

THE TECHNOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE IN THE ORAL SPEECH VIA AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN ESP LESSONS

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Abstract. The article focuses on the modern methods of conducting ESP lessons successfully with the help of authentic sources. It suggests empirical ways of designing creative classroom activities that can elevate learners’ level of English, to be more precise their speaking skills, into a new stage in the example of two different authentic listening materials. The proposed selection of the extracts enables language instructors to infuse vitality in teaching process and avert any potential questions about their relevance and appropriateness.

Keywords: authentic materials; authenticity; learners’ needs; listening activities; English for Specific Purposes (ESP); role-plays; debates; communicative competence.

One of the most urgent problems methodologists have faced over years is how to select authentic materials to improve learners’ listening which is defined as “the ability to understand spoken language”. Unlike some scholars who hold diverse opinions concerning the selection of these materials, Lee (1995) and Mc Grath (2002) present elaborate criteria that include factors such as relevance to learner’s needs, level and interest; sufficient comprehension of materials regardless of learners’ cultural background and becoming free from too complicated ideas or

structure; orientation towards skill improvement and the length of materials (not too long or short).

Subsequent to having formed some vital premises about how to choose authentic materials, to be more precise, what kind of aspects should be considered in the choice of material selection, one can assume that an ESP teacher has no difficulty in choosing authentic materials as well as applying them into a teaching process. However, correct selection of authenticity doesn't always guarantee efficiency in teaching process as many other aspects ranging from "starting" up to "ending" a lesson should be taken into consideration. Although every step of conducting lesson must be organized carefully, designing activities corresponding to students' level and interest makes really huge demands on ESP teachers.

Authentic listening and reading sources are regarded to be one of the crucial materials in developing speaking skills because students have an opportunity to develop their own lexical base with the help of vocabulary encountered in everyday conversations. Moreover, authentic texts encompassing not only a useful range of vocabulary in the target language but also grammar structures of that language and, more importantly, pronunciation produced by native speakers, which serves as a vital means of improving speaking skills. Considering the above mentioned points one may claim that correct analysis of authentic materials and conclusions about how to choose them enable teachers to develop useful activities. However, ESP teachers face great hurdles in utilizing sources and designing activities even when they have quite relevant authentic materials. They find themselves stuck in the problem of how to bring these sources into classroom as well as how to evaluate learners' knowledge in accordance with presented materials. As a solution to such kind of problems, it is better to illustrate ways of designing some activities and tasks based on authentic materials for ESP learners. For instance, let's imagine that vocational college students whose level is B1 according to CEFR and major is considered to be grain production need to use authentic materials to enhance their

language skills. When it comes to the source, an authentic listening typescript extracted from radio podcast (provided on the series of British podcasts) which is called “Amazing facts” is chosen as a sample for improving speaking and listening skills. This listening material is quite suitable for the students of Vocational Technological College, that’s to say, they have to study biology and chemistry as core subjects because their major is to deal with oil and grain products investigating their ingredients. In fact, the listening task called “Amazing facts” also reveals conversations about bacteria that are investigated in these subjects. Two people (probably friends) take part in this listening task as participants and the first speaker pools his newly found facts about bacteria with his friend.

ESP instructors can design effective activities using this material such as dividing it into three parts: pre, while and post-listening activities. In pre-listening activity which is supposed to introduce or lead students towards a main topic of the listening section students are required to answer the following two questions:

- 1) How many percentage of human body consists of bacteria?
- 2) Is human life better without bacteria?

As students strive to form initial opinions about the main topic of the listening task, they are required to give written responses as well. Subsequent to this pre-listening activity, a teacher can present while-listening activity in the form of “multiple choice questions” or “filling the gaps” in which students have to choose one of the presented options in order to complete the sentences extracted from the listening task. In turn, post-listening activities which should be followed after listening to the speech can involve speaking activities organized in the form of exchanging opinions on presented data. Concerning all of them, it should be acknowledged that speaking activities based on this authentic material can be perfectly developed, but the most important point is not to allow students to stray from the main topic. In turn, another possible way of creating speaking activities based on this listening task is to organize a debate involving spoken interaction in

which students have to provide responses amid the process of communication. After students are divided into two groups, a topic like “Bacteria are good for living organisms” can be introduced to students. The role of the listening extract in this case is of utmost importance while presenting opinions in the oral form. Before getting involved in discussions about bacteria, students take some notes about the facts illustrated in this authentic material. They jot down some facts like “Only about one tenth of the cells in our body are really we. The rest are bacteria”, “People also have millions, or trillions, of bacteria in them”, “Particular mites live in human eyelashes and eyebrows” and “Someone did an experiment to see if animals can live without bacteria, and he found that a lot of them died or had to have a special diet”. In fact, all of these examples enable students to become aware of useful profession-oriented vocabulary including collocations (“do an experiment”, “have a special diet”) and grammar constructions (“I really would have preferred not to know that”) as well as emboldening them to develop critical thinking.

Not only debates but also role-plays in which participants imitate some different social roles can be organized on the base of this listening activity as they are also considered one of the best ways of developing students’ language competence in a learning process. A role-play promotes action-based performance of the learners in which participants will be able to communicate with their peers or other participants in the target language. While organizing these types of activities, learners actively take the role of certain members of the society by imitating them. Role-plays mostly involve a communicational process in which learners exchange opinions, give pieces of advice, and provide explanations or instructions in the target language. Besides that, organizing role-plays in EFL classrooms is considered to have a motivational impact on learners. Not only young learners but adults are also inclined towards action-based activities in foreign language classrooms because participation in such kinds of role plays enables them to practice the language. Keeping these points in mind, the technology of organizing role-plays based on this

listening activity can be applied effectively during ESP lessons. Role-plays are possibly organized in a number of ways such as students acting as siblings may build up a conversation about bacteria; or one of the students can be a scientist while others are correspondents who would like to interview him and etc. In general, the role-play enables learners to improve their communicative competence and activate their lexicon encouraging them to practice what they have learned about the topic.

To sum up, both speaking activities (the debate and role-play) based on listening tasks aim at improving students' communicative competence in the target language. While authentic listening materials serve as important sources for learners to get acquainted with English speeches produced by native speakers, speaking activities designed by ESP teachers encourage learners to enhance their communicative competence.

References:

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