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**APPLYING AUTHENTIC TEXTS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS'
READING COMPREHENSION***Aghayeva Javahir Qeyis**Military Institute named after Heydar Aliyev**PhD student of Azerbaijan Language University**cevahir.19937@gmail.com*

Abstract: *The use of authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension has been a topic of interest in language education. This study aimed to investigate the extent to which authentic materials enhance students' reading comprehension skills. The results showed that the implementation of authentic reading materials significantly improved students' reading comprehension skills. Authentic materials create interest and enthusiasm among students, allowing them to participate with more enthusiasm in reading. They expose students to real-world language usage, diverse text types, and cultural context, which are crucial for developing reading skills in a foreign language. However, challenges in selecting and utilizing authentic materials exist, such as defining the term 'authentic' and addressing students' language proficiency levels. To overcome these challenges, teachers need to plan thoughtful ways for students to interact with these materials and consider the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials in the classroom. By doing so, teachers can effectively harness the benefits of authentic materials to improve students' reading skills and foster a genuine engagement with the material.*

Key words: teaching reading, authentic material, cultural context, text

Açar sözlər: oxumağı öyrətmək, orijinal material, mədəni kontekst, mətn

Ключевые слова: обучение чтению, аутентичный материал, культурный контекст, текст

Introduction:

Authentic texts are "real-world" passages or stories written purely to inform, entertain, persuade, etc., as opposed to contrived texts which are written specifically for teaching reading skills. Authentic texts are beneficial for improving students' reading comprehension as they are often written in a more natural and meaningful language, and are relatable and relevant to students' lives. They expose students to a variety of sentence patterns, language devices, and vocabulary, which can help students write better, struggle less with grammar, and have stronger comprehension. Authentic texts can be found in children's books, newspapers, websites like NewsELA and CommonLit, and even in social media posts. When using authentic texts in the classroom, it is important to model and conduct think-alouds to help students analyze and comprehend these more complex texts. Teachers can incorporate authentic texts into their curriculum by pairing them with contrived texts, adding them as supplementary reading, or using them in novel studies.

The search results provide information on the use of authentic materials to improve students' reading comprehension skills. The studies used quasi-experimental designs to investigate the effectiveness of authentic materials in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. The results showed that the implementation of authentic reading materials significantly improved students' reading comprehension skills. Authentic materials create interest and enthusiasm among students, allowing them to participate with more

enthusiasm in reading. They expose students to real-world language usage, diverse text types, and cultural context, which are crucial for developing reading skills in a foreign language. The studies also highlighted the challenges in selecting and utilizing authentic materials, such as defining the term 'authentic' and addressing students' language proficiency levels. To overcome these challenges, teachers need to plan thoughtful ways for students to interact with these materials and consider the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials in the classroom. By doing so, teachers can effectively harness the benefits of authentic materials to improve students' reading skills and foster a genuine engagement with the material.

Using authentic texts can greatly improve students' reading comprehension. Authentic texts refer to real-world materials that are native to the target language, such as newspapers, magazines, books, websites, and videos.

Here are some ways to apply authentic texts in the classroom to enhance reading comprehension:

1. Start with graded authentic texts: Select authentic texts that are slightly above students' current reading level, but still attainable with some support. Gradually increase the difficulty level to challenge students and help them progress.

2. Pre-teach vocabulary: Before students read the text, pre-teach them essential vocabulary words or phrases that may be unfamiliar. This will provide them with the necessary tools to decode and understand the text more effectively.

3. Set a purpose for reading: Clearly define the objective for reading the text. Encourage students to actively engage with the text by asking them to answer comprehension questions, make predictions, or summarize the main idea.

4. Scaffold the reading process: Guide students through the reading process by providing them with graphic organizers, annotation tools, or summarization strategies. These tools will assist students in organizing their thoughts and understanding the text's main ideas.

5. Encourage critical thinking: Use authentic texts to stimulate critical thinking skills by incorporating activities that require students to analyze, evaluate, and infer information from the text. Engage students in discussions or debates related to the text's content to further develop their reading comprehension skills.

6. Provide opportunities for interaction: Encourage students to discuss the authentic text with their peers, either in pairs or small groups. This interaction allows them to share interpretations, clarify doubts, and deepen their understanding of the material.

7. Incorporate authentic assessments: Evaluate students' reading comprehension skills using authentic assessment methods, such as having students write a summary, create a presentation, or participate in a group project that requires the application of knowledge gained from the text.

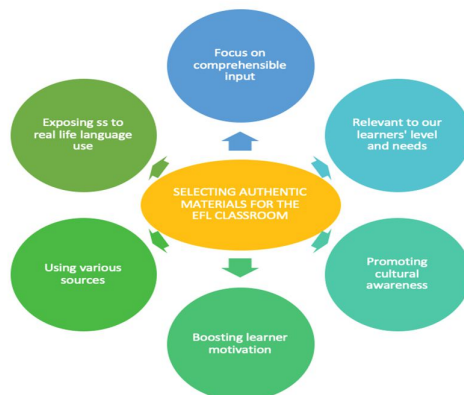
Theoretical Framework:

In contrast, there are a large number of publications on reading in a foreign language that point out the importance of authentic texts and the promotion of different forms of reading.

1. Working with authentic texts creates a connection to linguistic reality and corresponds to the meaning and purpose of foreign language teaching: to bring about productive encounters and intercultural exchange, to develop judgment skills and to reduce prejudices (Edelhoff, 1985, p.5).

Reading texts with appealing, interesting content can also be the basis for stimulating discussions in class, as the learners are ready to expand their vocabulary and formulate their personal opinions and values on the topic.

Authentic materials can be used to improve students' reading comprehension skills in various subjects. Examples of authentic materials that can be used in reading instruction include online articles, newspapers, magazines, journals, editorials, opinion pieces, essays, papers, textbooks, reference materials, business cards, letters, receipts, boat schedules, and phone books. Authentic materials should be the kind of material that students will need and want to be able to read when traveling, studying abroad, or using the language in other contexts outside the classroom. The internet is a useful resource for finding authentic materials, with large amounts of varied material being easily accessible. Authentic materials create interest and enthusiasm among students, allowing them to participate with more enthusiasm in reading. They expose students to real-world language usage, diverse text types, and cultural context, which are crucial for developing reading skills in a foreign language. However, challenges in selecting and utilizing authentic materials exist, such as defining the term 'authentic' and addressing students' language proficiency levels. To overcome these challenges, teachers need to plan thoughtful ways for students to interact with these materials and consider the advantages and disadvantages of using authentic materials in the classroom. By doing so, teachers can effectively harness the benefits of authentic materials to improve students' reading skills and foster a genuine engagement with the material.



The theoretical framework for applying authentic texts to improve students' reading comprehension skill is grounded in several key concepts and strategies, including:

Comprehension Strategy Instruction: This approach emphasizes the teaching of plans or sets of steps that good readers use to make sense text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful, active readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension. The seven strategies with research-based evidence for improving text comprehension include: activating background knowledge, predicting, questioning, visualizing, inferring, summarizing, and monitoring comprehension.

Metacognition: Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. Metacognition can be defined as “thinking about thinking.” Before reading, good readers might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and “fixing” any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they check their understanding of what they read.

Graphic Organizers: Graphic organizers illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text or using diagrams. They can help readers focus on concepts and how they are

related to other concepts. Graphic organizers help students read and understand textbooks and picture books.

Questioning: Questions can be effective because they: a) help students focus on important ideas, b) help students monitor their understanding, c) help students integrate new information with what they already know, d) help students clarify their thinking, and e) help students learn how to learn.

Cooperative Learning: Students work together to understand texts, helping each other learn and apply comprehension strategies. Teachers help students learn to work in groups and provide modeling of the comprehension strategies.

Explicit Instruction: Effective comprehension strategy instruction can be accomplished through explicit instruction, which involves teachers telling readers why and when they should use strategies, what strategies to use, and how to apply them. The steps of explicit instruction typically include direct explanation, teacher modeling (“thinking aloud”), guided practice, and application.

These strategies and concepts are based on research and provide a theoretical framework for using authentic texts to improve students' reading comprehension skills. By incorporating authentic texts into the curriculum and teaching students how to use comprehension strategies, metacognition, graphic organizers, questioning, and cooperative learning, teachers can help students become more proficient readers who are able to understand and analyze complex texts.

The use of authentic materials in language learning and teaching is based on several theoretical foundations. Here are some key theoretical frameworks that support the use of authentic materials:

1. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):** CLT emphasizes the importance of authentic language use in meaningful communication. It suggests that learners should be exposed to authentic language materials that reflect real-world language use, helping them develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively. Authentic materials provide learners with opportunities to encounter and understand different registers, genres, and language variations.

2. **Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories:** SLA theories, such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, recognize that language learning is most effective when learners are engaged in authentic and meaningful contexts. Authentic materials facilitate comprehensible input, which is crucial for language acquisition. They provide learners with opportunities to develop their receptive skills (listening and reading) and build their linguistic and cultural knowledge.

3. **Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT):** TBLT focuses on the use of authentic language tasks to facilitate language learning. Authentic materials are central to TBLT as they provide learners with meaningful and purposeful contexts to engage in communication. Authentic materials are used to create tasks that simulate real-life language use, promoting language production and enhancing learners' language proficiency and communicative competence.

4. **Sociocultural Theory:** Sociocultural theory, developed by Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in language learning. Authentic materials are integral to this theory as they expose learners to authentic language use within real cultural contexts, fostering social interaction, and promoting language development. By engaging with authentic materials, learners gain insight into cultural practices, values, and perspectives.

5. **Constructivism:** Constructivist theories of learning posit that individuals actively construct knowledge by engaging with the world around them. Authentic materials allow

learners to make connections between their prior knowledge and new information, facilitating the construction of meaning. They provide learners with opportunities to apply their existing knowledge, explore new concepts, and construct a deeper understanding of language and culture.

Overall, the use of authentic materials in language learning is supported by theories that highlight the importance of meaningful and contextually rich language use. Authentic materials provide learners with opportunities to engage with language in realistic and authentic contexts, promoting communication, linguistic development, cultural understanding, and overall language competence.

When applying Krashen's Input Hypothesis to the use of authentic texts to improve reading comprehension, educators can design reading activities that provide students with engaging and meaningful input in the form of authentic texts. By selecting authentic texts that are just above students' current reading proficiency, educators can create opportunities for students to encounter new vocabulary, sentence structures, and contextual information that promote language acquisition and reading comprehension.

Conclusion

Krashen's emphasis on the importance of meaningful and contextually relevant input aligns with the use of authentic texts, which inherently offer real-world content that is pertinent to students' lives and experiences. Furthermore, the Input Hypothesis underscores the value of exposure to language input that is interesting and engaging, which authentic texts are well-suited to provide. In summary, Krashen's Input Hypothesis offers a theoretical framework that supports the use of authentic texts to improve students' reading comprehension by emphasizing the significance of comprehensible and meaningful input in language acquisition and learning. Educators can leverage this framework to guide their selection and implementation of authentic reading materials that effectively support students' development of reading skills and comprehension.

Assessing existing textbooks and analyzing students' needs is a crucial step in effectively implementing authentic texts to improve students' reading comprehension. Here are some key considerations for this process:

1. Textbook Assessment:

- Evaluate the current textbooks and reading materials being used in the classroom. Consider factors such as content relevance, diversity of genres, cultural representation, readability, and alignment with curriculum standards.

- Identify strengths and limitations of the existing textbooks in fostering reading comprehension skills. This may involve reviewing the complexity of texts, vocabulary variety, and the presence of authentic, real-world content.

2. Student Needs Analysis:

- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of students' reading abilities, interests, and language proficiency levels. This may include standardized reading assessments, informal reading inventories, and observations of students' reading behaviors.

- Consider students' cultural backgrounds, prior experiences with different types of texts, and individual learning styles. Understanding these factors can help tailor the selection of authentic texts to better meet students' needs.

3. Content Alignment:

- Align the identified students' needs with the content and features of authentic texts. Look for texts that cater to diverse interests, address cultural representation, and offer a range of complexity levels to accommodate varying reading abilities.

- Consider the language proficiency levels of students and ensure that authentic texts provide opportunities for language growth while offering comprehensible input.

4. Genre and Text Type Analysis:

- Analyze the genres and types of authentic texts that students will find engaging and beneficial for their reading comprehension development. This may include narrative fiction, non-fiction, poetry, informational texts, and multimedia sources.

- Consider the diverse needs of students and provide a variety of authentic texts that appeal to different interests and learning preferences.

5. Feedback and Collaboration:

- Seek input from colleagues, reading specialists, and, when appropriate, students themselves regarding the selection of authentic texts. Collaboration can provide valuable insights and diverse perspectives on the suitability of texts for improving reading comprehension.

By conducting a thorough assessment of existing textbooks and analyzing students' needs, educators can make informed decisions about the integration of authentic texts to enhance students' reading comprehension. This process ensures that the selected authentic texts align with students' needs, interests, and language development, ultimately optimizing the effectiveness of the reading curriculum.

In conclusion, assessing existing textbooks and analyzing students' needs are critical preparatory steps for effectively incorporating authentic texts to improve students' reading comprehension. By carefully evaluating the current reading materials and gaining insight into students' individual abilities and preferences, educators can tailor their approach to selecting and implementing authentic texts in the following ways:

1. Enhanced Relevance: Through assessment, educators can identify areas where existing textbooks may lack relevance or inclusivity and can prioritize the selection of authentic texts that better represent students' diverse backgrounds and interests.

2. Targeted Support: Analyzing students' needs allows educators to address specific reading comprehension challenges by selecting authentic texts that cater to varying language proficiency levels, learning styles, and cultural experiences.

3. Diverse Engagement: By understanding students' interests and abilities, educators can curate a collection of authentic texts that encompass a wide range of genres, content types, and complexity levels, providing a more engaging and inclusive reading experience.

4. Informed Decision-Making: The assessment process empowers educators to make informed decisions about which authentic texts are best suited to address students' reading comprehension needs, promoting effective language acquisition and literacy development.

Overall, the thorough assessment of existing materials and students' needs sets the stage for the purposeful integration of authentic texts, maximizing their potential to enrich students' reading comprehension skills and foster a deeper, more meaningful engagement with the reading curriculum.

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ŞAGİRDŁƏRİN OXUDUĞUNU BAŞA DÜŞMƏLƏRİNİ YAXŞILAŞDIRMAQ ÜÇÜN ORİJİNAL MƏTNLƏRİN TƏTBİQİ

Ağayeva Cəvahir Qeys qızı
Xülasə

Oxumağı başa düşməyi öyrətmək üçün orijinal materiallardan istifadə dil təhsilində maraq doğuran mövzu olmuşdur. Bu tədqiqatın məqsədi orijinal materialların tələbələrin oxunu anlama bacarıqlarını nə dərəcədə artırdığını araşdırmaq idi. Nəticələr göstərdi ki, orijinal oxu materiallarının tətbiqi şagirdlərin oxuyub-anlama bacarıqlarını əhəmiyyətli dərəcədə yaxşılaşdırıb. Orijinal materiallar şagirdlərdə maraq və həvəs yaradır, onlara oxumaqda daha həvəslə iştirak etməyə imkan verir. Onlar tələbələrə xarici dildə oxu bacarıqlarını inkişaf etdirmək üçün çox vacib olan real dildən istifadə, müxtəlif mətn növləri və mədəni kontekstlə tanış olurlar. Bununla belə, orijinal materialların seçilməsi və istifadə edilməsində "orijinal" termininin müəyyən edilməsi və tələbələrin dil bilik səviyyələrinin müəyyən edilməsi kimi problemlər mövcuddur. Bu çətinliklərin öhdəsindən gəlmək üçün müəllimlər şagirdlərin bu materiallarla qarşılıqlı əlaqədə olmasının düşünülmüş yollarını planlaşdırmalı və sinifdə orijinal materiallardan istifadənin üstünlüklərini və mənfi cəhətlərini nəzərə almalıdırlar. Bununla müəllimlər şagirdlərin oxu bacarıqlarını təkmilləşdirmək və materialla həqiqi əlaqəni gücləndirmək üçün orijinal materialların üstünlüklərindən səmərəli şəkildə istifadə edə bilirlər.

ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ АУТЕНТИЧНЫХ ТЕКСТОВ ДЛЯ УЛУЧШЕНИЯ ПОНИМАНИЯ ПРОЧИТАННОГО УЧАЩИМИСЯ

Агаева Джавахир Гияс кызы
Резюме

Использование аутентичных материалов для обучения пониманию прочитанного было темой, представляющей интерес в языковом образовании. Целью данного исследования было выяснить, в какой степени аутентичные материалы улучшают навыки понимания прочитанного у учащихся. Результаты показали, что применение

аутентичных материалов для чтения значительно улучшило навыки понимания прочитанного у учащихся. Оригинальные материалы вызывают у учащихся интерес и энтузиазм, позволяя им с большим энтузиазмом участвовать в чтении. Они знакомят учащихся с реальным использованием языка, различными типами текста и культурным контекстом, которые имеют решающее значение для развития навыков чтения на иностранном языке. Однако существуют проблемы с выбором и использованием оригинальных материалов, например, с определением термина «оригинал» и определением уровня владения языком учащихся. Чтобы преодолеть эти проблемы, учителя должны планировать продуманные способы взаимодействия учащихся с этими материалами и учитывать преимущества и недостатки использования аутентичных материалов в классе. Поступая таким образом, учителя могут эффективно использовать аутентичные материалы, чтобы улучшить навыки чтения учащихся и способствовать подлинному взаимодействию с материалом.

Rəyçi: Minevvver Memmedova Firudin

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