

Authentic discourse: What's in it to be learned?

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"Authenticity" has been a major focus in language teaching and applied linguistics (see, for example, Nostrand, 1989). However, the meaning of "authenticity" has not always been clear, and there still seems to be much disagreement in the field as to what authenticity is all about. Another problem concerning authenticity is the choice of authentic materials. Although there has been much research done to exemplify the need for authentic materials, not much research has been done to evaluate what kind of authentic materials should be used in what kind of teaching/learning contexts.

In this paper, I would like to (1) discuss the term authenticity to make the concept clearer, and (2) report a case study which compares two authentic texts (TV news and a soap opera) that can be used as language teaching materials. I will argue that choices of authentic materials should be made more carefully, and that linguistic analyses of authentic materials themselves should be conducted more rigorously.