



RESEARCH ARTICLE



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THE ROLE OF NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES TO TEACH ENGLISH IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

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In the digital era, there have been drastic changes in all the fields and education has no exception. Due to technological revolutions, the field of education has undergone quite profound changes throughout the twenty-first century and the concept of teaching and learning has taken a new dimension. There is no room for the antiquated methods of teaching since a majority of the twenty-first century teachers have been adopting the modern technology in their classrooms. Moreover, the learners have also been using the available modern technology abundantly to develop their learning skills. The same scenario reflects on the teaching and learning of English in ESL/EFL environment. To improve the language skills of the learners, the modern teachers of English have been trying with numerous techniques, methods and approaches in order to meet the requirements of their learners. The use of mass media as a teaching tool in the English classrooms has increased significantly at all levels. The print media plays a vital role in promoting the language skills of the ESL/ EFL learners. Newspapers and magazines are the most widely used of the media and they expand the curriculum with infinite information to use as authentic materials to learn the English language. The present paper focuses on mainly the role of newspapers and magazines to teach English in the ESL/EFL classrooms.

Keywords: *Authentic Materials, EFL/ESL Classrooms, Language Skills, Magazines, Newspapers, Teachers.*



INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has witnessed spectacular vicissitudes in almost all arenas with the introduction of modern technology. We can perceive these variations in science and research, medicine, pharmacy, engineering and technology, fashion design, travel and tourism, education, mass media and communication, business and so on. The latest technology has benefitted the human beings in many ways and it has been very useful for their progress in their respective fields. Human beings can carry out their work without any confines and aberrations using the existing technology and attain incredible achievement in the field they put their exertions. Because of the scientists' innovations and discoveries, the present generation has been comfortably utilizing the available technology to achieve the right progress and the desired results in all the areas. The progress of the entire world is possible with the latest technological innovations. As technology influenced almost all fields, it has also greatly inclined the field of education. With the introduction of technology in education, there have been drastic changes and the teachers as well as learners have been using the latest technology in attaining better results in their teaching and learning. The teachers of English have been adopting the teaching materials from the available sources, especially the authentic materials, to teach English effectively.

THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIAL IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS

As technology progresses, there have been tremendous changes in the field of education, especially, in teaching English in the ESL/EFL classrooms. It is a fact that most of the learners do not show more attention towards their normal textbooks while learning the language, the teachers search for alternative materials to satisfy the ESL/EFL learners' needs and interests. Therefore, the teachers of English adopt the teaching materials using various sources in order to motivate the learners towards learning the English language with a lot of interest and enthusiasm. To fulfill the learners' needs and attain the desired results in their ESL/EFL classrooms, the teachers of English have to make use of the more

economic, useful and readily available authentic materials. According to Widdowson (1990), "Authentic materials give exposure to real language and its use in its own community". Nunan (1999) asserts, "Any spoken or written materials which are not pedagogical purposes". Also, Sanderson (1999) says, "Authentic materials are materials that we can use in the classroom and that have not been changed in any way for ESL students". Even researches proved that there are many advantages of using the authentic materials in the ESL/EFL classrooms such as newspapers, magazines, TV programmes, TV ads, songs, movies, the internet, literature, menus, brochures, label products, bus timetables, comics, realia like dolls and phones and so on. In accordance with the knowledge and needs of the learners, the authentic materials can be successfully used in the ESL/EFL classrooms at all the levels and prepare the learners to accomplish the tasks efficaciously.

THE ADVANTAGES OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS

Nunan (1999) claims that authenticity is one of the three significant principles of task design that suggest learners to learn a language in a natural way as it is used by the real language users. There are several advantages of using authentic materials in the ESL/EFL classrooms. First of all, they play a key role in motivating the English language learners positively and they attract the learners to concentrate more on learning the English language in a congenial atmosphere. Secondly, the learners show more interest on the materials since they have been selected and designed according to the learners' needs. Furthermore, they make the learners to participate in the classroom activities with a lot of enthusiasm. They also prepare the learners to perform the tasks in a learner-friendly environment. A majority of the learners actively participate in the discussions and communicate well with their peers as well as their teachers. Due to their cost effectiveness and abundant availability, authentic materials are profusely used by the teachers of English in their ESL/EFL classrooms to make the learners a better understanding of the subject taught.

Since the authentic materials are designed according to the levels and interests of the learners,



even the average and shy students can participate dynamically. As a result, the learners learn the English language skills in a short time with self-motivation. Moreover, the teachers select the eye-catching materials that highly attract the learners equipped with audio and visual effects, the learners grasp the content within no time and showcase their skills later in and outside the classrooms. In this context, it is apt to quote Brinton (1991 cited in Qura, 2001), "Authentic materials relate more closely to learners' need, for they build a connection between the language classroom and the outside world". Authentic materials function as mediating artifact to contextualize the language learning where the learners comprehend the TV advertisements and weather reports whereas these genres are commonly used in day-to-day context.

Another major advantage of the using the authentic materials in the ESL/EFL classrooms is that they offer a wide range of language contexts, registers, styles and genres of both written as well as spoken discourses and the materials certainly enrich the knowledge of learners' linguistic resources. Since the authentic materials that are used from the newspapers, magazines, comics and story books are entirely different from the normal prescribed textbooks, they reinforce the teaching items taught in the classrooms and they surely enhance the language skills of the learners immensely. Furthermore, authentic materials are more useful in teaching the language structure than improving the reading skills of the learners. There is no doubt that the learners improve their reading skills by reading the newspapers, magazines and brochures, but the main concentration is laid on the language skills. As the resources that are available on the internet are updated on regular intervals, they are more engaging and stimulating for the learners.

Also, authentic materials provide rich cultural content. Since learning a language cannot be separated from its culture and both the language and culture are inextricably intertwined, both language and culture should be taught in combination. Since language embodies products, perspectives, persons, communities and practices of a culture, the teachers of English should teach the language and culture inseparably to make the learner acquaint with the

culture of the language that they learn. When the teaching and learning takes place by adopting the cultural content in the materials adopted by the teachers, the learners understand the content more easily and show more interest in the topic as well. There are numerous authentic materials that comprise cultural information which can be exposed and provides more opportunity for the learners to expose more to the target language through newspapers, journals, movies and songs. Furthermore, the teachers of English should always integrate target language culture with the learners' own culture and also various cultures in order to make the learners a better understanding and proper respect to the other cultures. One of the main advantages of using the cultural content is that it results in effective teaching and learning. As there are innumerable advantages of the authentic materials to use in their regular ESL/EFL classrooms, the teachers are advised to select more interesting and appropriate materials to make the teaching and learning more effective and meaningful.

Authentic materials are so powerful and useful in giving boundless sources of information which we can compare with an encyclopedia or a library and they also provide an opportunity for the learners to enhance their knowledge and language skills and facilitate learner autonomy and self-education. Since mass media covers a variety of topics and subjects that create interest among the learners, they motivate the English language learners to work with the given tasks or activities in the ESL/EFL classrooms. This paper primarily focuses on the role of print media in the ESL/EFL classrooms and how they help both teachers and learners to collect, classify, analyze and classify the concepts, information and perspectives in promoting teaching and learning of English in the EFL/ESL classrooms. In this context, the main emphasis is laid on how teachers make use of both newspapers and magazines to teach English in the ESL/EFL classrooms in order to develop the learners' language skills, vocabulary and grammar colossally.



THE ROLE OF NEWSPAPERS TO TEACH ENGLISH IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS

Since print and electronic media attracts the learners in learning the language well, the teachers should try to adopt such variety of materials to keep the learners active in their ESL/EFL classrooms. The teachers can try out a wide range of activities using print media such as newspapers and magazines so that the learners participate in the activities very actively with utmost interest. Newspapers play an important role in teaching English as they publish the columns about news, reviews, editorials, historical events, games and sports, movies, entertainment, education, literature and poetry, science and technology, politics, business, weather, Ads, comics and so on. Newspapers publish regional, national and international news and they are fresh every day. Therefore, the language used in the newspapers entirely different from the language used in the textbooks. The language used in the textbooks is a standard one and there is no possibility to change the text until the completion of the time duration of the course, whereas the language used in the newspapers is not a permanent one, they change from day to day as newspapers are published daily. Furthermore, the language used in the newspapers is also vary from day-to-day. It gives the opportunity for the English teachers to select the relevant material useful for their teaching. Also, the teachers should take the needs and interests of the learners into consideration to engage them in the ESL/EFL classroom activities. When the authentic teaching material adopted from the newspapers make the learners to participate in the classroom activities with more interest and enthusiasm, the ESL/EFL learners learn the language skills perfectly with higher motivation and finish the tasks more successfully. Therefore, the teachers of English should make use of the daily newspapersto design suitable materials in the ESL/EFL classrooms according to the interests and needs of the learners to make the teaching and learning a fruitful one.

The teachers of English can improve the language skills of the second or foreign learners by adopting material from the available English newspapers and perform various activities. The teachers can ask the students to form groups and

find out the most important news of the day. At this juncture, the second or foreign language learners form groups of four to five and each group of learners is given a set of newspaper. Then the learners skim for the important news and note down on a paper. Since this activity is time bound, the learners do the activity quickly and accurately. Once the time is over, all the groups sit together and discuss the important news. This kind of activity really enhances the learners' reading skills of skimming. The teachers can also ask the learners to select a particular news item or article of their own interest and prepare a report on the news and also find out the meaning of any five difficult words. The teachers can ask the learners to do this kind of activity at home so that the learners can finish it at their convenient time. With this kind of activity, the learners not only improve their reporting skills but also enrich new vocabulary. The teachers can also form the learners into groups and give each group a different news item and ask the groups to prepare a quiz based on the news times given to them. Then the learners start working on it in groups and prepare the maximum number of questions based on the given task. Once the preparation of questions is over, the teachers ask the learners to put the questions to the whole class so that the other groups concentrate on a particular topic and answer the questions by reading the article thoroughly. Likewise, all the groups do the activity and it really improves the second or foreign language learners' reading comprehension skills, particularly, skimming, scanning, vocabulary, comprehension skills.

The teachers of English can also implement some pre-activity and while-activity techniques that are very useful for the second or foreign language learners. The teachers of English can give the learners any selected news item that he is going to teach in the next class and ask the learners to find some new vocabulary from it and summarize the news item at home. Then the learners come out with their own answers and these are discussed in the classroom. The teachers can also take a news item without any headlines and ask the learners to go through it and suggest a suitable title to it. At this juncture, the teaches can use brainstorming technique to involve the students in discussion so that the learners



participate very actively as there is no hard and fast rule to give an exact answer. Hence, the learners come out innumerable titles in a free and independent atmosphere. The learners can develop critical thinking skills as well as speaking skills. Furthermore, the teachers can also show the learners a picture of a famous person or an incident that has happened and ask them to say something about it. Or else, the teachers can show them a comic or cartoon and ask them to describe it. These techniques are certainly more useful for the second or foreign learners to enhance their speaking skills.

The teachers of English can also take the latest and burning topics from the newspapers and ask the learners to prepare a short summary of the news in three or four sentences so that it really improves the learners' reading as well as writing skills. Then the teachers can also ask the learners to present the summary of the news item to the class and the learners develop their speaking skills as well as presentation skills. Later, the teachers can take the same news from three or four different newspapers and ask the learners to compare the difference among them in presentation, vocabulary, grammatical structure and so on. The learners work in groups and come out with different answers. This activity surely enhances the learners' critical thinking and reasoning skills and the learners also know the standard of the language used by different newspapers.

The journalists of newspapers always try to extract more information to recreate that has happened in the form of stories and they create more interest among the learners. In reality, newspapers witness the happenings all over the globe and present the information exactly without any modifications. Since the information published in the newspapers is updated every day, the teachers can use them to find innovative ways of teaching English through activities. Using newspapers, the teachers can develop the learners' critical as well as analytical thinking outstandingly. Textbooks are updated after several years whereas newspapers are updated every day and present the latest information. Newspapers help the learners understand the transmission of culture and reflect changes in the English language. With a wide reading

of newspapers, learners understand the meaning of culture well. Since newspapers represent many variations in written English, the learners can learn how to write English with different styles and a lot of variety. The teachers of English use newspapers extensively to teach the learners of different levels. Most teachers use newspapers to enhance the learners' writing skills, reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, reading and interpreting maps, charts, diagrams, analytical and critical thinking skills and so on. There are numerous standard newspapers that are useful for the language teachers to select some important and valuable materials for the English teachers to try out activities in the ESL/EFL classrooms. The teachers can consult some newspapers such as The Hindu, Times of India, National Herald, The Wall Street, The Sun, Daily Mirror, The New York Times, The Guardian, The Washington Post, The Sidney Morning Herald, The Asahi Shimbun, Dawn, Zaman, The Daily Telegraph, Windsor Express, Daily Express, London Daily, The Times, Birmingham Post, Manchester Times, Asian Times, Evening Chronicle and so on and make use of the essential material to enhance the language skills of the learners enormously in the ESL/EFL classrooms. The teachers should select the relevant materials from the newspapers and organize them according to the needs abilities of the learners using the internet. Since there are many advantages of using newspapers as authentic materials in the ESL/EFL classrooms, the teachers are advised to choose the useful and interesting material and develop them innovatively according to the classroom situation.

THE ROLE OF MAGAZINES TO TEACH ENGLISH IN THE ESL/EFL CLASSROOMS

The In print media, magazines play a dominant role in promoting learning, especially in developing the language skills of the learners in the ESL/EFL classrooms. The main aim of using the magazines in the ESL/EFL classrooms by the teachers is to make the learners to understand the usage of language, grasp the information, entertain, give more information and persuade the learners learning the English language in an affable and pleasant learning environment. It is a fact that the purpose of using the newspapers as well as the magazines is the same in



teaching English, learners are more attracted to magazines because they are more colourful and attractive so that the learners are highly motivated and show more interest and pay more attention towards learning the English language. As magazines are filled with colourful pictures, it is very easy for the teachers to organize photograph activities in the classrooms which stimulate the learners to create both written and verbal stories on their own. They are very convenient for the teachers to use them to introduce short stories, fables, means of transport and even colours and also various stimulating activities in the classrooms. In the present digital world, there are numerous magazines that are more suitable for all age groups that make the decision making so easier. Most of the children and the teen-aged learners are very much attracted by magazines as they are published with full of colours and attractive pictures and above all, they are child-friendly. Since a majority of children and teenagers show more interest in reading magazines, the teachers should adopt and update their teaching materials in order to break the monotony and dreariness of the textbook-based lessons. It also gives a chance for both children and teenagers to be attracted and motivated by magazines those who have been turned off by the normal textbooks used in the ESL/EFL classrooms.

The word 'magazine' actually means 'storehouse' or 'warehouse' and it seems to be more appropriate since magazines are basically warehouses of information. It is a general tendency that all the learners read magazines in their own language both in print and online. But very few learners read magazines of the target language, i.e., the language they are learning. A lot of reading practice is essential for a language learner. So, the beginners and intermediate learners should concentrate more on learning the language by reading more and more magazines in English to develop their language skills. Since learners have textbooks and other reading materials from their classes and textbooks provide only a limited reading material where it is usually short and do not engage the learners much on the teaching material, the learners feel bored and do not pay more attention on the normal classroom teaching that is purely based

on the prescribed textbooks. Therefore, the teachers have to understand this problem and design the materials according to the will and wish of the learners. To engage the learners more on the language learning activities, the teachers should supplement their textbooks with the materials adopted from magazines to really kick their learners' reading into gear. Therefore, the teachers of English should encourage the learners to pick up a magazine of their own interest and make them read fresh and engage the reading materials so that the learners will learn new things and gain more knowledge about new content. In this way, the teachers can promote learning skills among the learners and also develop their critical thinking skills.

There are incredibly useful for language learners for practising reading and listening skills as they include audio recordings. Even if the magazines are updated from time to time and some of them are updated daily or weeks and some others every fortnight, month or once in two months, the common feature among them is that there will be new material at regular intervals. This feature eventually saves the valuable time of the teachers as there are plenty of resources available in magazines. Moreover, these materials are easily accessible more useful for both beginners and low-intermediate level learners of English and they can improve their language skills immensely in and out of classrooms. As a valuable source of information is provided by magazines, they can be adapted easily for classroom purposes. Ever since magazines cover a wide range of topics, the teachers of English can use material to teach various occasions, levels and subjects. Furthermore, they serve as supplements to the content of the subject taught because the information provided by the magazines is based on not only facts and data but also stories. Magazines, just like newspapers, always present the learners the changes in which the language undergoes and the learners can perform the tasks based on these materials than the materials in the textbooks since magazines are published daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, bi-monthly and quarterly. It enables the teachers to prepare innovative and effective teaching materials for the learners to learn the language in a congenial atmosphere.



Magazines are learner-friendly and they are with full of pictures and colours so that they are attracted by the young learners. They create interest among the learners and they also serve as a tool to motivate the learners' reading skills enormously. Magazines also enrich the learners' language skills, grammar and their both passive and active vocabulary. Furthermore, magazines are ultimately used for the culture that they transmit. Since magazines serve as a nation's mirror, the learners of the English language will be in a position to contact with the culture of the language that they study from the printed media in general and magazines in particular. As magazines focus mainly on the information about culture, the learners get a chance to study and know more about their own culture. For example, the articles about how some specific holidays are celebrated in their areas that speak the learners' language. The language teachers as well as learners are suggested to flip through some useful language learning magazines such as Reader's Digest, Just English, ELI Language Magazine, Scholastic Scope, Babel, The Language Magazine, The Illustrated Weekly, Unravel, The British Council Magazine, EFL Magazine, Just English and so on. Hence, the teachers of English should make use of the materials from all the available and useful magazines to prepare interesting and needed materials for the learners in order to involve them learning activities that take place in the ESL/EFL classrooms.

Since newspapers and magazines provide latest information and the language used in them is different from that of the language used in the textbooks, the teachers of English should make use of the appropriate material in order to motivate and attract the ESL/EFL learners.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, an attempt has been made to focus on the role of newspapers and magazines to teach English in the ESL/EFL classrooms. First of all, this paper has discussed the importance of authentic material used in the English classrooms and how the teachers of English use them as additional teaching materials to enhance the language skills of the ESL/EFL learners. Later, this paper has also disclosed the effective use of media in education. Then this

paper has also emphasized on the role of newspapers and magazines to teach English in the ESL/EFL classrooms. Finally, this paper has also given valuable recommendations both to the teachers and the learners of ESL/EFL teachers to enhance their teaching as well as learning skills in the present setting.

It is a known fact that media plays a vital role in teaching English in the ESL/EFL classrooms. Therefore, the main focus has been laid on print media, especially on newspapers and magazines, in developing teaching materials for the learners of ESL/EFL classrooms. Since newspapers and magazines always publish the latest news and information, they are so useful for the English teachers to motivate and create interest among the learners. Therefore, the teachers should adopt materials from the available English newspapers and magazines according to the needs and interests of the learners so that the learners will pay more attention on the subject and participate in the classroom activities with higher motivation. So, it is the main responsibility of the teachers to design the needful authentic materials using newspapers and magazines of English to create interest among the learners and motivate them towards learning the language with a great enthusiasm and interest. Therefore, the teachers as well as the learners of English should make use of the resources from newspapers and magazines to make their teaching and learning more productive.

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