

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. English Learning Media

English learning media is any form of tool, material, or resource—whether printed, visual, audio, or digital—used in the English language learning process to convey messages or material in a planned manner. According to Ristyani, Nurhayati, and Husnussalam (2019), learning media serves to increase student motivation and interest, making learning more enjoyable and improving learning outcomes. This media is used to create a conducive learning environment, improve student understanding, motivate, and facilitate the achievement of learning objectives effectively and efficiently. Learning media are all types of intermediaries used during the learning process to convey information or lesson material to students. As explained by Heinich, Molenda, Russell, dan Smaldino (2005), learning media can stimulate multiple senses simultaneously, making learning more effective and engaging. Media plays a crucial role in creating a communicative and contextual learning environment in English language education. Visual media such as images, illustrations, or animations can help learners remember new vocabulary, sentence structures, and language usage in context. English is a global language used to learn about all fields, including academic, economic, social, and political. Therefore, mastery of English has a significant impact on a country's development through global competition (Safrina et al., 2021). Reading is considered a vital skill for acquiring knowledge, and it is often linked to academic and professional success (Castles et al., 2018; Farzaneh & Nejadansari, 2014). Therefore, it is essential to encourage and motivate learners to engage in reading activities.

2.2. A2 Level English Learning

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is an international standard used to describe and assess a person's language ability from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficiency) covering of four main skills of reading,

listening, writing and speaking. This chart shows how learners develop their language level step by step.

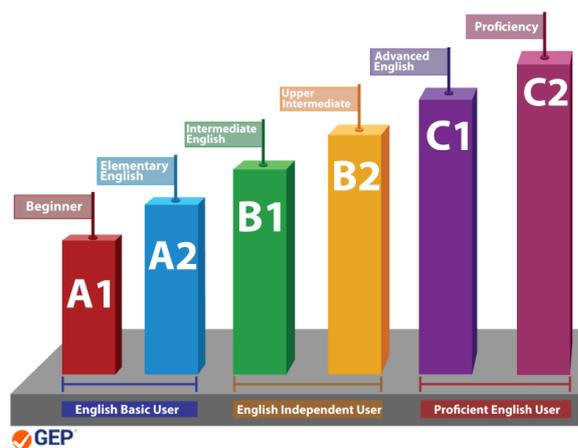


Figure 2. 1 English Level.

At the A1 level, beginners can understand and use simple words and phrases for everyday things. At A2, learners can talk about common topics and handle basic work situations. When they reach B1, they can share their experiences and goals and manage daily life more easily. B2 learners understand harder texts and join in longer conversations with confidence. At C1, advanced can understand hidden meanings and express their ideas clearly. Finally, C2 is the proficiency, where learners understand almost everything they hear or read and speak very naturally, even in difficult situations.

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), level A2 highlights the need for teaching materials that are tailored to learners' abilities, considering the complexity of language, the length of texts, and the level of vocabulary used. In terms of reading, A2 learners are expected to understand short and simple written passages focusing on familiar contexts. They can recognise frequently used words, follow short narratives, and locate information in everyday materials such as menus, schedules, catalogues, or simple stories. Reading practice often involves skimming for general ideas and scanning for details, which helps learners improve comprehension without being overwhelmed by difficult structures. Regarding listening, learners at this level are

able to understand common phrases and vocabulary when people speak slowly and clearly. They can follow short conversations, simple announcements, or everyday dialogues related to shopping, travel, or personal introductions. Listening materials often provide clear pronunciation, pauses, and repeated key vocabulary, sometimes supported by visual cues to enhance comprehension. In terms of writing, A2 learners are able to produce short and simple texts on familiar topics. They can write basic personal letters, short messages, emails, or simple descriptions of people, places, and daily routines. While their writing may contain grammatical errors, they can usually communicate the intended meaning effectively. Speaking skills at this level focus on the ability to participate in simple, routine conversations. Learners can introduce themselves, ask and answer straightforward questions, and exchange basic information about familiar topics such as family, hobbies, work, or shopping. Although their vocabulary is limited, they can make themselves understood if the interlocutor speaks clearly and is willing to cooperate.

In addition, grammar development at the A2 level introduces learners to simple sentence structures commonly used in everyday communication. One important focus is the present tense, which is used to describe routines, habits, or general facts, as in “I go to school every day” or “She drinks coffee in the morning.” By mastering this form, learners can express daily activities naturally and clearly. They are also introduced to the past tense, which is used to describe events that happened in the past, for example, “They watched a movie last night” or “I visited my grandmother yesterday.” At this stage, it is not necessary to learn all irregular verbs; instead, learners are encouraged to practise the most commonly used ones to build a solid foundation for further language development.

2.3. Short Story Anthology

Short stories are a type of narrative text that can be used to teach language. Short story feature narrative elements such as characters, plot, setting, and conflict, which enable learners to acquire language in an engaging and meaningful context. Short story not only convey moral messages, but also help introduce language structure, grammar, and new vocabulary (Pardede, 2011). Short story can help

learners learn English by increasing their desire to read. Learners can also help them learn things related to everyday life.

An anthology is a collection of poems, short stories, or essays compiled into a single book. According to Somers (2018), an anthology is a series of works compiled into a single volume, usually on a common theme or subject. If all the works are written by the same author, the book is more accurately called a collection than an anthology. An anthology can be written by a single author or many different authors, usually with a specific theme or genre. Abrams (1999) states that an anthology is a collection of literary works selected based on a specific theme, style, or quality for use in literacy, education, or documentation. Therefore, an anthology of short stories is a collection of short stories compiled into one book that share the same theme or writing style. This type of anthology is beneficial for language learning, particularly in enhancing learners' reading skills, critical thinking abilities, and expanding their vocabulary. Therefore, developing an anthology of short stories can help attract learners to read it, as it is a collection of stories with various themes and genres that prevent learners from becoming easily bored with just one story.

2.4. Vocabulary Insight in English Learning

Vocabulary is a collection of words used or possessed by a person in a particular language. Mastery of vocabulary is crucial for learning English, as it forms the foundation for reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Vocabulary is essential in communication, because without mastery of words, understanding and conveying ideas becomes limited (Schmitt, 2000). However, in vocabulary learning, insight refers to a deeper understanding of word usage, layered meanings, and the context in which words are used. Insight also includes the ability to recognise word associations, collocations, and semantic nuances. Nation (2001) states that vocabulary learning involves more than just understanding the basic meaning of words. It also involves studying the relationships between words, their context, and the grammatical forms of those words. Therefore, vocabulary insight serves as an aid in English language learning by familiarising oneself with basic vocabulary and expanding one's knowledge in vocabulary acquisition. Additionally,

the approach used in this product aims to enhance understanding through the use of short stories accompanied by illustrations.

2.5. Visual Illustration in Language Learning

Visual illustrations strengthen vocabulary comprehension and retention. According to the Dual Coding theory proposed by Paivio (1990), information conveyed through both visual and verbal channels can improve students' memory and understanding. Images associated with words or sentences facilitate the brain's ability to make multiple associations, which in turn makes them easier to process and remember. Character visualization in short stories serves two functions in English learning: first, it helps students better understand vocabulary; second, it attracts students' attention and encourages them to learn more. In multimedia learning theory, Mayer (2005) states that using the right combination of text and images can improve cognitive efficiency while learning. According to Al-Seghayer's (2001) research, contextual illustrations or dynamic images can more effectively improve foreign language vocabulary acquisition than just reading text. Consequently, this A2 short story anthology employs illustrations as a pedagogical strategy to create more meaningful connections, rather than merely aesthetic elements.

2.6. Short Story Design

The process of designing a book product is conducted systematically to minimize errors. Since each stage determines the quality of the final learning media, this process is important. This A2-level short story anthology book comprises eight important stages that are completed sequentially. A product that is not only visually attractive but also meets the needs of A2 level English learners can be developed by carefully following each design stage. According to Bogolepova and Shadrova (2020), a systematic design process that begins with a thorough needs analysis, followed by product design and evaluation, ensures that learning materials are aligned with learners' abilities and objectives, making them both effective and engaging.

2.6.1. Story themes

The themes chosen in this book relate to everyday life experiences, including work, family, leisure activities, and public spaces. Themes that align with the world of A2 students facilitate an understanding of the story and enhance the connection between the text and the real world. According to Nunan (2003), familiar themes will encourage students to be more engaged and interested in the learning process.

2.6.2. Story characters

The figures in the story are called characters, and they have an important role in conveying the message and enriching the vocabulary context. The selection of characters to adapt to occupations or social roles familiar to students, such as painters, doctors, and tour guides.

2.6.3. Narrative Text

In a short story, the narrative conveys a group of events that happen to the characters. The story structure consists of four phases: orientation, complication, resolution, and reorientation. According to Hyland (2004), the structured arrangement of narrative text makes it easier for readers to understand the storyline and see the use of grammar and vocabulary in their original context. The language used to adapt to the A2 level includes simple sentences, basic grammatical structures, and everyday vocabulary.

2.6.4. Audio Sound

Multisensory learning is supported by voice narration that complements the story's text. Audio helps students to listen, pronounce words correctly, and understand sentence intonation. Mayer (2001) emphasizes that the use of audio, along with text and images, aids multimedia learning, as students can process information more effectively when it is presented in multiple modalities.

2.6.5. Visual characters

Visual character illustrations provide a clear picture of the characters in the story. It helps students understand character descriptions and enhances their vocabulary, including traits and professions. In the dual

coding theory, Paivio (1990) suggests that combining text and visuals facilitates information retention and enhances memory.

2.6.6. Elements

Story elements include setting, plot, characters, theme, and language style. All components are designed to be easy to understand and educational at the A2 level. Cameron (2001) asserts that adapting teaching materials to the age and language level of learners is essential, and customizing story elements at the learner's entry level supports language learning goals.

2.6.7. Colour

Colour is used in storybook design to distinguish characters, settings, or important elements of the story, and to attract attention and create an atmosphere that is appropriate to the narrative. In the learning process, colour helps to increase visual appeal and improve student focus on specific content. Ware (2008) states that colour is an important component of visual perception and information dissemination.

2.6.8. Layout

The layout of a book is the way text, images, headings, and other visual elements are organized. A well-structured layout will make the book's content easier to follow and prevent confusion for the reader. In layout design, Several key considerations must be taken into account. Take into account: a balance between text and images, font consistency, and sufficient white space.

2.7. Previous Studies

Previous studies have demonstrated that short stories and visual illustrations can aid students in learning English vocabulary. Misriandi and Hendrawan (2023) examined the impact of short stories on elementary school students' vocabulary acquisition and found that regular reading of short stories tailored to students' ability levels significantly improved their vocabulary skills. Similarly, Ghazanfari, Hemmati, and Rastegar (2014) conducted an experimental study with English as a

Foreign Language (EFL) learners, revealing that short stories accompanied by illustrations enhanced students' recall of story content and new vocabulary. While these findings highlight the benefits of short stories and visual illustrations, there remains a lack of research on the simultaneous integration of stories, visuals, and audio illustrations within a single learning medium, particularly for A2-level learners. Most existing studies examine these elements separately, leaving limited evidence on how their combination can optimally enhance vocabulary mastery. This gap offers an opportunity to develop and evaluate integrated learning media for A2-level English learners.