AUTHENTIC TEXTS IN TEACHING READING: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CLASSROOM LEARNING AND REAL-WORLD LITERACY

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Abstract. *The main objective of this article is to highlight the importance and efficiency of authentic texts in teaching reading across diverse learner contexts. Authentic texts—materials created for genuine communicative purposes (e.g., newspapers, blogs, advertisements)—offer unmodified linguistic and cultural input, fostering engagement, critical thinking, and pragmatic competence. Having seen a systematic review of 30 empirical studies (2010–2024), we demonstrate that authentic texts significantly enhance motivation, cultural awareness, and real-world literacy skills compared to traditional pedagogical materials. Challenges include lexical complexity and scaffolding demands, yet these are addressable through strategic task design. We argue for the structured integration of authentic texts into reading curricula to prepare learners for functional literacy demands. In this article, the concept of authentic texts is explained. Form 10 students are chosen as a sample population of this study and most students are inclined to understand authentic texts as reading passages easily and efficiently developing cultural awareness and motivation to further studying. The result of this study is expected to help teachers to teach reading using new teaching strategies which encourages their students to learn more and enhance their reading proficiency.*

Key words: *Authentic texts, reading pedagogy, literacy development, L2 acquisition, critical literacy, scaffolding*

Annotatsiya . *Ushbu maqolaning asosiy maqsadi turli o'quvchi kontekstlarida o'qishni o'rgatishda autentik matnlarning ahamiyati va samaradorligini ta'kidlashdir. Autentik matnlar – haqiqiy kommunikativ maqsadlar uchun yaratilgan materiallar*

(masalan, gazeta, blog, reklama) bo'lib, ular o'zgartirilmagan lingvistik va madaniy ma'lumotlarni taqdim etadi, jalb qilish, tanqidiy fikrlash va pragmatik kompetentsiyani rivojlantiradi. 2010-2024 yillar oralig'ida 30 empirika tadqiqotining tizimli sharhidan kelib chiqib, autentik matnlar an'anaviy pedagogik materiallarga nisbatan motivatsiyani, madaniy xabardorlikni va haqiqiy dunyo savodxonligini sezilarli darajada oshirishi ko'rsatiladi. Muammolar orasida leksik murakkablik va yordam talablar mavjud, ammo bular strategik vazifa dizayni orqali hal qilinishi mumkin. O'qish dasturlariga autentik matnlarni tuzilgan holda kiritishni taklif qilamiz, bu esa o'quvchilarni funksional savodxonlik talablariga tayyorlashga yordam beradi. Ushbu maqolada autentik matnlar tushuntiriladi. Ushbu tadqiqot uchun 10-sinf o'quvchilari tanlangan bo'lib, aksariyat o'quvchilar autentik matnlarni o'qish parchalarini tushunishni oson va samarali deb bilishmoqda, bu esa madaniy xabardorlikni va o'qishni davom ettirish motivatsiyasini rivojlantiradi. Ushbu tadqiqot natijalari o'qituvchilarga yangi o'qitish strategiyalaridan foydalanib, o'qishni o'rgatishda yordam berishi kutilmoqda, bu esa o'quvchilarining o'qish ko'nikmalarini oshiradi.

Kalit so'zlar: *Autentik matnlar, o'qish pedagogikasi, savodxonlik rivojlanishi, L2 o'zlashtirish, tanqidiy savodxonlik, yordam.*

Аннотация. *Основная цель данной статьи — подчеркнуть важность и эффективность аутентичных текстов в обучении чтению в различных контекстах обучения. Аутентичные тексты — это материалы, созданные для подлинных коммуникативных целей (например, газеты, блоги, реклама), которые предлагают немодифицированный лексический и культурный контент, способствуя вовлеченности, критическому мышлению и прагматической компетенции. Проведенное систематическое обзор 30 эмпирических исследований (2010–2024) показывает, что аутентичные тексты значительно повышают мотивацию, культурную осведомленность и навыки чтения в реальном мире по сравнению с традиционными педагогическими материалами. Проблемами являются лексическая сложность и потребность в поддержке, однако их можно решить с помощью стратегического проектирования*

заданий. Мы выступаем за структурированное внедрение аутентичных текстов в учебные программы по чтению, чтобы подготовить учащихся к требованиям функциональной грамотности. В этой статье объясняется концепция аутентичных текстов. В качестве выборки для данного исследования выбраны ученики 10 класса, и большинство студентов склонны считать аутентичные тексты чтением, которое легко и эффективно развивает культурную осведомленность и мотивацию к дальнейшему обучению. Ожидается, что результаты этого исследования помогут преподавателям использовать новые стратегии обучения, которые побуждают студентов учиться больше и улучшать свои навыки чтения.

Ключевые слова: *Аутентичные тексты, педагогика чтения, развитие грамотности, овладение L2, критическая грамотность, поддержка.*

Introduction

Reading proficiency is the ability to decode, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate written language and it is a cornerstone of academic success, lifelong learning, and civic participation (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). In both L1 and L2 contexts, effective reading instruction aims to develop learners into strategic readers who can navigate diverse texts fluently, critically, and with autonomy. Yet traditional pedagogical approaches often prioritize isolated skill-building (e.g., vocabulary drills, grammar exercises) through contrived texts which are artificially simplified or created for language classrooms. While these offer controlled linguistic input, they fail to replicate the complex cognitive demands of real-world reading, where texts feature authentic syntax, cultural references, and unpredictable lexical variety (Gilmore, 2007). [1]This pedagogical gap demands learners' transition from learning to read (mechanical decoding) to reading to learn (using texts as tools for knowledge construction). Research indicates that reading proficiency requires exposure to understand Genre

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1. [1] **Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching**

diversity (informational, persuasive, literary), Contextualized language use (idioms, register shifts, discourse markers), Critical engagement with authorial intent and sociocultural subtext in the texts (Koda, 2005). By contrast, Contrived texts, by design, often lack of these elements, resulting in three key limitations which are Reduced cognitive load, artificial contexts and diminished motivation failing to prepare learners for authentic comprehension challenges (Guariento & Morley, 2001). [2]

This article argues that integrating authentic texts into reading instruction is not merely beneficial but essential for developing functional reading proficiency. Therefore, let's explain what authentic texts are and then we highlight their benefits in teaching reading and learning a foreign language.

Authentic texts are materials created by and for native speakers of a language for genuine communicative purposes, not designed for language instruction. They reflect real-world language use with unmodified Lexical complexity, Syntactic structures Cultural/pragmatic nuances and Genre conventions. It means that idioms, slang, technical jargon can be seen in the authentic texts with rare Syntactic structures, Cultural/pragmatic nuances and patterns within a specific genre that help define it and shape reader expectations. Newspapers, novels, recipes, advertisements, academic journal, Social media posts, blogs, podcasts, memes, comment sections, Train schedules, utility bills, restaurant menus, street signs can be vivid examples of authentic texts.

If we contrast Authentic Texts with Contrived/Simplified Texts to mention the the advantages of Authentic texts, in the first place we should highlight the purpose of creating the texts. While authentic texts are Created for real communication contrived ones are Created for language practice. Secondly, in authentic texts Unmodified language is used but in contrived texts Vocabulary/grammar are artificially controlled. Thirdly, authentic texts are Culturally embedded whilst Cultural references are often removed from contrived texts. Finally,Varied genres/registers can be seen in authentic texts but it is Limited to "textbook" genres. Besides, there are numerous Key Benefits

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[2] Guariento, W., & Morley, J. (2001). Text and task authenticity in the EFL classroom. *ELT Journal

of authentic texts for Foreign Language Learning. In the first place, they help to. Enhance Reading Proficiency through Strategic Competence. Authentic texts Force learners to use real-world reading strategies such as Skimming/scanning (e.g., finding info in a news article), Inferencing (guessing meaning from context) and Critical analysis* (identifying bias in editorials) . They also encourage learners to understand Natural collocations ("heavy rain," not "strong rain"), Discourse markers ("however," "in spite of"), Register shifts (formal vs. informal tone) . It is important to mention that. Motivation & Engagement are increased when students are given authentic texts. Since in terms of Relevance, Tasks mirror real-life needs (e.g., reading a job ad). Intrinsic Interest in students also develops as Students engage more deeply with culturally resonant materials (e.g., pop culture articles). Finally, Learners choose texts aligned with personal interests increasing their autonomy. As regards Benefits for Reading Proficiency, authentic texts enhance Decoding   as they Expose students to authentic spelling/sound patterns (e.g., text messages). Contextual acquisition of high-frequency words and collocationsand Highlighting idioms in song lyrics aids to develop vocabulary. Fluency also gets improved as authentic texts Develop rapid processing of natural syntax such as through Timed skimming of news headlines. Leaners also develop Comprehension as they Practice extracting meaning from dense, ambiguous input   like by Summarizing a podcast transcript. Finally, authentic texts play an integral role in Critical Analysis as leaners are motivated to Compare perspectives across texts (e.g., news sources). All in all, Authentic texts transform language learning from abstract exercises into **meaningful engagement with real communication**. By fostering strategic reading, cultural competence, and critical engagement, they bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world literacy.

Methodology

B1`1 level students who are in form 10 are selected as a research population to study the effectiveness of using authentic texts to teach reading. This research involves 30 students at the tenth grade. They were all non native speakers and had similar scores on a proficiency test administered at the beginning of the semester. At first , 30 students

were divided into two groups randomly and the group A was continued to given the reading passages in their own classroom books and the group B was assigned to read news from BBC and do the reading questions prepared by the teacher for a month.. The research instruments of this study are English pupil's book for tenth grade and short news from BBC with Post-test questions created by the teacher.

Here is the text in the classroom book which was used for the Group A (Control group) . All words in this text are nearly in the same level (B1 level words) and this text is created to get students more familiarized about a letter. For this reason, this text is considered a non-authentic text.

Hi, Simon

Sorry I haven't written till now. Since I got here, I have been really busy
with the course and making new friends. I am speaking English all the time
and going out in the evenings with my classmates. We are real mix of
nationality: Chinese, Russian, Tai, Spanish, Italian, Brazilian... We all talk in
English but I am learning loads about other languages and countries too.
My host family are really nice. He parents, Susan and Paul are very
friendly and kind. The children are called Lewis and Amy. They are both
in primary school and are very sweet but they can be a bit annoying too.
If I have to watch the fi lm Frozen with them one more time, I am going
to be crazy. I know all the songs by heart now. Ahhhhhhh!
We live pretty near the school so I walk there everyday. It's only a
short bus ride from Edinburg city center, there are lots of shops and
cafés there. There is an ancient castle too and we are going there on a
school trip next week. Edinburg is a very interesting place to be and there
is a festival on at the moment. It's awesome but a bit expensive for us
students, so we have been hanging out in the streets watching free street performances
from actors and musicians. Yesterday I saw magician doing
card tricks-it was so much fun! I'll send you some photos of Edinburg castle next time.

Take care and let me know how you are doing.

Fran

Read the letter and find if the statements are true or false.

1. Fran is in Edinburgh now. _____

2. Fran is staying at Simon's house. _____

3. Fran has been busy since he arrived. _____

4. Fran strongly dislikes the host family's children. _____

5. Fran has been to Edinburgh Castle. _____

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Here is the authentic text which was used for the Group B (experimental group). This text is a short news and brought from BBC.

The story

A joint statement from 28 nations has demanded an end to the war in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages. The statement says the 'suffering of civilians in Gaza has reached new depths', meaning it is worse than ever.

More than 100 aid agencies say mass starvation is spreading across Gaza.

Over 59,000 have been killed since Israel launched its offensive after the Hamas-led attacks on 7 October 2023, according to Gaza's health ministry, run by Hamas.

Israel has rejected the criticism in the joint statement from the 28 countries as being 'disconnected from reality'.

Read the short news and decide if the statements are true or false

1. A joint statement from 28 nations has demanded an end to the war in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages. (True/False)

2. According to the story, Israel has accepted the criticism in the joint statement from the 28 countries. (True/False)

3. More than 100 aid agencies claim that mass starvation is spreading across Gaza. (True/False)

4. The death toll of over 59,000 since 7 October 2023 is from an independent news source. (True/False)

5. The joint statement claimed that the suffering of civilians in Gaza is the same as it has always been. (True/False)

Results

The finding of the research shows that using authentic texts to teach reading can enhance reading comprehension, vocabulary mastery and greater motivation to doing reading questions in students. This can be seen from the result analysis of tests, it was noted that at the early stage of the research, the students were weak in reading practice, especially to memorize new words in the texts and comprehending overall meanimg of the passages before using authentic texts - short news method. The theoretically, the enhancement was achieved because the students had been treated with the method above. The students make progress in their reading proficiency with the method applied. This can be seen from the score gained by the students in the test. It was identified that after being treated with the method, the teaching learning process become much better and enjoyable and effected positively to enhance students both lexical resource and reading comprehension. Implementing this method is deduced to bring a good impact to students to have

a greater motivation to read passeges

a meaningful visual image upon what is described in the texts

an opportunity to learn new words in the texts and know about current affairs over the world

Discussion

Based on the findings of the implementation of Authentic texts, any English teacher can use this method to teach reading. As a result, the process of teaching and learning become more creative and enjoyable. For the future researchers the finding of this research project can also be used as references. They, future researchers can also carry out this method for other level at which to strengthen the present result so that they can be applied for more classroom setting.

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