

УДК [378.147:811.111'243]=111

THE PRINCIPLE OF AUTHENTICITY IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Suprun O.M.

Dmytro Motorny Tavria State Agrotechnological University

Melitopol

Ukraine

Summary: The article looks upon the principle of authenticity as a way to enhance the results of teaching foreign languages, to promote independent learning, to motivate learners of English and to expose them to real-life language in real-life situations.

Keywords: authenticity, authentic materials, task authenticity, learner authenticity, classroom authenticity, authenticity in assessment

The present stage of Ukraine's development is defined in the general context of European integration with an orientation towards the fundamental values of the world culture. Ukraine's main goal in the field of education is creating conditions for personal development and self-realization of every citizen of Ukraine, which requires an update of the content of education and the organization of the educational process in educational institutions.

The main aim of teaching foreign languages in institutions of higher education is training highly competitive specialists who will be able to keep up with the fast-paced development of the world and cooperate with people from other countries, which is inevitable in the context of globalization. This process sets new tasks and requirements to the level of knowledge of foreign languages among students of higher educational institutions. However, the required level does not only mean possessing a certain set of skills and abilities, it also means these skills and abilities have to be authentic.

Authenticity is defined as "the quality of being real or true", but authenticity in teaching foreign languages can be interpreted in a number of ways. In this article we shall look upon various aspects of authenticity and assess its advantages for the purpose of language teaching.

Authenticity as a principle of teaching English includes several aspects:

1) text (material) authenticity – this aspect deals with the selection of written or spoken material created for a real communicative purpose by people who have a message to impart to an audience;

2) task authenticity included the design and complexity of the task, the learning environment and setting in which these tasks are performed;

3) learner authenticity emphasizes the individual differences between the students, their purposes and needs in learning English and their ways of dealing with the tasks set by the teacher;

4) authenticity of assessment meaning the teacher's attitude and approach to the feedback on the students' individual performance in accordance with their

learning objectives, in order to develop an understanding of what they know, understand, and can do with the communicative skills and abilities they possess.

In the field of teaching English as a foreign language, the term “authenticity” often refers to the quality of materials used in the classroom and the process of their selection and includes spoken or written language data which have been produced in the course of genuine communication. Teaching materials can be called authentic if they have been produced by native speakers of English as opposed to those specifically produced for the purpose of English language teaching and learning [1, p.1]. Authentic texts for reading must be written by native speakers, and, which is equally important, they must be written for native speakers. We call an audio or a video authentic when they present conversations produced by people who speak English as their first language, with natural flow of speech, its speed, accent, intonation etc.

There are some significant benefits of using authentic materials in class while teaching English. First of all, they help to connect language learning and life, which enhances learners’ motivation and attitudes to the process of learning. Secondly, the use of authentic information promotes higher-order thinking skills and competencies of learners fostering greater autonomy of the students. Last but not least, it gives access to a rich source of information on different aspects of communicative competence and lead to improving communicative competence. Authentic materials develop creativity among teachers as well as learners.

At the same time, using authentic materials may often be quite challenging for both the teacher and the students as they contain complicated language and complex language structures, unneeded vocabulary items, which sometimes may not be relevant to the learner’s needs. Despite the variety and availability of sources of this type of material they demand a lot of effort on the part of the teacher as to the ways of organizing the learning process and the types of tasks set to the students.

It should be noted, however, that while authentic materials are mostly seen as a more useful tool giving better results in teaching foreign languages, non-authentic, or contrived (specifically designed) materials should not be considered lacking efficiency. With contrived materials students get clear objectives to develop. These materials contain simple language which is easier and more understandable as they are adapted for a particular aspect. Moreover, they are always relevant, useful and focused on what students are learning at the point. So, the choice between authenticity and contrivance should be conditioned by the learning objectives, stage of education and other respective factors.

Another aspect of this phenomenon is task authenticity. It defines whether a classroom task successfully reflects real-life activity in language use. Such tasks must provide situational language and students must be exposed to real discourse in class, often containing cultural context. Besides being more interesting for learners, authentic tasks are extremely helpful in developing social language skills. They provide knowledge of real situations of life and make the learners aware of the ways to behave in these situations. Authentic tasks develop the students’ ability of interpretation and help minimize the level of hesitation among them. So, in designing tasks teachers should include real-life communicative situations and integrated skills

approach, the context of which enables the learners to practice their skills in a natural way. Tasks must also be valid and their content has to be related to the authentic material selected.

Learner authenticity deals with the way the learners interact with the material which is offered in class for the purpose of teaching English. It refers to the purposes for which the text is used in classroom as opposed to the original purpose of the materials created by native speakers and for native speakers.

Learner authenticity is provided according to the following principles: the nature of the material, its type and topic has to be up-to-date and related to everyday situations; the content must be motivating and provide students with the opportunity to develop communicative and linguistic competence; they must be student-centered and appropriate to learners' needs and learning process, promoting their interest in language learning; they should be unsimplified, and thus rather difficult in vocabulary and syntactic structures, but causing no discomfort for the learner.

Authenticity in assessment is the way to measure the students' skills and abilities that is performance-oriented, the assessment that measures not only the correctness of the response, but also the way of thinking involved in arriving at the response. It is a form of assessment in which students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills []. Unlike traditional standardized testing, authentic assessment gives real evidence of how the student uses language tools to solve real-life communicative problems.

In conclusion, the learning process is redirected accumulation of knowledge to the formation of the skills and abilities to acquire knowledge, necessary to ensure the students' own competitive ability throughout their lives. Authentic materials enable learners to interact with the real language and content rather than the form. Learners feel that they are learning a target language as it is used outside the classroom. In order to achieve the objectives of teaching English as a second language it is important to exploit other materials around them according to the needs of learners and to create interest in them.

References

1. Külekçi, E. (2015). *'Authenticity' in English language teaching and learning : A case study of four high school classrooms in Turkey. PhD thesis.* University of Warwick. Retrieved May 20, 2019, from <http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/77323/>
2. Lansford, L. (2014). *Authentic Materials in the Classroom: the Advantages.* Retrieved May 20, 2019, from <http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2014/05/16/authentic-materials-classroom-advantages/>, Accessed 20 May 2019.
3. Prasad, D. Vishwa, Shakil Akhtar, Md. *Use of aUthentic Materials in the English Language Classrooms of Secondary Schools: a Qualitative Study.* Retrieved May 20, 2019, from <http://www.fortell.org/content/use-authentic-materials-english-language-classrooms-secondary-schools-qualitative-study>, Accessed 20 May 2019.