
PRESENTATION OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NORTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper investigated presentation strategies used by Lecturers in delivering English language instruction in higher institutions in Sokoto and Zamfara state, Nigeria. Three research questions and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the research. An explanatory sequential mixed method sample survey research design was applied in this study. Quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire in the first phase, while qualitative data was also collected in the second. A sample of 232 respondents which comprised of 116 lecturers of English and 116 students from Nine higher institutions across the Sokoto and Zamfara states were selected through a multi stage-sampling technique. Descriptive statistical analysis- frequency mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the responses reflecting the major research questions, while a non-parametric inferential statistics – Mann Whitney U test was used to test the hypothesis. While transcription, organization, coding, and thematic content analysis were applied in the qualitative data analysis. It was found that the lecturers usually present authentic material to the students and assign them to perform peer and group tasks in the classroom or outside the classroom. They also give students various websites and certain internet links to search for material. Sometimes they give some English language instructions in the classroom while the students perform some task online, or makes physical group presentations in the classroom. Part of the recommendations is that: apart from presenting language learning materials that are authentic in nature, lecturers should strive to encourage students to stage a role-play simulating real-life experience as part of authentic strategies in language teaching.

Key words: Authentic materials, English language, Tertiary institutions.

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Introduction

English language in Nigeria takes similar status it has in most developed and developing nations as a global language. The Nigerian education system, in particular, accords a priority attention to the learning of English from primary to tertiary level of education. Therefore, efforts are being made to teach the subject with a prioritized vigour. Although it is used as a second language in Nigeria, learning English is mostly confined to classroom activities rather than under a natural or authentic context like the native speaker environment.

From this instance, Felix (2002) argues that even the best face-to-face learning environment if it is outside the target language country may not provide the required opportunity for mastery of the language as it can only produce a sort of simulation because the setting and the teachers are non-native to the English language.

A worst-case in this instance is when the nonnative speakers of English teach the subject without recourse to the need for integrating authentic learning activities and strategies. Thus, teaching the English Language especially at the tertiary level might

be very successful when all or at least appreciable elements of authenticity are embedded in the delivery or presentation of English Language instructions. In this regard, Ozverir and Herrington (2011) see the authenticity of the language experience beyond the language skills of the native speaker teacher. They thus, propose a balance of authentic and complex tasks, as well as opportunities to speak to proficient and developing speakers of the language as one of the strategies to provide substantial opportunities for the learning of the English language in the schools. Although most teachers consider authentic learning very effective, for years, authentic learning has been difficult to implement. Marilyn (2007) claims that certain experiments are too unsafe, difficult, or expensive to conduct in the classroom. Many are simply impossible to perform. It can however be argued such difficulty might be more realistic only teaching subjects is purely science subjects than the English language. Therefore, authentic strategies might be very successfully implemented in a language class (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014) Authentic learning activities imply various tasks assigned to learners in the real world where they can apply what they learned in class and extend learning in a natural setting that is relevant to them. The basic tenets of authentic learning activities include applicable tasks and are of interest to learners. Although there is the appreciable impact of authentic materials in learning a language such as magazines, books, photographs, leaflets, newspapers advertisements and so on with the hope to create authenticity. these sources could only bring what Mishan and Strunz (2003) described as "cosmetic authenticity" arguing that as they are followed by comprehension questions or vocabulary activities that make the original purpose of the text secondary, there is special need create authenticity in the task to be performed by the learners with the target language.

Literature review

Kilickaya (2004) define authentic materials as exposure to real language and use in its community. These include: news broadcasts, Television adverts, movies, cartoons, quiz shows documentaries, comedy shows, audio-taped short stories and acted novels, songs. Others: are visual materials like pictures, stick- photographs slides, paintings, and children's artwork, wordless street signs, wordless picture books, pictures from newspapers or magazines (Genhard 1996). They and real objects like puppets, utensils rings, scissors, balls, toys, keys, animals, balloons, stones, sticks, umbrellas, and combs wallets, dolls etc. (Hussein 2012).

Berardo (2006) relates a personal experience of using authentic materials in the classroom with advanced learners particularly when given the task to design an intensive reading course for university students: According to him:

The course was to last 6 weeks for a total of 36 hours teaching time, twice a week for 3 hours per lesson, with the only criteria being that they had to be able to read and understand English texts by the end of the course. Most of the students were either advanced or upper intermediate level. The initial approach was to use ESP textbooks, one textbook that was tried was Oxford English for Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, but it was soon discovered that the students were not very motivated and the material not very stimulating. Materials downloaded from the

Internet were then adapted, with tasks being designed to use the different reading skills (Berardo 2006: 223).

This teaching scenario was reported to be very rewarding as it simplified the role of the teacher while the students were given a lot of relevant tasks to perform outside of the classroom. Most of the preparation by the teacher revolved around searching for suitable material and designing tasks. Once in the classroom after having set up the activities, monitoring, giving advice and any eventual feedback becomes easier for the teacher to handle. It was revealed in this instance that the students were highly motivated and preferred working with authentic material. They found both more interesting and up to date than the textbooks. Generally, the authenticity in the materials makes them more stimulating for teaching and learning English. However, the skills and pedagogical expertise and practice of the teacher in presenting the materials to the learners is one critical element for successful instruction.

Herrington, Oliver and Reeves (2003) identified various characteristics of authentic activities or tasks that, when used as design guidelines and especially presented with authentic materials, will certainly provide the necessary and relevant conditions for bridging the gap between the classroom and the real world. According to them, authentic tasks have real-world relevance, they are ill-defined and require students to define the tasks and sub-tasks needed to complete the activity. They also comprise complex tasks to be investigated by students over a sustained period, provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources and equally provide the opportunity for collaboration, reflection and can be integrated, applied across different subject areas and lead beyond domain-specific outcomes.

In addition, Tuttle (2007) and Rivers, (2010) have been required to create activities that are frequently fun, engaging and achievable within a classroom context, while also concentrating on authentic features of language use.

As for the question of utilizing this approach, different scholars have different opinions (Lingzhu and Zhang Yuanyuan, 2010a). Some suggestions given by various scholars is for teachers to Simplify the task or learning content to counter-balance the increased linguistic difficulty of the learning content or text by simplifying the requirements of the task. It is not necessarily the language that makes the authentic material difficult but the task that is set. Others like ...are against any form of simplification or modification to the materials.

If it involves listening, it is possible to use a listening passage that is well beyond the learners' level, provided that what is demanded of the learner is correspondingly simple (Field, 2008). Grading the material used and then following it up with authentic learning activities to be performed by the students is another suggestion when preparing to use authentic recording with English language learners. (Chen 2008) It will be thoughtful for the teacher to have a large collection of written or recording samples, and then you can grade them by the proficiency level of the target learners after which the learners are made to systematically use the language materials for either face to face interaction or technology-supported interaction (Erbaaggio, Sangeetha Gopalakrishnan Sandra Hobbs, 2014)

Field (2008) also noted that with a piece of authentic recording, for example, teachers can design as many tasks as possible. In the classroom, it is always advisable, to begin with simple tasks, and then gradually progress to the more demanding tasks.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the role and status of the English language in Nigeria couple with efforts and various methods and media use in teaching it in Nigerian schools, communicative performance, the outcome of various assessments and examinations have left much to be desired in the level of English language proficiency not only among students but also among teachers and other categories of users (Adewumi & Oweyemi 2012).

A recent case in reference is the report of massive failure in performance of candidates who sat in the year 2021 unified tertiary matriculations examination conducted by Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination Board there is the fear that a large portion of this failure might emanate from the English Language section of the examination.

Over the past decades, scholars in ELT have been giving various reasons and suggesting factors responsible for this kind of dismal performance in the English language. Obanya (2002) for instance, argues against teachers' overdependence on textbooks as the only source of material for language teaching, pointing out that interaction, which should be in form of multi-way and multi-media exchanges in the conduct of classroom teaching and learning activities is significantly absent in the Nigerian context of teaching English. In fact, he concludes that what obtains in the classroom during English language teaching is simply frontal teaching characterized by a heavy reliance on the textbooks as the exclusive teaching-learning materials despite their potential negative effects as they may contain inauthentic language, distort content and fall short in meeting students' needs and interest coupled with the fact that they can deskill teachers. (Yusuf, 2005).

As a response to these kinds of challenges over time, there has been a significant move to make curriculum and content more authentic and relevant to make student learning successful (Apple, 2008) and to allow students to become creative thinkers and problem solvers. This is sometimes done through technology integration. However, successful teaching goes beyond uploading teaching materials online (Palloff & Pratt, 2001). Teachers' confidence in designing proper learning environments and authentic tasks that engage and educate learners are equally very essential (Chung 2008) Worthy of note, is the relevance of authenticity in language learning tasks and activities. Unfortunately, there is the tendency for the majority of English language teachers in Nigerian higher institutions to ignore or give less attention to the use of authentic materials or incorporating authentic activities and strategies as part of their teaching methods and ways to promote the learning of the English language and improve students' performance in the subject. In many schools, colleges and universities, English language teaching practitioners and their learners seem to focus more on covering the course content through school type activities that are not in-depth, less complex, short-timed, and often irrelevant to the real-world situation. Marilyn (2007) advocates Learning-by-doing according to her is the most active way to learn. She argues that with the advantage provided by the Internet and a variety of emerging communication, visualization, and simulation technologies,

teachers can now offer students authentic learning experiences ranging from experimentation to real-world problem-solving.

Thus, investigating teachers practice in presenting authentic materials, activities and strategies in the teaching and learning sessions of the English language at the tertiary level of education in Nigeria remain not only imperative but also necessary in this research. This remains the thrust of this paper.

Research objectives

The objectives of this research are to:

Find out the strategies used by English language lecturers in the presentation of authentic material to the learners of English in tertiary institutions in North- western Nigeria

Determine the perception of students on the strategies used by their lecturers in the presentation of authentic material for the learning of the English language in tertiary institutions in North- western Nigeria.

Find out if there is any difference between the lecturers' strategies of presenting authentic teaching strategies and their students' perception of those strategies.

Research Questions

What are the strategies used by English language lecturers in the presentation of authentic material to the learners of English in tertiary institutions in North- western Nigeria?

What is the perception of students on the strategies used by their lecturers in the presentation of authentic material for learning of English language in tertiary institutions in North- western Nigeria?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the lecturers' strategies and the students' preferred strategies on the presentation of authentic material for English Language instruction in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Methodology

An explanatory sequential mixed method sample survey research design was applied in this study. Quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire in the first phase, while qualitative data was also collected in the second phase of the research to elaborate on the quantitative result. (Creswell, 2014, Ary, Jacob & Sorenson 2010).

All the lecturers of English and all students of English in tertiary institutions in Sokoto and Zamfara states constituted the population of the study while a sample of 232 respondents which comprised of the 116 lecturers of English and 116 students from Nine higher institutions across the Sokoto and Zamfara states were selected through a multi stage-sampling technique. The schools were selected using a stratified random sampling technique while the respondents were selected using

purposive sampling. Among the schools selected, universities, colleges of education and offer the English language as a specialized course while polytechnics offer English as a mandatory General course for English and communication skills which is only taught by specialized English lecturers hence their inclusion in the research. Following a pilot study conducted in an institution with similar characteristics, alpha values of 0.866 and 0.724 were obtained for lecturers' and students' questionnaires respectively and this indicates a good level of internal consistency of the instrument (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009 and Zailinawati, Schattner & Mazza 2006).

Accordingly, Descriptive statistical analysis- frequency, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the responses reflecting research questions 1 and 2, while a non-parametric inferential statistics – *Mann Whitney U test* was used to test the hypotheses. For the qualitative data analysis, transcription, organization, coding, and thematic content analysis were applied to obtain the result.

Results and Discussions

Findings related to research question 1 which sought to examine the strategies used by the lecturers in presenting the authentic materials for English language instructions are presented in Table 1. showing the mean and standard deviation for variables measured in each statement under this construct. It equally shows the overall mean for the construct.

Table 1: Lecturers Presentation Strategies Using Authentic Material

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	MA	A	SA	M	SD	Remark
1	I present internet material to the students and assign them peer and group tasks to perform in the classroom	7	20	19	58	12	3.41	1.080	Agreed
2	I present websites and certain internet links to the students and ask them to search for certain material for their English language course.	7	24	22	50	13	3.33	1.109	Agreed
3	I present some English language instructions in the classroom and ask the students to perform some tasks online.	3	21	25	56	11	3.44	.981	Agreed
4	I present English language instruction with the students making a group presentation that demands the use of the English language.	-	9	12	62	33	4.03	.839	Agreed
5	I engage the students in a role play in which they act different roles simulating real-life experience	-	5	21	65	25	3.95	.756	Agreed
6	I encourage peer and group feedback among students boost the students confidence and promote cooperation	2	-	15	59	40	4.18	.717	Agreed
7	I organize a competition to promote the use of the English language in the class	2	7	18	42	47	4.08	.979	Agreed

9	Overall	3.63	0.923	Agreed
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Table 1 above presents findings related to research question 1 which sought to examine the strategies used by the lecturers in presenting the authentic internet materials for English language instruction. Therefore, with a mean value of 3.41, the respondents confirmed that they present internet material to the students and assign them peer and group tasks to perform in the classroom. With the mean value of 3.33, they also reported that they present websites and certain internet links to the students and ask them to search for certain material for their English language course. Equally, having the mean value of 3.44 the respondents agreed that they present some English language instructions in the classroom and ask the students to perform some tasks online. Also with the mean value of 4.03, the respondents affirmed that they present English language instruction with the students making a group presentation that demands the use of the English Language. In addition, a mean value of 3.95 shows that the lecturers engage the students in a role play in which they act different roles simulating real-life experiences. Furthermore, with a mean value of 4.18, the respondents confirmed that they encourage peer and group feedback among students to boost the students' confidence and promote cooperation. With the mean value of 4.18, the respondents revealed that they organize a competition to promote the use of the English language in the class. The overall mean for the entire items under this construct stands at 3.63 which represents an agreement level.

Students' preferred Strategies for the presentation of Authentic Internet material

Table 2 presents findings, which sought to determine the perception of students on their preferred strategies which their lecturers should consider in presenting authentic internet materials for English language instruction. It shows the mean and standard deviation for variables measured in each statement under this construct. It equally shows the overall mean for the construct.

Table 2: Students' preferred Strategies for the presentation of Authentic Internet material

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	MA	A	SA	M	ST.D	Remark
1	I learn the English language better with authentic internet material when we perform peer and group tasks in the classroom	1	7	24	49	34	3.94	.911	Agreed
2	I like to be given websites and certain internet links by my teachers to search for authentic internet material for my English language course	4	11	25	43	32	3.77	1.066	Agreed
3	I like to perform some tasks online and work with authentic material.	1	5	30	42	38	3.96	.917	Agreed
4	I prefer to make a group presentation where we use	1	4	18	34	59	4.26	.905	Agreed

	the English language with my coursemates										
5	I like a role play in which I act different roles reflecting real-life experience as we learn English in the class.	1	4	20	44	45	4.12	.876	Agreed		
6	I prefer to receive corrections through feedback from my fellow students during the English language	1	4	11	50	49	4.23	.831	Agreed		
7	English language games and competitions help me to learn and use English in the class	1	4	7	45	59	4.35	.823	Agreed		
8	Overall						4.09	0.904	Agreed		

Table 2 presents findings, which sought to determine the perception of students on the preferred strategies which their lecturers should consider in presenting authentic internet materials for English language instruction. Therefore, with a mean value of 3.94, the students confirmed that they learn the English language better with authentic internet material when they perform peer and group tasks in the classroom. With the mean value of 3.77, the students also reported that they like to be given websites and certain internet links by their teachers tasking them to search for authentic internet material for their English language course. Equally, having the mean value of 3.96 they confirmed that they like to perform some tasks online and work with authentic material. Furthermore, with the mean value of 4.96, the students revealed that they prefer to make a group presentation where they use the English language with their coursemates. Also a mean value of 4.12, the students show their preference for a role play in which they act different roles reflecting real-life experience as they learn English in class. Furthermore, with a mean value of 4.23, the students prefer to receive corrections through feedback from their fellow students during English language instruction. Accordingly, the mean value of 4.35 indicates the perception of the students that English language games and competition help them to learn and use the English Language in the class. The overall mean for the entire items under this construct stands at 4.09 representing agreement level.

Table 3: Lecturers presentation strategies vs students' preferred strategies

	Lecturers'presentation strategies vs students' preferred strategies
Mann-Whitney U	4649.500
Wilcoxon W	11435.500
Z	-4.081
Asymp. Sig (2 tailed)	.000

Table 3 shows the result of the comparison between lecturers' strategies and students' preferred strategies for the presentation of authentic material for English Language

instruction. A Mann Whitney U test inferential statistics was employed to determine the statistical significance of this comparison. The results pointed out that there is a significant difference between the lecturers' strategies and the students' preferred strategies on the presentation of authentic internet material for English Language instruction ($U=4649.500$ $P = .000 > 0.05$). Thus, the significant value of .000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Against this background, therefore, we reject the null hypothesis which states that: There is no significant difference between the lecturers' strategies and the students' preferred strategies on presentation of authentic internet material for English Language instruction and conclude that lecturers' strategies are significantly different from students' preferred strategies in the presentation of authentic internet material for English Language instruction.

Discussion

Finding in this research study reveals that the lecturers' presentation strategies in the use of authentic internet material include: Presenting internet material to the students and assigning them peer and group tasks to perform in the classroom, giving websites and certain internet links to the students to search for material, presenting some English language instructions in the classroom while the students perform some task online, presenting English language instruction with the students making a group presentation. The findings equally indicate that the role-play engaged by the students simulating real life experience coupled with the use of peer and group feedback are also encouraged. This is perhaps why Apple (2008) supports the move to make curriculum and content authentic and relevant to student learning. This is achieved because it allows students to become creative thinkers and problem solvers. This is sometimes done through technology integration. However, successful teaching goes beyond uploading teaching materials online as cautioned by Palloff & Pratt, (2001). Another significant variable is the Teachers' confidence in designing proper learning environments and authentic tasks that engage and educate learners are equally very essential (Chung 2008).

The outcome of the qualitative data obtained through interviews also seems to support the above finding as captured in the expressions of the lecturers like:

Well, usually a good presentation is when you present a topic and ask students to discuss; to deliberate on the topic then there you will be adding your material to them. Or on the other way, you can give them the topic beforehand and ask them to go to the internet, source out get the material in groups and then come to class and make a presentation (Lecturer Participant 3)

The students' views on the above are not different as indicated in their statements:

Honestly, I like an active class whereby we cooperate with both teachers and students because through interaction, sometimes fellow students can help one to understand what he didn't get well from the teacher (Student participant 2) This view is supported by Marilyn (2007) who advocates Learning-by-doing. According to her is the most active way to learn. She argues that with the advantage provided by the Internet and a variety of emerging communication, visualization, and simulation technologies, teachers can now offer students authentic learning experiences ranging from experimentation to real-world problem-solving.

It has also been observed that in the use of authentic material what seems to be the most significant thing is what kind of methods are adopted in presenting these materials to the learners for instruction. (Lingzhu and Zhang Yuanyuan, 2010).

As it relates to the lecturers' strategies presentation, therefore, the findings of this research agree with Field (2008) who posits that with a piece of authentic material, teachers can design as many tasks as possible. He argues that in the classroom, it is always advisable, to begin with, simple tasks, and then gradually progress to the more demanding tasks.

Recommendations

Given the above findings, this paper recommends as follows:

lecturers should implement strategies that will allow learners to perform peer and group tasks and presentations in the classroom.

The students should also be tasked to search for websites and certain internet links for materials for learning English.

Students should be tasked to stage a role-play simulating real-life experiences.

Lecturers should engage their students in healthy competitions, extra-curricular activities and games that promote their students use of the English language both within and outside the classroom.

Managements of tertiary institutions should provide resources for English language learning and accessibility to the internet for online learning and research for the benefit of both the students and lecturers

Conclusion

Based on the outcome of this study, it can be simply concluded that lecturers of the English language have embraced the use of authentic material especially sourced from the internet and use them in the teaching and learning of English. The presentation or delivery strategies used by the lecturers' students that the students have some freedom and pedagogical support to construct their knowledge through collaboration and interaction among themselves. This practice will promote the teaching and learning of the English language in Nigerian higher institutions based on the current fact that both teachers and students support this approach as a very essential pedagogical option. It is believed that this will improve students reading culture, stimulate imaginations and sustains attention and interest in the learning of the English Language through online practices classroom presentations and other collaborative and individual tasks among students.

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