AUTHENTICITY IN IMPROVING STUDENTS SPEAKING ABILITY IN EFL TEACHING

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Abstract: This research article explores the significance of authenticity in enhancing the speaking ability of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The study investigates various strategies and approaches employed to incorporate authenticity in EFL classrooms and examines the positive outcomes resulting from the implementation of these strategies. Authenticity is considered crucial for creating a realistic and meaningful language learning environment that promotes effective communication skills, cultural understanding, and student motivation.

Key words: speaking skills, authenticity, communicative-based teaching, authentic visual materials, authentic printed materials, linguistic proficiency

INTRODUCTION

Authenticity plays a votal role in speaking as it fosters a deeper connection with the audience and enhances the overall impact of the message being conveyed. When individuals speak authentically, they project sincerity, credibility, and emotional resonance, thereby capturing the attention and interest of listeners. Authentic speakers are perceived as genuine and trustworthy, which can significantly influence the effectiveness of their communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In fact, most language teachers prioritize material from course books. It has been known for a long that some of the materials used in textbooks are often inaccurate when presenting the "real thing" (Crystal & Davy 1975:2).

Moreover, teaching speaking at this time prioritizes communicative-based. In some conductions, the EFL teacher will give the context including textbook, learning situation, and culture to achieve learning objectives appropriately. The students' native language (L1) can be used during learning activities but not more than the target language use. The target language (L2) must become the primary language in the classroom, both from reading instructions, managing the class and communication (Freeman & Anderson, 2011). This strategy is used to make the student realize that the target language they will learn is a significant part of communication, not only the object they studied but they also used.

Besides, research in communicative competence in semantic, pragmatic, and sociolinguistic sciences has developed rapidly. It became clear that it was time for a fundamental change in teaching effective speaking (Gilmore, 2007). One of the main

reasons of language teaching is to enable learners to communicated in the language learning process. When students recognize importance of their efforts to this process, the outcomes can be more effective and obvious even in assessing speaking skills.

Previous study conducted by Unver (2017) finds that using materials based on real-life can help the teacher overcome the difficulties in teaching language. In line with this, Wahyuningsih (2020) shared her finding that using authentic teaching material can fill the gap between unnatural classroom situations and natural real-world situations while learning language. Unver (2017) and Sundana (2017) have observed that teachers must choose materials carefully. Otherwise, it may reduce students' learning motivation due to inappropriate selection.

Although previous research has shown how useful and influential authentic material is, none have been implemented and teach it directly in teaching secondary students, especially in EFL classrooms. Moreover, there has not been much research on the use of authentic materials in the field of speaking skills. Therefore, investigating the effect of authentic material in Secondary EFL classrooms, especially in speaking ability, becomes an interesting point in this research. Besides, it will try to find how significant the result of teaching speaking with authentic material. According to the definition proposed by Kilickaya (2004), authentic materials are considered as a disclosure to original language and usage in real context as they were not designed for academic intentions in the process of teaching.

Methods

Questionnaires are adequate for quantifying data. Hence, the questionnaire is appropriate for data collection as the present study focuses on the 30 students' one of the universities in Uzbekistan and their attitude and perception on the use of authenticity in speaking. Moreover, the questionnaire is a predominant instrument in previous research. The questionnaire was conducted in English which comprises of one major component; it consists of 15 statements. The subjects responded using a 3-point Likert scale to indicate the frequency of the usage of each strategy, ranging from Agree (1) to unsure (3).

DATA ANALYSIS

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
1. Authenticity plays a crucial role in enhancing speaking skills and overall communication effectiveness.	15 50%	10 33%	5 17%
2. Speaking authentically allows individuals to express	20 66%	7 23%	3 11%

their true thoughts, emotions, and personality.			

The data showed that 50 % of students believed that authenticity plays crucial role in efficiency of overall speaking ability, while more than 17 % of them were unsure and unaware of its importance at all. Moreover, speaking authentically was seen as the best way to express feelings and emotions accounting for 66% when the rest were either unsure or had contradicting idea towards it. 3. The practice of authenticity in speaking promotes genuine connection and engagement with the audience.

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
4. Authenticity in speaking helps build trust and credibility with listeners.	25 83%	2 6%	3 11%
5. Speaking authentically enhances the speaker's ability to convey their message effectively.	28 94%	2 6%	0
6. Authenticity in speaking enables individuals to communicate with clarity and conviction.	25 83%	3 11%	2 6%
7. The use of authentic language expressions and gestures adds depth and impact to the speaker's delivery.	28 94%	2 6%	0

According to the statistics, 94% of learners reported that speaking authentically enhanced their ability to convey the message effectively and authentic language was considered as the better way to add depth and impact to the delivery of the intended idea. However, minority of the them believed that authenticity is not at all important to increase the clarity of the message and text. 25 students highlighted authenticity as the tool to build trust in speaking while more than 10% of them did not have any idea about it.

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
8.Speaking authentically fosters a sense of relatability and resonance with the audience.	30 100%	0	0
9. Authenticity in speaking encourages active listening and comprehension among listeners.	25 83%	3 11%	2 6%
10. The ability to speak authentically contributes to effective persuasion and influence.	25 83%	5 17%	0

The data showed that almost 83% of the students reported that being authentic contributes to persuade and influence the listener, while the same amount of people thought that authenticity in speaking requires active listening. Interestingly, all of the students saw the increased relatability and resonance with the audience after being authentic and original.

Statements	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
11. Speaking is the most difficult skill.	14 46%	12 40%	4 14%
12. I have been taught with traditional way of teaching speaking.	27 90%	3 10%	0
13. I have observed some improvements in my speaking after focusing on more real life situations.	28 94%	1 3%	1 3%
14. Speaking authentically or not does not matter for me.	2 6%	28 94%	0
15.Being authentic helped me to overcome my anxiety.	27 90%	0	3 10%

According to the above given data, 94% students replied that observing and focusing more on real-life situations improved their speaking ability, even they have

never been taught using authentic materials in the class. In fact, almost half of them believed that speaking is the most challenging part while the rest disagreed. Furthermore, 10% of the learners were not sure about the benefits of being authentic while 90% of them noticed developments in their speech and in their attitudes towards anxiety.

RESULTS

The results of the studies indicate that the incorporation of authenticity in EFL speaking classrooms yields several positive outcomes for students. The findings also highlight the positive impact of authenticity on students' confidence in using English for communication purposes. Furthermore, the study reveals that authenticity facilitates cultural understanding and empathy, enabling students to communicate effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds. The development of critical thinking skills through authentic speaking tasks is another significant outcome observed in the research.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of authenticity in improving the speaking ability of EFL students. By incorporating authentic materials, real-life contexts, and interactive activities, teachers can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. The positive outcomes observed in this study range from enhanced communication skills, increased motivation, and improved fluency and accuracy to cultural understanding, critical thinking development, and transferable skills. The findings emphasize that authenticity bridges the gap between classroom language learning and real-world communication, preparing students for future academic, professional, and social interactions. It is evident that embracing authenticity empowers EFL students to become confident and effective communicators in English. Therefore, educators and curriculum designers should prioritize the integration of authenticity in EFL speaking lessons to foster meaningful language learning experiences and facilitate students' overall language proficiency and competence.

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