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здобувач першого рівня вищої освіти,

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THE ROLE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN DEVELOPING PHONOLOGICAL SKILLS

In the continuous development of English Language Teaching (ELT), the shift toward communicative competence has highlighted the importance of the real-life English audio materials. While traditional textbook recordings provide a clearly structured language environment for learners, they often lack the phonetic nuances of natural speech, such as elision, assimilation, and authentic intonation contours. This can create a gap between classroom theory and linguistic reality, especially as modern secondary school students are exposed to colloquial English through social media and digital entertainment. That is why the integration of authentic materials, varying from cinematic dialogues to YouTube vlogs or TikTok videos, serves as an essential tool in developing strong phonological skills. This requires employing techniques such as shadowing and the analysis of non-adapted texts. By using these techniques, teachers bridge the gap between artificial classroom drills and authentic English. Educators must move with the times, fostering confident and comprehensible speakers. The aim of this study is to investigate how authentic materials contribute to the development of learners' phonological skills and to explore the effectiveness of techniques such as shadowing in this process.

The concept of phonological skills plays a crucial role in learning English. Therefore, the teacher's goal is to create a pleasant environment in which students have an opportunity to acquire these skills, as they enhance learners' communicative competence, particularly in the context of listening and speaking. One of the key components is phonological awareness, which refers to the ability to consciously recognize and manipulate the sound structure of spoken language [2, p. 323]. It involves the ability to identify and work with elements such as syllables, rhymes, and individual phonemes, forming the basis for accurate pronunciation and comprehension.

Furthermore, phonological skills also deal with the ability to perceive features of natural speech, such as stress, intonation, rhythm and connected speech phenomena. It includes elision, assimilation, intrusion and linking, which constantly occur in everyday speech, but are often simplified or absent in traditional teaching materials. As a result, students may struggle with decoding real-life spoken language, where phonemic variation is more vivid. Such a problem also affects learners' reading skills, as to become a successful reader, one has to decode effortlessly so that most of the cognitive resources can be dedicated to comprehension [1, p. 2].

Another key concept in this study is that of authentic materials. The term 'authentic materials' is characterized by multiple definitions describing the idea of authenticity. In the field of language teaching, numerous definitions of authentic materials highlight the fact that they (authentic materials) are (1) not written for specific language teaching purposes and (2) expose students to a real language atmosphere [7, p. 140]. This offers a wide range of materials like podcasts, TV shows, radio, blogs, social media, etc. In addition, authentic materials provide cultural content of the language, as they introduce to the learners how the language is used by the native speaker and components of culture [4, p. 25]. By applying such materials in the learning process, educators not only expose students to real-life English, but also introduce the cultural aspects of the language.

The use of authentic materials in language teaching has been widely supported in modern ELT methodology. It is a strong tool to build learners' phonological skills, as in the process of teaching the foreign language, we can often encounter problematic cases when learners perceive the sound form but they do not correlate it to any meaning, so a learner can listen to a text in the foreign language and write it down without knowing the meaning of some words [3, p. 113]. With the help of authentic materials, students practice their understanding of the words, that can sound differently because of stress, speed, accent variation, etc. Learners often struggle to comprehend fast, natural speech, which is full of linking, elision and assimilation. Unlike adapted textbook recordings, authentic resources, such as podcasts, YouTube videos and TV shows prepare students not only for real communicative situations but also enhance their phonological competence.

As Teymurzada mentions, the use of authentic materials enhances learners' motivation, engagement, and overall language proficiency [6]. It can be observed that by using such materials, teachers not only enhance students' linguistic skills, but also make them engaged into studying. Learners actively participate in the lessons, when they study materials that align with their personal interests and real-life experiences. Instead of boring drills or chants, provided by textbooks, authentic songs and videos with real communication will serve as a motivation for practicing pronunciation and developing speaking skills. That shows the importance of adapting lessons to learners' needs and incorporating authentic materials through appropriate techniques to foster creativity and participation.

To use authentic materials in fostering phonological skills effectively, teachers need to integrate different techniques, such as shadowing. Shadowing is a language learning technique where the learner listens to audio in the target language and

simultaneously repeats what they hear (Alexander Arguelles) [5, p. 2660]. In this way, students enhance their pronunciation and listening skills, as they distinguish sounds better. Moreover, it develops their speaking fluency and intonation, making them confident and comprehensible speakers. Therefore, when applied to authentic audio input, shadowing becomes a powerful tool for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge of phonology and its practical use in real-life communication.

In conclusion, the use of authentic materials plays a crucial role in forming learners' phonological skills in modern English Language Teaching. By fostering an atmosphere where real-life English is actively used, educators bridge the gap between classroom learning and real communication. This helps students deal with natural speech and improve their pronunciation, intonation, listening comprehension and perception of connected speech. Furthermore, materials alone are not enough, and employing techniques such as shadowing makes authentic materials effective and boosts students' confidence.

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