

## ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF USING TED TALKS AS AUTHENTIC MATERIAL

**Abdulvohidova Nafisa Serobjon qizi\***

\*Student,

Termez State University, UZBEKISTAN

Email id: nafisaas@mail.ru

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### ABSTRACT

*This article is based on the field of methodology of teaching foreign languages. This article discusses importance of authentic materials, advantages and disadvantages of using videos called TED talks as authentic material in foreign language teaching.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Authentic Material, TED Talks, Teaching Languages, Video, Presentation, Language, Listening Comprehension, Subskill*

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### INTRODUCTION

In Uzbekistan ELT is seen as a career in a field of educational specialization: it requires a specialized knowledge base obtained through both academic study and practical experience. Nowadays the demonstration of a certain level of proficiency in English as component of certification is required. In Uzbekistan the multistage model of FLT has been worked out on the basis of continuous, succession, taking into consideration the international standards, and localization of EL teaching and learning methodology and materials (adapting to the national context). It is related to the well-known multilevel model of FLT in the foreign countries.<sup>1</sup>

Technology is an effective tool for all teachers and students worldwide. A variety of methods may be achieved via the use of this tool. In the case of students, instructors, and parents, free internet resources, educational materials, and other chances for effective learning may be quite beneficial. Both learning and teaching are made more exciting and meaningful by the use of technological resources, and if students and teachers use it appropriately, useful learning outcomes can be gained.<sup>2</sup> Numerous educational advancements, particularly in teaching languages, have been made possible due to the fast progress of technology. Audiovisual aids, including films and shows, songs, and Power Point presentations, are frequently used in EFL classrooms to supplement textbooks and other interactive activities to promote student agency, autonomy, communication, and connection to a particular idea. EFL Teachers are increasingly turning to these resources to help them convey and create successful courses.<sup>3</sup>

The role of technology in the present era of education is facilitating learning through different types of tools. One of these tools is videos. According to Brook<sup>4</sup>, videos are a significant tool for language teaching and learning since they raise participants' awareness, offer realistic resources, and encourage learners to participate more actively in the courses. Videos serve as genuine resources in which learners may examine how language is used in real-life situations and learn from their mistakes. It is indeed a massive benefit to use video resources since they are made by

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and for native speakers, such as movies and TV shows, as well as music. It is possible to utilize videos in various instructional and teaching environments, such as instructional settings, as a means of displaying knowledge, as a platform for debate, as an aid to self-study, and as an assessment tool.<sup>5</sup>

One subcategory of videos is TED (Technology, Education, Design) Talk videos that are claimed to be of utilization not only by many learners but also by many school teachers.<sup>6</sup> TED Talks may help learners become more aware and critical thinkers, but they can also help instructors present knowledge and communicate with their learners more quickly. Many elements contribute to TED Talks' educational benefits, including the accessibility with which they can be accessed in many languages, the quality of the information, and the precision it is presented. Aside from subtitles and transcribed translations in the native and target languages, speech rate modification is also helpful for students.<sup>7,8</sup>

Starting from the assumption that authentic materials are crucial in teaching/learning a foreign language, this paper is an attempt to analyze how such materials can be used in the particular situation of teaching/learning, especially since our access to materials designed for native speakers of English/German/French is virtually unlimited, due to various reasons. We have laid special emphasis on the internet, since we consider it to be an extremely useful and convenient resource.

There are lots of resources available to English language teachers today: from textbooks to online teaching tools, they can all aid and enrich English lessons. Many teachers also introduce authentic English material into their lessons to expose learners to the language as it is spoken in the real world.

Generally, the “authentic” in authentic materials simply means that the text, video, or audio material has not been created with English language teaching in mind. It is considered that authentic material is any material written in English that was not created for intentional use in the English language classroom. Using this content to teach the English language can make the learning process even more engaging, imaginative and motivating for students. It can also be useful to elicit genuine responses from learners.

The great thing about using authentic material is that it is everywhere, which makes it easy to find, and simple for learners to practise English in their own time. Remember that it isn't limited to articles from newspapers and magazines. Songs, TV programmes and films, radio and podcasts, leaflets, menus – anything written in English constitutes authentic material.

In fact, the term «curriculum» includes the totality of the knowledge that is expected to be imparted to the learner in a school, lyceum or college. It provides a comprehensive plan on which the entire system of learning and teaching can be based. Hence, the curriculum should plan the use of receptive and productive skills, mastery of vocabulary, and acquaintance with the culture and literature of the people who use English as their first language.<sup>9</sup>

The effectiveness of teachers' pedagogical activity, at first, depends on acquiring the ideas of modernization. A modernization means: 1) changing the goal and results of education; application of modern methods and technologies in practice of teaching/learning; reworking out the state standards and curricula for EL teaching and learning. Thus, all components of methodical system of ELT should be modernized, particularly:

- 1) Approaches and principles to EL teaching and learning;
- 2) Goals of teaching and learning;
- 3) Content of EL teaching and learning;
- 4) Aids, methods and techniques;
- 5) ways and forms of control of the results of EL teaching and learning.<sup>10</sup>

Looking at TED Talks itself, they are influential videos from expert speakers on education, business, science, technology and creativity. TED (means Technology, Entertainment, Design) is dedicated to researching and sharing knowledge that matters through short talks and presentations. Its goal is to inform and educate global audiences in an accessible way. Scientists, researchers, technologists, business leaders, artists, designers and other world experts take the TED stage to present “Ideas worth Spreading”: valuable new knowledge and innovative research in their fields. These TED talks are filmed at our flagship TED conferences, independent TEDx events, partner events and salons held in our NYC World Theater.

Moreover, TED talks are short talks given by speakers on a wide range of subjects. They are a great way to discover new ideas and learn something new in a quick and fun manner. TED events are held all over the world and involve a day or two of 20-minute talks on any given topic. TED talks are topical, relevant and interesting, and are usually poignant or motivational. Whatever the interests of your class, you are bound to be able to find a TED talk to suit their needs.

TED talks are considered as great examples of authentic language, ready to be used in the classroom. Using authentic texts exposes the learner to genuine, natural language which hasn't been manipulated to suit a particular language level, like the texts in course books. What's more, learners enjoy using authentic texts because at the end of the lesson they can appreciate they can fully understand a completely unaltered text and, more often than not, they're more interesting than course books.

TED Talks can teach students about how to think critically about new or difficult information which is a skill that will benefit them almost immediately. Listening to experts present can also help them grow as a leader by providing them with advice about how to lead others and themselves with confidence.

There's something incredibly powerful about learning something new in just a few minutes, and many TED Talks provide important insights about well-being from a range of speakers, each with unique experiences and stories to share. We've gathered some of their speakers' most meaningful and actionable insights here, so you can discover smart tips on relieving stress, fighting your inner critic, reframing your failures, and more.

When it comes to the advantages of using TED talks in FLT process, I can point out that they are numerous. They help language learners not only interest their subjects, but also improve their language skills such as listening, writing, speaking, vocabulary, etc. altogether.

Listening comprehension is the ability to comprehend spoken words in various ways, to name a few, a working knowledge of speech sounds, particular word meanings, and sentence structure. Listening comprehension is the listener's capacity to comprehend and repeat back what they have heard, even though the listener may just be repeating the noises. Developing interpretation

from context information and present knowledge is an evolving process in which the listener relies on a variety of strategic resources to complete the job requirements.<sup>11</sup>

Efficient communication is dependent on the ability to listen. According to Hamouda, listening comprehension is a process of interaction in which listeners communicate with one another actively and generate meaning. During the construction of meaning, learners make use of their content and subject knowledge and their understanding of the English language, which includes phonology, grammar, and discourse.<sup>12</sup> Despite its critical role in communication and the fact that L2 learners often struggle with listening, this oral receptive talent has received little attention in the academic literature.

Using TED Talks as an authentic source has some advantages that can improve listening comprehension. According to Park and Cha<sup>13</sup>, TED Talk videos are authentic and interesting since they involve many topics such as entertainment, technology, design, science, business, and universal issues. In addition, TED Talks are useful materials for English teaching since they catch students' attention and get them more familiar with uses of English language in real contexts.

Pronunciation plays a special role in the content of language material. Pronunciation mechanism envelops three parts as hearing (acoustic), uttering (motor) and meaning (semantic). Mastering phonetic side of the language, i.e. mastering pronunciation sub-skill is one of the core conditions of successful communication.<sup>14</sup>

Teaching vocabulary is a very important objective in the curriculum. According to psychologists, human beings learn the life experiences by words, because thoughts are made by words. Word is a central unit of a language: language first of all is the system of words. Without a sufficient vocabulary, students cannot communicate effectively and express ideas. Having a limited vocabulary is also a barrier that prevents students from learning a foreign language. If learners do not know how to expand their vocabulary, they gradually lose interest in learning. Learning a new language is basically a matter of learning the vocabulary of that language. Not being able to find the words you need to express is the most frustrating experience in speaking another language. Without doubt vocabulary is not the only thing you have to know about the language. Other levels of language (grammar, phonetic, phonological, and stylistic) are also important.

The necessity of vocabulary enrichment is pointed out in curriculum. Fortunately, for students and teachers, the most vocabulary growth takes place through incidental learning, that is, through exposure to comprehensible language in reading, listening, speaking, audios and videos and so on. It is necessary to study both theoretical and practical approaches to teaching vocabulary. Thus, knowing the vocabulary selecting criteria is significant for an effective learning.<sup>15</sup>

Speaking as a skill of oral communication is considered one of the speech activities. Speaking is an integral part of oral conversation. Speaking is the use of a certain lexical, grammatical or phonetic phenomena in the aim of expressing the idea. The proverb «First think then speak» proves this idea. So verbalization of ideas is speaking skill.

Teaching speaking in English is considered as a medium practical goal, i.e. at the beginning stage of the education students learn speaking and listening but reading and writing used as a means of teaching. At the higher level, when reading and writing becomes a goal, speaking turns

into a means of teaching. Speaking has three functions: a means of communication, a means of teaching and practical aim of teaching.<sup>16</sup>

Here we can see some advantages of TED talks:

**They Will Teach Something.** Each time we listen to a TED Talk, we will discover something new. There are truly hundreds of talks that have been done by experts like Bill Clinton, Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, or James Cameron. TED Talks cover an entire range of ideas, some of which we may be aware of, while others will teach you something you may have never considered before. Unlike the click bait we may come across on the internet, these talks highlight innovative and intriguing ideas backed by experts in the field. It is very likely that we will come across an idea or topic that we have never considered before. Chances are, some of the topics may seem completely obscure, but TED carefully selects charismatic lecturers to help ensure you that the information you are getting is reliable.

**Inspire Conversation.** Conversation is the root of how we communicate as humans. After we listen to our first TED talk, it is likely that we will be fascinated by how eloquently the speakers are able to present their ideas. Noticing how these experts express their thoughts is a great resource for refining our own public speaking skills. Listening to highly trained professionals speak provides fantastic examples of how to present information to others in a succinct and articulate way. In fact, we may discover that you want to share some of your newfound knowledge with our friends and family. TED carefully selects presenters and topics that will spark conversations amongst listeners.

**They Provide Motivation.** Many TED Talks come from presenters who have overcome incredible odds to achieve incredible goals or inspire change in the world. It is likely that you will experience this within the first couple of talks we tune into. Hearing their stories will motivate us to reevaluate your personal goals and set new ones that may challenge you more than we would have previously thought. A great time to tune into TED Talks is when we are finishing up or beginning your day. These short videos provide inspiration to start our day off on the right foot or help close out our day the right way. Since these talks are shorter than most podcasts, we can easily listen to them through your headphones while in traffic or on the bus to get a quick dose of motivation. Additionally, watching these TED Talks will also inspire us to pursue our personal passions and academics with confidence. Hearing these experts share how they followed their own passions will leave us feeling excited to chase after our own!

**They Provide Awesome Advice.** If we are looking for quick advice, TED Talks are a fantastic option! One of the best TED Talks to listen to is Amy Cuddy's "Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are". Her talk teaches listeners how to exude confidence in their daily lives. Cuddy takes time to show her "power pose", which she discovered to boost confidence during a tense or stressful time. Cuddy's video is just one example of many different talks that can provide advice for any questions we may have or difficult situations you are facing.

**They Will Expand Perspective.** TED Talks are jam packed with knowledge to challenge and expand our perspective. Tuning into talks about topics or ideas we have never considered causes us to apply what we learn to the circumstances in our own life. Applying what we learn from TED Talks may also help us discover that we may not always know what we are talking about. Instead, these presentations teach us to listen first and then consider the information presented to

us before drawing any sort of conclusion. This is a life skill that will last us long past our high school days and will benefit us for years to come.

They Will Improve Skills. Listening to TED Talks can help us improve the skills we will need either in high school or need to adopt in order to be successful in college. TED Talks can teach us about how to think critically about new or difficult information which is a skill that will benefit us almost immediately. Listening to experts present can also help us grow as a leader by providing us with advice about how to lead others and ourselves with confidence. Additionally, TED Talks can help us get a head start in learning how to think, act, and approach a difficult or uncertain situation in a professional and mature way. This skill will be very important to rely on in college and will help to maximize our academic and personal experience in college.

Although TED Talks are of great importance in FLT and has a lot of advantages, there are a few considerations to bear in mind when using TED talks, as there are when using any authentic materials. Firstly, make sure the content is appropriate and relevant. Consider the learners in your class and make sure they won't be offended or bored by the talk. Secondly, watch the talk first and consider whether the speaker is speaking too fast or has a difficult accent. Usually we would use TED talks with older learners and learners from Intermediate and upwards to take into account these issues because if it is too difficult, for whatever reason, it will prove demotivating for your learners.

Another disadvantage of TED talks is the length. Because it's so short, the information presented isn't very comprehensive. Often, points of argument are left unsaid or not justified, which could affect the ethos of the speaker. To the general public, though, the speaker probably wouldn't have to worry about that. Most people aren't experts on the topic being spoken about, so it's not like they can find many holes in the argument.

Considering all ideas and explanations, it is very crucial to conclude that TED talks is the best option for all teachers and language learners. They have a great number of positive sides and some disadvantages which can help everybody to improve their language skills through different ways. All in all, I think that if they are used in an appropriate way to teach foreign languages, they can be more useful and effective authentic materials that everybody wants.

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