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USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS AT ENGLISH LESSONS

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Nowadays the word «authentic» has become very popular. J. Garmer, the British methodologist, in his book «The Practice of English Language Teaching» defines authentic materials as «the ones, which our students come across in the real life while communicating with native speakers, and due to the fact that they are authentic, one can't expect that they will be simplified or will have an easy context (like the one in elementary text-books)». So, we may define authentic materials as the

ones, which reflect the real language of native speakers or competent language speakers. Authentic materials are used in everyday life of the country of the studied language. These are newspaper articles, brochures, airplane or other tickets, booklets, letters, advertisements, TV or radio programs, notices, etc.

Sometimes it is difficult to decide what materials are really authentic. Garmer sets the example of a theatre play, written for native speakers, but which represents the author's language, not the language of the real life. This play can be considered both authentic and not authentic.

Using authentic materials at different stages of studying has some advantages and disadvantages. Authentic materials may and should be used since the elementary stage of studying. For example, using traditional English children's rhymes, nurseries, songs and plays at the English lessons attract junior pupils very much, because it helps solving communicative tasks, however, there are a lot of lexical and grammatical difficulties at the intermediate and advanced levels of speaking.

Authentic materials can be used more widely at the next stages of studying on condition that these authentic tasks are thoroughly selected, well-planned and help students realize the value of these materials as the source of a real modern language but not underline their little knowledge. The aim of authentic tasks is to develop pupils' ability to respond to oral and written tasks in the same way as it occurs in real communicative situations. These may be tasks, which teach reading or listening and are aimed at comprehending the text, searching definite information or solving a definite problem. The exercises on speaking and writing should model real communicative situations and reflect various roles, which we play in our life. Otherwise, wrongly chosen authentic tasks may dissatisfy and demotivate students. In order to avoid this situation, teachers of foreign languages should thoroughly select texts on reading and listening and accompany them with special pre-text, on-text and after-text tasks (in order of increasing complexity). Such approach can improve senior pupils' ability to understand different tasks on reading, speaking and listening, they will be able to understand and

enjoy foreign films. In such a way they can achieve a great success in comprehending authentic tasks. However, teachers should note that partial adaptation is possible only at the cost of simplifying the language of the authentic material, not the narrative strand.

While selecting authentic materials, teachers should pay attention to the pupils' age and their level of knowledge, try to select the texts, which meet the educational requirements and correspond to the topics studied at the certain stage. They should also analyze the aim of using this material and the stage of studying. Authentic texts should give the students a possibility of a socio-cultural analysis and serve a basis for correlation of the cultural realities. Also, teachers should foresee if these texts can present difficulties, and, namely, what difficulties (in grammar, vocabulary, etc.).

These texts can be distributed into different types, belonging to various genres. Such types of texts include *oral* ones, for example, public announcements, instructions; public speeches, lectures, presentations, sermons; rituals (ceremonies, formal religious service); entertainment (performances, shows, readings, songs); sports commentaries (football, figure skating, boxing, races and so on); newscast; public debates and discussions; telephone conversations; personal dialogues and talks; employment interviews, and so on.

These could be *written* texts, for example, books (fiction and science fiction), literary, scientific and scientific-methodical magazines; illustrated magazines; newspapers; different types of guidance («Do it yourself», cookery books, etc.); textbooks; comics; brochures and booklets, circulars, leaflets; advertisement materials; signs and displays in public places; signs in supermarkets and shops, signs on packs and labels of different goods; tickets, forms and questionnaires; dictionaries; business documents; personal letters, essays, compositions and exercises, notes, reports, notices, news.

Teachers know, that the more senior students are and the higher level of their communicative competency is, the more various authentic materials can be used at the lessons. Due to modern information technologies, these materials are becoming more available. Let's deal with several examples.

1. For junior students while studying the degrees of comparison of adjectives it is sometimes difficult to remember the exclusions: *bad-worse- worst, much/many – more – most, etc.* A teacher may use the following rhymes to get his students interested and encourage them to memorize the rules:

Bad – worse – worst

In March my cat gets utterly mad –

That's rather bad.

On my payday I lost my purse – that is still worse.

Ricardo and poor Wild Rose divorced –

Oh, that's the worst!

Little – less – least

There lived an old man with thick bristle

That used to stick out a little.

He gave it a press,

Made it stick a bit less

At least to stop scratching his fiddle.

2. A teacher can help his students develop grammatical awareness exploring some famous lines of English poetry, like:

Little drops of water,

Little grains of sand

Make the mighty ocean

And the pleasant land.

These lines may be used while teaching: a). the word order of the English sentence:

Little drops of water (Subject) + *make* (Predicate) + *the mighty ocean* (Object);

b). the relation between the adjective and the noun (Adjective+ Noun): *the mighty ocean* and *the pleasant land*.

3. The limericks, especially those written by Edward Lear (1812–1888), are also a wonderful choice for this purpose. The limerick is a light verse form, usually composed of five lines:

There was an old man in a tree

Who was horribly bored by a bee.

When they said: "Does it buzz?"

*He replied: "Yes, it does!
It's a regular brute of a bee!"*

This limerick can be used at a Passive voice lesson and while explaining the word order in the interrogative sentences and the short answers. Another example may be used to study some prepositions:

*There was a young lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.
They returned from the ride
With the lady inside
And a smile on the face of the tiger!*

4. Proverbs are of special interest to the student of language and culture as they tend to retain archaic elements of language and reflect popular attitudes that have persisted throughout the centuries. Proverbs can be used in intermediate and advanced level English classes, explaining with their help grammar and vocabulary, discussing them in terms of their popular wisdom, historical significance. After quoting the proverbs, presenting their equivalents in the native language or explaining them, a teacher can lead his students in a conversation about the cultural values that are reflected in this or that proverb. Students usually like such cross-culture exercises and thus are motivated to use English in class discussions because proverbs are folk wisdom that reflects certain aspects of a national identity.

If a teacher chooses, for example, as conversation material the proverb «*Too many cooks spoil the broth*», a teacher may develop the discussion around these questions:

- a) What does this proverb mean?
- b) Is there a similar proverb in your native language?
- c) What social conditions (or historical period) does this proverb suggest?
- d) Are there other English proverbs that have similar meaning?
- e) Have the students ever appeared in such situation? What were the circumstances and the results?

The last question in particular may develop much fruitful conversation material, because as Keats said, «Nothing ever becomes real till it is experienced. Even a proverb is no proverb to you till your life has illustrated it».

5. Discussing aspects of the cultures is one of the most productive

activities in conversation classes. Students are greatly interested in the ways in which their culture is similar to or different from an English-speaking one. For example, while reading a dialogue, a joke or a short story, a teacher may point out a specific feature of the English or American culture and then ask his students how this can be compared to the features of their own culture. Senior students are especially interested in different aspects of life in an English-speaking country, such as: Generation gap, Wedding customs, Eating habits, Features of etiquette, Standards of living, Influence of the media, The arts, etc. For instance, the following short story may be used for discussion:

The New York traffic was slow but he managed to arrive at Mr. Brown's office at five to three. His appointment was scheduled for three o'clock. A young secretary with grey eyes and blond hair looked up from her typewriter and smiled, saying, «Hi! Are you Tom Smith?» He nodded, cleared his throat and said, «Yes, I believe Mr. Brown is expecting me». «Mr. Brown will be with you in a few minutes», she replied and resumed her rapid typing with the diligence required by company rules.

After giving this selection to students, they may be asked to cite the features of American culture that differ from their own. The answers may be as following:

- 1) The American considered punctuality very important.
- 2) The company employed an attractive young girl as a secretary.
- 3) The secretary greeted the man informally.
- 4) The man showed agreement by nodding his head.
- 5) Although polite, the secretary was impersonal and returned to work immediately.

Each of the points could then become a source of conversation, discussing with the learners the attitudes and values underlying the aspects of American life.

So, while choosing authentic texts for their lessons, teachers should pay attention not only to the written texts – long stories or extracts from fiction, but also to other texts, which we come across in our everyday life. However, these authentic materials should be comprehended correctly by students in order to acquire useful information. For example, a radio or TV announcement, or a brief advertisement in a newspaper, or some manual – all these texts may give a very useful information for learners and, besides, they are not so difficult for them,

while long, complicated, sometimes not very informative or even boring texts make students feel dislike for studying a foreign language, especially when teachers ask them to translate or to retell these texts. A short text, dialogue or a notice may be much more informative than a long text by a foreign author. Of course, teacher's knowledge of methods of working with such materials is very important in order to help their students interpret these texts and form the skills and abilities, significant for their real communication in modern life.

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QUELQUES RÉFLEXIONS SUR L'IDENTITÉ ETHNIQUE ET LE CODE NATIONAL

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Dans le monde globalisé il est très important de protéger les traits particuliers propres à une nation. Ces particularités sont intégrées dans le contenu de l'identité ethnique et centrées dans les indices du code national comme un système de signes indiquant les valeurs culturelles qui appartiennent à une nation, une langue commune, un passé