From Pizza Hut to Hazard: Some Authentic Materials to Motivate Students.

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Abstract
Students are more motivated to participate in class activities when authentic materials are used. One benefit of using authentic materials is that they encourage students to be responsible for their own learning, while promoting learner-centeredness. Authentic materials are rich in cultural background. The learning of cultures is essential for students, especially as they communicate with others from various cultures and customs. The researcher has designed some worksheets and activities from authentic materials and tested them in classes. These materials and activities have been proven to be interesting for secondary school and adult learners. In addition, a simple survey was distributed to eighty-three students. The students' feedback was gathered, in order to compare and examine if they were more motivated to learn when certain materials they consider interesting—for instance textbooks, handouts and authentic materials—were used in class. The findings and recommendations are also discussed.

Introduction

Authentic materials are generally defined as language materials meant for communication in a non-teaching situation. In a definition coined by Wong, Kwok and Choi (1995), authentic materials are used in the real world and not designed for the instruction of English in the classrooms. Some examples of authentic materials are maps, menus, catalogues, newspapers, songs, flyers, radio advertisements, Internet articles, magazines and many others. All in all, authentic materials are materials that are rich in culture, language and communicative qualities, which are used in a particular society and serve students' communicative and survival needs in that society.

Rationale for using Authentic Materials

Researchers have reported positive outcomes when using authentic materials in their classes. Students were motivated to learn when authentic materials were used in class (Guariento and Morley, 2001). Students have the perception that they are learning language that is used in the community through the use of authentic materials. In addition, students are motivated as they are able to associate and familiarize with the content of authentic materials. Students' confidence is boosted and the fear of losing face or making mistakes is lessened. They are no longer shy to voice their opinions and participate in class activities. Moreover, authentic materials are more appealing than textbooks, as they are more current and associated with everyday issues.

Authentic materials also promote learner-centeredness. As many communicative elements are richly embedded in authentic materials, a variety of activities could be

conducted in pairs or group work. Students are given an opportunity to explore, learn and experience the use of the language. The focal point is the students; the learning process is not teacher-centred.

The language used in authentic materials promotes positive learning among students. Linguists have indicated that all learners should be exposed to linguistic features that are one level beyond the students' knowledge of the language. The linguistic sentence structures and lexis used in authentic materials are generally complex and difficult. That is why it is important to know the students' level of language proficiency before selecting the right authentic materials to be used in the classroom (Guariento & Moley, 2001).

Most authentic materials are rich in culture (Kilickaya, 2004). Cultural elements of the target culture—for instance humor, cultural quotations, the usage of idioms, sayings, proverbs, phrasal verbs, language functions, pragmatics, pronunciation and many others—could be made known to students. The teaching of culture is very important in language teaching, as culture is embedded in the language.

Suggestions for Designing and Developing Activities or Handouts from Authentic Materials

Lee (1995) listed the following guidelines for teachers when designing activities or questions based on authentic materials:

- "In real-life communicative situations, it is common to use more than one language skill to achieve different communicative purposes, and for this reason an integrated skills approach is recommended.
- Contexts have to be provided for tasks, so that learners can practice the skills in a natural, meaningful, and relevant way.
- Tasks must have task validity, that is, the content and nature of the task should develop the language ability we want learners to practice.
- The task contents should be related to the authentic materials selected, so that learners can use them as springboards for their tasks.
- Whether the task is used as pre-activity, practice activity, or post-activity depends on the course objectives, the skill(s) to be practiced, and learners' preferences".

Examples of Using or Adapting Authentic Materials

A take-away menu (Pizza Hut) and a song (Hazard, composed and sung by Richard Marx) were developed for the purpose of this exploratory study. (Please refer to appendixes A and B). A skimming-cum-scanning activity and some grammatical exercises (comparative adjectives and superlative adjectives) were designed from the Pizza Hut take-away menu.

By contrast, Hazard was chosen because the lyric has a story line with an open ending; it depicts the target culture and it contains a strong message. An activity that could be developed from Hazard could be an oral or writing activity where students rewrite the story and predict their own ending.

Students' Feedback

A survey was conducted on eighty-three first-year, second-semester Business Undergraduate students from a private college. Their views and feedback were gathered

as the researcher attempted to assess the effectiveness of using authentic materials, textbooks, and additional photocopied handouts in the classroom.

A variety of authentic materials were given to two groups of business students every alternate week, starting in the second week of classes. The students from both sections were given the same authentic materials by the researcher (who has had more than five years of language teaching experience). In addition, the business textbook and additional photocopied handouts from other textbooks were also used in class. The outcomes of the questionnaire survey are illustrated in tables below. The results are given in the form of percentage scores only, since this was an exploratory study. The statements are in the order that they appeared in the questionnaire used for the survey.

Table 1: Textbook

Statements	Yes	No	Sometimes	Nil	Total
1) The textbook meets the objectives of the course.	32 (38.5%)	10 (12%)	41 (49.39%)	--	83 (99.89%)
2) The textbook helps you to improve your English proficiency.	47 (56.6%)	14 (16.8%)	22 (26.5%)	--	83 (99.9%)
3) I am motivated to learn English through the textbook.	22 (26.5%)	29 (34.9%)	31 (37.34%)	1 (1.2%)	83 (99.94%)
4) The textbook is interesting	35 (42.16%)	14 (16.86%)	34 (40.96%)	--	83 (99.98%)

Most students (49.39%) were uncertain about whether the contents of the textbook met the objectives of the course, while 38.5% felt that the textbook did meet the objectives of the course. Most of the respondents perceived that the textbook did assist them in acquiring the language (56.6%). Many of the respondents (37.34%) sometimes felt motivated to study from the textbook and believed that the textbook was interesting (42.16%). However, 34.9% of the students stated that they were not motivated at all to read the textbook, and only 16.8% felt that the textbook was not interesting at all. Thirty-four students out of 83 (40.96%) believed that only certain components of the textbook were interesting.

When the students gave their feedback regarding the Business English textbook that was used in class, 10 out of 83 commented that the textbook was very good, informative and useful as a reference to prepare them for the workforce. However, six students remarked that the contents in the textbook were boring, and did not help much in improving their proficiency in English. Three students said that the textbook was quite difficult to comprehend. Two students observed that the textbook should have more pictures, attractive comics and more flexible topics. One student lamented that the textbook lacked grammar exercises, and another respondent suggested that a magazine could be used together with the textbook.

Table 2: Photocopied Handouts, Complied Notes and Exercises

Statements	Yes	No	Sometimes	Nil	Total
5) The handouts are useful and relevant to the course structure.	60 (72.28%)	5 (6.02%)	17 (20.48%)	1 (1.2%)	83 (99.89%)
6) The handouts help you to improve your English proficiency.	52 (62.65%)	7 (8.43%)	24 (28.91%)	--	83 (99.99%)
7) The handouts are interesting	24 (28.91%)	17 (20.48%)	42 (50.60%)	--	83 (99.99%)

The data collected indicate that most students (72.28%) thought the extra notes and exercises which the researcher had given in class were useful and did help them (62.65%) in ways to improve their English language proficiency. However, 50.60% of the students felt that only some of the materials were interesting and beneficial. Students felt that the materials were generally useful but should be made more interesting in the future. Some students recommended that the researcher incorporate illustrations or funny pictures together with the notes and exercises. In addition, there were also proposals to include more captivating topics and examples.

Table 3: Authentic Materials (Comics/Newspapers/Music, etc.)

Statements	Yes	No	Sometimes	Total
8) The usage of authentic materials motivates you to learn English.	61 (73.49%)	6 (7.23%)	16 (19.27%)	83 (99.89%)
9) Authentic materials help you to improve your English	57 (68.67%)	2 (2.4%)	24 (28.91%)	83 (99.99%)
10) The authentic materials are interesting	63 (75.90%)	4 (4.81%)	16 (19.27%)	83 (99.99%)

The results in Table 3 indicate that the students positively expressed that the classroom use of various authentic materials had truly inspired and supported them in learning and mastering the English language. In addition, the authentic materials appealed to them (75.90%) the most when compared to the use of the common textbook (42.16%) or the complied notes (28.91%).

Eight students advocated the use of magazines in class, six requested more authentic materials, and another student appealed for more songs and jokes. One student requested the use of a dictionary and the aid of a listening laboratory, while another suggested using movies, more music and the television set to supplement the lessons in the classroom . The following are quotations from two respondents:

"I love music, to focus on lyrics to improve my vocabulary, the newspapers to improve my summary writing and paraphrasing skills" (Respondent 1)

"Music doesn't help much, I prefer magazines and newspapers. Actually, it depends on personal interest." (Respondent 2)

Therefore, it may be important for language teachers to discover what their students' interests are before selecting the various types of authentic materials to be used in the classroom for the teaching and learning process.

Table 4: Comparing the Levels of Motivation Using Textbook, Complied Notes or Authentic Materials in Classes.

Statements	Textbook	Complied Notes	Authetic Materials	Nil	Total
11) Which materials helped you the most to improve your English?	15 (18.07%)	21 (25.3%)	33 (39.75%)	14 (16.86%)	83 (99.89%)
12) Which materials motivated you the most to learn English?	9 (10.84%)	11 (13.25%)	48 (57.83%)	15 (18.07%)	83 (99.9%)
13) Which materials were the most interesting?	6 (7.23%)	3 (3.62%)	59 (71.08%)	15 (18.07%)	83 (100%)

In general it is observed that the use of authentic materials was more appealing to students (71.08%), more motivating (57.83%) and more helpful (39.75%) in acquiring their proficiency in the English language, in comparison with the other materials used in the classroom. This indicates that authentic materials should be extensively encouraged in the language classrooms to aid students' interest and motivation in learning the English language.

Problems and Solutions

Adapting and using authentic materials both carry some disadvantages, according to this study's findings. For example, the learners with low-level language proficiency often had difficultly understanding the contents of the materials. They were not able to cope with the vocabulary, sentence structures or formation of certain phrases within the authentic materials selected (Guariento and Morley, 2001; Richards 2001, cited in Kilickaya, 2004). Adapting and simplifying authentic materials to suit the students with low-level English proficiency, however, are permissible. It is important for students to be attracted to the materials used in order to generate learning. Wong, Kwok and Choi (1995) and Lee (1995) suggested teachers take into consideration their students' level of language proficiency and learning abilities before choosing authentic materials.

Another disadvantage is that developing and adapting authentic materials can be very time-consuming for most teachers, especially those teaching several language classes during the same term. Much thought should be committed to the formation of guidelines and appropriate questions, and to the adaptation of selected authentic materials. In addition, some simple effort must be put into analyzing the target culture, in order to

impart the cultural information to learners. Using authentic materials, therefore, may seem to be a great burden for some teachers, as they are constantly bogged down with selection, reviewing, adaptation and modification of selected materials, along with the vast amount of paperwork that accompanies the teachers' daily chores. Nevertheless, developing authentic materials can be rewarding, and the time spent is well worth the effort.

The pay-off—stimulating and challenging materials in a manner relevant to both teachers and students—is immensely gratifying. Likewise, this researcher felt rewarded to the overall positive reaction of students to the materials, and their active participation in the language classes. Such positive response in the survey has encouraged this researcher to select and to make use of authentic materials in the future.

The Danger of Cultural Bias

Any authentic material could be deemed culturally-biased, ethnocentric, or gender-biased (Martinez (2002, cited in Kilickaya, 2004). Some authentic materials may focus too much on the Anglo-American culture, Anglo-British culture, or the secondary role of women in society. This is especially true in songs, comics, women's magazines, entertainment magazines, and the Internet. In certain societies, the Anglo-American culture or Anglo-British culture is not accepted. Gray (2000) conducted a survey to study 20 Barcelona teachers' perception of the cultural content in ELT reading materials. The teachers were apprehensive with the Anglo-British culture, which is portrayed in the reading material. They perceived the Anglo-British culture as offensive, and believed it to contain sexist attitudes toward women. In order to overcome culture collision, a cross-cultural approach, where students make comparisons between the cultures portrayed in the material and their own culture, is recommended. Another strategy is using international target culture materials as recommended by McKay (2000). International target cultural materials depict various cultures in the world. As English is an International language and used globally, it is important that teachers promote cross-cultural understanding through the materials they use. Ultimately, the teacher's discretion is important when the time comes to choose appropriate authentic materials.

Conclusion

There is a wealth of authentic material to be tapped by language instructors. It takes a little imagination and some effort to look for these sources of useful and abundant teaching and learning materials. Other than the ones mentioned above, authentic materials that can be appropriately adapted for use are sources from the Internet, business and technical reports, radio jingles, entertainment and popular magazines, school journals and selected films. Teachers can use their creativity in using any variety of authentic materials, in order to motivate students to learn the English language.

In conclusion, this researcher endorses the words of Wong, Kwok and Choi (1995): "Authentic materials can serve as a bridge between the classroom and the outside world, and, (along) with a collaborative effort between teacher and students, the learning experience can become a constructive and fulfilling one."

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Appendix A

Take Away Menu from Pizza Hut

A) Grammar Exercises

i) Comparative Exercises

Study the take away menu from Pizza Hut. Then complete the comparison. Use "_____er than", "the same as", "similar", "alike", "different from" or "more _____ than" in your comparisons.

1) Stuffed Crust Pizza is _____(tasty) Classic Crust Pizza.

2) Large 12" Stuffed Crust Supreme Pizza is _____(expensive) Pan Crust Pizza.

3) The price of Regular 9" Supreme Pan Crust is _____the price of Regular 9" Supreme Classic Crust.

4) Veggie Lover Pizza is _____(healthy) Super Supreme Pizza.

5) Personal Family Favourites Pizza is _____(cheap) Regular Family Favourites Pizza.

6) Royal Masala Pizza is_____(spicy) Pepperoni Delight Pizza.

7) Hawaiian Tuna is _____(sour) Chicken Supreme Pizza.

8) The toppings of The Hawaiian Chicken Pizza and the toppings of The Hawaiian Supreme Pizza are _____.

9) The toppings of Island Supreme Pizza are _____ with the toppings of Super Supreme Pizza.

10) The ingredients used to make coleslaw are _____ with the ingredients used to make Salad.

11) The price of "Sesame Cinnamon Breadstix" and "Breadstix" is _____.

ii) Superlative Exercises

Study the take away menu from Pizza Hut. Then complete the superlatives. Use "the ___est", or "the most _____" in your comparisons.

1) Stuffed Crust Large 12" Supreme Pizza is _____(expensive) pizza of all.
2) Personal 6" Family Favourites Pizza is _____(cheap) pizza of all.
3) Stuffed Crust Pizza is _____(tasty) pizza of all.
4) Veggie Lover Pizza is _____(healthy) pizza of all.
5) Royal Masala Pizza is _____ (spicy) pizza of all.
6) Pepsi can is _____ (cheap) product in Pizza Hut.

B) Reading (Skimming\Scanning)

1) All but one pizza below costs RM25.90.
a) Large Pan Crust Super Supreme
b) Large Classic Crust Chicken Supreme
c) Large Classic Crust Island Supreme
d) Large Stuffed Crust Hawaiian Supreme

2) How much does a Hawaiian Chicken Classic Crust Large 12" cost?

_____

3) Why does Royal Masala taste spicier than Hawaiian Chicken?

_____

4) You want to have a party for 20 friends. You can spend RM150. What would you take away from Pizza Hut?

1) Coleslaw	5 containers	RM15.00
2) _____	_____	_____
3) _____	_____	_____
4) _____	_____	_____

5) Which pizza costs more? Large Stuffed Crust Chicken Supreme or Large Pan Crust Chicken Supreme?

_____

6) How much does it cost to purchase one Large Stuff Crust Super Supreme and one Large Pan Crust Island Supreme?

_____

7) Which pizza do you prefer to eat and why? _____

8) How many millilitres are there in a 1.5 litre bottle of Pepsi? _____

9) Pizza Hut sells Chicken Lasagna. T/F
10) Super Supreme Stuffed Crust comes in personal 6. T/F

11) What are the names of the pizzas that have seafood, vegetables and pineapples as the toppings?

_____

12) Pizza Hut will deliver the items to your house free of charge if you order more than RM10 worth of food. T/F

_____

13) Name the side orders that cost only RM2.00 and below. _____

14) Why do you think many young people like to eat Pizza Hut? _____

15) How many types of Pizza Crust do Pizza Hut offers? What are they?

_____

16) What is the difference between Regular Crispy Catch and Large Crispy Catch?

_____

17) Name a menu that only serves potatoes._____

18) It is 21st October, 20__ and you have decided to take away Peperoni Delight Regular Pan Pizza and 4 pieces of Breadstix. How much will the bill cost?
a) RM 16. 90
b) RM 17. 90
c) RM 19. 84
d) RM 20. 89

_____

19) It is 21st October, 20__ and you are in Pizza Hut branch in Genting Highland. Can you obtain a free Garden Fresh Salad if you take away a Thai Seafood Large Pan Pizza? Yes/No

20) After browsing through the take away menu, you decided to have Roasted Delight 2, add on D, add on Pepsi and Seafood Lasagna. How much will the bill cost?

_____

21) If the pizza is delivered to you cold, you could ask for a replacement. T/F

22) You are having holidays in Langkawi and wish to have Pizza for dinner. You can order pizza by dialling 1-300-88-2525. T/F

Appendix B

Hazard (Lyric/Song)
Singer: Richard Marx (1998)
Album: Richard Marx Greatest Hits
Song title: Hazard

A) Listen to the song and fill in the blanks with phrases or words that you hear.

My mother came to Hazard when I _____

Even then the folks in town said with _____
That boy's not right
Three years ago when I _____
First time that someone looked beyond the rumours and lies
And saw the man inside

We used to walk down by _____
She loved to watch the sun go down
We used to walk along _____
And dream our way out of this _____

No one understood what I felt _____
No one cared until the night she _____
And never came home
Man with a badge came _____
Here was I surrounded by a thousand fingers suddenly
Pointed right at me

I swear I left her by the river
I swear I left her safe and sound
I need to make it to the river
And leave this old Nebraska town

I think about my life gone by
How it's done me _____
There's no escape for me this time
All of my rescues are _____

I swear I left her by the river
I swear I left her safe and sound
I need to make it to the river
And leave this old Nebraska town

B) Based on the lyrics above, answer the following comprehension questions:

1) How old was the boy when he and his mother arrived in Hazard?
2) What is the meaning of "prejudice eyes"?
3) What does the following phrase mean? "The boy's not right?"
4) How did the citizens of Hazard treat the boy and his mother? Why were they treated in that manner?
5) When did the singer meet Mary?
6) Did Mary treat the boy like the way the other citizens in Hazard did? Why did Mary treat the boy in that manner?
7) Were the citizens of Hazard unhappy about their relationship?
8) In your opinion, what happened to Mary? Why didn't she come home after going out one night?
9) Who is the "man with the badge"?
10) Why was the 'man with the badge" looking for the boy?
11) In your opinion, what happen to the boy after the "man with the badge" came looking for him?
12) What is the mood of this song? What do you think is the singer's feeling?
13) Do you like this song? Give your reasons.

C) In groups of three, based on the lyrics above, answer the following questions to write a story. You are allowed to change the names of the character, change the time and place. As this song does not provide the ending of the story, come out with your ending.

1) Setting
a) When? _____
b) Where? _____
c) Atmosphere? _____

2) Characters: Who are they? Describe them.

3) Plot
Event 1: What happened first?
Conflict:
Event 2: What happened next?
Event 3: What happened later?
Conflict:
Climax:
Resolution:
Ending: (Comment and moral values)