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WAYS OF IMPROVING STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION-ORIENTED ORAL SPEECH SKILLS IN ENGLISH (THROUGH AUTHENTIC MATERIALS)

Abstract. The presented article briefly examines the problems that first and second course students confront while speaking. The article emphasises that English has become a fashionable language to learn in Azerbaijan in the past decades. First course students know grammar rules well enough and they possess rich vocabulary also. Yet most students (not all of them, of course) are unable to take part in simple conversations either with a teacher or with each other. The lack of self-confidence in students lead them to express their view points in Azerbaijani. The presented paper emphasizes the importance of the use of authentic materials to improve first and second course students' communication-oriented skills in English. It is indicated in the paper that according to the requirements of the communicative approach, the usage of authentic texts and language materials in the English language lesson are better than the presentation of artificial texts. Speaking is the productive use of language and improving students' speaking skills which is considered to be the most difficult part of language teaching and is directly connected with motivation, communicative exercises, listening activities. In the article, it is stated that habit forming provides an excellent incentive so speak English fluently. With regard to the selection of authentic materials, the interests of the students should be taken into consideration. Those authentic materials should be presented to the students that meet their needs and requirements. In addition, the article outlines the types of authentic materials. Teachers are encouraged to use all the types authentic materials in class. Authentic reading and listening materials used in English classes and the activities to be carried out on them are also grouped. The paper points out that authentic materials have become an important element of the English language lessons

noting that students should use them in English more often in the contexts in which real oral speech occurs naturally than in the context in which artificial speech occurs. Therefore, it is important to use authentic materials in the process of teaching English.

Key words: language learning; authentic materials; language teaching methods; motivation; newspaper articles; listening activities; learner independence.

INTRODUCTION / ВСТУП

Formulation of the problem. We have to confess that English became a 'lingua franca' many years ago. There have been many various reasons why English is considered the new universal, international language. "Journal of the IATEFL SIG" explains it like: "The English language has gradually imposed itself as a 'global language', as a language capable of being assumed and understood in every part of the world and by people of all cultures, religions, and social status. This is, no doubt, to two main factors: the growing capability of modern man to move around the planet and the unstoppable advance of new technologies, which precise new terms and idioms to go about defining and baptizing this range of different elements that so far did not exist and that are becoming part of our new daily universe" [1, p. 5].

But it is not the reason why English is so popular in Azerbaijan. The reason why English is so popular in Azerbaijan may be explained as follows: after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan gained its independence in 1991. Since that time, our country has been developing its international relations with other countries not through the Russian language, but mainly through the English language. That is why English has become very fashionable foreign language in Azerbaijan. Foreign companies, student exchange programmes and other factors influenced on our education system also. However, because of our country's economic growth, the English language plays an important role in the business sector, in the workplace, and especially in high education. Developing students' communicative ability is vital for achieving success in their professional career. Thus, there is an urgent need to produce competent, qualified users of English.

Analysis of major research and publications. D. Nunan explains the authentic language material as "any material which has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching" [2, p. 54]. In general, which texts are more appropriate for students learning English, whether texts are authentic or not has often become a topic of discussion. "That is because people have worried about more traditional language-teaching materials which tended

to look artificial and to use over-simplified language which any native speaker would find comical and untypical” [3, p. 68].

Referring to the book “The practical study of languages” published in 1899 by Henry Sweet, one of the prominent linguists at the end of the 19th century, A. Gilmore pointed out that the use of authentic materials in the teaching of foreign languages has a long history and wrote: ...The artificial systems, on the other hand, tend to cause incessant repetition of certain grammatical constructions, certain elements of the vocabulary, certain combinations of words to the almost total exclusion of others which are equally, or perhaps even more, essential” [4, p. 97].

However, in the 20th century, the dominant language theories of the time, which created some language teaching methods, such as the audio-legal method, led to the widespread use of fictitious materials, which A. Howatt called the “cult of materials” [5, p. 267]. In the 1970s, the question of textual authenticity reappeared against the background of polemics between N. Chomsky (1965) and D. Haymes (1972) and this was due to the fact that the scope of communicative competence was more extensive than language structures and contextualized communication than prevailed over the form.

This trend led to the use of authentic texts in English language teaching, which continues today and is valued not for its linguistic form, but for the ideas it presents. By taking advantage of these criteria, it is possible to say whether a text is authentic or not, referring to the source of the discourse and the context in which the text was created. From these brief summaries, we can see that the concept of authenticity is reflected either in the text itself, in the participants, in the social or cultural situation and goals of the act of communication, or in a combination of all these features.

While considering the difference of the above mentioned opinions related to authenticity, it is better to define “an authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort” [6, p. 13]. We also consider this to be a more suitable option. We should not forget that authentic materials are not limited to articles taken from newspapers and magazines. Songs, television programs and films, radio and podcasts, leaflets, menus – everything written in English is considered to be an authentic material.

AIM AND TASKS / МЕТА ТА ЗАВДАННЯ

The *purpose* of the research is to group types of authentic materials that develop students’ communication-oriented oral speech skills and to deal with

the activities that can be performed based on those materials.

The **tasks** of the study may be described as follows:

- to analyse the relevant scientific literature;
- to group types of authentic materials;
- to describe the activities that can be performed with the help of authentic materials.

THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS / ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ОСНОВИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

Since communicative language teaching emphasizes the study of words that are used in a real context and are useful for the current period, the problem of the authenticity of materials presented to students in the process of English language teaching is still an actual issue.

We would like to re-emphasize an issue known to all of us and say that as a result of using language materials out of the real context during the lesson, students cannot effectively apply the language materials and grammar rules they have learned in the process of communication. Since students are being prepared for real communication, the use of authentic teaching materials is a necessary requirement. It is possible to develop students' communication-oriented oral speech skills in English when students work with authentic materials and perform various operations on them.

If we consider that any written or recorded by a native speaker is authentic regardless of the year of writing and speaking, then we can divide authentic texts into two groups:

- a) linguistically authentic material;
- b) authentic material in terms of time.

Clarifying this idea, we can say that in terms of time, even an article published last week may not be considered authentic, because time does not stand still and developing events replace each other. Linguistically, that material is authentic and it is acceptable to work on it in class. "A video drama which contained 5-minute episodes would not, therefore, be authentic in terms of typical TV programs, but it would be pedagogically practical and efficient in terms of language comprehension" [7, p. 85].

M. Breen divides authenticity itself into four types. "The four types of authenticity within language teaching are as follows:

1. Authenticity of the texts which we may use as input data for our learners.
2. Authenticity of the learner's own interpretations of such texts.
3. Authenticity of the tasks conducive to language learning.

4. Authenticity of the actual social situation of the language classroom [8, p. 68].

By the authenticity of the text, the author means the authentic qualities of the text. In the context of language learning, authentic texts are any source of data which will serve as a means to help learners to develop an authentic interpretation.

The authenticity of the learner's own interpretations refers to the ability of learners to interpret the meaning in the text as the native speaker would interpret it in real life.

Authenticity of the tasks refers to tasks selected to engage learners in authentic communication.

Authenticity of the actual social situation of the language classroom means that language learners in the classroom have the opportunity to experience the social and interpersonal distribution of language learning content, and the discovery of the most effective tools and strategies for dividing and solving problems with such content [8, p. 68].

RESEARCH METHODS / МЕТОДИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

Regarding the selection of authentic materials in developing students' oral speaking skills in English, S. Berardo considers it appropriate to select authentic texts based on the following factors: suitability of content, exploitability, readability and presentation. A teacher who chooses an authentic material based on these factors should find answers to questions that include those factors:

«Suitability of Content:

- Does the text interest the student?
- Is it relevant to the student's needs?
- Does it represent the type of material that the student will use outside of the classroom?

Exploitability:

- Can the text be exploited for teaching purposes?
- For what purpose should the text be exploited?
- What skills/strategies can be developed by exploiting the text?

Readability:

- Is the text too easy/difficult for the student?
- Is it structurally too demanding/complex?
- How much new vocabulary does it contain? Is it relevant?

Presentation:

- Does it “look” authentic?
- Is it “attractive”?
- Does it grab the student’s attention?
- Does it make him want to read more?» [9, p. 63].

As it seen, S. Bernardo emphasizes the importance of taking into account the student's interests when choosing an authentic material and making sure that the authentic material matches the needs and abilities of the student.

Among these criteria used to select an authentic material to use in the classroom, suitability of content is considered the most important factor because the presented authentic reading materials should arouse students' interest, meet their needs, and motivate them. Exploitability refers to the methods used to develop the reading competence of learners, while readability incorporates the difficulty and complexity of the text. The authentic material should not contain a large number of difficult words and sentence structures. The material should match the English level of the language learners. Otherwise, it may demotivate students and slow down the learning process.

McGrath suggests the following eight criteria to consider while selecting appropriate authentic texts:

- Relevance to course book and learners' needs.
- Topic interest.
- Cultural fitness.
- Logistical considerations.
- Cognitive demands.
- Linguistic demands.
- Quality.
- Exploitability [10, p. 251].

Other authors argue that authentic texts should be relevant to students' experiences. In addition, the characteristic of developing students' competencies (skills) and the use of authentic text for educational purposes is an indicator of its suitability for learning. Finally, “the language, structure and lexical complexity of the authentic text determine its readability” [11, p. 459–473].

S. Berardo also points out that teachers should consider two other important criteria while choosing authentic materials: variety and presentation. Using different texts helps make reading assignments more interesting. According to him, the presentation of authentic materials is the main element to attract the attention and interest of learners [9, p. 60–69].

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH / РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

Summarizing all the above mentioned, we can suggest the following criteria and factors to be taken into account while selecting authentic materials:

1) while presenting authentic materials (reading, listening and video materials), their topics and type of text should be taken into account. Students should not always read factual encyclopedia type texts, we should also introduce them short stories, business letters and newspaper articles, small interviews. Organizing discussions, especially after reading or listening material, is useful in terms of developing students' communication-oriented speaking skills. "If they are all business people, the teacher may well want to concentrate on business texts that. If they are science students, reading scientific texts may be a priority. But if, as is often the case, they are a mixed group with differing interest and careers, a more varied diet is appropriate. Among the things the teacher might want them to read are magazine articles, letters, stories, menus, advertisements, reports, play extracts, recipes, instructions, poems, and reference materials" [3, p. 69].

2) authentic materials should be selected according to students' English level and interest. It is pedagogically wrong to bring all the materials that we consider authentic to the classroom. "However, if you give low-level students a copy of The Times or The Guardian (which are certainly authentic for native speakers), they will probably not be able to understand them at all. There will be far too many words they have never seen before, the grammar will be (for them) convoluted and the style will finish them off" [3, p. 68]. That is why authentic materials should be carefully selected or adapted to the students' level of linguistic knowledge. Otherwise, it will lead to demotivation of any student. Therefore, there should be a balance between the language of the authentic material and the students' skills and interests.

There are some authentic materials such as menus, manuals, time-tables, etc. students at the beginning level understand them to some extent and can apply them where appropriate. But when it comes to prose works, we can offer students works written or adapted for their level.

For students it is essential to learn how to successfully manage during communication, it is necessary to know what real models native speakers use in that situation. While working with these materials, students perform not only the tasks required from them, but also they make new meanings for themselves, new discoveries about the way of life of foreign countries with great interest. Such texts foster a sense of tolerance towards other cultures.

3) while choosing authentic materials, the volume of that material should

be taken into account. Boring and long dialogues cannot be considered suitable for the lesson either as reading or listening material. If what the interlocutors are talking about does not interest the student, is not appropriate for their age and knowledge level, no matter how authentic it is or how much the students listen, there is nothing for them to learn. It's just a waste of time.

Another problem in the presentation of authentic materials is related to the teacher's ability to effectively benefit from that authentic material. The teacher should not consider his work finished by suggesting an authentic material to be read or listened to in the teaching process. By conducting practical work on both authentic reading and listening materials, the teacher should be able to make the lesson interesting and develop students' communication-oriented oral speech skills.

Authentic materials can be divided into the following three types:

1. Authentic listening materials, such as radio news, cartoons, songs, etc.
2. Authentic visual materials, such as street signs, magazines and newspapers pictures, post cards, etc.
3. Authentic printed materials, such as sports reports, newspapers, restaurant menus, train tickets, etc. [10, p. 251].

In another source, this list is more extensive: "There are two main categories of authentic materials – print and auditory. ...Some examples of the many types of authentic print materials include:

- Utility bills.
 - Packing slips.
 - Order forms.
 - ATM screens.
 - ATM receipts.
 - Web sites.
 - Street signs.
 - Coupons.
 - Traffic tickets.
 - Greeting cards.
 - Calendars.
 - Report cards.
 - TV guides.
 - Food labels.
 - Magazines.
 - Newspapers
- Examples of authentic auditory materials include.
- Phone messages.

- Radio broadcasts.
- Podcasts.
- E-books.
- Movies.
- Videos and DVDs.
- Television programs” [12].

Of course, using all or most of these listed materials in class may result in deviation from the lesson program provided in the syllabus. That is why we decided to group the authentic reading and listening materials and the types of activities to be carried out on them in the following way:

1. *Short dialogues* – the use of authentic short dialogues is of special importance in the process of developing students’ communication-oriented oral speech skills in English. Dialogues, which are considered to be real examples of real foreign language speech, increase the effectiveness of the learning process by reflecting the elements of communicative competence in the communication process, because they are the product of the real speech and culture of the native speakers, and when brought to the audience, they become a reflection of the socio-cultural environment of that country. Memorizing and retelling dialogues is a traditional language learning technique. But on the contrary: «learners can be asked to perform the dialogue in different ways: in different moods (sad, happy, irritated, bored, for example); in different role-relationships (a parent and child, wife and husband, wheelchair patient and nurse, etc.). Then the actual words of the text can be varied: other ideas substituted (by teacher or learners) for “shopping” or “it’s stopped raining”, and the situation and the rest of the dialogue adapted accordingly. Finally, the learners can suggest a continuation: two (or more) additional utterances which carry the action further» [13, p. 132].

2. *Short stories* are a type of activity aimed at reading. A person can read to gain information, to increase their knowledge, or for pleasure. If students are not interested in reading, giving them short and easy stories to read has a positive effect, because when the meaning of reading materials is understood, it is possible to organize students’ interactive activities on them in a more organized and efficient manner. At this point, even funny stories or anecdotes can be recommended, as students read them enthusiastically. In addition, reading easy and funny material encourages students to read more difficult material. After a certain time, teachers can ask them to read more difficult stories. “Just as we can claim that extensive reading helps students to acquire vocabulary and grammar and that, furthermore, it make students better

readers...” [14, p. 228].

It is better if teachers empower students to choose reading materials by themselves. The plan of the reading lesson by stages, the questions to be asked should be prepared in advance.

Most books classify the levels of reading lessons as follows:

- 1) Pre-reading activities;
- 2) While reading activities;
- 3) Post reading activities.

Or:

- 1) Pre-reading activities;
- 2) First reading;
- 3) Second reading;
- 4) Post reading activities [15], [16].

The purpose of presenting pre-reading activities is to arouse students' interest in the reading material and encourage them to read. These tasks help students focus on the reading material. As a pre-reading activity, the best and most common method is to tell students the title of the story and ask them what they think the story will be about. Tasks performed before reading play a major role in the development of students' guessing and logical prediction skills.

While reading activities help students to work carefully on the reading material. Therefore, in order to focus students' attention on the reading material, teachers ask them to perform certain tasks, for example, finding a synonym / an antonym of a given word from the text, finding words and phrases in the text according to the definition, etc.

It is inadmissible to be satisfied with conducting analytical work on the reading material. Discussing the reading material should definitely become a part of the lesson because students' participation in the discussion allows them to improve their communication skills in English. The main goal of our research is to develop students' communication-oriented oral speech skills, which is more effective through pre-reading and post-reading tasks. These activities teach students the habit of maintaining communication, help them express their thoughts on the reading material and make connections between the material and their own lives.

3. *Newspaper articles.* The application of newspaper materials to the language teaching process creates interactivity in the class, increases students' worldview. All the activities performed in reading short stories can also be performed while reading articles. In addition, teachers may ask students to write short essays on any event, either real or fictional.

4. *Songs*. Special importance should be given to the issue of developing students' communication-oriented oral speech skills through listening comprehension. In this case, songs are the best tool, because music has a positive effect on human emotions and creates enthusiasm. The song should be selected in advance, activities and questions to be performed while listening should be prepared in advance, in short, a short plan of the lesson should be drawn up to ensure the sequence of the lesson.

Students should be aware of the theme of the song they are going to listen to. For this reason, pre-listening questions are of great importance to focus students' attention on the song. The teacher should encourage and direct students' maintaining communication through consistent and related questions. On the basis of these questions, students determine what and why they will listen to, and they understand the theme of the song more quickly.

While listening some activities, for example marking correct/wrong answers, filling in missing words, sequencing mixed lyrics, correcting words that do not match the text, etc. can be done.

After listening to the song, answering questions, narrating the short content of the song, drawing conclusions, narrating any story connected the song and other activities may be performed. While doing such activities, students express their opinions by making sentences of various constructions (simple and complex) and improve their own communication-oriented oral speech skills by referring to their previously acquired lexical and grammatical knowledge. Besides, as J. Harmer pointed out: «they can write stories based on the mood of the music they hear, or to more than one piece of music and discuss with each other what mood the music describes, what “colour” it is, where they would like to hear it, and who with» [14, p. 242].

5. *Short videos*. Videos are the best source of authentic spoken language. Activities based on short videos are almost identical to activities applied in reading and listening comprehension classes. Of course, teachers trying to make their lessons different and colorful prefer other methods, such as discussing the watched passage by “freezing” the image, asking students what can happen next. “Almost everything we have said about listening applies to video too” [3, p. 108].

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH / ВИСНОВКИ ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ПОДАЛЬШИХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ

Summarizing all the above mentioned, we can point out two main reasons for exposing students to authentic: firstly, inauthentic materials, i.e.

“invented materials”, have different characteristics from authentic materials in a certain sense. Since they include the linguistic features of written speech compared to oral speech, they do not train students to communicate, either in class or outside of class, because the elements of real communication are not manifested in inauthentic texts.

The second advantage of using authentic materials is that students are able to apply the learned grammatical and lexical knowledge not only in the learning process, but also in the environment outside the classroom.

Considering that students benefit from English more in contexts where real oral speech occurs naturally than in contexts where written speech occurs, then usage of authentic materials during English language learning should become an important element of the lesson.

Prospects for further research in this direction. The presented paper emphasizes the importance of the use of authentic materials to improve first and second course students’ communication-oriented skills in English. It is indicated in the paper that according to the requirements of the communicative approach, the usage of authentic texts and language materials in the English language lesson are better than the presentation of artificial texts. With regard to the selection of authentic materials, the interests of the students should be taken into consideration. Those authentic materials should be presented to the students that meet their needs and requirements. In addition, the article outlines the types of authentic materials. Teachers are encouraged to use all the types authentic materials in class.

Authentic reading and listening materials used in English classes and the activities to be carried out on them are also grouped. The paper points out that authentic materials have become an important element of the English language lessons noting that students should use them in English more often in the contexts in which real oral speech occurs naturally than in the context in which artificial speech occurs. Therefore, it is important to use authentic materials in the process of teaching English.

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ШЛЯХИ ВДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ КОМУНІКАТИВНО-ОРІЄНТОВАНОГО УСНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ СТУДЕНТІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ (ЗА АВТЕНТИЧНИМИ МАТЕРІАЛАМИ)

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Анотація. У статті коротко розглядаються проблеми, з якими стикаються студенти першого та другого курсу під час мовлення. Підкреслюється, що за останні десятиліття англійська мова стала модною для вивчення в Азербайджані. Студенти першого курсу достатньо добре знають правила граматики, а також мають багатий словниковий запас. Проте більшість учнів (звичайно, не всі) не можуть брати участь у простих розмовах ні з учителем, ні між собою. Відсутність у студентів впевненості в собі змушує їх висловлювати свою точку зору азербайджанською мовою. Представлена стаття підкреслює важливість використання автентичних матеріалів для вдосконалення комунікаційних навичок студентів першого та другого курсу англійською мовою. У роботі зазначено, що згідно з вимогами комунікативного підходу використання автентичних текстів і мовних матеріалів на уроці англійської мови краще, ніж подання штучних текстів. Говоріння – це продуктивне використання мови та вдосконалення мовленнєвих навичок учнів, що вважається найскладнішою частиною навчання мови і безпосередньо пов'язане з мотивацією, комунікативними вправами, аудіюванням. У статті стверджується, що формування звички є чудовим стимулом, тому вільно розмовляйте англійською. При відборі автентичних матеріалів слід враховувати інтереси студентів. Студентам мають бути представлені ті автентичні матеріали, які відповідають їхнім потребам і вимогам. Крім того, у статті окреслено види автентичних матеріалів. Вчителям рекомендується використовувати на уроці всі види автентичних матеріалів. Також згруповано автентичні матеріали для читання та аудіювання, які використовуються на уроках англійської мови, а також дії, які необхідно виконувати з ними. У роботі вказується, що автентичні матеріали стали важливим елементом уроків

англійської мови, зазначаючи, що учні мають використовувати їх англійською мовою частіше в контекстах, в яких справжнє усне мовлення відбувається природним чином, ніж у контексті, в якому відбувається штучне мовлення. Тому в процесі навчання англійської мови важливо використовувати автентичні матеріали.

Ключові слова: вивчення мови; автентичні матеріали; методи навчання мови; мотивація; газетні статті; аудіювання; самостійність учня.

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