

## AUTHENTIC MATERIALS AS A MEDIA FOR TEACHING VOCABULARY

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### ABSTRAK

Permasalahan yang terjadi dalam proses pengajaran bahasa Inggris tidak hanya dihadapi oleh siswa tetapi juga oleh guru. Sebagai contoh: siswa kebanyakan menemui kesulitan dalam penguasaan kosakata atau vocabulary. Sedangkan dari pihak guru, permasalahannya adalah guru tidak memiliki kreatifitas yang cukup dalam menyusun materi pembelajaran yang lebih menantang daya pikir siswa, sehingga mereka hanya mengandalkan penggunaan buku teks dan atau LKS saja. Teks otentik atau materi-materi otentik lainnya diciptakan untuk memenuhi beberapa tujuan sosial dalam komunitas bahasa dimana teks atau materi-materi otentik tersebut dibuat. Penggunaan teks otentik dari sisi bahasa tulis maupun bahasa lisan dapat membantu menjembatani persoalan antara pengetahuan yang didapat siswa selama KBM di kelas, dengan kapasitas mereka dalam berpraktik di situasi kehidupan nyata.

**Kata kunci:** *authentic material, vocabulary teaching.*

### ABSTRACT

Problems that happened in English teaching learning activities not only faced by the students, but also by the teacher. For example, most of the students have difficulties in mastering vocabulary. While the teacher has lack of creativities in conducting the teaching instruments, which is challenging for the students, so they do not only depend on the text book and or the worksheets. Authentic text is created to fulfill some social purposes in language community in which the authentic text has been made. The use of authentic text in the written or spoken language could bridge the gap between the students' problems during the teaching learning activities at the class, and their capacity in practicing their skills in the real life.

**Key words:** *authentic material, vocabulary teaching.*

### INTRODUCTION

English is a compulsory subject that has been learned by the students in Indonesia, as a means of developing the field of science, technology, arts and culture. The goal of teaching English must be directed to the function of English as a medium of communication. The students sometimes find some problems in using English as a means of communication. The problems arise because they have limited vocabulary, feel bored with the teacher or may be the students do not like the subject, in this case English subject. A good English learner should master the four

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skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) intergratedly. (Sukarno, 2000:1) states that the weaknesses on one of the skills will influence the ability of using other skills. Sukarno also states that, if our listening skill is not good because we lack listening to the spoken English, especially produced by the native speakers of English — it will automatically influence our speaking skill. It can be said that, the four skills of English are related one another.

Many authors have asserted that authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation in the foreign language classroom. A large number of teachers claim that authentic materials increase the learners' motivation in English Foreign Language classroom. Many EFL teachers certainly have faith in authentic materials as motivators. Melvin and Stout as quoted in Rivers (1987:45) define authentic materials as materials which give students direct access to the culture and help them use the new language in real application. It means that the students could learn the language used contextually from authentic materials. Peacock (1997:144) emphasizes that many writers claim that authentic materials motivate learners so they are intrinsically more interesting or stimulating than article non-authentic materials. In addition, Alwright (1979:45); Freeman and Holden (1986:67); Little and Singleton (1989:124) as quoted in Peacock (1997:144) state that authentic texts bring learner closer to the target language culture making learning more enjoyable. It can be said that authentic materials can make the students learn the target language easily in more enjoyable situation in the teaching learning process.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Authentic Materials**

Rivers (1987:44) is explaining about the importance of using authentic materials for foreign students of English suggest the teachers to provide their students with such materials. Rivers defines authentic materials as materials which give students direct access to the culture and help them use the new language authentically themselves, which means that the content of the authentic materials should be related to students' daily activities.

According to Little *et al.* as quoted by Guariento and Morley (2001:347), authentic text is one created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced. As described by Wilkins (1976:79), as quoted in Guariento and Morley, the use of authentic texts, embracing both the written and spoken words, is helping to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and the students' capacity to participate in real world events.

It is stated that with the onset of the communicative movement, a greater awareness of the need to develop the students' skill for the real world has meant that teachers endeavor to simulate the world in the classroom, in the expectation that exposing students to the language of the real world will help them acquire an effective respective competence in the target language. It is implied that authentic materials can be used as a tool to use the language in real communication.

In addition, Shepherd (2009) states that using authentic material is relatively easy and convenient way of improving not only the students' general skills, but also their confidence in a real situation. Further he states that a key skill when working with authentic material is dealing with unknown language, in particularly vocabulary. In this case, the authentic materials is used as materials to help the students to increase their vocabulary, beside to be a bridge which help them share or express their ability in the target language when working with the authentic materials to participate in English class activity.

### **The Characteristics of Good Authentic Materials**

1. Original

Original here means the text authenticity. Rueckert (2006) argues that authentic materials are materials that can be used in the classroom that have not been change in any way for ESL students. It means that the teacher should try to keep it as original as possible in the teaching learning activity. However, the text should have its authenticity to get close between the students and the real world to bridge the gap between the classroom knowledge and the students capacity to participate in the real world events (Wilkins, as quoted in Guariento and Morley (2001:347).

2. The Authenticity of a Genuine Purpose

Willis (1996) as quoted in Guariento and Morley (2001) states that in the tasks of authentic materials, the emphasis should primarily be on meaning and communication and this is something which replicates the process of communication in the real world. Further, Willis confirms that the students have the chance to interact naturally in real time, to achieve the communicative goal, which will be far more likely to lead to increase the fluency and the natural acquisition. It can be said that the purpose of the tasks is to help the students to communicate naturally in the real world and to help the students to increase the fluency and natural acquisition through the new vocabulary from the tasks.

3. The Authenticity Through the Real World Targets

Long and Crookes (1992) as quoted in Guariento and Morley (2001) argue that pedagogic tasks must relate to the real world target tasks. They give some example, such as; buying a train ticket, renting an apartment, reporting a chemistry experiment, taking lecturer notes and so forth. The target tasks are identified following a needs analysis of the tasks which the learners are preparing to undertake. It can be said that tasks might be authentic if it has a clear relationship with the real world needs.

4. Interesting

The authentic materials should be interesting because it should be able to arouse the students' interest to the teaching learning process. It becomes interesting because authentic materials always bring the students to the real

world events. Melvin and Stout, as quoted in Rivers, (1987:55) state that the students who work with authentic materials have an interest in the language that is based on what they know it can do for them. Thus, it can be said that the language used in authentic materials can arouse the students' interest in learning English, especially in learning vocabulary as they know they could work with it when they converse about daily activities.

5. Motivating

Peacock (1997:144) reviewing about the effects of authentic materials concludes that many author have asserted that authentic materials have a positive effect on learner motivation in the foreign language classroom. From the statement above we can say that authentic materials could be a good motivator for the students to learn English as a foreign language, in order to get more information from the text, especially to enlarge their vocabulary, as we all know that vocabulary is one of the most essential elements that should be mastered in foreign language learning. The students can get a lot of new vocabulary from the authentic texts given to them, and it was expected that after they have learned the meaning of the words, they could use it in their communication in or outside the classroom correctly and confidently.

6. Useful

Many authentic materials are useful for the students in any level. Wilkins, as quoted in Guariento and Morley (2001:347), confirms that authentic text embracing both the written and spoken word, is helping to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and a students 'capacity to participate in real world events. It means that authentic materials as the bridge which help the students express or practice what they have got from authentic materials with their ability and their knowledge in the classroom activity. Authentic materials are necessary to be given to the students since they contain a lot of information about the real life event. Moreover, authentic materials are part of the real communication in the real life. In other words, authentic materials have tight connections with the real world and cannot be separated from one's daily activities which required a lot of communication exchange.

### **The Sources of Authentic Materials**

There were various kinds of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom, such as:

1. Newspapers

Most people are familiar with the newspapers. They read either for getting information, as a guiding entertainment or just killing the time which are done at home, at the office, or even when they have traffic jam or everywhere they are. According to The World Book Encyclopedia (1966:668-669), newspaper is a marvel of editorial skills, mechanical ingenuity and business organization. Newspapers are printed publication, issued daily or

weekly, with news, advertisement, and so forth (Oxford Dictionary, 1980:278). Newspapers contain a lot of information and source so it can give the readers news, advertisement, and articles on various subjects. Thus, in English classes the teacher can use the newspaper as authentic materials with real news in it, in the hope that the students will be provided with the real use of English in the newspaper articles, advertisement, headlines and many more. The students can enjoy reading the newspaper so they know what happen in the real world.

## 2. Magazines

According to The World Book Encyclopedia (1966:27-28), a magazine is a publication, issued at regular intervals that provides information and entertainment. Weekly or monthly magazine is illustrated with stories, articles by various writers. It means that magazines can make students learn science or knowledge, because magazine has function as a source in teaching English. Magazine has a different appearance from that of newspaper. Magazines have a special designed front covers carrying a large photograph. Besides, magazines are printed on better paper than newspaper. Hello Magazine, Newsweek, Asiaweek, were some magazines that present the English subject that can be used as the media in the teaching learning process.

## 3. Cooking Recipes and Manual Directions

Cooking recipes and manual directions also belong to authentic materials, because they are closely related to our daily life activity. We can define the cooking recipes as the direction to make or to prepare some food. Meanwhile, manual directions are the act of directing or an authoritative command for doing, operating, using or preparing something. Cooking recipes and manual directions contain ingredient or utilities and procedures to follow to make us working in the right way or in the right steps. Little *et.al*, as quoted in Guariento and Morley (1988:27), state that an authentic text is one created to fulfill some social purposes in the language community in which it was produced. In addition, Connie Chow (2009) states that cooking recipes are useful to teach authentic language use and provide hands-on experience, catering for learners with different intelligence profiles, namely bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal talents. It also opens avenues to cross-discipline cooperation between EFL and home science. An added benefit is cultural awareness of western styled food and meal.

## 4. The Internet

Berardo (2006:1) states that anything can be used as authentic materials. The internet can be used to provide authentic material as well. The teacher can search for web sites that focus on a specific topic, make questions, manual, directions and so forth. With the advanced of the world wide Web, teachers have at their disposal large amounts of texts, articles, newspaper, magazine, and so many more. In addition, Internet as a wide modern source

is very helpful both for the teachers and the students. It was easier to access among many different types of authentic materials resources as long as the contents available and suitable with the students' understanding.

### **The Classifications of Vocabulary**

Hatch and Brown (1995:218) classify words into four classes, they are:

1. Nouns
2. Verbs
3. Adjectives
4. Adverbs.

### **Teaching Vocabulary**

According to Haycraft (1986:44) there are many ways of presenting new vocabulary, for the students. Some of the ways will be describe briefly as follows:

1. In Context  
If the word occurs in a text or passage, the meaning can often be deduced when the other words in the sentence are already known.  
Example: ... *fall from the trees in autumn*  
*A young cow is a ...*  
This deductive process applies particularly to use of reading passages or stories, whether taped, read or told.
2. Descriptions or Definition  
We can also describe or define the word from the passage.  
Example: *Lawn* is an area of grass in a garden
3. Mime  
Mime is useful for actions: *eating, drinking* etc. It can also involve the objects connected with verbs: *drinking coffee, eating a sandwich* etc.
4. Opposites  
A word can be defined if the students know its opposite.  
Example: *a brave man isn't afraid, an ugly girl isn't pretty*, etc.
5. Synonyms  
We can use synonym to teach vocabulary to the students. The students have to choose the alternative words which have closest meaning to the word.  
Example: *gleam*     *a. gather*     *b. shine*     *c. welcome*     *d. clean*
6. Translation  
It would be much simpler to translate the word from the passage into the students' first language. We have to exemplify the word in context in order the students do not forget easily.

### **Authentic Materials in English Teaching Learning**

Spelleri (2002) argues that ESL learners like authentic materials. Authentic materials have a big interest value because of their relevance and because there are

at least three layers of learning embedded within them: language learning (structure and vocabulary), cultural insight and practical application (using authentic materials in the way it was intended). She also states that authentic materials are unedited and remain unsimplified in any way. The authentic materials require the teacher to act as a filter, releasing the language in manageable quantities, raising or lowering the filter as needed and ensuring the comprehensibility of the materials through the selection of the learning objective, the task to be accomplished and the way the material is approached.

According to Kelly *et al*, (2002) their experience have shown that having students work in pairs is a better approach because they tend to be more enthusiastic and work harder. The teacher gives each pair of the students the authentic material and the question handout. After the authentic material has been distributed, the teacher gives explanation and point out.

Further he says that interestingly, student with the strong commands of English is not necessarily the one who is able to extract the most information from the materials. Students of different abilities tend to complement one another; they tend to contribute the individual strength to the completion of the tasks.

According to the explanation above, it was clear that authentic materials can make the students participate actively in the classroom activity. In this research, authentic material in the form of recipes has been consulted with the English teacher to be used as the teaching materials to be taught to the students, since it was included in the 2006 School-Based Curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above it is suggested to the English teacher to use authentic materials as alternative materials to improve the students' vocabulary achievement since it is useful to arouse the students' interest and motivation in learning and mastering vocabulary. The students are suggested as well to be familiarized to the authentic materials since they could increase the storage of vocabulary, as well as their general knowledge by relating their experience to what they get in classroom activity and the real life situation.

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