

TEACHING SPEAKING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

Шонь О.Б.

*кандидат філологічних наук,
доцент кафедри англійської філології та методики навчання англійської мови
Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет
імені Володимира Гнатюка
м. Тернопіль, Україна*

Discussing the use of primary sources in the classroom one most often thinks of working with them in a history or sociology class. However, using them in language learning classroom is beneficial as well as they can become the means of developing students' language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

As the manual "Engaging Students with Primary Sources" published by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History states, primary source is a first-hand, original account, record, or evidence about a person, place, object, or an event [1].

Speaking about primary sources one almost always means written documents though the range is much wider. We single out the following basic kinds of primary sources:

- a) texts such as manuscripts, letters, diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, journals, newspapers;
- b) audio recordings and video recordings;
- c) visual materials such as photographs, prints, advertisement cards;
- d) artefacts, e.g. clothing, costumes, furniture, objects of everyday use;
- e) research data, e.g. polls, charts.

Primary sources are material evidence of the definite epoch and as such they can give first-hand account of an event, supply the data that is missing in a textbook and give students the opportunity to be analytical and think critically while examining the sources, connecting them to the topic they study, express their opinions and build up a perspective speaking about past and present and making prognosis for the future. Primary sources expose students to multiple perspectives on great issues of the past and present. What is more, they can give food for thought and provide necessary background for various class activities. The importance of primary sources in the classroom is discussed by Scott M. Waring and Richard Hartshorne who believe that engaging students with such type of material can help them to foster critical-thinking and deductive reasoning skills, make learning more appealing and allow teachers to personalize learning environments [3, p. 3]. Selecting primary sources, however, is one of the most important and at the same time complicated issues. As M. Goblirsch states, primary sources should illuminate the content of a lesson, which in turn will improve students' understanding of concepts, thereby achieving national and state historical standards [2].

It is evident that one should be warned against simplified approach to primary sources. Simple reading and discussion of any historical text or describing a photo is insufficient. In the book “Conducting Authentic Historical Inquiry: Engaging Learners with SOURCES and Emerging Technologies” Scott M. Waring and Richard Hartshorne develop the SOURCES Framework for Teaching with Primary and Secondary Sources through which the learning process is scaffolded to allow individual students opportunities to examine the sources, question their understanding of a historic event, develop background knowledge, find further evidence that support the understanding and construct their own narrative [3, p. 4]. The SOURCES Framework for Teaching with Primary and Secondary Sources includes the following seven steps:

1. **Scrutinizing the Fundamental Source(s).**
2. **Organizing Thoughts.**
3. **Understanding the Context.**
4. **Reading Between the Lines.**
5. **Corroborating and Refuting.**
6. **Establishing a Plausible Narrative.**
7. **Summarizing Final Thoughts** [3, p. 4].

Thus, primary sources of any kind are multidimensional material in various types of classroom. They can be used not only to gain knowledge but to develop language skills in a foreign language classroom.

Considering using them for teaching speaking we can state that any kind of primary sources can be used to boost a conversation, stimulate a discussion, compose a dialogue, act out a roleplay. Not only texts as primary sources but paintings, photos, charts, objects can be used effectively.

As an example of visual primary sources in teaching speaking we may consider the painting by Daniel Huntington “The Republican Court” (1861) that shows a reception held by George Washington, the first US president, and his “Lady Presidentess” Martha Washington. There are 64 people in the painting arranged in several groups and engaged in conversation. The following steps of activities can be suggested:

Step 1. The teacher introduces the painting and asks students to comment on its plot.

Step 2. Students identify the groups in the painting where conversations may happen.

Step 3. Students brainstorm the ideas and topics of the conversations in the painting (e.g.: politics, fashion, society gossip, family matters etc.).

Step 4. Students are divided into groups and positioned as in the painting. Each group acts out a dialogue or a group conversation). The teacher moves between the groups listening or may perform a character that joins various conversations in turn.

Step 5. Students rearrange groups and continue conversations thus enlivening the painting and expanding ideas. The number of such reshuffles depends on the number of groups, purpose and time for the activity.

Step 6. Students summarize their conversations and provide feedback.

Analysis of feedback shows that using primary sources in such capacity is effective though demanding as students have to think in terms of historical perspective and act out the part of another character. At the same time working with primary sources creates meaningful learning experience for students and builds historical empathy, develops historical context, boosts creativity and develops critical thinking.

References:

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THE BENEFITS OF WEB-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING TOOLS FOR LEARNERS AND TEACHERS

Кулик С.А.

*кандидат наук із соціальних комунікацій,
асистент кафедри романо-германської філології
Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет
імені Володимира Гнатюка
м. Тернопіль, Україна*

Пежинська О.М.

*кандидат філологічних наук,
доцент кафедри романо-германської філології
Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет
імені Володимира Гнатюка
м. Тернопіль, Україна*

Nowadays, the access to the Internet means more than staying connected and sharing information. It has revolutionized the very approach to education making full use of online teaching tools the key trend in language learning in the 21st century. The move towards digitalization of education has also been triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 forcing governments of different countries to look for the ways of continuing educational process during lockdowns and virus-caused self-isolation requirements [4]. In terms of online language teaching this has led to the