



World Conference on "Integrated and Life-long Education of Modernity"

Selection Criteria for Authentic Reading Materials for B1 Level EFL Learners

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Abstract. Reading is not only reading the words, however, this skill plays a vital role as it is an indispensable tool in majority language classrooms. Selection criteria of EFL reading materials must be carefully done by the teachers as not all sources may not be appropriate in all classrooms. This paper gives an overview about reading material development and selection of authentic materials for designing reading tasks in the English as a foreign language classroom. It also provides certain practical theories which support the efforts in selecting culturally and locally appropriate EFL reading materials.

Key words: authentic, authenticity, criteria, reading skills, reading materials, knowledge, EFL learners, text, strategies.

Most students nowadays have shown their lack of interest in reading English language materials. However, reading interest is important in encouraging the students to read because students who cannot read would not be able to succeed in school and life. Baba and Affendi mentioned that the ability to read is crucial in which reading affects an individual's intellectual and emotional growth¹. As the result, good readers would have more chances in broadening their mental horizons and better opportunities of success. Students who seldom read would encounter problem in knowing the progress happening around them.

In order to enhance students' reading skills, the use of authentic materials seems to be a great help and beneficial. Authentic materials create the interest of reading among the students and allow them to participate with more enthusiasm in reading. In schools, the authentic materials such as textbooks are effective to encourage the students to read according to their needs and requirements. Furthermore, according to Berardo's claims the use of authentic materials is useful to make learners expose themselves to the real language that is used in real text. In addition, authentic materials help to motivate the students, giving the sense of achievement if the students understand what they have read and enhance the students to do further reading.

However, usage of real reading materials is not always good as it is expected unless, it is correctly selected. Because selecting reading materials is just one of teacher's many daily

¹Baba, J. and Affendi, F. R. "Reading Habit and Students' Attitudes towards Reading" Asian Journal of University Education, p. 109-122. (2020).

duties, most teacher's do this task based on their own criteria with no further considerations. They hardly ever involve the students in this reading selection process, even though, they are the final recipients of the reading materials. As the consequence, the reading materials chosen by the instructors are often inappropriate. Selection of reading texts for any particular EFL class must be a thoughtful process rather than a random one. If as a teacher, you would like to involve your students actively in the process, you have to adopt appropriate reading materials for the class. Teachers should wisely need to devote some of their valuable time to analyzing each aspects of selection process. While choosing authentic reading materials some student-based factors should be in consideration. Thus, those factors are: student's level, student's interest, student's needs and student's background knowledge. Moreover, there are others factors, too. There are some aspects related to the text, such as, relevance, content and authenticity.

Some researchers regard authenticity as another important criterion for the selection of readings for the EFL classes². However, whether the material used for EFL classes should be authentic or not has been widely questioned by those who advocate the use of teacher-made materials. Among those who advocate the use of authentic material, Melvin & Stout state that teachers should take full advantage of the potential benefits of authentic materials. In a like manner, Gebhard points out that authenticity should be part of the criteria taken into account when selecting appropriate reading material for ESL classes. Gebhard asserts that «understanding the needs of students in specific fields can provide the means through which materials can be selected and created. The teachers can determine how appropriate the reading materials are by considering whether they are relevant to the learner or not³.

There are some benefits of choosing appropriate reading materials for EFL learners. For example, it is surely time consuming as well as it is really useful for both the learners and students at the same time. At the end, teacher can motivate and improve the reading procedure by providing the learners with appropriate texts. Time must be devoted to our students in our daily teaching practice because every one of them has infinite potential instructors that must take advantage of that.

To sum up, selecting real reading materials is challenging, however, it is very useful as well. In this important process of selecting the material for a reading class, the teacher cannot neglect the students' level, interests, needs and background knowledge in order to consider text difficulty, content and authenticity. It requires some effort on the instructor since he should consider about student's needs too. However, the teacher can enhance the reading process by providing the students with appropriate texts.

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