

# ОПУБЛИКОВАТЬ СТАТЬЮ

в изданиях НИЦ "Социосфера"



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UDC 378.016:37.01

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS  
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**Abstract.** The article reveals the significance of authentic materials as a specific kind of resources created for the purpose of language teaching and particularly Business English training purposes. It highlights why the authentic materials might be used in the language teaching process. The author also analyses the selection and ways of exploiting of such materials according to the students' needs in terms of their skills and language requirements.

**Keywords:** authentic material; training purposes; selection and exploitation of authentic materials; learners; language requirements; text materials; language activities; listening skills; reading skills; speaking skills; authentic audio and video materials.

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As a whole, the authentic material is a kind of material taken from the real life and not created for the purpose of language teaching. It can be a text, video or audio material, or it can be objects such as products, equipment or models. The authentic material that is most useful for Business English training purposes is produced by companies for use by their staff or client information.

There are some reasons why the authentic material might be used in the language teaching process. First, the authentic texts have a number of features that are often lacking in the texts created for learning English. They exemplify the particular register to which they belong (for example, academic, legal or journalistic) and often contain specific terminology and sometimes typical organizational structures and sentence patterns. The language used in such texts reflects the specific purpose for which the material was created and targets of the learners for whom it was intended. Moreover, the authentic text includes the type of language which the learner may need to develop skills for understanding.

Second, the material may provide information about real-life situations or events. In this case it is the content of the material ra-

ther than the language which is useful for the teacher and learner.

It should be noted that when selecting the material, it is very important to keep in mind the three main aspects such as what learners it is for, what the training purpose is and how the material can be used. The ways of exploiting the material depend on its type and content and have to relate to the needs of the learners in terms of their skills and language requirements.

As a rule, text materials provide a model of authentic written language. Authentic audio and video materials provide a model of spoken language which differs in many features from written language [5].

The use of text materials should be seen in relation to the needs of the learners. Depending on its content, the text could be used for the language activities which focus on the vocabulary, structures or functions it contains. The teacher needs to think about what is most useful for the learners and whether they need to use this language or be able to recognize its meaning when reading. The language which is only found in written texts should not be the focus of an oral production activity.

However, many Business English learners require speaking and listening skills [4]. To provide this kind of practice, the text is to be adapted in some other way. For example, the text could be used by the teacher only for its information content. If the learners need listening skills rather than reading skills, the teacher could use the content of the text to present information orally to the learners. Moreover, texts (for example, magazine articles) can be used to stimulate discussion and practice summarizing or forecasting possible outcomes and making comparisons with their own experiences.

In general different types of text material can be evaluated in terms of which groups of learners could more benefit from using them, what teaching purposes (in terms of target language and skills) they could be used for and what kinds of activities can be developed to achieve the teaching purposes.

Summarizing these aspects the following types of text material can be underlined:

1. Books, journal and newspaper articles.

As a whole, books may have been written for study purposes at universities or may be aimed at people who want to improve their knowledge and skills. Some may be very academic, some more practical (for example, business books). It is worth noting that they are particularly useful for all kind of learners if the content is relevant. A prerequisite to setting a reading task based on a book extract or magazine article should be that the learner would be interested in reading the text if it were in his or her own language.

2. Pictures, charts, diagrams.

These are useful for producing language, not for providing a model (unless accompanied by a text). They appeal to learners who work a lot with visual material. Charts containing figures are appropriate for all kind of learners who have to present some results.

3. Advertisements.

Job advertisements can be used by the learners to apply for jobs in English. They should learn letter writing, preparation of a CV in English and even interview role plays. Product advertisements can be used for mak-

ing comparisons or discussing advertising techniques.

4. Company material:

- Annual reports. They usually contain company accounts, details of directors and company structure, changes made in the company in the previous year and a report on the financial standing of the company. These are especially useful for the learners to be able to present his or her own company.
- Correspondence. Letters may be formal or informal, and can have a range of different functions. The skill of writing letters is useful for those who will have to deal with their own correspondence.
- Reports and memos. These may simply be short notes. These are relevant to the learners who have to read them or write them.
- Manuals and instructions. These are grouped together because they have a common purpose and similar use of instructional language, although they may refer to either technical or administrative procedures. These are useful for those learners who have to read or write them. Written instructions could be reproduced as oral instructions if this is appropriate to the learners' needs.
- Brochures and specifications. Most companies produce brochures for their clients about their products and services. Some of these have a general content aimed at non-specialists, others may contain specific technical information for people in the trade. The teacher can make use of the text, the specifications (for example, figures and technical details) or pictures and diagrams relating to a company's product.
- PR materials. Some of these can be of general interest to both company staff and people outside the company (for example, the brochures about the company's environmental policy).

As with text materials, audio and video recordings can be used simply as background information for the teacher or for listening

practice and language work or as a stimulus for a variety of oral activities.

Thus, to exploit authentic materials the following tasks and activities can be developed: using authentic material to develop speaking skills, to practice extracting information from a text, to develop listening skills, to improve learners' comprehension of presentations, to extend letter-writing vocabulary.

Authentic material may provide the core of a very specialized course if the course objective is, for example, to develop skills for reading manuals, instructions, contracts or financial reports, or to develop letter-writing or report-writing skills. On the other hand, authentic material may be used to supplement Business English material by adding interest and variety.

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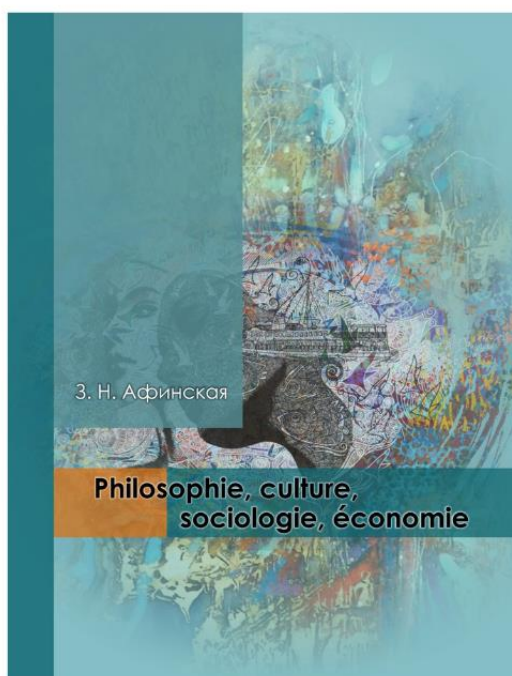
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