



Implementing Authentic Texts in Designing Reading Materials

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the exposure to authentic materials (newspaper articles, online text news, magazine articles, journal articles) into EFL classroom and the benefits of the latest data that lead learners to real world communication. It is very important to students to be exposed to a real language. The real language will provide students the language that is used by the native speaker. In the end, it will meet a demand of good communication to the target language. Students will find the authentic materials useful since it can be applied in their social life and importantly improve their communication skills in the target language.

Keywords:

Authentic text, reading comprehension, language skills, target language, communicative competence, exposure to language, native speaker

Introduction

Almost every country in the world uses English as a tool of communication. English is a tool of communication because its function is to share information and to equalize the different culture among countries. This is used in international conferences, education or in business. This is the international language that everyone in every country has to understand. Therefore, learning English become a must to all over the world including Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan, English subject is taught as a foreign language (EFL) in the education system that makes language teachers teach it related to the language students communicate.

Now, English subject is one of the subjects that included in the entrance exams to most of higher education institutions. Moreover, students have opportunity not to take English exam in case having proper IELTS score. This is used as a benchmark to the students' standard of graduation also to create the competent students in English. Therefore, English is one of the important subjects that must be taught in

Uzbekistan. Creating the competent students in English teachers certainly will link students with four skills. The skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills, meanwhile, speaking and writing are productive skills. Receptive skills mean those skills in which the students receive language, while productive skills are those skills in which the students produce language. Therefore, receptive skills include understanding when you listen and when you read. You receive the language and decode the meaning to understand the message. Productive skills are speaking and writing. You use the language that you have acquired and produce a message through speech or written text that you want others to understand. With the result, these four skills are very significant to allow the students to be the skilled and competent students in English.

Main part

We believe that texts play an important role in teaching and acquiring a second

language. It is essential that a teacher uses texts that appeal to the students in order to get their attention and to increase motivation. Therefore, we think that it is important for the teacher to include the use of authentic texts in the classroom. This extends the students' possibilities of finding and subsequently reading books that appeal to them. This is supported by theory which underlines the importance of relevant texts and motivated students in the learning process. This section will go through some of the common definitions of the term "authentic materials", from the point of view of the following writers:

1. Herrington and Oliver (2000) suggested a new pedagogical term, called "authentic learning". This term is directly related to the students' real life and prepares them to face and deal with real world situations.

2. According to Herod (2002) authentic learning 'materials and activities' are designed to imitate the real-world situations.

3. Nunan (1988) defines authentic materials as the materials "which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language".

4. Jordan (1997) defines authentic texts as the ones which are not designed for pedagogical aims.

5. Jacobson et al (2003, p. 1) sees authentic materials as printed materials, which are used in classrooms in the same way they would be used in real life.

6. In other words, Stubbs (1996) defines authentic texts as "actual, attested, and such that they have real authentic instances of use."

Types of Authenticity: According to Breen (1985) there are four types of authenticity. These are: text authenticity, learner authenticity, task authenticity and authenticity of the classroom. These types are discussed below: Authenticity of text: refers to the authentic qualities of a text. Authentic texts in the context of language learning, means any source of information used to help learners to develop an authentic understanding. Authenticity of learners: refers to the ability of learners to interpret the meaning present in the text like the native speakers do in the real world.

Authenticity of the tasks: refers to the chosen tasks provided for the learners to be engaged in an authentic communication and authentic aims for learning. Authenticity of the classroom: the most important role of the classroom is to enable the learners to experience "public and interpersonal sharing of content of language learning, the sharing of problems with such content, and revealing of the most effective means and strategies to overcome such problems." Breen (1985, p. 67). The use of Authentic Materials in the EFL classroom: Using inappropriate teaching materials makes learners face difficulties in learning a foreign language. Learners need to be motivated to succeed in learning any language. Therefore, teaching materials must be motivating and raise learners' interest. If teaching materials are not interesting and motivating, learners will learn nothing. In order to help learners learn better, a lot of researchers suggest using authentic materials (AM).

It was concluded that authentic materials are helpful in developing learners' reading skills. "Without the use of authentic materials while exposing learners to EFL situations, it is difficult to anticipate how the learner will perform in the real situations." These are:

- 1) they prepare learners for real life,
- 2) they meet learners' needs,
- 3) they affect learners' motivation positively,
- 4) they encourage teachers to adopt effective teaching methods and
- 5) they present authentic information about culture. Authentic materials therefore, help learners realize the relationship between the language presented in the classroom and the language used in real world situations. From his side, Genhard (1996) believes that authentic materials "contextualize" the language learning. In addition, authentic materials help to bridge the gap between the language being taught in the classroom and the language used by real people in real situations in the real world.

The Use Of Authentic Reading Materials in the Classroom

One of the main ideas of using authentic materials in the classroom is to "expose" the

learner to as much real language as possible. Even if the classroom is not a “real-life” situation, authentic materials do have a very important place within it. It has been argued that by taking a text out of its original context, it loses authenticity:

“As soon as texts, whatever their original purpose, are brought into classrooms for pedagogic purposes they have, arguably, lost authenticity.” (Wallace 1992:79)

Even if true, the learner is still exposed to real discourse and not the artificial language of course textbooks, which tend not to contain any incidental or improper examples. They also tend to reflect the current teaching trend. Authentic materials also give the reader the opportunity to gain real information and know what is going on in the world around them. More times than not, they have something to say, be it giving information, a review. They also produce a sense of achievement. Extracting real information from a real text in a new different language can be extremely motivating, therefore increasing students' motivation for learning by exposing them to 'real' language. They also reflect the changes in language use, (again something that does not occur in textbooks, which become very dated, very quickly) as well as giving the learner the proof that the language is real and not only studied in the classroom: “Authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people.” If the text interests the learner, it can also be related to his own experiences. One of the aims of authentic materials is to help the student react in the same way B2 speakers react in their first language. Learners who live in the target language environment, once outside of the classroom will encounter a variety of situations in which different reading purposes skills are required. We can claim that learners are being exposed to real language and they feel that they are learning the 'real' language. The main advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom therefore include:

-having a positive effect on student motivation;

-giving authentic cultural information;

-exposing students to real language;

-relating more closely to students' needs;
-supporting a more creative approach to teaching.

Use authentic materials effectively in the classroom

Since the authentic materials are more economic and effortlessly available anywhere and anytime, the teachers of English can use them to teach in their regular ELT classrooms. There are many authentic materials available to teach English such as News Papers, Brochures, Pamphlets, Flyers, Advertisements, Greeting Cards, Invitation Cards, Post-Cards, Wall Papers, Comics, Cartoons, Story Books, Agony Columns, Directories, Maps, Magazines, Journals, Pictures, Audio Cassettes, Images, TV Programs, TV Ads, Movies, Songs, Internet Notices, Bus or Train Timetables, Recipe, Menus, Stamps, Tickets, Product Labels, Realia such as phones and dolls, Currency, Weather Reports, Puppets and so on. Unlike the ESL materials, worksheets, study guides and other lesson plans the teachers download from the web, authentic materials are resources created for native speakers of the target language. There are no reading comprehension tests and vocabulary sections at the end of an article to quiz students' understanding. To get one's mind thinking of all the possibilities, authentic materials can include:

Listening: TV shows, radio, commercials, news broadcasts, documentaries, movies, phone messages, etc.

Visual: photographs, art works, signs with symbols, postcards, picture books, etc.

Printed: restaurant menus, newspaper articles, bulletin board advertisements, company websites, coupons, sales catalogues, travel brochures, maps, telephone books, signs, blogs, movie posters, food labels, etc.

Conclusion

Authentic texts mirror the real world and can provide a language base for both conversation and travel. Additionally, students see the language used in authentic texts as a way

to help them understand the huge amount of English they are exposed to every day outside of the classroom and by using strategies such as guessing, they can gain the confidence necessary to use the language in unknown situations agree that authentic texts help students develop confidence when using English and as an added bonus, even cultural references can be found within these texts. This can be seen as a way to put non-native English speakers on the same level as their native-speaking peers.

Authentic texts also help to develop students' vocabulary and grammar, mainly due to the natural dialogs found in these texts. Understanding an overall context of a story is also important and this is something more easily achieved with authentic texts, since students can follow the story without understanding every single word. Additionally, when authentic texts are used for literary discussions, not only do the students learn to read and speak English at a faster pace, they also become acquainted with the various parts of a literary work, such as characters and plots Gilmore points out that another important benefit realized through the use of authentic texts in the EFL classroom is the teachers' freedom to choose texts that best meet the specific needs of the learners.

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