



## INTRODUCTION

Today, EFL teachers have a lot of choices in terms of teaching methods and materials. One of the most challenging tasks that are faced by EFL teachers is how to elicit the interest and to explore the creativity of their students so that they will be more motivated to learn. I have always been interested in current and alternative ways of teaching since they bring many new ideas and variety of ways to teach English more effectively. I find that some of them are really useful for me.

EFL teachers are free to choose method and materials but they should pay attention to students' need and improvement. Not only vocabulary building but also grammar structures should be prepared for them. Moreover, students need to be familiarized with the real English usage where real forms of communication and cultural knowledge are crucially exposed. There are many alternative approaches and methods to facilitate this purpose. Therefore I decided to look closely at one of the alternative ways. One of the most influential strategies used in ESL and EFL teaching today is the use of authentic materials in EFL classroom. They are sometimes underestimated since teachers attempt to explore only handbooks most of the time. I believe if authentic materials were used more, English teaching would be not only more effective, but also more interesting for the learners.

Teaching through authentic materials will make the learners feel that they are learning a real language which is used by the real native speakers for real communication. If learners are asked to study grammar rules or study the textbooks for the tests they can't understand nor experience the feel of the language as a real language used. Authentic materials are perceived by the learners as useful, lifelike, and interesting. Nowadays, Khaniya (2006) 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.<sup>1</sup>

## AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

Before discussing further, definitions of authentic materials from language experts should be understood. Authentic materials are resources which are not intentionally used as teaching materials in teaching learning process in the classroom. They are therefore written for native speakers and contain "real"

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<sup>1</sup> Khaniya, T. R. (2006). Use of authentic materials in EFL classrooms. *Journal of NELTA*, 11(2), 17

language Wallace (1992)<sup>2</sup>. Nunan (1988) also stated that authentic materials in general, are “those [materials] which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language”<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, Jordan (1997) refers to authentic texts as texts that are not written for language teaching purposes<sup>4</sup>.

In other words, we can get authentic materials from sources other than materials specifically used for teaching. Authentic materials are obtained from the real communication activities by native speakers of the language. Authentic materials are language produced by real native writers to real readers and from native speakers to real listeners in order to exchange real messages (Morrow, 1977) as cited in (Gilmore, 2007)<sup>5</sup>. Experts insist that language is acquired. That’s why learners must be immersed in the language use. Learners need the exposure of real language use to increase their motivation in learning language as proposed by Guariento & Morley (2001)<sup>6</sup>

All in all, authentic materials are the materials which are used in real activities by native speakers in order to communicate each other in real communicative setting, not intentionally made for teaching learning processes. Gebhard (1996) gives many examples of authentic materials which can be used in EFL and ESL classrooms<sup>7</sup>. Some examples that teachers of EFL can use are authentic listening viewing materials such as silent films, TV commercials, quiz shows, cartoons, news clips, comedy shows, dramas, movies, soap operas; radio news, drama and ads; professionally audio taped short stories and novels; pop, rock, country, folk, and children’s songs; home video; professionally videotaped travel logs, documentaries, and sales pitches.

Authentic visual materials also have many benefits in improving students’ interest in learning language. They are: slides, photographs; paintings; sketches; drawings by children; stick-figure drawings; wordless street signs; silhouettes; calendar pictures; pictures from travel, news, and popular magazines; ink blots; postcard pictures; wordless picture books; and stamps. Authentic

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<sup>2</sup> Wallace, C. (1992) *Reading*. Oxford, O.U.P. 145

<sup>3</sup> Nunan, D. (1988). *The Learner Centered Curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 99

<sup>4</sup> Jordan, R. R (1997). *English for Academic Purposes: A Guide and Resource for Teachers*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press, 113

<sup>5</sup> Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic Materials and Authenticity in Foreign Language Learning & Language Teaching, 40 (2), 97-118.

<sup>6</sup> Guariento, W. & Morley, J. (2001). *Text and task authenticity in the EFL classroom*. *ELT Journal* 55(4), 347

<sup>7</sup> Gebhard, J.G. (1996). *Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Teacher Self-Development and Methodology Guide*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 100-101

printed materials, such as: newspaper articles, cartoons, advertisements, movie advertisements, astrology columns, sports reports, obituary columns, and advice columns; travel magazines; science, math, and history books; short stories; novels; books of photographs; lyrics to popular, rock, folk, and children's songs, restaurant menus, street signs, cereal boxes, candy wrappers, tourist information brochures and tourist guidebooks; university catalogs; department store catalogs; telephone books; world, city, and relief maps; calendars; TV guides, driver licenses; comic books; greeting cards; business cards; bank checks and deposit forms; grocery coupons; hotel registration forms; pins with messages; bus, plane, train, taxi, and jitney schedules; teletext subtitles for the hearing impaired. EFL teachers can collect these printed materials easily: at home, book stores, markets, banks, or while they are on journey, holiday or on business trips. So, there's no need to much efforts in collecting authentic materials from everyday life.

Realia (real world objects/miniatures) can be effectively used in EFL and ESL classrooms to grab learners' attentions. Realia are also used to pre-teach some new vocabulary, especially for young learners so that they can visually expose to a new objects. The examples are dolls, puppets, currency, key rings, scissors, folded paper, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs, stuffed and toy animals, wall clocks, balloons, walkie-talkie, candles, fly swatter, string, thread, chewing gum, glue, rulers, tacks, paper clips, rubber bands, trays, aprons, plastic forks and spoons, dishes, glasses, bowls, umbrellas, wallets, purses, balls, phones, fishing reels, furniture, people, cars, bug collections, play money, stones, plants, sand, clay, ink, sticks, jars, coffee cans, chalks, credit cards, hats, Halloween masks, rubber vomit, manikins, to name a few. Realia are often used to illustrate points very visually or for role-play situations.

## **BENEFITS AND LIMITATION IN USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN EFL CLASSROOMS**

EFL teachers are free to choose authentic materials from unlimited sources from everyday activities and internet. However, teachers should consider the negative and positive sides. The paragraphs below are examples of the weaknesses and the strengths of using authentic materials in EFL classrooms.

One of weaknesses mentioned by Gebhard (1996) is that collecting, selecting, and matching the authentic materials with specific lessons can take more time<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, EFL teachers need to allocate more time in preparing the

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<sup>8</sup> Gebhard, J.G. (1996). *Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Teacher Self-Development and Methodology Guide*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.p101-03

materials to match with the certain lessons. This the challenge for EFL teachers who really want to enhance their students' language proficiency by providing them the appropriate authentic materials for the lessons.

The other limitation is that authentic materials sometimes consist of difficult vocabulary or dictions which are difficult for students to comprehend<sup>9</sup>. Often, students with low level of competence will have difficulties in understanding the materials. Richards states that along with these disadvantages, authentic materials often contain difficult language, unneeded vocabulary items and complex language structures, which causes a burden for the teacher in lower-level classes<sup>10</sup>. To prevent this to happen, teachers should carefully choose the most suitable authentic materials for the students in accordance with the students' level of proficiency. Teachers also need to pay much attention on the complexity of vocabulary and structure of authentic materials to avoid the long gap between the materials and learners' competence. Lower level students should be supported by appropriate tasks in using authentic materials because difficult materials may cause low level students to get discouraged and confused since they lack of vocabulary and structures used in the target language.

The third disadvantage is that some students think differently about the authentic materials used in classroom. Some of them may think that some authentic materials are considered as entertainment, such as: movies, TV drama, videos, comedy, cartoons, or songs. They don't accept authentic materials as being valuable learning sources<sup>11</sup>. Some of them still think that learning materials should be more serious.

Another disadvantage is authentic materials contain cultural setting which sometimes misunderstood by the learners. Martinez emphasized that this cultural influence in authentic materials can be hard for lower level learners to understand. Too many structures which are mixed with cultural bias make some students confused<sup>12</sup>. Teachers need to give elaboration about cross cultural understanding and discourse to make them understand the language being learned.

Despite the disadvantages, there are very strong reasons for EFL teachers to use authentic materials in the classroom. Authentic materials can be used as the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 101

<sup>10</sup> Richard, J.C. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 253

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 102

<sup>12</sup> Martinez, A. (2002). Authentic materials: An overview. *Karen's Linguistic Issues*. Retrieved Nov,20,2003 from <http://www3.telus.net/linguisticsissues/authenticmaterials.html>.

media to connect the classroom activities with outside world<sup>13</sup>. By using authentic materials, students will be enriched with the language beyond textbooks so that they can expand their knowledge of language from classroom into the real use of language outside classrooms.

While Nunan (1999) realizes that it is not realistic for teachers to use only authentic materials in the classroom, he makes a point that learners should be enriched with authentic materials as many as possible because ultimately, if they only encounter textbook dialogues and listening texts, their learning task would be made more difficult<sup>14</sup>. He also insists that it is important that learners listen to and read authentic materials of as many different kinds as possible. This will help motivate the students by bringing the content and the subject matter more concrete for them, and enable them to make the important connections between the classroom world and the real world beyond it.

Another good reason for using authentic materials is proposed by Gebhard. He stated that authentic materials offer a way to contextualize language learning<sup>15</sup>. Authentic materials is valuable sources for language input. By giving authentic materials such as the real map of the area, a real restaurant menu, or real hotel brochure near their neighborhood or anything that is used in real life, they will tend to focus more on content and meaning rather than to the language only. By doing these, students are provided with so much input to help them broaden their active learning contextually. They will be exposed to the real use of the language rather than the knowledge of the language.

Nunan highlights that authentic materials provide variety and interesting sources for learners in the classroom. These materials help learners to understand language easier and able to use language in more meaningful learning since they are connected with the real life.<sup>16</sup>

## WHAT TO CONSIDER IN IMPLEMENTING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

EFL teachers should carefully choose the suitable approach to match the authentic materials used in classrooms. Sometimes, teachers tend to give

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<sup>13</sup> Gebhard, J.G. (1996). *Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Teacher Self-Development and Methodology Guide*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 102

<sup>14</sup> Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching and Learning*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publishers, 27

<sup>15</sup> Gebhard, J.G. (1996). *Teaching English as a Foreign Language: A Teacher Self-Development and Methodology Guide*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 102

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 212

hand out materials to each student and ask them to work individually. On the other hand, the research has shown that using pair work or group work can be more interesting for students. They can work together and spend more time participating in the classroom enthusiastically<sup>17</sup>. Pair work or group work enables low level students to ask the pair or the member of the group when they have difficulties. The higher level students will have experience in giving suggestions or answers and increase their self esteem. Different from having to do the task alone, lower level students will be more encouraged because they are supported by the other friend in the group. It needs teachers considerations in choosing best approach suited with authentic materials used.

Considering the task design is also crucial in implementing authentic materials in the classroom. According to Lee (1995), the following points should be considered<sup>18</sup>: In real-life communicative situations it is very common to use more than one language skill to achieve different communicative purposes, and for this reason an integrated skills approach is recommended. Contexts have to be provided tasks, so that learners can practice the skills in a natural, meaningful, and relevant way. The task content should be related to the authentic materials selected so that students can use them as after the tasks. Whether the task is used as pre-activity, practice activity, or post-activity depends on the course objectives, the skills to be practiced, and learners' preferences.

Teachers should pay attention to the level of difficulties of the tasks applied in using authentic materials used in the classroom. Tasks should be appropriate according to the level of the students. The authentic materials can be simple or complex but the tasks can be suited with the level of the students. The tasks given to students should be simple and vocabulary should be introduced in advance. For the lower level, for instance, the task can be: find the main idea, find meanings of new words, find verbs, nouns, etc, and make sentences from them.

Furthermore, teachers can also choose the authentic materials for lower level by considering the simple vocabulary, simple structure and grammatical structure such as time tables, simple restaurant menus, short videos, short news, or simplified stories. Teacher then can suit the more difficult vocabulary and structures of authentic materials for higher level students. More difficult

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<sup>17</sup> Kelly, Charles, et al. *Effective Ways to Use Authentic Materials with ESL/EFL Students* The Internet TESL Journal, Vol. VIII, No.11, November 2002 <http://iteslj.org/>

<sup>18</sup> Lee, W. Y. (1995). *Authenticity revisited: text authenticity and learner authenticity*. ELT Journal, 49 (4), 325

authentic materials for intermediate or advance levels can be longer articles, longer videos, more complex structure and vocabulary in news or reports.

In conclusion, the variety of authentic materials can always be suited to the students' level and the objectives of the lesson. It needs teachers' creativity and innovations.

## AUTHENTIC MATERIALS WITHIN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

EFL teaching and learning process has to vary each meeting to prevent students' boredom. Teachers need to create a healthy, supportive environment for students to be more active and productive. The activities chosen by teachers for students to do should also be interesting and possible for students to actively learn and improve themselves.

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen stated that learning a second language can be exciting and productive or painful and useless. One's efforts can end in the acquisition of native-like fluency or a stumbling repertoire of sentences soon forgotten. The difference often lies in how one goes about learning the new language and how a teacher goes about teaching it. To be successful, a learner need not have a special inborn talent for learning language. Learners and teachers simply need to "do it right."<sup>19</sup>

The following are several examples of classroom activities in which students use authentic materials and have specific tasks to accomplish in order to meet real-world language objectives:

First, using article of newspaper will give the broad new knowledge for the readers. Newspaper is always up to date, factual and accurate. Newspaper will not only gives the latest news of the society but also as the exercise of understanding new vocabulary through context. For example, newspaper article about government and 2014 election. Teachers should choose the article which is interesting to students so that students will get easily engaged to the topic and be willing to participate in class activities. Newspaper contains vocabulary which is common for students in Indonesian language but it is stated in English so that it will give broader insight of translation. Teacher can divide class into groups of four/five students in each group, followed by peer group and then continued by individual work. This grouping will help students to work in a team and gradually sifting to peer work then individual.

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<sup>19</sup>Dulay, H., Burt, M., & Krashen, S. (1982). *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2

The activities are started with pre-activity to lead students to activate background knowledge by eliciting ideas about the pictures of former and present presidents, election, and campaigns. The main activities were re-arranging the jumble article and discuss the difficult words from the context in group. The next activity is discussing the probable title and answering related questions in group, in pair, then individually.

Another example is using brochure. While it may be difficult to fund multiple copies of books for literature or guided reading books, teachers can find limitless ways to use brochures, which are available free of charge at any institutions, hotels and provide a wonderful source for integrating subject matter. Begin by choosing the standards that provide the learning objectives that you would like to set. Brochure of TOEIC from ITC Jakarta can be used as the example. It is the brochure of the Test of English for International Communication which is produced by ETS (Educational Testing Service). TOEIC test questions are based on real-life work settings in an international environment (meetings, travel, telephone conversations, etc) so that it will give more knowledge about the certified TOEIC test. The vocabulary and the expressions used are related to English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

In pre-activity, students discuss what kind of English tests that they know and discuss in group, then continued to discuss TOEIC. In the main activities, teacher gives each student the brochure which consists of 2 pages. Later, in group of 4 or 5, students are asked to read the first testimony and discuss within the group. Next, students are asked to read the rest in page 1 and discuss the unfamiliar words from the context. In pair, students have to discuss the meaning of difficult words from the context. And then after that, they have to response to questions related with the text individually.

The other example is using short story taken from the best seller book entitled "Chicken Soup for the soul". The book consists of many stories of many kinds of motivational experience, so it's interesting to read and appropriate one for our students. On the other hand, teachers don't need much effort to build students' understanding of the context, vocabulary, and expressions since they have been there and all you need is to explore them in class activities.

Videos are very interesting sources of authentic materials if teachers can choose them carefully and create suitable tasks in accordance with the objectives of the lessons. There are many examples of how ESL/EFL teachers have done this. In Gebhard (1996), Garber and Holmes, for example, used authentic video as a means to have students in their ESL classes write and produce their own

commentaries<sup>20</sup>. They prepared four, or five minute video segments on everyday themes, showed them to the students without a soundtrack, and asked them to write a commentary based on the video segment of their choice.

Video is very effective in teaching foreign language since it represents the environments; gives examples of particular language use which present authentic language interaction; shows the nonverbal components of the language, i.e. lips movements, body language/gestures, and facial expressions.

Some teachers have used advertisements and asked the students to compare prices and select the best buy product, as well as cartoons with blank bubbles, cultural quizzes, crossword puzzles, and funny pictures or photos of classmates under which readers can write in possible captions<sup>21</sup>.

With the existing of the internet, EFL teachers have great opportunities to download unlimited amounts of texts, audio, videos, newspapers, magazines, live radio and T.V shows, video clips and much more. There is abundance of useful materials for the EFL classroom. Even if in a foreign context, the internet allows you to download English authentic materials to be implemented in the EFL classroom.

## CONCLUSION

Authentic materials are the materials which are not specifically written for teaching. Many researchers have conducted studies about the authentic materials. Although they have different views, but they have common idea that using authentic materials in EFL classrooms can be the exposure to real language used in real life communication. In other words, there are a lot of benefits that students can get from being exposed to the language in authentic materials although there are a few disadvantages. The authentic materials should be used in accordance with the students' level of knowledge and the students should be helped by their teachers to overcome the problems they get during teaching learning process.

Some consideration for the implementation of authentic materials must also be given to know when and how the materials will be introduced and used in the lesson. If they are used effectively, authentic materials can help teachers to bring the real world into the EFL classrooms and significantly bring the EFL classrooms into the lively environment. Authentic materials can serve

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 103

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 104

as excellent resources for teachers in introducing language in its real form to improve learners' communicative competence.

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