

The Role of Authentic Materials in Language Learning

Avilova Khalida Nabijanovna

Senior teacher at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages

Abstract: This article discusses the importance of using authentic reading materials in order to develop students' reading skills in EFL classes. Moreover, it analysis the process of using authentic reading materials with 1st year students majoring in English language and literature at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages. As results show, application of such reading materials increases the motivation of learners to a great extent rather than reading textbooks.

Keywords: Authentic reading, reading strategies, newspaper articles, short stories.

Authentic materials play main role in our language learning process. Reading more authentic materials than textbooks is becoming more popular y language learners throughout the world. That is to say, more and more people are interested in that kind of materials. The demand of reading life materials is increasing day by day. The more we read them, the more we get involved in reading them. They are not boring or a waste of time, because by reading them, we gain lots of life experience. Also, authentic materials provide people real-life examples of language used in everyday situations. We can increase the knowledge we have, expand world view, get closely informed with the culture of the target language speakers.

There are several types of authentic materials such as reading and listening. A newspaper article, short stories, a novel, a radio interview are examples of authentic reading materials. They are written for real-life, not written for pedagogic processes. Authentic reading is the most interesting process in language learning. Since, by reading them, we can speed up language learning course. We can find reading authentic materials at study sites that is to say at University, college, school lessons or online locations.

This year a new module was introduced to the 1st year students majoring in English language and literature at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages. Students were involved in reading short stories, newspaper articles and a novel in and out of class. In reading and writing lessons, students read stories such as 'Everyday Use' by Alice Walker, 'Two thanksgiving Day Gentleman' by O. Henry. After reading short stories students were questioned about their impression on reading them. It is worth to note, 90% of students were motivated by reading short stories. They pointed out, that reading authentic short stories was a bit challenging, however, it increased their motivation to reading, enlarged their vocabulary, created an opportunity to be more familiar with their life style and use of language.

In the second phase of the lessons, learners were involved in reading newspaper and magazine articles. "Lost in translation? The one inch truth about Netflix's subtitle problem", "Air travel", "From a pandemic to plastic surgery: how Covid changed the way we see our faces" were the articles that students read and discussed in classes. Students practiced reading articles using different mode of interaction as well as creating the atmosphere of real life discussion in class. The most important aspect of such reading, as mentioned by learners, is that reading about current situations in English speaking countries motivates students more than reading textbooks. Moreover, they have a positive effect on learner motivation.

Apart from authentic reading, authentic listening materials are also widely used in teaching context. TV news, shows, podcasts, songs, online videos, and movies are great examples of these type of materials. When learning a language, of course, it is important to watch movies in that language with subtitles, listen to English songs, news, different podcasts every day. Certainly, practicing the new language by listening authentic materials plays main role in language learning. Because, if the same activity is repeated every day, it will start to become a habit, which means that you want to teach English perfectly, for which of course it is important to do above mentioned tasks. By listening to only English authentic materials, students can learn phrases, new words used in speaking.

It should be noted that by watching subtitled movies, listening to English songs, podcasts, and news learners can also learn rules of pronunciation. When watching a movie, at an initial stage, learners preferred to watch the Uzbek version first, and then the original one with or without subtitles. Such method has a great impact on language learning and plays an important role in our learners learning process.

To conclude, the role of authentic materials in language learning is very important. As it is stated above, learners can speed up language learning process, gain a lot of experience, and enlarge their knowledge by doing pleasurable activities. By gaining real life experience, they can further use those skills in their life time and they know how and what to read or listen in every day life. The most important sight of these materials is motivation. As in authentic materials, real- life situations are described and as a result, the learner who read or listen to them will be able to draw necessary conclusions and get enough motivation to change their life for the better. Thus, motivation is an action that motivates a person to act.

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