

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTIC READING MATERIALS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING SKILLS**

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There are many references to authentic material in the ELT literature. Debates are still raging on why it should or should not be included in lessons, and how it is to be used or best exploited. Reading the literature, it is clear that those authors who support the use of authentic material have in common one idea: "exposure". In other words, the benefit students get from being exposed to the language in authentic materials. Peacock (1997) defines authentic materials as materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purpose in the language community differentiates between "authentic" and "genuine material". He believes that Authentic would be material designed for native speakers of English used in the classroom in a way similar to the one it was designed for. For example, a radio news report brought into the class so students discuss the report on pollution in the city where learners live. Most of the time, though, this material is used in a genuine way, in other words, not in the way it was intended, but in a somewhat artificial way. For example, news article where the paragraphs are cut up and jumbled so students have to put them back together in the correct order. Teachers who hold positive beliefs towards using authentic material in the classroom, even when not done in an authentic situation, argue that Textbooks often do not display incidental English while authentic reading could be useful for many reasons, amongst which are: Students are exposed to real discourse, as in videos of

- interviews with famous people where intermediate students listen for gist. Authentic materials keep students informed about what is
- happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value. As teachers, we are educators working within the school system, so education and general development are part of our responsibilities (Sanderson, 1999). They can produce a sense of achievement, e.g., a
- brochure on England given to students to plan a four-day visit. The same piece of material can be used under different
- circumstances if the task is different. Language change is reflected in the materials so that
- students and teachers can keep abreast of such changes. Reading texts are ideal to teach/practise mini-skills such

- as scanning, e.g. students are given a news article and asked to look for specific information (numbers, percentages, etc.). The teacher can have students practice some of the micro-skills mentioned by Richards (1983), e.g. students listen to news reports to identify the names of countries, famous people, etc. Books, articles, newspapers with a wide variety of text

- types, language styles not easily found in conventional teaching materials. They can encourage reading for pleasure because they

- are likely to contain topics of interest to learners, especially if students are given the chance to have a say about the topics or kinds of authentic materials to be used in class. On the other side, those holding negative beliefs against using authentic materials inside the classroom may claim that: They may be too culturally biased, so may cause some

- type of cross-cultural communication breakdown. The vocabulary might not be relevant to the student's

- immediate needs and above their levels; Hatch and Brown (1995) argue that vocabulary is the list of words that speakers of a particular language use. Words in this context means not only single items, e.g. " dog " but also string of words which together form one lexical item, e.g. idioms such as " keep someone on his toe" or common expressions such as " once upon a time". Too many structures are mixed so lower levels have a

- hard time decoding the texts. Special preparation is necessary which can be time and

- effort consuming. With listening: too many different accents that are really

- too difficult to follow. Actually the most commonly used authentic reading materials perhaps are; newspapers, TV programs, menus, magazines, the internet, movies, songs, brochures, comics, literature (novels, poems and short stories), and so forth. A relevant example of involving using authentic magazine advertisements is the following: Students are set in groups of 3-4 and get some four adverts. They are to imagine they are working for an advertising agency and compare the ads taking into account the texts and the photographs. Students are to decide on which the best is and which the worst is. Then they redesign the worst ad, including the text. Ads with short texts might be used with slow learners, while those containing more complex texts are for intermediate or shinning students.

Some purposes of applying authentic materials in the classroom, there are:

1. The chance in receiving the real information and to find out what happened in the society of the world; in this situation, the students have an opportunity to explore and get the news of what happened of current issue

in so many part of the world. It is believed to be very motivating because the information that is served in authentic materials is truly pure made by the native speaker, then the students will try to give their best by being intense and focus in comprehending the material.

2. The students will earn the real language materials as much as possible; even if the classroom is not a “real-life” situation; authentic material plays the role in replacing the absence of the “ real world” by giving the students the materials which are using and available in native speaker’s country only.

3. The materials give a sense of achievement to the learner; at first, the students may notice that the materials is different compare to the usual material that is used in the classroom every day. They probably do not realize that the usual materials is design just for pedagogical purpose. However, eventually students will acquire the feel of satisfactory and passion in learning the authentic materials because of they will be assured about the point that they are able to understand not only the easy/simplified English material but also the real one as well.

Overall, applying authentic texts in the classroom has many purposes. The students can be always up to date with the current issue in the world. And this is will increase students’ motivation in learning Reading Comprehension. Besides, authentic texts also bring students in real situation although classroom is not the real situation but authentic text can represent the absence of the real world, moreover authentic texts will help students in producing the achievement in classroom.

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