

The preference of Using Authentic and non-Authentic Reading Materials to Enhance EFL Learners' Comprehension and schema knowledge at First Semester of Faculty of education Misurata university

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Abstract:

This study concentrated on the preference of using authentic and non-authentic reading materials to enhance EFL learner's comprehension and schema knowledge at first semester of faculty of education Misurata university. The data was collected from standard questionnaire on 30 female students English students, by using quantitative method. Based upon the data gathered, students in the group that they have non-authentic material found it difficult to understand and they spend long time to understand it, while the other group that have both the material found the authentic material very interesting when they read it. Therefore, the idea of using authentic material in language teaching is supported among references and many professionals in the field of language pedagogy. Authentic material provides the learners with many significant advantages and promotes them with high motivation and interest in language learning and lead to improving communicative competence.

key words: original reading- not original- reading texts

تفضيل استخدام مواد قراءة أصلية وغير أصلية لتعزيز فهم متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة
أجنبية ومعرفتهم بالمخطط في الفصل الدراسي الأول لكلية التربية جامعة مصراتة
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المخلص:

ركزت الدراسة على مدى تفضيل استخدام نصوص القراءة (الأصلية وغير الأصلية) للفصل الأول لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية جامعة مصراتة، وتم جمع البيانات من استبيان ضم 30 طالبة استخدم فيها المنهج الكمي، وبناء على البيانات التي تم جمعها وجد الطلاب الذين استعملوا النصوص غير الأصلية

يقضون وقت طويلاً لفهمها بينما الطلاب الذين استعملوا النصين (الأصلي وغير الأصلي) كانوا أكثر استيعاباً ومرتعة عند قراءته، لذلك فإنه يجب استعمال النصوص الأصلية في طرق التدريس لما لها من مزايا في تحسين كفاءة الاستيعاب والتحصيل العلمي ويعكس بشكل إيجابي إتقان اللغة للمتعلمين. الكلمات المفتاحية: قراءة أصلية- غير أصلية- نصوص القراءة

Introduction:

Incorporating authentic materials helps students acquire an effective communicative competence in the target language. The most common sources are newspapers, magazines, TV, video, radio, literature, and the internet. Reading is one of the most critical skills in second language learning (Alderson, 1984). According to Nuttall (1996), reading described as the most studied and the least understood process in education. In addition, authentic reading is reading a variety of text for real purposes and it is most like that which occurs in everyday life. Therefore, the use of authentic materials in English classroom is very important. This is because authentic materials give some positive impacts for both the learners and the teachers. Teachers, therefore, must pass teacher training course (TTC) with communicative language teaching CLT framework and they use some real world activities in the classroom (Stern,1981). To do so, teachers incorporate authentic materials as one of the most important principles in CLT approach in EFL classes.

Moreover, authentic materials can provide information about the target culture and provide that culture's perspective on an issue or event. The rich language found in authentic materials provides a source of input language learners need for acquisition(Li & Hedebouw, 2009). Also, Authentic materials provide real-life examples of language used in everyday situations. Therefore, They can be used to add more interest for the learner. Also, As Nunan (1991) claimed that, this is due to several reasons, including the influence of comprehension-based approaches to the development of language, the role of applied linguists, and the development of computer-based language corpora. Developing reading comprehension is an important aspect in acquisition of a language.

Authenticity in teaching involves features such as being genuine; becoming more self-aware; being defined by one's self rather than by others' expectations; bringing parts of oneself into interactions with students; and critically reflecting on self, others, relationships and context(Li & Hedebouw, 2009).

Statement of the problem

Most of reading materials in Libyan educational system are non-authentic materials designed for educational purposes. Faculty of Education, Misurata University EFL first semester students have various problems in reading comprehension especially when they attempt to read. The first problem is lack of vocabulary; similarly a lack of grade-level vocabulary can delay comprehension if student does not know the meaning of most of the words he/she is reading. The second is lack of interest; sometimes the problem can be as simple as a lack of interest. If a student is not interested in the content he/she is reading, she will not be motivated to understand it. As this has an issue in Libya's EFL classrooms, many seminars and trainings have been held to increase English teachers' awareness of needs for developing authentic materials as supplementary lessons. These authentic materials can mutually complement the existing textbooks mandated by the Minister of Education in Libya.

Significance of the Study

The result of this research can be useful for English teachers or trainers as information and suggestion which can be useful in their teaching and learning process, especially in using authentic materials to interest the students in reading. Also, it will improve students' reading comprehension and schema knowledge. The teachers can use the most preferred and effective materials in their classroom to improve students' reading comprehension. Authentic reading materials can provide a relatively easy way to bring something up to data and topical into the classroom. Also, provide with opportunity to look at the same topic reported in different ways. Therefore, this research intends to investigate the effectiveness of authentic material for the reading among the EFL learners of Misurata University.

Research Question:

The study aims to answer these questions:

- 1- Does the use of authentic material enhance the students reading comprehension and schema knowledge?
- 2- Do the students prefer to use authentic material in the classroom?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading comprehension and schema knowledge

Richard (2002) reported that reading comprehension is a complex process in which the reader used his mental ability to obtain the information and improve schema knowledge. It means that the reader must be able to recognize the meaning of printing words. Instructors and researchers have developed various ways of improving reading strategies in order to ease the process of reading and help learning in more effective ways. According to, Pressely (2006) the idea is that students will develop stronger reading comprehension skills on their own if the teacher gives them explicit mental tools for unpacking text. Another strategy is visualization which creates mental images in the learner's mind while reading text, which "brings words to life" and helps improve reading comprehension.

Moreover, Bell (2009) illustrates in relation to this strategy that "Asking sensory questions will help students become better visualizers." (p. 3). Pressely (2006), suggested that a written text should be understood through Text factors (e.g. genre) or if it was a literary text, it should be understood through its plot, characters or themes.

Recently, in Libya, for example, It has applied the meaningful approach' in English language teaching. House, (2008) proved that English language teaching needs a meaningful context. It means that students should know 'beyond' the language. This idea suggested that students should not only know the language, but also know how to use it in the real life context. However, according to House, (2008), the most serious challenge in English language teaching in Libya is lack of exposure to real life use of the language and insufficient amount of using authentic materials as a strategy in the classroom. This situation motivates Libyan students to learn English as they need. Graves (2000) contends that although teachers do not deserve the right to choose the core materials (textbooks), they have to increase their creativity of how to make such materials more interesting. One of the attempts is creating

their own supplementary materials, Moreover, task-based language teaching is now widely used in Libya in which the focus of English learning process is the communicative language tasks that students need to perform. Consequently, authentic materials play a role in promoting task-based language learning since they connect the language used in the classroom with the natural use of language outside the classroom (Nunan,1991, cited in Oura, 2001).

The Importance of Using Authentic Materials

The use of authentic materials is beneficial to the process of learning, especially in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) context (Hadley, 2001)). Compared to English as a second language (ESL) context, learning English in the EFL setting needs more efforts and persistence due to the lack of opportunity to use the target language (TL) or on exposure to the TL in the daily social interactions (Saville& Troike , 2003). Many studies examined the effects of authentic materials on learners' attitude, motivation, and language achievement (House , 2008).To expand knowledge of how authentic material benefit language learning and teaching in the EFL context.

Lansford (2014)illustrated about the authentic material that "The topics, language, syntax, structure, etc., are all pitched at a target audience of native speakers and offered through media intended primarily for native speakers"(p.21). Several studies have shown how textbook language differs from authentic speech and writing. For example, Eisenclas (2011) found that the range of language used in Spanish textbooks regarding giving advice was quite limited in comparison to what Spanish speakers actually use. Also, Simpson-Vlach and Ellis (2010) compiled an academic phrase list from academic lectures in English. One of the phrases on the list was *blah, blah, blah* . This is an example of a phrase that international students are unlikely to have learned if they have studied English from textbooks using scripted academic lectures.

Advantages of Using Authentic Material

The usefulness of authentic material has been stressed and discussed by many scholars(Alptekin, 2015). First," it builds background knowledge by exposing learners to new ideas and content from real-life and helps learners

transfer their literacy skills from familiar formats to a variety of other formats they may encounter. Moreover, it increases learners' confidence to deal with literate word around them. And motivates learners by showing them that the literacy skills they are learning are valuable and useful for living in an information-age culture. Finally," it prepares learners to deal with real-life situations outside the classroom and supports learners' transition and integration into the world outside the classroom”(Berardo, 2006, p.64).

In addition, the authenticity of the material makes students interested in English language” (Gower, Phillips & Walters, 1995, p.83). Therefore, authentic material is interesting and stimulating when a learner finds his interest in a text, he can easily relate it with his own experience (Coopens & Rico ,2013). Also, Harmer (cited in Al Azri& Al-Rashdi, 2014, p.252) “believes that learner learns the language fast and produces better language because of using authentic material” . Moreover, learner feels confident to overcome real life situations as well.

Non authentic materials

Non authentic materials are tools used by teachers in order to facilitate the learning of language. This sort of materials are proposed, revised and modified to serve pedagogical purposes. They include cassettes, videos, work books, photocopies. Kennedy and Bolitho (1984) considered simplified texts as a burden which prevents learners from dealing with the real world of their subject area. Moreover, Huang, Tindall, & Nisbet, (2011) claimed that a simplified version of such material is a “kind of translation from the usage available to author of extract to that which is available to the learner”. Saville-Troike, (2003) suggested that simplified texts involve enriched input that consists of many typical examples about the target structure.

Advantages of Using Non-Authentic Material

Non-authentic material provides safety for both the teachers and students. Garinger (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.2) regards textbook as a main source, sometimes supplementary source. Also, textbooks provide, help and guideline for beginner teachers to train them. Teacher’s book of a textbook clearly states the objectives, goals and possible challenges to overcome. Therefore, teachers

feel secured because of having textbook as a guideline. learners feel the seriousness of learning when there is a textbook. If there is no textbook, they may sense there is no purpose of learning. Meanwhile, lack of textbook makes a student teacher-dependent and they become out of focus. According to Garinger (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.3), students get an impression of being measured perfectly while having a textbook.

In addition, textbooks provide instant materials which have been tried and tested already. As a result, teachers need not have to waste time for making materials. Therefore, it saves a lot of time and it reduces preparation load from the teachers. O'Neil and Sheldon (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.3) also think that ready-made textbook materials save teacher's preparation time which they can spend in other important area. Also, textbooks provide a suitable syllabus that matches with student's level . As a result, textbook determines student's level also. Roger (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.3) thinks textbook has structured syllabus where the instructions are standardized. Therefore, textbooks are efficient - language models.

Disadvantages of Using Non-Authentic Materials

According to Gabrielators (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.1), it depends on the user whether a textbook is a facilitator or a burden. Therefore, non-authentic materials have some drawbacks also. It is difficult to find a coursebook that meets all the students' needs . Ur (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.4) states that students have individual need and no textbook can fulfill everyone's need. Therefore, Roger (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.4) feels that textbook may remain unsuccessful to meet students' need.

Textbook can be a burden for both the teacher and the student. Students may feel bored as the material is-predictable. Therefore, they may not like the textbook and feel less interested. In fact, a teacher may feel bound to use a course book that he does not like to meet different students' need. According to Ur (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.4), the teacher will find himself as a peacemaker with no freedom in this case.Lamie (cited in Awasti, 2006, p.4) suggested that textbook makes the teacher inactive and they get stuck with the textbook. Meanwhile, the teacher may lose his creativity by searching for the materials which will motivate and interest the students. Also, One textbook cannot serve

different level students who have different learning styles in a language classroom. Moreover, the topics that a textbook covers may not interest the students.

Method Research Design:

This research used the quantitative research method to explain the preference of authentic material for the reading skill among first semester students of English Department in Misurata University in the academic year 2018-2019. this study is descriptive. Creswell(2015) illustrated that descriptive design "is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Also, survey resolves problems using numbers. Emphasis is placed on the collection of numerical data, the summary of those data and drawing of inferences from the data (Creswell, 2015).

Participants and setting

The study included thirty EFL students of faculty of education, English Department in Misurata University, all the participants were female. The twenty students returned the questionnaire immediately after finishing it.

Research Instrument

The researcher made use of authentic as well as non-authentic materials to present them for the students. The students read the two passages and answered the survey questions.

Data collocation

The data was collected from the students of the Department of English in Misurata University in academic year 2018-2019 as they answered a questionnaire.

Ethical consideration

General ethical issues such as confidentiality, assessment or risks, informed consent and access to data were carefully considered in conducting this research. All information collected from the participants has been kept strictly confidential. Permission to undertake the study was sought from the head of the department in English.

Data analysis

The questionnaire was statically analyzed using Excel.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter, however, takes the analysis to a more practical field. The research conducted a questionnaire, containing two passages, one authentic and the other non-authentic. The participants did not know which passage was authentic and which was non-authentic, although it is very simple to know this. Next to the passages, there were eight questions for participants to answer in order to know which material they prefer best, authentic or non-authentic. The questions are presented in the form of statements by using two point liker scale.

The first passage provided for the readers was an example of a non-authentic material, it is bullying in schools from textbook. The second passage was about the same topic but from newspapers. Thus it is an authentic material. The aim was for the participants to read both the passages and decide that which passage would be sufficient and helpful for them to improve their reading skill and which kind of reading material is more comprehensible.

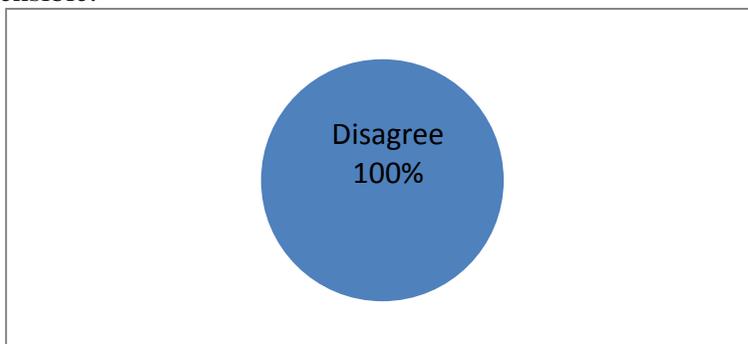


Figure1: I found the non-authentic material passage easy to read, understand and comprehend.

The first statement in the questionnaire is about the easiness and simplicity of the first passage “non-authentic”. All participants in the second group who have non authentic passage only, disagreed to the above statement that they found the non-authentic passage easy to read, because they found it difficult and they spend more time to understand it.

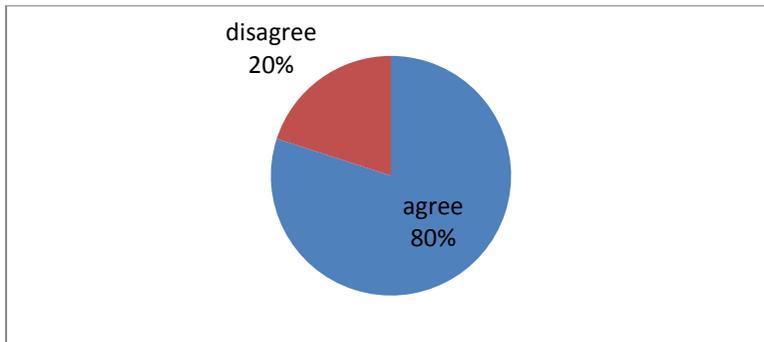


Figure2: I found the authentic material passage easy to read, understand and comprehend.

The second statement in the questionnaire is whether the participants in the first group that they have two passages “authentic and non-authentic material” find the second passage (authentic) easy to read, understand and comprehend, About 80% of the participants agree that they found the authentic passage easy and simple, and they do not spend much time to understand it and answer the question so easy. While the rest of 20% found the authentic passage not easy to understand.

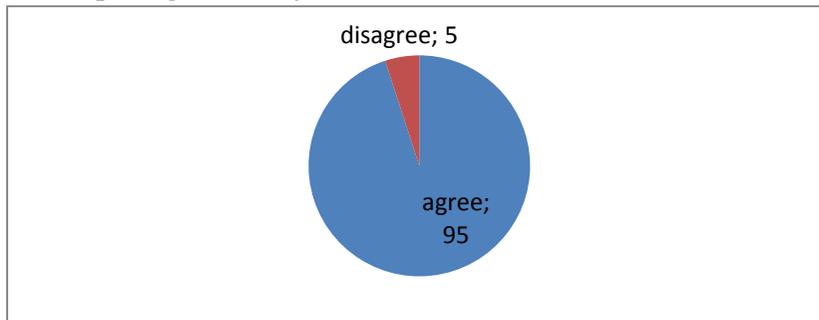


Figure3: If you have a chance to choose a reading material, you will choose the authentic material passage .

In this statement that asked for both groups were agreed by about 95% of participants that they will choose the authentic passage because they were interesting when they read it and enhance them to learning English by using this material . While the other 5% disagreed.

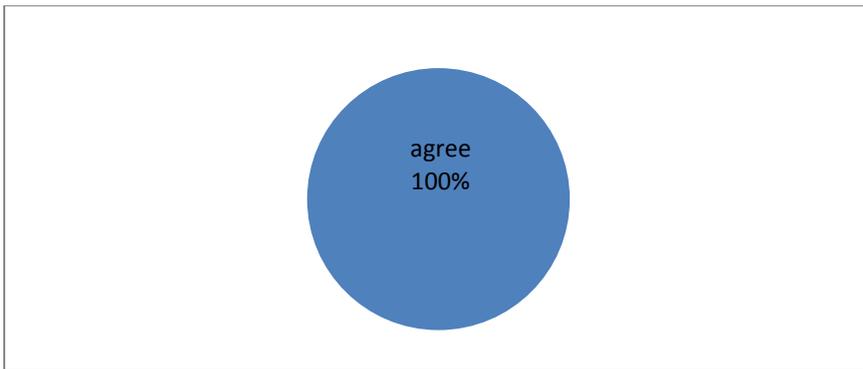


Figure 4: I found authentic passage interesting more than non-authentic.

All of participants in both groups were agreed with this statement that they found the authentic passage interesting and stimulating because they became more motivated to read about their own favorite topics and new things, also they learn the language fast and produces better language because of authentic material.

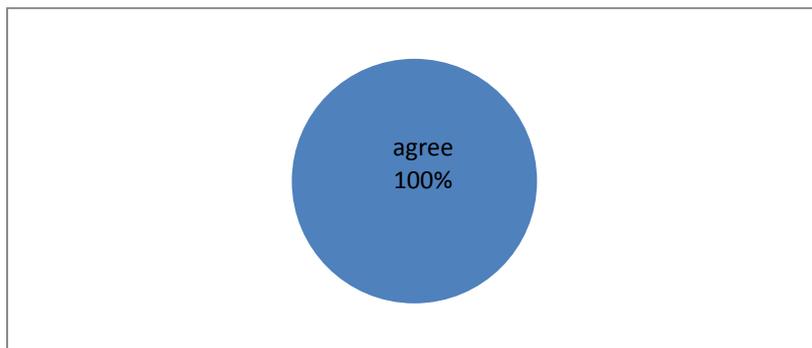


Figure 5: The authentic material passage has easy and simple vocabulary rather than in non-authentic.

Also in this statement all the participants in both groups agreed that the vocabulary in authentic material easy and simple and it help them to understand the passage, especially for the first and second semesters.

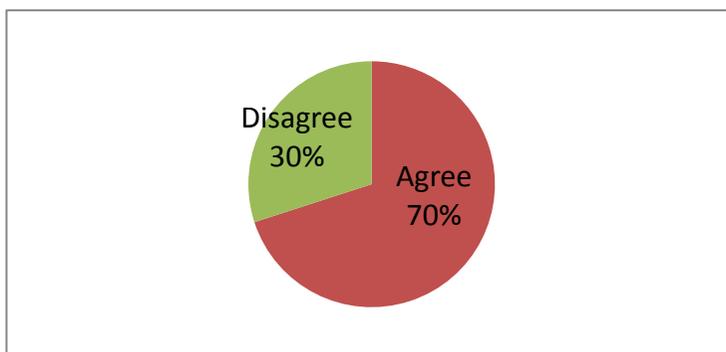


Figure 6: The non-authentic is boring and contains so many choppy. .

This statement was agreed by 85% of the participants, because when they read the non-authentic they feel less interested, beside that it's so difficult to understand it easily, and the students will be bored with the same reading text that are not attracting them and it will make them passive and became be slow reader , but the others 15% were disagreed with the statement .

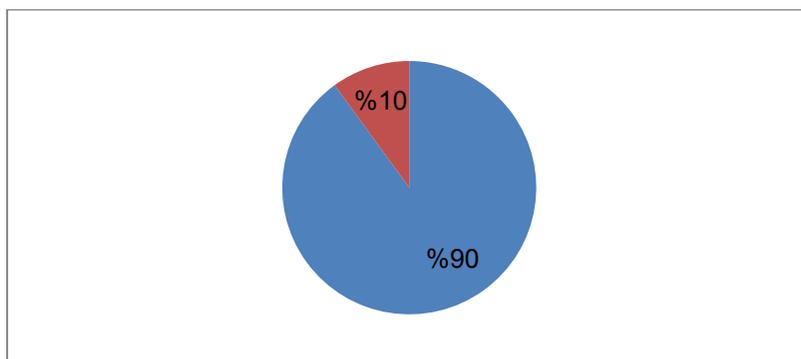


Figure 7:Non-authentic is difficult but it helps to develop and get more words.

In this statement most of participants about 90% agreed that the non-authentic is difficult to understand and the words is strong especially for beginner. But at the same time help them to develop their words because it have it has many and new vocabulary, so when they read the authentic passage it helps the students to understand non-authentic. While the other

10% disagree with this statement. In conclusion, Authentic material help the students to understand the topic easily, and make it motivation , interesting and they get a scam a knowledge. In short, the students' agreed with authentic material as a tool and it's became as kind of strategy in second language learners to understand non-authentic material easily.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research motivated the usage of authentic and non-authentic material and which material is preferred by the undergraduate student of English Department, Faculty of Education. Based on the results and discussions of the research, It found that , using authentic materials enable learners to interact with the real language and enhance learners comprehension and improve schema knowledge. It recommended that EFL teachers should emphasized on their regular use of the materials in their language classes, which would positively reflection learners language proficiency.

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