

THE IMPORTANCE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN IMPROVING LISTENING SKILLS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract: In modern classrooms, authentic sources of target languages play crucially important role to develop learners' language competencies, in particular, their listening skills. Hence, this article attempts to persuade foreign language teachers to include authentic materials and tasks into language teaching process in order that students will be able to use the language effectively inside and outside the classroom.

Key words: listening skill, authentic materials, listening comprehension, SLLs/FLLs.

INTRODUCTION

The English language, owing to globalization, has been acquired and spoken by a myriad of people as a main communication tool around the globe. Obviously, it is necessary that an interlocutor should comprehend the main idea of what a communicator is trying to express and respond accordingly in order for an effective communication. Furthermore, improving listening skill is also needed for the comprehension of a variety of contents such as movies, songs, podcasts, and news programs. Through listening to a wide range of materials in the original language, one is capable of boosting vocabulary bank, speaking skills, and pronunciation simultaneously. Listening input (receptive skill) can be a basis for the output in L2 (productive skills such as speaking and writing). Thus, language teachers should ensure that second language learners/ foreign language learners (SLLs and FLLs) are exposed to comprehensible input for producing their own speech in L2. It is strongly recommended that more authentic sources should be brought to the classroom so that learners can make good use of them to improve their language skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term 'authentic materials' refers to original sources created by native speakers of the language for non-native speakers of the language (Thanajaro, 2000). Thus far, a number of studies have been carried out on SLA regarding the importance of authentic materials in developing aural skills.

The research conducted by Herron & Seay (1991) concluded that with the usage of grammar and pronunciation tasks, teachers cannot aid students in building real-life communications which is considered the main purpose of second language acquisition.

Authentic materials, on the other hand, including videos, radio podcasts and TV programs present an opportunity for students to be involved with real-life listening contexts. In addition, Rogers and Medley (1988) stated that providing that FLLs/SLLs are acquiring the language for using it in real-life communications; they are required to experience it as it is applied in real-life contexts. Internet is seen advantageous over other authentic sources by Mallapiang (2014) due to its flexibility, continuous updateability, and the ability to make lessons more interactive and stimulating. In this case, students are more active and can do more interactive tasks.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

In this part, previous related research is analyzed as to gain more insight into the significance of incorporating authentic materials into teaching listening. The research was conducted through quasi method involving tenth grade science program students. In order to gain data, the instruments including MCQ and questionnaire were applied. Participants from overall four classes were taught with Authentic Listening Materials and Non-Authentic Listening Materials. For all the classes involved, the same curriculum was utilized and their abilities were also similar.

The first tool MCQs were used to check students' listening ability and the second one (self-regulation questionnaire) was intended for discriminating students into categories of students with high self-regulation and low self-regulation.

The results reveal that Authentic Listening Materials bring about the betterment of students' listening ability. The first possible reason for this is the entertainment and real engagement into the learning process which they offer for the students. The second one is the exposure to the authentic language. The students with high self-regulation, in particular, showed better results because of their ability to continuously monitor their aural skill.

CONCLUSION

In general, it can be said that authentic materials have a positive impact on language learners' development in terms of their listening ability in L2 and language teachers are encouraged to involve their students not only with artificially created textbooks but also authentic materials which give the opportunity to experience and acquire real-life English outside the classroom.

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