

РІВНЕНСЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ ГУМАНІТАРНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ
КАФЕДРА ПРАКТИКИ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ



АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ

СТУДЕНТСЬКИЙ НАУКОВИЙ ВІСНИК

PHILOLOGY



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THE USE OF AUTHENTIC SOUND (AUDIAL) MATERIALS FOR BEGINNERS

The research is dedicated to the usage of authentic sound materials in elementary school. To reach this aim we have to define the main notions connected with the topic.

Nowadays, a common feature in the listening lessons at primary school is that the majority of teachers follow the same pattern: the schoolteacher played the textbook assigned audiotape and all students tried their best to listen for the information they needed in order to answer the questions in their workbooks. In most cases, the audio from the tape was with the British accent, and it usually involved two individuals speaking to one another. The speakers took careful turns, meaning that the first speaker said all s/he had to say in full before the next speaker spoke. There were no elisions or assimilations and instead every word was carefully articulated. This careful articulation in school was not only unnatural but also unlikely to occur in a conversation outside of the classroom, as the great mismatch exists between listening in English classes and listening in the “real world”.

Listening is a psychological phenomenon, which takes place on a cognitive level inside people’s heads, and a social phenomenon, which develops interactively between people and the environment surrounding them. It considers listening as a complex process, which needs to be understood in order to teach it, and subsequently, evaluate it before integrating it with phonological aspects and with the skill of speaking.

Listening is probably the least explicit of the four language skills, making it the most difficult one to learn. It is evident that children listen and respond to language before they learn to talk. When it is time for children to learn to read, they still have to listen so that they gain knowledge and information to follow directions. In the classroom, students have to listen carefully and attentively to lectures and class discussions in order to understand and to retain the information for later recall. Teaching listening can be hard for teachers and students both. Students who are good at speaking at their own pace and reading may have trouble listening to a recording that is a regular-speed conversation. Listening is often confusing for an English learner.

Rost explains the importance of listening in language classroom as follows:

1. Listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin.
2. Spoken language provides a means of interaction for the learner. Because learners must interact to achieve understanding. Access to speakers of the language is essential. Moreover, learners’ failure to understand the language they hear is an impetus, not an obstacle, to interaction and learning.
3. Authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to understand language as native speakers actually use it.
4. Listening exercises provide teachers with a means for drawing learners’ attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language [6, 141-142].

It is uncontroversial that language learning materials differ from authentic language with regard to vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. When and how to bring in authentic materials, however, is

a matter of debate. Assuming that most teachers find it easier to use authentic materials with advanced students, I will focus here on how to use authentic materials in lower level classes.

Interest in authentic materials has a history as long as 1890s and Henry Sweet is believed to be one of the first advocates who favoured the use of authentic materials and discussed their benefits over contrived ones. He believed that natural texts “do justice to every feature of the language” while artificial materials include “repetition of certain grammatical constructions, certain elements of the vocabulary, certain combinations of words to the almost total exclusion of others which are equally, or perhaps even more essential” [3, 349].

The notion of authenticity itself is difficult to define as it changes with the time. However, there are various definitions of authentic materials.

It is materials were not created for language learning purposes. Instead, they were created with some real-life goal for, generally, native speakers. They include both spoken and written language samples. Some obvious examples of sound authentic materials include, movie reviews, television shows, conversations between native speakers, train schedules, and so on, most of which can be found on the Internet. The term authentic has been used as a reaction against the prefabricated patterns of the textbooks while authentic materials were the non-pedagogical items used to help learners improve not only their communicative but also their cultural competences. Authentic materials – also known as *realia* – can be described as anything created for native speakers of a language, we can use for our teaching purposes. With the changing linguistic boundaries, it is now widely known as materials that include ideas, words, phrases and expressions that are heard and read in real-life situations.

According to H. Widdowson, “authenticity does not lie in the text but in the way speakers and readers make use of it, namely in their response” [10, 67]. Taking also into account that the link between a certain language and its social community can be very changeable, we believe that cultural and communicative competence means understanding the social conventions of the target language speech community while preserving one’s own recommendations that the language presented should be authentic” [10, 68].

Students learn important topics through materials like audio, video, podcasts, stories, interviews and online resources. Furthermore, multimedia technology affords the learner multiple ways of leaning a language from real-life material. It is a powerful blend of computers, video, radio, and sound. The materials available on the internet can meet all demands, according to level and interest in language teaching.

Here are some examples of authentic sound materials and sources for beginners:

1. Music: Mama Lisa's World of Children and International Culture – A neat site with children's songs, nursery rhymes, stories and other materials from around the world.
2. Languages Online: Series of well-organized lessons, games, songs and other teaching/learning materials for beginning ESL and other languages.
3. YouTube: collection of songs and lyrics.
4. Lang Media: features video clips of interviews and discussions with people from many different countries and of many different ages and walks of life. Some interviews and discussions are in English; more are in the language(s) of the countries involved. Translations and transcripts are given for all non-English video clips. Topics include family, food, education, religious and cultural customs, work, art, sport, travel, and more.
5. WWITV: a huge collection of free live internet TV stations streaming online. A portal to watch live and on demand TV broadcasts from around the world.
6. Podcasts and Radio: OMNI Radio – you can search for all live radio stations of the world by country.
7. Foreign Internet Radio: online news radio, talk, information programs, and music programs featuring music in many languages.

The issue of using authentic materials in language classrooms has been influential over the past two decades. Moreover, many practitioners involved in foreign language teaching and research have argued about the benefits of using authentic materials [2, 348; 8, 183]. These benefits may range from

highlighting comprehension, presenting real language, providing opportunities to introduce cultural issues, to enhancing motivation, and creating language awareness.

Authentic material provides the students with models of English spoken language used in daily conversation. It is assumed that when students are exposed with authentic language models, they will be able to produce the language appropriately.

It has long been recognized that the language presented to students in textbooks is a poor representation of the real thing as even the best materials are far away from that real, informal kind of English which is used very much more than any other during a normal speaking lifetime; and if one aim of the language-teaching exercise is to provide students with the linguistic expertise to be able to participate confidently and fluently in situations involving this kind of English, then it would generally be agreed that this aim is not being achieved at the present time.

“It seems difficult to match in the classroom the ‘real world’ experience of language, whereby it might be possible for observation and imitation to lead the learner to prefer those sequences which are the usual forms in a given speech community” [8, 183].

Perhaps this difficulty can most easily be overcome by presenting learners with carefully selected authentic language to work with in the classroom; at least until we understand more about the processes involved in sounding idiomatic in English.

The lack of realistic models in course books means that learners are unlikely to get a feel for the typical patterning of this genre, particularly how to enter and exit the talk naturally.

Gilmore (2004) compared seven textbook service encounters with their equivalent authentic interactions and found considerable differences across a range of discourse features: length and turn-taking patterns, lexical density and the frequency of false starts, repetition, pausing, terminal overlap, latching, hesitation devices and back-channels. Similarly to Myers Scotton & Bernsten (1998), the authentic samples were found to have a more complicated structure than the regular A-BA-B question-answer patterning displayed in the textbooks. Instead, the smooth flow of the discourse was frequently disrupted by the ‘information giver’ seeking clarification or further information from the ‘information receiver’. Thus, in authentic service encounters, learners may have considerably more interactional demands placed on them than they are given to expect by classroom models.

However, when the definition of ‘native speaker’ expands to include all proficient speakers of English, of whatever variety, this argument ceases to be valid. There are cases to be made for either choice although the pedagogical consequences are quite different.

Using authentic sound materials in the classroom are known to have the following advantages:

First, when authentic materials are made available for students, they provide exact examples of how the language is used by its native speakers or of the vast majority of target language users.

Second, students feel more confident using the language when they know they are performing as expected. With authentic records, learners are provided with words and expressions used in real-life contexts. When students are confronted with similar situations, they manage better in informal, face-to-face communications.

Third, real-life materials are more informal, socially-centered and widely used. They can be a valuable material to complete the rules and patterns of textbooks.

The use of authentic texts in listening skills instruction gives students the idea they learn real language and see “the relevance of classroom activity to their long-term communicative goals” [1, 298]. M.Rost suggests that when it comes to listening comprehension, understanding “authentic language is the target of virtually all language learners” [6, 123].

However, using authentic discourse texts can pose a number of problems in listening instruction since many of the texts produced specifically for use in listening instruction are often ungraded and very difficult, suitable for only the highest levels. G. Richards suggests another option for working with authentic listening texts: we can adjust the task itself to focus on the specific listening skill area that learners need to work on [7, 213].

Using authentic materials for beginners in the classroom means preparing students to cope with the language when it is used in real communication. Besides the advantages mentioned above, Wilson

also states that using authentic materials also have some disadvantages. He says that authentic materials are usually messier, less complete and less ordered compared with scripted materials.

Moreover, there is no guarantee that the authentic materials used by teacher in listening classroom are more interesting than scripted materials. Considering about the natural language usage in authentic materials, how they can be considered naturally when the native speaker has to slow down the speed during his/her speaking.

To sum up, language is a dynamic process which changes with demands of society migrations, popular culture, and even technological innovations. If teachers rely on traditional textbook for materials for class, they will be constantly providing outdated information. If students trained to use the language as the native speakers do, they will find less need to alter their language later when using it conversationally. In addition to this, when given the opportunity to travel to places where the target language is used, the learner will not have as much difficulty in using it in different contexts. The authentic text was defined as a text that was created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced [4, 21]. Teachers also need to consider just how helpful the authentic materials they choose actually are for their students. As it can be helpful at any level. Also, “we can say that authentic language reflects a naturalness of form and an appropriateness of cultural and situational context” [5, 475]. Since authentic texts are generated by and for native speakers of the language, they are perceived as being too difficult for students of beginner levels to understand. Nevertheless, the listening-comprehension skill in such students tends to improve through exposure to authentic input. Nowadays, “it is more likely that students are required to complete a task while listening or as a follow-up activity that involves using information in the material in some realistic ways” [9, 436]. It is even recommended a trend toward bringing classroom-listening instruction and to practice as close to real world listening as it is possible. Since a goal of classroom listening is to prepare students for real-life listening outside the classroom, it is necessary to implement authentic aural materials at all levels of language instruction and listening-comprehension training.

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KEY SOLUTIONS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN WITH VISUAL DEFICIENCY IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS FOR BETTER TEST PERFORMANCE

In recent years the policy of inclusive education has become increasingly common worldwide as a strategy to deal with diversity and difference. Ukrainian teachers are meeting the challenges of today's classrooms - their increasing cultural, linguistic and developmental diversity along with the pressure to achieve high academic standards for everybody, including both regular students and those with special educational needs. Nowadays due to the increasing popularity of high-tech gadgets more and more children tend to lack their basic sense – sight, which negatively affects their learning performance. This fact raises a question of how to deliver the promise of inclusive education to achieve good academic and social results for everybody.

The topic of inclusive education and the principles of its efficiency grab the attention of scholars and teachers all over the world (M.Arthur-Kelly, C.Barnes, R.Brown, K.Hall, N.Hook, N.MacDonald, D.Mitchell, M.Nind, M.Oliver, G.Parekh, G.Porter, W.Sailor, A.Shaddock, R.Simpson, J. Stone, Van der Veen, L.Vyhotskii, A.Kolupayeva, I.Mamaichuk, N.Sofii, M.Svarnyk, O.Taranchenko, T.Pantiuk and other). Yet there is a gap in empirical research on the implementation of effective principles of inclusive education in mainstream schools. Therefore the research is dedicated to the problem of finding different ways of implementation of the key principles of inclusion teaching children with visual deficiency in mainstream schools for effective test performance. To reach this aim we have to define the main notions connected with the topic and to develop suggestions based on the experiment set within the school.

Nowadays the issue of the introduction of inclusive education as the type of education that can apply to all students with no exception is very significant and is treated as the paramount one in modern education. Many teachers have very strong views about how to work with children who have special educational needs and all the ways how to conduct such type of teaching. However, far too little attention has been paid to strategies to be used when implementing this model of teaching in Ukraine. Extra attention in terms of curriculum adaptation, teaching methods, availability of teaching and learning materials, assistive technology, assessment systems, as well as resources and funds for more assistance in adapting the school environment are among the subject matter.

Inclusive education as a concept, the philosophy of education (such as democratic education, civic education, personal-oriented education, etc.) is described differently in various sources [1, 8].

To define the notion “inclusive education” we have analyzed definitions in the main international documents: Standard UN Equal Opportunity Rules, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child, The Salamanca Declaration and the Special Education Curriculum needs, International Consultation on Early Childhood Education with Children special educational needs.

There is a narrow and broad concept of inclusive education. A narrow one defines it as the teaching of children with special educational needs and children with disabilities in general education institutions. A wider understanding of inclusive education is a positive attitude to the diversity of students, the appreciation and consideration of the differences of each student [2, 53-54].

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