

A Review on the Effectiveness of Using Authentic Materials in ESP Courses

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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 (Shrum & Glisan, 2000; Paltridge, 2001; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Kelly & Kelly & Offner & Vorland, 2002). These benefits may range from highlighting comprehension, presenting real language, providing opportunities to introduce cultural issues, to enhancing motivation, and creating language awareness. However, the use of authentic materials in learning contexts such as ESP has always been a matter of controversy. In this respect, the present paper aims at reviewing the implementation of authentic materials in ESP contexts. To this end, there will be a review of authenticity and authentic materials as opposed to textbook-based materials focusing on the nature and quality features as well as the approaches which advocate the use of authentic materials such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and Content-Based Instruction (CBI). Moreover, learners' needs as one of the fundamental principles in ESP course design will be discussed. Further, the paper will probe into the motivating nature of authentic materials especially for ESP learners with the assumption that language is used for real-life purposes by real people. The paper will conclude by providing a list of the authentic materials and presenting some guidelines for the selection and instruction of authentic reading materials in ESP courses.

Key words: Authentic materials, English for specific Purposes (ESP), motivation, real life language use

Introduction

Interest in authentic materials has a history as long as 1890s and Henry Sweet (1899) is believed to be one of the first advocates who favored 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" (Cited in Gilmore, 2004). The reappearance of authenticity according to Gilmore (2004) dates back to the discussion raised by Chomsky (1965) and Hymes (1972) who remarked that communicative competence does not only comprise the knowledge of the language but the need for contextualized communication. The climax of this view was seen in communicative language teaching.

As Lin (2004:26) puts it, from 1980s the importance of teaching authentic texts in culturally authentic contexts rather than texts designed pedagogically has been emphasized by communicative approaches. This is also mentioned by Guariento and Morley (2001) who believe that using authentic materials relates to the onset of communicative movements in which there was an attempt to simulate real world in the classroom. Many language teachers (Shrum and Glisan, 2000; Richards, 2001; Kilickaya, 2004, etc) believe that authenticity has proved its beneficial role in language teaching and there is no argument regarding this.

Nowadays, Khaniya (2006:17) believes that

In the course of the decade, the use of authentic materials has become increasingly popular in learning situations ranging from traditional intensive ESL to language training for professionals.

Particularly in the latter setting, he believes that a larger number of teachers are starting to identify the benefits of authentic materials and the options that such texts may provide. Thus, these options may be applied to diverse settings, learning objectives or tasks. As Bax (2003) states, for material developers and syllabus designers on one hand, and task-based approaches and communicative language teaching on the other, authenticity has played a focal role. According to Shomoossi and Ketabi (2007), hitherto, syllabus designers and materials developers used to base material development on the arrangement of the content materials and activities while ignoring authenticity criterion. Nevertheless, as Oxford (2001) cited in Shomoossi and Ketabi (2007) states some teaching practices such as multiple intelligences, cooperative learning, task-based learning, and content-based learning lead to authentic interaction in classroom. Richards (2001) referring to the facilitating role of authentic materials believes that communication which takes place in the class must simulate as much as possible the communication observable in the real world outside.

ESP

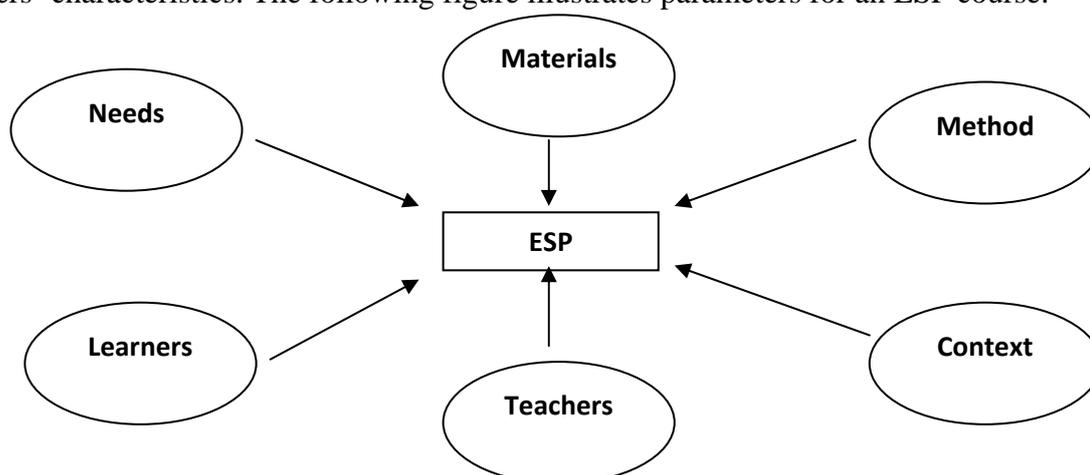
With the advent of communicative language teaching there appeared a change in focus from English as a system to be studied to English as a means of communication in syllabus design. Hence, content selection was done based on learners' communicative needs (Carter & Nunan, 2001). In the same vein, courses which aimed at meeting the students' needs and objectives and which were consequently tailored to students' needs and objectives were developed which took the name "English for Specific Proposes". Having begun in 1960s, ESP is considered as one of the most significant areas in language teaching field which was in reality teaching languages towards learner's needs in order to economize the instruction of the language and for the optimization of the learning process (Farhady 2005:8). Hence, ESP is designed to build up students' skill in order to enable them to communicate in English language and the materials that are included are basically chosen based on the learners' area of professional expertise. (Tarnopolsky, 2009)

Another teaching/learning process corresponding to ESP and advocating the use of authentic materials is content-based instruction. This approach according to Tarnopolsky (2009) is primarily based on four principles. The first principle is ensuring the systematic selection of the content of the course in a way to develop learners' professional knowledge. The second criterion is "ensuring professional authenticity of learning materials". The features of such materials include rendering professional content information, having been prepared by native speakers who are professionals in the field, and having been prepared for native speakers who are also professionals in the area of the content. Accordingly, materials which may be used are genuine texts. The third feature of content-based teaching, and as Tarnopolsky (2009) swans the "focal principle", is the authenticity of professional-related learning activities in ESP classes.

As is noted by Palmero (2003) ESP is fundamentally based on two teaching paradigms, namely pragmatic and cognitive. Under pragmatic paradigm the focus is on language in use and emphasis is put on contextualized teaching, using authentic materials, and attention to sociolinguistic aspects of interaction. On the other hand cognitive teaching

paradigm puts emphasis on students' responsibility on their own progress and the insertion of creative tasks.

According to Belcher (2004) ESP is an attempt to help learners accomplish their academic and occupational needs and goals. Farhady (2005:10) proposes a list of theoretical underpinnings which are inherent in ESP as being based on learner needs, being goal-directed, serving a utilitarian purpose, relating in content to a certain discipline, having the possibility in focusing on a particular language skill, following the prefabricated methodology, paying attention to the instructional contexts and finally the learner and teachers' characteristics. The following figure illustrates parameters for an ESP course.



In preparing and choosing materials for ESP learners, Palmero (2003) introduces different challenges that an ESP instructor may face. According to him these include the authenticity, simulation of real situations, flexibility on the part of topics used, and relevance to the discipline they aim to destine. She further provides a list of possible sources of materials for designing ESP courses. One of the sources that may be used is English for General purposes courses materials. For this purpose she claims that updated manuals which include sections specified for business, science, technology, health, and education may be used. This source is recommended by her particularly for the ESP learners whose proficiency level is low and who experience the course for the first time. The next source is the one which is specifically designed for ESP. This source is twofold; either publications issued by publishing houses or those designed by teachers and published by universities. A third source is the use of references. By this she means the use of dictionaries and grammar reference books or glossaries which are designed for different areas of knowledge. A further source is, as she calls authentic materials, which have no limit. Authentic materials include “instruction leaflets, journals, manuals, advertisements, internet links, inscription forms, demonstration videos, statistics, and job offers” (ibid: 193). The last source of materials is the ones “from the students” which she thinks is the best help that ESP provides for language teaching methodology which includes giving more weight to learners' interest and participation and changing the role of the instructor to a collaborator which will both enhance learners' involvement and teaching relevance.

Horwitz (2008) concerning EAP/ESP points out that in such specialized courses learners have a range of needs and purposes and those play an important part in preparing materials. As the course name suggests there always needs to be a purpose (Farhady, 1995) compared with general English courses that no specific need or purpose is defined. One of the needs and purposes in such courses is to act properly in real-world situations. According to Dudley -Evans (1997) ESP is characterized by a learner-centred approach to teaching, an emphasis on aspects of English relevant to professional discourse, communicative and immediate learning purposes of learners in learning the language, diversity of materials, a

teacher who takes the role of the materials designer and collaborator, and the most urgent needs of learners (Cited in Palmero, 2003).

Harding (2007:10) emphasizing the use of authentic materials provides some guidelines for ESP teachers for the approach they need to take and some dos and don'ts as follows:

- Think about what is needed.
- Understand the nature of your students' subject area or vocation.
- Spend time working out their language needs in relation to the subject.
- Use contexts, texts, and situations from the students' subject area.
- Exploit authentic materials that the students use in their specialism or vocation
- Make the tasks authentic as well as the texts
- Motivate the students with variety, relevance, and fun.
- Try to take the classroom into the real world that the students inhabit, and bring their real world into the classroom.

However, ESP as a learner centered approach to teaching English, which is mainly based on learner needs and purposes for studying English, seems a very suitable platform for the implementation and introduction of authentic materials. The selection of authentic materials and the topics can be based on the assessment of learners' needs. Thus without losing time which is a very important issue in ESP courses the learners will be directly taught the materials they need in the real world which also includes the learners' job settings.

Authenticity

Morrow (1977) defines authentic text as the language produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience which is expected to express a real message. Rogers & Medley (1988) move further and look at the terms authenticity and authentic as used for describing oral and written language samples that are the reflection of language forms which are used naturally and appropriately based on the cultural and situational context. Nunan (1989) and Jordan (1997) concentrate on the issue of purpose and state that authentic is any material which has not been specifically produced for the purpose of language teaching. For Harmer (1991) also authentic materials are the texts designed for the native speakers which are real and not initially designed for language learners. Lee (1995) considers authenticity in texts which are not produced for teaching purposes but for a real communicative purpose. By this he means that the writer of a text intends to convey a message to the reader. However, throughout the history of English language teaching, according to Tatsuki (2006:1) "authenticity is taken as being synonymous with genuineness, realness, truthfulness, validity, reliability, undisputed credibility, and legitimacy of materials or practices". MacDonald et al. (2006) contend, if there is a correspondence between the texts used in the classroom and types of texts used outside the classroom then it is possible to call such texts authentic. However, according to Kilickaya (2004) "what is common in these definitions is exposure to real language and its use in its own community". Furthermore, Mishan (2005) prefers to set some criteria for authenticity rather than defining the term. According to her "Authenticity is a factor of the:

- Provenance and authorship of the text.
- Original communicative and socio-cultural purpose of the text.
- Original context (e. g. its source, socio-cultural context) of the text.
- Learning activity engendered by the text.

- Learners' perceptions of and attitudes to, the text and the activity pertaining to it" (p .18).

Authenticity has been viewed diversely by different scholars. Authenticity according to Cooper (1983) may have two different meanings. One refers to authenticity as being genesis and the other authenticity as meaning correspondence. (Cited in MacDonald et al. 2006)

MacDonald et al. (2006) introduce four types of authenticity. Authenticity of text (like what Guariento and Morley, 2001 suggest), authenticity of competence (proposed by Canale and Swain, 1980), learner authenticity (by Widdowson, 1979), and authenticity of classroom (proposed by Breen, 1985 and Taylor, 1994). The first three types of authenticity, as MacDonald et al. (2006:251) propose, pertain to correspondence while the last type relates to genesis. (ibid)

When text authenticity as the first kind of authenticity is concerned we may encounter terms pertaining to authenticity other than text authenticity such as language authenticity and materials authenticity (MacDonald et al.; 2006). In this case authenticity may be defined as McDonough and Shaw (2003:40) define it:

a term which loosely implies as close an approximation as possible to the world outside the classroom, in the selection of both language material and of the activities and methods used for practice in the classroom.

According to MacDonald et al. (2006) the second kind of authenticity is competence authenticity. By competence they refer to Canale and Swain's 1980 classification of competence into three categories of grammatical competence by which it is meant knowing all rules of grammar, sociolinguistic competence by which it is meant knowing appropriate register and style, and strategic competence which means being aware of the compensation strategies used for breakdowns in communication. Being authentically competent means that a learner's performance should as much as possible correspond to the way native speakers perform. (ibid)

The third kind of authenticity is learner authenticity. Lee (1995) points out that another kind of authenticity is produced by the interaction between the user and his purpose, the situation in which the text is being used, and the text sample. Taking learner authenticity as an important facet of authenticity, Lee defines it as the "learners' positive feelings and reactions towards materials and the pedagogical intentions inherent in them". Hence, the reason why the learners will like the materials is not their authenticity but the fact that they (the materials) have a communicative potential. The last category proposed by MacDonald et al. (2006) is classroom authenticity. According to Breen (1985:68):

The authentic role of the classroom is the provision of those conditions in which the participants can publicly share the problems, achievements and overall process of learning a language together as socially motivated and socially situated activity.

Another classification of authenticity is proposed by Breen (1985) as: text authenticity used as input, authenticity of learners' interpretation of the texts, authenticity of tasks related to language learning and the authenticity of the actual social situation provided in the class. Breen states that since the first two kinds of authenticity are concerned with and directed at the students, instructors have to provide the students with the means which help them in the interpretation of the texts so that they are enabled in sharing their knowledge with the fluent speakers of the language. For the third and fourth kind of authenticity Breen refers to authentic communication task and authentic learning task. Breen draws the conclusion that an authentic activity must have a metacommunicative nature and it is the classroom context and situation

which can evaluate authenticity and bringing authentic and real world into the classroom cannot be the essence of what is meant by authenticity.

Distinguishing authenticity from genuineness, Widdowson (1998) contends that a text may be genuine, but to be authentic there is a need for some social interaction. He also contends that genuineness of the text will not guarantee authenticity because there are two aspects in ensuring authenticity. The first is the text characteristic and the other is the recipient or the reader of the text and his reaction to the text. Taylor (1994) also believes that the essence of authenticity does not reside in the text and the material but it is conferred on them in a particular situation and with particular participants who use its language. But he disagrees with Widdowson in thinking that a classroom is not authentic by itself (because there is real use of the language which can also be compatible with child/parent talk) and the perception that only a genuine text is authentic because he states that “classroom itself is a real place” and “a text could lack genuineness, and yet sound natural” because it is unfair to claim that for example an ESL teacher is not a real writer.

Moreover, as Maher Salah (2008) quotes from Mulling (1991), authenticity is not a feature exclusively of the texts but it is the way the students and the teachers work with texts. Authenticity cannot be reached if students do not respond to texts as do native speakers in real contexts, or if authentic tasks are not used in accordance with the text. In line with this Anderson (1999) and Velazquez (2007) express that rather than focusing on authentic materials themselves teachers must focus on authentic uses of materials and what is going to be done by those materials. All in all, according to Shomoosi and Ketabi (2007) “[an authentic material is] materialized within each context with the interaction of its participants”

Tatsuki (2006) concerning authenticity in the classroom context believes that the real-life is “out there in the outside world” and it has to be brought into the classroom. Conversely, Chavez (1998) argues that taking authentic materials out of their real occurring situation and away from their real audience will cause them to lose the authenticity criterion, concerning real world he also argues that the world inside the classroom could also be real if a real social interaction takes place. Yet, Berardo (2006) disagrees and contends that even if the situation of the class is not as authentic as the natural situation of the language occurrence, still authentic materials are beneficial in exposing learners to real world language. All in all, authenticity does not only reside in materials that are authentic. Thus to create an authentic situation different factors such as learners’ perceptions, teachers’ interference, the context of teaching and the kinds of activities and uses of the teaching materials must be considered.

Authentic materials vs. textbook-based materials

According to Velazquez (2007) foreign language teachers normally apply two kinds of texts for instruction; either authentic or simplified. To Velazquez both kinds of texts are valuable. He values simplified texts compared to authentic texts because he considers them as easy-to-comprehend language which is tailored to students’ language ability at a specific level. He further argues that simplified texts can reinforce vocabulary and grammar and prepare learners for reading authentic texts.

Tomilson (2001) believes that since the contrived materials focus on the target form or structure they can be more helpful to learners although he further claims that if meaningful exposure to language is aimed authentic materials better prepare learners. Authentic materials are valuable because they contain cultural aspects and show the students the real samples of language as used by native speakers. Constructed materials are advantageous because they use more familiar structures and words. These are more appropriate when a new grammatical structure is to be introduced or reinforced. However there are disadvantages seen for constructed materials such as being less interesting and not introducing real world reading to

learners (Horwitz, 2008). She further states that when there is an aim of intensive reading both authentic and constructed materials are advised to be used while for extensive reading authentic materials are preferred (ibid). With the concern of textbook materials, unlike Tomilson and Velazquez who favor contrived materials in textbooks, Shrum and Glisan (1994:28) highlight that:

Unfortunately, many language textbooks contain poorly motivated and illogically sequenced texts and dialogues that do not reflect real-world language or situations, although they usually contain multiple examples of the grammar being presented. (cited in Hwang, 2005)

Berardo (2006) refers to some of the characteristics pertaining to non-authentic materials as having an “artificial and unvaried” language, concentrating on the point that is to be taught, and including “false-text indicators” such as sentences which are formed perfectly, questions which are formed by grammatical structures and followed by a full answer, and structures which are repeated. These make the texts seem very unlike what the learners may face in the real world as the real language use reflection. He further claims that these texts cannot be used as a means of improving reading skills because they “read unnaturally” but still he is in the belief that they can be used when the teaching of language structures are concerned. Comparing authentic materials with written EFL materials, Hwang (2005) points out that authentic materials are interactive, whereas, EFL textbooks are instrumental. She also insists that if a learner wishes to get to near-native proficiency, relying on carefully written materials for English teaching is not enough.

Bell (2005) comparing simplified and contrived texts with authentic materials insists that although the burden that students have with simplified texts is less in understanding, authentic texts are advantageous since students face the real language written for and used by the native speakers. Besides, simplification may sometimes be detrimental to understanding because of “grouping”. To define grouping Joiner (1984) brings an insightful example which shows that how important may authenticity be in understanding the target language for students. Joiner explains a situation in which a teacher adapts a menu for the classroom instruction and she decides to delete some of the words like coca-cola which she assumes there is no need to expose the learners to that word because they already know it. As Joiner argues, unlike the assumption made by the teacher, the word may be very useful in understanding the menu because for example a traveler may make an intelligent guess as to what the other words coming in the same grouping as coca-cola may mean and then the traveler may recognize the words come in the same grouping as drinks. (Cited in Bell, 2005). As Bell further explains grouping can be called as one of the natural cues that authentic materials provide which is very helpful in understanding the meaning of unknown words in a set. Having reviewed different views on textbook-based materials, (Beeching, 1982; Byrd & Reid, 1995; Hwang, 2005; Jioner, et al. 1989; Mueller, 2003; Porter & Roberts, 1981), Su (2007:23) concludes that textbook based materials are far from reflecting real language use and they are teacher-centered rather than learner-centered. Also learners are poorly motivated working with such materials. Criticizing non-authentic materials, Berardo (2006) criticizes non authentic materials for being unnatural and unlike what learners will encounter in real world. He believes that for teaching reading skills such materials are not suitable. Concluding from what we read in literature, it is comprehensible that practitioners magnify the use of authentic materials as a factor to improve learners’ motivation while at the same time they do not repel the total use of materials specifically designed for language learners.

Nature and quality features of authentic materials

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According to Shrum and Glisan (2000: 133) “authentic materials provide an effective means for presenting real language, integrating culture, and heightening comprehension.” They bring two reasons for believing that authentic materials are beneficial. Firstly, by exposure to such materials, students will be provided with the opportunity to see language as is used in real world to serve a real purpose. Secondly, such materials can be considered as a rich source of cultural content. Gilmore (2004:367) believes that:

If our goal in the classroom is to prepare learners for independent language use, then surely we are obliged at some stage to present them with realistic models of discourse...

Swaffar (1981:188) contends that “the sooner the students are exposed to authentic language, the more rapidly they will learn that comprehension is not a function of understanding every word, but rather of developing strategies...., strategies essential in both oral and written communication” (cited in Maher Salah, 2008). However, Velazquez (2007) values both authentic and simplified texts since he believes that they both play an important role in learners’ language development. Still he believes ‘authentic texts provide students with everyday use of language and experiences in the target language’ (p. 1)

Guariento & Morley (2001:347) also value using authentic materials since they believe that extracting real information from a real text in a new/different language can be extremely motivating. Furthermore, Kelly et al. (2002) state that when used effectively, authentic materials help bring the real world into the classroom and to a considerable point can bring life inside the ESL class. By exposing learners to cultural features in a text a deeper understanding of the topic can be generated and thus interest in the text may be raised. On one hand, the students develop their ability to recognize relevant information, and on the other, they learn how to disregard what is not relevant. Also, Paltridge (2001) states that in order to produce awareness of language and its related skills, authentic materials must be used. Chavez (1998), in the same way agrees that using authentic materials is to the benefit of the students because they are more enjoyable and students find a chance to interact with the language and its use. Oguz and bahar (2008) see the advantage of authentic materials in the fact that “they engage both the learners’ and teachers’ attention in the language being taught. They have high interest value because of their relevance to the real world keeping the students informed about what is happening in the world they live.”(p:330-331)

Haley and Austin (2004) and Velazquez (2007) encourage the use of authentic texts since they believe that such texts can provide a connection between the students on one hand and the target language and culture on the other hand. Also the teacher is provided with “more opportunities to bring the real world aspects into the class” (ibid: 93).

As Burns and Seidlhofer (2002: 226) suggest, “authentic texts can introduce students to a full range of transactional and interpersonal speech”. As they put it “they can highlight language variation and choice rather than fixed and formal sets of rules.”Mishan (2005:44) introduces the concept of 3Cs by which she means culture, currency, and challenge in order to explain the advantages of authentic materials. Referring to culture she states that authentic materials can represent the target language culture. As she mentions, currency of the authentic materials is an exclusive quality especially when the materials are driven from the media because the topics offered are of the “language in current use”. And finally she asserts that authentic materials are more challenging than artificial materials. Berardo (2006:64) lists the advantages of using authentic materials as follows:

- Having a positive effect on student motivation;
- Giving authentic cultural information;
- Exposing students to real language;
- Relating more closely to students’ needs;

- Supporting a more creative approach to teaching

Authenticity and motivation

As is mentioned in Lin (2004) different researchers such as Lee (1995), Little, Devitt, & Singleton (1988), Peacock (1997), and Shei (2001) claim that authentic materials have a motivating effect. This according to Lin is because they see authentic materials as being only more interesting and stimulating. Taking affective factors such as motivation as important, Guariento and Morley (2001) maintain that since authentic materials are real they give the learners a sense of coping with a living entity and they conclude that in order to promote motivation they can be used.

Oguz and Bahar (2008) contend that if learners' interaction with authentic materials is established with interest and without difficulty they can participate actively in learning and in the same way their motivation levels may raise. To support this view they refer to the research carried out by Akar and Yildirim (2000) who found out that with a constructivist approach to learning and using authentic materials students' motivation and their reading skills developed.

As Berardo (2006) mentions authentic materials can be used to promote motivation and give learners a "sense of achievement" and encourage them for further reading. When learners get out of the "safe" situation of the classroom they need to face the real world and need to have learned skills which can help them in coping with real situations outside of the class, so the teacher has to prepare the learners for the actual use of the language which can be accomplished by using authentic materials. (ibid: 60). The positive effect of using authentic materials on motivation is also discussed by Fei and Yu-feng (2008) as a conclusion of the study they conducted for extensive reading courses.

Gulikers et al. (2005: 520) quotes from Huang (2002) who introduces two principles in describing adults' motivation in learning. The first principle is that adults prefer a problem-solving orientation in learning. In particular, adults express that they learn best when the problem is presented in a real life context. The second principle is that adults are highly motivated to learn when they can gain new knowledge in such a way that this knowledge helps them to solve important problems in their professional lives. Huang's words that care for adult learners' professional lives, reminds us of ESP learners who are not only adults but also need to improve their English for a specific reason pertaining to a specific setting such as a vocational or professional one. Providing an authentic learning environment can build up such a connection with reality proposed by Herrington & Olive (2000) that according to Huang is an important factor in adults' motivation.

Recommendations for the choice and instruction of authentic materials

The selection and accessing of authentic materials according to Haley and Austin (2004) may be a very challenging activity. Oguz and Bahar (2008:331) do not encourage random selection of authentic materials. To be used effectively they mention that when choosing materials there should always "be an aim in using them and chosen materials should meet the objectives of the lesson". Further, they point out that criteria such as learners' age, level, interests, needs, goals, and expectations must always be met. Considering the level as Spelleri (2002) mentions the complexity level of the materials must be slightly beyond learners' level if there is an aim in increasing motivation, awareness, and curiosity. Fei and Yu-feng (2008) also mention the importance of level of the learners as a determining factor in choosing appropriate authentic materials. According to Spelleri the focus of authentic material is not on full understanding but on the message which is to be conveyed, hence, the teacher may act as an interpreter of the materials by using techniques such as paraphrasing,

providing synonyms, miming, and using pictures in order to get the message across and enhance learners' comprehension. (Cited in Oguz and Bahar, 2008:33)

In choosing authentic materials three other factors have been introduced by Nuttal (in Berardo, 2006:62) as suitability, exploitability, and readability. The most important criterion, suitability, refers to the idea that texts must be chosen based on learners' interest and they should be relevant to their needs. By exploitability he means the way through which learners' competence as readers may be developed. Readability means choosing texts' difficulty based on learners' language level.

With reference to learners' background Khaniya (2006) mentions three aspects in materials selection. The first is the linguistic background which "influences classroom management, the selection of tasks, the sequencing and execution of tasks, and the focus of micro-skill instruction". The second is the conceptual background which "determines the need for specificity or generality of information in the selected materials" and the last aspect is cultural aspect which affects trainee-instructor interaction, the formality or informality of classroom interaction, and expectations of traditional instructor and trainee/student roles." (p. 21) He further adds two other criteria important in material selection as applicability and adaptability. By applicability he means that the tasks and texts must be selected based on the learners' "field of employment" or "professional reality". By adaptability he means ease in "task design" and "text manipulation".

There still exists another way to solve the problem of comprehensibility of authentic texts. According to Guariento and Morely (2001:348) since authentic materials can "bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world" as a result like what happens in real world" partial comprehension of text is no longer considered to be necessarily problematic."

Rogers and Medley (1988) point out that for the identification of authentic materials the source and purpose are not the only vital factors and other characteristics such as quality, appropriateness, and naturalness of the language must be considered. Other key aspects in choosing the materials for learners are those which Shomoossi et al. (2007) point out as the context of use needs, and the goals and interests of the participants. The materials which are going to be selected, as Paltridge (2001) states, must follow some criteria such as the learners' needs, proficiency level and interests. For Chastain (1988) the communicative purpose which lies behind the language is a focal point in choosing authentic materials. Authentic materials can best be instructed if instructional strategies which can contextualize and make them level appropriate accompany. (Velazquez, 2007)

However, considering the early stages of learning and for low proficiency learners, it is still possible to use such materials if they are chosen from the learners' own subject area (Jordan, 1997) and if they are used according to the learners' ability by designing appropriate tasks modified to their understanding level. (Guariento & Morley, 2001). They also state that for lower-level learners authentic texts which are going to be selected must be studied carefully for the issues of "lexical and syntactic simplicity" and also "content familiarity or predictability" because as far as these criteria are not met using authentic texts even with simple tasks may not only be frustrating but also demotivating for learners.(348)

Similarly, Dunkel(1995) argues that to develop materials which are authentic, care must be taken on finding appropriate levels of authentic text concerning the group of learners and the activities that are going to be carried out in their group. (cited in Shomoossi and Ketabi, 2007)

In order to choose authentic reading texts Fei and Yu-feng (2008) propose three criteria. The first criterion is readability. By readability it is meant "a combination of structural and lexical difficulty" which is an important issue in selecting texts for pedagogical purposes since very difficult texts can demotivate learners since the learning process may be hindered. For the second criterion they explain that learners' needs must be taken into

account particularly when the reading materials are provided for learners who learn English in academic settings. The third criterion is considering learners' interests.

Karpova (1999) provides a list of the criteria which need to be considered when using authentic materials as follows:

1. Content: the content of authentic materials has to be appropriate for learners' age, interest, needs and goals.
2. Tasks: tasks must be "sequenced and differentiated" and must include "communicative and cognitive procedures" so that the learners' background and new knowledge can be integrated.
3. Teacher-learner relationship: the materials must be structured in a way that a "reciprocal" interaction between the instructor and the learner takes place.
4. Learning strategies: cognitive abilities of the learners must be improved by paying attention to learning strategies.
5. Learning environment: the environment provided must in a way encourage "risk taking and idea sharing".
6. Social Values and Attitudes: authentic materials must be a reflection of social values and attitudes.
7. Culture issue: authentic materials must further learners' "cultural, sociolinguistic, and paralinguistic awareness".

Furthermore, Valencia (1991) cited in Su (2007) reports some other guidelines in choosing authentic materials. These guidelines include choosing materials with themes and ideas which are of importance, which contain real world experiences, and which have applications inside and outside the classroom. Also the materials must be sensitive to the developmental progress of the students and higher levels of thinking must accompany when instructing authentic materials are taught.

Berardo (2006) refers to variety and presentation as important when teachers need to select authentic materials. Using a variety of texts can make the reading course more interesting. Moreover, authentic presentation of those texts is vital. To present the texts authentically there must be the use of pictures, charts, photographs to build a context for the text being presented. He then compares an "attractive" article with a page full of text to conclude that the former can be more appealing and can better motivate learners. Galloway (1990) recommends the following criteria in authentic material selection:

- Topic should be accessible to learners
 - Length of text should not be intimidating to beginning readers
 - Linguistic level should be slightly above the reader's own level unless the tasks are closely structured to involve focused reading
 - Clues to meaning should be abundant such as contextual, verbal, pictorial, and linguistic.
- (Cited in Haley and Austin, 2004: 160-161)

To sum up, it can be concluded that although authentic materials are abundant, the selection to fit them into the learning/teaching context is not accomplished effortlessly. First and foremost, learners' language level must be considered in selecting texts and texts must be carefully examined for their lexical and structural difficulty. Moreover, to choose appropriate themes and topics, learners' needs and interests are required to be reflected on.

Concluding remarks

Authentic materials have been many times discussed as beneficial in teaching English for different skills. However, for settings other than general English, these materials may also work as a motivating feature and as a link between students' general knowledge of language and their professional language needs. Authentic materials, being a part of the real world, can serve as excellent resources for introducing language in its real form to ESP learners whose final goal in taking ESP courses is to communicate properly in real-world contexts. Some of

these materials which ESP learners encounter in their professional settings include articles as a part of their specific field literature, product labels, advertisements, brochures, newspapers, reports, literacy excerpts, audio recordings, and videotapes and best of all internet which unlike other sources is updated continuously (Shrum & Glisan 2000; Kilickaya, 2004; Hwang, 2005; Awasthi, 2006; Berardo, 2006; Crossley et al., 2007; Horwitz, 2008). Besides, Berardo refers to internet as a stimulating and interactive source which promotes a more active approach towards reading. Internet is also appreciated by Bell (2005:7) since “the authenticity, immediacy, and scope of materials now available via the web are unprecedented in history”. However, ESP teachers who as literature suggests also take the role of material developers may consider the benefits inherent in authentic materials. This can be used in creating a connection between ESP learners’ needs/objectives and the real world outside the instructional context. Thus, in professional settings it may be possible to simulate the real world in classrooms via presenting authentic materials that are probable in occurring outside the safe classroom context and in learners’ future vocational settings.

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