

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 English Language Learning at the A2 Level

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) is an international standard for describing language ability. It was developed by the Council of Europe to provide a clear, comprehensive, and consistent framework for learning, teaching, and assessing languages. CEFR divides language proficiency into six levels, such as A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2, which are grouped into three main categories: Basic User (A1–A2), Independent User (B1–B2), and Proficient User (C1–C2). This framework is widely used in educational institutions, language courses, and standardized testing to ensure comparability of language skills across different contexts and countries (Council of Europe, 2020).

The A2 level in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) is the second level of *basic user* after level A1. According to Siahaan (2020), learning English at the A2 level should focus on understanding the context, mastering basic or general vocabulary, and improving reading and listening skills in the text according to their level. At this level, students are expected to be able to understand simple sentences that are often used in daily life and be able to communicate directly.

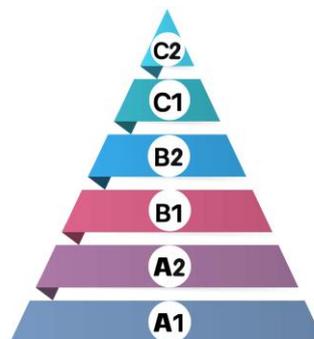


Figure 2. 1 The CEFR Level

The main focus of teaching English at the A2 level is to strengthen receptive skills (listening and reading) and begin to develop productive skills (writing and speaking) gradually. Teaching materials are usually adapted to the context of daily life so that students can relate learning to real situations. This is in line with the communicative approach, where language is a means of communication, not just a collection of grammatical rules.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), language learning at the basic level must pay attention to the aspects of exposure, repetition, and rich context so that the language acquisition process takes place naturally. Therefore, the teaching materials and media used at the A2 level should be concrete, meaningful, and easily recognizable by students. Learning at this level is ideal using alternating top-down and bottom-up approaches: learners can be invited to understand the general meaning of a narrative (top-down), then analyze vocabulary and sentence structure (bottom-up) to strengthen grammatical comprehension.

According to Atmaja (2020), beginner or basic English learning needs to pay attention to the context of language use and provide real and meaningful language models. In addition, he also emphasized the importance of audio-visual media to strengthen understanding and increase student involvement in the learning process. With a communicative and contextual approach, A2 level learners will more easily understand the meaning of language and be able to use it functionally.

2.2 Reading and Listening Comprehension in English Learning

Reading comprehension and listening comprehension are the two main receptive skills in learning English. According to Brown (2001), listening and reading are receptive skills that require learners to process and understand language input in a meaningful way. These two skills have an important role in the process of understanding the meaning of the language conveyed, both orally and in writing. Heinich, Molenda, Russell, and Smaldino (2002) stated that interactive media can create an interactive learning atmosphere, allowing

learners to interact directly with the content, so that the learning process becomes more personalized and effective.

In the context of A2 level English learning, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), learners are at the stage of developing their ability to grasp the main ideas, obtain specific information, and understand simple sentence structures in short and clear texts. They are expected to understand short and simple texts containing high-frequency everyday vocabulary, identify the main idea and locate specific details in materials such as advertisements, brochures, menus, schedules, and short narratives, and follow the sequence of events in a straightforward story.

In reading skills, comprehension does not only depend on the skill of identifying words or phrases, but also involves cognitive strategies, such as connecting information in the text, making inferences, and associating the text with prior knowledge. According to Kintsch and Rawson (2005), reading comprehension is a constructive process in which the reader actively strings together meanings based on the text and the mental structure it has. Therefore, texts that are appropriate to the skill level such as short stories are ideal for A2 level students, because they help them understand the content of reading contextually.

Meanwhile, listening comprehension is an understanding related to the ability to receive and interpret the meaning of the spoken language they hear. Usually, common difficulties experienced by A2 level learners are the speaker's speed of speech, the pronunciation of foreign vocabulary, and the lack of visual or linguistic context to help with meaning. The use of audio narration that is tailored to the right speed and expression can help learners understand the spoken message easily. Daulay (2022) revealed that audio media that supports listening teaching can significantly increase students' concentration and involvement in the learning process. Mayer (2009) in *Multimedia Learning Theory* explains that learners understand information better when presented in a combination of words and images than just text or audio. In this context, the

use of interactive media such as picture storybooks with audio narration is an example of effective integration of learning modalities.

The integration of reading and listening activities in one learning medium in the form of interactive short stories with audio-visual, is an effective approach in developing both receptive skills simultaneously. Nation & Newton (2009) stated that language learning that emphasizes integrated skills is more effective than if the skills are taught separately. By listening and reading, learners not only understand the content of the reading text, but also gain a model of English pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm that supports their communicative skills.

2.3 Anthology of Short Stories as a Media for Learning English

In learning foreign languages, books are often used as one of the learning mediums. One type of book that is often used is story books, because they are considered more interesting and entertaining, so that the learning process becomes more fun and can provide strong motivation (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983). In the storybook category, there are various types, one of which is a short story anthology. Literally, the word anthology comes from the Greek word meaning wreath or flower (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Initially, the anthology contained only a collection of poems. Over time, however, the concept has expanded to include prose, articles, and short stories.

According to Sumardjo and Saini (1986), in general, short stories are fictional stories or narratives that have not really happened but can happen anywhere and anytime, and are relatively short. Meanwhile, according to Umamy (2021), a short story is a short story, only telling one event or conflict, but resolving all problems and themes thoroughly. Short Stories in Anthologies are considered more effective as a learning medium because of their simpler form. These characteristics make short stories a great choice for language learning. Hismanoglu (2005) mentioned that short stories have simple and short characteristics. In addition, Pardede (2011), also argues that short stories can be an effective medium because of their unique characteristics, namely their short length and simplicity of language.

In learning foreign languages, in order for the media used to be effective, the media must be in accordance with the level of language proficiency of the learner. Therefore, the use of short story media is considered effective for learners with a low level of language proficiency because the language patterns and vocabulary used are usually still simple (Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000).

2.4 The Use of Audio Narration in English Learning

Audio is an important component of learning English because it provides an authentic model of pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of the language. By listening to the narrative of the story in the target language, English, learners can grasp meaning, understand the context orally, and can imitate the speech style and sentence structure used by native speakers. The use of audio media, such as audio books, podcasts, and story narration, helps improve learners' listening skills gradually (Nation & Newton, 2009).

Additionally, audio can be used to introduce new vocabulary in a meaningful context. Students learn not only through text, but also by hearing words or sentences in real-life situations that are attractively packaged. According to Daulay (2022), the use of audio-visual media is very helpful in learning to listen, especially for students who are just learning a foreign language. Audio provides exposure to correct sentence structure and proper pronunciation of words, which would be difficult to obtain if only through written text.

Audio content also increases learners' independence by allowing them to access auditory materials repeatedly, so they can learn at their own pace (Field, 2008). Repeated exposure to authentic input helps learners become more familiar with different speaking styles, increasing their confidence in listening. For A2-level learners, who are still building basic language skills, audio provides a hands-on experience with real language use outside of the classroom environment.

According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012), teaching effective listening skills requires assigning tasks that are clear in purpose and input that is

appropriate to the student's proficiency level. Regular listening exercises, such as through audio narration, train learners to estimate content, recognize important vocabulary, and draw logical conclusions, skills that are essential for understanding spoken language. Additionally, combining audio with text and visuals encourages multi-sensory learning, which improves engagement and understanding. For early learners, especially, this integration helps clarify meaning and reinforce language patterns.

2.5 Development of Audio Narration as an Interactive Learning Media

Audio narration in the context of learning English provides auditory stimulation that can strengthen understanding of the text and help learners to internalize the target language structure naturally. Morley (2001) states that listening skills are the "main skill" in second language mastery, as they are the foundation for other language skills. Therefore, learners who have good listening skills tend to be faster in understanding structure and vocabulary, and better able to respond appropriately in real communication situations.

The development of audio narration that is tailored to the learning content, such as short stories, is also included in the category of narrative-based instruction, which is a learning strategy that uses stories to convey knowledge.

2.5.1 Principles of Effective Audio Narration Design

Based on Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2009), there are several principles that need to be met in order for audio narrative to be effective in the learning process:

- a. Modality Principle; learning is more effective when words are delivered orally (audio) than through written text alone.
- b. Redundancy Principle; the simultaneous use of audio and text should not be excessive so as not to overload students' working memory.
- c. Segmenting Principle; audio should be divided into short segments to make it easier for students to process, especially for beginners.
- d. Contiguity Principle; audio and relevant images or text should be presented at the same time to improve understanding.

The application of these principles is particularly relevant in the development of an interactive short story anthology equipped with a QR code for audio access, where learners can read the text while listening to the narrative at a controlled tempo.

2.5.2 Interactivity and Learning Autonomy

Audio narration that can be accessed through QR codes provides an opportunity for learners to develop learner autonomy, which is the ability to organize and manage their own learning process. According to Little (1991), independent learners have control over the content, speed, and frequency of learning. In this context, learners can replay the audio narration at any time according to their needs.

Furthermore, Blin (2004) stated that interactive learning media increases learner engagement because they not only passively receive information, but also actively manage their learning experience. By providing audio narration as a feature in the short story anthology, learners gain a multimodal learning experience that not only reinforces linguistic aspects but also enhances emotional and motivational engagement.