

THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN EFL/ESL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Teaching material is one of crucial part in English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Teaching language is related to the teaching culture which has great influence in human life. One better way to introduce students to the real world is through the use of authentic material. Since EFL students get more difficulties in acquire and explore the language, it can help them to experience real-world events in the classroom. Using authentic material enables teacher to modify teaching and learning strategies into a collaborative and interactive student centered learning environment instead of traditional teacher centered. Audio and visual presentation of the authentic material makes teaching and learning condition more interesting. Based on the previous explanation, this paper is focused on the use of authentic material in teaching and learning English in EFL classroom. It also describes how authentic material helps students improve their language skills and motivate them to learn English.

Keywords: Authentic material, second language, EFL/ESL classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching material is one of teaching components which determine the success of teaching and learning process. One example of materials used by a teacher is text book. There are many kinds of text books written based on curriculum used at school. It makes teaching and learning process focus on the book and monotone. Besides, text books cannot show the real language use. Therefore, using authentic materials in EFL/ESL classroom can help the teacher show the real language use and teach communicatively.

Definition of Authentic Materials

Many researchers have given some definition about authentic materials. According to Nunan (1990) in Akbari (2015), authentic materials are any material which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching. It means that these materials are different with materials written in the text books because their main goal is not as teaching material. Bacon and Finnemann (1990) in Enas Al Musallam (2007) define authentic materials as texts produced by native speakers for non-pedagogical purposes.

It shows the language use in real life and communication.

Harmer (1991) in Matsuka (2004) defines authentic texts as materials which are designed for native speakers; they are real text; designed not for language students, but for the speakers of the language. It shows that authentic materials expose the students to the real language because they are written for social purpose used by native speaker.

Sources of Authentic Materials

There are many kinds of authentic materials that can be used in teaching English. Teacher can get the materials from English newspaper, magazine, brochure, TV, Radio, etc. Furthermore, with the development of technology such as internet, the teacher will be easier to get the authentic materials.

Baird in Enas Al Musallam (2007) mentions some examples of authentic materials:

Spoken: TV commercials, films, news items, weather forecasts, airport and station announcement, radio talks, interviews, and debates.

Written: recipes, articles, train timetables, advertisements, brochures, poems, application forms, and instruction for use of equipment.

With various kinds of authentic materials, teaching and learning process will be more enjoyable and interesting. It will increase students' motivation and language skills.

Why Are Authentic Materials Useful in Teaching English?

The use of authentic materials in EFL/ESL classroom can give many advantages for teacher and students. Kilickaya (2004) mentions main advantages of using authentic materials:

- They have a positive effect on learner motivation.
- They provide authentic cultural information.
- They provide exposure to real language.
- They relate more closely to learners' needs.
- They support a more creative approach to teaching.

It shows that students are being exposed to the real language and they feel that they learn the real language. And then they can use the language communicatively. Besides, for the teacher, authentic materials can create an interesting teaching material. It also improves students' motivation to learn English.

It is also supported by Tamo (2009) who said that there are some advantages of using authentic materials in EFL classroom. Some of them are:

- Students are exposed to real discourse.
- Authentic materials have positive effect on learners motivation.
- Authentic materials keep the students informed about what is happening in the world, so they have intrinsic education value.
- Authentic materials can produce a sense of achievement.

It can be conclude that there are so many advantages of using authentic material in EFL classom.

Moreover, learning a language cannot be separated with cultural

content of the language. Culture is related to the use of the language and how it is used. In other words, authentic materials provide authentic cultural information because they are written or created for native speakers.

Cultural Content in Teaching English

Teaching English cannot be separated with culture of the language to be successful. Westerhuis in Kilickaya (2004) defines 'culture' as the customs, values, laws, technology, artifacts and art of a particular time or people. Culture in English language teaching materials mean that how the native speakers of English use and value English in their life. Knowing the culture of the native speaker is a good way to master the language.

According to Stuart and Nocon (1996), learning about the lived culture of actual target language speakers as well as about one's own culture requires tools that assist language learners in negotiating meaning and understanding the communicative and cultural texts in which linguistic codes are used. In other words, it will be very useful for learner to learn the culture of English in order to get the language. Authentic materials provide the learners with real language and culture of the language. Cultural content provides exposure to living language that a foreign language student lacks. So, culture is a helpful tool to make learners feel the need to speak and use the target language.

The Application of Authentic Materials in Teaching

Incorporating authentic materials in teaching English required some points that need to be considered by the teacher:

1. Criteria of Authentic Materials
Since the purpose of EFL/ESL classroom is to teach a language and

not all materials can be used as teaching materials. Teacher should be more selective in choosing the materials. Berardo (2006) provides three criteria for choosing authentic texts:

- a) suitability of content: students' interests, needs and abilities
- b) exploitability: students' competence and teaching purposes
- c) readability: language of the text

By considering these criteria, the teacher is able to determine which materials are suitable for her/his students.

2. Integrated home and target culture
Authentic materials provide culture content of the language. They introduce to the learners how the language is used by the native speaker and components of culture. Due to the big influence of foreign culture, students' own culture should be discussed together with target culture. In other words, home and target culture should be integrated.
3. Effective activities
An Effective teaching strategies or classroom activities are required when teaching English. Although the teacher has used authentic materials, effective activities related to the authentic materials are needed. The learner will be more motivated if the teacher can create interesting and effective activities in the classroom. Kelly (2002) gives some examples of effective activities in teaching English:

- a) Word Search

The students search for parts of speech such as adjectives on a given page or search for certain categories of things. An advantage of this activity is that

students do not need identical copies of the authentic material.

b) Crosswords

The teacher prepares a crossword puzzle using words from the handout. The questions for the handout can also be presented as crossword clues. Crossword generating programs found on the Internet make this easy.

c) Personalizing

The students write a list of purchases for an imaginary party using a supermarket handout,

plan a trip using a travel brochure or plan a meal with a menu. The students could also be asked to fill out a mail order form with an imaginary order of purchases for family members.

d) Pair Practice

The students ask and answer the printed questions on the handout and are encouraged to ask their own questions. The students can role play the parts of customer and clerk either following a sample conversation provided by the teacher or making up their own.

CONCLUSION

Authentic materials can be effective sources of teaching and learning process in EFL/ESL classroom since they expose the learners to the real life communication and context. Although the materials have introduced how the language is used by the native speakers, teacher's role in selecting the

authentic materials is crucial in order to achieve learning objectives. Finally, text book is not only the material that can be used in teaching English. Authentic materials are another example of material that can advantage the teacher and learner in EFL/ESL classroom.

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