

The Role Of Authentic Materials In The Development Of Professional Competences Of EFL Students

Sabohat Sharipova

Sevara Ziyaboyeva

Marifat Kazakova

EFL teachers

Namangan State University

Abstract:

The current new teaching goal in EFL teaching in Uzbekistan is to train future specialists to use English in face-to-face communication as well as to retrieve, process, and exchange professionally useful information from various authentic sources. This is the main difference between the new and the traditional EFL teaching programs. In the new approach, the teaching goal is no longer merely knowledge about the language, but also on developing communication skills for everyday life and professional or commercial exchange in the target language. To achieve these goals the role of authentic materials are crucial in the development of language competences of future EFL students. In this article, we define and describe authentic materials, and outline benefits and challenges of using them. And we offer suggestions for selecting and finding locally relevant authentic materials which help students to develop their professional competences.

Keywords: authentic, authentic materials, professional competence, communicative competence, EFL.

Materials and Methods

What are authentic materials? Researches show that authentic materials were defined and argued a lot by many scholars. Swaffar (1985) says that “an authentic text, oral or written, is the one whose primary purpose is to communicate meaning”. According to Little, Devitt, and Singleton, Thomas(2014) an authentic

text is “to fulfill some social purpose” in the language community in which it was produced” .For Tomlinson (2012), “an authentic text is one which is produced in order to communicate rather than to teach. The text does not have to be produced by a native speaker and it might be a version of an original which has been simplified to facilitate communication” . Authentic materials are “used in the students’ specialist subject area, written by specialists, for specialists” (Jordan, 1997). Tomlinson (2012) argues that authentic materials can provide meaningful exposure to language as it is actually used, motivate learners and help them develop a range of communicative competencies and enhance positive attitudes towards the learning of a language”. Gilmore (2007) states that “authentic materials, particularly audio-visual ones, offer a much richer source of input for learners and have the potential to be exploited in different ways and on different levels to develop learners’ communicative competence” . Spelleri (2002) notes that “authentic materials offer real language that is contextually rich and culturally pertinent” . Peacock (1997) empirically investigated the use of authentic materials in the classroom and concluded that motivation and on-task behavior increased significantly when learners used authentic materials.

- expose learners to language that serves a useful purpose;
- provide a refreshing change from the textbook;
- focus more closely on learners’ interests and needs;
- provide information about a variety of topics;
- increase learners’ motivation; and
- connect the classroom with the outside world.

As the coin has two sides, despite about mentioned benefits of authentic materials there are such challenges any EFL teacher might face when using them in the classroom. Gilmore(2007) argues that “authenticity doesn’t necessarily mean *good*, just as contrivance doesn’t necessarily mean *bad*”. Gilmore(2007) says that it is difficult to “accurately measure learners’ motivation in classroom-based studies” .

He recommends “careful planning, selection and sequencing of materials and tasks” to overcome the challenges associated with using authentic materials (Gilmore 2007; Peacock 1997; Spelleri 2002; Tomlinson 2012):

- The cultural content may seem too unfamiliar.
- Vocabulary may be too specialized
- Grammar structure may be too complex
- Preparation might take a lot of time

Regardless these challenges, carefully selected authentic materials based on the analyses of learner’s needs can rich significantly EFL teaching and learning.

Hence, authentic materials are produced for real communication and that the purpose of authentic materials is to communicate meaning and information rather than to teach language. The key to understanding what makes materials authentic is to think of them as texts that were not intentionally produced for language classrooms or learners. Two examples of the types of authentic materials that create engaging EFL classroom activities are cooking recipes and restaurant menus. These texts are authentic because they were created to communicate useful information in the real world rather than to teach language. The ongoing evolution of web content and web applications ensures that the possible sources and formats of authentic materials are ever expanding and diversifying. There is no doubt that the vast majority of teachers use video at some point during their teaching. With help of videos, teachers can integrate the outside world into the classroom. Short footage, newscasts, posters, documentaries, TED talks, YouTube, dramas and even educational clips on the internet or on different massager programs can serve as authentic real-world and up-to-date educational content. They can create a unique, relevant and fun lesson to immerse students in their learning.

Our teaching experiences have made us believe that any person, irrespective of his/her age, abilities and education, *can* learn how to speak British English with great pleasure. The goal of English instruction should be to give students the

chance and the means to speak the language. The authentic task is to be both efficient and inspirational focusing on the topics such as the arts, customs, food, holidays, places, situations, and traditions that should give students such opportunities to engage in critical thinking and cross-cultural communication expressing as attitudes, perceptions, and values. The Internet is a powerful source of authentic materials. Use it to find authentic materials relevant to your own EFL context such as those listed below.

BLOGS

Blogs are rich in lively sources of authentic materials. Blog postings are usually short texts, which are often accompanied by an image or a short video. Use Google's Advanced Search interface (www.google.com/advanced_search) to search for blogs and blog postings. First, input the name of a student's country, city, or region, and then input terms like *blog* and *expat*. If necessary, narrow your results by language, region, last update, and other factors.

TED Talks

Ted Talks offer us authentic listening where many hundreds of amazing TED speakers make their ideas worth sharing. TED Talks are influential videos from expert speakers on education, business, science, medicine, technology, sport, health, art, culture and other fields. You can visit to www.ted.com to find authentic listening materials relevant to your own EFL context.

FILMS

If your EFL context is somehow related to a commercially produced movie, you will find the Internet Movie Database (IMDb; www.imdb.com) website useful. IMDb calls itself "the world's most popular and authoritative source for movie, TV and celebrity content." IMDb contains "more than 100 million data items including more than 2 million movies, TV and entertainment programs and more than 4 million cast and crew members."

MAGAZINES

The following websites offer content about current events that is similar to content in print magazines. These websites feature true stories related to many countries in the world. The articles are often accompanied by maps, photos, illustrations, and audio and video recordings. Input the name of a student's country in the Search box.

- National Public Radio (www.npr.org). Themes: News, Art & Design, Books, Business, Food, Health, Movies, Music, Opinion, Performing Arts, Politics, Pop Culture, Science, Sports, Technology
- Voice of America (www.voanews.com). Themes: News, Arts & Entertainment, Business & Economy, Health, Science & Technology

NEWSPAPERS

Many countries have at least one locally published English-language newspaper. Use the ABYZ News Links website (www.abyznewslinks.com) to search for newspapers in a student's country, city, or region. The code ENG in the far right column of your search results list indicates that a given newspaper is published in English

PROFESSIONAL ARTICLES

Newspaper and magazine articles (news, reports, feature articles, popular science articles from such magazines as *Uzbekistan Today*, *The Economist*, *The NewScientist*, *National Geographic*, *Teaching English Professional*) *UzTEA Newsletter*, *EnglishTeaching Professional*, *Modern English Teacher*)

<https://www.uz24.uz> ,
<https://www.etprofessional.com>
<https://www.uztea.uz>
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com>
<https://www.modernenglishteacher.com>

POSTERS

Meaningful posters in teaching EFL can motivate students to learn better and inspire them focus on a certain idea, fact, event or process. You can find meaningful posters relevant to your own EFL context from the website: www.printmeposter.com, www.allposters.com, www.handmadeposters.com

Dramas

Drama is an effective way of helping students to use languages in action.. Activities can include role-play, drama games, improvisation, group discussion and individual or pair work. You can find dramas relevant to your own EFL context from the website www.dramarecouse.com.

Conclusion

We can conclude briefly by saying that authentic materials should focus on relevance and help students stay connected to their reality: the context in which they live outside the EFL classroom. Also, authentic materials should be focused on students' personal interests and and appropriate to their language proficiency levels.

Hence, authentic materials enrich EFL teaching and learning when the materials are selected with sensitivity to the context, and when they are used to communicate meaning and information.

References:

1. Swaffar, J. K. 1985. Reading authentic texts in a foreign language: A cognitive model. *The Modern Language Journal* 69 (1): 15–34.
2. Tomlinson, B. 2012. Materials development for language learning and teaching. *Language Teaching* 45 (2): 143–179.
3. Gilmore, A. 2007. Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching* 40 (2): 97–118.
4. Peacock, M. 1997. The effect of authentic materials on the motivation of EFL learners. *ELT Journal* 51 (2): 144–156.

5. Spelleri, M. 2002. From lessons to life: Authentic materials bridge the gap.
ESL Magazine 5 (2): 16–18.
6. www.google.com/advanced_search
7. www.npr.org
8. www.ted.com
9. <https://www.uz24.uz> ,
10. <https://www.etprofessional.com>
11. <https://www.uztea.uz>
12. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com>
13. <https://www.modernenglishteacher.com>
14. www.printmeposter.com
15. www.dramarecouse.com.