



Academia Review-A Multidisciplinary Online Journal

ISSN (Online): 3070-6726

Website: <https://academia.org>

Volume 2, Issue 4, April, 2026



This work is Licenced under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

# **Bridging Cultures: How Authentic Materials And Discussion Prompts Influence Student Perceptions In ELT**

**Muxammadiyeva Xalima Saidaxmadovna**

Scientific supervisor, Associate professor of  
Namangan state university

Email: [xalima7127@gmail.com](mailto:xalima7127@gmail.com)

**Avazbekova Fotimakhon Zamirbek's daughter**

Student of Namangan state university

Email: [fotimaavazbekova40@gmail.com](mailto:fotimaavazbekova40@gmail.com)

Phone number+998949170604

**Abstract.** This article explores the influence of authentic materials and discussion prompts on students' cultural perceptions in English Language Teaching (ELT). It emphasizes the importance of integrating real-life resources, such as videos, articles, and social media content, into classroom practice to provide meaningful language input. In addition, it shows that guided discussions based on these materials enhance students' engagement, promote critical thinking, and develop intercultural awareness.

The findings indicate that learners become more motivated and demonstrate a deeper understanding of cultural similarities and differences. As a result, the use of authentic materials combined with discussion activities contributes to more effective and communicative language learning.

**Keywords:** Authentic materials, ELT, cultural perception, discussion prompts, intercultural competence, learner engagement, communicative approach

## **Исследование Восприятия Студентами Культурных Различий И Сходств В Процессе Обсуждений На Английском Языке**

**Авазбекова Фотимахон Замирбековна**

Студентка Наманганского государственного университета

Электронная почта: [fotimaavazbekova40@gmail.com](mailto:fotimaavazbekova40@gmail.com)



Academia Review-A Multidisciplinary Online Journal

ISSN (Online): 3070-6726

Website: <https://academia.org>

Volume 2, Issue 4, April, 2026



This work is Licenced under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

Телефон: +998949170604

**Аннотация.** В данной статье рассматривается влияние аутентичных материалов и дискуссионных заданий на формирование культурных представлений студентов в обучении английскому языку. Особое внимание уделяется использованию реальных источников, таких как видео, статьи и контент социальных сетей, которые обеспечивают более естественную языковую среду. Показано, что дискуссии на основе таких материалов повышают вовлечённость студентов, развивают критическое мышление и межкультурную осведомлённость.

Результаты исследования свидетельствуют о том, что учащиеся становятся более мотивированными и лучше понимают культурные сходства и различия. Таким образом, использование аутентичных материалов в сочетании с дискуссионными заданиями способствует более эффективному и коммуникативному обучению языку.

**Ключевые слова:** Аутентичные материалы, культурное восприятие, дискуссионные задания, межкультурная компетенция, вовлечённость студентов, коммуникативный подход.

### **Introduction**

In recent decades, the process of learning English has evolved far beyond memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary lists. In today's interconnected world, language is deeply tied to culture, identity, and real-life communication. For learners, especially in English Language Teaching contexts, understanding how language reflects cultural values, beliefs, and everyday practices is essential for developing true communicative competence. However, many classrooms still rely on simplified or artificial materials that do not fully represent how English is actually used in real-life situations.

Authentic materials such as films, podcasts, news articles, and social media content offer a more realistic and engaging alternative. These resources expose learners to natural language, diverse accents, and cultural nuances that cannot be easily captured in traditional textbooks. When students interact with such materials, they begin to see language not only as a system of rules but as a living



tool for communication. This shift helps make learning more meaningful and relevant to their personal experiences.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, exposure alone is not enough. Learners need opportunities to process, interpret, and reflect on what they encounter. This is where discussion prompts play a crucial role. Carefully designed questions encourage students to express opinions, compare cultures, and engage in deeper thinking. Through discussion, learners actively construct knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, and become more confident communicators. Such interaction aligns with the principles of communicative language teaching, which emphasizes meaningful use of language in social contexts.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, combining authentic materials with discussion-based activities creates a dynamic and student-centered learning environment. It allows learners to connect classroom content with real-world experiences, fostering both linguistic development and intercultural competence. Research shows that students who engage in culturally rich and interactive tasks are more motivated and open-minded, which positively influences their overall learning outcomes.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, this research aims to explore how authentic materials and discussion prompts influence students' perceptions of cultural similarities and differences in ELT classrooms. By focusing on learners' experiences and responses, the research seeks to highlight practical ways of making language teaching more engaging, relevant, and culturally responsive.

### Literature Review

The use of authentic materials in English Language Teaching has been widely recognized as an effective way to connect classroom learning with real-life language use. According to Gilmore, authentic resources expose learners to natural language and cultural context, helping them develop both linguistic and pragmatic competence. Similarly, Nunan<sup>4</sup> emphasizes that meaningful and realistic materials increase learner motivation and engagement.

<sup>1</sup> Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 40(2), 97–118.

<sup>2</sup> Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

<sup>4</sup> Nunan, D. (1999). *Second Language Teaching and Learning*.



In addition, communicative language teaching highlights the importance of interaction in the learning process. Richards states that discussion-based activities encourage students to actively use language, express ideas, and develop critical thinking skills. Such tasks transform learners from passive recipients into active participants.

Furthermore, Byram stresses the role of intercultural communicative competence, arguing that language learning should also promote understanding of cultural differences and similarities. When authentic materials are combined with guided discussions, students become more open-minded and culturally aware.

Overall, previous studies show that integrating authentic materials and discussion prompts enhances engagement, improves communication skills, and supports intercultural development in ELT classrooms.

### **Methodology**

This article adopts a qualitative, classroom-based approach to explore the influence of authentic materials and discussion prompts on students' cultural perceptions in English Language Teaching. It is based on practical classroom observation where intermediate EFL students are exposed to authentic materials such as videos, short articles, and real-life dialogues reflecting cultural themes, followed by guided discussions using structured prompts that encourage comparison, reflection, and opinion sharing. Data are collected through observation of classroom interaction and analysis of students' spoken responses during discussion activities, focusing on participation, depth of reflection, and intercultural awareness. The data are then interpreted thematically to identify patterns related to learner engagement, cultural understanding, and communicative development.

### **Analyses And Results**

The practical implementation of this article was carried out during teaching practice in two intermediate EFL groups: Group A (experimental group) and Group B (control group) at school. The aim was to compare how different teaching approaches influence students' engagement, communication skills, and cultural perceptions. Group A was taught through authentic materials supported by structured discussion prompts, while Group B followed a traditional textbook-



based syllabus focusing mainly on reading comprehension, vocabulary practice, and grammar-oriented tasks.

In Group A, lessons were designed around culturally rich and real-life topics such as education systems in different countries, daily routines, traditions, youth culture, and communication styles. Each lesson began with exposure to authentic input, after which students engaged in guided discussions using prompts that encouraged comparison and reflection (e.g., “How is this similar or different from your culture?”, “Why do you think this happens?”, “Would you prefer this system? Why or why not?”). Classroom observation showed a strong increase in learner involvement over time. In the first sessions, participation was moderate, with some students hesitant to express opinions due to limited vocabulary. However, by the second and third weeks, around 80–90% of students were actively contributing to discussions. Even previously passive learners began participating when they realized that there were no single “correct” answers and that personal opinion was valued.

A noticeable development in Group A was the quality of students’ spoken responses. Initially, answers were short and descriptive, such as “It is different” or “I like it.” As lessons progressed, students began to produce longer, more structured responses that included reasoning and comparison. For example, one student stated, “In this video, students are more independent and can express their opinions freely, but in our education system, students usually wait for teacher instructions, so communication is more formal.” Such responses demonstrated not only improved language use but also developing critical thinking and intercultural awareness. Students also started asking spontaneous questions about cultural practices shown in the materials, which indicated genuine curiosity and deeper cognitive engagement with the topic.

Peer interaction in Group A also increased significantly. Students often agreed or disagreed with each other’s opinions, creating short discussions without teacher intervention. This peer-to-peer communication contributed to a more dynamic classroom atmosphere and helped learners practice real communicative strategies such as agreeing, disagreeing, clarifying, and elaborating ideas. Emotional engagement was also clearly visible; students reacted with surprise, laughter, or



interest when encountering unfamiliar cultural behaviors, which made lessons more memorable and meaningful.

In contrast, Group B demonstrated a more traditional and passive learning pattern. Approximately 40–50% of students regularly participated in classroom activities, mostly by answering direct comprehension questions from the textbook. Responses were generally short and factual, such as “It is true,” “Yes, I agree,” or simple one-sentence answers. There was limited use of extended speech, reasoning, or personal reflection. Cultural comparison tasks were either absent or minimally discussed, and students rarely connected the material to their own experiences.

Even when discussion questions were introduced in Group B, student participation remained limited. Many learners were hesitant to speak, often due to lack of confidence or unfamiliarity with expressing opinions in English. The classroom environment was more teacher-centered, with the teacher playing the main role in controlling interaction. Students tended to focus on accuracy and correctness rather than fluency or expression of ideas, which restricted spontaneous communication.

Another important difference was the overall classroom atmosphere. In Group A, the environment became increasingly interactive, cooperative, and student-centered. Learners were more willing to take risks in speaking and were less afraid of making mistakes. In Group B, however, the atmosphere remained relatively formal and quiet, with fewer voluntary contributions and minimal peer interaction. Motivation levels were also noticeably different, as Group A students showed greater enthusiasm and curiosity when dealing with real-world materials, while Group B students often viewed tasks as routine classroom exercises.

Overall, the results clearly indicate that Group A outperformed Group B in several key areas: learner engagement, communicative competence, and intercultural awareness. The integration of authentic materials combined with discussion prompts significantly improved students’ ability to express opinions, compare cultures, and participate actively in communication. In contrast, the traditional approach used in Group B limited students’ interaction to controlled exercises, resulting in lower levels of engagement and cultural reflection. These



findings strongly suggest that authentic, discussion-based instruction creates a more effective and meaningful learning environment in ELT classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, based on the theoretical background presented in the literature review, the methodological approach applied during the teaching practice, and the results obtained from the comparative analysis of Group A and Group B, it can be confidently stated that the integration of authentic materials combined with structured discussion prompts is a highly effective pedagogical strategy in English Language Teaching.

The literature clearly emphasized that authentic materials provide learners with exposure to real-life language use and cultural context, which are essential for developing communicative competence and intercultural awareness. In addition, previous research highlighted that discussion-based activities promote interaction, critical thinking, and learner engagement, making the language learning process more meaningful and student-centered.

The practical implementation of these principles during classroom observation confirmed their effectiveness. In Group A, where authentic materials and guided discussions were applied, students demonstrated a noticeable improvement in participation, motivation, and confidence. They gradually moved from short and simple responses to more developed, reflective, and culturally aware expressions. Students became more willing to share opinions, compare cultural experiences, and engage in peer interaction, which created a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

In contrast, Group B, which followed a traditional textbook-based approach, showed limited progress in communicative performance and cultural reflection. Students mainly focused on completing controlled exercises and gave short, factual answers with minimal interaction. Their participation remained relatively passive, and opportunities for critical thinking and intercultural comparison were restricted.

Overall, the analysis of both groups clearly demonstrates that authentic materials, when supported by well-designed discussion prompts, significantly enhance students' linguistic development and cultural understanding. This approach



Academia Review-A Multidisciplinary Online Journal

**ISSN (Online):** 3070-6726

**Website:** <https://academia.org>

Volume 2, Issue 4, April, 2026



This work is Licenced under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).

bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world communication, making English language learning more relevant, engaging, and effective.

Therefore, it can be concluded that authentic, discussion-based instruction is a powerful and necessary approach in modern ELT classrooms, as it not only improves language proficiency but also fosters intercultural competence, learner autonomy, and active participation.

### References

1. Gilmore, A. 2007. Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 40(2), 97–118.
2. Richards, J. C. 2006. *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Byram, M. 1997. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
4. Nunan, D. 1999. *Second Language Teaching and Learning*.