ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23
American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 04,2026

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

DEVELOPING SPEAKING COMPETENCE USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN EFL CLASSES

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of using authentic materials to develop speaking competence among learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Grounded in Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching, the research investigates how real-life language input enhances learners' communicative performance. The study highlights the pedagogical value of integrating authentic resources into EFL speaking instruction and provides methodological recommendations for classroom implementation.

Keywords

speaking competence, authentic materials, EFL, communicative competence, TBLT, CLT

Introduction. In contemporary language education, the development of speaking competence is a central objective, particularly in EFL contexts where exposure to real communication is limited. Traditional textbook-based instruction often fails to prepare learners for real-life interaction. The shift toward communicative approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes meaningful communication over form-focused instruction. In this regard, authentic materials—defined as texts and resources created for real-life purposes—play a crucial role in bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world language use.

Despite their recognized importance, many EFL classrooms still rely heavily on simplified or artificial materials, which limits learners' communicative development. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of authentic materials on developing speaking competence. The present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using authentic materials in developing speaking competence among learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. In line with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching, the research focuses on how exposure to real-life language input contributes to meaningful communication and improved oral performance.

More specifically, the study seeks to examine the impact of authentic materials on the overall development of learners' speaking competence[1]. It pays particular attention to key components of speaking, including fluency, accuracy, and interaction, in order to assess the extent to which these elements are enhanced through the use of authentic resources. In addition, the research aims to identify and evaluate effective pedagogical strategies for integrating authentic materials into classroom practice, ensuring that their use is both practical and beneficial for learners.

To achieve these objectives, the study addresses several key research questions. First, it explores the overall effect of authentic materials on EFL learners' speaking competence, with the goal of determining whether such materials lead to measurable improvements in oral communication. Second, it investigates which specific aspects of speaking competence—namely fluency, accuracy, or interaction—show the greatest development when authentic materials are employed[2]. Finally, the study examines the pedagogical challenges that may

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arise during the implementation process, considering both teacher- and learner-related factors that could influence the effectiveness of this approach.

In particular, they are expected to enhance learners' fluency by promoting more spontaneous and continuous speech, improve accuracy through exposure to natural grammatical structures, and strengthen interaction skills by encouraging meaningful communication and real-life conversational exchanges[8].

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the relationship between instructional input and communicative outcomes in EFL education. Within this framework, the use of authentic materials is considered the independent variable, while speaking competence—comprising fluency, accuracy, and interaction—serves as the dependent variable[4]. The model assumes that exposure to authentic language input increases learners' motivation and engagement, which function as mediating factors in the learning process. As learners interact with real-life language through carefully designed speaking tasks, they are more likely to participate actively and develop their communicative abilities.

Overall, the framework suggests that authentic materials contribute to the development of speaking competence indirectly by enhancing exposure, motivation, and interaction. Through the integration of communicative and task-based activities, learners are provided with meaningful opportunities to practice language in context, leading to measurable improvements in fluency, accuracy, and interaction skills[5]. This conceptualization aligns with contemporary approaches such as Content and Language Integrated Learning, which advocate for contextualized and content-rich language learning environments.

Material and Methods: This study employed a quasi-experimental research design to investigate the effectiveness of authentic materials in developing speaking competence among EFL learners. The research involved two groups: an experimental group, which received instruction through authentic materials, and a control group, which was taught using traditional textbook-based materials. This design enabled a comparative analysis of the two instructional approaches and allowed for the identification of differences in students' speaking performance.

This sample was selected due to its relevance to EFL contexts where learners often have limited opportunities for authentic communicative practice. To collect data, several research instruments were employed[6]. Pre-test and post-test speaking tasks were administered to evaluate students' speaking competence before and after the instructional intervention. These tasks were designed to elicit natural and spontaneous speech, including activities such as expressing opinions, describing situations, and participating in short dialogues. Students' performance was assessed using a structured rubric that focused on four key components of speaking competence: fluency, accuracy, interaction, and pronunciation. In addition, a classroom observation checklist was used to monitor students' engagement, participation, and interaction during the lessons, providing supplementary qualitative insights into the learning process [10].

These activities were designed to simulate real-world communication and promote active language use. In contrast, the control group followed a traditional approach, working with textbook dialogues and scripted speaking exercises that emphasized controlled practice rather than spontaneous interaction[11]. This analytical approach allowed the researcher to determine whether the use of authentic materials led to significant improvements in learners' speaking competence.

Result and discussion: The results of the study indicate a statistically and pedagogically significant improvement in the speaking competence of students in the experimental group compared to those in the control group. Overall, learners who were exposed

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to authentic materials demonstrated greater progress across all assessed components of speaking competence, including fluency, accuracy, interaction, and pronunciation.

Overall, the findings reveal that students who participated in authentic, communication-oriented activities developed higher levels of fluency and spontaneity in their speech. Their interaction skills improved significantly as a result of engaging in real-life communicative tasks such as discussions, role-plays, and presentations[12]. The findings of the present study clearly demonstrate that the use of authentic materials has a significant positive impact on the development of speaking competence among EFL learners. The results revealed that students in the experimental group outperformed those in the control group across all key components of speaking, including fluency, accuracy, interaction, and pronunciation. These outcomes can be interpreted in light of contemporary language teaching approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching, both of which emphasize meaningful communication and the use of real-life language in instructional settings.

Another important aspect of the findings is the role of motivation and engagement as mediating factors in the learning process. Students who were taught using authentic materials appeared to be more interested and actively involved in classroom activities. This increased engagement likely contributed to their improved performance, as motivated learners are more willing to participate in communicative tasks and take risks in using the target language. These include the potential difficulty of linguistic input, the need for careful material selection, and the requirement for effective instructional scaffolding. Teachers must therefore play a crucial role in adapting materials to learners' proficiency levels and designing tasks that facilitate comprehension and interaction.

In conclusion, the findings of this study support the view that authentic materials are a valuable pedagogical tool for developing speaking competence in EFL contexts. Their integration into classroom practice not only enhances learners' communicative abilities but also increases motivation and engagement. These results have important implications for language teaching, particularly in non-philological settings such as engineering education, where opportunities for real-life communication are often limited.

Conclusion: The present study set out to investigate the effectiveness of authentic materials in developing speaking competence among EFL learners. The findings clearly demonstrate that the integration of authentic materials into language instruction leads to significant improvements in learners' speaking performance, particularly in terms of fluency, interaction, accuracy, and pronunciation. Compared to traditional textbook-based approaches, authentic materials provide richer linguistic input and create more opportunities for meaningful communication.

The results confirm that exposure to real-life language use enhances learners' ability to communicate spontaneously and effectively. Students who participated in authentic, communicative activities were more confident, more engaged, and better able to express their ideas in English. These outcomes support the principles of Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Language Teaching, which emphasize the importance of interaction and real-world language use in developing communicative competence.

In addition, the study highlights the importance of integrating authentic materials in non-philological contexts, particularly in engineering education, where students often lack sufficient opportunities to practice spoken English in real-life situations. By incorporating authentic resources such as videos, podcasts, and real-world texts, teachers can create a more dynamic and communicative learning environment that better prepares students for professional and academic communication.

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Overall, the study concludes that authentic materials are not only an effective tool for improving speaking competence but also an essential component of modern EFL pedagogy. Their use contributes to the development of well-rounded communicative skills and supports learners in becoming more confident and competent speakers of English.

In conclusion, the integration of authentic materials, supported by appropriate pedagogical strategies, can significantly improve the quality of EFL speaking instruction and better prepare learners for real-world communication.

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