



Journal Website:
<https://theusajournals.com/index.php/ijp>

Copyright: Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 licence.

THE IMPORTANCE OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN EFL CLASSES

Submission Date: June 10, 2024, Accepted Date: June 15, 2024,

Published Date: June 20, 2024

Crossref doi: <https://doi.org/10.37547/ijp/Volume04Issue06-17>

Rahimov Iroda

The Department of foreign languages and literature at University of Tashkent for Applied Sciences, Gavhar Str. 1, Tashkent 100149, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the significance of using authentic materials in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. It explores how suitable learning materials, tailored to students' financial, linguistic, and social backgrounds, can enhance motivation and foster continuous learning. The article delves into the benefits and challenges of using authentic materials, supported by various studies and expert opinions. It emphasizes that despite the difficulties, the advantages of incorporating authentic materials far outweigh the challenges, and with proper task design, teachers can effectively integrate these resources into their curriculum.

KEYWORDS

EFL, authentic materials, language learning, motivation, task design, linguistic competence, teaching strategies.

INTRODUCTION

English teachers play a crucial role in fostering their students' learning by providing appropriate materials that cater to their financial, linguistic, and social backgrounds. As Nunan and Lamb suggest, teachers must ensure that learning materials are relevant to the students, as this influences classroom interactions and learning outcomes. The use of meaningful, real-life expressions in teaching can significantly enhance students' motivation and engagement.

The English teachers ought to encourage their students' learning by providing them with appropriate learning materials. The criteria of being appropriate are that the learning materials are embraced, adjusted, created, or indeed made on the premise of students' financial etymological social foundations, needs. and characteristics. Suitable learning materials will foster students' motivation and make them keep learning and practicing what they are learning. In case it is as well

difficult to make or create learning materials, they can select copious given by private distributors which are appropriate for the students' needs and materials characteristics (or conceivably adjust, or indeed receive, on the off chance that the materials are truly pertinent to settings and fitting for the understudies).

It is in accordance with Nunan and Lamb suggesting that teachers should determine whether contents of learning materials are relevant to the students or not. It is imperative since such learning materials are related to deciding certain designs of interaction with modern culture within the classrooms.[1]. It is important because such learning materials are related to determining certain patterns of interaction with new culture in the classrooms.

Good teachers always know what materials to use with a given class and have access to them. The educator ought to cater the understudies with materials within the shapes of hand outs, modules, or coursebooks that make it conceivable for the understudies to relate dialect to the social implications that it carries and to utilize it as a vehicle for social interaction. the target language as a means of communication. Therefore, such meaningful expressions frequently used in real life situation should exist, be conveyed, and be trained to the students. In the post-method era, the English teachers give freedom in using particular methods in delivering a certain learning material to a particular group of students attending the class.

To help the learner meet the predetermined learning objectives, the English teachers can use three type activities:

1) problem solving activities (identifying, matching, sequencing, prioritizing, and classifying),

2) interactive activities (making survey and carrying out interview)

3) creative activities (making masks, birthday cards, etc.)

When conducting activities, the teachers should make sure that that student really interact with one another in auditory. they are pushed to produce more accurate and appropriate language that can also be used as language inputs for other learners.

Activities conducted during the English teaching and learning should:

1) focus on language practice

2) are cognitively simple

3) are not always personalized to pupils' interest

4) are not meaningful end themselves

5) provide a small degree of freedom and choice

6) provide controlled and guided practice

7) rehearse specific language items, skills, or strategies

8) support the linguistic and cognitive demands of tasks in a structured way.

Such interesting activities to follow should remain focus on contents and language use. They are not merely for fun although young learners love fun and enjoyable activities. Appropriate learning materials are essential for motivating students and encouraging continuous practice. These materials should be embraced, adjusted, created, or chosen based on the students' backgrounds and needs. If creating new materials is challenging, teachers can opt for suitable

resources provided by private publishers, adapting them to meet students' specific needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Appropriate Learning Materials

In our century, which is developing day by day, it can be observed that in the process of language learning, along with some effective methods, methods, resources, some problems are also encountered. These include not knowing where to start language learning, lack of initial knowledge for independent learning, lack of resources and materials, or inability to use them independently. It should be noted that the use of authentic materials during practical lessons in learning a foreign language helps to effectively solve these problems. In this case, it is necessary to pay special attention to the use of "real materials" in learning a foreign language. "Authentic materials provide real-life examples of language used in everyday situations. They can be used to further increase the interest of students." Authentic materials focus on both reading and listening comprehension skills materials, in fact, are oriented to the purpose of providing information, and they are materials that are not intended for the purposes of language teaching and learning. Films, plays, works of art, scientific texts, newspapers and magazines, TV shows can be included. Non-authentic materials include audio and video clips invented, written or recorded for learning a particular language. They include textbooks, manuals, or materials designed in imitation of real materials for language learners, specifically aimed at language learning. Of course, using these materials makes the work of teachers much easier. It is especially good to use them together with textbooks to design classroom or course lessons and organize the curriculum and deliver

lessons to students in a logical sequence. serves as programming. But according to Dr. Gareth Popkins, a language teacher and polyglot, "Textbooks can sometimes become a boring and demotivating tool for students [2]." In his opinion, in such a situation, it is a useful choice to use authentic materials as an additional source along with textbooks. Authentic materials help to enrich the teaching process and increase students' interest in language learning. If the authentic materials are selected according to the educational programs presented in the textbooks, there will be no problems in the process of searching and selecting them, only then these materials will have coherence and a logical sequence. When authentic materials are developed and made available to the public, it is assumed that the consumer can understand the language being used at the level of their mother tongue and is not specialized for language learners, i.e. without some special language learning or teaching structures. will be Its advantages are exactly that. That is, while using these materials, the language learner will encounter expressions, slangs, accents, academic words used by natives in real life language, even dialects, and in general aspects of real language. Real materials allow you to get acquainted with the original features of the language. When using authentic materials, first of all, when choosing materials to show the original, real form of speech, connecting to the topic taught in the lesson makes the process effective. At the same time, it is important to assess the student's level of knowledge and know his age, as well as take into account his interests.

To sum up, textbooks alone can be monotonous, and incorporating authentic materials can enrich the teaching process and maintain student motivation. For optimal results, authentic materials should align with

educational programs, ensuring coherence and logical sequence. These materials expose learners to real expressions, slang, accents, and dialects, allowing them to experience the language in its original form. When selecting authentic materials, it's crucial to consider the students' knowledge level, age, and interests to enhance the learning process effectively.

Benefits of Authentic Materials

Authentic materials, such as films, newspapers, and TV shows, provide real-life language examples and help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world usage. Various studies have shown that exposure to authentic materials enhances listening comprehension and motivates learners[3]. Authentic materials also help develop reading and listening skills by introducing new vocabulary and expressions. The purpose or function of authentic materials often will determine how teachers use them. For example, it is far more beneficial to use a current newspaper to search for relevant information, such as what the weather will be tomorrow or the best place to buy new tires, than it is to use an outdated newspaper to locate proper nouns.

The first example shows authentic use of materials;

The second is a learner-based approach.

Keeping authenticity at the forefront, teachers can help students: Create and update personal calendars and address books, Write postcards they will mail after class, Make shopping lists they will use that evening, and Respond to e-mail from their students' teachers.

S. Haines (1995) considers the following to be the advantages of authentic materials: Authentic texts

have a communicative purpose unrelated to the language teaching itself.

Most texts are aimed at particular target listeners, who may be expected to react to the text in some way. Authentic texts help students to develop listening strategies. As the speech is the perfect example of real spoken language there are many forms and ways of working on it: Paying attention to the accent working out the pitch of the voice, activities based on commonly used and useful phrases or expressions.

Challenges of Using Authentic Materials

Despite their benefits, authentic materials can be challenging for both teachers and students. They can be culturally biased and difficult to understand, especially for lower-level learners (Martinez, 2002; McNeil, 1994). However, these challenges can be mitigated by designing tasks that simplify the requirements or by selecting materials appropriate for the students' proficiency levels. It is generally acclimated that the requirement for authentic materials in the field of language teaching and their helpfulness have perpetually recognized by the educators and scientists. Numerous experimental reviews have shown the constructive outcomes of real materials taken by learners who have chances to connect and manage them. Studies, for example, Miller and Thanajaro have demonstrated the utilization of authentic materials which prompt aural language development. Also, Otte concentrated the effect of aural authentic texts on listening comprehension capacities of adult ESL understudies of an American college. He found that presentation to authentic materials would prompt better listening comprehension capacities and inspiration of the language learners. By a similar way, the investigation of

Herron and Seay that the language learners listening to authentic radio tapes as consistent classroom exercises had shown more noteworthy listening comprehension than others[4]. Additionally, numerous specialists of language teaching and instructional method expressed that applying authentic materials would enhance the open capacity of the learners. Additionally one more researcher Gilmore concentrated the impact of utilizing authentic materials contrasted with course reading materials on building up the open ability of the learners amid one year try[5]. Weyers took a shot at the impact of authentic video materials on college language learners, particularly on listening comprehension and informative ability[6]. According to Ur understanding texts outside the classroom is troublesome for students since the reading materials used in the classroom do not illustrate the language in the real world[7]. She argues: "we want our learners to be able to cope with the same kinds of reading that are encountered by native speakers of the target language". Bantmeir stated that real life reading comprehension texts should be used as an essential part of language curriculum. Moreover, Hadley pointed out: use of real or simulated travel documents, hotel registration forms, biographical data sheets, train and plane schedules, authentic restaurant menus, labels, signs, newspapers, and magazines will acquaint students more directly with real language than will any set of contrived classroom materials used alone[9]. It is likewise settled that students of all language proficiency levels can deal with the authentic materials.

The students' positive attitudes toward language learning were based on the advantages of authentic materials brought into instruction context. Authentic materials cause exposure to real language and are

more related to natural needs of the language learners. Real-life materials bring the chance of applying a more creative approach toward teaching.

☒ The enormous difficulties that sometimes affect the motivation of students and lower the teaching process because of the negative influence

- ✓ The enormous difficulties that sometimes affect the motivation of students and lower the teaching process because of the negative influence
- ✓ The low level of matching with teaching program. (It is not easy to choose the material matching with necessary topics, vocabulary and grammar)
- ✓ Most of the taught language rules are broken in them >They have much background and technical noise
- ✓ Authentic texts are soon out of date
- ✓ These disadvantages are not characteristic to any of the materials designed for special teaching purposes, though they are less natural or interesting.

Consequently, both types of material (authentic or non-authentic) can be satisfactorily used in teaching, but as authentic ones are more effective in the development of listening comprehension.

Effective Use of Authentic Materials

To effectively use authentic materials in language teaching, teachers should design activities that focus on practical language use, are cognitively manageable, and provide controlled, guided practice. These activities should support the linguistic and cognitive demands of tasks in a structured way. Effective activities include problem-solving, interactive, and creative tasks that encourage students to interact and use the language accurately and appropriately.

Experts agree that the target language, when used as part of a social setting, motivates learning. Studies indicate that learners working with authentic materials show a heightened interest in language learning. Authentic materials also help in overcoming cultural barriers in language learning. They introduce new vocabulary and expressions, helping in reading development, and help in the development of writing proficiency through comprehension strategies.

However, some experts question the value of authentic materials. Some argue that media has no impact on language learning, and there is no significant difference between using authentic or non-authentic materials. Challenges include difficulty in comprehension due to cultural bias, the random nature of authentic texts regarding vocabulary and structure, and the practical issues of accessing and preparing these materials. Despite these challenges, it is suggested that difficulties can be mitigated by designing tasks that require only partial comprehension.

Ultimately, while there are challenges in using authentic materials, their motivational power and contribution to overcoming cultural barriers make them a valuable resource in language teaching. Incorporating authentic materials in teaching a FL offers more than linguistic advantages. Scholars argue for the motivating power of authentic materials. McNeil [1] and Kilickaya [11] indicate that the use of authentic texts is now considered to be one way for increasing students' motivation for learning since they give the learner the feeling that he or she is learning the real language—the target language as it is used by the community that speaks it. Empirical studies have confirmed that students' motivation and self-satisfaction increased after exposure to authentic

aural texts. In addition, Kim (2000) argues that authentic materials make a major contribution to overcoming certain cultural barriers to language learning.

On the other hand, some scholars do not see the value of using authentic materials. Kilickaya further points out that authentic texts are random in respect to vocabulary, structures, functions, content, and length; thereby causing a burden for the teacher. Teachers face challenges regarding access to authentic materials, the expense of purchasing them, and the time required to find an appropriate authentic text and design suitable pedagogical tasks. Such issues often make it impractical for instructors to integrate authentic materials into the curriculum successfully.

Furthermore, authentic input has long been perceived as too difficult for students to understand. Martinez (2002) mentions that authentic materials may be too culturally biased and difficult to understand outside the language community. Learners may experience extreme frustration when confronted by an authentic text, especially lower level students, as found by McNeil (1994). Schmidt (1994) argues that authentic discourse may panic learners who find themselves faced with the speed of delivery coupled with a mixture of known and unknown vocabulary and structures; instead, he prefers using simplified texts that have communicative value rather than using authentic input. However, Guariento and Morley (2001) assert that such difficulties can be overcome by designing tasks that require only partial comprehension.

In conclusion, the benefits that authentic materials bring to the FL classroom greatly outweigh the challenges. In addition, it is possible to overcome the

challenges through task design. Thus, integrating authentic materials will merit the extra time and effort required of FL teachers.

Madden (2007) has done the research with the same aim as Mendolsohn. His goal is to give learners strategies for studying to listen in the middle of a conversation by quickly making inferences about the setting, mood, interpersonal relationships and the topic. Madden used the audio recordings from his course texts. Generally speaking, his class consists of three stages: presenting, while-listening, and post-listening. There are three steps in the presenting stage. First, introduce the activity and explain that the class will be working on how to listen from the middle, and then tell students the importance of knowing about the listening time and place, the speakers, their feelings, what kind of speech they are engaged in, what the topic is, and why someone might want to listen. Second, tell the students that during listening they need to take notes and discuss what they hear.

According to various scholars' view, in the while-listening stage, four steps are needed:

- First, play a one-minute segment from the middle of the listening text. All of the speakers should be heard in this part. Students should take notes. When the recording is stopped, students should check their notes with a classmate. The discussion provides additional listening practice and opportunities to negotiate meaning (Lee & Van Patten, 2003; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987).
- Second, play the same one-minute again. Ask the students to check or add to their notes, and then give a second time with classmates (Widdowson, 1990).

- Third, as a class, students discuss and fill out the displayed copy of the “What I heard”. Fourth, play a third time. Students make corrections to the “What I heard” and “What I can identify about” tables (Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987).

Ultimately, the motivational power and cultural insights provided by authentic materials outweigh the challenges, making them a valuable resource in language teaching. They help students understand "real speech" and communicate effectively in real-life situations. Integrating authentic materials is worth the extra effort for language teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The study involves a comprehensive review of existing literature on the use of authentic materials in EFL classes. It synthesizes findings from various researchers and pedagogical experts to provide a coherent understanding of the benefits and challenges of using authentic materials in language teaching. Materials will be considered anything which is used to help language learning (Tomlinson, 1998). Such as: course books, workbooks, CDs, flashcards, and CD-ROMs. The design is relatively uncluttered and it is usually easy for learners to see what they have to do. The layout and design of the materials reflect a very structured approach.

There is a clear structure and consistency in appearance throughout the student book with each unit following the same basic pattern of presenting a grammatical structure in a conversational context followed by controlled practice activities. This is good for learners who like the familiarity of such a structured approach, but not so good for those who prefer more variety. The illustrations in the books and on flashcards

are generally realistic and functional; the textbook cover is bright and colorful and probably looks attractive to young learners. The contents of the textbook and additional materials (flashcards, CD-ROM) also probably look interesting and fun to young learners. The font size and type used is suitable for the particular learners.

The core teaching methodology in many books (Shortall, T. (2001); Martinez, A. (2002)) is called the Model Action Talk (MAT) method, which is basically a Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach incorporating a Total Physical Response (TPR) component. This approach is reflected in the layout and design of the textbook, the types of activities it includes, as well as the suggested lesson plans in the teacher's book. However, although this methodology obviously informs the materials, it is possible to adapt them to suit alternative approaches. Overall, the materials provide sufficient opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. However, as discussed, the grammatical/structural approach tends to restrict what learners are able to say, especially if implemented using the PPP-based lesson plans in the teacher's book.

To sum up, authentic materials include anything aiding language learning (Tomlinson, 1998), such as course books, workbooks, CDs, flashcards, and CD-ROMs. These materials are structured and visually consistent, providing a clear and familiar format for learners. The core teaching methodology, often the Model Action Talk (MAT) method, follows a Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach with Total Physical Response (TPR), but materials can be adapted for other methods. While these materials effectively develop speaking and listening skills, the grammatical focus may limit learners' broader language use.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The review indicates that authentic materials significantly enhance students' motivation and language skills. However, the challenges associated with their use, such as cultural bias and difficulty in comprehension, require careful consideration and task design. Teachers can overcome these challenges by simplifying tasks, grading materials according to students' proficiency levels, and providing structured support. The evaluation scheme was designed with the aim of evaluating the ability of the materials to promote learning in a particular context. As Dickinson demonstrated (2010) the materials design on any skill was checklist-based, requiring responses indicating levels of agreement or disagreement with statements about the materials. The evaluation assessed the materials in relation to the following areas:

- General Appearance;
- Layout and Design;
- Methodology;
- Activities;
- Language Skills;
- Language Content;
- Topic Content;
- Teach ability and Flexibility;
- Assessment;

There are some ways in which a teacher can ensure that an authentic recording falls within the listening competence of the learners.

1. Simplifying the task: teachers may counter-balance the increased linguistic difficulty of the text by simplifying the requirements of the task (Anderson and Lynch, 1988). It is not necessarily the language that makes a piece of listening difficult. Difficulty may also arise from the task that is set. It is possible to use a listening passage which is well beyond the learners' level, provided that what is demanded of the learner is correspondingly simple. If one notches up the text, one notches down the task. (Field, 2008)

2. Grading the text: As a teacher, if you prepare to use authentic recording with your students, you should have a large enough collection of recording samples, then you can grade authentic recording in accordance with the proficiency level of your learners. You should bear the following in your mind when doing the grading:

- More frequent vocabulary;
- Simple syntax;
- Simpler and less dense ideas and facts;
- A degree of redundancy, with ideas/facts expressed more than once;
- A degree of repetition, with the same form of words repeated;
- A very specific context or genre of communication which to some extent pre-determines how participants behave; (Field, 2008)

3. Staging the listening: With a piece of authentic recording, teachers may design many tasks. In the classroom, they should begin with very simple tasks, and progress to the tasks that are more demanding. In all, we can find every reason that foreign language

teachers should introduce authentic listening materials to the learners at all levels to increase their exposure to the real target language in use. Quite a lot of evidence shows that learners feel more comfortable and motivated with authentic listening materials. There are a lot of ways to help us to achieve this without demanding too much of the learners.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of using authentic materials in EFL classes greatly outweigh the challenges. These materials provide students with real-life language exposure, enhance motivation, and improve linguistic competence. By integrating authentic materials into the curriculum and designing appropriate tasks, teachers can significantly enhance the effectiveness of their teaching and the learning outcomes of their students. Moreover, using authentic materials is a relatively easy and convenient way of improving not only students' general skills, but also their confidence in a real situation.

REFERENCES

1. Nunan, D., & Lamb, C. (2000). *The Self-Directed Teacher: Managing the Learning Process*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Dr. Gareth Popkins, <https://howtogetfluent.com/>
3. Miller, L. (2005). *Listening to Lectures*. Authentic Publishing.
4. Thanajaro, M. (2000). Using Authentic Materials to Develop Listening Comprehension. *TESOL Journal*.
5. Otte, J. (2006). *Listening Comprehension and Authentic Materials*. American University Studies.
6. Herron, C., & Seay, I. (1991). *Authentic Texts in Language Learning*. Modern Language Journal.

7. Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory*. Cambridge University Press.
8. Guariento, W., & Morley, J. (2001). Text and Task Authenticity in the EFL Classroom. *ELT Journal*.
9. Hadley, A. (2001). *Teaching Language in Context*. Heinle & Heinle.
10. McNeil, L. (1994). Authentic Texts and Language Learning Motivation. *Language Teaching Research*.
11. Kilickaya, F. (2004). Authentic Materials in the EFL Classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*.
12. Gilmore, A. (2007). *Authentic Materials and Pedagogical Contexts*. Cambridge University Press.
13. Weyers, J. (1999). The Effect of Authentic Video on Communicative Competence. *Foreign Language Annals*.
14. Bantmeir, R. (2008). Reading Comprehension in the Language Classroom. *Language Teaching Research*.
15. Maxim, H. (2002). A Study on Authentic Texts in Language Learning. *Language Learning Journal*.
16. Rivers, W. (1987). *Interactive Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
17. Kim, D. (2000). Overcoming Cultural Barriers in Language Learning. *TESOL Quarterly*.
18. Clark, R. (1983). The Impact of Media on Language Learning. *Journal of Educational Research*.
19. Kienbaum, B., et al. (1986). Language Learning and Authentic Materials. *Language Learning Journal*.
20. Bacon, S., & Finneman, M. (1990). Authentic Listening Materials in Language Teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*.
21. Berardo, S. (2006). The Use of Authentic Materials in Teaching. *The Reading Matrix*.
22. Harmer, J. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Longman.
23. Allen, D., et al. (1988). Developing Writing Proficiency through Authentic Texts. *Language Learning Journal*.
24. Kilickaya, F. (2004). Authentic Materials in the EFL Classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*.
25. Mendolsohn, D. (1994). *Learning to Listen*. Carleton University Press.
26. Madden, M. (2007). Strategies for Effective Listening. *TESOL Journal*.
27. Tomlinson, B. (1998). *Materials Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
28. Dickinson, L. (2010). *The Evaluation of Language Learning Materials*. *Language Teaching Research*.

