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The main goal of this article is to share the experience of using authentic materials taken from English speaking mass media sources to use them for teaching and learning activities in the classes of Foreign Language discipline at the university. Despite the number of various research papers on the issues concerning the use of newspapers and magazines, the lack of developed programs and special guides for instructions leave a lot of problems open how to use mass media resources effectively. The author demonstrates some methods of using authentic materials in the classroom which are based on the communicative approach toward teaching English. These methods, described in the article, allow to develop not only language communicative competences, but also strengthen professional soft skills for the future managers.

*Keywords:* reading, magazine, newspaper, authentic materials, soft skills, effective teaching, language approach, communicative competences.

**R**eadings newspapers and other mass media products in English is a challenging task for students whose major is not languages and linguistics; however, by doing these activities on a regular basis with students whose major is business and management gives them new perspectives in mastering not only English language skills but also acquiring deep cultural awareness and useful soft skills which go hand in hand with studying foreign language and culture of the target country.

Soft skills such as: problem-solving, well developed communication abilities, public speaking skills, negotiation expertise are strongly required today on the business job market. Doing all that in English adds more benefit for the employees in the seeking process for prestigious job positions.

Newspaper reading activities may be various; consequently, the goal, the choice of the content, principles and methods depend on the level of English language proficiency, university major, communication competences.

#### Literature review

The problem of using newspapers and other mass media resources for teaching and learning English has become one of the widely discussed themes of many research journals and various methodological collections dedicated to perspectives of teaching foreign languages and cultures at schools and universities. Mostly every author in his article emphasizes the importance of these resources to develop reading, speaking, listening, and writing skills of learners. Some authors describe a number of useful activities in the classrooms like Nola Kortner Aiex [1], the author of *Using Newspapers as Effective Teaching Tools* who specifically points out that reading newspapers enables students «bridge the gap» between the classroom and the real day today situations in the world, increase vocabulary necessary for better understanding of the newspaper context and effective mastering of writing skills. In addition, as it is pointed out in the article,

newspapers materials used in the classroom are extremely flexible and adaptable to all curriculum areas. Another researcher of the same issue, Shivender Rahul [2], from India, added in his turn, that newspaper materials may be used to master grammar skills, grammatical structures, in particular, as well as authentic use of idioms, phrases and many new innovative constructions. He also emphasizes that newspapers reading opens many new ways of discussion and conversation in the classroom, helps gaining deeper general knowledge in many areas of life and science. Another aspect of the same issue was explored in the article by Amina Gogo Tafida and Bala Muhammad Dalhatu [3], who mostly focused on the possibilities of using newspapers as a tool of learning for students of different levels of English language proficiency from beginners to advanced. However, the activities for all categories of students were described fragmentary and it is hardly possible to observe strictly systematic approach from simple to more complicated or any kind of continuity from level to level. The recommendations given by the authors at the end of the article are too general and carry little help for those working with mass media materials. Although studies have been conducted by many authors, the problem of effective use of newspapers in the classroom is still insufficiently explored. Most of the studies exclusively focus on the idea that using newspapers in the classroom is important to develop different language skills, which has never been the subject of dispute, in fact, this statement is accepted by all authors without exception. The main question now is how tutors can use this authentic source effectively, what principles and approaches to choose to accomplish a significant progress in terms of studying the language of the press in English, which has its own format of texts «various types and language styles, which are not so easy to find in generally accepted sources and textbooks of the English language» [4], but what is more — how to use this authentic material for developing high (HOTs) and low order skills (LOTs)

of students involving them in the process of cognitive activities. The course Reading Newspapers Critically, which has been introduced for the second-year students within the compulsory discipline «Foreign Language (English)», was created by the professors of Baikal International Business School with the aim of maintaining interest in learning English as a foreign language by using authentic materials and practicing a communicative approach in studies. Unlike the traditional teaching methods with text books and a lot of language exercises, the use of English language newspapers give our students a very good opportunity to get a hang of the language in a more natural and more interesting way.

#### Communicative Approach in Teaching Language

This approach allows to use a wide variety of teaching methods and authentic materials to develop communicative competence in language learners and persistently involve them in the learning process. The choice of methods depends on the setting goals and objectives, tasks or activities for the whole course and each module (lesson) in particular. The leading method that we use in our practice is task-based and communicative teaching styles. The communicative approach, known as the most effective and commonly used in language teaching, is perfectly suited to our main goal of teaching students through reading newspapers and magazines, watching TV programs and listening to radio broadcasting, evaluating information of these sources critically, analyzing it thoroughly, and expressing their own views on various issues meaningfully relying on their knowledge and beliefs.

We mostly focus in our teaching practice on the following principles:

- communication and fluency to learn a language;
- motivation to use acquired competences outside the classroom;
- active use of mastered language skills in real life situations;
- active pair and group work for the development of socio-cultural competences for professional purpose (the role of managers, group leaders).

#### Materials and Methods

In our classes we use authentic materials not using English textbooks, audios for teaching English language made according to the level of English language proficiency (beginners, intermediate or advanced students), we choose interesting up to date articles from New York Times, Washington Post, Guardian, Financial Times, Canadian Tribune, The Times of India, China Daily and some magazines such as New Yorker, People, Wall Street Journal, and various publications in Russian which meet students' interests. Fragments of TV news, TED materials, real interviews with famous people, documentary films and even feature films are in the collection of classroom resources. Under authentic materials we, as many other researchers, understand those created for some real- world purpose other than

language learning, and often, but not always, provided by native speakers for native speakers.

Specifically, clarifying the concept of authentic materials, Gilmore (2007), in his review of authentic materials, provided several definitions that were used over the years but eventually settled on one from Morrow (1977, cited in Gilmore, 2007), which defines authentic materials as «a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort» [5].

Reading, watching, and listening authentic materials on a regular basis help students increase their vocabulary, improve listening skills, acquire a lot of interesting information to enrich their general knowledge, get more cultural information about the target language, gain the opportunity to be exposed to real language and many other advantages. Using authentic materials is a challenging task for both teachers and students, as from language perspectives, they are more complicated for comprehension, but at the same time, their use has more advantages than disadvantages as they make the whole process of learning language more interesting and productive, making up for the lack of direct communication with native speakers, and, although virtually, reproducing the atmosphere of immersion in the environment of a definite country and even a particular region.

The role of a teacher is very important in selecting authentic materials because the chosen materials should contribute to the achievement of the main goals of the course meeting the interests of students and motivating them for further search and analysis at the same time. Otherwise, the inappropriate choice and hardly effective methods of working with materials may lead to the opposite result such as the loss of interest and enthusiasm in absorbing the information and using it for further communication.

Properly selected methods and tasks for students in the educational process can also help maintain motivation and interest in the learning process.

As we mentioned above, out of a large number of teaching methods, we have fixed our attention on the main two: communicative language teaching and task-based language teaching, two components of authentic meaningful communication, which, in our case, is considered as a way to master a foreign language proficiency. We agree with those researchers who think that Communicative Language Teaching considers meaningful communication as the goal while Task-based learning sees it as a necessity for communication to achieve or do a meaningful task (Research Gate, 2021).

The Communicative Language Teaching emphasizes communicative output speaking and writing skills in the language learning process. This method helps students express their thoughts in the most effective way in a sensible situation either in real life or simulated situation in the classroom. The teacher using this method involves students into different activities

such as role plays, discussions, debates, reporting on the projects, and many others.

Pair, group or team work is a powerful instrument in the class when students develop communicative competences. During the period of task preparation, they speak only English sharing knowledge, motivating each other, cheering those who feel shy and have a lack of confidence. They learn how to share responsibilities of doing common task and take the consequences after its completion no matter whether it is a success or a failure. For future managers this kind of format is a useful experience to gain. In our course, we widely use the group work, especially when students are doing a project. We will discuss some illustrations for the team work and show its efficiency and advantages.

- In-class activity
- The activities: Summarizing Discussion
- Participants: two groups
- Topic: What makes a good movie?
- Skills: speaking (two forms: a monolog and a dialog)
- Aim:
- improving monologue and dialogue speech skills
- forming critical thinking skills

Description of the procedure

Before the students start the discussion, the instructor (teacher) in class nominates the student-moderator for the discussion performance, and two group leaders who are supposed to prepare the groups for the discussion on the given topic organizing the preparation, sharing responsibilities, nominating a speaker(s) who will start the discussion and introduce the position of the group in a 1–2 minute monolog speech.

All of the students chosen for the final discussion should be familiar with the main ideas about movie making as the teacher in advanced, in our case, prepared a study guide which was entitled *Movies Ratings, Reviews, Discussions: Watch thoughtfully, think fast & speak smart*. With the help of this study guide, the students learn a lot of interesting things about outstanding directors such as Gérard Oury, a French film director; Sir Ridley Scott, an English film director and producer; Sergei Bondarchuk, a Russian film director and a famous actor; Todd Phillips, an American film director and producer, James Cameron, Canadian filmmaker known for his expansive vision and innovative special-effects films and some others. In addition, students watch TV interviews with famous actors and directors Jim Carrey, Joaquin Phoenix as Joker, charismatic actor Vladimir Mashkov, and some others. The students of the final discussion groups actively participated in various previously organized activities when the topic about movies was under discussion in regular classes: individual speech contest, speech battles, comments on the famous people quotations and many other interesting activities. The students can hardly organize a high-quality final discussion on the go, if they are not prepared with the

topic before it starts and without information which can be used to advocate and illustrate their position. The leaders of both teams organize brain storming discussion, then choose information relevant to the interests of the group, make the plan of one's speech, orally discuss rough draft of the monolog, choose those students who will make a suggestion how to make a catchy introduction and conclusion, nominate main speakers to prepare the main body of the monolog or at least main items. Preparatory work takes usually 40–50 minutes, but it's worth doing it as it gives very good final results. This is a successful example how communicative approach and collaboration on the preparatory stage help students effectively use English language for meaningful purposes in authentic situations. In this article we focused only on the preparatory part of the classroom discussion, but the discussion itself in the form of a dialogue requires more detailed description and analysis which may be given in our future articles from the series *Teaching to read newspapers*. The roles of the discussion moderator and group leaders is very important for the students as they during university studies years should not only get some knowledge in the field of business, accounting or economics, but also develop leadership qualities required for the job of a future manager. The roles of leaders performed in various situations give students opportunity to gain practical experience how to empower others, encourage members of the team to do their best in the accomplishment of the common goals.

The second method used in our course is Task-based teaching. For the next illustration, how this method is used in the classes of press reading, the work with various newspapers was chosen. All students are divided into three or more groups, the number depends on the class size. Their task is to give a short presentation about one of the most popular newspapers or magazines paying special attention to the front page and its structure. The main communicative goal is to arouse the interest of other students towards this publication and create a desire to subscribe to a given newspaper or magazine. Traditionally this method involves going through three stages of presenting the final result:

- pre-task (introduction to the topic and exercise);
- task (task, planning, report);
- language focus (analysis, practice).

In the pre-task stage, the instructor or a chosen in advanced student introduces the words and expressions useful for the description of the front page. A short quiz about the names of the newspaper parts is a very appropriate activity; after its fulfillment, one of the students summarizes the information pointing to the parts of the front page on a schematic layout.

Directions for students after the quiz: Look at the front-page layout and name each part appropriately. Use the key words from the box: newspaper masthead, image, detailed paragraph, headline, columns, caption, subheading.



Pic. 1. Cover page

After that, in the task stage, the students start to discuss which publication to choose from the given examples by the teacher, discuss how to present the information to the whole class, choose the key speakers, discuss the details of presentation. Then goes presentation of each group, not more than three examples should be given. Opinion gap activity is the final stage of the task when students are asked to express their opinion, share their feelings about a presentation, and make a final decision «subscribe for publication or not». Such types of activities presuppose no right or wrong answers.

Thus, we introduced the work with authentic materials and chosen methods of working on English speaking publications. The choice of the method or exact materials depends on the purpose of the lesson and the stage of progress over the main topic of the course.

#### Results and Discussion

Our experiment with various authentic materials in the course introduced for the students with intermediate and high intermediate English language proficiency, whose major is Management turned out to be interesting and gained approval of the majority of students most of whom, at the beginning of the course, were skeptical about reading publications of English-speaking magazines and newspapers reasoning their reluctance by a lack of interest towards reading newspapers in general, and language difficulties in particular. At the end of the course most of the students changed their opinion and express readiness to continue reading publications in English in the future.

The key methods, chosen from the very beginning, met our expectations although they turned out to be very labor-intensive and required enormous preliminary preparation for each lesson.

The idea of developing manager's soft skills for the future job parallelly with language communicative competences was also proved to be fruitful, but it still demands further consideration and practical development. The necessity to invite instructors of different professional disciplines for collaboration, especially when discussing the topics from newspapers like business and finance, politics and various social issues is also welcome.

The benefits of using newspaper and magazine resources in foreign language learning as many

researchers emphasized in their papers are evident, and activities described in the papers with grammar structures and vocabulary are useful, but global information accessibility requires more effective approaches to deal with facts and opinions from mass media resources, analyze them critically and choose them thoroughly in order to use in the educational process.

#### Conclusion

The regular newspaper and magazine reading with students allows teachers to bring novelty and creativity in the foreign language learning process. The activities based on the current social and cultural information from mass media contribute to maintain students' interest in studying English language and culture of the target English speaking countries. Prevailing communicative teaching style in dealing with authentic materials gives the opportunity to the English language instructors to develop not only language communicative competences, but also soft skills of the future professionals required on the modern labor market of business and management. ■

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## Эффективное использование газетных статей на уроках английского языка

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Основная цель данной статьи — проанализировать и описать опыт использования аутентичных материалов, взятых из англоязычных средств массовой информации с целью их использования в учебном процессе в рамках дисциплины «Иностранный язык» в университете. Несмотря на большое количество опубликованных научных исследований по вопросам использования газет и журналов на занятиях по английскому языку, отсутствие разработанных программ и специализированных учебно-методических пособий оставляет открытыми целый ряд проблем эффективного использования данных ресурсов из средств массовой информации. Авторы демонстрируют некоторые методы использования аутентичных материалов и коммуникативных стратегий для эффективной работы на уроках по обучению владения навыками речи на иностранном языке (английском).

*Ключевые слова:* чтение, журнал, газета, аутентичные материалы, гибкие навыки, эффективное обучение, языковой подход, коммуникативные компетенции

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