

Adapting Reading Strategies through Authentic Materials in EFL Classroom

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were to study English reading comprehension ability of undergraduate students through Authentic Materials in EFL classroom. The samples were 30 undergraduate students of Suratthani Rajabhat University, Suratthani province in the second semester of the academic year 2016 by simple random sampling. The instruments of research consisted of lesson plans and English reading comprehension test. Data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, and t-test. The results of the research showed that the reading comprehension ability after using adapting reading strategies through authentic materials in EFL classroom was higher than that before significantly at the .05 level.

Keywords: Authentic materials, reading comprehension

Introduction

In Thailand teaching English as a foreign language. Since the mid-1970s communicative language teaching has considered a consistent need to develop students' skills for the real world. According to educational policy of Thailand, Communicative language teaching is used for teaching in high schools and university. Teachers, therefore, must pass teacher training course (TTC) with CLT framework and they use some real world activities in the classroom (Stern, 1981). To do so, teachers incorporate authentic materials as one of the most important principles in CLT approach in EFL classes.

Rogers (1988) stated "the authentic materials should be qualified in terms of objectives, learners, needs and nature of the meaningful communication" (p.467). In addition, Dornyei (2003) has demonstrated that students' motivation and, learning achievement are highly influenced by the teachers' attitudes. Besides, scholars argue that the use of authentic materials help students to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and their' capacity to participate in real-world events. In other words, incorporating authentic materials helps students acquire an effective communicative competence in the target language. Hence, the present study was designed to investigate English reading comprehension toward using authentic materials in EFL classrooms in Thailand.

Objective

The purpose of this research were to study English reading comprehension ability of undergraduate students through Authentic Materials in EFL classroom.

Research Question

How to use and adapt authentic materials in EFL classroom to enhance reading comprehension for undergraduate students?

Methodology

Design

This is quantitative approach which uses statistical data. This study will be conducted using one group pretest-posttest design. It is one kind of experimental method.

Participants

The selected participants of the study were 30 undergraduate students of Suratthani Rajabhat University

Sampling Technique

The study used simple random sampling technique in choosing the students.

Procedure

The data was collected by using the pretest and posttest before and after using Authentic Materials in EFL classroom to compare the learning achievement in reading comprehension

Research Instrument

The information and data needed in the study was gathered through pretest and posttest in reading comprehension

Data Analysis

The data were statistically processed and analyzed by mean, standard deviation and t-test for dependent

Literature Review

Definition of authentic materials The term authentic materials have been defined in different ways throughout the literature. Nunan (1989, as cited in Adams, 1995) states that authentic materials are not always produced for the purpose of language teaching. Little et al. (1988, as cited in Guariento & Morley, 2001) declare that authentic materials are used for some social purposes in the language context where they are produced. Bacon and Finnemann (1990) also state that authentic materials are those tests which are made by native speakers for non-pedagogical purposes. This paper will assume Bacon and Finnemann's definition because their definition specifies the producers of the text as native speakers, whereas the others do not.

The impact of authentic materials on FL teaching Although the use of authentic materials in the classroom has become general practice during the previous 30 years, the issue of authenticity has been one of the most debatable aspects in the ground. However, the need or usefulness of authentic materials has been increasingly recognized especially in non – native countries as Thailand. Empirical studies have demonstrated the positive effects of utilizing authentic tests by language Learners. For example, some researches show that using authentic materials leads to oral language development (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990 ; Miller, 2005; Otte, 2006; Thanajaro, 2000). Moreover, some other studies have confirmed that using authentic materials has great influence on developing reading comprehension by presenting new words and expressions to students (Bacon & Finnemann, 1990 ; Berardo, 2006). Harmer (1991) points out that these are only authentic materials which actually develop students' listening and reading skills. Furthermore, Allen et al. (1988, as cited in Baird, 2004) mentions that developing students' strategies in comprehending authentic tests will lead to developing their writing proficiency in the target language learning. According to Omaggio Hadley (1993) and Rogers and Medley (1988), if students are to develop a functional proficiency in

the language and to use the language communicatively in the real world, they must begin to encounter the language of that world in the classroom. Also, learners need opportunities to practice using the language to cope with everyday situations they might encounter outside the classroom.

Selection of authentic materials According to Berardo (2006) authentic tests must be chosen based on: suitability of content, exploitability, and readability. He believes that the content is suitable if it interests the students and is appropriate to their needs and abilities. Bacon and Finneman (1990) also assert that the authentic texts should be culturally relevant to the students' experience. Furthermore, the way the authentic text is used to develop the students' competence and how it can be broken for teaching purposes is called exploitability. Finally, the language of the text and the structural and lexical difficulty refers to readability.

Sources of authentic materials The sources of authentic materials (whether spoken or written) are endless. The most common sources are newspapers, magazines, TV, video, radio, literature, and the internet. Although radio is easy to use, the comprehensibility of its input is the most difficult for language learners because all non-verbal information is missing. Pictures, movements, colors and body language of TV and video, unlike radio, allow learners to access non-verbal information; therefore, TV and video are easier for the language learners to comprehend. Yet it is the internet that is assumed the most useful source (Berardo, 2006). As printed materials date very quickly, the internet is always updated, is interactive, and provides visual stimulation (Berardo, 2006). Moreover, comparing to the other sources, the internet is more useful. Because, teachers can get articles, audio clips, podcasts and videos from the internet. However, as Miller (2003) states, TV is the most used medium for obtaining authentic listening materials for language instruction (see appendix A). Some studies provided insights about learners' attitudes toward authentic input. In addition, pedagogical research required to provide recommendations for material selection and sources. The study with the aim of exploring students' reading comprehension materials in Suratthani Rajabhat University in Thailand this study attempts to address this issue.

Findings

The students' reading comprehension ability the students' reading comprehension ability was identified using reading test the results were showed in the table

Table 1
Students' reading comprehension ability

	N	\bar{X}	S.D.	t	p-value
Pre - test	30	18.20	1.58		
Post - test	30	23.60	2.69	13.310	.000**

*p<.05

The result of the study found that the students' scores in test after learning by using authentic material were more than the scores before learning with authentic material or pretest significantly at the .05 level.

Discussions

The purpose of this research were to study English reading comprehension ability of undergraduate students through Authentic Materials in EFL classroom. This paper discuss about how to use and adapt authentic materials in EFL classroom to enhance reading comprehension for undergraduate students issue of authenticity in the field of language teaching and learning. It also aims to shed light on our understanding of how to use and adapt authentic materials in reading comprehension classes so as to make it more approachable to undergraduate students language learners. Adaptation of materials especially the

Communicative Language Teaching, the philosophy of teaching changed from skills-based paradigms focusing on direct teaching to the instruction of materials aiming to reflect realistic and naturalistic or real –life use of language. This approach holds that second or foreign language learners are supposed to use the materials such as magazines, newspapers, news reports, radio or TV programs, etc that were good for learning reading comprehension.

Authentic materials provides the learners with many significant advantages and promote reading comprehension. The authenticity of text, the authenticity of task, and the most importantly is the learner authenticity. This study has showed a real implementation of these authentic reading materials on undergraduate students.

The findings show significant between pre-test and post-test. The reasons underlying the research findings might be attributed to the level of the scores. The students like authentic materials and they want to study English. They satisfied with teaching through authentic material and media and technology with simply content and easy to understand. Teaching through authentic material helps students perceive actual information, understand, and develop knowledge and good attitude. Moreover, teaching through authentic materials can stimulate motivation and learning could be effective tool for stimulating, exciting, interesting, and enjoyable experience in learning English in the EFL classroom.

Recommendations

The study recommends that lecturer should be use more media and technology during the learning process in order to help students understand content and having fun in learning English.

Conclusion

This study explored the student's English reading comprehension ability in EFL classroom in Suratthani Rajabhat University in Thailand. The results revealed that all of the students had positive achievement toward providing authentic input in their classes. The reason for such the students can improve their reading skill through the real English language. Authentic materials are texts produced by native speakers for non-teaching purpose. These materials reflect the real world language such materials include TV commercials, films, news, weather forecasts, advertisements, brochures, and application forms.

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