A Perspective on Integrating Authentic Multidisciplinary Content in Language Learning Context

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Abstract
Authentic materials can provide a rich source of material that can be employed in the language classroom to expose and train learners to meet the demands of real life communication. Identifying appropriate materials to suit the needs and the interest level of the students can help build a successful career for the learners, because authentic multidisciplinary content provides a context for meaningful and interactive learning. Integrating the knowledge of different disciplines with language learning helps learners understand how language is used in a variety of contexts. Consequently, it prepares them to confidently face an unpredicted situation where language has to be used for different purposes. This paper, besides providing an insight into the nature of authentic materials, reviews the major research work related to authentic multidisciplinary aspects and analyses the rationale behind using multidisciplinary content. Further, it provides information on the sources for obtaining these contents in their authentic form in various disciplines. Also, it critically examines the use of authentic multidisciplinary content in language learning. Finally, the paper provides some suggestions on how these materials can be exploited to the advantage of the learners.
Keywords: authentic materials, multidisciplinary content, language learning, language contexts.

Introduction
Multidisciplinary approach was adopted in the field of education way back in the 1920s as a substitute or supplement to a separate subject curriculum (Ishraga Bashir Mohammed Elhassan).The assortment of contents from various disciplines offers students a holistic experience in language learning. Although the contents are integrated from different disciplines, they are taught in a restricted manner in the language learning context. The emphasis is on the incorporation of different subjects in language learning with the objective of providing exposure on how language is manipulated in different fields and to help them learn the use of different vocabularies. Students who are taught only with language related content may find it difficult to clearly explain or express their ideas relating to other disciplines. On the other hand, the mere incorporation of the content from other disciplines will not fully solve the problems in language learning. The process should provide an ambience where students get an opportunity to learn naturally and use the items in real- life situations. This would be possible by adopting 'authentic multidisciplinary content' in the language classroom. Authentic materials can be described as materials that are not developed for the purpose of learning and teaching. In other words, the discourse that takes place among native speakers for their real life communication is considered authentic, and these conversations are transcribed and recorded for teaching and learning purposes. The authentic multidisciplinary contents can include transcriptions and recordings of lectures in different disciplines, conversations among students in the academic settings on a particular topic, meetings and presentations in the business and entertainment world. Introducing students to these kinds of authentic, multi-academic domains would provide real- life setting and help students to learn and converse naturally in English language.

Review
The concept of integrating authentic multidisciplinary content is not new but only a few studies have been carried out to prove its effect on language learning. However, there are some studies on using authentic materials and multi discipline specific language teaching that   have impacted students' language learning. The following studies provide an adequate proof for integrating authentic and multidisciplinary content in language learning syllabi.

Ishraga Bashir Mohammed Elhassan (2012) conducted a study in Sudan by incorporating multidisciplinary syllabus to teach English language for first year undergraduate students as a pre- sessional program. This program consisted of four stages. The programme was designed to build skills in reading, speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary, grammar, critical thinking, and self-learning. The foundation programme aimed to bridge the gap between the secondary school and university education. The materials were designed based on students' proficiency level and their interest. With the instructional design the students were taught English language and Sudanese cultural aspects. Findings of this multidisciplinary approach to teach

English language have revealed positive effect on students.

Rashid Hamed Al Azri Majid Hilal Al- Rashid (2014) discusses the effect of using authentic materials in teaching. The author explains the different types of authentic materials and provides guidelines on choosing authentic materials according to the students' level. He highlights the advantages and disadvantages of authentic materials and further discusses the arguments in favour of using authentic materials and analyses the complexities involved in using them for language learning. The paper concludes by emphasising that in spite of their shortcomings, they have proved as a valuable resource to motivate learners in natural language learning.

SavkaBlagojevic (2013) illustrates in his paper by giving an example of how to manipulate original texts in instructing ESP (English for Specific Purpose) to the learners of philosophy. The author has suggested some criteria on designing a course book using original texts in order to attain authenticity in ESP courses. These criteria should be followed in the selection of texts and tasks which would enable their successful application in language learning. Besides these, the course book serves as a scaffold in the comprehension of complex texts and in turn, enhances language skills.

Trien T Nguyen, Julia Wiliam, Angela Trimarchi (2015) conducted a study to explore students' perception on discipline specific language teaching with traditional method of course delivery in economics. Based on their survey on international students' requirements, their research focused in teaching content–based English as additional language (EAL) tutorials to ten voluntary international students pursuing their first year introductory Economics courses. These students had pre- and post- treatment assessments and an exit interview at the end of the project. Results and interviews showed that discipline- specific language instruction helped the students improve content and language proficiency.

Deborah AdeninhunAdeyemi (2010),in her paper, elucidates the concepts of the disciplinary, interdisciplinary and the multidisciplinary/ integrated approaches to instructional delivery. The author gives a valid reason for using the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches in instruction in Botswana schools. Finally, this paper proffers a brief illustration of the teaching of a concept with the use of the multidisciplinary approaches with useful implications for instruction.

Rationale for using multidisciplinary content

The renowned psychologist and founder of multiple intelligence, Howard Garner (1983), states that students possess different kinds of intelligence in the process of learning. Students vary in their learning styles and have diverse backgrounds, talents, interests, values, experiences; Howard Gardner opined that bringing all possible domains and methodologies into a nut shell would improve students' involvement, and in that way, better their learning.

Dr. Garner's belief would be appropriate in authentic multi-disciplinary context because it exposes students with different intelligence to different disciplines that enable them to acquire knowledge and language as well and catering to their needs.

Deborah AdeninhunAdeyemi (2010) perceives multidisciplinary instruction as a rich resource for comprehensive learning. "The fact that the different disciplines borrow knowledge from each other potentially makes the classroom amusing and thought provoking". She substantiates this by citing Bansford, Brown, and Cockin's (2002) statement, "integrating learning through multiple disciplines provides students with a more comprehensive learning experience that unifies, and a greater understanding than that which could be obtained by examining the parts separately".

Sources of Authentic multidisciplinary materials

Online corpora play a significant role in providing plethora of authentic materials for language learning and research. There are several online corpora websites that are created and governed by academicians. These corpora websites contain discourse of spoken and written transcripts of different genre. There are particular genre of corpora such as learner corpora and specialised corpora that are largely used by syllabus designers and researchers. Some online corpora websites are freely accessible whileothersrequire licence and fee. Freely accessible corpora websites benefit both the teachers and the students where learners have a chance to explore the nuances of language teaching or learning. The following websites can be useful for retrieving myriad of authentic materials from various disciplines.

MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken American English) is owned by the University of Michigan, currently holds freely available audio tapes and 152 transcripts at the MICASE website for research, study, and teaching purposes. Accessible at

http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/c/corpus/corpus?page=home;c=micase;cc=micase

The Brown Corpus contains collection of American English, totalling around a million words and gathered from various sources. It is compiled, combining various elements of linguistics, psychology, statistics, and sociology.

http://www.essex.ac.uk/linguistics/external/clmt/w3c/corpus_ling/content/corpora/list/private/brow/brown.html

The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) is the largest freely accessible corpus of English,

consisting 520 million words and categorized as popular magazines, spoken, academic texts, and fiction. Accessible at
http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/
The American National Corpus (ANC) contains of 22 million words of American English written and spoken data, further it includes data from email, web data, and tweets. This is also called as the Open American National English because it is freely obtainable with no constraint. Accessible at
http://www.anc.org/data/oanc/
Santa Barbara Corpus is a large body of recordings of naturally occurring spoken interaction from all over the United States. Santa Barbara corpus represents a wide variety of people of different social background. Accessible at http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/research/santa-barbara-corpus

Advantages and disadvantages
Authentic multidisciplinary instructions do not only help learners to familiarise and learn language of different fields. It also makes them to deal with complex subjects in a meaningful way that is required in this advanced world.

Harmer (1994) says that authentic material is useful and has positive effect on students in that; (1) Encourages learner to learn better language. (2) Assists learners to attain language proficiency quickly. (3) Prepares learners to encounter real life situations more confidently.

Deborah AdeninhunAdeyemi (2010) states that multi-disciplinary instruction would be more valuable in language teaching and learning activities. Activities like guided reading, read aloud and independent reading help learners to gain in-depth knowledge of contents in various disciplines. In storytelling, it can play an engaging role in developing the plot, narrating the story and evolution of ideas.

Gilmore (2007) emphasises the complexity of using authentic texts: "as authentic texts reflect the real life language, they contain a great diversity of grammatical and lexical elements, which means that they are much more abundant in language form than the texts constructed for language teaching purposes. However, from a language teacher's point of view, such abundance in linguistic devices may be considered a disadvantage".

Authentic multidisciplinary content may not be applicable to all level of students. Sometimes these materials carry the content beyond students' ability to comprehend and learn them. And it requires teachers to invest more time to prepare and choose appropriate method and approach in teaching multidisciplinary content.

Conclusion
There has been very little research on authentic multidisciplinary content. Multidisciplinary content provides a deep understanding as well as helps students to achieve mastery in English language skills and course content. Multidisciplinary texts can be successfully used in teaching English. These texts offer an opportunity to students to learn discourse and vocabulary relevant to them. At the same time, these heterogeneous texts fulfil their professional needs that are required in this competitive world.

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