

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING.

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Abstract: *This article mainly concentrates on four important points. The first point is the purpose of using authentic materials in foreign language classroom. The second one is the role of authentic material use in the second language classroom. Advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials also have been discussed in the paper. Another point of this study will help us to analyze why and how authentic materials could be more effective to develop the language skills of the second language learners. Previous experience and thoughts of some authors and academics will support our research. Difference between published and authentic materials will also be the point of our discussion in this study.*

Key words: *authentic materials, second language, foreign language, study.*

Introduction

Authentic materials in English language teaching refer to materials that are created for native speakers of the language and are not specifically designed for language learners. These materials can include newspapers, magazines, books videos and audio recordings. While using authentic materials in the classroom can have numerous benefits, there are also some potential drawbacks to consider. Instead, the learning content comes from a genuine source like a news outlet, podcast or video platform. The teacher develops questions, activities or projects around the authentic material, graded to the level of their students. There are lots of advantages to teaching English with authentic texts and materials.

Authentic materials are language materials that were originally designed to be used by first language speakers and were not intended for use by language learners (Nunan & Miller, 1995). Authentic materials are everyday materials ‘that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community.’ (Peacock, 1997) but can be used in language teaching or learning.

Authentic texts are extremely useful in language teaching because they are samples of real language and help to bring the ‘real’ world into the classroom. If carefully selected, they motivate learners and involve them in thinking about real problems and situations. Students can be deceived about the true nature of the language

if they are always offered textbook texts. From time to time learners need to assess themselves against real language.

There are a number of advantages for using authentic materials in the language classroom. Learners are exposed to ‘real’ language in context, which helps learners to develop a broader language base. According to Widdowson (1990:67), ‘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.’ Exposure to authentic materials helps language learners to keep informed about what is happening in the world. These materials also help learners to understand that there is a community of language users who use the language outside of the classroom; which promotes language learning and helps to introduce the learners to the target culture. Authentic materials are different to the usual formal learning materials in that they may be more relevant, visually stimulating and target different learning styles. As a result these materials can make lessons more interesting, motivating and memorable for learners. Authentic materials can be used to develop a range of language skills and strategies, including vocabulary and grammar, speaking, reading, writing, listening and critical thinking skills.

One of the greatest advantages of authentic materials is that they are relatively inexpensive and readily available. In the following, we will give some other benefits of authentic materials in the teaching process:

- a) Teach to your students' interests
- b) After getting to know your student (or students) on your first day of tutoring online, you will know plenty about their interest, goals and challenges. Then you can create easily lesson materials that directly relate to student's personal or professional interests and goals.
- c) Real-life language use:
- d) Authentic materials provide students with exposure to real-life language use, including idiomatic expression, colloquial language and cultural references. This can help students develop a more natural and authentic understanding of the language.
- e) Motivation:
- f) Authentic materials can be more engaging and interesting for students compared to traditional textbook exercises. This can help to increase motivation and interest in learning English
- g) Talk about topical stories:
- h) Beyond talking about the things your students are interested in, you can also find content relating to topical news stories or local events. News, so long as it's no upsetting or too controversial, can be a great starting point for any lesson.
- i) Cultural awareness:

- j) Authentic materials can expose to students different cultural perspectives and customs, helping them to gain a better understanding of the culture associated with the English language.
- k) Varied content:
- l) Authentic materials cover a wide range of topics and genres, allowing to students explore different areas of interest and develop their language skills in various contexts.
- m) Make business English class material more relevant:
- n) Business English course books are often quite generic. While they have business-related vocabulary and decent role-play activities you will be lucky to find exercises that fit your student's role.

There are some disadvantages of using authentic materials in the classroom. For example,

- The biggest disadvantage of using authentic materials is that it might reflect idiosyncratic and unusual native speaker usage.
- Another is that it might be copyrighted. Also, newspaper articles are not typically written at the A2 or B1 level. If you are bring in a real newspaper article, students will not be able to handle it.
- Lack of scaffolding: Authentic materials may not provide necessary support and scaffolding that language learners need to comprehend the content. This can lead to frustration and discouragement among students.
- Limited language proficiency: students with lower language proficiency levels may struggle to understand and engage with authentic materials, leading to feelings of inadequacy and demotivation.
- Time- consuming preparation. Teachers may need to spend a significant amount of time adapting and preparing authentic materials for classroom use, which can be time-consuming and challenging.
- Sources of authentic materials: There are many different sources of authentic materials which are at the disposal of the EST teacher, e.g. literature, computer software, media and etc. But selecting contents to work with it is often a difficult task since teachers are to bear in mind concerns such as students interest' and availability of appropriate materials. These learners are generally interested in topics that have to do with their present specialized studies and future professional careers, as it has already been stated.

As for availability, in today's globalized world, there are plentiful sources and examples but it is a fact that the teacher often has a hard time finding and working with relevant material, besides, teacher realize the content of their lessons must be meaningful and the activities engage the students to use the target language to communicate rather than just imitate.

Donna's (2000) opinion is that the authentic materials are not reliable as sources of teaching material due to their lack of correctness, since such production may not be linguistically or theoretically appropriate for the sake of communication or as possible examples to be imitated by our students. In fact, students are not aware that perfection does not on all occasions much reality, no matter whether it is printed or on the Web.

Hammer (1991) defines authentic texts either written or spoken as those which are designed for native speakers; i.e. they are real text created not for language students but the speakers of the language in question. As for Nunan (1989), he considers authentic material as that which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching.

Conclusion:

While authentic materials can offer numerous benefits for English language teaching including exposure to real-life language use, increased motivation and cultural awareness, they also present challenges such as complexity, lack of scaffolding, and time-consuming preparation. It is important for teachers to carefully consider the needs and proficiency levels of their students when incorporating authentic materials into their teaching practices. Balancing the advantages and disadvantages can help ensure that authentic materials are used effectively to support language learning.

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