

AUTHENTICITY AND AUTHENTIC MATERIALS: HISTORY AND PRESENT

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ABSTRACT

It is vital that, nowadays there have been so many pedagogical tools in the curriculum from worksheets to e-materials. Especially, authentic materials play a crucial role in 21st century education in EFL and ESL classroom. In this article, historical background and contemporary importance will be explored.

Keywords: Language teaching, authentic learning, authenticity, authentic materials, authentic classroom, cluster.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to begin to discuss this theme, the definitions of both terms authenticity and authentic materials should be clarified. "Authentic materials are print, video, and audio materials students encounter in their daily lives, such as change-of address forms, job applications, menus, voice mail messages, radio programs, and videos. Authentic materials are not created specifically to be used in the classroom, but they make excellent learning tools for students precisely because they are authentic." The term «authentic» was used as a reaction to prefabricated samples whereas authentic materials were not pedagogical tools used to help students, improve not only their communicative, but also cultural competencies. This term has long history and definitions that claimed by linguists and researchers. Although, the use of authentic materials and authenticity in language learning started to gain ground in language pedagogy very early in history, however, the early part of the 20th century was defined by a blossoming of a variety of teaching methods such as the oral method, the audio lingual method, the situational approach and the direct method, which applied language learning materials that concentrated on the linguistic aspects of language and were specifically structured for language learning purposes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Until now, at least eight possible but considerable range of meanings appeared in linguistic science:

According to Porter and Roberts (1981; Little et al. 1989) "Authenticity relates to the language produced by native speakers for native speakers in a particular language community". In addition to this it in 1998 Kramsch mentioned that "Authenticity relates to culture, and the ability to behave or think like a target language group in order to be recognized and validated by them". Due to these both descriptions it is obvious that, authentic materials are created for native speakers firstly the reason behind this is that native speakers are able to figure out this kind of tools without cultural and behaving issues and misunderstandings. Furthermore, in accordance with the ideas of Tomlinson, the term of authentic materials or authentic texts refers to any 'written or spoken texts' which are commonly not intended to language teaching. Similarly, Wallace defines authentic texts as 'real-life text, not written for pedagogic purposes'.

Therefore, these materials are likely not provided or designed for teaching English especially to non-native speakers. They are initially not proposed to foreign learners.

METHODOLOGY

Scientist Gebhard classified authentic materials into three categories.

I Authentic Listening-Viewing Materials.

It consists of TV commercials, quiz shows, cartoons, news 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.

II Authentic Visual Materials.

Slides, photographs, paintings, children' artwork, stick figure drawings, wordless street signs, silhouettes, 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.

III 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.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the modern pedagogy, Authentic materials are likely now regarded as one of the resources of teaching every skill for EFL and ESL. Most researchers and teachers agree that these tools can give benefit to teaching the target- language more effective and even faster. They can give a lot of advantages for both educators and students. For learners, these materials create experience of a real context of the target language. They will be introduced how a conversation in a natural situation of native speakers begins, goes on and finishes. Furthermore, the most important profit of these texts is that they can motivate learners in learning language especially by movies, news reports or songs as well as novels and newspaper articles. Because of their interesting and real features, authentic materials are likely able to attract learners to have further learning of new things autonomously. This means that these texts can give a meaningful learning. Especially, one of the best sources of authentic materials which are more useful in the ESL and EFLteaching classrooms is the newspapers. Papers never lose their value and their reader no matter the y are published or in e-version, since they usually publish latest and burning news every day and the teachers can adopt the essential 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 they can make themselves heard in the world". Newspapers are very informational and provide very influential education to the learners. The reason behind this is that, papers present any directions of science, such as education columns, sports columns, geographical and historical columns, technological columns, political columns, cultural activities columns, etc. that can be suitable any interests of learners particularly with attractive scenes and pictures. They are the most affordable reading materials for the learners to buy and at least it is the easiest tool to browse from the internet than other authentic materials because of their little internet traffic. Moreover, newspaper articles assist to enhance learners' reading

comprehension, vocabulary skills, writing skills, grammatical skills and create skill of critical and analytical thinking which are really helpful and fundamental ones to solve any issues in their life. Also, they can not only grow the learners' observation and critical thinking skills but also promote the learners' imagination and broaden their outlook. By articles students can be aware of what is going on in real life without any fine-spun things that are likely fake or artificial. Since there are innumerable advantages of using newspapers in the ELT classrooms, the English teachers should make use of the available and useful materials for the learners to promote their language skills efficaciously. For teachers, these texts offer a wide range of teaching materials. It is exact that language used in the newspapers differ from one news and the other and the vocabulary and grammatical structures also vary from day to day, therefore it plays a crucial role to find out the day-to-day language with all the possible idiomatic expressions of the local culture. Teachers can design or decorate their classroom more differently and incredibly that helps to attract students' attention which is the most difficult problem in the classrooms and increase their knowledge. By creating authentic classroom, a teacher can achieve to open a door for learners how a real life is in target language spoken countries. As a result, it influences on students' learning.

The study was conducted in three parts and 2 participants took part in the study. A non-verbal intelligence test consisting of 25 questions was employed to the students in the first section. They had to complete the test for 35 minutes. In the second part, a proficiency test on reading comprehension consisting of 20 questions was provided to the students and they were given 30 minutes to complete the test. The third part of the study was aimed at finding out the communication competence of the students in English. In order to conduct the interview and assess them honestly researcher interviewed students individually. After that, based on their interviews, researcher obtained a result of the communication skills of the students.

Researcher applied the non-verbal intelligence test for the students including 25 questions which was designed and standardized by Raven's Progressive Matrices. The non-verbal test consisted of set of matrixes without any verbal statements. Researcher aimed to measure the non-verbal ability of students and questions were designed to involve students age also. The questions take the form of a matrix of 3x3 which one tile is missing. Eight potential A-H responses were provided for every question. Students had to select the tile that best completes the matrix. The researcher took the test from the open source on web.

A reading comprehension test were used to evaluate the students' language proficiency on reading competence of the language. The reading assessment was developed by Cambridge English Language Assessment. The reading material consists of 20 questions including 3 part which logically sequenced and level of questions were increased in each part. During the test students encountered some problems with parts of the speech, vocabulary and phrases. This test was also taken from the open source on web.

According to Harris (1969) the simplest and the easiest way to measure the students' communicative competence is conducting the interview individually. Like questionnaires interview also commonly used type of research tool in order to collect desired data. In this research, researcher chose structured open-ended questions since open-ended questions require full sentences to answer using students' own knowledge and feelings and cannot be answered with short answers like "yes" and "no". In this approach, topic was controlled by researcher but students were free to speak whatever came to their mind on topic and it was easy to assess their communicative competence in English. Researcher chose basic daily conversational topics in order to assess since it was easier to speak for students also and it allowed to researcher

get overall image of students oral-proficiency. Researcher rated students according to five criteria including pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary and grammar. For each criteria scores were given and then all scores were averaged to evaluate their communicative competence.

CONCLUSIONS

After going through the related literature, it is apparent that however authenticity is not created for non –native –speakers, the utilizing of authentic materials is useful for learning target language teaching and learning equally. Therefore, it should be mentioned that, authentic materials can develop learning effectiveness and teaching methodology. This research has also some implications for further researches. Many other personal factors play crucial role in second language acquisition and intelligence is only one of the factor of these. High intelligence can predict language proficiency achievement; however, it should not be based on only this factor. Therefore, teacher need to consider also low-intelligent students and need to develop a curriculum which covers all types of students no matter how their intelligence level. Employment of variety of task types can create authentic environment and can cause to encouragement on learners. Learners also should bear in mind that intelligence is not only important factor that identifies language learning success. As a conclusion, language learning is a long process that learner`s practice and effort are key factors in achieving success and only intelligence, authenticity and other factors cannot indicate the language acquisition.

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