

Developing Reading Skills through Authentic Materials: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

The use of use of authentic materials in the classroom will benefit the learner to expose him/her to real language being used in a real context. Furthermore, the use of authentic materials highly motivates, gives a sense of achievement when understood and encourage further reading. The study aims at how authentic materials develop reading skills for the B.TECH students of A.P. It also to what extent these materials provide real life communication in the class room

Date of Submission: 14-12-2023

Date of Acceptance: 30-12-2023

I. Introduction

English as an international language has a significant role in India as a medium of higher education and as a lingua franca. It is an associate official language in a multicultural national context is dominant in learned professions, large scale industry and commerce. It is considered to be the language of opportunity, opening the door for a better job and upward social mobility.

With this background, a learner must be able to in communicate English in the classroom and able to participate in real-life situations. It is felt that majority of the learners from regional medium background seem to be passive and not adept in interacting with others in the teaching/learning processes. From this, there is a need to improve their overall proficiency levels and enhance their language skills by exposing them to real world communication.

Reading means different things to different people, for some it is recognizing written words, while for others it is an opportunity to teach pronunciation and practice speaking. However reading always has a purpose. It is something that we do every day, it is an integral part of our daily lives, taken very much for granted and generally assumed to be something that everyone can do. The reason for reading depends very much on the purpose for reading. Reading can have three purposes, *for survival, for learning or for pleasure*. Reading in learning is considered to be the type of reading done in the classroom and is goal oriented.

The use of use of authentic materials in the classroom will benefit the learner to expose him/her to real language being used in a real context. Furthermore, the use of authentic materials highly motivates, gives a sense of achievement when understood and encourage further reading (cited in Peacock 1997).

The purpose of the study

The study aims at how authentic materials develop reading skills for the B.TECH students of A.P. It also to what extent these materials provide real life communication in the class room

Hypothesis

The present study hypothesis is “Using authentic materials to develop reading skills”. The study aims at how authentic materials develop reading skills for the B.TECH students of A.P. It also to what extent these materials provide real life communication in the class room

Research Questions

1. How does the use of authentic materials develop reading skills?
2. What extent do authentic materials reflect real-world language in the classroom?

II. Methodology

The study adopts both the qualitative and quantitative techniques. B.TECH students, who are from regional medium background and whose English is not up to the mark to participate in the classroom, are the sample of this study. The study includes Tests, Classroom Observation and Interviews as the research

instruments. The data from the Tests will be analyzed quantitatively and data from observation and interviews will be qualitatively.

Descriptive statistics will be used to display the result of the questionnaires. Any marked findings such as special patterns of their response will be focused and explored. As for the interview, the relevant significant portion will be called from participants' response and further discussed in the research. By doing all these, a better understanding of English teachers' attitudes towards authentic material can be obtained.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research is to examine how English teachers see the usefulness of authentic material in English teaching. In general, a majority of the participants have appositve attitude towards the use of RM and think RM facilitate students' English learning. The result shows that all participants have used authentic material with different frequencies. This difference may be caused by 1. Whether they can actually see the positive effects of RM 2. Whether they are satisfied with traditional text books and 3. Whether they can spare time for selecting and adapting texts. I answer the result obtained from the questionnaire show that all participants of English teachers have employed authentic a material in their teaching by different degrees despite the fact that some of them consider their students English proficiency "bad" and "very poor". This may be due to the fact that 100% responses agreed that students should not be denied the opportunity to interact with authentic material. Also, in some of the participants

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Dr. Kandukuri Mariyadas. "Developing Reading Skills through Authentic Materials: An Exploratory Study." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, vol. 12, no. 12, 2023, pp. 96-97. Journal DOI- 10.35629/7722