



---

## **A Brief Overview of Authentic Materials in ESL/EFL Classrooms**

**Lalit Kumar Yadav**

Doctoral Student

ASLA, Amity University Gurugram, Haryana, India

**&**

**Sanjay Kumar Jha**

Professor (Linguistics)

ASLA Amity University Gurugram, Haryana, India

Received: Mar. 22, 2019

Accepted: Apr. 25, 2019

Online Published: May. 30, 2019

---

### **Abstract**

This paper elucidates classroom research project on authentic material and investigate whether authentic materials increase the classroom motivation of learners. However, learners also reported authentic materials to be significantly more interesting than artificial materials. Authentic materials bridge the gap between classroom language use and real life language use by bringing familiar linguistic situations and materials right into the classroom and help ESL teachers and students to find ingenuity beyond the conventional ESL learning process in education and educational institutions, teaching, learning, and teaching materials are crucial interlaced activities to bring out intended learning outcome.

**Keywords:** Authentic materials, Conventional ESL

### **Introduction**

Authentic materials have real language. In order to achieve the objectives of English language teaching/ learning it is important for the English language teachers to exploit other materials around them according to the needs of learners and to create interest in them. These materials are effective and easily available. Authentic materials provide resources for ELT teachers and offer them the opportunity to expose learners to materials produced for real life and out of classroom contexts. The focus is on the message and means and context are often used to help to communicate it. If teachers use authentic texts sensibly, they provide learners with alternatives to

learn real English usage. There are a lot of sources for authentic materials, which are economic and easily available every time and everywhere. They are: Agony Columns, Audio Cassettes, Brochures, Cartoons, Comics, Currency, Directories, Greeting Cards, Images, Internet, Invitation Cards, Advertisements, Journals, Magazines, Maps, Menus, Movies, News Papers, Notices, Post-Cards, Pictures, Product Labels, Puppets, Recipe, Songs, Stamps, TV Programmes, Tickets, Wall Papers, Weather Reports etc.

The use of authentic materials in EFL/ESL learning has an extended history with Henry Sweet being one of the first linguists to regularly implement them in his textbooks. Sweet claimed, 'the great advantage of natural, idiomatic texts over artificial 'methods' or 'series' is that they do justice to every feature of the language' (1899, p. 177). He endorsed them on the grounds that they were natural and contained real language in comparison to the diluted version found in contrived materials.

### **Definition of Authentic Material:**

Some common definitions of the term "authentic materials", from the point of view of the following writers:

1. Herrington and Oliver (2000) suggested a new pedagogical term, called "authentic learning". This term is directly related to the students' real life and prepares them to face and deal with real world situations.
2. According to Herod (2002) authentic learning 'materials and activities' are designed to imitate the real world situations.
3. Nunan (1988) defines authentic materials as the materials "which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language".
4. Jordan (1997) defines authentic texts as the ones which are not designed for pedagogical aims.
5. Jacobson et al (2003, p. 1) sees authentic materials as printed materials, which are used in classrooms in the same way they would be used in real life.
6. In other words, Stubbs (1996) defines authentic texts as "actual, attested, and such that they have real authentic instances of use."
7. According to Carter & Nunan (2001, p. 68) authentic materials are "ordinary texts not produced specifically for language teaching purposes."

Most researchers realize the role of authentic materials in language teaching. They believe that authentic materials scaffold learners' learning of a target language more sufficiently (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Wilcox & Oaks, 1999; Weyers, 1999). They state that using authentic materials has linguistic and non-linguistic advantages.

Authentic materials provide many advantages and promote something new, challenging, and interesting in teaching-learning process, which can build students' motivation in English learning. This study aims to explore about the types of authentic material which are used in teaching reading and what kinds of reading activity can be implement by using authentic material. In this research, a case study was applied as the research method and the data were qualitative data. To collect the data, some techniques of data collection were used such as observing the classroom activity, conducting the interview to the subjects of the research, and analyzing the documents. Through the data analyziz, the researcher sumerized two points from this study: 1) The authentic materials used by the eighth grade teacher of Junior High School are texts obtained from the internet, printed story book, videos, and pictures; 2) The reading activities conducted by the eighth grade teacher of Junior High School through the use of authentic materials as supplementary materials are reading aloud, walking gallery, filling in

blanks, rearranging jumbled paragraphs, doing cloze tasks, having short answer tasks, conducting information transfer, having text analysis, and doing some vocabulary ordering.

### **Advantages of Using Authentic Materials**

There are a lot of advantages of using authentic materials in English language classrooms. They provide situational language and students are exposed to real discourse. Not only are they interesting for learners but are also very helpful in developing social language skills. Authentic materials develop creativity among teachers as well as learners and are highly motivating. They provide knowledge of real situations of life and make the learners aware of these situations. They develop ability of interpretation and are very economic and easily available everywhere. These are helpful in minimizing the level of hesitation among the learners and not only can the same material can be used to teach different classes but also encourage the learners to read for pleasure.

Since English is not the first language of EFL Students, teaching English is not a simple thing for some of English teachers. They have to use materials or teaching media which may motivate the students. Without any of it, the students will gain nothing. Some researchers suggest that using authentic materials significantly will motivate and make learning languages interesting. One of the researcher stated that authentic materials help motivate students learn the language by making them feel that they are learning the “real” language (Guariento& Morely,2001 as cited in Al Azri& Al Rashdi, 2014).Do ThiThanhTra on his research focusing on teaching speaking using authentic materials (2009) suggested that using authentic materials is one way to effectively increase student's motivation at TBU to learn speaking in particular and English in general.

Academics claim that the purpose of using authentic materials is to prepare students for their social lives. The authentic materials are used in order to close the language gap between classroom knowledge and real life. The real language here means learning the language is not only a language, but also the students need to consider all the things related how the language used in its “real society”. Geoffrey M. Maroko (2010) proposed 5 advantages of using authentic materials both for teacher and students. First, authentic materials will expose the students to the natural business language which will be helpful on their workplace. Second, it will bring reality to the classroom and make interaction meaningful. Other advantage is authentic materials will make the assessment and teaching to focus on skill rather than the facts of language. The fourth advantages still based on Geoffrey, authentic materials will be readily available and inexpensive teaching resources as well. Lastly, it adds variety to classroom activities and support more creative approach to teaching. The students in this case, will have a chance to practice the skills learnt in the classroom in real life situation.

### **References:**

- Blacthfor, C. H. (1993). Newspapers: Vehicles for teaching ESOL with a cultural focus. *ELT Journal*, 7 (12), 145-151.
- Bose, N. V. (2009). Using authentic materials in ESL classrooms. *The Journal of English Language Teaching*, 49 (3), 18-20.
- Bose, N. V. (2010). Using authentic materials in higher classes. *The Journal of English Language Teaching*, 49 (2), 4-5.

- Chih, S. (2008). The value of English teaching story books. *ELT Journal*, 67 (1), 39-48.
- Foppoli, J. (2002). *Authentic vs graded materials in second languages*. Retrieved March 26, 2011, from <http://www.eslbase.com>.
- Galarcep, M. F. (1968). Puppets in teaching english. *ELT Journal*, 25 (1), 165-170.
- Homolova, E. (1992). *Creative approach to authentic materials in ESL introduction*. Retrieved March 26, 2011, from <http://www.eslteachersboard.com>.
- Hussain, A. (2008). *Methods of teaching urdu*. Hyderabad:Deccan Traders.