Authentic Reading Materials Efficiency on Developing Vocabulary Learning among Sudanese Students at Secondary Level

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Abstract:

This study investigates authentic reading materials efficiency on developing vocabulary learning among Sudanese students at secondary level and it aims at showing the effectiveness of authentic materials on the enrichment and retention of vocabulary for secondary school students and encouraging third year secondary students to expand their vocabulary through authentic reading materials such as short stories, newspapers, magazines and text books. The study's method is based on descriptive analytic method using a questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. The findings of this study are authentic materials affect positively on enriching secondary school students' vocabulary, using authentic materials in the classroom is beneficial in enriching and retaining the secondary school students' vocabulary and English language teachers are enthusiastic towards the use of authentic reading materials in the classroom. The study recommends that authentic reading materials should be used in teaching reading skills, teachers have to take into consideration their students, level when choosing and implementing the authentic materials, Newspapers, magazines, plays, novels and short stories are convenient sources for vocabulary enriching; therefore, they should be carefully selected and implemented and teachers have to encourage students to have extra authentic reading materials other than that used in the class.

Key words: authentic reading materials, vocabulary expansion

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Language learning requires mastering grammar and lexicon in order to facilitate comprehension understanding and developing reading skills. As a matter of fact, a foreign language cannot be spoken or understood without being aware of its essential vocabulary that requires knowing the words aspects, such as pronunciation, spelling, collocation, grammar aspects and semantic meaning. Besides, knowing words, relationships in their contexts and semantic associations is essential stipulation in learning English. In fact, vocabulary is considered as the most crucial aspect in a foreign and second language learning stages. Therefore, no one can claim to speak or understand a foreign language without mastering its essential vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, authenticity plays a crucial role in fostering vocabulary size and it links students with real life context.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem
Foreign English language learners of the third year secondary school in Sudan face many obstacles to enrich their vocabulary which is necessarily required for the learner to understand a comprehension and develop the learner's reading skill. The learners face a problem of vocabulary lack that appears as a result of passive syllabus which ignores the cyclical approach of rich and active vocabulary. Moreover, most of the students feel frustrated due to the lack of rich and active vocabulary and vocabulary's aphasia. Consequently, they regard learning and deciphering discourse as an arduous task.

1.2 Significance of the Research

According to researcher's reading only a few researches have been conducted on vocabulary enriching in general, and the impact of authentic reading materials on developing and retaining secondary school students, vocabulary in particular. So, taking into consideration the impact of authentic reading materials on developing and retaining vocabulary of the EFL (3rd year secondary school students), the research will accentuate how authentic texts are enriched with various and active lexicons that can affect noticeably on facilitating comprehension understanding and develop the EFL learner vocabulary.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The research aims to achieve these objectives:

1- Showing the effectiveness of authentic materials on the enrichment and retention of vocabulary for secondary school students.

2- Encouraging third year secondary students to expand their vocabulary through authentic reading materials such as short stories, newspapers, magazines and text books.

3- Raising the awareness of methodologists, linguists, syllabus designers and teachers, and direct their attention to the crucial role of authentic reading materials in enriching and retaining the learners, vocabulary.

1.4 Research Question

1-What are the effects the suggested authentic reading materials on the enrichment of vocabulary of secondary school students?

2- What are the effects of the suggested reading materials on the retention of vocabulary of secondary school students?

3- What is the role of English teacher in secondary school in implementing and using authentic materials in class room?

1.5. Research Methodology

The instrument of data collection for the research was a questionnaire consisting of fifteen statement. The subjects were chosen purposively from Khartoum's schools. The researcher conducted a pilot survey and used statistical techniques through which validity and reliability of the questionnaire were verified. The overall research method used was the descriptive analytic method.

1.6   Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Khartoum, Sudan. Khartoum's schools include elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools. The study is limited to a small sample of population which was chosen from one secondary school in Khartoum State. The study is limited to one subject area, English language and it is conducted in 2017.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Decurion (2000) "vocabulary is central to language acquisition, whether the language is first, second or foreign". Vocabulary knowledge and mastery is considered as the crucial and basic factor that facilitates reading comprehension. Vocabulary plays a tremendously important role in self-expression, translation and style development (cited in M. Celc. Murica (2001).

       Widdowson (1987) states that people could describe few things without grammar, but they could express nothing without vocabulary. Lewis (1993) asserts that vocabulary acquisition is the main task of second language acquisition and the language skills as listening; speaking, reading, writing and translating all cannot go without vocabulary. The importance of vocabulary acquisition, knowledge and teaching has been noticeably and widely highlighted in second language research

by researchers, linguists, as well as, methodologists. The obstacle of vocabulary appeared in the field of education in the four previous decades, since, no consensus on how the problem can be solved. Lee (1995) states that authentic materials are effective resources in the foreign language classroom and can positively contribute to students' progress. The culture of target language is of great importance, therefore, using and incorporating authentic reading materials in EFL classrooms is required to bridge the gap between the classroom knowledge and the students' capacity to participate in the real-world events. During the last two decades EFL learners become eager to use authentic materials in the classroom as they facilitate vocabulary acquisition and development.

2.1 Definition of Authenticity

The term authenticity is of great importance to be defined, because it's impossible to engage in a meaningful debate over the advantages and disadvantages of authenticity, until we agree on what we are talking about.

Many writers mention various definitions and interpretations for the term authenticity; Widdowson (1978) asserts that authenticity relates to the qualities bestowed on a text by the receiver, in that it is not seen as something inherent in a text itself, but is imparted on it by the reader/listener.

2.1.1 Types of Authenticity

Breen (1985) identifies four types of authenticity to be particularly used within the classroom:

 -Authenticity of the texts which we may use as input data for our students.

-Authenticity of the learners' own interpretations of such texts.

-Authenticity of tasks conductive to language learning.

-Authenticity of the actual social situation of the classroom language.

Types of authentic materials whether spoken or written are endless and infinite. The most common ones are newspapers, magazines, T.V, video, radio, literature, and the internet. Berardo (2006) considered the internet as the most useful source, justifying this opinion, Berardo adds: As printed materials date very quickly, the internet is always updated, is interactive, and provides visual simulation.

Miller (2003) does not agree with Berardo when stating, that T.V is the most used medium for obtaining authentic listening materials for language instruction. Gebhard (1996) lists more examples of authentic materials that are: Authentic listening-viewing materials, T.V commercials, quiz shows, cartoons, news clips, comedy show', movies, soap operas, professionally audio-taped short stories and novels, radio ads, songs, documentaries, and sales pitches. Authentic Visual Materials: slides, photographs, paintings, children's artwork, stick figure drawings, wordless-street signs, silhouettes, pictures from magazines, ink blots, postcard pictures, wordless picture books, stamps, and x-rays. Authentic Printed Materials: newspapers articles, movie advertisements, astrology columns, sport reports, obituary columns, advice columns, lyrics to songs, restaurant menus, street signs, cereal boxes, candy wrappers, tourist information brochures, university catalogs, telephone books, maps, T.V guides, comic books, greeting cards, grocery coupons, pins with messages, and bus schedules. Realia (Real word objects) used in EFL/ESL classrooms: coins and currency, folded paper, wall clocks, phones,

2.1.2 Definition of Authentic Material

Authentic material is defined by many authors and researchers in various ways. According to Nunan (1999), this type of material is all that spoken or written information that is produced genuinely on a daily basis of communication, and not specially intended for English learning. Widdowson (1990),

distinguishes between authentic text and authentic discourse, saying that the language presented to SL learners may be genuine record for native speaker behavior, genuine, that is to say, as textual data, but to the extent that it does not engage native speaker response it cannot be realized as authentic discourse. Nunan (1988) defines authentic materials as the materials "which have been produced for purposes other than to teach language". Jordan (1997) agrees with Nunan in that authentic materials or texts as the ones which are not designed for pedagogical aims. Jacobson et al (2003) see authentic materials as printed materials, which are used in classrooms in the same way they would be used in real life. Authentic texts are also defined as "actual, attested, and such that they have real authentic instances of use" by Stubbs (1996). Similarly, (Carter and Nunan (2001) describe authentic materials as "ordinary texts not produced specially for language teaching purposes". Harmer (1991) defines authentic materials (either written or spoken) as items that designed for native speakers of English and were not designed for language students per se. Morrow (1997) clarifies that authentic materials convey a real language; a real speaker or writer produced authentic text to convey a real message. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) define authentic materials as "the natural communication task". At the same time authentic texts are also defined as the ones which are not designed for pedagogical aims Jordan (1997).

2.1.3 Selection of Authentic Materials

According to Berardo (2006) there are three important criteria for choosing authentic texts: Suitability of content, exploitability, and readability. Suitability of content indicates that the text should be appropriate to students' needs and abilities; besides, meeting their interest. By exploitability he means the way through which learners' competence as readers

may be developed. Readability means choosing texts' difficulty based on learns' language level.

Rogers and Medley (1988) clarify that for the identification of authentic materials. Galloway (1990) recommends the following criteria in authentic material selection:

-Length of text should not be intimidating to beginning readers.

-Topic should be accessible to learners.

-Linguistic level should be slightly above the reader's own level unless the tasks are closely structured to involve focused reading.

-Clues to meaning should be abundant such as contextual, verbal, pictorial, and linguistic. (cited in Haley & Austin (2004).

According to Mc Grath (2002) there are eight criteria to be considered when choosing appropriate authentic texts. These are: Relevance to course book and learners, need, topic interest, cultural fitness, logistical considerations, cognitive demands, logistic demands, quality and exploitability.

2.1.4 Characteristics of authentic activities

Herrington (2003) suggested ten characteristics of authentic activities or tasks that, when used as design guidelines, may provide the necessary and relevant conditions for bringing the gap between the classroom and the real world. Authentic tasks therefore,

-Have real world relevance.

-Are ill-defined, requiring students to define the tasks and sub-tasks needed to complete the activity?

-Comprise complex tasks to be investigated by students over a sustained period of time.

-Provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources

-Provide the opportunity to collaborate

-Provide the opportunity to reflect

-Are seamlessly integrated with assessment.

-Create polish products valuable in their own right rather than as preparation for something else.

2.1.5 Advantages of authentic materials

Many advantages of authentic materials are written by many authors. These include:

-Authentic materials provide an opportunity to transmit information and foster communication and understanding across culture (Gebhard, 1996).

-Authentic materials include resources and activities that instructors use in class. They contextualize language learning and are a valuable source of language input (Kramsch, 1989).

-Authentic materials include a wide variety of text types and language styles not easily found in traditional teaching materials (Peocock, 1997).

-Incidental or improper English often is not included in textbooks and the same piece of material can be used in a different way if the task is different (Dumitresscu 2000).

-Authentic materials provide exposure to real language and relate more closely to students' needs. Students are exposed to real world intercultural discourse (Peacock, 1997).

-Authentic materials contain topics of interest to students and encourage reading for pleasure, and they are practical and real because they provide valid linguistic data.

-Authentic materials are applicable and adaptable for classroom use (Chase, 2002).

2.2 Vocabulary expanding

Robinson (2006) adds more important points that support learning new words as follow:

-Learning new words should be fun, not drudgery. Children learn new words so quickly because they have a keen interest in the world around them and in communicating with others. Become receptive to the words around you.

-The words you use say a lot about you. Your vocabulary is the foundation of your ability to think and your ability to share your thoughts with other people.

-The number of words you know is less important than the care you have taken in learning the ones you already know.

-Big, important- sounding words are not necessarily better. A good vocabulary consists of words that educated people use in everyday life.

-Read well- written newspaper, magazines, and books, and make the effort to be aware of new words and learn them form context.

-Use dictionary to verify meaning – and pronunciations- of words that you've learned from context.

-Simply reading the dictionary is a pretty inefficient way to learn new words. This is because most dictionaries discuss only the meaning of words, but the context in which words is used is equally important.

-Consider purchasing a good portable paperback or electronic dictionary so you can immediately confirm definitions you encounter in everyday life.

-Synonyms are not interchangeable! Use thesaurus to find the precise word to capture your meaning, but be sure to verify its exact definition and usage a dictionary.

-The exact word you want to use depends not only on its meaning and connotation, but also on the overall rhythm, vocabulary level, variety, and effect you are trying to achieve.

-Memorizing a word: mnemonics, wacky mental images, and etymologies can be helpful.

-Mnemonic are memorization devices that typically work by associating something you're trying to remember with an

already familiar idea, image, or pattern (such as a rhyming scheme). "Spring forward, all back" is an example of a mnemonic.

-The etymology or root origins, of a word will help your understanding and memory by relating the word to others you already know.

3.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction
The method used to conduct this study was the descriptive research method. A questionnaire was designed and used for data collection. The researcher used Microsoft Office Program, "Excel 2010", for analyzing the data.

3.2 The Population of the Study
As the study is focusing or the effect of authentic reading materials on developing and retaining secondary school students' vocabulary. It dealt with the attitudes of English teachers in both universities and schools, educational experts and the secondary school students.

3.2.1 The Sampling
The sample of the study consisted of three sections 332 English language teachers from both schools and universities,10 educational experts and 30 secondary school students. Three hundred and sixty- two copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the teachers and three hundred and thirty two of them were collected. The researcher excluded some of the copies because the respondents did not fill all of the statements and some of them marked more than one option. About twenty copies were invalid and they were excluded from the sample.

Three hundred and thirty- two copies of the questionnaire were valid so they were included in the study. In

order to check the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher ran a pilot study. Ten copies of the questionnaire were distributed to some of the English language teachers from English language unit. The teachers wrote down their comments, suggestions, notes and advice at the end of the questionnaire. According to their comments, suggestions, notes and advice, the number of statement were reduced from thirty five to thirty five to thirty statements. the final version of the questionnaire consisted of two pars. The first part concerns with the information about English language teachers including qualification and experience. the second part consisted of three sections and thirty statements.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This study investigates the effect of authentic reading materials on developing and retaining vocabulary of secondary school students. The instruments used to collect the data were a student questionnaire consisting three sections and thirty statements. The number of respondents was thirty students and the questionnaire was analyzed by SPSS and tabulated by the researcher. The first section of this questionnaire is about English language teachers' attitudes towards the effect of authentic materials on enriching secondary school students' vocabulary.

Table (4-2): Distribution of the surveyed individuals according to their views about authentic materials as motivating students for reading outside classroom

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid strongly agree	172	518	51.8	51.8
Agree	38.6	38.6	38.6	90.4
Neutral	28	8.4	8.4	98.8
Disagree	4	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table (4-2) represents the distribution of the surveyed individuals in the study according to their views about whether authentic materials as motivating students for reading outside classroom or not, and it reveals that most of them strongly agree and agree to that statement, with percentages 51.8% and 38.6% - respectively, and the remaining are either neutral or disagree, and they represent 8.4% and only1.2% - respectively.

Table (4-3): Distribution of the surveyed individuals according to their views about authentic materials as providing students with vocabulary items that they need to use in real situations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid strongly agree	176	53.0	53.0	53.0
Agree	144	43.4	43.4	96.4
Neutral	10	3.0	3.0	99.4
Strongly disagree	2	3.0	3.0	99.4
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table (4-3) represents the distribution of the surveyed individuals in the study according to their views about authentic materials as providing students with vocabulary items that they need to use in real situations, and it reveals that most of them strongly agree and agree to the statement with 53% and 43.4% - respectively, and the remaining are neutral 3% and disagree 0.6% .

Table (4-4): Distribution of the surveyed individuals according to their views about newspapers as convenient sources for enriching vocabulary

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid strongly agree	118	35.5	35.5	35.5
Agree	167	50.3	50.3	85.8
Neutral	40	12.0	12.0	97.9
Disagree	7	2.1	2.1	100.0
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table (4-4) represents the distribution of the surveyed individuals in the study according to their views about newspapers as convenient sources for enriching students' vocabulary, and it reveals that most of them agree and strongly agree to the statement, with percentages 50.3% and 35.5% - respectively, while the other remaining percentages are 12% neutral and only 2.1% for those who do not agree.

Table (4-5): Distribution of the surveyed individuals according to their views about magazines as playing an important role in enhancing vocabulary

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid Strongly agree	118	35.5	35.5	35.5
Agree	169	50.9	50.9	86.4
Neutral	40	12.0	12.0	98.5
Disagree	5	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table (4-5) shows the distribution of the surveyed individuals in the study according to their views about magazines as playing an important role in enriching students' vocabulary, and it reveals that most of them agree and strongly agree to the statement, with percentages 50.9% and 35.5% - respectively, and the remaining percentages 12% for those who are neutral and only 1.5% for those who do not agree.

Table (4-6): Distribution of the surveyed individuals according to their views about brochures as good for providing new vocabulary items

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	76	22.9	22.9	22.9
Agree	159	47.9	47.9	70.8
Neutral	71	21.4	21.4	92.2
Disagree	24	7.2	7.2	99.4
Strongly	2	.6	.6	100.0
Total	332	100.0	100.0	

Table (4-6) shows the distribution of the individuals surveyed in the study according to their views about brochures as good for providing new vocabulary items, and it shows the majority of them agree and strongly agree to the statement, with percentages 47.9% and 22.9% - respectively, and the remaining percentages are 21.4% for those who are neutral, 7.2% for those who do not agree, and only 0.6% for those who are strongly do not agree, as figure (4-6) shows below.

5.0 CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction:

This study investigates the effect of authentic reading materials on developing and retaining Sudanese secondary school students' vocabulary. The instruments used to collect the data of the research were questionnaire. The questionnaire addressed English language teachers in different universities and schools. This chapter concludes the study besides, containing the findings of the research, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

5.2 The findings of the study

The findings of this study show the effect of authentic reading materials on developing and retaining vocabulary of Sudanese students at secondary level.

1.   Authentic materials affect positively on enriching secondary school students' vocabulary.

2.   Teachers are the cornerstone in implementing, selecting and using authentic materials in the classroom.

3.   Teachers are the cornerstone in implementing, selecting and using the authentic materials in the classroom.

4.   Extra vocabulary makes the students more confident and enables them to express themselves.

5. English language teachers are enthusiastic towards the use of authentic reading materials in the classroom.

6. English language teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of authentic reading materials in the classroom.

7. Using authentic materials in the classroom is beneficial in enriching and retaining the secondary school students' vocabulary.

8. Authentic materials can be used as a teaching tool in an EFL classroom.

9. Educational experts have positive attitude towards the use of authentic reading materials in the classroom.

10. Educational experts are enthusiastic towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom.

5.3 Recommendations

In the light of these findings the researcher recommends the following:

1. The ministry of education should contribute in preparing suitable authentic reading materials for secondary school level.

2. Secondary school should be provided with the suitable authentic reading materials to develop the students' vocabulary.

3. Authentic reading materials should be used in teaching reading skills.

4. Universities, colleges and teacher training institutions have to take positive steps in providing and selecting the suitable authentic reading materials to be used in secondary schools.

5. Newspapers, magazines, plays, novels and short stories are convenient sources for vocabulary enriching; therefore, they should be carefully selected and implemented.

6.   Training courses in implementing and selecting authentic reading materials should be encouraged and financed by the educational officials.

7.   Teachers have to take into consideration their students, level when choosing and implementing the authentic materials.

8.   Teachers have to take into consideration the variety of authentic materials in order to avoid tediousness.

9.   Educational experts have to take positive steps in encouraging, selecting, implementing and using the authentic materials in the classroom.

10.   Teachers have to encourage students to have extra authentic reading materials other than that used in the classroom.

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