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Integrative Approaches to Developing Speaking Skills Through Authentic Materials

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Abstract: This article examines the effectiveness of integrative approaches and the use of authentic materials in developing speaking skills. The authors promote a communicative approach, recommending authentic materials—such as films, interviews, podcasts, and everyday conversations—as key tools to help language learners develop the ability to communicate in real-life situations. The article highlights the advantages of an integrative methodology that combines grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural context. Based on research, this approach is shown to increase learner engagement, boost motivation, and help students speak more fluently and confidently.

Keywords: Authentic materials, CLT, theory, practice, explanation.

Introduction: Students may easily access a wealth of knowledge, even resources not meant for educational purposes, thanks to the growing popularity of online learning. According to Nunan (1988), authentic resources are those that are not produced with language instruction in mind, but instead for practical reasons. These resources are not meant to teach language; rather, they are meant to facilitate communication. Because of their authenticity, authentic materials have the potential to be useful teaching tools. They also provide learners numerous important benefits that encourage strong motivation and interest in language acquisition. However, it can be difficult and time-consuming to use authentic materials in a foreign language school. English language instructors should encourage language acquisition and act as mediators by using real resources to help EFL students become more interculturally competent.

Since authentic products are delivered in the native tongue, they facilitate genuine communication. Authentic materials come in a variety of forms, including realia or real-world materials, authentic printed materials, authentic visual or viewing materials, and authentic audio or hearing resources. Podcasts, blogs, YouTube videos, and online news are examples of authentic resources that are available online. One excellent strategy to increase motivation and interest in learning a new language is to use real resources. Nonetheless, it can be difficult and time-consuming to use real-world examples in a language instruction. To accommodate the goals and interests of the students, the content must be changed. Students improve their communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and cultural awareness when they use real resources. Using real resources to learn a language has many advantages, such as boosting motivation.

Literature review

Over the past three decades, there has been a lot of debate about the meanings of the ill-defined terms "authentic" and "authenticity," as well as how they relate to language learning. The beginning of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s served as the impetus for this. CLT rejected earlier, purely structural methods to language learning and made room for the use of authentic texts—texts that had been produced with a sincere communicative intent—by prioritising communication over form. The emergence of texts and interactions on information and communications technologies (ICT) has further complicated the so-called "authenticity debate," in which the definition of authenticity has been applied to everything from a text's initial appearance to the user's perception and validation. Prior to receiving

After a century of frantic research and progress in language teaching practice, the modern version of the concept of communicativeness arose in the 1970s. Academic approaches gave way to experiments with so-called "natural" and "direct" methodologies, and the first attempts to use technology for educational objectives occurred during the previous century. Though the synthesis of CLT was influenced by all of these methods to some extent, its true origins can be found in the emergence of the new discipline of linguistics around the turn of the century. This led to the development of the field of psycholinguistics, which examines the mental processes involved in language acquisition.

Chomsky's concept of competence was eventually reformulated as "communicative competence," which included language use: "The rules of grammar would be useless without the rules of use" (Hymes 1971; 1979: 15). According to Brumfit and Johnson (1979: 13–14), competence was now defined as "the overall underlying knowledge and ability for language use which the speaker-listener possesses [...] this involves far more than knowledge of (and ability for) grammaticality." To put it another way, a person's communicative competence included both what they needed to know about the language and its culture and how well they could utilise it to communicate effectively—that is, to achieve the intended result from the engagement. The foundation of CLT is this idea of communicative competence.

Former teaching priorities were reoriented by the communicative philosophy, which called for teaching language through communication rather than language through communication (Allwright 1979: 167). Effective communication was the aim, and language was only the tool; language was learnt through attempts to communicate in the target language. A fundamental tenet of CLT, namely the importance of meaning over form, was expressed by the notion of employing texts "communicatively," that is, by taking advantage of them for their content rather than their grammatical structure. The design of and student participation in truly communicative activities is the central tenet of the communicative technique, and it is also where it may and does so often falter. Early CLT exercises typically employed the information gap technique, which required communication from learners to close the gap (Johnson 1979: 201).

What is authentic material?

Due to a fundamental ambiguity, the term "authenticity" causes misunderstanding (Widdowson 1983: 30). It was most likely not intended to be as understated as it is now, twenty years after it was written. The contemporary concern with authenticity in language learning is the result of dominant currents from three areas, which have recurred frequently throughout the history of language education, as the previous section has demonstrated. The first comes from SLA research; the second comes from language pedagogy itself, specifically communicative approaches to language learning; and the third comes from sociology, namely the increasing impact of ICT (information and communications technology) on our work and learning practices.

Second, as was seen in the preceding section, the concept of authenticity is ingrained in the dominant language pedagogies, which are communicative and independent modes of learning. Communicative language teaching (CLT) places a strong focus on "real" language use, which raises the question of what is authentic and real. In contrast, students who are learning a language on their own have to make decisions about the resources and text types they utilise. The third "current" involving the idea of authenticity is the growing use of electronic resources, or ICT.

Part of this book's assumption is the importance of input, which has frequently been at the heart of SLA ideas. The idea of "comprehensible input" (Krashen 1981, etc.), which is renowned for being i+1, is one of the most well-known variants. It means that the input should be just above the learner's current level but yet understandable enough for him or her to understand (1981:102-3). According to Krashen, a learner picks up a second language by trying to bridge the gap between what they already know and such material. Therefore, in a way, acquisition is triggered by the input's incomprehensibility rather than its comprehensibility (White 1984: 95).

Advantages of authentic material

One of the main arguments in favour of using authentic texts for language learning is the incentive aspect. First of all, it's telling that motivation has been described using concepts that are commonly used to characterise how students engage with real texts: According to Peacock (1997), "motivation" in this study is defined as "interest in and enthusiasm for the materials used in class; persistence with the learning task, as demonstrated by levels of attention or action for an extended duration; and levels of concentration and enjoyment." It would seem that authentic learning texts are the best motivators if they are interpreted as referents for or elements of motivation, as Peacock proposes (ibid.: 145–6).

Today's literature typically defines the kind of motivation Peacock outlines above as intrinsic—that is,

driven by the learner's own interest or curiosity—as opposed to extrinsic—that is, driven by outside influences (Arnold and Brown 1999: 14). However, the more "traditional" notions of language learning motivation can be more applicable to our situation. Motivation is traditionally classified as originating from a desire to accomplish a practical goal (instrumental motivation) or to integrate with the target language group (integrative motivation) (Gardner and Lambert 1972). Integrative motivation is by far the more persuasive of the two and is always linked to second language proficiency (Ellis 1994: 510).

"Aspects of emotion, feeling, mood, or attitude which condition behaviour" is a relevant definition of affect in the context of language learning (Arnold and Brown 1999: 1). Affective aspects have been conceptualised as a "affective filter" that influences language acquisition (Krashen, e.g. 1981: 22). The phrase describes how learners' receptivity to the target language is changed by affective and attitudinal elements. One explanation for why integratively driven language learners perform better than instrumentally motivated ones is that their engagement with the target language lowers their affective filter. Numerous factors, such as the learner's sociocultural background, personality, and attitude towards the target language and the TL speaking society, influence how strong this filter is.

Another element that has been argued to be crucial to effective learning is engagement (see, for instance, Harmer 1996: 11). Participating in a text or activity diverts the learner's attention from the primary goal, which is language acquisition. This lowers anxiety, lowers the affective filter, and permits acquisition to occur. This has always been a compelling argument in favour of using authentic materials: "There are strong indications from psychological and psycholinguistic research that the quality of a given psychological interaction relates to the extent to which the interactant sees the material being processed as having personal significance." Participation in a text or learning activity also requires a certain level of empathy, either with the topic under discussion, the interlocutor, or whatever the activity entails. (Little and others, 1989: 5–6)

CONCLUSION

This article has examined some of SLA research that is pertinent to using input from texts in real languages. It has been shown that the majority of recent research findings seem to support the use of real texts in language learning. While the complexity of actual input is demonstrated to be advantageous in several ways, the legitimacy of the pedagogical approach of "simplifying" material is being questioned. The significance of having a rich linguistic framework in which to operate has been brought to light by a greater knowledge of inductive language processing. It has been demonstrated that rich material fosters the development of emotive elements that are critical to learning, particularly motivation and engagement. Furthermore, there is glaringly little concrete proof of how structured language training affects things like grammatical precision, acquisition sequence, or learning durability.

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