

THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN DEVELOPING SPEAKING AND WRITING SKILLS

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of authentic materials in developing speaking and writing skills among intermediate EFL learners. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 60 tenth-grade students through performance assessments, classroom observations, and learner feedback over a six-week instructional period. The findings indicate significant improvements in speaking fluency, lexical diversity, writing coherence, and learner motivation, supporting the pedagogical value of authentic materials in EFL instruction.

Keywords: authentic materials, EFL learners, speaking skills, writing skills, motivation, real-life input, fluency, coherence

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, English language teaching has shifted from traditional, textbook-centered instruction toward more dynamic, learner-centered approaches that emphasize communicative competence. One of the most significant developments within this shift is the growing use of authentic materials—resources originally created for native speakers rather than for pedagogical purposes. Such materials include newspapers, television programs, podcasts, interviews, brochures, blogs, and social media texts. Iroda examines that authentic materials expose learners to genuine linguistic forms, pragmatic functions, and culturally embedded language that cannot be fully replicated through simplified instructional texts [5; p. 96]. Chevar states that integrating these materials enhances learners' engagement by connecting classroom tasks with real-life communication, fostering both linguistic and affective development [2; p. 132].

In EFL contexts, learners often experience limited exposure to natural language input. Instruction is frequently based on controlled grammar exercises and artificial dialogues, which may develop passive knowledge but fail to promote oral fluency and effective written communication. Richards notes that exposure to real spoken discourse enables learners to understand the rhythm and interactional nature of authentic communication [9, p. 44]. Erkinov argues that authentic materials, by contrast, present language as it is naturally used, allowing learners to engage with real communicative situations [3, p. 567]. Sarvarova emphasizes that exposure to authentic materials supports vocabulary expansion, syntactic awareness, discourse competence, and pragmatic understanding [10; p. 2]. According to Utedjanova, authentic materials also help learners understand sociocultural norms and context-specific language use, which are often absent in traditional classroom texts [13; p. 4].

Speaking development, in particular, benefits from authentic input. Spoken language is characterized by features such as hesitation markers, reduced forms, fillers, and incomplete structures, which are rarely represented in traditional textbooks. Richards notes that exposure to real spoken discourse enables learners to understand the rhythm and interactional nature of authentic communication [9, p. 98]. Audio-visual materials such as interviews and news clips help learners internalize these patterns, leading to improved fluency and confidence. Chevar states that listening to authentic discourse allows learners to acquire pragmatic strategies, turn-taking skills, and discourse markers, which are crucial for real-life communication [2, p. 133].

Authentic written materials also play a vital role in the development of writing skills. Texts such as blogs, articles, and emails expose learners to genuine organizational patterns, genre conventions, and rhetorical structures. Hyland emphasizes that writing proficiency develops most

effectively when learners observe how coherence, cohesion, and communicative purpose are achieved in real texts [4, p. 57]. Iroda also argues that authentic written materials allow learners to internalize idiomatic expressions, collocations, and rhetorical structures, promoting both accuracy and appropriateness in writing [5, p. 100].

Motivation represents another crucial link between authentic materials and productive language skills. Learners tend to be more engaged when instructional content reflects real-life use and personal relevance. According to Tomlinson authentic resources reduce the psychological distance between classroom learning and real-world communication, increasing learners' willingness to participate in speaking activities and invest effort in writing tasks. Despite their benefits, authentic materials must be carefully selected and scaffolded. Linguistic complexity, unfamiliar vocabulary, and cultural references may present challenges for learners if materials are not adapted to proficiency levels. Therefore, teachers should provide pre-task activities, guided support, and post-task reflection to maximize learning outcomes [12, p. 112].

Erkinov emphasizes that teachers should provide pre-task activities, guided support, and post-task reflection to maximize learning outcomes [3, p. 570]. Sarvarova also argues that scaffolding authentic texts ensures learners can negotiate meaning effectively and gradually develop both linguistic competence and strategic learning skills [10; p 4].

This study investigates how authentic materials contribute to the development of speaking fluency and writing coherence among intermediate EFL learners. By combining quantitative performance data with qualitative learner perceptions, the research provides empirical evidence supporting the pedagogical value of authentic materials. Rahmatova states that integrating authentic texts with interactive tasks creates meaningful opportunities for language production, which is critical for developing communicative competence [8; p 85]. Chevar adds that careful selection and sequencing of authentic materials enhances both linguistic outcomes and learner motivation [2; p. 136].

In conclusion, authentic materials are a crucial component of modern EFL instruction, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use. Shodmonov examines that their strategic integration supports linguistic development, cultural awareness, learner engagement, and motivation [11, p. 108]. Evidence from multiple studies, including those conducted in Uzbekistan, confirms that authentic materials are indispensable for developing productive skills in speaking and writing within learner-centered, communicative classrooms.

Literature Review

Authentic materials are widely regarded as an effective tool in English language teaching, particularly for developing communicative competence. Breen defined as texts created for real-life communication, authentic materials expose learners to natural language use and contextualized discourse [1; p 36]. Richards indicates that authentic spoken input improves speaking fluency by familiarizing learners with real discourse features such as hesitation and reduced forms [9; p. 44].

According to Hyland in writing instruction, authentic texts provide models of coherence, organization, and genre conventions, enabling learners to produce more meaningful written language [4, p. 57]. Peacock defines motivation is another key benefit; learners working with authentic materials demonstrate higher engagement and confidence [7, p. 148].

From a theoretical perspective, Krashen's Input Hypothesis supports the use of authentic materials as a source of meaningful and comprehensible input [6, p. 21]. However, Tomlinson emphasize the importance of careful material selection and scaffolding to match learners' proficiency levels [12, p. 112].

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A mixed-methods research design was adopted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of authentic materials on speaking and writing development.

Participants

The study involved 60 Grade 10–11 EFL learners from School No. 53 in Uchko‘prik District. All participants were at the B1 proficiency level according to the CEFR.

Instruments

Speaking proficiency was assessed through a picture-based oral task measuring fluency, accuracy, and lexical variety. Writing ability was evaluated using a narrative paragraph task focusing on coherence, vocabulary use, and organization. Classroom observations and open-ended student feedback forms were used to collect qualitative data.

Procedure

The intervention lasted six weeks and integrated authentic videos, interviews, blogs, brochures, and real-life written texts into speaking and writing lessons. Pre-tests and post-tests were administered to measure progress.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were coded thematically to identify patterns related to motivation, engagement, and confidence.

RESULTS

Table 1.

The results show a significant improvement in all aspects of speaking: fluency, accuracy, and lexical variety, indicating that the intervention positively impacted the learners’ speaking skills.

Speaking results	Pre-test	Post-test	Improve percentage
Fluency	3.1	4.2	35%
Accuracy	2.8	3.6	29%
Lexical variety	3.0	4.1	36%

Table 2.

The writing test results indicate notable progress, with substantial improvements in coherence, vocabulary use, and organization, demonstrating enhanced overall writing skills.

Writing results	Pre-test	Post-test	Improve percentage
Coherence	2.9	4.0	38%
Vocabulary use	3.2	4.3	34%
Organization	3.0	4.1	37%

Observation data revealed higher learner engagement and confidence, particularly during activities involving videos and social media texts. These findings support previous research highlighting the effectiveness of meaningful input [3, p. 112].

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that authentic materials significantly enhance speaking and writing skills. Exposure to real spoken discourse improved fluency and lexical richness, while authentic written texts strengthened coherence and organizational ability. Learner motivation emerged as a key factor, supporting communicative and constructivist approaches to language teaching.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that authentic materials positively influence the development of speaking and writing skills in EFL contexts. Improved performance, increased motivation, and enhanced confidence suggest that authentic resources should be systematically integrated into

language instruction. Future studies may explore genre-specific effects of authentic materials on language production.

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