

THE EFFECTS OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study intended to investigate the effects of authentic materials on vocabulary acquisition in International English Language Testing System (IELTS) students of Kimiya-e-Danesh institute, Yasuj, Iran. It focused on how authentic materials facilitate vocabulary development. To this end, 50 IELTS student were randomly selected. IELTS classes were observed several times and then a self-reported questionnaire was distributed to all students of chosen classes. The results showed that most of the students prefer using authentic materials for vocabulary acquisition. Authentic materials play an important role in teaching a second language. By using authentic material students deal with outside and real world, they become interested when deal with real language. Students become familiar with the culture of target language, Awareness of cultural background is important in learning a language. Also authentic materials increase motivation of learners for learning second language.

KEYWORDS: authentic materials, vocabulary development, facilitate

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1970s, communicative approaches to language teaching encountered with a need to develop students' skills for the real world. Teachers, therefore, must stimulate this world in the classroom. One of the ways is to incorporate the use of authentic materials. Scholars argue that the usage of authentic materials helps to bridge the gap between the classroom knowledge and the students' capacity to participate in the real-world events. The term authentic material has been defined in different ways throughout the literature. What is the common definitions is the exposure to real language and its usage in its own community. The usage of the authentic materials in the second language learning in different skills has become common practice during the last two decades.

Here are different definitions for authenticity. According to McDonough and Shaw (1993), authenticity can be described as the following: "a term which loosely implies as close an

approximation as possible to the world outside the classroom, in the selection both of language material and of the activities and methods used for practice in the classroom".

Authentic materials demonstrate situations that learners are likely to encounter through their day-to-day socio-cultural interaction with native speakers of English. McGrath argued that "Authenticity is felt to be significant because it offers learners a sense of the real world, a chance to 'rehearse' in a protected situation, hence the less authentic the materials we use, the less preparation learners will make for that real world". Therefore, students exposed to authentic materials in the foreign language classroom are better able to process foreign language input in real-life situations and have a more positive attitude towards learning the foreign culture.

Nunan (1989) provides the conventional definition of authentic texts: "Authentic materials are usually defined as those which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language". Such example includes print materials like newspapers and timetables, or spoken materials like public announcements. He also supports that "the use of authentic sources leads to greater interest and variety in the materials that learners deal with in the classroom. This authentic material helps bring the contact to life, and ultimately makes learning and using language more meaningful and easier for students." Authentic materials keep students informed about what is happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value.

Authentic materials are an effective way to language acquisition. It is also useful to vocabulary acquisition. According to Lewis (1993) "vocabulary is often described as the cornerstone of language learning". Without vocabulary, learners would be unable to form the simplest of utterances, and therefore unable to communicate at even the most basic level. Also Knight (1994) argued that "Vocabulary acquisition is therefore often prioritized in the learning process by students and teachers. Nowadays many teachers use authentic materials such as magazine, newspapers and advertisements, written notes and messages for vocabulary acquisition. Therefore the purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of authentic material on vocabulary acquisition in IELTS students of Kimiya-e- Danesh institute.

Objectives of the study

This study intends to investigate the effects of authentic materials on second language learning, in the area of vocabulary acquisition. It seeks to find out how learners can learn the words in real language and real situation by using authentic materials. In particular it aims at investigating the effectiveness of authenticity on vocabulary acquisition.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the advantages of using authentic materials?
- 2- Are authentic materials useful and effective in vocabulary acquisition?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

In this study a homogeneous sample of 50 students was selected from a population of IELTS students studying at Kimiyay-e- Danesh institute, Yasuj, Iran. The subjects of the study were adults above 25. The reason for selecting these students is that IELTS students must learn many words for IELTS exam, so in IELTS term they deal with a lot of unfamiliar words. The very important duty is learning an extended list of words.

Materials

The research materials in this study were some authentic materials including English songs, news, movies, etc. some non-authentic CDs, a bilingual dictionary, a reading book and two questionnaires (see the appendix) which were designed for the study.

Data collection and procedures

As their teacher, I started to teach them. The research was conducted by using authentic and non-authentic materials during the course to familiarize the students with them. Using authentic material can cause motivation as a crucial key for successful learning. They can deal with real world. Then the questionnaires were distributed to 50 students to find their opinions about the authentic materials. All the questions in the questionnaires were orally translated and explained in the students' native language in order to know how to answer the questions.

Data analysis

The quantitative collected data submitted to SPSS software package for the analysis of data. I found out the effects of authentic materials by analyzing the questionnaires which students answered.

RESULTS

By using the authentic materials, and using an observation and questionnaires, the results show that most of the students' attitudes towards the use of authentic English language materials are positive and they enjoy learning. Also it shows that authentic material could influence both learning and teaching.

Table 1: The Use of Authentic Materials to Develop Vocabulary.

Item	Strongly	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly
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	agree				disagree
Listening to English songs helps me enhance my vocabulary	23	17	2	6	2
Listening to English news helps me enhance my vocabulary	20	23	0	5	2
Watching English movies helps me enhance my vocabulary	35	10	2	3	0
Authentic materials enhance my vocabulary	25	15	2	3	5
Authentic materials provides useful idioms and slang for vocabulary	14	24	9	2	1

Table 2: The Influence of Authentic Materials on Students' Attitudes towards Learning English Vocabulary

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly agree
Learning English vocabulary through songs allows me to enjoy myself.	28	15	2	3	2
Learning English vocabulary through English news allows me to enjoy myself.	24	13	7	3	3
Learning English vocabulary through English movie allows me to enjoy myself.	30	20	0	0	0
I feel more comfortable and confident when listening to English news.	25	15	6	3	1
I feel comfortable and confident when listening to English songs.	32	16	0	2	0

According to my observation and questionnaire I found out most of the student prefer using authentic materials for vocabulary acquisition. By all of my researches and some materials like questionnaire and observation, I could find and figure out that by authentic materials students could learn more about their words using culture and also how they could memorize and saving words for too long though. When students use authentic materials, they sense real world and we can say they are using real language and they learn skills, so it can help them in coping with real situation outside of the class, in another word, students are prepared for actual use of vocabulary,

which learn by using authentic materials. Also, authentic materials sources are contextually rich, so learners could deal with the useful words. Because the students could get acquainted to a new culture and learn about it cause to have a motivation on learning them and it could be memorable for long though. Finally, it has been shown that authentic materials can effect on words and how to learn it.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I researched about the effects of authentic material on vocabulary acquisition. The focus in a foreign language is to learn a language and be able to use it in the outside world. By using authentic material we deal with outside and real world. Sources of authentic materials are newspapers, magazines, the Internet, TV programs, movies, CDs, songs, brochures, comics, literature, catalogues, tickets, postcards, bills, receipts, recipes, business cards, etc. I used observation and questionnaire for finding the effects. During my work, I have found out that authentic materials play an important role in teaching a second language. One of the most important factors in my observant is how professor teaches words and after that what would be the result and the side effect of teaching after finishing, So, I checked the class, by the accents and the numbers of repetition, so after finishing of a term about 40 hours study for some students randomly, and after that by a reasonable question, there were some new and important conclusions I could find. Another important factor in this research is that students can touch real life with words and learn the beauty of words by ways, acquisition and methodical teaching of the professor. It is a big motivation, Student become interesting when they experience language in a lively and realistic ways. Also students become familiar with the culture of target language, Observing differences in culture is essential for understanding other nations. Awareness of cultural background is important in learning a language. I think using authentic material is a very good way to acquisition of vocabulary and it plays an important role in teaching a second language. I would recommend using authentic materials to all the language teachers.

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Appendix

The Use of Authentic Materials to Develop Vocabulary.

Instruction: after you read each statement please put a tick () in the box which best express your opinions or attitudes.

No.	statement	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Listening to English songs helps me enhance my vocabulary					
2	Listening to English news helps me enhance my vocabulary					
3	Watching English movies helps me enhance my vocabulary					
4	Authentic materials enhance my vocabulary					
5	Authentic materials provides useful idioms and slang for vocabulary					

Influence of Authentic Materials on Students' Attitudes Towards Learning English Vocabulary.

Instruction: After you read each statement, please put a tick () in the box which best expresses your opinions or attitudes.

No.	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly agree
1	Learning English vocabulary through songs allows me to enjoy myself.					
2	Learning English vocabulary through English news allows me to enjoy myself.					
3	Learning English vocabulary through English movie allows me to enjoy myself.					
4	I feel more comfortable and confident when listening to English news.					
5	I feel comfortable and confident when listening to English songs.					