

## 外国語言語教室でオセンチック教材を使う

### Using Authentic Materials in the Foreign Language Classroom

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*Abstract: We have been using authentic materials in the classroom for over 10 years and have found that they complement English classes by enlivening the class and creating a more positive attitude toward learning. We now have an extensive collection of materials that include menus, maps, newspaper inserts, store advertisements, travel brochures, catalogs, phone books, real estate pamphlets, and various pamphlets of sightseeing and tourist information. This paper presents how to effectively use the materials to motivate students.*

#### 1. Objectives

There are several reasons for using authentic materials in the classroom. Heightened interest and motivation are, of course, always welcome. Getting students to be aware of cultural differences in foods, tipping, prices, weights and measures can improve a student's survival ability in a foreign country. It is also important to develop the student's ability to zoom in on relevant information and to disregard what is not relevant. Using authentic materials develops the student's ability to do this quickly and more efficiently.

#### 2. Collecting Useful Materials

Almost any authentic material can be used. The easiest materials to obtain are those written in English about the city or country where one works. These can be English newspapers, magazines, menus, or sightseeing guides. Traveling is another way to find authentic materials. Airline schedules, in-flight magazines, bus schedules, and tourist guides can easily be picked up when traveling and mailed back to school. Even friends, relatives, and students traveling

abroad can be asked to pick up materials. Country, city, province, and state visitor bureaus are an excellent source of information. Some places will mail requested information. Many countries have inexpensive rates for sending printed materials overseas.

#### 3. Choosing Authentic Materials

There are several important points to consider when choosing authentic materials. Make sure to collect enough of one material to go around. The materials should be well organized and pleasing to look at. It is best not to use material with too many pages, unless the pages are clearly numbered for easy reference. It is important that they are hardy enough to withstand a lot of handling and they should be easily refolded and put back together. Materials with multiple pieces or pages that fall out or come apart should be avoided. Also, keep in mind that some materials are more easily dated than others. For example, last season's catalog does not have the same impact as a current one which is filled with items which the student could actually order. A menu, on the other hand, can be used as long as the prices remain contemporary. Students are generally uninterested in special events, for example, an Expo, that have already past. Remember to choose material that is appropriate for the students' level. However, a

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certain amount of adjustment can be made depending on the type and level of questions used in the accompanying question handout.

#### 4. Using Authentic Materials

When we first began using authentic materials, we handed out materials to each student and had them work individually. However, experience has shown that having students work in pairs is a better approach because they tend to be more enthusiastic and work harder. We give each pair the authentic material and a question handout. Interestingly, the student with the stronger command of English is not necessarily the one who is able to extract the most information from the material. Students of different abilities tend to complement one another and, as a result, do not get bogged down easily. Students tend to contribute individual strengths to the completion of the task. We usually tell students that question handouts will be collected since this keeps them more focused on the completion of the exercise. The teacher's personal anecdotes and other background information should be shared before the students begin concentrating on the material.

##### 4.1 Procedure

4.1.1 The teacher distributes the authentic material to each student or group. After the authentic material has been distributed, we give a brief explanation and point out, for example, the importance of the table of contents in a pamphlet or the legend in a map. We point out small print and other parts of the material that are easily missed. We have found that pointing out Japanese words and products raises the level of interest in the material. This is a good time for the teacher to explain measures, abbreviations, and difficult words and expressions.

4.1.2 The teacher distributes the question handout to each student or group. The students look for answers to the questions on the question handout. While the students are working on the assignment, we move around the room interacting as freely as possible. We help them by answering questions and commenting on

their work. This is also a good chance to give hints to those who are stuck on a particular question.

4.1.3 The teacher collects the material and question handout. Once the allotted time is up and the material has been collected, we go over the difficult questions with the class.

4.1.4 The question handout is graded. (Optional) If the handouts are to be factored into the students' grades, it is a good idea to make sure they have a chance to work with various partners over the course of the semester.

#### 5. The Question Handout

The question handout is very crucial to the effectiveness of the lesson and should be constructed carefully. First, the teacher must completely familiarize himself with the authentic material and make note of the parts that should be brought to the attention of the student. The questions should direct the student toward this material. For the question handout to be particularly effective, the questions must be well constructed to (a) give the students the opportunity to practice English, (b) help the students gain confidence in their English ability, (c) expose the students to cultural differences and customs, and (d) help the students develop their ability to find pertinent information quickly. A well thought-out question handout can make any authentic material work.

##### 5.1 Tour Questions

The first part of the question handout should contain easy multiple choice or fill-in factual questions. These questions give the students a 'tour' of the material and expose them to a variety of question types. The students gain an overview of the material as they answer these initial easy questions and this makes them feel confident enough to tackle more difficult questions later. In the case of a supermarket sale advertisement, the first questions could be:

1. *This sale is from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.*

2. *How much is the Frozen Pizza?*

3. Which is the cheapest?
- a) Coca Cola
  - b) Pepsi
  - c) 7-Up

**5.2 Cultural and Personal Choice Questions**

The second part of the handout should contain questions that can be used to bring attention to cultural differences in packaging, sizes, and pricing; for example, the packaging of a dozen vs. ten to a carton:

4. How many large brown eggs can you buy for \$1.00?

Authentic materials also often contain references to cultural events such as holidays, and questions can be used to bring these to the students' attention. From this point more difficult questions that are analytical or multi-step can be included. Keep in mind that students may be able to handle more difficult questions when they work in pairs. The questions can be made to highlight differences in weights and measures and to force students to make comparisons of metric and imperial systems:

5. How much do ten ears of Florida Super Sweet Corn and two pounds (lb.) of Fresh Ground Round cost?
6. How many grams of Florida Red Potatoes can you buy for five dollars? (One pound is about 453 grams.)

Students are familiar enough with the material at this point to answer personal choice questions as well. These often lead to lively discussion because students must agree on what answer to write. These questions usually require the students to choose items from the material or a course of action based on personal preference:

7. You are having a party for six friends at your house. You can spend up to 50 dollars. What would you buy for the party?

1	Potato Chips	4 six oz. Bags	\$	6.00
2	_____	_____	\$	_____
3	_____	_____	\$	_____
4	_____	_____	\$	_____
5	_____	_____	\$	_____
		<i>Total</i>	\$	_____

**5.3 Challenging Questions**

The third part should have questions that are more challenging and time consuming. Because of the differences in abilities (and sometimes luck), the time it takes students to complete a question handout can vary considerably. The more challenging questions at the end of the handout tend to work as 'equalizers' and slow down faster students so slower students can catch up. Questions can involve reading the small print, be especially detailed, or involve deductive reasoning. When students are working on the challenging questions they often begin to compare their progress to that of their neighbors'. Deliberately misleading 'red herring' questions add to the competitiveness while developing the students' critical thinking:

8. What can you buy in a glass jar that is usually sold in a plastic bottle in Japan?
9. Would you shop at this store? Why or why not?

**6. Activities**

There are other methods of using authentic materials. Some of these can be used as a supplement to the question handout, or on their own, for variety. Here are four examples of effective activities with brief explanations.

**6.1 Word Search**

The students search for parts of speech such as adjectives on a given page or search for certain categories of things. An advantage of this activity is that students do not need identical copies of the authentic material.

### 6.2 Crosswords

The teacher prepares a crossword puzzle using words and information from the authentic material. The questions for the handout can also be presented as crossword clues — crossword-generating programs found on the Internet make this easy. These can be used in place of, or in addition to, the question handout.

### 6.3 Personalizing

The students write a list of purchases for an imaginary party using a supermarket handout, plan a trip using a travel brochure or plan a meal with a menu. The students could also be asked to fill out a mail order form with an imaginary order of purchases for family members, boyfriends, girlfriends, and/or themselves.

### 6.4 Pair Practice

The students ask and answer the printed questions on the handout and are encouraged to ask their own questions. The students can role-play the parts of customer and clerk either following a sample conversation provided by the teacher or making up their own.

## 7. Internet

The Internet can be used to provide authentic material as well. The teacher can search for sites that focus on a specific topic, make questions, and post them online. The questions can be clickable, taking the student straight to the appropriate URLs of the chosen site. The student can do the exercise either from the computer lab or from home. However, the questions may have to be updated each time the target sites are changed. Although the Internet has many advantages, it cannot replace the hands-on, three-dimensional quality of real materials brought into the classroom by the teacher. See the following URLs for examples of online lessons:

- Web Site Guides for ESL Students  
<http://iteslj.org/guides/>

- Internet Treasure Hunts for ESL Students  
<http://iteslj.org/th>
- EFL/ESL Lessons Using Web Sites  
<http://iteslj.org/t/ws/>
- Travel Plans for Conversation Practice  
<http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~offner/travelesson/>

## 8. Conclusion

When used effectively, authentic materials help bring the real world into the classroom and significantly enliven the ESL class. Exposing the students to cultural features generates a deeper understanding of and interest in the topic. On one hand, the students develop their ability to zero in on relevant information, and on the other, they learn how to disregard what is not relevant. As students pool their individual strengths they gain confidence in being able to function in an English-speaking society. Ultimately, student motivation and interest in English study is enhanced and students gain confidence and satisfaction knowing that they are able to read and understand materials written for a native speaker.

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