

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF ONLINE AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN INDONESIAN EFL CLASSES

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Abstract

This study is aimed at investigating how both teachers and students perceive their attitude towards the use of online authentic materials. The learning of English has been evolving from using traditional media to more advanced and technology-friendly media. One of the media that is very accessible with the support of wide internet access nowadays is online authentic materials. With all the benefits of authentic materials and the use of technology in classroom activities, teachers at The British Institute Malang have been utilizing the online authentic materials for several years. The data is collected through questionnaires and interview. The questionnaires are spread to 18 university-level students from 2 accessible classes at the institution and two teachers were involved in the interviews. The findings of how the students and the teacher perceive their attitude towards the use of online are discussed. Finally, some suggestions to the teacher are also proposed.

Key words: online authentic materials, teachers' attitudes, students' attitudes.

Introduction

The language teaching and learning especially English language teaching (ELT) has been evolving in every aspect from time to time, from practice to research and vice versa. Stern (1983: 113) noted the development and innovations of language teaching began about more than 100 years ago. This trend of development and innovations *vis-a-vis* English language teaching would be more dynamic in the future with the support of invented technologies. The use of technology in ELT cannot be considered as a new thing. Tape recorder, language laboratories, and videos have been used since 1960's. In early 1980's with the invention of computer, the so-called computer assisted language learning (CALL) has been utilized. Furthermore, the computer networking development in the 1990's has brought the world more benefits with the internet which allows all users to have almost unlimited access to the world (Dudeny, 2007: 7).

All efforts which have been done by researchers and practitioners are intended to conduct a successful process of learning. Despite many factors e.g. teachers' beliefs, students' motivations, and learning context/environment, etc. which are influential to the success of language learning (Williams & Burden, 1997), materials selection is one of those important points to be considered as it is included in language instruction components. Nunan (1988: 98) as cited in Adams (1995) added that materials are essential element within the curriculum. Not only will the materials help the teacher present the language in the class, materials are also to provide the model for the teacher to develop for their own.

Kitao (1997) suggested some criteria to fit in selecting materials to be used in the classroom, that materials should be in the correct, natural, current, and standard English. In order to meet the good criteria of good material selection, teachers are expected to be able to select appropriate supplementary material out from any possible resources. As described in preceding paragraphs, the internet can be very resourceful for the teachers facing the need of materials. By typing the keywords on the engine search websites such as Google, Yahoo, or Bing, teachers can find any types of online authentic materials they need for their students easily.

Authentic materials as supplementary to graded materials which is suited to the students' level of proficiency have been discussed and used by both researchers and practitioners all along the way. Haines (1997:60) defines the authentic material "is written or spoken language which has been produced for native speakers, rather than learner for foreign learners of a language". Therefore, all kinds of texts either in written or spoken forms which are produced by and for the native speakers only, regardless the learner of English which needs consideration of their level or proficiency. The term online describes that the materials are accessed through the internet. Furthermore, there are numbers of benefit from online authentic materials that can be highlighted (Haines, 1997: 62-63; Berardo, 2006):

1. Authentic materials are written or spoken in real English. This means that they are structurally and lexically varied. They also avoid repetition which characterized the graded materials. Furthermore, they have communicative purposes rather than the language focused purposes.
2. Authentic materials do not patronize foreign language learners. The non-graded materials are not for language learners. They are simply the examples of language in use.
3. Authenticity itself is attractive to learners. Learners enjoy reading magazines, novels, and enjoy listening to latest popular English songs.
4. Authentic texts help students develop useful listening and reading strategies. Being exposed with the authentic texts in their tasks, students will be more ready with strategies to cope with various texts they find in the daily life.
5. Authentic texts can be exploited at different levels. It is possible to utilize the authentic materials for any level ranging from elementary for reading for gist skill and scanning skills to advanced level for in-depth understanding for the register and style of the author or the speaker.

Moreover, other research has been conducted in other countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. The studies reveal that the authentic materials are effective to contribute positive attitude and motivations to the students (Al-Mussalam, 2009). Moving to another part of the world, Iran, the studies regard the use of this type of materials as a means to improve students' motivation, maintain their interest and expose them to real language in original contexts (Al-Azri et.al., 2014: 253). In Thailand, students and teachers indicated the most frequent use of this kind of materials are multimedia, image and printed text in

the classroom, including songs, photographs, newspapers and short stories. In addition, they perceived the use of authentic materials positively for real English and its benefits are not only to increase vocabulary knowledge but also to improve the knowledge of global communication in real contexts (Tanasavate, 2013: 189).

The British Institute, as one of the oldest providers for English language learning in East Java, has been utilizing and taking the benefit of online authentic materials for years. An interview was conducted to one of the senior teachers at the institution. The initial study reveals that the teachers at the institution have been using the authentic materials such as news articles from news portal websites, English songs, images, videos from video-sharing websites, etc. for more than ten years.

Based on the statements above, some research questions were formulated:

1. What are the online authentic materials which are used in by the teacher in the classroom?
2. How are the learners' perceptions towards the use of online authentic materials in the classroom?
3. How are the teachers' perceptions towards the use of online authentic materials in the classroom?
4. What other types of authentic materials are preferred by the students to be used in the classroom?

Method

This study employed survey method. According to Latief (2013) survey research is typically used to describe opinions, attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of people interests. In a simple way, a survey design is to describe an individual or group by having participant complete a survey or questionnaire.

Participant

The subjects of this study were 18 university-level students enrolled in the Global English program which covers general English for adult students. These students are in pre-intermediate level. The subjects are selected to get involved in the study based on the accessibility. There were 18 running classes for adult students. However, there were only two classes can be accessed for this study. In addition, there were two teachers involved in the study to be interviewed.

Instrument

This study utilizes questionnaires and interview as the main instruments to collect the data. The questionnaires are adapted from Al-Mussalam (2009: 128-131). Although the questionnaires are adapted, there are some items intentionally modified and omitted due to suitability to the purpose of this study. The questionnaires consist of open-ended and close-ended questions.

Procedure

This study initiates with the first interview with senior teacher at the institution. The interview reveals the fact that most of the teachers have been using the online authentic materials as the support of the textbooks provided by the institution for the

students. At this stage, the questionnaires are prepared and set for investigating the types of online materials used in class, the learner attitude towards the use of online authentic materials in the class, and students' preferences for some other types of authentic materials to be used in future classes.

Furthermore, interviews were also conducted with two teachers. This is to investigate the teachers' attitudes towards using authentic materials in the class, and to confirm the finding from the students' questionnaires.

Findings and Discussion

Firstly, the data from the students' questionnaires will be presented. The first section of the questionnaire was designed to investigate types of the online. The result indicated that there are four types of online authentic materials used by the teacher in the classroom. They are news portal websites, English songs, images, videos. The following table describes the students' opinion towards the use of online authentic materials in the classroom.

Table 1. Kinds of online authentic materials used in the class.

Types	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
News	4	22%	10	56%	3	17%	1	6%	0	0%
Song	13	72%	5	28%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Picture	4	22%	14	78%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Video	11	61%	7	39%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Mean	8	44%	9	50%	1	4%	0	1%	0	0%

The table above indicates that the students have strong positive attitude towards the use of all implemented authentic texts in the classroom. The mean score of percentage suggests that the numbers of the students who strongly agree, agree, neutral, and disagree are 44%, 50%, 4% and 1%. None of the students shows strong disagreement towards using online authentic materials in the classroom. In short, the students concur with the use of online authentic materials. Furthermore, songs are in the first position with 72% of the students choose them with strong agreement which means that the students like them to be utilized in the classroom learning activities. The second position after songs is the video with the percentage of strongly agree reaches 61%. Meanwhile, news and images are the least preferred among the implemented materials. This is a bit different with the findings from Tanasavate (2013) that the students and teachers in Thailand indicated newspapers and images are preferable along with songs and videos.

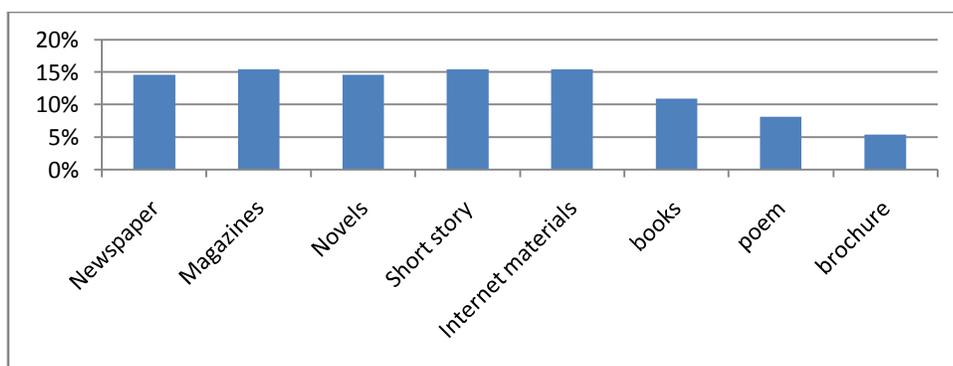
Some other data from the questionnaires also exhibits interesting fact, specifically about how the students' perceived attitudes towards the use of online authentic materials. The students agree that authentic materials could: (1) introduce them to how the language is used in the real world; (2) help them improve their language proficiency; (3) help them improve their language skills, especially the receptive skills e.g. reading and listening; (4) increase their knowledge of vocabulary items they need in real situation; (5) increase familiarity with the use of grammar in original contexts; (6) make the lesson be more

interesting; (6) motivate them to read or listen to English materials outside the classroom. However, the students disagree that the use of the materials could: (1) be difficult to comprehend; (2) make them feel frustrated; (3) cause cultural conflicts that hinder comprehension.

Another fact which can be obtained is that most of the students believe that the class which reflects the best practice of using media or materials in the classroom is the class that uses both textbooks and authentic materials. On the other hand, they believe that the class is the worst when the teacher utilizes either textbook only or authentic texts only. Therefore, utilizing the textbook only or authentic text only would not be interesting for the students.

The questionnaires also obtained the data about the students' preferences to other types of authentic texts that can be used in the classroom. The data for this point can be described with the following chart:

Figure 1. Students' preferences on other types of authentic materials.



The most preferred types of other kinds of authentic materials are magazines, short stories, and the internet materials with 15 per cent for each. Newspaper articles and novels appeared to be the second preferred materials after the magazines, short stories, and the internet materials. On the other hand, books, poem, and brochures are not very preferable.

Secondly, at initial stage, the interview with the teacher indicates that most of the teachers at the institution have been using authentic materials from online resources for some years. After gaining the data from the students' questionnaires, the interviews were then conducted with two teachers confirming the results. The first indication of the interview is that both of the teachers use all online authentic materials that have been mentioned earlier like songs for listening activities, online news portals for reading tasks, photos from Google images for teaching aids, and videos from YouTube. However, from the two teachers, one does not use songs very often as she said that it took longer time for her to prepare the tasks for the song. The second indication, the teachers were asked about how they perceive their attitudes towards using authentic materials from online sources. Both of the teachers like using them as it is easy to access with the help of the internet, moreover the institution provides free wi-fi connection which allows everybody access the internet easily and for free. Equally important, the teachers think that the students are more motivated when they are brought supplementary materials out of the book so that they would not get bored with the textbook. From the teachers' daily observation, they said that

the students exhibit more excitement when online authentic texts are used, especially when songs are used as parts of the tasks.

These findings are in line correspondingly with the theory that the use of authentic materials would appear to be benefit for both the teachers and the students (Haines, 1997). With the help of the internet, the teacher would be able to have almost unlimited access to authentic materials online anytime and anywhere. Whereas, the student could experience learning with the real language and they could be shown how the language is used in real contexts. Moreover, the students also exhibit excitement and motivation during the lesson where the lesson involves authentic texts either in written forms or in oral forms (Al-Mussalam, 2009; Al-Azri: 2014).

Conclusion and Suggestion

In conclusion, there have been various types of authentic materials which are accessible with the connection from the internet used by the teachers in the classroom. They are news articles, songs, images, and videos. The students at the institutions believe that the use of the authentic texts which have been implemented in the classroom are beneficial for their learning progress like improving their vocabulary items, grammar awareness, language skills, motivation, and interest towards learning English. On balance, the teachers also appeared to have positive attitudes towards authentic materials which can be accessed online as they are very easy to grab from the internet and these materials also help the students, from teachers' observation, improve students' motivation to get involved in learning activities. This study also reveals the students' preferences of other kinds of authentic texts that may be interesting to be used in the future classes. They are, in the order from the most preferred to the least ones, magazines, short stories, the internet materials, newspaper articles, novels, books, poem, and brochures.

Based on the study, some suggestions can be addressed to three different stakeholders. The first is to the teachers as they have direct impacts on using the materials in the classroom. From the findings, the students are more motivated and show better attitudes on the use of combination of both authentic materials and the textbooks. This empirical data can be the base for the teacher to maximize the use and take benefits from authentic materials in classroom activities and tasks. The teacher, therefore, can avoid the boredom of the students which is caused by monotone use of the textbooks as it was revealed that the students believe that single materials either authentic texts only or textbooks only can be turned out to be the worst class. Equally important, the teacher may refer to the findings on selecting appropriate materials from the internet based on the students' preferences. By having more appropriate and more motivating materials and tasks, the teacher can enhance the quality of students' involvement in the classroom activities.

The second is to the institution as the administrator. As supported by the data from the findings that both students and teacher show positive attitudes towards the use of authentic texts in classroom, it is suggested to provide facilities which support the students and the teacher to have access to any types of the authentic materials. Having wider access to the materials, the students and the teachers can be exposed to the language more intense which means it is good for the development. For the students, the development can be from

the skills progress as they are having more language exposures. While for the teachers, they can continuously develop their skills in creating lessons and tasks with meaningful contexts instead of meaningless drills. These developments, of course, are positive to the institution itself.

The third is to future research. This study is a survey to the attitudes of the students and the teacher towards the use of online authentic materials in the class. There are some possibilities to conduct future research in the same area but in various variables and designs. One instance, by having some other kinds of authentic texts implemented in the classroom, another survey can be undertaken to investigate how Indonesian students perceive their attitude toward its use. Experimental design is another possibility that may be interesting to conduct in investigating the effect of these materials to the students' scores and other variables.

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