

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING WRITTEN COMPETENCE THROUGH AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

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Improving written competence with the help of authentic materials is a powerful and effective way to enhance language skills. Nowadays, linguists are discovering more and more new methods and techniques in order to make the process of acquiring language skills easier. The purpose of authentic materials is also concluded in the matters of time-saving, since by integrating with real-life materials or handouts, learners might with ease implement and heed the rules in writing. Today's learners have an access to a wide range of resources that are created for native speakers of a particular language, including daily newspapers, low-circulation and advertising tabloids, magazines, books or even social media posts. The listed materials serve for the learners as a big chance to engage with language in its natural context, allowing them to develop linguistic and writing skills in a more meaningful way. Factually, it cannot be denied the fact that authentic materials enhance motivation and inspire learners to deeply learn grammatical structures via scripts. Day by day the number of bilinguals is step by step showing upward trend as they are counted mostly as visual learners. They learn best when they see information through visual aids and images. Additionally, this type of learners is naturally attracted to visual stimuli, and find it useful to use and integrate with various postcards, or should it be food labels, train schedules, websites blogs, price tags, recipes or menus. Worth to mention, that learners should take into consideration the effectiveness of selected materials, they must be relevant to the learners' interests, needs and, of course, proficiency level.

Authentic materials are materials that are not created or adapted specifically for language learners. The language is real and raw just as it is in everyday life. When used cleverly and blended with graded materials (ELT textbooks and materials), authentic materials can keep learners interested and engaged in language learning. Per to many teachers, it's too difficult to use authentic materials with low-level learners. Scholars in the field of language learning and education have highlighted the significance and benefits of leveraging authentic materials. Methodologists' opinions may differ when it comes to the effectiveness of authentic materials. While Diane Larsen-Freeman define authentic materials as a bridge between language learning and real-world communication, offering learners opportunities to engage with a target language in meaningful contexts [2; 44], Dr. John H. Schumann state that authentic materials may pose potential challenges for learners in terms of hindering their comprehension and linguistic complexity, potentially leading to frustration and disengagement [3; 125]. Moreover, It is useless to adapt to a target language without scaffolding, since it could alienate learners, particularly those at lower proficiency levels, creating considerable barriers to the learning process. According to Professor Claire Kramsch, authentic materials offer learners a glimpse into the target language community, granting them the opportunity to acquire knowledge about cultural norms, values and communication approaches [4; 74]. This exposure allows learners to develop a deeper understanding of the cultural fostering insight into the societal customs,

beliefs, and effective communication methods that shape the community. Language itself is defined by a culture. We cannot be competent in the language if we do not also understand the culture that has shaped and informed it. We cannot learn a second language if we do not have an awareness of that culture, and how that culture relates to our own first language. [1; 4] Similarly, to this statement, Dr. Pauline Gibbons, an expert in the field of second language acquisition and bilingual education, has emphasized the importance of authentic materials in language learning in her book "Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom." In this book, Dr. Gibbons discusses the role of authentic materials in contextualizing language and promoting impressive and potent language learning experiences for learners, particularly those in mainstream classrooms [5; 96]. She highlights how authentic materials help connect language use to real-world contexts and cultural practices, enhancing students' language development and academic achievement.

Here are five strategies to improve writing competence via authentic materials:

1. *Analyzing authentic texts.* One of the factors that help to boost writing is motivation, which plays a pivotal role in learning process. Since improving writing competence is accounted as one challenge, learners must encourage themselves to analyze and deconstruct authentic written texts such as newspaper articles, blog posts or essays to comprehend how language is used in different contexts, identify writing styles, structures and vocabulary. By examining how proficient natives express ideas, students can learn sentence structures and stylistic elements that they can incorporate into their own compositions. Analyzing authentic texts broadens students' vocabulary by introducing them to new words in context, improving lexical repertoire.
2. *Genre Study.* Students should be exposed to various genres of writing through authentic materials (e.g., formal letters, academic papers, advertisements) to familiarize them with different text types and conventions. Provision of a guided writing tasks based on authentic materials wherein students can respond to prompts or questions inspired by the content they have analyzed, allowing them to apply what they have learned in a controlled setting.
3. *Incorporating multimedia.* Integration of multimedia elements such as videos, podcasts or infographics as authentic writing prompts can inspire students' creativity and critical thinking in their written responses. Teachers must assign writing tasks where students respond to analyze authentic materials they have read or seen, allowing them to engage critically with the content and practice articulating their thoughts effectively.
4. *Cultural contextualization.* Connection between of writing competences' and authentic materials cannot be denied. Writing tasks should be linked to cultural aspects embedded in authentic materials to help students develop a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural implications of language use in different contexts. Incorporate authentic materials that reflect cultural themes, practices, or perspectives to prompt students to explore cultural dimensions in their writing and develop intercultural competence.
5. *Modeling writing styles.* In this type of strategy imitation plays a key role, as students have to imitate the writing styles and structures they have observed in the provided real-life materials that they have interacted with such blog posts or daily newspaper articles.

Analyzing above, using with authentic materials may have differentiated strategies that cover various activities including imitation, pair works or incorporation with infographics and multimedia. Alongside with potential benefits, there could pop up challenges referring to cultural awareness.

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