

# EFFECTS OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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**Abstract:** This study tried to inquire students' opinion about authentic materials and their effectiveness for language learning and language acquisition. Researcher elaborated theoretical aspects of both concepts, learning and acquisition to give readers a brief knowledge about what they would encounter through the study. To investigate effect of AMs on second language acquisition researcher took 300 of AMU undergraduate students as her study sample and asked them to fill questionnaire with 20 statements. Questionnaire consisted of different aspects of language acquisition and AMs. To name common aspects of both, it is not pointless to mention attitude, motivation and age/level. Collecting data by the help of questionnaire, researcher used SPSS (20) to analyze data and after all discussed results and reported conclusions. Findings would give practitioners (teachers, course authorities and curriculum designers) in the area of language teaching and learning clearer sight about using AMs and their pros and cons.

**Index Terms-** Language Acquisition, Language Learning, Authentic Materials.

## Introduction

At the very first ages, language-learning objectives were based on grammar because scholars had to translate scientific texts to other languages. Mostly from Latin to others. Whereas now as our world is changed a lot, we are learning other languages than our mother tongue, for themselves sake. We want read, listen, talk and write in those languages. Easily we want communicate through those languages. To explain this huge difference happened in language learning, it is necessary to differentiate between 'that learning' and 'this learning'!

Zascerinska (2010) easily defines learning a language as a conscious process and acquiring a language as a subconscious process. However, the 'acquisition' term, means 'learning' but as an agreement, many scholars use it as different type of learning. Acquisition is applicable as such learning which takes place internally for learners. However, it is applicable for first language (L1) but sometimes based on the situation where learners are learning their second language (L2), we face phrases such as 'Second Language Acquisition'. Jack Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) define above-mentioned phrase as process of developing language proficiency.

Siti Khasinah (2014) elaborates effective factors of acquisition as attitude, aptitude, age, motivation, personality and cognitive style. Attitude is related to the way of thinking about both learner's culture and target culture and teacher in charge of class and language learning activities. Aptitude is related to those natural qualities which learner needs for natural language learning. Age is related to the fact that learners in younger age can improve better than older age. Motivation is related to learner's desire to learn a language. Personality is related to set of characteristics of a person, which is taken to the learning environment. Finally, cognitive style is related to the way of learning language.

Sanakar, Soundararajan and Kumar (2016) in their study created a long list of language acquisition strategies, named AMs as one of them. They defined strategies as tactics, which are taken to solve a problem or walk someone through to achieve an ideal result. It means using AMs during language learning is one of those tactics that leads learners to language acquisition. Reading books more than one time, listening to the music and watching movies, playing games, using AMs and etc. are some of those strategies they listed to compare results of different

strategies for learning and acquisition. For learning, they mentioned learning grammar, sentence production, practicing pronunciation, vocabulary card, reading loudly etc. as language learning strategies.

To differentiating between language learning and acquisition, it is necessary to explain some of their characteristics comparatively. According Jelena Zascerinska (2010), Learning is systematic and conscious; learner moves from in-concrete to concrete and usually happens for second/foreign language. Finally, language learning is taking place because of external forces. On the other hand, acquisition is non-systematic and subconscious, learner move from concrete to in-concrete and usually happens for mother tongue. Finally, language acquisition is taking place because of internal forces.

There are many studies investigating effects of AMs on different language dimensions, which can assumed as results of language acquisition. One of these studies is Weyers' (1999) work called *The Effect of Authentic Video on Communicative Competence*. Theoretically, he referred to many other works about AMs including videos are efficient for language learning/ acquisition. Practically he conducted a research to stablish efficiency of using videos to achieve communicative competence.

## 2. The Purpose of the study

This study tries to show what are effects of using AMs are in language learning process especially for second language acquisition with the help of the designed questionnaire.

### 2.1. Significant of the study

Since present study is taken AMU undergraduate students as its population, it is significant in the sense of considering practical aspect of using AMs to elevate AMU curriculum quality.

### 2.2. Questions of the study

- In what extent AMs can improve language learning.
- In what extent AMs can improve language acquisition.

### 2.3. Hypothesis of the study

- There is a positive relationship between using AMs in teaching language and language learning.
- There is a positive relationship between using AMs in teaching reading and language acquisition.

### 2.4. Limitation of the study

Limitations of this study, which do not let to generalize the results, are as follow. The number of respondents was not big enough and it is limited to only 300 hundreds undergraduate students. However, during designing the questionnaire, the researcher tried to consider all the aspects of language acquisition and using AMs, but still there are chances for missing points and dimensions. In addition, there is another limitation in this study, since the respondents were undergraduate students who may not be aware enough about the importance of language learning concepts like AMs and language acquisition. Therefore, their opinions may be under effect of their wrong perception.

## 3. Review of literature

Elena Kozhevnikova (2014) in her article, named 'Exposing Students to AMs as a Way to Increase Students' Language Proficiency and Cultural Awareness' points out the emphasis of English learning classes is on the grammar and vocabulary, and language skills (LSRW) separately. She suggests practitioners of this area should keep in their mind language is so related to communication and culture in one hand and in other hand language skills should learnt integrated to gain much better results. To show the consequences of using AMs on the language proficiency and culture awareness, which can assume as factors, which lead learners to language acquisition, she tried out exposing 20 students of IT and Tourism to AMs along their textbooks. She used selected

episodes of sitcoms, also selected articles from magazines. Topics were related to textbooks and appropriate to the level of learners. Reporting results, she announced 95% of learners through the semi-structured interview conducted by Kozhevnikova considered those materials positive and effective in learning while only 5% of them used negative terms to describe the experience such as ‘waste of time’, ‘boring’ and etc. Finally, she reported 85% of learners had improved motivation. In addition, considering cultural awareness, through those selected episodes learners exposed to many cultural references about different occasions-weddings, Christmas, bridal showers and thanksgiving dinners- that was one of assumed factors of language acquisition.

Jana Berasova (2015) in her Article, called ‘Authentic Materials- enhancing language acquisition and cultural awareness’ compared three different types of AMs through a quantitative approach. She tried to prove the effect of AMs on increasing level of language acquisition and cultural awareness. Taking literary and journalistic texts as dependent variables and academic texts as pedagogical texts create good criteria to compare the results of using these during language learning. After analyzing results Berasova found out for advanced learners, AMs would help them to improve better than the time they exposed only with their prescribed textbooks.

Christian Bjork-Olivares (2017) in his Master Dissertation on ‘The impact of the use of AMs in the motivation and increases acquisition of business English skills and vocabulary by English for business students at *Universidad san Ignacio de Loyola*’ studied AMs’ advantages. Like the previous one, he again compared two types of materials, online AM with textbook-based material. He tried to find answer to this question: is AMs (Economist online articles) can effect on students motivation for language acquisition. After collecting data and analyzing them, he noticed those online AMs have positive effect on language acquisition and learners felt sense of achievement. To prove so he studied 40 students divided to two experimental and control group. As it is clear, experimental group exposed to online articles from Economist magazine while control group studied only regular textbook. The results shows students are interested to use AMs during learning English.

Ghanbari (2015) in her study called ‘The Effect of Using AMs on Iranian EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Learning’ considered learning vocabulary as one of main steps in language learning. She investigated 80 students in range 17 to 20 years, who received Oxford Proficiency Test. After this test, she took 66 remained students and divided them to two experimental and control groups. All of them received a test as pre-test and after that, they had English classes 3 times in a week for one month while control group exposed to new vocabulary by prescribed textbooks and experimental group exposed to same range of vocabularies through online materials. During post-test results showed both groups had better performance, however experimental group showed a lunge in their marks.

Aswini and Srinivasan (n.d.) in their study on ‘The Importance of Using AMs in Language Learning’ emphasized on the need of AMs in second language learning. They demonstrated recent and positive approach toward using AMs because these materials content real-life English. Since English language learning as second and foreign language faces different challenges to prepare learners to handle real- life situations, obviously practitioners of this area are giving more attention to AMs. To prove above-mentioned claim, Aswini and Srinivasan investigated others views on how those materials can be effective during language learning. Their paper is investigating not only advantages of AMs, but also disadvantages of them and in next level trying to recommend methods to overcome those problems.

Qamariah (2016) in her work, which is called ‘AMs, And Alternative in English Classroom’ studied teachers’ way of selecting materials specifically Indonesians for teaching English. She stated however, AMs are considering as good but still there are teachers who preferred commercial course books to avoid difficulties of using AMs such as being time consuming or need for being trained to use AMs and design related tasks. She believed AMs are good and real sources of language; provide range of vocabularies and structures which may not found in formal language of textbooks. Finally, she reported AM as a tool, which make language-learning process interesting, motivating and easy for learners.

Hussein (2017) in his study about AMs and its effect on undergraduate students' language learning- The Effect of Using Authentic Materials on Developing Undergraduate EFL Students' Communicative Competence- investigated 45 students of Anbar University in academic year 2015-2016. He used pre-test and post-test to study communicative competence of undergraduate students. Twenty students assigned to control group and received regular communicative method while 25 students assigned to experimental group who exposed to AMs. Comparing scores of pre-test and post-test showed performance of learners in communicative competence who received AMs is better than those who did not receive.

Nunan (1991) in his study about second language acquisition- Second Language Acquisition Research in The Language Classroom- taking a critical approach, investigated 50 researches which taken place during 25 years. He considered different aspects of those researches, rationale, environment, research design and method of data collection, types of analysis and types of data collected.

Zasceriska (2010) in her paper called 'Language Acquisition and Language Learning: Developing The System Of External and Internal Perspectives' defined language learning and language acquisition separately and then tried to elaborate how these two should integrate to create an ideal model to use for language learning. In defining those terms, learning and acquisition she pointed out learning is taking place consciously in both formal and informal environments, while acquisition is taking place subconsciously in informal environment.

Gass and Selinker's (2008) book called 'Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course' is about second language acquisition. They introduced language acquisition as a recently considered field; its age barely passes 40-45. In this book, it is tried to answer all the questions about language acquisition and its aspects. Taking an interdisciplinary point of view to language acquisition, they tried to define terms and concepts in first chapter. In second chapter, they elaborated first, second and third language, in addition defined sounds, words, etc. chapter three is about second and foreign language. Chapter four is explained how mother tongue effect other languages. Resent approaches toward already known language are studied in chapter five, etc.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Population**

The number of present study's population is all the undergraduate students of AMU. The survey taken place during academic year of 2018-19.

### **4.2. Sample**

The researcher took 300 undergraduate students of AMU as her sample based on random method. Equal number is assigned to male and female students.

### **4.3. Instrument**

To do present survey, researcher is used a questionnaire designed by herself. Related questionnaire distributed between students to collect their ideas and reactions to statements of questionnaire.

### **4.4. Design**

During academic year 2018-19 researcher was collecting data with the help of related questionnaire consist of 20 statements written to study effects of authentic materials on second language acquisition. Sample size was 300 undergraduate students of AMU. Male and female students have equal population. Collected questionnaire scored and analyzed statistically.

#### 4.5. Procedures

After distributing questionnaires, researcher explained the objectives of survey and tried to encourage students to answer all the statements. As there is no wrong and right answer, they should react to the statements and choose between five answers, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. After scoring the questionnaires, researcher used SPSS (version 20) to analyze data.

#### 4.6. Analysis

Table no. 1

| Name of dimension             | Gender | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | t-test | Level at significance | Cronbach alpha |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|----------------|--------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Reading skill                 | Female | 150 | 12.44 | 3.18           | 3.56   | .01                   | 0.76           |
|                               | Male   | 150 | 10.73 | 2.75           |        |                       |                |
| Using authentic material      | Female | 150 | 7.92  | 2.51           | 0.51   | .05                   | 0.85           |
|                               | Male   | 150 | 7.69  | 2.93           |        |                       |                |
| Effect of authentic materials | Female | 150 | 9.81  | 3.32           | 3.47   | .01                   | 0.74           |
|                               | Male   | 150 | 8.13  | 2.64           |        |                       |                |
| Challenges                    | Female | 150 | 8.24  | 2.35           | 0.80   | .05                   | 0.77           |
|                               | Male   | 150 | 8.54  | 2.17           |        |                       |                |
| Prospects                     | Female | 150 | 12.28 | 3.46           | 4.30   | .01                   | 0.78           |
|                               | Male   | 150 | 10.12 | 2.73           |        |                       |                |

Equal number of male (150) and female (150) students taken as sample in this study to compare how they react/ answer to designed questionnaire. The used questionnaire consists of five parts, named as reading skills, using authentic material, effect of authentic materials, challenges and prospects. Statements assigned to each part are designed to elicit particular information.

Results of first part of questionnaire (Reading Skills) are as follow; mean score for female students is 12.44 with standard deviation 3.18 at the level of significance 0.01. Finally, standard error is 0.26. And mean score for male students is 10.73 with standard deviation 2.75 at the level of significance 0.01. Finally, standard error is 0.22.

Results of second part of questionnaire (Using authentic material) are as follow; mean score for female students is 7.92 with standard deviation 2.51 at the level of significance 0.05. Finally, standard error is 0.20. And mean score for male students is 7.69 with standard deviation 2.93 at the level of significance 0.05. Finally, standard error is 0.23.

Results of third part of questionnaire (Effect of authentic materials) are as follow; mean score for female students is 9.81 with standard deviation 3.32 at the level of significance 0.01. Finally, standard error is 0.27. And mean score for male students is 8.13 with standard deviation 2.64 at the level of significance 0.01. Finally, standard error is 0.21.

Results of fourth part of questionnaire (Challenges) are as follow; mean score for female students is 8.24 with standard deviation 2.35 at the level of significance 0.05. Finally, standard error is 0.19. And mean score for male students is 8.54 with standard deviation 2.17 at the level of significance 0.05. Finally, standard error is 0.17.

Results of fifth part of questionnaire (Prospects) are as follow; mean score for female students is 12.28 with standard deviation 3.46 at the level of significance 0.01. Finally, standard error is 0.28. And mean score for male students is 10.12 with standard deviation 2.73 at the level of significance 0.01. Finally, standard error is 0.22.

As it comes in the definition of t-test, it is showing the difference between two sets of scores. Larger t-test scores in reading skills (3.56), effects of authentic materials (3.47) and prospects (4.30) are the results of difference between mean scores of females and males in those parts. While smaller t-test scores in using authentic materials (0.51) and challenges (0.80) are the results of similarity between mean scores of females and males. Cronbach alpha is a statistical concept related to reliability. Cronbach alpha for reading skills is 0.76, for using authentic materials is 0.85, for effect of authentic materials is 0.74, for challenges is 0.77 and for prospects is 0.78. All of them are in accepted range, which is between 0.7 and 0.8.

In this part of questionnaire, which considered reading skills, students reacted/answered statements designed in a way to investigate how much they are aware of usefulness of reading classes in their language proficiency generally and language skills separately. Also students defined what kind of curriculum is more motivating for them and what factors of demotivation for them are. 27.27% of students responded Strongly Agree, 35.47% of students responded Agree, 20.20% of students responded Neutral, 12.93% of students responded Disagree and 4.13% of students responded Strongly Disagree (figure no. 1)



Figure no. 1

In this part of questionnaire, which considered using authentic material students reacted/answered statements designed in a way to investigate different sources of AMs to make better improvement. 18.78% of students responded Strongly Agree, 32.11% of students responded Agree, 26.33% of students responded Neutral, 16.00% of students responded Disagree and 6.78% of students responded Strongly Disagree (figure no. 2).

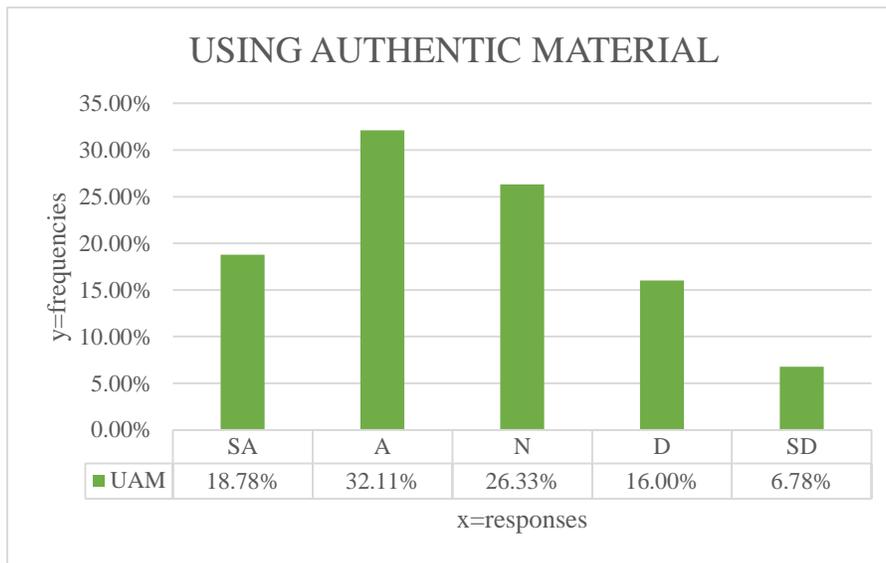


Figure no. 2

In this part of questionnaire, which considered effect of authentic materials students reacted/answered statements designed in a way to investigate how these AMs can effect on language learning factors such as motivation and being interesting. 28.92% of students responded Strongly Agree, 35.84% of students responded Agree, 22.08% of students responded Neutral, 9.08% of students responded Disagree and 4.08% of students responded Strongly Disagree (figure no. 3).

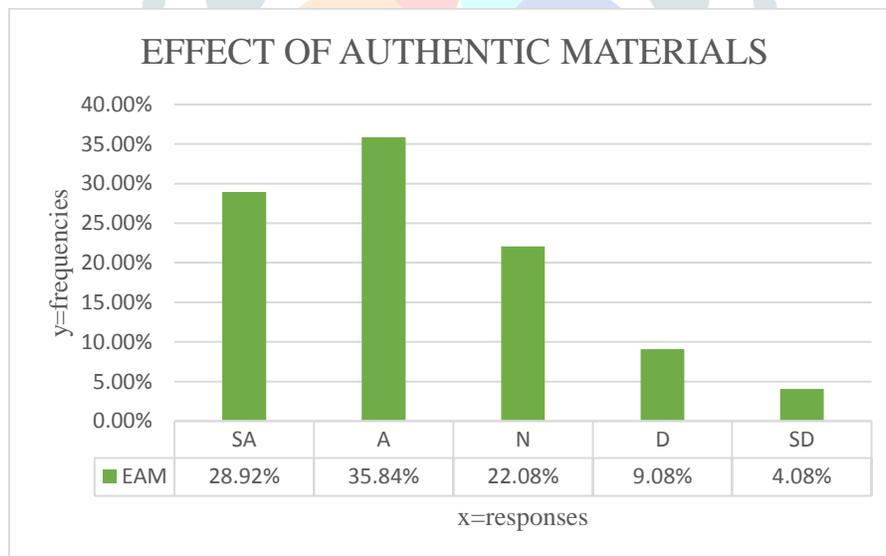


Figure no. 3

In this part of questionnaire, which considered challenges in using AMs students reacted/answered statements designed in a way to investigate what kind of challenges they will face during using AMs, such as level of those materials, cultural differences between target and native language and lack of some language aspects. 11.44% of students responded Strongly Agree, 29.34% of students responded Agree, 33.67% of students responded Neutral, 19.00% of students responded Disagree and 6.55% of students responded Strongly Disagree (figure no. 4).

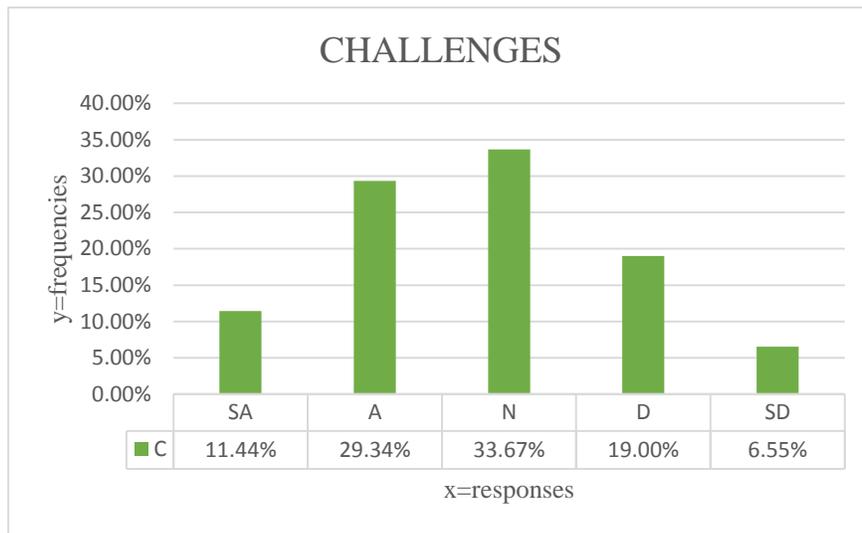


Figure no. 4

In this part of questionnaire, which considered prospects of using authentic materials students reacted/answered statements designed in a way to investigate what kind of prospect they will face during using AMs, such as improvement and cultural and social awareness they may create. And in next level such materials will add infinite sources of materials to learn not only reading but also the other language skills (LSW). 25.74% of students responded Strongly Agree, 40.53% of students responded Agree, 21.53% of students responded Neutral, 8.93% of students responded Disagree and 3.27% of students responded Strongly Disagree (figure no.5)



Figure no. 5

### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

To discuss in more details, students’ answers can interpret as follow. More (62.74%) than half of the population of study sample strongly agree and agree with vitality of reading classes and AMs, preference of classes with both textbooks and additional materials and their role in preparing students for handling real life

situations. On the other hand, a noticeable number of students answered Neutral. Which means they do not have enough knowledge to make more solid answers. This needs to be more considered by teachers. Finally, 17.06% of study sample strongly disagree and disagree with the importance of reading classes and AMs, preference of classes with both type of materials and also effect of AMs on preparation of students for real world. This means they do not come out of their comfort zone and face AM and its challenges or they do not think this additional material can change the situation.

In second part of questionnaire 50.89% of students strongly agree and agree with different types of AMs, such as online materials, multimedia materials like photos and banners and texts provided for different purposes. It shows students had positive experience with these sources of materials before. Remarkable 26.33% of respondents answered neutral. It might be result of not being aware about the infinite sources of AMs. 22.78% of students answered strongly disagree and disagree. It is not a venial number and shows area of problem to the teachers, which needs attention to train learners that are more knowledgeable.

64.76% of responses are strongly agree and agree with AMs being interesting and create a motivational environment for language learning. This can interpret as students' previous experiment with AMs lead them accepting AMs effective and efficient. Again, a remarkable number (22.08%) of responses assigned to neutral by the students, an affirmation to problem in this area. At the end of line 13.16% of respondents strongly disagree and disagree with AMs being interesting and create a motivational environment for language learning. This also is not deniable number, which means there are some students who thinking AMs are not effective to motivate learners.

Since in this part, on the contrary of others the most frequent answer is neutral with 33.67%, which is a huge number, less number (40.78%) of respondents strongly agree and agree with the challenges they might face during using AMs. The neutral responses can interpret as agree and disagree while students could not make a solid decision or it shows their lack of knowledge about what they will encounter after using AM. 25.55% of answers assigned to strongly disagree and disagree. It is a bigger number compare to others and indicates some of students do not think of AM as something challengeable.

The last part of questionnaire has biggest number (66.27%) of strongly agree and agree answers, which an invincible reason to approve usefulness of AM. 21.53% of respondents answered neutral and their answer can interpret negatively. As they could not accept using AM' prospects. At the end 12.20% of answers are strongly disagree and disagree. This is the smallest number of disagree answers in all parts which can take as positive point for prospects of AM.

Having AM along textbooks seems a good method to help students not only for language learning but also for acquiring target language. AM can create such proper environment for language learners to make learning internal, interesting and unconscious activity. Looking back to language acquisition and AM's factors, we can see many overlaps and interferes. Both have 'motivation' as an important point of attention. Attitude and age/level are other common determinant characteristics.

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