

AUTHENTIC VERSUS ADAPTED VIDEOS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AT TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES

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Currently, many English lecturers prefer using multimedia aids in their English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classes at universities. Significant roles among the mentioned aids play video records. They can be authentic (made without the educational aim, primarily for the language speakers) and adapted (created with the goal of teaching). Thus, it is important to identify which video type – authentic or adapted – is better in the present-day teaching English at technical universities.

Four types of authenticity exist [4 as cited in 1]:

- 1) text authenticity,
- 2) learner authenticity,
- 3) task authenticity,
- 4) classroom authenticity.

A text may be reckoned either a written or a spoken verbal unit. Therefore, the authenticity of a video refers to the authentic features of an oral text. Hence, a text type may be described as a specific type of spoken or written item [5, p. 203]. Authentic texts in the process of foreign language teaching and studying mean any source of materials used to help students develop an authentic language comprehension. Whereas, the tasks' authenticity is determined by assignments, which are given to students to be engaged in an authentic communication and with authentic studying aims [4, p. 67 as cited in 1, p. 250].

In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, there are limited sources for students to learn the characteristic features of the culture, language of which they are studying, simultaneously with the target language, and authentic vocabulary. The most beneficial among the authentic multimedia aids are films, series, and programmes in the studied foreign language, e.g. English, while they present the language that occurs naturally in the society, as well as the unabridged culture [3]. Among the features of authentic videos and texts are idioms, specific slang, and neologisms, which are rarely present in textbooks but may be useful for students' future communication with colleagues in the technical field, who, obviously, use not only formal technical terminology from books.

Sometimes, teachers of EFL and ESP at technical faculties might do their students a disservice by providing simplified, i.e. adapted, texts (both written and oral) in listening and reading tasks instead of authentic materials. Adaptation often simplifies the original text, which, in some cases, impedes the students' understanding of both lexis and culture [6, p. 58].

Adaptation of the language used in the ESP classroom may be intentionally made by the foreign language teacher to ease students' communication in the English class

and perform certain pedagogical tasks [2, p. 182]. That is, the ESP lecturer presents to students audio records and videos specially prepared for education and written texts with simplified terminology so that they can better perceive what they hear or read. In the process of adaptation, or simplification, “complex” terms can be substituted by simpler words; consequently, the students will not be able to encounter certain English expressions and/or idioms [6, p. 58]. The substitution of linguistic units may also affect technical students’ ability to adopt new words. Video- and text adaptation may be helpful for students who have a low level of the English language knowledge or who have difficulties with foreign language studying, but it only hinders the further development of students with the satisfactory and higher levels of English proficiency.

There are the following advantages and disadvantages of authentic and specially-prepared-for-study (adapted) videos in teaching English at technical universities:

1. While adapted videos are made specifically for education, their used English lexis usually is more understandable, and thus, technical students’ comprehension is easier than during authentic videos viewing. Nevertheless, the students are not encouraged to relational thinking, and they do not necessarily learn to derive the meaning of unknown terminology from the context and nearby words, as they have to do with authentic video records.
2. Authentic videos in English provide technical students with real-life examples of the target language use (i.e. original language), including technical terminology, which, occurring in a different context, may have or not have the same meaning. In adapted videos, the creators tend to present the lexis in the most common context.
3. With authentic videos, students of technical specialties learn to derive the meaning of a word or a word-combination from the wider context, observing the visual image on the screen and adding their background knowledge when the subject of the video correlates with their specialty. This should be done without specially-prepared (target to native) vocabulary lists: only target-target lists are allowed if the students need to be aware of some terminology prior to the viewing. Whereas, information on adapted videos usually is presented using easier-to-understand vocabulary and often with intentionally highlighted essential parts and appropriate pausing.
4. In terms of listening comprehension, authentic videos may be much more complicated since they are made primarily for people who are used to the perception of the English language in its diverse forms. Thus, there may be various accents and a different speech rate on each video record. Most of the time, only people with proper and clear English are chosen to be presenters on adapted videos. However, knowledge of and ability to comprehend various accents and speech speed is essential for the development of students’ good communication skills.
5. One of the most essential advantages of authentic English videos use in the ESP class is the technical students’ motivation augmentation. If the students

hear the authentic English language – in its true form and not simplified, – see real people, or, at least, actors who are the native speakers of English, they are able to extract lexical and cultural information important for real-life situations and needed for their future profession. In this case, students of technical specialties become encouraged as long as they know that the information they learn in the English class at the university is actually used and applicable in the real life.

It should be mentioned that even though authentic videos in English help to make ESP learning more diverse and bring classroom communication closer to the real life, adapted texts and videos should not be completely discarded from the English lessons at technical universities as long as they help to prepare the students at the early stages for more complex listening during further watching authentic videos in English, such as clips from feature films and scientific programmes corresponding to the students' technical specialties.

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