



MOTIVATE SECOND YEAR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS IN LISTENING CLASSES THROUGH AURAL AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

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Abstract:

This paper is devoted to examining the effects of aural authentic materials to motivate second year English major students in listening classes at Hung Yen university of Technology and Education. 25 majored English students are invited to experience aural authentic materials applied in the listening class and they also are assigned to choose their own favorite aural authentic input to practice at home. The data from interview, observation and weekly reflection of what they self practiced were collected to be analyzed and then be presented in this paper. From that, the pedagogical implications are discussed to help the instructors and students implement aural authentic input effectively inside and outside the classroom.

Keywords: aural authentic material, motivation, listening skill.

INTRODUCTION

Listening ability plays a crucial role to receive messages in the communication process and to develop other language skills. With the experience of 7 years teaching English at Hung Yen University of Technology and Education (UTEHY), the author finds that the listening materials are limited and out of date. Teachers often use the textbook published outside their own countries with inadequate numbers. Each book has 2 or 3 CDs enclosed that are the main resources to practice at class. In some cases, because of lacking CDs, teachers may pretend as the native speakers in teaching listening. They may read the text and interactively try to communicate with their students. However, there are some bizarre dialects of English which cannot be practiced or pronounced well by the teachers. As a result, when students work with the real aural texts, they do not understand and get the messages from the speakers. More and more attention has been given to utilizing authentic materials to solve this problem. The purpose of that research paper is to find the answer for two following questions:

- What are the effects of authentic materials on learners' motivation in listening?
- What types of learning strategies are regularly employed by learners while exposing to authentic materials in the classroom?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of authentic materials

For many researchers, authenticity is very significant, because it prepares the learners for the real world situations in terms of using the target language. On the other hand, using less authentic

materials with our learners, may lead to less practice in the real world. According to Tatsuki (2006) "authenticity, is taken as being synonymous with genuineness, realness, truthfulness, validity, reliability... of materials."

Gebhard (1996) as cited in Lingzhu and Yuanyuan (2010) explains that authentic material should be classified into three categories which are defined according to each type of material:

1. Authentic listening viewing materials: TV commercials, quiz show, cartoons, news clips, comedy shows, movies, soap operas ...
2. Authentic printed materials: newspaper, articles, movies, advertisements, sport reports, lyrics to songs, restaurant menus, street signs....
3. Authentic visual materials: slides, photographs, paintings, children's artwork, wordless street signs, pictures from magazine, postcard pictures, stamps...

Definition of motivation

Woolfolk at al. (2008) define motivation as "an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behavior." (p.438). Such a state is possibly reached when the listener of the music becomes interested in the context of the materials and takes a deep into it, which often requires learning the language features such as words, a possible variety of their definitions and pronunciation, idioms and grammar.

Many theories focus on either intrinsic or extrinsic nature of motivation (Harlen, 2012; Woolfolk at al., 2008). While intrinsic motivation is linked to curious, interests developed by the person, and the joy that the person experiences when she or he performs an action in order to achieve the

goal; extrinsic motivation is known as behavioral or instrumental arising from the expectations of external rewards when pursuing the goal.

The relationship between aural authentic materials and motivation

According to Dörnyei (2001), to generate learners' initial motivation, teachers have to enhance the learners' language-related values. The values can be classified into three types: intrinsic value, integrative value and instrumental value. Aural authentic materials are beneficial for enhancing these three values because they tend to have fewer limitations and be more variable in the choices of topics, they are real cultural products from the target community and they could be easily integrated with learners' daily life.

Cheung (2001) suggests that popular culture could prompt learners to be more responsive and active. Furthermore, researchers also suggest that aural authentic materials could help teachers to create meaningful, interesting tasks (Mc. Garry 1995 and Little et al. 1989).

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the objects of the study, the qualitative methodology was used. The qualitative approach would assist me to explore the problems that my students were facing and their responses to the treatment I implemented in listening classroom.

Three methods were employed while carrying out this qualitative research: interview, class observation and students' journals. Interviews were applied twice: before and after the treatment to collect the participants' view and feelings about the listening materials at class. Another mean of collecting data is observation. During the period of 4 weeks, the students were invited to participate in the listening class in which the aural authentic materials were implemented. The purpose of class observation was for the researcher to notice how effectiveness of using the authentic materials in the classroom and to closely observe the students' attitudes as well as their reaction to the input and their teacher. Students' journals would provide rich sources of information about the participants' experiences and reflections when they exposed aural authentic materials at home.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. The students' optimistic attitudes toward the aural authentic texts

When being asked to rank the three types of aural authentic input that the students want to expose, the results showed that three of the highest scores were "songs (29)," "films (28)," and

"cartoons (26)" while "CDs" only had a total score of seven. This indicated language learners preferred the use of authentic materials in the classroom, especially aural authentic materials. When being asked to explain for their choices, student 1 said that: *"It is interesting in terms of the contents. And also I can see and learn the live language which is used in real life."* Sharing the same opinion with him, student 2 said: *"I prefer these kinds of learning material because it is very lively. On the other hand, it is because of my personal interests."*

From what they wrote in the weekly journals, it exposed that most students (80%) chose songs as their selection for practicing listening at home. And pop songs were also the best options for them because of the slow and gentle melody. The results from class observation indicated that the students generally displayed an acknowledgment, in a way or another, while they were listening to the teacher. The results collected from class observation show that most of the time, the students nodded head or precisely said an answer when the teacher asked a question. When they were given an instruction to do certain thing, the students normally responded accurately. Nevertheless, the students sometimes kept quiet and did not respond to what the teacher said.

2. Benefits that aural authentic materials bring to students in improving listening skill

2.1. Enriching the vocabulary

All of the respondents claimed that they expanded their vocabulary. The students said that they expanded their vocabulary by working out the definitions of new words in context and/or looking up words in dictionaries. From the students' weekly journal, the participants wrote down a list of words they learned from their chosen input to practice at home. The ranges of words are different from the topic to another one. They can be about the food, the fashion, the love, politics or sports, etc. The responses above show that the students learned words in context which is considered to be the most effective way of vocabulary acquisition. Besides, learning words from the texts that are of the interest to the learner is suggested to lead to deep learning.

2.2. Improving pronunciation

Students were able to replicate the pronunciation of the vocabulary taught in class and they also recognized words and expressions from the authentic material after being exposed to listening comprehension input during the development of the activities. Authentic materials

might contain different accents, giving students a chance to experience speech differences from around the world as one student stated that: *“because the voices of different speakers can be far differ from each others. They can speak different kind of English with accents and have different meaning in the words”* Or *“But thanks to extensive listening, I believe that I have improved my pronunciation”*. The participants majoring at ELT do not have a chance to be exposed to the target language in the class environment, which sometimes leads them to transmit the language. While performing extensive listening activities, participants were strictly required to listen to the materials recorded by the speakers in a real situation.

3. The students' interests in other cultures

The culture and historical elements of these genuine texts can motivate students' learning and build students' knowledge. This showed that learners considered aural authentic materials to have integrative values because they could “see” the real life of the target community rather than merely “hear” or “read” about the culture. Since they were the real cultural products from the target community, they could help learners to “experience” the culture with their own eyes. Some of them claimed that they could learn the culture of the English-speaking country from aural authentic input. They rather reveal a broad spectrum that the semi-structured interview may provide a study with. The two of the interviewees expressed their emotional closeness with the cultures they were speaking about. The student 6 shares that when she watched a series of comedy film named “Friends”, she learned much about the lives of young people in England: the topics they often talk to each other, the lifestyle and the perception about the love and marriage as well. It is quite different from Vietnamese youth, she thinks.

4. Different listening strategies are employed

Most students mentioned guessing the meaning from the context when they encountered an unfamiliar word. Some of them usually tried to guess what the other person would say next. The others generally thought in their own native language when they listened to the target language whereas the rest learners tried not to translate between their first language and the second language they were learning. Additionally, the teacher always instructed the students to expect what they were about to hear while listening. All these strategies were collected from the class observation and the participants' reflection as well. However, some students still

met difficulty in keeping up with the speed of the native speakers or generalizing the main message in a long aural text. Therefore, students should be well equipped with some listening strategies to make use of the aural authentic input and become active listeners.

IMPLICATION

From the benefits that the authentic materials offer the students in listening class, the instructors who use the course books should prepare and bring different materials to their classrooms to motivate their students during the lesson. In this sense, the authentic materials can provide interaction for the development of language skills as well as being an opportunity to encourage practicing authentic language in a non-threatening manner. Furthermore, teacher can also integrate target culture with language teaching because language and culture are closely related with each other and the learners can gain much real-life information apart from language knowledge.

Another implication of this study is the more time is needed to prepare and encourage students for independent listening. Since most of students come from a teacher-centered learning background, so they need help to move from the state of dependence on the instructor to becoming independent listeners. Therefore, if they are first introduced to some useful techniques of listening such as: predicting, note taking, listening for details and listening for main ideas, and second, they are suggested some reliable and available sources of aural authentic texts, students can have a real chance to self- practice at home. When the students actively expose to a variety of authentic texts, they can gain the confidence and enjoyment in listening to foreign language.

CONCLUSION

From the findings after carrying out the research, it can be seen obviously that the big benefits of using authentic materials is motivating foreign language classroom, especially in listening classes. The use of authentic materials in the classroom is now more important because the students are more enjoyable and conscious of the close relationship between classroom language and real-life speech. Authentic material can contribute a more relaxed learning environment in which students are more interested in the lesson and also learn more. Therefore, if teachers want to prepare their students for real-life listening inside and outside classroom, it is necessary to implement aural authentic materials in any listening classes.

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CẢI THIẾN KỸ NĂNG NGHE HIỂU CHO SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGỮ NĂM THỨ 2 THÔNG QUA TÀI LIỆU THỰC TIỄN

Tóm tắt:

Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện nhằm đánh giá những tác động của phương pháp sử dụng nguồn nghe ngoài sách giáo trình để thúc đẩy sự hứng thú trong việc học của sinh viên chuyên ngữ năm thứ 2. 25 sinh viên đã được mời tham gia vào lớp học có áp dụng phương pháp mới này, ngoài ra các em còn được giao nhiệm vụ hàng tuần tự chọn 1 tài liệu nghe khác nhau và viết một bài luận theo các tiêu chí đã cho sẵn. Các kết quả thu được sau đó được phân tích chi tiết, đồng thời nghiên cứu đưa ra một số đề xuất cho việc sử dụng tài liệu thực tiễn trong việc giảng dạy và học kỹ năng nghe trên lớp và tại nhà.

Từ khóa: tài liệu nghe thực tiễn, sự hứng thú, kỹ năng nghe.