

# Classification of Authentic Materials in the EFL Teaching to Improve Students' Communicative Skills

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## ABSTRACT

The article distinguishes the notion of the communicative competence to enhance students' English language skills through authentic methods and techniques. The descriptive analysis method was used to express the effectiveness of authentic activities. The article considers general tendencies in the world and education Uzbekistan, and also both principles and methods of forming professional, communicative competences and in the process of teaching foreign language for professional purposes. The meaning of authenticity, and researchers statements are analyzed and classified into several categories. The article describes some essential issues of this competence including awareness of pedagogical values, the construction of the pedagogical process, pedagogical technology, its essence, innovative components of professional activity. Furthermore, the article suggests some ways and techniques of forming communicative competence to use in the foreign language teaching process, and sample criteria for a lesson. The author concludes that the plan of the lesson can be a helpful tool for foreign language teachers in using authentic materials.

**KEYWORDS:** *English as a foreign language (EFL); communicative competence; critical thinking skills; techniques; education; teaching and learning process*

## INTRODUCTION

The term competence is considered as the formation of the ability for the qualitative functioning of an employee in the field of a particular discipline applying some special knowledge, skills, awareness of responsibility for their actions aimed at organizing and applying creative abilities in a professional sphere. In the implementation of the functional properties of a professional and personal competence is important in order to integrate the development of creative abilities, is the communication process [4]. Communicative competence is noted as a complex concept with a complex internal and external structure. The internal structure supposes an efficient and expedient aspect. Efficiency is expressed in the implementation of communicative competence. The external side of the concept is associated with the problem of developing competence in a person and the influence of knowledge, motivation, emotions and behavioral characteristics on its successful development. English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers may come down to finding ways, techniques and methods for organizing assignments to use in each lesson in order to form the students' communicative foreign language competence as well.

Authentic content in teaching foreign languages has been studied for non-educational purposes. According to Krichevskaya's statement, proposes the definition of authentic materials as corresponding to genuine literary,

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folklore, pictorial, musical works, and objects of reality, such as clothing, household objects, dishes and their illustrative images as well. She also distinguishes materials from everyday life into an independent group: pragmatic materials (ads, signs, questionnaires, menus and accounts, cards, labels, advertising brochures on tourism, goods, job vacancies), that have a fairly large value for creating the illusion of familiarity with the environment and believes that their role is an order of magnitude higher than the authentic texts presented in the textbook, despite its volume [8]. To date, in many countries of the world, including Uzbekistan, there have been processes of new implementations in the field of education especially in the field of foreign languages teaching. Thus, using authentic materials are vitally important as they are a model of a modern foreign language and create the illusion of participation in the daily life of the country that serves as an additional incentive to encourage students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

K.S. Krichevskaya notes that in the methodology there is the following classification of authentic materials that depend on their use in a particular sphere of communication in our life:

1. educational and professional sphere of communication;
2. social and cultural sphere of communication;
3. everyday sphere of communication;

4. trade and commercial sphere of communication;
5. family and household communication environment;
6. sports and recreation sphere of communication [8].

According to Voronina, this classification given is identical to the definition of authentic materials given who in turn defines authentic texts as texts that are taken from the communicative practice of native speakers. She identified two types of authentic texts that are presented in different genre forms in the following: 1) functional: advertising, instructive, explanatory or warning function (signs, theater programs, diagrams, road signs, drawings); 2) informative that performs information function containing information that is constantly updated (topical sensational information, announcements, letters from readers to print media, articles, interviews, explanations for statistics, graphics, commentary) [5].

When we analyzed the notion of authentic materials we came up with the statements in the following: Kirienko assumes that it is considered to be an authentic text that was initially unsuitable for educational purposes, that is a text written for native speakers by the native speakers of this language [6]. On the other hand, our methodologists note that authentic materials that are produced for native speakers that are actually original texts created for real conditions.

We may come across with a question in the following: are inauthentic materials (when they are far from the real language) can make the learners good listeners, readers and speakers? Thus, it can be more preferable to teach the foreign language using authentic materials that are materials taken from original sources and were not intended for educational purposes.

However, Milrud notes that there are some disadvantages of such materials that are complex in the linguistic aspect and may not always correspond to specific tasks and learning conditions, highlighting methodological authentic texts. Authentic educational texts should be understood as texts compiled by the authors of the teaching materials that take into consideration all the parameters of authentic educational production that can be presented in summary tables. Milrud developed the following parameters authentic educational text that considers a set of structural features of such a text that meets the norms that are accepted by native speakers [11]. A text is an authentic that is characterized by the naturalness of the lexical content and grammatical forms, the situational adequacy of the linguistic means and demonstrates with the help of illustrations as well.

#### METHODOLOGY

A question might be arisen: Are authentic materials should be used only in teaching reading and listening? Also, how might this affect the students? If we suppose that we gave students at the elementary level a page from Ch. Dickens' work or an article from a daily/weekly newspaper. They may not understand these texts and might be disappointed with it. However, students may also get frustrated when they faced with light texts. Thus, extreme positions should not be used in the educational process and both authentic and inauthentic texts should be placed in textbooks. On the contrary, all of them should be understandable to students, and correspond to their language competence reflecting realistic models of written or spoken language as well.

According to Milrud and Nosonovich's, authentic materials include: articles, advertisements, recipes, short stories/tales, personal letters, interviews, regional and popular science texts, short extracts/passages from writers' diaries [1, 11]. They include authenticity of the genre and the fact that genre-compositional diversity allows students to familiarize themselves with speech cliché, vocabulary, phraseologisms that are associated with different spheres of life and belong to different styles. Justifying the use of authentic texts that are intended for the native speakers themselves, Milrud emphasizes substantive aspects of authenticity in the following:

1. Authenticity of assignments to texts is that study assignments should stimulate interaction with the text, and should be based on the sources of information;
2. Authentic design is that grabs attention students and thereby simplifies understanding of a communicative task, the text and the establishment of its links with reality;
3. Reactive authenticity is the development of educational text that it needs to be given the ability to evoke in students an authentic mental, emotional and speech response;
4. Situational authenticity implies reality of the situation that is offered as an educational illustration, interest native speakers to this topic, simplicity of its discussion;
5. Informative authenticity is that the use of texts that provide learners with meaningful information that corresponds to their interests and age characteristics;
6. Cultural authenticity that is using texts that form the students' idea of the specifics of another culture, habits and attitudes of native speakers;
7. Authenticity of national mentality that is able to explain to students the appropriateness or inappropriateness use of a particular phrase or word.

Therefore, there is no universal and complete definition of authenticity. Authentic materials can be defined as those materials that were created by native speakers for native speakers for non-educational purposes, corresponding to original literary, folklore, visual, musical works, as well as real-life objects such as furniture, clothing, dishes and their illustrative images. In the methodology, there is the following classification of pragmatic (authentic) materials, depending on their use in a particular area and sphere of communication in our life:

1. Educational and professional sphere of communication;
2. Social and cultural sphere of communication;
3. Everyday sphere of communication;
4. Trade and commercial sphere of communication;
5. Family and household communication environment;
6. Sports and recreation sphere of communication.

Authentic texts are characterized by the originality of lexical content in linguistic aspect. The sociocultural background of authentic materials is realized through a productive vocabulary that includes the most significant lexical units that are common in daily conversations, situations, including evaluative vocabulary to express opinion, colloquial clichés and words related to a national-cultural component. The authenticity of educational material is a relative property that depends on a number of factors. Such factors may be the conditions in which the given educational material is applied and the individual characteristics of students, the goals of the teacher as well.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The specialists identified major reasons that determine the necessity of using authentic materials during the lesson: a) using authentic materials, students learn the language for live communication; b) authentic materials correspond to the interests of students having a positive impact on the motivation of students; c) increase of teaching efficiency; d) authentic materials introduce students to the culture of the target language [10].

In other words, authentic materials can help to overcome the language barrier taught in the lesson and the language that people use to communicate in certain real life situations. Authentic texts in their original form are unsuitable for educational purposes. For this reason, they should be subjected to didactic manipulation. These manipulations could be: processing of the structure and linguistic forms of the text, its combination with other educational materials, the provision in a foreign language environment can violate its authenticity as well. In order for students to recognize the text in a real situation, it is necessary to preserve the identifying features of the original text taking into account the criteria for its authenticity that are: the addressee, the purpose of the message, the external form, environment, code and tonality. The text that was chosen as a teaching material, can be processed by: a) removing one complete part from the whole, for example: an interview from a television program; b) using the collage technique; c) segmentation; d) reduction; e) drawing up an annotation; f) omissions, additions, substitutions, separate words; g) replacing difficult grammatical forms; h) simplification by removing the characters and details.

On the other hand, it is significant to take into account the ratio of difficulty and accessibility of the text for the learners. During the preparation of the text, it is important to know the dosage of unfamiliar material in order to avoid information overload. The text should contain authentic speech that becomes more complex as the time goes. From the teaching experience we can note that students develop comprehension more quickly if they are convinced that comprehension does not require decoding verbatim. In order to save time, it is recommended to subject text didactic processing that are not very tied to the current topics of the day, so that they can be used for a long time in the learning process. In the following, techniques of working with authentic letters are given:

**Warm up:** 1) Have you ever written a letter to someone? 2) If yes, when did you write it and why?/ To whom? 3) What types of letters do you know? (Formal, Informal, Transactional)

### Stage I. Listening.

1. Listening for comprehension. After listening to the letter, answer the questions: a) What do you think the letter is from ...; b) What is the subject of the letter; c) When the letter is written.

2. Listening with the extraction of partial information. After listening to the letter, answer the following questions.

3. Listening to detailed information with the extraction. After listening to the letter, do the following tasks: a) answer questions about the content of the text; b) finish sentences; c) correlate the beginning and end of phrases; d) answer correctly or the sentence is incorrect; e) correct the wrong (incorrect) options; f) retell the content chain.

### Stage II. Reading.

1. Reading for comprehension. After reading the letter, answer the following questions: a) from whom it is; b) what it is about?

2. Reading with extract (partial) information. After reading the letter, answer the questions.

3. Reading with full understanding. After reading the letter: a) answer the question about the content of the text; b) finish the sentence; c) say the sentence is right or wrong; d) correlate the beginning and end of the sentence; e) correct the wrong options; f) retell the letter.

### Stage III. Speaking.

Do you have a pen friend? Tell us about your pen friend. Ask your partner about his pen pal. Retell the letter. Convey the content of the letter in indirect speech.

**Stage IV. Grammar of speech.** Write down all the verbs. Determine the tense form.

a) Retell in indirect speech; b) Ask questions about the proposal; c) Write out adjectives, form degrees of comparison; d) Correct mistakes; e) Find offers at a specific time; f) Transform sentences into passive voice; g) Rewrite the paragraph, replacing adjectives (or changing verbs) with synonyms.

**Stage V. Letter writing.** Practice writing a letter. After reviewing the letter forms, answer the following questions: a) How do I start a letter? b) How to prepare a letter? c) Where is the date written? d) What phrases does the letter end with? e) Are abbreviations allowed in the letter? f) How is an official letter different from an unofficial one? g) How is the text divided into paragraphs? h) Determine the nature of each letter (personal, business, complain letter, letter of gratitude, letter invitation, congratulation extraction) i) Write a letter according to the proposed plan. j) Rewrite the letter in an abbreviated form (by summarizing content).

## CONCLUSION

Thus, the following criteria for the selection of authentic materials for practical lessons in the foreign language (English as a foreign language): a) criterion of thematic correlation; b) the criterion of orientation towards the modern reality of the country of the target language; c) a criterion for taking into account age characteristics and cognitive capabilities of students; d) the criterion of obligation that determines the selection of the information minimum about works of painting, literature, history that are necessary for every culture; e) criterion of educational value; f) criterion of novelty [9]. Therefore, we can see that authentic materials have more advantages in comparison with inauthentic such as the ability of authentic materials to help students prepare for a real life communication, they reflect national specifics, arouses interest among students, authentic materials illustrate functioning in a natural social context and also help make the lesson unusual vivid and memorable that will contribute to a better memorization of lexical units, grammatical structures and of the target language.

We also found out that it is possible to achieve the formation of the communicative foreign language competence of students in different ways. For example, using the group form of learning activities, the project method, assignments that can provide for the development of critical thinking, logical thinking of students. For example: an essay,



discussion, dialogue, role play. Also, using information and communication technologies and the Internet are a means of communicative tools and techniques. It was also revealed that when selecting authentic materials for assignment in the foreign language lesson, it is worth adhering to criteria that were stated above. The presented methods and forms of working with authentic materials could be used to work in the classroom, including in the English as a foreign language classes.

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