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The implementation of authentic language input in second language (L2) teaching: Pedagogical arguments

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This paper was written at the same time that the annual language and culture seminar of Hellenic Culture School Switzerland was being held in Greece. That was a felicitous coincidence, since it allowed the observation and interpretation of the students' learning behaviour and their target language interactions within its native environment. This short immersion into authentic language and culture input was welcomed by students of all proficiency levels as a challenge and call for participating in a new, enriched learning activity performed within a natural, real-life situation and hence, a more purposeful and meaningful communication context. Students were led to a self-directed reception and assimilation of language input, applying their own strategies, experiences or intuition. This attitude of students, normally deprived of a native language environment, reflects the need to incorporate authentic materials in L2 classes based on their ability to function as substitutes for the native environment, which is missing, and on their potential to become vehicles for language progress, pragmatic and cultural awareness. The importance of authentic texts in language learning has been discussed by theorists in applied linguistics and language learning throughout the 20th century but with the development of the communicative approach and task-based learning it has become a leading feature of language teaching materials. This paper explores the development of task authenticity in the selection of language teaching materials in class and examines the arguments for their use, based on the analysis of culture, currency and challenge.

KEYWORDS: task authenticity, schema, authentic materials, communicative approach, task-based learning, culture, currency, challenge



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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1899, Henry Sweet, an English philologist specialising in Germanic languages, was the first to recognise the value of implementing authentic texts in second language teaching, based on their potential to 'do justice in every feature of the lan-

guage' (Sweet, 1964, p. 177). Several years later, Mishan (2005) confirmed this initial hint by claiming that on the eve of the 20th century the appeal of authenticity has been reinforced becoming 'the predominant paradigm for the language teaching classroom' (Mishan, 2005, p. 10). This issue of

pedagogically incorporating authentic input in language teaching has evoked the research interests of many linguists and language teachers and has provided the basis for expressing various views, which are often opposing, regarding the necessity and validity of this practice from both a theoretical and pedagogical perspective.

Indeed, contemporary L2 teaching methods have reintroduced, in a compelling way, the demand for an authenticity-centred language teaching, especially with regard to the latest permutations of the communicative approach and mainly, within the task-based approach, where the nature and notion of task itself are calling for authenticity in learning materials design (Skiada-Sciaranetti & Georgiadou, 2019). This revival can be further explained in sociological and pedagogical terms. On the one hand, the revolution in information and communication technologies has granted greater access to authentic texts of all types. On the other hand, a gradual pedagogical shift towards learner autonomy and thence self-direction in learning, has passed the responsibility for learning and the access to information and knowledge, from the teacher to the learner. In the light of this movement in language pedagogy today's learner has higher expectations of authenticity – of target language and culture input and of interactions applied to obtaining and processing it (Mishan, 2005, p. 10-11).

Within this context, the academic debate focusing on the nature of authenticity, its theoretical framework and the conditions preserving its value has intensified. First and foremost, authenticity as an absolute textual quality (*text authenticity*) is validated by evidence reduced to the primary conditions of production and reception of the text. At the same time, authenticity, as an element which transcends the textual basis per se, is transformed into a characteristic of the relationship between the text and the reader and it has to do with appropriate response (Widdowson, 1978, p. 80). This means that it relies more on the interaction between the learner and the input text, rather than on the input text itself and, therefore it depends on the learner's response to it. This kind of authentici-

ty is ensured through designing authentic tasks (*task authenticity*), in other words, activities which maintain the primary communicative purpose of the text (Buendgens-Kosten, 2014; Gilmore, 2007; Guariento & Morley, 2001). Within this framework, the definition of authentic text has a dual meaning. On the one hand, authentic is considered any text, whether oral or written, which has not been compiled strictly on pedagogical terms (Wallace, 1992) so as to ensure the linguistic progress of students, but in order to respond to a need for communication, information or real language expression. In short, a text which is not produced to teach but to communicate (Tomlinson, 2013) and '*to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced*' (Little et al., 1989, p. 27). On the other hand, an authentic text entering the language classroom remains authentic or is being *authenticated* when processed on the basis of its primary communicative function, in order to achieve a reception on behalf of the students similar to that of native speakers.

The aim of this article is to take part in this wide academic debate on authenticity by presenting and analysing the pedagogical arguments advocating the use of authentic texts for language learning.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Culture

These arguments are encapsulated in three general categories of features, intrinsically incorporated in authentic texts, underlining their pedagogical role. Mishan (2004) proposes this distinction summing up the pedagogical value of authentic language input into three inherent features of authentic texts, namely the '*3 C's: culture, currency, challenge*' (Mishan, 2004, p. 220).

The first category pertains to *culture*, in other words, the cultural dimension of authentic texts and its beneficial impact on language acquisition. In 1948, T.S. Eliot wrote that '*even the humblest material artefact which is the product and the symbol of a particular civilisation, is an emissary of the culture out of which it comes*' (Eliot, 1948, p. 92). Since language and culture are an indivisible

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unity, an inseparable, symbiotic whole, the entire range of language production – from an advertising slogan to the verse of a poem – is representative of the culture within which it was developed. Sapir (1963) adds to this notion, emphasising that *‘it is an illusion to think that we can understand the significant outlines of a culture through sheer observation and without the guide of the linguistic symbolism which makes these outlines significant and intelligible to society’* (Sapir, 1963, p. 161).

This does not mean that language functions unilaterally as a symbol of an objective cultural reality. At the same time, it is an integral part of this reality in which it is ‘shaped’ and formed in constant interaction with other parts. This two-way dynamic between language and culture makes it impossible to study them in isolation. *‘Teaching culture without language is fundamentally flawed and to separate language and culture teaching is to imply that a foreign language can be treated in the early learning stages as if it were self-contained and independent of other sociocultural phenomena’* (Byram, 1991, p. 18).

Therefore, since the cultural whole is to such an extent interrelated to the target language, the main priority is to portray and highlight these cultural messages by making learners aware of them during language acquisition. Authentic texts constitute an appropriate language learning material corpus and are indicated for this purpose, provided that they represent aspects of the target culture and become therefore credible depictions of this culture within the classroom. At the teaching level, the process of students integrating new cultural elements is smoothly and seamlessly carried out when it entails an organic part of the lesson, harmoniously incorporated into language teaching and does not

have the form Kramersch (1993) has criticised, that of simply ‘tacking on’ separate cultural elements as an ‘expendable fifth skill’ (Kramersch, 1993, p. 1).

Besides, the cultural messages mediated through authentic texts are not always discernible and explicit. For this reason, as Tomalin and Stempleski (1993, p. 8) claim, *‘little benefit will result from merely displaying a cultural document or artefact in the class’*. What is necessary on the teacher’s part is to train students in applying strategies to identify language input and to retrieve appropriate information from there. In this way, a process is stimulated which gradually leads to the cultivation of a skill, that of cultural awareness, which involves developing sensitivity towards the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language usage and communication (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p. 5; Gladkova & Larina, 2018). This awareness will in turn create favourable conditions for the development of empathy, in other words, the capacity to identify with a non-familiar culture, which is an important emotional factor in successful language acquisition (Thaler, 2019). Particularly in classes of refugees or immigrants, who of necessity must participate and converse in an unfamiliar language often contrary to their own cultural environment, there is a dire need for greater empathy to be acquired.

Of course, a situation of absolute empathy is a rather utopian idea, since *‘the native cultural experience is bound to shape the perception of the new reality by relating and evaluating both fields of experience’* (Buttjes & Byram, 1991, p. 232-233). Despite this, the development of a familiar cultural framework as a reference point for language acquisition can ultimately be beneficial within an instructed language acquisition environment. Researching and identifying points of convergence and divergence between two cultures, as well as comparatively studying these cultures and deriving useful conclusions, may broaden horizons of understanding and ultimately improve learners’ ability to communicate with native speakers of their target language culture. It may also be a starting point for a process of deepening and re-adapting to native and foreign cultural environments.

Authentic texts are considered appropriate fields for such cultural investigation. Mishan (2005) describes them as 'treasure chests' embodying a cultural wealth handed over to students for them to explore and assimilate (Mishan, 2005, p. 46). Adequate exposure to the target culture through various channels and sources (television shows, literature, magazines, daily press, films, etc.) provides an excellent opportunity for students to recognise specific behaviours, habits, traditions, forms of interaction and other aspects of the target culture and therefore derive conclusions regarding underlying attitudes and values. Particularly in the case of refugees and immigrants who choose to learn the target language systematically, within an instructed learning environment, the use of authentic texts contributes to the understanding, verification and assimilation of every piece of linguistic and cultural information encountered outside of the class, under language immersion conditions. This information is otherwise dispersed and convoluted. Hence, authentic texts function as 'the keys for opening up the target language culture' (Maley, 1993, p. 3) and create a type of cultural framework for the language.

This assumption is closely linked to schema theory which ascribes a psycholinguistic interpretation to the way in which knowledge of the cultural framework affects the learning and understanding of the target language, especially instances that are perceived as 'linguistic misunderstandings' (Mishan, 2005, p. 47). The emphasis placed on the assimilation of the other culture as being conducive to language acquisition comprises a convincing pedagogical argument in favour of the use of authentic texts incorporating this culture.

To be specific, schemata are defined as '*cognitive networks that encapsulate our expectations regarding more or less standardised types of discourse*' (Edmonson, 1997, p. 51). Schemata are considered culturally 'coloured' and to a certain extent 'idiosyncratic' (Mishan, 2005, p. 47), since they constitute notions which are formed in the mind of an individual through native cultural experience acquired when integrating into their own

culture. Texts present several abstract concepts, such as codes of conduct or specific lexical items with references to administrative, political and social systems. Those that have lexical representations are obviously more accessible (Mishan, 2005, p. 47-48).

Within this scope, schemata are of vital significance for language progress. During the reception and processing of language input, students have already identified internal schemata, which are in line with the incoming information, or create new receptors to accommodate the new linguistic culture. In both cases, comprehension is achieved through an interactive and cyclical process carried out between the receptor and the language input. Subsequently, the lack of, silencing of, or any attempt to neutralise the cultural dimension of the language, has the potential to deter language process, as it does not create those conditions which are conducive to the development of schemata pertaining to the new linguistic culture. Many language misunderstandings which are hastily interpreted as 'deficiencies in language processing skills', are due to a failure in accessing the appropriate schemata (Carell & Eisterhold, 1983). Along these lines, comprehension continues to be a language skill, but is also perceived as a function pertaining to the knowledge of the specific cultural framework, that is the schemata in particular. Nunan's (1989) study is representative, according to which an appropriate cognitive framework has been proven to be a determining factor in a student's ability to understand school texts, even more than linguistic complexity.

This pedagogical argument which adduces the schemata theory in favour of authentic texts as reliable vectors of the target language cultural context, becomes even stronger in the case when L2 learning takes place outside its native geographic territory. In this case, authentic texts can function as substitutes for the cultural reality that is missing and enable students' access to the cultural core of the target language, in other words, the formulation of new schemata, which in fact, unleashes comprehension and is a first major step in language learning.

2.2. Currency

The next pedagogical argument is analysed within a different category of features which focuses on the notion of *currency*. This term has a broad meaning which encompasses the concepts of the current reality, synchrony, diachrony and topicality. This kind of currency with all its conceptual parameters, equally resides in both the linguistic and thematic content of authentic texts and endows them with a strong advantage over traditional learning resources. To begin with, authentic texts, when serving the teaching process, become the channels through which the language is conveyed; it is the real world of native speakers in the language class (Horwitz, 2008; Bell, 2005; Guariento & Morley, 2001). Authentic texts enter the lesson with the smell, taste and rough edges of life outside the walls of the school (Little et al., 1989) thus allowing students to perceive the target language as a vivid reality and to observe the various ways in which this language is realised and typically used (Tomlinson, 2003). Contrary to coursebook texts that ‘fossilise’ the language within the time frame of the book’s edition (Mishan, 2005, p. 56-57), authentic texts are constantly updated and topical (Case, 2012) and offer students direct access to conventional, colloquial language usage and brings them into contact with realistic and appropriate pragmatic models of discourse (Malyuga, 2020) which develop *pragmatolinguistic competence* (Gilmore, 2004, p. 367; Gilmore, 2007, p. 97). Authentic texts feature a ‘*comprehensive range of conversational and interpersonal speech*’, in other words, they ‘*place emphasis on language variation and choice, rather than conventions and formal rules*’ (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2002, p. 226). They can reflect the diachronic nature of language – particularly through literary texts – as well as represent target language on a synchronous axis, that is the spoken language *in flux*.

Learners’ interaction with this type of colloquial language input equips them linguistically in order to prepare them and make them competent for the real, social ‘interaction order’ (Goffman, 1983). This equipment is of crucial importance to students who live in the target language environment.

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Especially in the case of refugees and immigrants who have direct and vital needs for communication and social integration. They will be called to abandon the comfort zone of the school classroom and respond to real, socially situated communication needs where different skills are required (Berardo, 2006, p. 64). Language instruction is considered effective when it has prepared learners exactly for this moment. Pedagogic texts are not in a position to serve this goal because they have been compiled to accomplish specific learning objectives, and for the most part, ignore sociolinguistic references and pragmatic aspects, as well as violate the natural flow of speech. The nature of language and structures in non-authentic texts is rather ‘artificial and unvaried’, focusing merely on the language elements to be taught and not reflecting real language usages, so that it is unlikely to prepare students for what they will encounter in the real world within real communication circumstances (Berardo, 2006, p. 65-66). As a result, learners remain unaware of the criteria according to which specific word choice is accepted or rejected, based on the influence of current sociocultural and pragmatic factors. This deficiency ‘*can be a source of frustration and puzzlement as learners struggle with the subtleties of appropriacy of language registers*’ (Mishan, 2005, p. 58).

Added to that, non-authentic texts are unable to capture and relay all the transformations and changes in language, which is a living and constantly evolving entity. However, in order for a teacher to prepare students for experiences with the language, it is vital to keep them ‘*at the cutting edge of language change*’ (Mishan, 2005, p. 56) and only a multifarious and abundant authentic

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text body can foster this objective. Authentic texts keep students aware of these changes, so that they are not surprised or disoriented later when encountering these changes, but rather recognise and attempt to reproduce them (Berardo, 2006).

Beyond the language, such currency is equally featured in the thematic content of authentic texts. According to recent research findings, the subjects of traditional coursebooks are restricted and display repetitive and monotonous normality. The emphasis lies on common thematic areas (weather, travel, food, work, environment, etc.) while more controversial issues seem to be side-lined or absent, as well as some taboo topics which may evoke more dynamic engagement and stimulation on behalf of the students (Thornbury, 1999, p. 15-16; Bell & Gower, 1998). On the other hand, by using authentic texts, the teacher has the opportunity to cover a wide range of topics with references to the current reality, current news, as well as topics that may stimulate debate among students. Furthermore, content currency is more compatible with authentic texts rather than with traditional coursebooks, in terms of being in line with the adulthood of students. This means that authentic texts present issues that have more adult content than those contained in textbooks in order to respond to the expectations and interests of adult learners.

Within a teaching environment, the pedagogic value of this intrinsic language and subject matter, currency of authentic texts arises from the relevance and interest such language input has for students. These concepts and their functions are interspersed and interdependent, to a certain extent, creating favourable conditions for personal engagement and stimulating motivation in students.

The greater the relevance and the correspondence of the text to the interests and general profile of the learners, the stronger the motivation for learning, which is a crucial affective factor in language acquisition. Therefore, the aforementioned points embody a strong argument in favour of the use of authentic texts in L2 teaching (Bacon & Finneman, 1990; Little et al., 1989; Swaffar, 1985; Peacock, 1997). The significant impact of learning motives in language learning is a point where all L2 acquisition theorists coincide and concur (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 13). Ellis (1994) agrees, underlining the beneficial impact that the engagement of learners' interest in classroom activities has on learner motivation, adding that part of this motivation is derived from the actual desire for communication (Ellis, 1994, p. 517). In this sense, authentic texts, when selected on the basis of relevance to and immediacy with the target audience, facilitate *'the natural curiosity and interest which energises the students' learning'* (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 14). There is a higher probability that authentic texts meet the expectations of students and serve needs (functional or non-functional) that are dictated by their learning incentives. In particular, in the case of refugees and immigrants with strong integration incentives, authentic texts, due to their intrinsic cultural currency, allow these students to acquire a higher level of fluency and confidence while interacting with the target culture (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p. 39).

2.3. Challenge

The third pedagogical argument in favour of the use of authentic language input in L2 teaching stems from the inherent difficulty of authentic texts which entails a *challenge* for students and is therefore, an advantage rather than an obstacle to language learning. Sweet (1964) implies with discretion the positive influence of this challenge in raising motivation for learning. He casts doubts on intended simplicity or 'unnecessary triviality', emphasising the satisfaction that students gain upon retrieving language elements that may exceed their language competency (Sweet, 1964, p. 186). Subsequently, this challenge can foster language ac-

quisition significantly and therefore, any teaching practice that deprives students of accessing interesting language input in based on language proficiency level criteria is not valid.

Along the same lines, Krashen (2003) assigns major importance to the function of challenge which is accurately depicted in his famous schema of $i + 1$. This formula proposes that appropriate and still comprehensible language input (i) is that which exceeds by $(+1)$ the student's current proficiency level. Besides, the comprehension degree of the language input is inextricably tied to learning incentives, which are largely affecting the learning process and are activated when the teaching material and teaching tasks '*pose a reasonable challenge to the students – neither too difficult nor too easy*' (Ellis, 1994, p. 516).

A considered student's interaction with authentic texts is a weighty challenge, a process which in itself promotes learner's confidence, thus reinforcing the sense of achievement. The student succeeds in managing and accessing – in terms of language and content – a flow of oral and written speech produced by native speakers and intended for them. This sense of the student overcoming linguistic obstacles and understanding demanding authentic language input significantly strengthens their motivation and encourages them to continue (Berardo, 2006; Leloup & Ponterio, 1997). Consecutively, a student with developed self-esteem is accurately equipped for the next step which is the *risk-taking*. Self-esteem is not a negligible factor and doesn't concern only childhood but continues to play a major role in lifelong learning (Arnold & Brown, 1999).

This means that this student is prepared to risk making mistakes, forming assumptions, drawing conclusions and making generalisations on the basis of context or prior knowledge and experience. This readiness to take on 'risky' initiatives comprises an emotional factor that is vital to learning, provided that the risk taken is balanced, or 'moderate, but intelligent' (Oxford, 1999, p. 63).

Exposure to authentic language input can create favourable conditions for such risk-taking initiatives in the sense that it can trigger a student-

centred learning process whereby the learner's autonomy towards actively discovering and exploring a new language and cultural universe is put in place. In other words, knowledge is not delivered in a ready-made form, but arises from a series of assumptions, associations, actions, correlations, repetitions and trials and is therefore more strongly assimilated by the student. Furthermore, this dynamic approach towards language acquisition enables students to make generalisations regarding grammar and vocabulary, as well as observe the different ways in which existing knowledge of language can be accessed in order to process and explain new linguistic information. Generalisation entails an important and beneficial learning strategy, through which the subject, by observing certain examples, may form a rule, an axiom or derive a conclusion (Brown, 2001). Hence, the skill of consciously controlling structures of the target language is developed (Little et al., 1994). Students learn to access and use language sensitively and consciously, thus reinforcing *language awareness* and minimising dependence on language rules, which may actually be inadequate since these rules simplify language application (Paltridge, 2001; Van Lier, 1995). More specifically, interaction with various types of authentic texts gradually enables students to apply deductive methods through which they can independently discover language structures, usages and relationships between language elements, without formerly teaching explicit grammar rules.

However, despite the benefits, at the lower levels of language learning, the inherent difficulties of authentic texts are judged on the basis of the problems they pose for students and not on whether they pose a challenge for them. The positive effect of challenge on emotional factors that are crucial for learning – such as motivation, confidence and self-esteem – are not sufficiently assessed. Therefore, there is a tendency to avoid exposing elementary levels to authentic input, due to language difficulties which prohibit reception and comprehension. This attitude inevitably precludes lower level students from accessing subject matter which meets their interests or needs and hence are more

likely to enable them to cope with demanding texts well above their estimated language competence. Lazar (1994) criticises this exclusion by arguing that *'despite their very limited proficiency in the language, students need the challenge and stimulation of addressing themes and topics that have adult appeal and which encourage them to draw on their personal opinions and experiences'* (Lazar, 1994, p. 116).

Besides, challenge is not only attributed to the authentic text input, but mainly to the task that mediates between the text and the student. This assumption introduces new arguments to the academic discussion regarding the need for pedagogic modification of authentic language input and is linked to the overall concern regarding task authenticity. Within this scope, authentic texts are made accessible to students, not by simplification of content, but by tailoring the tasks to the learner's language proficiency level (Latifi et al., 2013). More specifically, *'the difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activity which is required of the students, rather than on the text itself, providing it remains within their general competence. In other words, one should grade exercises rather than texts'* (Grellet, 1981, p. 7-9). This means to vary the task rather than the text (Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996). However, this task simplification should be based on the demand for task authenticity, which means that tasks should be appropriate to the text and to coincide with the text's primary communicative purpose, thus constituting a rehearsal or approximation of tasks performed by native speakers in real life.

Even for students of elementary level, there is a plethora of tasks appropriate and consistent with their language proficiency which are authentic in the sense that they *'emulate native-speaker interactions'* (Mishan, 2005, p. 62). What the teacher should take into consideration is that partial comprehension of a text is no longer considered to be necessarily problematic, since even native speakers typically operate with less than total comprehension (Willis, 1996; Guariento & Morley, 2001; Widdowson, 1990). Hence, detailed word-for-word decoding of a text is neither necessary

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nor beneficial. Emphasis should be rather placed on encouraging students to make the most of their partial comprehension.

3. DISCUSSION

It is therefore at the discretion of the teacher to design tasks of graded difficulty so that students can practise applying different strategies in accessing and processing texts, similar to those of native speakers and in accordance with the language input at hand. For example, simple but authentic tasks that are appropriate for authentic texts, such as newspaper or magazine articles are: reading headings, subheadings or lines so as to get the gist of the text, identifying key words, assessing existing knowledge regarding a particular news item in order to explain a concept, etc. (Grundy, 1993, p. 7). Such strategies are scanning and skimming, as well as intentionally ignoring confusing or irrelevant language information at first glance. In this way, students realise that comprehension is not a process of searching for the meaning of each word, but a process of developing strategies, with applications in both oral and written communication (Swaffar, 1999).

Furthermore, students – beginners included – do not enter the language class as *tabula rasa* and are not devoid of language. On the contrary, they have already assimilated knowledge and language experiences forming their own cognitive framework which could be exploited to facilitate target language acquisition. Especially authentic texts, as real-life products, depict universal types of discourse, structures, lexical forms and subjects which appear more recognisable and familiar to the students. This universality in language or con-

tent allows a higher degree of contextualisation and fosters prior knowledge activation facilitating comprehension. Knowledge of a subject presupposes a partial, at least, knowledge of the corresponding discourse type, therefore students who have this equipment are able to manage texts that exceed their language competence (Crandall, 1995, p. 87). Besides, the sources of authentic materials that can be used in the classroom are infinite, including a plethora of naturally graded texts which can cover the entire range of proficiency levels. This means that some songs, advertisements, poems, articles are from a language perspective inherently easier than others. Therefore, as Tomlinson (2003) points out, students of lower levels can be motivated and assisted in developing advanced skills and not restricted to specially modified material that focuses on decoding language and mere language practice.

4. CONCLUSION

Summing up, this article outlined the main arguments which advocate – from a pedagogical perspective – the incorporation of authentic language input in L2 teaching. Overall, the ways in which certain inherent characteristics of authentic texts promote language acquisition at any proficiency level were analysed. Initially, the ineradicable cultural connotations of authentic texts were

highlighted, as well as their impact on learners' process of acquiring awareness of the language system which forms this culture and of the society in which this system is implemented and used. It was explained how authentic texts, as carriers of this symbiotic relationship between language and culture, are more likely to smooth the reception and assimilation process of new and unfamiliar linguistic and cultural information, removing obstacles on the way to language acquisition. Furthermore, the conceptual nature of currency which pervades authentic texts was discussed at both language and content level. The pedagogical benefits of language and content topicality of learning material were interpreted on the basis of the interest and relevancy that such material has for students and its consequent positive effect on learners' motivation. Finally, the pedagogical argument of challenge arising from the a priori demanding nature of authentic input was presented, particularly its ability to act as a positive and motivating driving force even at elementary levels. Within this framework, the teaching strategy of varying the tasks depending on students' proficiency level and general profile was emphasised. This task modification needs to comply with the guidelines for task authenticity, as well as to provide a properly weighted degree of challenge for students of any language competency.

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