



IMPLEMENTING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' READING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract: The use of authentic texts is addressed for teaching reading comprehension as well as for creating materials to improve the teaching-Learning process of this skill. Authentic materials provides English language teachers with more resources to practice the real language in language classrooms. However, integrating these types of reading materials can be difficult and time-consuming even though there are many benefits to using them to teach language learners how to read. Real-life based texts, which are not specifically designed for educational purposes have been recognized by many educators to be effective and interesting materials.
Key words: authentic, effective, characteristics, basic, acquisition, access, reading comprehension, motivation, skills, competence, strategy.

“It has been traditionally supposed that the language presented to learners should be simplified in some way for easy access and acquisition. Nowadays there are recommendations that the language presented should be authentic” (Widdowson 1990:67).

What are characteristics of authentic materials? There are many ideas about the meaning and concepts of authentic materials. According to Swaffar “an authentic text, oral or written, is one whose primary intent is to communicate meaning”¹. Marrow defines authentic material as a “stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to carry a real message of some sort”². Zyzik and Polio defined authentic materials as “those created for some real-life purpose other than language learning, and often, but not always provided by native speakers for native speakers” [6]. Nunan said authentic materials helps students learn and use the foreign language more indicative³.

Moreover, Martinez (2002) defines authentic-based materials as the materials which are prepared for native speakers and not designed to be used for teaching purposes. Nuttall (1996) commented that authentic-based materials can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purpose by real people. The difference is not in the language

¹Zyzik, E. C., & Polio, C. (2017). Authentic materials myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching. Michigan, MI: University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.7892433>

² Daniyeva M.D. Derivational-functional and text forming features of substantive phrases in English. Dissertation abstract for the doctor of philosophy degree (PhD), Tashkent, 2017. 49 p.,

³ Widdoson, H.G. (1978). Teaching Language as Communication. Oxford: Oxford University Press.



materials themselves but rather on their outcomes and their effectiveness. In this regard, “it has been traditionally supposed that the language presented to learners should be simplified in some way for easy access and acquisition, nowadays there are recommendations that the language presented should be authentic” (Widdowson, 1990, p. 67). In contrast, Miller (2003) state that non-authentic materials are those materials that are specially designed for learning purpose and the language used in them is artificial with well-formed sentence all the time which is useful for teaching grammar⁴. As it’s shown that authentic material is a type of material which we can freely use the language in a real life situation.

Thus, we can assume that authentic materials are natural or “real life” which are not intentionally produced for teaching. Its main objective is to communicate meaning and information. However, it is important to point out that it is acceptable to adapt an authentic reading material in case of necessity to match the context.

The investigations devoted to this problem have been studied by many scholars in Uzbekistan such as M.D.Daniyeva, N.A.Tukhtahkodjaeva, U.R.Yuldoshev, in Russia such as З.А. Кочкиной, Г.В.Роговой, Е.В. Носович, Р.П. Мильруд, Г.И. Воронина, Н.В. Елухина, Г.В. Рогова, in foreign countries such as Henry Swatt, Chomsky, Hymens Bachman, Van Lier, Zyzik and Polio, Swaffar, Richards, J. Harmer, M. Breen, L. Lier, D. Wilkins and others.

Using authentic material is beneficial in Reading classes, so it has several advantages than disadvantages.

Richards, J. and Rodgers, T. (2001:248), mention the main advantages of using authentic materials are:

1. They have a positive effect on learner motivation.
2. They provide authentic cultural information.
3. They provide exposure to real language.
4. They relate more closely to learners ' needs.
5. They support a more creative approach to teaching⁵.

M. Syafri (2011) stated that the advantage of using authentic materials in the classroom are the following⁶:

1. using authentic materials in the classroom is to make students know the use of real language;
2. Students can get contextual language learning through using authentic materials in the classroom;
3. Students can get the chance to read, rehearse, practice, use and learn the language through the materials that they can see, examine and touch;
4. They can enjoy learning about interesting places, viewing the photographs, reading the brochures, etc. without going to the places;
5. Students who use authentic materials can learn more on content and meaning than on language, it is a valuable source of language input;

⁴Course book, textbook, and student work sheets are good instances of non-authentic materials. 2017 Scientific & Academic Publishing, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

⁵ Richards, J. and Rodgers, T. (2001), *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

⁶ M. Syafri. The use of authentic efl reading materials in teaching reading. an experimental study at a senior high school in sarolangun regency jambi province, Master Thesis, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, 2011

6. Using authentic materials is a relatively easy and convenient way to improve not only students' general skills, but also their confidence in a real situation

We consider the following advantages of using authentic material:

-Language is used by natural way, by simplifying language or modifying it for teaching purposes (limiting structures or controlling vocabulary), the teachers risk making the task more difficult. It may, in fact, be removing clues to meaning.

-Authentic language is used effectively, it provides students the opportunity to deal with a small amount of material which contains complete and important messages at the same time.

- Authentic printed materials offer students with the chance to make use of nonlinguistic clues such as layout, pictures, colors, symbols, the physical setting in which it occurs help them find out the meaning more easily.

- Students need to be able to see the direct applicability of learning materials in the classroom to what they need to have outside, and authentic material treated realistically makes the connection understandable.

Gebhard grouped that authentic materials under three categories:

- *Authentic audio/visual materials* include TV commercials, quiz shows, video clips, cartoons, movies, soap operas, radio dramas and radio commercials;
- *Authentic visual materials* include slides, pictures, photographs, children's drawings, non-verbal street signs, skylines, magazine pictures, postcards, non-verbal picture books, and stamps;
- *Authentic written materials* are newspaper articles, movie commercials, astrology columns, sports news reports, obituaries, recommendation columns, lyrics, restaurant menus, street signs⁷.

Therefore, there are many factor in reading authentic materials:

Background information- It refers to the previous experience that the readers have already known before and relates to the reading materials that they read. In order to understand the text students need background information from their real life experiences;

Language skills - the readers have to know about some elements of language, for example: vocabulary, grammar, and phonetics. Besides that they must know morphology, syntaxes, stylistic devises, lexicology in order to know the structure and the meaning of the text;

Thinking ability. It means that the readers ability to analyze the reading materials. Students reaction and their attitude to the very topic. In addition, how do they understand the concept of the topic;

Affection. It means that the readers have to know about some psychological factor that can affect the readers' comprehension. The factors are interests, motivation, attitudes, etc.

Reading purpose. It refers to the readers' purpose why they read the reading materials. It usually done by making some question or predicting as a stepping stone to get comprehension.

So we can suggest the following authentic reading strategies in language classes:

- ✓ Previewing- reviewing titles, section headings, and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection;
- ✓ Scan and skim the text- using a quick survey of the text to get the main idea, identify text structure, confirm or question predictions

⁷ Gebhard, J. G. (1996). *Teaching English as a foreign language: A teacher self-development and methodology*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.



- ✓ Predict the text from the context - using prior knowledge of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues to the meanings of unknown words, instead of stopping to look them up;
- ✓ Paraphrasing the text; stopping at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text
- ✓ Inferring-To infer is to draw a conclusion based on reasoning and evidence. When making inferences, information at hand is analyzed for any patterns or connections that are implied or hinted at.
- ✓ Answer the questions-reading authentic text and grasp the meaning, understanding the plot of the context and reply the questions such as special questions, general questions, alternative questions, tag questions, disjunctive questions, rhetoric questions and problematic questions.

We provided questionnaire in order to identify the quantitative and qualitative results of the research. That questionnaire was given to the students at the end of the research to analyze and find out the use of authentic materials in reading classes. However, the aim of this questionnaire was to identify the students' answer to authentic materials in language classes:

Percentage of students' response using authentic materials in reading classes

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Implementing authentic materials in language classes makes me confident in learning Reading skills	12,5	72,3	15,2
Using authentic classes in Reading classes is totally difficult for me	5,3	65,4	29,3
When my teacher uses authentic material It really raises my Motivation to the lesson	19,8	74,4	5,8
I feel bored when my teacher uses authentic materials in reading classes	4,8	2,3	92,9
Authentic materials help me to use the language in a real life situations	35,2	53,4	11,4
I think I'll learn culture while using authentic materials	45,1	54,9	0

As it's shown below that the majority of students have the positive answer of using authentic materials to English classes in order to improve their reading competence. In addition



using authentic materials help learners to use the language in real life situations and different conversations so far. In short, students should read the material on pleasure and just for fun, they must enjoy the process of reading authentic materials in class and out of class in their life.

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