employed

and the challenges encountered in integrating these texts into classroom practice. The presentation of findings follows these two focal areas, supported by direct observational evidence and participant perspectives are elaborated in the following organization:

The effect of authentic texts on the reading comprehension skills of seventh-grade learners.

During the classroom observation phase, the researcher employed a smartphone camera and a detailed observation checklist to ensure comprehensive and precise data collection. The primary focus was to examine how authentic printed materials specifically brochures and restaurant menus were incorporated into English reading comprehension lessons. The two observed sessions were held in a public junior high school in Ciamis and followed a structured instructional sequence. Lessons began with a warm greeting and a brief review of prior content before introducing the day's authentic material. The brochures featured vivid images, while the menus displayed realistic dish names and prices, both selected to stimulate curiosity and interest among students.

From the moment these materials were presented, there was a marked increase in student engagement. Learners leaned in to examine the images, exchanged quiet remarks with peers, and actively posed questions. Several students immediately connected the content to their own experiences, such as visiting tourist destinations or ordering food at a restaurant. This fostered an animated and interactive classroom environment. The teacher facilitated this process by highlighting specific vocabulary, encouraging students to predict meanings, and prompting them to construct sentences using new words. Reading aloud was also integrated, enabling the teacher to assess pronunciation, support fluency, and reinforce comprehension through repetition.

Differences in learners' reading proficiency became evident throughout these activities. High-achieving students quickly identified main ideas and could rephrase parts of the text in their own words. They demonstrated the ability to infer meanings of unfamiliar terms by relying on contextual clues or recalling related vocabulary encountered in the past. Conversely, students with lower proficiency often paused when faced with unfamiliar words, sometimes omitting them entirely. To support these learners, the teacher incorporated visual aids, synonyms, and repeated explanations. Stronger students were also encouraged to assist peers through paraphrasing and simple translation, a collaborative process that benefitted both groups by reinforcing comprehension for advanced learners while providing accessible support for those struggling.

Collaborative learning was a central element of instruction. Students worked in pairs or small groups to discuss paragraph meanings, answer comprehension questions, and identify essential vocabulary. This cooperative arrangement encouraged idea exchange and peer verification of understanding before sharing responses with the whole class. Accompanying worksheets served as both practice tools and assessment instruments, including matching exercises, multiple-choice items, and short reflective writing tasks linking the text to students' personal experiences.

Observation findings indicated that authentic texts had a notable positive impact on students' reading performance. By presenting materials connected to real-life contexts, the lessons became more meaningful and engaging. The combination of visual information and familiar scenarios helped learners overcome initial comprehension barriers. Nevertheless, the range of reading abilities present in the class required differentiated instruction to ensure all students could participate effectively.

The instructional strategies employed and the challenges encountered in integrating these texts into classroom practice.

The second research question was addressed through semi-structured interviews with the teacher and selected students. The teacher explained that her selection of materials was guided by their relevance to students' everyday lives, cultural appropriateness, and linguistic accessibility.

Brochures were chosen for their potential to introduce descriptive language and geographical vocabulary, while menus were selected to strengthen functional language related to food, pricing, and customer service interactions. Preparation involved identifying key vocabulary beforehand, designing prompts to activate prior knowledge, and creating both individual and group-based activities.

While the instructional benefits were clear, the teacher acknowledged several challenges. Certain texts contained dense content, complex sentence structures, or idiomatic expressions that students found difficult to interpret. Addressing these complexities often consumed more class time than anticipated. In larger classes, providing personalized support was challenging, leaving some students who required additional guidance struggling to keep pace. To mitigate these issues, the teacher segmented the material into smaller portions, developed comprehension aids, and utilized visual resources to strengthen understanding.

Student interview responses confirmed a preference for authentic texts over conventional textbook passages. Learners described the lessons as more engaging, realistic, and relatable. Many expressed increased motivation because they could envision using the language in real-world situations such as ordering meals or asking for directions. At the same time, they acknowledged that unfamiliar vocabulary and cultural references sometimes posed difficulties. Students reported that learning was most effective when the teacher clearly explained new terms, provided contextual examples, and encouraged group discussions to explore meanings collaboratively.

To maintain interest and accommodate varying learning needs, the teacher diversified the types of authentic materials and incorporated interactive activities. For example, when working with a restaurant menu, she organized a mock restaurant role-play in which students acted as customers and servers. This activity required learners to read menu items, use polite language, and respond appropriately to customer requests, reinforcing both vocabulary and speaking competencies. In another lesson using a travel brochure, students collaborated to plan a fictional trip, selecting destinations and justifying their choices to the class. Such activities bridged the gap between reading comprehension and practical language application, making learning both functional and memorable.

Discussion

The findings of this research strongly reinforce the growing consensus among scholars and practitioners that the incorporation of authentic texts into English language teaching can lead to notable improvements in both student engagement and reading comprehension. This conclusion aligns with the work of Namaziandost et al. (2022), who demonstrated that authentic resources they reflect language as it is genuinely used heighten learners' motivation and reduce the affective barriers often associated with language learning. When students encounter materials that mirror real-world communication, they are more likely to perceive English as a practical skill rather than an abstract academic subject. In the present study, the use of printed brochures and restaurant menus allowed learners to make tangible connections between classroom lessons and their daily experiences. Students responded with visible enthusiasm: they leaned forward to examine visual details, engaged in spontaneous conversations, and drew upon their personal backgrounds to interpret the texts. Such reactions confirm Smith et al.'s (2021) position that activating prior knowledge is a highly effective means of enhancing comprehension, as it allows learners to connect unfamiliar linguistic input with familiar cognitive frameworks. The teacher's deliberate selection of culturally relevant and contextually familiar materials created a bridge between abstract vocabulary and grammar and the concrete realities of students' lives in Ciamis.

In addition to increasing motivation, the lessons provided evidence that authentic texts can simultaneously develop multiple language skills. While reading comprehension remained the primary objective, students naturally engaged in speaking, listening, and writing as part of the learning process.

Group discussions and role-play activities required them to articulate their ideas verbally, listen attentively to peers, and respond appropriately, thereby reinforcing communicative competence. Comprehension worksheets and reflective writing tasks extended the learning into the written domain. In this way, the classroom became a microcosm of authentic language use, where reading was not an isolated activity but part of a broader communicative process.

However, the use of authentic materials was not without challenges. One recurrent difficulty was the high lexical density and cultural specificity of the texts. As Widianti et al. (2021) note, authentic resources are produced for native or fluent speakers and therefore often contain idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and colloquial language that can be perplexing for learners. In this study, less proficient students frequently struggled with idiomatic phrases and context-dependent terms, which occasionally led to hesitation, incorrect interpretations, or avoidance of unfamiliar vocabulary. This challenge reflects Banditvilai's (2020) findings that an excessive vocabulary load can cause cognitive overload, making it harder for learners to process and retain meaning. To address this, the teacher implemented scaffolding strategies such as pre-teaching essential vocabulary, segmenting longer texts into smaller, manageable units, and using visual aids to provide immediate context. These steps helped students gradually build understanding without feeling overwhelmed.

The variation in reading proficiency levels among students further complicated the implementation. High-achieving students were able to grasp key ideas and navigate the texts independently, while those with lower proficiency required structured, step-by-step guidance. This dynamic is well explained by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, as outlined by Lasmawan and Budiarta (2020), which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding to help learners progress beyond their current skill levels. Peer collaboration emerged as a particularly valuable tool in this setting. Advanced students were encouraged to explain concepts, translate challenging words, or paraphrase sentences for their peers. This reciprocal learning arrangement not only supported struggling students but also reinforced the knowledge of those offering assistance.

Time management proved to be another practical limitation in fully exploiting the potential of authentic materials. Compared to standard textbook exercises, lessons incorporating brochures and menus demanded more time for explanation, discussion, and consolidation. This observation aligns with Ilahi et al.'s (2024) assertion that authentic resources require careful instructional planning to ensure that objectives are met within limited classroom periods. The teacher in this study addressed this issue by selectively focusing on the most relevant portions of the text and designing targeted comprehension tasks. This approach allowed students to engage deeply with the material while avoiding unnecessary complexity or time pressure.

The teacher's role emerged as a decisive factor in the overall success of the lessons. Kuru Gönen and Zeybek (2022) emphasize that while authentic materials can be highly effective, their impact depends on the teacher's ability to adapt them to the learners' needs. In this case, the teacher's preparation extended beyond selecting the materials; she also anticipated potential difficulties, developed scaffolding techniques, and created interactive activities that encouraged active participation. Through the integration of role-plays, tangible realia, and structured group work, she ensured that students were not merely decoding text but actively constructing meaning. Such adaptability is especially critical in rural EFL contexts, where standard teaching resources may not be tailored to the diverse abilities and learning styles present in the classroom.

Interactive and communicative tasks were among the most engaging elements of the lessons. For example, the restaurant role-play required students to act out customer–server interactions using menu-based vocabulary and polite expressions. This not only reinforced comprehension of the menu text but also promoted pragmatic language skills essential for real-life communication. Rossi and Brunfaut (2021) have argued that task authenticity is as important as text authenticity in enabling the

transfer of skills from classroom to real-world contexts. Similarly, when working with travel brochures, students collaborated to plan imaginary trips, selecting destinations and explaining their choices to the class. These activities bridged the gap between receptive and productive language skills, making the learning process both meaningful and memorable.

The visual elements embedded in the authentic materials also played a crucial role in supporting comprehension. Research conducted by Støle et al. (2020) indicates that visual aids can reduce the cognitive load associated with processing new linguistic input, particularly for younger or less experienced learners. In this study, images within the brochures and menus provided immediate contextual clues, helping students infer meaning, predict content, and link new vocabulary to prior knowledge. This was particularly beneficial for visual learners, who could anchor abstract concepts in concrete visual representations.

From a methodological standpoint, the triangulation of multiple data sources enhanced the reliability of the findings. As Morgan (2022) notes, the combination of document analysis, classroom observation, and participant interviews yields a more holistic and accurate picture of the teaching–learning process. The thematic analysis framework described by Naeem et al. (2023) ensured that the coding process was systematic and that themes emerged from a comprehensive synthesis of all data sources. By cross-referencing observational notes, interview transcripts, and student work samples, the study avoided over-reliance on any single perspective and provided a balanced, evidence-based account.

In the Indonesian EFL context, where opportunities to encounter English beyond the classroom are often scarce, the use of authentic materials presents both unique opportunities and challenges. As Mitrulescu and Negoescu (2024) argue, authentic resources can significantly accelerate language acquisition by exposing learners to realistic linguistic forms, but only if they are carefully matched to learners' proficiency levels and cultural familiarity. In this case, the teacher's decision to use printed brochures and menus was particularly appropriate for a rural setting, where internet access is limited and digital resources may be less feasible. These materials were adapted to ensure cultural relevance and linguistic accessibility while maintaining enough challenge to promote learning progress.

Pedagogically, the evidence from this study supports the argument that authentic materials can form the foundation of student-centered instruction. Their effectiveness, however, depends on three interrelated factors: the contextual relevance of the materials, the quality of instructional scaffolding, and the level of learner engagement. Ilahi et al. (2024) emphasize that teacher training is essential to equip educators with the skills necessary to select, adapt, and integrate authentic resources effectively. Without such preparation, there is a risk that authentic materials will be used superficially, without fully leveraging their potential to enhance comprehension and communication.

Looking forward, the findings of this study point to several promising directions for further research. Future studies could investigate the use of digital or multimedia-based authentic texts, such as QR code-linked resources or interactive online menus, to determine whether these formats offer additional benefits in terms of engagement and accessibility. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable for assessing whether the gains in motivation and comprehension observed in the short term are sustained over longer periods. Comparative research between rural and urban schools could provide further insight into how socio-economic and infrastructural factors influence the implementation and outcomes of authentic materials.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating authentic texts, particularly brochures and restaurant menus, into EFL instruction significantly improves junior high school students' reading comprehension, engagement, and real-world language application. The approach fosters not only reading skills but also speaking, listening, and writing, creating a holistic language learning experience. Effective implementation requires careful material selection, cultural and linguistic adaptation, and sufficient scaffolding to address diverse proficiency levels. These findings advance current knowledge by highlighting how authentic materials can be systematically adapted for rural Indonesian classrooms with limited English exposure.

Looking forward, the findings of this study point to several promising directions for further research. Future studies could investigate the use of digital or multimedia-based authentic texts, such as QR code-linked resources or interactive online menus, to determine whether these formats offer additional benefits in terms of engagement and accessibility. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable for assessing whether the gains in motivation and comprehension observed in the short term are sustained over longer periods. Comparative research between rural and urban schools could provide further insight into how socio-economic and infrastructural factors influence the implementation and outcomes of authentic materials. Thus, future research should investigate long-term impacts, explore digital authentic resources, and compare outcomes across different educational contexts.

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