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THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN TEACHING READING

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: The article explores the pivotal role of authentic materials in enhancing reading comprehension. Authentic materials, defined as resources not originally designed for pedagogical purposes, such as newspapers, magazines, websites, and everyday texts, offer learners exposure to real-world language use and cultural contexts. The study highlights how these materials can significantly improve students' reading comprehension, motivation, and engagement by providing relevant and relatable content. Additionally, the study involved a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative methods and open-ended questions and close-ended questions with both educators and students to assess the effectiveness of authentic materials in reading instruction. Results indicated that students exposed to authentic materials demonstrated a significant increase in reading comprehension scores compared to those who used traditional textbooks.

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a form of communication processes to get information faster from the writer by the readers. So reading is useful in learning English process. According to Carrel reading is the most effective ways in English learning than three skills other [2].

Reading is frequently characterized as a natural activity involving the reader's cognitive function. "Reading is an exercise controlled by the eyes and the brain," writes Jeremy Harmer. The eyes receive the message, and the brain deciphers its importance [5, 210]. This process also needs eye movement and if it is done orally, it needs the movement of muscles [8, 138]. Reading is made up of two interconnected processes: word recognition and comprehension. The process of understanding how written symbols match to one's spoken language is referred to as word recognition. The process of making understanding of words, phrases, and related material is known as comprehension. Background information, vocabulary, grammatical expertise, familiarity with text, and other tactics are commonly used by readers to assist them grasp written content [4, 6].

Authentic materials are also one of the factors that affect students' reading comprehension. Because according to Sherman; Sanderson; Peacock in Richards, authentic materials have several advantages, one of them is they have a positive effect on learner motivation, because they are intrinsically more interesting and motivating than created materials [9; 13; 14]. So, with the students' motivation in reading using authentic materials can improve students' reading comprehension. According to certain specialists, there are several definitions of genuine material. Authentic content, according to Jennings and Haynes, is "written or spoken language generated by native speakers rather than for foreign language learners." Newspaper articles, tourist information brochures, radio programs, and "real life" conversations are examples of resources that can be used [6]."

Authentic materials, according to Berardo, are made with real-life aims in mind, and examples include magazine adverts, movie reviews, television shows, a dialogue between native speakers, train timetables, nutrition labels, and so on. They include samples of both spoken and written language [1, 60-69]. Internet access is another type of authentic material; according to Sudiran, using the Internet to teach authentic materials in the teaching and learning process would assist teachers make the classroom more entertaining and appealing [12, 45-50]. As a result, employing real resources in teaching will assist teachers in

overcoming the challenges they have while developing instructional materials for their students.

Widdowson backs it up, saying, "Authentic Material is a type of material that is produced for native speakers of English and is utilized in the classroom in a manner similar to the one it was developed for; an example of the material would be a radio news story" [15, 12]. According to Harmer, genuine texts (whether written or spoken) are materials produced for native speakers: they are real texts intended for language speakers rather than language students [5].

The most crucial thing to accomplish first is to define "authentic material". It is certainly beneficial for children to have relevant classroom experiences, to make language learning an educational process of self-development and discovery as well as the acquisition of a linguistic skill. However, this has little to do with actual materials. Using authentic materials simply means using samples of language created by native speakers for some genuine purpose rather than language produced and intended merely for the sake of the classroom.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main document containing requirements for student preparation and recommendations for their foreign language education is the State Educational Standard (SES) of the continuous education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Approval of the State Educational Standard for Foreign Languages of the Continuous Education System" No. 124 of May 8, 2013 [11]. This State Standard includes the following sections:

1. Outline provision;
2. Structure of the State Standard;
3. Purpose and objectives of studying the subject;
4. Content of foreign language education;
5. Requirements for the level of student preparation.

The section "Outline provision" defines the purpose and objectives of the State Standard, specifies international regulatory acts and regulatory acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as state standards of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which serve as the basis for compiling this State Standard, provides a comparison of the levels of education implemented by the continuous education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and

language proficiency levels according to the CEFR system [3]. Intermediate level or B1, considered in this study, corresponds to graduates of the grade 10-11 of general education schools with a non-language profile in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In the section "Objectives and Objectives of Studying the Subject," definitions of competencies are provided, from which foreign language communicative competence is formed. Thus, this State Educational Standard implements a competency-based approach to foreign language education. Reading competence is considered in it as one of the components of foreign language communicative competence and one of the elements of linguistic competence. Socio-linguistic and pragmatic competences are also included in foreign language communicative competence, the presence of which, along with linguistic competence, determines reading skills of learners. Socio-cultural and existential competences are implicitly present and expressed through "can do" descriptors.

The content of the State Educational Standard for the formation of B1 level written competence includes the following:

Reading simple professionally-oriented texts consisting of frequently used language material [10]. Reading letters, emails, brochures, manuals, short official documents. Intensive reading of authentic professionally-oriented texts. Reading materials of general interest (newspapers, magazines, short stories, personal and electronic letters, etc.). Development of skills and abilities in skimming, scanning, detailed reading, and reading for orientation (signs, labels, etc.).

In Uzbekistan, the teaching of reading is primarily conducted within the framework of the national curriculum, which outlines the learning objectives and content standards for language education. Reading instruction typically begins in the early grades and continues throughout primary and secondary education [7].

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To have a clear picture for this study, we are going to present the main findings, analyze and demonstrate the data collected from the orderly questionnaires. The study aims at investigating the use of authentic materials in teaching reading at school No.22 in Nukus.

a) Methodology, Tools, and Sampling

The present study is collected through quantitative methods. This method includes questionnaires. They are divided into two parts; one designed for teachers and other for

students. Both of them contain open-ended questions and close-ended questions. The questionnaires were administered to a sample of **100, Grade 10-11 students and 6 teachers.**

b) Learners' Questionnaire

Learners' questionnaire is designed to explore the importance of using authentic materials in teaching reading in classroom. It is used to collect the students' knowledge and attitude toward the use of authentic materials in classroom. It consists of both open-ended in which the participants express their opinions toward the use of authentic materials in teaching, and close-ended questions; which involves yes/no and selected items concerning the use of authentic materials in classroom.

Question 1: Do you know what do we mean by authentic materials?

Students awareness	Number	Percentage
Yes	80	80%
No	20	20%

Table 1.1 The Use of Authentic Materials by Teachers.

This question aimed to find out if our participants knew what we mean by authentic materials. By the results, we found that 80% of students mentioned that they already know the meaning of authentic materials. While 20% said that, they had no idea about what do we mean by authentic materials. The results revealed that students are aware about the importance of using authentic materials in classroom.

Question 2: How often does your teacher use authentic materials in the reading session?

The use of authentic materials by teacher	Number	Percentage
Always	20	20%
Rarely	50	50%
Never	10	10%
Sometimes	20	20%

Table 1.2 The Use of Authentic Materials by Teachers.

As it is observed from the table, 20 participants (20%) stated that their teachers always use authentic materials in the classroom, 50 participants (50%) mentioned that teachers use them rarely, 20 (20%) claimed that their teachers use authentic materials sometimes, and just 10 (10%) stated that they never uses authentic materials in the classroom. In this question, we found out that there is a lack of using these materials in classrooms.

Question 3: What Sort of authentic materials do your teacher use in the classroom?

Sort of Authentic Materials	Number	Percentage
Paper Based	20	20%
Audio-Video	30	30%
Internet & Media	50	50%

Table 1.3 The Sort of Authentic Materials Used in The Classroom

In this question, we asked students about the kind of material used in the classroom, 20 participants (20%) respond that their teacher uses paper-based materials and, 30 (30%) stated that audio-video materials are used in the classroom, the majority of them 50 (50%) stated that internet and media are the most used materials in the classroom. All those results may refer to the teacher attitude towards using authentic materials in classroom.

Question 4: How do you consider your reading abilities?

Students' reading abilities	Number	Percentage
An average	59	59%
Good average	21	21%
Under average	20	20%

Table 1.4 Students' Reading Abilities

By asking this question, we aimed to have students' evaluation of their reading abilities, and the table above show that 59 participants (59%) have an average reading abilities, 21 (21%) reported that they have good average reading abilities, just 20 (20%) have an under average reading ability. We noticed that those whom get the average have the chance to express their ideas, share opinions beside they feel comfortable and motivated to improve their reading skill.

Question 5: Do you prefer learning reading with authentic materials or with textbooks

Learning reading with authentic materials or textbooks.	Number	Percentage
Textbooks	16	16%
Authentic Materials	84	84%

Table 1.5 Learning Reading with Authentic Materials or Textbooks.

From this table above, about 16 (16%) prefer learning reading with the classic method which is using textbooks and, 84 (84%) prefer learning reading with authentic materials, from this we find that Students are having a positive feedback towards authentic materials.

Question 6: What kind of materials do you prefer?

Kind of authentic material	Number	Percentage
Printed	16	16%
Pictures	62	62%
Documentary videos	22	22%

Table 1.6 Kind of Authentic Materials that Students Prefer

After we knew what students prefer to learn with in reading session, we asked them this question to know about the kind of authentic materials they prefer using. The majority of informants 62 out of 100 stated that they prefer pictures because they help them to understand the meaning of the word, expression, or palatable. Only 16 Students said that they prefer printed sources because they find the language easy. In addition, 22 participants choose documentary videos because they found them helpful.

Question 7: Do you participate in the classroom activities presented with authentic materials?

Students' participation	Number	Percentage
Little	0	0%
Much	43	43%
Very much	50	50%
Very little	7	7%

Table 1.7: Students Participation in the Classroom with Authentic Materials

The objective of this question is to know when the teacher uses authentic materials in the classroom, what extent our participants are able to participate in classroom activities.

According to table 1.7, out of 100 Students, 10% said that they participate very little, 40% answered much, and 50% of the respondents said very much. This means that, 90% of our informants participate hugely in classroom activities presented with authentic materials.

Question 8: Are authentic materials helpful for you to develop your reading skill?

The effects of authentic materials on students' reading skill	Number	Percentage
Very strongly helpful	86	86%
Not helpful	14	14%

Table 1.8 The Effects of Authentic Materials on the Students' Reading Skill.

The aim of this question is to discover whether the use of authentic materials develop students' reading skill as many scholars mention it. The table 1.8 show that 86% of Students find authentic materials very strongly helpful for them to develop students' reading skill. While only 14% of them said that, they are not helpful. Those who found authentic materials

strongly helpful because they make them react in the same way mother tongue speakers react in their first language.

Question 09: What sort of authentic materials do you suggest for your teacher to use in the classroom?

At the open-ended question, we left some lines for students to tell us what sort of authentic materials they suggest their teachers use in classroom in reading session. Some participants prefer to do not write anything. While others said:

- Read songs of native speakers with lyrics to obtain new expressions.
- Read and see stories in form of video with subtitles that contain simple language to catch new words.
- Read newspaper article to acquire new vocabulary.
- Read text that contain pictures for better understanding.

Question 10: What problems do you encounter in the reading session?

In this question, our aim was to determine what problems they have in the reading session; these were some of their problems:

- Issues with decoding, they struggle when they meet new or unfamiliar terms.
- Poor comprehension, if the teacher does not explain well the text, they will have many problems in understanding the text.
- They mentioned also that, they have problems in spelling words.

Question 11: What is positive about the reading session?

Students' opinion concerning the reading session and what did they benefit from the session of reading.

- These are some of their answers:
- They discovered new cultures.
- Their speaking skills were increased.
- It enriches their previous knowledge.

It enables them to communicate with each other in the classroom.

c) Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire is outlined to show the importance of using authentic materials in classroom for both teachers and their learners. It divided into two parts; open-

ended and close- ended questions. It seeks the appropriate responses to answer the questions as well as to prove the suggested hypothesis.

Beyond these lines, the result of each question has been dealt with in detailed way.

Question 1: Would you prefer to use authentic materials in your classes?

The use of authentic materials in classroom	Number	Percentage
Yes	6	6%
No	0	0%

Table 1.9 The Use of Authentic Materials in Classroom

According to table 1.9, all 06 teachers (100%) indicated that they prefer using authentic materials in their classes. Since authentic materials help them and motivate their students.

Question 2: why do you prefer using authentic materials?

The aim of using authentic materials	Number	Percentage
Expose students to real language	2	33,3%
Motivate students	1	16,6%
Improve the students' skills	3	50%
Administration requirement	0	0%

Table 1.10 The Aim of Using Authentic Materials

Through the Table 1.10, the half number of participants 50% answered that they prefer to present authentic materials to their students in order to improve their English language skills. In addition, 33, 3% of them said that they prefer using authentic materials in classroom to teach Students the language used in real life. Moreover, the results show that only 16, 6% use authentic materials to motivate their students in learning. No one of the participants choose the administration requirement because it is not mentioned in the curriculum.

Question 3: What are the sources that you would use to obtain authentic materials?

The sources of authentic materials	Number	Percentage
Printed	3	50%
Audio visual	2	33,3%
Internet	1	16,6%

Table 1.11 The Sources of Authentic Materials

The third question is about the sources that teachers use to obtain authentic materials. Results show that 50% of teachers choose printed as a main source in teaching reading. In addition, 33, 3% of the teachers would prefer to use audio-visual sources. Only 16, 6% use internet to obtain authentic materials.

Question 4: Can you give examples?

In the second part of the question above, teachers list different types of materials used in the classes such as; newspaper articles, magazines reports, songs of native speakers, videos, logos, Facebook statues, data show, and pictures...etc.

Question 5: How do you evaluate your students' level in reading after using authentic materials in the classroom?

Students' level in reading skill	Number	Percentage
Weak	0	0%
Average	2	33,3%
Good	0	0%
Very good	4	66,6%
Excellent	0	0%

Table 1.12 Students' Level in Reading Skill

According to table 1.12, 33.3% teacher evaluated their students' reading level after using authentic materials by average, while 66.6% of them mentioned that their students' level in reading is very good.

Question 6: How you design your teaching materials and what do you take into consideration?

Teaching materials design	Number	Percentage
Students' level	0	0%
Students' need	0	0%
Course objective	0	0%
All of them	6	100%

Table 1.13 Teaching Materials Design

According to table 1.13, all informants agree that when designing their teaching materials, they take into consideration students' level, needs and course objectives to facilitate the lesson for each one of their students.

Question 7: Do authentic materials fulfill students' needs?

Students' needs by authentic materials	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	83.3%
Agree	1	16.6%
Disagree	0	0%
Neutral	0	0%

Table 1.14 Students' Needs by Authentic Materials

In this table, as it is showed, we asked teachers if they see that their students' needs are fulfilled with the use of authentic materials. 5 teachers (83.3%) stated that they strongly agree, and 1 (16.6%) mentioned that he agrees with this idea, we did not get any disagreement from this we can say that authentic materials proved their effectiveness on student's needs.

Question 8: Do you find that authentic materials develop your Students' ability in reading?

Development of students' reading abilities when using authentic materials	Number	Percentage
Yes	4	66,6%
No	2	33,3%

Table 3.15 Development of Students' Reading Abilities when Using Authentic Materials

As it is mentioned in this table, we asked teachers about the development of their students' reading abilities through using authentic materials, 4 (66.6) teachers they have observed a development but 2 (33.3%) respond by no.

Question 9: What are the sources of authentic materials (not used before), you prefer to use in your reading session?

At the end of the questionnaire, we left some lines for the teachers to suggest some sources of authentic materials that they did not use before and they would use it in the reading session.

They said that they would like to use these materials:

- Videos, films and, plays that contain a simple language and meaning.
- Stories that can keep them in touch with the native speakers.
- Documentaries and newspapers to acquire vocabulary.

Question 10: Do you think that you need training for using authentic materials? What kind of training you suggest?

The result of this question detected that most of the teachers 83, 3% agree that they need training for using authentic materials; one of the teachers said that they need to know how to use internet creatively. While 16, 6% are totally disagree.

They stated some kind of training such as; training in designing the activities and training in designing the materials, and in selecting appropriate texts. This means that

designing the appropriate tasks using authentic materials better than selecting the suitable materials.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing and discussing the main results, the analysis of the two questionnaires shows that all learners during the use of authentic materials in reading session can get new words and grammatical forms, acquire several vocabularies, and produce the right pronunciation of words, to increase them regarding their abilities. Authentic materials used in the classroom are considered as the appropriate tools for both teachers and learners in learning and teaching reading skill. The findings went hand in hand with our hypotheses, which emphasize that the use of authentic materials in teaching is regarded as the ideal tool by which learners improve their reading skill and help learners to increase their communicative competencies.

After identifying the difficulties that encounter teachers and pupils towards authentic materials, the solution to make teaching second language for students' effective is to create an authentic environment, it gives the chance to pupils to face real life situations. In addition, in teaching English language a diversity of materials can be used in classrooms, these materials should attempt students' attention and motivation.

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