

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

*D. Yoqubova<sup>1</sup>*

### *Abstract:*

Many English classes come with a textbook or curriculum for instructors to follow. This can be helpful when designing a course, determining learning outcomes, and assessing students. It also makes it easy for teachers to plan lessons and introduce concepts to students in a logical sequence. However, these resources are not provided by every institution and even when they are, they often lack an authentic context in which students can practice English. In cases where these resources are not provided for a course, using authentic materials is an excellent option. Different types of authentic materials, the benefits and challenges of using them will be discussed. Teaching strategies to use with these materials in the English language classroom will also be explored. Activities will focus on activating and building students' background knowledge, increasing vocabulary, supporting comprehension, and including summative tasks.

*Key words:* authentic materials, newspaper articles, developing skills, authentic classroom.

*doi:* <https://doi.org/10.2024/tre58h16>

---

---

### **Introduction**

The purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to benefit from using it in the real world, in real situations. During the past decades, teaching a foreign language has gained much more attention in most countries around the world. Therefore, most of the language teachers think whether it is enough to teach the language using course book tasks, which are regarded artificial because they are designed for teaching purposes only, or if they should adopt using authentic materials to scaffold learners' learning process in general and develop reading skills in particular. Reading task should provide learners with a high level of independence when reading in a foreign language in a real-life context, which in turn means, using actual authentic materials. Communicative language teaching approaches changes the view of syllabus designers toward English subjects, from just a language to be learned like other subjects in the school, to a very important tool of communication inside and outside the classroom. Hence, the syllabus designers are advised to take into account the learners' needs and provide them with the chance, to be able to communicate the learned language in real situations outside the school walls. Recently, in teaching English language, in ESL classes, use of authentic materials gained much attention from teachers. Researchers claim that when authentic materials are used with the purpose of students' learning, students will have a sense that the real language for communication is being learnt, as opposed to classroom language itself. Reading such literature, it is clear that those authors who support the use of authentic material have one idea in common:

---

<sup>1</sup> *Yoqubova Dinora, student of Samarkand Institute of Foreign Languages*

“exposure”, or in other words, the benefit students get from being “exposed” to the language in authentic materials. Because authentic materials are intrinsically more active, interesting and stimulating. Otte (2006, p.56) believes that learners need to “practice using authentic language themselves, in order to be better prepared to deal with authentic language in the real world”.

### ***Methodology***

Authentic materials are classified into three categories.

#### *Authentic Listening-Viewing Materials.*

It consists of TV commercials, quiz shows, cartoons, new clips, comedy shows, movies, soap operas, professionally audio-taped short stories and novels, radio ads, songs, documentaries, and sales pitches. This category is the most well-known one in terms of its effectiveness in language learning and teaching. Firstly, they serve to develop listening skills and pronunciation. Secondly, non-native speakers can learn target culture, traditions, attitudes, signs, art, psychological and social differences as well.

#### *Authentic Visual Materials.*

Slides, photographs, paintings, children's artwork, stick figure drawings, wordless street signs, pictures from magazine, ink blots, postcard pictures, wordless picture books, stamps and X-rays are included in this category that is really beneficial to cultivate the sense of interest and imagination of every learner.

#### *Authentic Text Materials.*

The last category is full of necessary means for enhancing reading skills and vocabulary. They are newspaper articles, movie advertisements, lyrics to songs, restaurant menus, street signs, cereal boxes, information brochures, maps, TV guides, comic books, greeting cards and bus schedules.

### ***Discussion***

In pedagogy, authentic materials play an important role to develop every skill for EFL and ESL. According to more researchers and teachers, these tools can give an advantage to teaching the target language even faster and more effective. For learners, these materials create experience of real context of the target language. In this while, learners can have motivation in learning language by watching movies, new reports, music and songs as well, this is the most important profit of authentic materials and also this tends to be easier for educators to teach students.

One of the best sources of authentic materials which are more useful in the ESL and EFL teaching classroom is the newspapers. Papers never lose their value and their readers no matter they are published or in e- version, since they usually publish latest and burning news, reports as authentic materials to teach the learners of English. Jacob J.S says, “Newspaper gives the people the eyes to see themselves, gives them the ears to hear themselves and hear to the world, it gives people the voice by which this can make themselves heard in the world. Newspapers are really informative and provide very influential education to the learners. The reason behind this is that, paper presents any directions of science such as education column, sport column, geographical column, historical column, technological column, political column, cultural activities column. By reading newspaper, people can be informed about day-to-day life news, what is happening in society, and how it is prevented by organizations in a scale. Moreover, newspaper articles are helpful to enhance learners' data-based information, improving reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, writing skills,

grammatical skills, analytical skills, critical thinking which can be fundamental ones to solve issues in their life.

By creating authentic classroom, a teacher can achieve to open a door for learners how real life is in target language spoken countries.

### **Conclusion**

It cannot be denied that the advantages which authentic materials can bring is significant in getting English learners exposed to the real use of language. Consequently, providing a definition on which the criteria for selecting the most suitable and effective materials can be constructed and developed is excessively crucial. However, there are still so many issues to consider and being too biased and over serious about the production of what can be considered authentic materials may lead to the ignorance of a colossal amount of available data produced by the non-native but real speakers of English. Learners of English can benefit from those materials as much as from those produced only by native English speakers without the fear that they will learn “wrong language” as those learners will eventually become the real speakers of this ever- evolving language.

English teachers therefore, should put more emphasis on the pedagogical purpose when selecting teaching resources. The following questions may possibly help if satisfactorily answered in the choosing-process.

- a. Was the material created for a real purpose of communication?
- b. Is the material correct in terms of lexical resource and grammar?
- c. Does the material appropriately serve the teaching purpose?
- d. Should any modification be required?

In conclusion, it can be argued that the definition of authentic material, while attempting to set ground for English teachers to develop their criteria for choosing what is best to use, needs to become more flexible in a way that the changing environment of language use in the twenty first century should be taken into account. The assumption of “native speakers” should be understood differently and all those who use English for real communication purposes should have the authority in creating materials that can be employed as “authentic” in the English classroom.

### **References:**

- [1]. D. Umirova (2020:130) *Authenticity and authentic materials: history and present. Vol.8 No.10. ISSN 2056-5852 European journal of research and reflection in Educational Science.*
- [2]. R.H.Al Azri, M.H.Al-Rashdi (2014:249) *The effect of using authentic materials in teaching 2277-8616 International journal of scientific & technology research*
- [3]. Vu Tran-Thanh(3) *Authentic materials in teaching English: A reconsideration of existing definitions. 4.Teacher's corner(2018:1) Teaching with authentic materials*
- [4]. <https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/teachers-corner-teaching-authentic-materials>