

The Effect of Authentic Advertisement Materials on Reading Comprehension

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Article Info	Abstract
Article history: Received 07 Juli 2026 Revised 07 Juli 2026 Accepted 24 September 2026 Keywords: authentic materials; advertisement; reading comprehension; descriptive text; quasi-experimental;	This study aims to describe eighth grade students' reading comprehension of descriptive texts at SMP N 1 Angkola Barat before and after the use of advertisements as authentic materials, and to examine the significance and magnitude of the resulting improvement. This quasi-experimental study used a pretest-posttest control group design with 59 students, consisting of Class VIII-A (n=29) as the experimental group taught using authentic advertisement materials and Class VIII-B (n=30) as the control group taught conventionally. Data were collected through a 20-item multiple-choice test covering four reading comprehension indicators, then analyzed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, Levene's test, Paired Sample T-Test, and Independent Sample T-Test via SPSS. The results showed that the experimental group's mean score increased from 51.38 to 81.38 (+30.00 points), while the control group only increased by 20.83 points (45.00 to 65.83). The Independent Sample T-Test produced a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant effect. These findings prove that authentic advertisement materials effectively improve students' reading comprehension and are worth considering as an alternative teaching medium in English classrooms.

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1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill in learning English as a foreign language, particularly for junior high school students, since it enables learners to construct meaning from texts and supports the development of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical awareness, and overall language proficiency (Nation, 2020). Difficulties in reading comprehension are commonly caused by limited vocabulary mastery, insufficient background knowledge, and low reading motivation (Grabe & Stoller, 2021), which lead students to read texts mechanically without achieving a deep understanding of their content.

This problem is also observed among eighth grade students at SMP N 1 Angkola Barat, who show relatively low achievement in reading comprehension, especially when reading English texts. Classroom observation suggests that students' engagement in reading activities is closely related to the extent to which the materials are connected to their everyday experiences. One contributing factor is the reliance on conventional teaching materials; although textbooks are useful, the texts they contain often lack real-life context and fail to expose students to authentic language use, which may reduce students' interest and limit their ability to comprehend real English texts (Richards, 2021).

In the eighth grade of junior high school, descriptive text is one of the main text types taught in reading lessons. Descriptive text aims to describe people, places, or objects and is closely related to students' everyday experiences. However, many students still face difficulties in understanding descriptive texts, particularly in identifying descriptive details and interpreting vocabulary used in the text (Hyland, 2022). This condition indicates the need for more contextual and meaningful reading materials that can support students' comprehension of descriptive texts.

One alternative to address this problem is the use of authentic materials in teaching reading. Authentic materials are texts taken from real-life sources and are not specifically designed for language-teaching

purposes. Advertisements are a form of authentic material that students frequently encounter in daily life; they usually contain short texts, attractive visuals, and simple language, which makes them suitable for junior high school students and potentially helps them understand descriptive information more effectively (Gilmore, 2021).

Several previous studies are relevant to this research. Mara and Mohamad (2021), in "The Use of Authentic Materials in Teaching Reading to Secondary School Students," and Namaziandost et al. (2021), in "The Impact of Authentic Materials on Reading Comprehension, Motivation, and Anxiety among EFL Learners," both demonstrated the effectiveness of authentic materials in improving reading comprehension. However, these studies discuss authentic materials in a broader sense and were conducted in different educational contexts. The present study specifically emphasizes advertisements as a form of authentic material and focuses on the junior high school level, particularly on descriptive texts, so that it addresses a gap that has received limited attention in the existing literature.

Based on this background, the researcher identifies three problems: students have low reading comprehension of English texts, the descriptive texts used in reading lessons lack real-life context, and authentic materials are rarely used in teaching reading. Accordingly, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows: (1) how well do eighth grade students at SMP N 1 Angkola Barat comprehend descriptive texts before being taught using advertisements as authentic materials; (2) is there any significant effect of using advertisements as authentic materials on students' reading comprehension of descriptive text; and (3) do the students show significant improvement in their reading comprehension of descriptive text after being taught using advertisements as authentic materials. This research is therefore conducted to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of using advertisements as authentic materials in enhancing students' reading comprehension, particularly in the context of descriptive text learning at the junior high school level.

2. Method

This research used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method, which was chosen because the researcher could not randomly assign students to groups (Creswell, 2021). The study applied a pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design and was conducted at SMP N 1 Angkola Barat during the 2025/2026 academic year. Two intact classes were involved: Class VIII-A (n=29) as the experimental group, taught using authentic advertisement materials, and Class VIII-B (n=30) as the control group, taught through the conventional method. Both classes were selected from a population of 170 eighth grade students using a cluster sampling technique (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The research instrument was a reading comprehension test consisting of 20 multiple-choice items covering four indicators, namely identifying the main idea, identifying specific information, understanding vocabulary in context, and making simple inferences, with five items representing each indicator (Brown, 2020; Alderson, 2020). The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha through SPSS and obtained a coefficient of 0.578, categorized as moderate reliability (Arikunto, 2021), while the validity of each item was examined using the corrected item-total correlation compared to the r-table value at a 5% significance level.

Data were collected through a pretest administered before the treatment and a posttest administered after the treatment, using equivalent formats and difficulty levels for both groups. The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Levene's homogeneity test, the Paired Sample T-Test, and the Independent Sample T-Test through SPSS.

3. Results

The descriptive statistics show that on the pretest, the experimental group obtained a mean score of 51.38 while the control group obtained 45.00, indicating that both groups had relatively low reading comprehension before the treatment. After the treatment, the mean posttest score of the experimental group increased to 81.38, while the control group increased to 65.83, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Group	Test	N	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Experimental	Pretest	29	51.38	15	95	17.92
Experimental	Posttest	29	81.38	65	95	7.55
Control	Pretest	30	45.00	20	65	13.90

Control	Posttest	30	65.83	40	85	10.67
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Source: Primary data processed

All students in the experimental class experienced an increase in their scores after the treatment, with gain scores ranging from 0 to 60 and an average gain of 30.00 points, while every student in the control class also obtained higher posttest scores, with gain scores ranging from 5 to 35 and an average gain of 20.83 points. This indicates that the improvement in reading comprehension was considerably greater among students who were taught using authentic advertisement materials.

In the experimental class, individual pretest scores ranged from 15 to 95 with a standard deviation of 17.92, indicating a wide initial spread of reading ability among students, whereas posttest scores became more concentrated, ranging from 65 to 95 with a lower standard deviation of 7.55. This pattern shows that after being taught using authentic advertisement materials, students' scores not only increased but also became more homogeneous, with individual gains ranging from 0 to 60 points. In the control class, pretest scores ranged from 20 to 65 (SD = 13.90) and posttest scores ranged from 40 to 85 (SD = 10.67), with individual gains ranging from 5 to 35 points. The narrower and more consistent score distribution in the experimental class after treatment suggests that authentic advertisement materials were effective across students with varying initial reading abilities, not only for those who already performed well on the pretest.

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test produced significance values of 0.872 (pretest, experimental), 0.063 (pretest, control), 0.145 (posttest, experimental), and 0.172 (posttest, control), all of which were greater than 0.05, indicating that the data in each group were normally distributed (Ghozali, 2018). Levene's homogeneity test produced $F(1, 57) = 2.823$ with a significance value of 0.098 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the variance between the experimental and control groups was homogeneous (Sugiyono, 2022). These results confirm that the data met the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis.

The Paired Sample T-Test showed a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in both groups: $t(28) = -9.871$, Sig. = 0.000 for the experimental class, with a mean difference of 30.000, and $t(29) = -13.558$, Sig. = 0.000 for the control class, with a mean difference of 20.833 (Sarwono, 2018). This indicates that both groups improved after the learning process, although the improvement was considerably larger in the experimental class.

The Independent Sample T-Test on the posttest scores produced $t(57) = 6.439$ with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between the experimental and control classes after the treatment. The effect size, calculated using Cohen's d , yielded a value of approximately 1.68, which according to Cohen's (1988) criteria indicates a large effect. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, confirming that the use of authentic advertisement materials had a significant influence on students' reading comprehension of descriptive text.

4. Discussion

The greater improvement observed in the experimental class indicates that authentic advertisement materials provided students with a more meaningful and contextual learning experience. Advertisements contain concise information, attractive visual elements, and vocabulary closely related to students' daily lives, which made the reading materials easier to understand and more engaging, allowing students to comprehend the texts more effectively (Gilmore, 2021). Unlike textbook materials that are often simplified for instructional purposes, advertisements expose students to real-life language use, connecting classroom learning with real-world situations and increasing students' motivation to participate in reading activities.

The improvement was also reflected in the four reading comprehension indicators measured in this study. Advertisement texts generally focus on a particular product, service, or object, which made it easier for students to identify the main idea; the detailed product information in advertisements encouraged students to locate specific information more accurately; the descriptive and persuasive vocabulary supported by visual elements helped students infer word meaning in context; and the need to interpret persuasive intentions encouraged students to make simple inferences and think more critically about both explicit and implicit meaning (Grabe & Stoller, 2021).

These findings support the view of Gilmore (2021) that authentic materials expose learners to genuine language use and create meaningful learning experiences, as well as the view of Grabe and Stoller (2021) that reading comprehension improves when learners interact with meaningful and relevant texts. The findings are also consistent with Namaziandost et al. (2021), who found that authentic materials significantly improved students' reading comprehension and motivation, and with Mara and Mohamad (2021), who reported that authentic materials help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life situations.

Taken together, these results indicate that advertisements, as a form of authentic material, can be recommended as an alternative teaching medium for improving reading comprehension among junior high school students.

5. Conclusion

In response to the first research question, the reading comprehension of eighth grade students at SMP N 1 Angkola Barat prior to the use of advertisements as authentic materials was found to be in the poor category, with pretest mean scores of 51.38 for the experimental class and 45.00 for the control class, indicating that students' initial ability to comprehend descriptive texts was still limited.

In response to the second research question, there is a significant effect of using advertisements as authentic materials on students' reading comprehension of descriptive text, as evidenced by the Independent Sample T-Test result ($t(57) = 6.439$, Sig. = 0.000, $p < 0.05$) with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.68$), which leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1).

In response to the third research question, the eighth grade students at SMP N 1 Angkola Barat showed significant improvement in their reading comprehension of descriptive text after being taught using advertisements as authentic materials, with the experimental class improving by 30.00 points (from 51.38 to 81.38, good category) compared to only 20.83 points in the control class (from 45.00 to 65.83), confirming that the improvement was considerably greater among students who received the treatment.

Based on the conclusions above, school principals are encouraged to support English teachers in implementing authentic materials such as advertisements by providing adequate teaching resources and relevant training. English teachers are encouraged to use authentic advertisement materials as an alternative medium for teaching reading comprehension of descriptive text, while selecting materials that match students' level and the eighth-grade curriculum. Students are encouraged to regularly engage with authentic texts in their daily lives to strengthen their reading skills, and future researchers are recommended to conduct similar studies with larger samples and to examine the effect of authentic materials on other language skills.

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