Research Paper

Using Authentic Materials in Foreign Language Classes: EFL English Teachers' Perspective

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Abstract
Applied linguists and language practitioners have long contested the use of authentic resources in teaching English as a foreign language. If you're not familiar with how to select the right material and how to utilize it in your English lectures, you're more likely to avoid using real resources than you are to use them. Teaching English as a second or foreign language in Libyan public colleges requires the use of authentic materials to help students improve their oral, written, and listening skills. Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Sirte University provided the data for this study through a survey. SPSS was used to conduct a quantitative analysis of the survey responses in terms of frequencies and percentages (version 24). According to the findings, the English teachers in the sample have a positive outlook on the use of real resources in their EFL classrooms. The utilization of realistic materials, according to participants, can motivate students, pique their curiosity, and give them a taste of how the English language is actually used in the real world. The regular usage of the materials by EFL teachers in their language classes was also emphasized by some of them, as this would have a good effect on their students' language skills.
Keywords: *Authentic materials (AMs),Communicative Language Teaching(CLT), English classes, EFL teachers, learners,real-life situations.*

I. Introduction

In teaching English as a foreign language, the use of Authentic Materials (AMs) has been debated by scholars since the 1970s when the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach developed. As a response to pedagogical writing resources used in language education, this project was born. When it comes to ethnographic research, the focus on authenticity stems from the need to gather, describe, and explain linguistic evidence. It's also in line with CLT's emphasis on actual communication to use authentic resources in the classroom. As far as possible, the teaching activities in the classroom should be based on real-world examples and use "genuine" sources. According to Richard (2006), "classroom activities should be as similar to thereal world' as possible" (p. 20). Teaching methods and materials should focus on the message, not the medium because language is a tool for communication. When it comes to reading in the classroom, the goal should be the same as it is in real life. It is the goal of this study to determine how Libyan university EFL teachers feel about using real materials in their classrooms. The findings of this study will aid the researcher in the development of educational materials in the future.

II. Literature Review

Definition of Authentic Materials

The phrases "authentic materials" and "authenticity" are defined differently in the literature on foreign language instruction. Nunan (1988–89) identifies a common factor in all of these definitions. Authentic materials, according to Nunan, are spoken or written items that are not meant for language instruction. For instance, television, radio, news reports, newspapers, magazines, and posters can all be used in the classroom to stimulate discussion among students. According to Hedge (quoted in Losada, Insuasty, and Osorio, 2017, p. 90), authentic resources are not created to teach a foreign language and hence do not contain "contrived or simplified language." This is one of the distinguishing features of communicative language teaching (Larsen and Freeman, 2000, p. 129).

Authentic resources, according to Rogers (1988), can be defined as "suitable," "excellent," and "natural" in terms of learning objectives as well as learners' needs and interests. A definition of authentic texts by Harmer (1991) is "materials that are meant for native speakers; they are real texts; designed not for language students, but speakers of the language." P. 90 of Hammer (1991). In the words of Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010), an authentic text " is generated to 'communicate, rather than to educate;'" and authentic learning activity "is one that involves the learners in communicating to achieve an end, rather than to practice the language." genuine materials "are designed not to impart declarative knowledge about the target language but rather to provide an experience of the language in use," Tomlinson and Masuhara (2010, p. 400) write. Students would be less prepared for real-life circumstances if all learning materials were not authentic, according to these proponents.

Researchers generally agree that authentic materials "are produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and aimed to convey a real message of some sort" despite differing definitions of authentic materials (Yelubayeva, 2017, p. 4). To put it another way, authentic materials are more intriguing, more interactive, and more engaging than typical textbooks because they prepare students for real-world situations. What's more, students who use authentic resources in the classroom feel that they're studying the "real" language?

For this reason, it can be inferred that authentic materials can be obtained from any source that represents natural speech or the authenticity of language. ' Teachers commonly employ actual materials, such as songs, news, weather forecasts, interviews, films, note-taking, and telephone messages, for listening education as an example.

Selection of Authentic Materials

An authentic text must be chosen based on its applicability, its exploitability, and its comprehensibility according to Berardo (2006) As long as it's interesting to the students and meets their needs, the content is fine. Usefulness refers to the way actual texts are used in the classroom and how they can be broken down for instructional reasons. Exploitability The readability of a piece of writing is based on the difficulty of its structure and vocabulary (Akbari et al., 2015). Authentic literature should be relevant to students' lives, according to Bacon and Finneman (1990).

Sources of Authentic Materials

There are countless sources of authentic materials that can be used for teaching English as a foreign language. The most common materials are newspapers, magazines, TV, videos, brochures, novels, short stories, movies, songs, YouTube videos, blog posts, leaflets,and the Internet. Miller (2003) notes that radio is easily accessible, but its texts are the most difficult for students to understand.This is mainly because non-verbal information, such as body language including gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact, which helps learners understand the meaning behind the words, is missing. Therefore, Miller suggests that teachers who use radio programs as teaching materials should carefully consider the ability level of their students and choose comprehension listening tasks. In contrast, TV and videos are much easier for students to understand, since students can perceive the "paralinguistic features of the spoken text" (Miller, 2003, p. 18). Learners understand texts much better when they can see the person speaking and/or the context.

Berardo (2006) considers the Internet tobe the most useful source of authentic materials for several reasons. First, the Internet is constantly updated, so students are exposed to current language and information. Second, the Internet can also be a window to various other kinds of materials, such as articles, audio clips, and videos. Third, the Internet can interactively provide visual stimulation, whereas printed materials such asnewspapers and magazines are quickly outdated and lack interactivity (Berardo, 2006, p. 62).The benefits and cons of using real texts in foreign language instruction are highly discussed topics in the field of language teaching.

Advantages of Using Authentic Materials

The wide mismatch between resources designed expressly for English language teaching and authentic discussions, according to some experts, necessitates more authentic materials in the classroom. Students are exposed to real-world applications of the language, which might increase their motivation and interest. According to Lee (1995, p. 74), real texts are more appealing to students because they appear more current and relevant to their daily lives.

Since students feel they are learning and participating with the language as it is used outside the classroom, genuine materials are more motivating, according to Guariento and Morley (2001). Students' motivation and self-satisfaction are boosted by employing real oral texts (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Otte, 2006; Thanajaro, 2000). For students of all competence levels, Hansen and Jensen (1994) argue that real speech should be part of their listening assignments. Less skilled pupils can benefit from authentic texts, according to Bacon (1989).

According to Tamo (2009), the greatest way to prepare students for real-life circumstances is to provide a larger choice of materials and techniques for teaching with them. Beginner-level pupils will be able to use actual materials. For students who are learning a new language, they must learn about the context in which they will encounter the language to better understand it. This is why it's important to use authentic materials to get the most up-to-date knowledge about current events.

Students' motivation is believed to be boosted by the use of authentic materials since they are exposed to real-life language. When students find the content engaging, they are supposed to be more enthusiastic about the learning process. Students benefit from "immediate and direct interaction with input data that reflect genuine dialogue in the target language" if teachers incorporate authentic speech into their lessons (Azizah, 2016, p. 366).As a result of employing real resources, students' reading comprehension improves. According to Berardo (2006), using real resources can help pupils learn new vocabulary and expressions and thus improve their reading comprehension. Students gain confidence in their ability to communicate in the target language outside of the classroom, according to Berardo (Berardo, 2006, p. 62).

To help students improve their listening abilities and gain greater autonomy in their language use, Miller (2003) points out that the Internet and computer technology provide a variety of activities (Miller, 2003, p. 18).As a result, some researchers claim that authentic resources encompass a wide range of texts and topics that are difficult to locate in traditional educational materials. Having a wide range of texts to choose from can help students develop their reading skills and become more self-sufficient as a result (Berardo, 2006, p. 65).

Students who have had the opportunity to interact with real materials have been shown in numerous studies to get superior results in their language studies. In addition, numerous studies suggest that realistic materials boost all four aspects of language learning: hearing, speaking, writing, and reading (Abdulhakim et al., 2015; Al-Musallam, 2007; Bacon & Finneman, 1990; Chen & Brown, 2012; Gilmore, 2007; Kilickaya, 2004; Hyland, 2003; Miller, 2005; Otte, 2006; Thanjaro, 2000, Rahman, 2014). According to Harmer (1991), authentic materials can progress and build learners' hearing and reading skills in the target language while Bacon and Finnemann (1990) say that authentic materials increase learners' reading skills by exposing them to new vocabulary and expressions.

Because authentic resources providing students with writing prompts and expanded their vocabulary, they became more enthusiastic writers as a result of the experience. Students are better able to cope with authentic resources and learn helpful communicative expressions when they are given an email from a foreign friend and asked to write a response to it (Yuhong, 2012). When it comes to this talent, students must be exposed to a variety of real sources (Abdul, Rahman, Sabri, & Shukri, 2017). This study's major goal is to examine the impact of authentic materials on EFL learners' writing skills at the university level, taking into account cohesion and cohesion in their written texts.

The usage of actual resources also assisted students in their writing since it provided them with writing ideas and boosted their vocabulary; as a result, they became more enthusiastic about writing. To prepare students for real-world situations, they should read an email written by a foreign friend and compose a response (Yuhong, 2012). To make significant progress in this area, students need to be exposed to a variety of real-world resources (Abdul, Rahman, Sabri, & Shukri, 2017). So the fundamental goal of this study is to verify the impact of authentic materials on university-level writing skills of EFL learners, taking into account coherence and cohesiveness in their written texts is to check Authentic materials, according to Yuhong (2012), piqued students' interest in the writing process because they provided them with topic ideas and expanded their vocabulary. Students were exposed to real-world resources and practiced communication skills by responding to an email from a foreign friend. To make significant progress in their writing abilities, students need to be exposed to a wide range of real sources (Abdul, Rahman, Sabri, & Shukri, 2017).

It is possible to conclude that authentic resources reflect these linguistic and social world changes. As a result, students benefit from staying current on current events thanks to the utilization of these resources (Martinez, 2002.p,8).

Disadvantages of Using Authentic Materials

Although authentic materials play an essential role in learning a foreign language, they are not always positively received by teachers and students, since using real texts can pose many difficulties for both. Berardo (2006, p. 65) notes that according to Richards (2001), authentic texts often contain complex language structure and difficult vocabulary, which might not be suitable to the student's current needs or level.

Alderson (1980, cited by Lee, 1995, p. 134) states that when teachers cannot find suitable materials that meet the learners' needs, they create their materials to ensure the learning activities are appropriatefor the students. While students enjoy using materials created by teachersinstead of course books,thiscan create problems for teachers who face the challenge of finding appropriate authentic texts and designing suitable educational tasks that consider the students' ability, which can be time-consuming for the teachers.

Another negative aspectof using authentic materials is that some texts focus on competence training rather than comprehensible input. Such texts train learners to develop strategies for extracting only key information rather than understanding the entire text, which may lead to frustration or disappointmentwhen the text is too difficult for the learners (Guariento and Morley, 2001, p. 349).

Berardi (2006, p. 65)argues that "authentic materials are often too culturally biased and difficult to understand outside the language community". Martinez (2002) agrees that authentic materials may be culturally biased. This can have a negative effect on students' motivation; for example, being exposed to too many different accents can confuse beginner-level students. These negative aspects affect learners' levels of comprehension and reception of information; the vocabulary might not be relevant to students' immediate needs, and too many structures can get mixed up, so that students at lower levels may have a hard time understanding the texts (Azizah, 2016, p. 366).

Lower-level students may become irritated and demotivated when confronted with authentic texts, according to McNeil (1994), Kilickaya (2004), Ur (1996), and other authors. At lower levels, the usage of authentic texts may not only inhibit the learners from reacting in meaningful ways but may also lead them to feel frustrated, confused and more importantly de-motivated," according to Guariento and Morely (2001, p. 3). In the early stages of learning, real-life materials do not affect pupils' learning, according to Kim (2000).Finally, as can be shown, there are several drawbacks to using this strategy. This includes the inaccuracy of some of the resources and the prohibitive prices of accessing these materials for both learners and teachers in some circumstances. As a result, it shows that using authentic resources in teaching listening is more useful than costly.

When Is It Time to Use Authentic Resources?

In language instruction, the subject of when to use real resources is a contentious one. Teachers should only use real resources in intermediate and advanced language lessons, according to Kilickaya (2004) and Kim (2000). It is recommended that actual texts not be used with lower-level students, as this could lead to irritation, misunderstanding and lack of desire. Researchers argue that pupils should be exposed to real materials at an early stage of language learning (McNeil 1994; Miller 2005) since it will help them build appropriate techniques for dealing with complicated tasks later on (Akbari et al., 2015, p. 5). Schmitt (2002, p. 206) emphasizes the importance of gradually introducing students to authentic activities rather than starting with lifelike ones.

Objectives of this Study

The goal of this study is to find out if EFL teachers in Libya are aware of authentic resources and if they use them in their classrooms. The following research questions were addressed in this study:
1. Do English teachers prefer to use authentic materials?
2. In which levels do teachers use authentic materials?
3. Which sources do teachers use to obtain authentic materials?
4. Do teachers require training on working with authentic materials?

III.   Methodology

Participants

The researcher asked EFL teachers working at Sirte University, Sirte, Libya to participate in this study. All participants were Libyan EFL teachers with varying teaching experience, ranging from two to 20 years within the academic field.

Procedure and Instrument

For this paper, only a questionnaire was employed for data collection. Please read the following link for further information and a complete survey outline: (Appendix A) E.M. Soliman (2013) used a survey form to disseminate the survey to 15 Libyan EFL teachers via e-mail. It was the goal of this survey to gain insight into teachers' views on the benefits of using real texts to educate students on how to better communicate. Multiple-choice questions were included in the survey. To gather information regarding respondents' profiles (i.e. includes years of experience, and academic degree), as well as their attitudes toward using real materials in the classroom, these types of questions can be utilized.

Eight multiple-choice questions were included in the questionnaire. Participants could select more than one response. The survey had a five-day deadline for completion and return from the educators. For any questions, the researcher's email address and phone number were provided. SPSS was used to compute frequencies and percentages for all of the completed surveys.

IV.   Results and Discussion

The present study set out to learn about EFL teachers' attitudes towards using authentic materials in English language classes.To answer the research questions, a survey questionnaire was distributed electronically to 15 Libyan EFL teachers.

Table 1 displays the teachers' responses to the questionnaire, with their frequencies and percentages.

Table 1 Analysis of Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

Question	Answer	Frequency	%	
1. Would you prefer to use authentic materials in your classes?	Yes	15	100	
	No	0	0	
2. Why do you prefer not to use authentic materials?	Time-consuming0	0		
	Difficult for the learners	0	0	
	Syllabus constraints	0	0	
3. Why do you prefer to use authentic materials?	Exposure to real language	12	80	
Motivating students	14	90		
	Improving students' skills	3	20	
	Administration requirement	0	0	
4. In which class(es) would you use such materials?	Listening	8	53.3	
Reading	7	46.7		
Writing	4	30		
Speaking	12	80		
5. At which level(s) would you use authentic materials?	Beginner level	4	30	
	Intermediate level	8	53.3	
Advanced level	10	70.7		
6. Which sources would you use to obtain authentic materials?	Newspapers and magazines	10	70.5	
	TV/video	12	80	
	Radio	1	28	
	Internet	8	53.3	
7. What selection criteria would you follow?	Language level	9	60	
Length of the text	12	80		
Learners' needs and interests	4	26.8		
Course objectives	2	13.3		
8. Do you think you need training on dealing with such materials?	Yes	10	66.7	
	No	5	33.3	

The results show that overall, the Libyan EFL teachers in the sample are aware of the advantages of using authentic materials in the EFL teaching and learning process. In their answers to Question 1, all 15 teachers indicated that they prefer to use authentic materials in their language classes. Since all participants endorsed the use of authentic materials, none of them answered the second question.

In their answers to Question 3, the analysis shows that 90% of the teachers are concerned about motivating students to learn the language by using authentic materials. One teacher stated that "there is another type of authentic materials which is genuine materials. These materials sound very useful for students because their difficulty level is reduced but they still have the same features of authentic materials".Eighty percent of those polled said they would utilize authentic materials to show children how the language is used in the world. Additionally, 20% of those polled said they prefer to use real materials to help pupils develop their language abilities. Teachers' perceptions regarding real materials in EFL lessons are favourable, according to the findings. They believe that authentic materials are essential for strengthening their drive to learn and exposing children to how the language is utilized in everyday situations. "Exposure to real language and its use in the own

community" is a common feature of most definitions of authentic materials (Kilickaya, 2004; Harmer,1991; Yelubayeva, 2017, 1990; Otte, 2006; Thanajaro, 2000).

Question 4 asked teachers whether they would use authentic materials in speaking lessons or listening classes. Eighty percent of the teachers said they would, while 53.3% said they would not. The use of authentic materials was favoured by the majority of teachers for their speaking and listening classes. 46.7 percent of students said reading lessons were the second most preferred option for using real materials. Writing classes, where just 30% of participants said they would use real materials, were the last to emerge as a viable option for teachers looking to engage their students. With these findings, Abdulhakim and colleagues, Al-Musallam (2007); Breen (1985), Joiner and colleagues 1989; and Miller (2003) have stated that authentic materials are a significant and current source of learning materials for speaking and listening activities.

Some 70.7 percent of the respondents to Question 5 favoured using authentic materials in advanced level programs, 53.3 percent believed authentic materials may be utilized in intermediate level classes, and only 30 percent advocated using authentic materials for beginners. There is a belief that "beginners cannot touch such texts since they lack many lexical elements and grammatical structure" in the English language.

It is apparent from the teachers' recommendations that authentic resources are not recommended for students at the beginner's level. One of the most hotly discussed issues in language instruction is how to introduce real materials at the appropriate level. "The question now [...] is not whether original texts should be used, but when and how they should be introduced," say Guariento and Morley (2001, p. 348). In addition, they say that authentic texts are best suited for students at the intermediate or advanced levels because they can be difficult for pupils at the beginner level to comprehend."Teachers should choose resources that are appropriate for the linguistic abilities of their students" (Day, 2003, page 3).

Asked in the sixth question, how do teachers go about finding real materials? The majority of participants (80%) stated that they prefer to get their information via television and videos. According to the survey, 70.5 percent of respondents plan to read newspapers and periodicals, 53.3 percent want to use the Internet, and 28 percent plan to listen to the radio. Al-Musallam (2007) indicated that EFL teachers' TV/Video is the most widely used source of authentic materials in the Saudi context. The internet came in third, followed by printed goods like magazines and newspapers. According to Berardo (2006), "Whereas newspapers and any other printed materials, e.g. textbooks, date extremely rapidly, the internet is regularly updated, more visually engaging, and being interactive." The results of this study are congruent with Berardo's findings. (p.62).

How do teachers select authentic materials for their students? Question 7 inquired about this topic. All three responses were selected by most teachers. More than 80 percent of respondents would use the length of the text as the key selection factor, while 60 percent would use the language level of the text as a secondary consideration. Participants (26.8%) are more likely to focus on what their students want rather than what the course aims to accomplish. Like Akbari et al. (2015), Bacon and Finneman (1990), as well as Tamo (2009), the authors of this study all, stated that the selection of materials should take into account factors such as their length, level of difficulty, and relevance.

Two-thirds of participants (10 out of 15) agreed, in response to Question 8, that using such materials necessitated special training. Only five teachers stated that they did not need any more training.

V. Conclusion

EFL teachers in Libya were asked about their views on using real materials in their classes, and the results of the survey were published. Sirte University, Libya, was the site of this research. There were no differences in views about using real materials between the teachers who participated in the study, no matter how long they had worked in education or how advanced their degrees were.

It has been widely debated in the field of language training that pupils gain from exposure to real-world circumstances when learning a foreign language. Authentic materials also have the benefit of being highly motivational, giving students a sense of accomplishment when they master them and inspiring them to continue their education. Additionally, authentic resources are current, cover a wide range of text types, and reflect the many diverse ways in which the language is used. They can also be used in a variety of ways to promote a variety of abilities. If you want to help kids improve their language abilities and provide them with real-world experience, you can use anything as authentic content. The Internet, for example, is an excellent resource for teaching pupils to read since it provides a wide variety of content that can be easily accessed. It's important to employ authentic resources in the classroom because kids will be exposed to the real-world language and how it is used when they leave the classroom, rather than the classroom's fake language. It is the teacher's job not to deceive students, but rather to prepare them, enabling them to comprehend how the language is used in real-world contexts. It's worth noting what Davies (1984, p. 192) had to say about their effectiveness in the classroom: "It is not that a text is understood because it is authentic but that it is authentic because it is understood," he wrote. In other words, "what the learner knows is real to him."

Limitations of the current study

The current study has some limitations. Despite the small number of participants, the data gathered from this study was quite valuable. Using a questionnaire as the only means of collecting data is another. For a more comprehensive and generalizable dataset, a repeat study could employ a wider range of research instruments.

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