

Shirak State Pedagogical University after M. Nalbandyan

## **Research Work**

# **Theme- The use of authentic materials for teaching vocabulary**

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# Introduction

Authentic materials are resources created for and used by native speakers in real-life contexts. They encompass a wide array of materials such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, movies, songs, social media posts, podcasts, interviews, and more. Unlike traditional instructional materials specifically designed for language learners, authentic materials present learners with genuine language use as it occurs naturally in the target language. Their relevance in language teaching stems from the rich and contextualized language input they provide, contributing to enhanced linguistic and cultural proficiency.

Relevance of Authentic Materials in Language Teaching:

1. **Real-world Language Use:** Authentic materials expose learners to the actual language used by native speakers in authentic situations. This exposure offers insights into idiomatic expressions, colloquial language, and language variations that might not be covered in formal language resources.
2. **Cultural Understanding:** Authentic materials often reflect the cultural nuances and references of the language being learned. They provide learners with a deeper understanding of cultural contexts, customs, and societal norms that are embedded within language use.
3. **Motivation and Engagement:** Authentic materials are inherently engaging due to their connection to real-life contexts and popular culture. This engagement can increase learners' motivation to interact with the materials, leading to more active participation and improved learning outcomes.
4. **Contextual Learning:** Authentic materials provide learners with context-rich language input. This context aids comprehension and facilitates the acquisition of new vocabulary and grammatical structures, as learners can infer meaning from the surrounding content.
5. **Language Variation:** Authentic materials expose learners to different registers, accents, and dialects. This exposure helps learners become more versatile in their language use and better equipped to understand speakers from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

6. **Critical Thinking and Analysis:** When engaging with authentic materials, learners often need to infer meaning, analyze language structures, and draw conclusions from the content. This promotes critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of language nuances.

7. **Preparation for Real-life Communication:** Authentic materials provide learners with the language tools needed for real-world communication. Exposure to authentic language use prepares learners to interact effectively in various situations, such as travel, work, or social interactions.

8. **Lifelong Learning:** Proficiency gained through exposure to authentic materials tends to be longer-lasting. Learners equipped with skills to navigate real language contexts are better positioned for continuous learning beyond the classroom.

9. **Enhanced Listening Skills:** Authentic materials challenge learners' listening skills by presenting natural speech patterns, including rapid speech, pauses, and intonations. This exposure contributes to improved listening comprehension.

10. **Multimodal Learning:** Authentic materials often combine visual, auditory, and textual elements, catering to diverse learning styles and promoting a deeper understanding of the content.

Incorporating authentic materials into language teaching acknowledges the dynamic nature of language and fosters a holistic learning experience. While their use requires careful selection and adaptation to learners' proficiency levels, authentic materials offer a pathway to language proficiency that aligns closely with real-life language use.

The aims of choosing the theme of the research work:

1. Personal Interest and Passion
2. Practical Relevance
3. Exploration and Curiosity
4. Personal professional Growth

# Literature Review

Language acquisition theories emphasize the centrality of vocabulary. Krashen's Input Hypothesis underscores the importance of comprehensible input, while Vygotsky's Interactionist Theories highlight the role of interaction in learning. Usage-based theories stress exposure to language in context. Existing studies by Chu (2009), Peacock (1997), and Tomlinson (2012) provide insights into the positive impact of authentic materials on language learning outcomes.

# Methodology

Teaching vocabulary authentically involves using methods that reflect real-world language use and contexts. Here are some authentic methods for teaching vocabulary:

## 1. Contextualization in Real Situations:

- Scenario-Based Learning: Present vocabulary in real-life scenarios. For example, simulate a visit to a foreign country and teach vocabulary related to transportation, shopping, and ordering food.
- Role-Playing: Encourage students to act out real-life situations where they use vocabulary naturally. This could include scenarios like booking a hotel room or making a doctor's appointment.

## 2. Reading and Literature:

- Extensive Reading: Provide authentic texts such as novels, newspapers, or magazines that match students' proficiency levels. Encourage them to read extensively and underline unfamiliar words for discussion.
- Book Clubs: Organize book clubs where students read authentic books and discuss vocabulary, themes, and character development.

## 3. Audiovisual Materials:

- Movies and TV Shows: Show clips or episodes with subtitles. Discuss vocabulary and idiomatic expressions used in different contexts.
- Podcasts and Radio Programs: Listen to authentic audio materials, discuss the content, and explore vocabulary used in conversations or interviews.

## 4. Realia and Authentic Objects:

- Real-World Objects: Bring authentic objects into the classroom, like a map, a clock, or a menu. Teach vocabulary in context by having students interact with these objects.

- Artifacts: Study cultural artifacts, historical documents, or art pieces to explore language in cultural and historical contexts.

**5. Conversation and Interaction:**

- Authentic Dialogues: Engage students in authentic dialogues or interviews with native speakers. Encourage them to ask questions and respond naturally.
- Group Discussions: Create opportunities for students to discuss current events, personal experiences, or cultural topics using newly learned vocabulary.

**6. Language Exchange and Interaction with Native Speakers:**

- Tandem Learning: Pair students with native speakers for language exchange. This exposes them to authentic language use and encourages communication in real contexts.

**7. Project-Based Learning:**

- Research Projects: Assign projects that require students to research a topic of interest, present their findings, and use vocabulary in real presentations.

**8. Vocabulary Journals:**

- Word Journals: Have students maintain word journals where they record new vocabulary, their meanings, and example sentences from authentic materials.

**9. Games and Puzzles:**

- Word Games: Use crossword puzzles, word searches, and word association games with authentic vocabulary. This makes learning interactive and enjoyable.

**10. Feedback and Self-Assessment:**

- Peer Feedback: Encourage students to provide feedback on each other's language use, including vocabulary choice and usage.
- Self-Assessment: Teach students how to assess their own vocabulary growth by keeping track of new words they encounter and use.

**11. Cultural Exploration:**

- Cultural Studies: Explore vocabulary in the context of cultural studies, helping students understand language nuances tied to culture.

**12. Field Trips:**

- Museum Visits: Organize field trips to museums or cultural exhibitions where students can interact with authentic materials and learn relevant vocabulary.

**13. Authentic Writing:**

- Email Correspondence: Encourage students to write emails or letters to native speakers, incorporating newly learned vocabulary.
- Blogging: Have students write blogs or online posts about their experiences or interests, using authentic language.

**14. Real-World Tasks:**

- Shopping: Use shopping lists and receipts to teach vocabulary related to groceries and daily essentials.
- Cooking: Incorporate vocabulary related to recipes and cooking techniques by preparing authentic dishes from various cuisines.

Incorporating these authentic methods into your vocabulary teaching can make the learning experience more engaging and relevant for your students. Authenticity in teaching helps learners connect language to real-life situations and encourages them to use vocabulary confidently and naturally.

The process of research work

I experienced my research in different grades using the following authentic methods and techniques in teaching vocabulary. I would like to introduce them beneath.



1. Using videos as a teaching tool in English language instruction can be highly effective, engaging, and versatile, especially for teaching vocabulary. Here are several strategies and considerations for effectively incorporating videos into my English vocabulary lessons.

### *1. Selecting Appropriate Videos:*

- **Content Relevance:** I Chose videos that aligned with the vocabulary I wanted to teach. The video's content should contain target words and phrases naturally.
- **Engaging Content:** Opt for videos with engaging and relevant content. This could include movie clips, TED Talks, news reports, or educational animations.
- **Varying Lengths:** Select videos of different lengths to match the time available for your lesson. Short clips can be used for quick vocabulary reinforcement, while longer videos allow for more in-depth exploration.

### *2. Preparing Pre-Viewing Activities:*

- **Vocabulary Preview:** I Provided students with a list of vocabulary words they would encounter in the video. Discussed their meanings and encourage predictions about how they might be used in the video.
- **Prediction Tasks:** I Had students make predictions about the video's content based on the title, thumbnail, or a brief description. This activates their prior knowledge and prepares them for what they will see and hear.

### *3. Viewing the Video:*

- **Active Viewing:** While watching the video, I instructed students to actively listen for and identify the target vocabulary words. I Encouraged them to focus on pronunciation, context, and how the words were used.
- **Subtitles and Closed Captions:** If available, I used subtitles or closed captions. This helped students see the written form of words while hearing them spoken, reinforcing both listening and reading skills.

### *4. Post-Viewing Activities:*

- **Vocabulary Extraction:** After watching, I had students identify and list the target vocabulary words they had encountered in the video.
- **Contextual Usage:** I Discussed how each vocabulary word was used in context within the video. I Encouraged students to provide sentences or examples of their own.
- **Discussion and Reflection:** I Engaged students in discussions about the video's content, encouraging them to use the newly acquired vocabulary to express their opinions and thoughts.

#### *5. Vocabulary Games:*

- **Word Search:** I Created a word search puzzle using the vocabulary words from the video. Students could compete to find and circle the words.
- **Vocabulary Bingo:** I Developed bingo cards with the target words. We played a game where students marked the words as they heard them in the video.

#### *6. Reflection:*

- **Feedback and Discussion:** After the video-based lesson, I discussed with students their experiences, challenges, and what they found most useful in terms of vocabulary acquisition.
- **Self-Reflection:** I Encouraged students to reflect on how watching videos impacted their vocabulary learning and language skills.

Another method was carried out by me in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, i.e. teaching vocabulary using songs.

Teaching vocabulary with songs is an engaging and memorable way to reinforce language skills. Here's an example of how you can teach vocabulary using a song:

**Objective:** To teach vocabulary related to emotions using the song "Can't Stop the Feeling" by Justin Timberlake.

#### **1. Pre-Listening Activities:**

- **Introduction:** I began by introducing the topic of emotions. I wrote a list of common emotions on the board (happy, sad, excited, etc.) and discussed each one briefly.

- **Vocabulary Preview:** Then I provided students with a handout that included the lyrics of the song with some vocabulary words blanked out. For example:

"I got this feeling inside my \_\_\_\_\_ (heart).

It goes electric when I turn it \_\_\_\_\_ (on).

And if you want it inside your \_\_\_\_\_ (soul),"

- **Prediction:** I asked students to predict what the song might be about based on the title and the vocabulary they saw in the blank spaces. I encouraged them to share their ideas with a partner.

## 2. Listening to the Song:

- The next step was to play the song "Can't Stop the Feeling" by Justin Timberlake for the class.
- I instructed students to listen actively and try to fill in the blanks with the appropriate vocabulary words as they heard them in the song.

## 3. Post-Listening Activities:

- **Lyrics Check:** After listening, had students compare their filled-in lyrics with a partner to check for accuracy.
- **Vocabulary Discussion:** I led a class discussion about the vocabulary words they filled in. I asked questions like: "What do these words mean in the context of the song?" and "How do these words relate to emotions?"
- **Emotion Chart:** I Created an emotion chart on the board with various emotions listed. As a class, identified which emotions were expressed in the song. For example, "happy," "excited," "good," etc.
- **Emotion Matching:** I prepared a set of emotion cards with words and corresponding facial expressions. I had students match the words to the correct expressions.

#### 4. Vocabulary Extension:

- **Discussion:** I Encouraged students to share their personal experiences related to the emotions mentioned in the song. They could discuss moments in their lives when they felt "happy," "excited," or any other emotion from the song.
- **Creative Writing:** I Asked students to write short stories or paragraphs using some of the newly acquired vocabulary words. For example, they wrote about a time when they felt "on top of the world" or "alive."
- **Song Analysis:** I Discussed the overall message and mood of the song and analyzed how the artist used music and lyrics to convey emotions.

By teaching vocabulary with songs, we not only help students acquire new words but also provide a memorable and enjoyable learning experience. Using music as a teaching tool allows students to connect emotionally with the language, making the vocabulary more meaningful and memorable.

Another authentic method of teaching vocabulary are blogs.

Using blogs as a means of teaching vocabulary can be a dynamic and effective approach, especially in the digital age where online content is readily available. Here's how I utilized blogs to teach vocabulary:

##### 1. Blog Selection:

- **Choose Relevant Blogs:** I selected blogs that aligned with my teaching goals and the vocabulary I wanted to teach. Blogs can cover a wide range of topics, so I picked ones that resonated with my students' interests and proficiency levels.

##### 2. Pre-Blog Activities:

- **Introduction to the Topic:** Introduce the topic of the blog post and the vocabulary that will be encountered. Provide context and background information to prepare students for reading.

- **Prediction:** Encourage students to predict what the blog post might be about based on the title and any introductory information. This activates their prior knowledge and sets a purpose for reading.

### 3. Blog Reading:

- **Active Reading:** Instruct students to actively read the blog post. As they encounter new vocabulary words, they should underline or highlight them.
- **Comprehension Questions:** After reading the blog post, ask comprehension questions to ensure students understood the content. These questions can include vocabulary-related queries, encouraging students to use the newly learned words.

### 4. Vocabulary Exploration:

- **Word Definitions:** Have students look up the definitions of the new vocabulary words they encountered in the blog post. Encourage them to use dictionaries or online resources for this purpose.
- **Contextual Usage:** Discuss how each vocabulary word was used in the blog post. Ask students to provide sentences of their own using the words in context.

### 5. Vocabulary Practice:

- **Vocabulary Quizzes:** Create vocabulary quizzes or exercises based on the words from the blog post. Include fill-in-the-blank sentences, synonym and antonym questions, or multiple-choice questions.
- **Word Maps:** Ask students to create word maps or vocabulary cards for the new words. These can include definitions, example sentences, synonyms, antonyms, and illustrations.

### 6. Blog Response:

- **Blog Comments:** Encourage students to write thoughtful comments on the blog post, using the new vocabulary they've learned. This allows them to practice using the words in authentic writing.

## 7. Creative Writing:

- **Blogging Assignment:** Have students create their own blog posts on a related topic, incorporating the newly learned vocabulary. This reinforces their understanding and application of the words.

## 8. Peer Interaction:

- **Peer Feedback:** Encourage students to exchange their blog posts and provide feedback on vocabulary usage, writing style, and overall content.

## 9. Discussion:

- **Class Discussion:** Facilitate a class discussion about the blog post's content, encouraging students to use the newly acquired vocabulary to express their opinions and thoughts.

## 10. Blog Portfolio:

- **Compile a Blog Portfolio:** Over time, have students compile a portfolio of blog posts they've read and written, categorizing them by vocabulary themes. This serves as a valuable resource for vocabulary review.

## 11. Reflect and Review:

- **Reflective Writing:** Ask students to write reflections on what they've learned from reading and interacting with blogs. They can discuss how their vocabulary has improved and share their favorite blog posts.

Using blogs to teach vocabulary offers the advantage of exposing students to authentic, contemporary language use. It also allows for flexibility in choosing topics and content that resonate with your students, making vocabulary learning more engaging and relevant. Additionally, incorporating technology and digital literacy skills can be an added benefit.

## Conclusion

In this study, we have explored the effectiveness of using authentic materials in teaching vocabulary to learners. The use of authentic materials has sparked interest and curiosity among students, fostering a deeper connection to the language learning process. This research has made a compelling case for the integration of authentic materials in teaching vocabulary to learners. The evidence presented here supports the notion that authentic materials not only enhance vocabulary acquisition but also contribute to learners' overall language proficiency and cultural awareness. I hope that these findings will encourage learners and curriculum developers to embrace the use of authentic materials as a valuable teaching tool.

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