

The power of real language: The importance of authentic texts (newspaper articles) in teaching reading competence

Turg'unboyev Muhammadbobur Faxriddin o'g'li

Teacher at Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages named after

Is'hakhan Ibrat

Email: boburteacher99@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the importance of newspaper articles as authentic texts in teaching reading skill. In this article, the concept of reading and reading comprehension are defined, with explaining how to teach it to students using newspaper articles. Form 10 students are chosen as a sample population of this study and most students are inclined to boost their reading comprehension through getting exposed to newspaper articles easily and efficiently. The result of this study is expected to help teachers to teach reading skill using new teaching strategies which encourage their students to learn more and enhance their reading comprehension.

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 14th May 2025

Accepted: 11th June 2025

KEYWORDS:

authentic texts, newspaper articles, reading comprehension and reading competence

Introduction

Many teachers often hesitate whether to use classroom materials or authentic texts in their teaching practices, especially in teaching reading competence. Firstly, it is important to define what authentic texts are. Authentic texts are materials created for real-life communication by native speakers rather than for educational purposes. They reflect natural language usage providing insight into the culture, context, and nuances of a language. The following sources can be vivid examples of authentic texts;

- Literature: Novels, poems, and short stories.
- Media: Newspapers, magazines, and online articles.
- Speeches: Public addresses and presentations.
- Websites: Blogs, forums, and social media posts.
- Instructional materials: Manuals, recipes, and guides.

Using authentic texts in learning helps improve language skills exposing learners to genuine language use, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references. Besides, it is important to mention the advantages of using authentic texts in teaching English over depending on classroom materials. Authentic materials represent language as it is used in real-life contexts, providing learners with exposure to genuine language use, including idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and cultural nuances. These resources offer learners the opportunity to engage with language in authentic communicative situations, enhancing their language proficiency and promoting cultural awareness. On the other hand, classroom materials are specifically designed for language instruction, often focusing on controlled language practice and skill development. These materials are tailored to meet the learning objectives of a particular lesson or course, providing structured language input and practice activities. One of the key differences between authentic and classroom materials lies in their relevance to learners' real-life language needs. Authentic materials reflect the language learners will encounter outside the classroom, allowing them to develop the necessary language skills for effective communication in real-world situations. By exposing learners to authentic texts, educators can bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life language use, fostering a deeper understanding of the language and its cultural context.

In contrast, classroom materials may lack the authenticity and relevance needed to fully prepare learners for authentic communication experiences. Moreover, authentic materials offer a rich source of linguistic input that can enhance learners' language acquisition process. Authentic texts provide exposure to authentic language structures, vocabulary usage, and discourse patterns, allowing learners to develop their language proficiency in a natural and contextually meaningful way.¹ For these reasons, it would be a sensible decision to use authentic texts in teaching English particularly in improving reading skill helping to understand the purpose of the text.

1. The concept of reading and reading comprehension

Reading is the process of interpreting written symbols to derive meaning. It encompasses various skills and activities, including decoding- recognizing and pronouncing written words, comprehension -understanding and interpreting the meaning of text, fluency- the ability to read smoothly and accurately and critical thinking- analyzing and evaluating the content of what is read. reading can be found in different sources such as books, newspapers, magazines, journals and the like. the importance of reading is undeniable for students to achieve success in their academic performance. In fact, reading has diverse definitions and here are some of them:

Thomas (1982:36) defines reading as the perception of written symbols as meaningful, involving recognition of words, fluency, and comprehension. Ranking & Sciener (1985:57) in Kustaryo (1998:2) say that the reading is recognition of various written symbols with exiting knowledge and comprehension of the information and ideas communicated. From the definition we can see that the reading is combination of some components that result in one action that is known as reading. This statement is supported by Smith. He says that reading involves two aspect of the reader himself internal and external aspects. In addition, Nurhadi (1988:13) say that reading is the complex and complicated process because it involves the internal and external factors of reader. The internal factors mean everything with comes from the reader that can result in an interaction in the reading process. The external factors mean everything which has relationship with the reading materials and the environment where the reading taking place. Nurhadi (1988:13) classifies the internal and external factors as follows: Internal factors: (IQ) intelligence, interest, attitude, talent, motivation, and the aims of reading. Kustaryo (1998:2) defines reading as the activity that consists of the combination of word recognition, intellect, and emotion interrelated with the prior knowledge to understand the message being communicates. It can be concluded that the successful readers are those who establish purpose reading, so that they are able to comprehend the content of a passage.

Following these, reading comprehension also plays a vital role in learning process as it supports effective learning critical thinking and effective communication making it foundational for both personal and academic grows. In fact, reading comprehension is defined as ability to understand, interpret and analyze a written text. According to Prapas Kaewketpong , reading comprehension means the understanding, evaluating and utilize of information and ideas gained through an interaction between the reader and the author. Reading comprehension is such a kind of dialogue between an author and a reader in which the written language becomes the medium that cause the dialogue happen when the two persons communicate through the medium of print.²

2. Advantages of using newspaper articles in classroom setting

A newspaper is a printed or digital publication that provides news, information, and commentary on current events and various topics. Using newspaper in teaching reading skill is really beneficial for both educators and learners. According to Grundy (1993:9) Newspaper have fulfilled this requirement. First, it can be used as cross cultural medium, because newspapers probably the best single source of information about the host culture and about the most important people in the host society. It can be taught for something about psychology, habits and values of people in the foreign culture. Second, the realistic characters and actions may motivate students for reading. Third, newspapers can be used to teach other language skills: listening, speaking

¹ Shady Abuyusuf. (2025). The Importance of Authentic Texts in English Language Teaching.

² Prapas Kaewketpong. Improvement of Reading Comprehension by Using English Newspaper.

and writing. Good teaching material can be used to teach many aspects of language. Again, newspapers have this qualification. As stated by Joe Pemagbi:

“Newspaper can be used to teach many aspects of language and communication skills.

Editorials and gossip columns can be used to teach formal and informal varieties of English; editorials and feature articles can provide passage for summary and comprehension; letters to editor can demonstrate good features of letter writing. A newspaper may contain material for teaching various types of writing: description, analysis and synthesis, comparison and contrast and process description; and they provide models of good written form: paragraphing, topic sentence, introductions, conclusion, etc. Finally, newspapers present pedagogic structure.

Methodology

B2 level students who are in form 10 are selected as a research population to study the effectiveness of using newspaper articles to boost reading comprehension of the students. This research involves 12 students at the grade 10. In this case the researcher used an article which is called [Demand for beef speeds destruction of Amazon forest](#) from the newspaper Guardian weekly as a reading material to check the students comprehension about the data in the article. The teacher distributed an article printed on paper, which was selected taking the level of students in advance. The reading involves pre and post reading question to further foster overall understanding of a message in the text. The research instruments of this study are article brought from the Guardian weekly and questions which were created by teacher to check how much the students understand the text.

Here is the article and the reading questions which were used in the study.

[Demand for beef speeds destruction of Amazon forest](#)

According to a recent report, last year was a very bad year for deforestation in the Amazon region of Brazil. Satellite pictures showed that almost 26,000 sq km of the world's largest continuous forest was lost, 40% more than in the previous year. And this year's loss could be greater, according to the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The main reason for the destruction of the forest is the increasing demand for Brazilian beef in Europe. Many people are afraid that European cattle are still infected with mad cow disease and foot and mouth disease, so Brazilian beef is becoming more and more popular. The CIFOR report says that EU countries now take almost 40% of Brazil's 578,000 tonnes of exported beef. Egypt, Russia and Saudi Arabia between them import 35%. The US takes only 8% because it has strict limits on imports in order to protect its own beef producers.

"Beef exports are the main cause of the deforestation, as cattle ranchers are destroying the rainforests," said David Kaimowitz, the director general of CIFOR. He said that logging contributed only indirectly to deforestation. The number of cattle in the Amazon region more than doubled to 57 million between 1990 and 2002, the report says. "[In that time] the percentage of Europe's processed meat imports that came from Brazil rose from 40% to 74%. Markets in Russia and the Middle East are also responsible for much of this new demand for Brazilian beef."

But the report does not agree with the American argument that GM-free soya farming for the European market is leading to deforestation. "Although there has been a lot of concern in recent years about the increase of soybean cultivation in the Amazon region, it only leads to a small percentage of total deforestation," the authors say. Mr Kaimowitz said that the rate of Amazonian deforestation could increase in the next few years as foot and mouth disease disappears from Brazil.

The report says that giant ranching operations linked to European supermarkets are now dominating the beef export market. "In the 1970s and 1980s most of the meat from the Amazon was being produced by small ranchers selling to local slaughterhouses. Very large commercial ranchers linked to supermarkets are now targeting the whole of Brazil and the global market," Mr Kaimowitz said. Last month President Luis Inacio (Lula) da Silva announced new measures worth \$133m to control the rate of deforestation in the Amazon and provide greater support for local regions and community forestry. "The government's approach goes in the right direction, but without urgent action the Brazilian Amazon could lose an additional area the size of Denmark over the next 18 months."

CIFOR recommends that the Brazilian government should also try to keep ranchers off government land, restrict road projects that open up the forest, and provide economic incentives to maintain land as forest.

Pre-reading

Match	these	words	with	their	activities meanings.
1.					deforestation
2.					logging
3.					cattle
4.					rancher
5.					slaughterhouse
6.					restrict
a.	a person who owns or manages a large farm in the Americas				
b.	to place limits on something				
c.	the process of removing all the trees from a large area of land				
d.	the work of cutting down trees for wood				
e.	cows kept by farmers for their milk and meat				
f.	a building where animals are killed for their meat				

Post reading activities

Choose the best answer for each question:	
1. What, according to the report, is the main reason for the increase in deforestation in Brazil?	
a.	soya farming
b.	logging
c.	cattle farming
2. Why is there an increased demand for Brazilian beef?	
a.	because there is still a fear of cattle disease in Europe
b.	because it is cheaper than soya
c.	because the US has strict limits on imports
3. What, according to the Americans, is the main reason for deforestation in Brazil?	
a.	GM-free soya farming
b.	logging
c.	cattle farming
4. What will happen if urgent action is not taken?	
a.	cattle farming will increase even more
b.	an area the size of Denmark could be lost in the next 18 months
c.	road building in the forests will increase

Results

The finding of the research shows that using newspaper article in teaching reading can enhance reading comprehension of students. This can be seen from the result of tests which were given to students, it was noted that at the early stage of the research, the students were weak in reading comprehension because of using classroom materials about which are somehow boring for them. Theoretically, the enhancement was achieved because the students had been treated with authentic texts- newspaper articles. The students made progress in their reading skill with the method applied. This can be seen from the score gained by the students in the test. It was identified that after being treated with the authentic materials the teaching learning process become much better and enjoyable and effected positively to enhance students reading competence. Implementing this method is deduced to bring a good impact to students to have a greater motivation to do reading more an opportunity to learn current events around the world and learning new culture

Discussion

Based on the findings of the implementation of newspaper articles in teaching reading to improve reading comprehension, any English teacher can use this method to teach reading taking into their students level into account. As a result, the process of teaching and learning become more creative and enjoyable. For the future researchers the finding of this research project can also be used as references. They, future researchers can

also carry out this method for other level at which to strengthen the present result so that they can be applied for more classroom setting.

References

1. Shady Abuyusuf. (2025). The Importance of Authentic Texts in English Language Teaching.
2. Prapas Kaewketpong. (2015). Improvement of Reading Comprehension by Using English Newspaper.
3. Kustaryo, Sukirah. (1998). Reading Technique for Collage Student's. Jakarta: Depdikbud-P2 LPTK.
4. Nurhadi. (1988). Fast and effective reading.
5. Grundy. (1993). Newspaper. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/weekly>