Use of Authentic Materials in English as a Foreign Language Classrooms: Challenges, Reasons, Types and Frequency*

Ghuson Orooq[1]
ga92@live.com

Anwar Hussein-Abdel Razeq[2]
aaabdelrazeq@birzeit.edu

Abstract

This descriptive analytical research study investigated English as a foreign language teachers' attitudes towards the use of authentic materials in their classrooms, reasons for using authentic materials, challenges in using authentic materials, types of authentic materials they use and how often they use such materials. The participants of the study consisted of all 63 grade ten English as a foreign language teachers in one of the school districts in Palestine. The researches collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were collected through open-ended questions that ask participants to report on use of, challenges, reasons and frequency of using authentic language in their classes. Quantitatively, a close-ended questionnaire was distributed to all participants. The study concluded the majority of the participants strongly support the use of authentic materials in spite of the challenges that they encounter. Approximately 36.5% of the participants reported it is challenging and 44.2% reported that it is not challenging at all. The factors behind each group's perspective are discussed in the discussion section. Enriching EFL classrooms and enhancing students' motivation are some of the reasons behind using authentic material. In addition, the majority supported the frequent use of authentic materials depending on students' English level. Implications for teacher training and classroom instruction are presented and discussed.

Keywords: Authentic materials; Learning activities; Instructional materials; Palestinian English textbooks; Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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استخدام المواد الأصلية في اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفِها لغةً أجنبية: التحديات والأسباب والأنواع والتكرار*

أنور حسين عبد الرزاق[2]
aaabdelrazeq@birzeit.edu

غصن عروق[1]
ga92@live.com

ملخص

بحثت هذه الدراسة التحليلية الوصفية مواقف معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفِها لغةً أجنبية تجاه استخدام المواد الأصلية في فصولهم الدراسية، وأسباب استخدام المواد الأصلية، والتحديات في استخدام المواد الأصلية، وأنواع المواد الأصلية التي يستخدمونها، ومدى استخدامهم لهذه المواد. يتكون المشاركون في الدراسة من جميع معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية للصف العاشر، البالغ عددهم (63) معلمًا ومعلمة، في إحدى المناطق التعليمية في فلسطين. جمع الباحثون بيانات كمية ونوعية. البيانات النوعية التي جُمعت من خلال أسئلة مفتوحة تطلب من المشاركين إفادتَهم عن استخدام اللغة الأصلية في فصولهم الدراسية، وتحديات استخدامها، وأسباب استخدامهم لها، ومدى تكرارهم له. من الناحية الكمية، وُزِّع استبيان مغلق على جميع المشاركين. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن غالبية المشاركين يؤيدون بشدة استخدام مواد أصلية على رغم التحديات التي يواجهونها. أفاد ما يقرب من 36.5% من المشاركين أنه يمثل تحديًا، وأفاد 44.2% أنه لا يمثل تحديًا على الإطلاق. نوقشت الأسباب الكامنة وراء منظور كل مجموعة في قسم المناقشة. إثراء الفصول الدراسية للغة الإنجليزية بوصفِها لغة أجنبية، وتعزيز دافعية الطلاب؛ هي بعض الأسباب وراء استخدام مواد أصلية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أيدت الأغلبية الاستخدام المتكرر للمواد الأصلية، اعتمادًا على مستوى اللغة الإنجليزية للطلاب. ناقش الباحثان تأثير نتائج الدراسة في تدريب المعلمين وتدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفِها لغة أجنبية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لغة أصلية، أنشطة تعليمية، مادة تعليمية، كتب اللغة الإنجليزية الفلسطينية، تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية بوصفِها لغة أجنبية

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1. Introduction

A number of applied linguists discussed the definition of authentic materials in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Some of them argued that they are texts that are not written for language teaching purposes. For instance, Nunan (1988), Jordan (1997), and Tomlinson (2004) contended that authentic materials are not developed for teachers to use in their classrooms. Rather, these materials are from real life various situations, while Daskalos and Ling (2005) and Adams (1995) believed that they are the texts in which language and structure are not simplified in anyway and are produced by native speakers. However, Jacobson et al. (2003) proposed that "[it is] the printed materials which are used in classrooms in the same way they would be used in real life" (p. 1). In this sense, Joy (2011) argued that "the original context of authentic materials no more remains the same when it is used in a classroom because the text is re-contextualised as a teaching text" (p. 10). Consequently, it is debated that it is almost impossible to achieve complete authenticity in classrooms.

Widdowson (1998) argued that being appropriate to the context is what makes the text real. Thomas (2014) argued that such texts are originally produced for real communication purposes. According to Geltrich-Ludgate and Tovar (1987), authentic materials could be classified into three categories:

1. Listening materials: radio news, cartoons, songs, etc.

2. Visual materials: street signs, magazines and newspapers pictures, post cards, etc.

3. Printed materials: sports reports, newspapers, restaurant menus, train tickets, etc.

Furthermore, movies and video clips might be the very obvious example for these materials. In this regard, videos are considered one of the best authentic materials available for EFL teachers since they let learners listen to the native speakers, observe their gestures and body language (González, 2016; Thomas, 2014). Online materials "provide real life linguistic input as well as valuable cultural information for our students" (Ciornei and Dina, 2015, p. 276).

Authenticity in language learning and teaching refers to both oral and written language inputs that are natural and used in appropriate cultural and situational context (Rogers and Medley, 1988). Some applied linguists such as Shomoossi and Ketabi (2007) maintained that focusing only on oral and written input is a limited perspective. They recommended taking into account the socio-pragmatic aspects of language and the context in which it is used in working with authentic language materials. Further, According to Tatsuki (2007) language speakers construct authenticity through their real life social interactions. Taylor (cited in Joy, 2011) concluded: "The classroom has its own reality and naturalness. Participants in the language classroom create their own authenticity there as they do elsewhere" (p. 5). This suggests that authenticity comes from classroom interactions and it is not brought to the classroom.

There are four types of authenticity according to (Breen, 1985); these include authenticity of the texts, authenticity of learners' interpretations of the texts, authenticity of the tasks used for language learning and teaching, and authenticity of the social situation used in the classroom. In other words, the definition of authenticity is not limited to the materials or the activities; rather, it is the combination and integration of all the elements in a certain context. The concept of authenticity is explained more clearly through a multifaceted model suggested by (Brown and Mansche, 2003). They argue that authenticity consists of three main types: input authenticity, task authenticity, and output authenticity. The key of this model lies in that each type of authenticity contains multiple degrees of authenticity.

For instance, they suggested four degrees for input authenticity. First, *genuine input authenticity*, in which the materials are not created for the classroom but for real life usage. Second, altered *input authenticity*, which is the same as genuine input but with some changes, as adding lexical glossing. Third, *adapted input authenticity*, which is originally a genuine input but adapted to be used in the classroom. Fourth, *simulated input authenticity*, which is the materials that were originally created for the classroom, but with some modifications to make it authentic. Finally, *Inauthenticity, which is* the materials that were created for the classroom without paying attention to making it authentic.

Brown and Mansche also suggested three degrees for task authenticity. These are genuine task authenticity, simulated task authenticity and Pedagogical task authenticity. *Genuine task authenticity is* when the tasks are presented in ways they would be in the real life. *Simulated task authenticity* is when the tasks concentrate on language learning but within a real life frame in the classroom context. *Pedagogical task authenticity* is useful for language learning but not authentic. Finally, two degrees for output authenticity were suggested; *genuine output is* when the learners interact and negotiate meanings according to their actual beliefs. The second is *simulated output*; it is when the learners are not communicating effectively. This multifaceted model suggested by Brown and Mansche (2003) has deconstructed the concept of authenticity in language classroom. It provided a better understanding of what makes the language classroom authentic.

1.1. Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. To which extent do EFL teachers consider using authentic materials and are able to use them?

2. What are the reasons behind EFL teachers' support and use of authentic materials in their classrooms?

3. What are teachers' general thoughts concerning use of authentic materials in their classrooms?

4. What types of authentic materials do teachers use in their classrooms? What are the most common ones that they use?

5. How often do they expose students to authentic material?

1.2. Literature Review

It is extremely crucial that both teachers and students have a positive attitude towards the used teaching materials, and learning strategies in the classroom as this affects the teaching- learning process. Therefore, several researches investigated different aspects of authentic materials use in teaching English as a foreign language. Learners reported that the use of authentic materials was very beneficial because they were being exposed to a real life language that native speakers use in their daily interactions and communication. Further, use of such authentic materials motivated them and made them feel a sense of achievement (Mamo, 2013; Abdelhafez and Abdallah, 2015).

Enhancing students' achievement and improving their language skills could be achieved by enriching classroom textbooks with authentic real life language. For instance, Soliman (2013) found out that the perfect reading class is the class where there is a combination of both authentic texts and textbooks. As a result, he recommended that language programs should take into consideration integrating authentic materials into the EFL curriculum to enhance teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. As Ting-fai (2011), Abdulhussein (2014), Zhafarghandi, Barekat, and

Homaei (2014), Kılıç and İlter (2015) and Saleh (2017) found, both teachers and students like to use such authentic materials in the learning process and had positive attitudes towards that.

Having a positive attitude towards authentic materials and supporting using them in English as a foreign language classrooms stemmed from the finding that use of such materials facilitated students learning. Teachers' use of authentic materials varies depending on some factors. These include: their beliefs about using authentic materials in their classrooms, their satisfaction with the used textbooks and their willingness to prepare authentic material. Further, EFL teachers should keep in mind English language learners' levels when choosing authentic language materials (Ting-fai, 2011).

The way such authentic materials are used and presented is vital. This is because it has a profound effect on students' motivation and attitude towards such material. Further, familiarity with the topics of authentic materials chosen also affects learners' engagement and enthusiasm in the learning process. In addition, EFL instructors should take into account the level of difficulty of chosen materials since this also impact students' motivation and engagement in the learning process (Firmansyah, 2015). Reading authentic and interesting texts created active classrooms. While EFL teachers are not allowed to change assigned English textbooks, using a combination of both types of texts is essential to creating active classrooms where students are engaged in the learning process (Daskalos and Ling, 2005).

2. Methodology

2.1. The Research Design

The current study used a mixed methods design. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in collecting and analysing the data. The aim of using mixed methods research "is not to replace either of these approaches, but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both in single research studies and across studies" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14). It helped the researcher to collect sufficient data to answer the study research questions thoroughly.

Qualitative data were collected through open-ended questions. At the end of the questionnaire participants were invited to share any information that might not captured through the questionnaire items and any additional information they feel it is necessary pertaining to issues related to the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom. Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to investigate English as a foreign language teachers' perspectives regarding using authentic materials and tasks in their classrooms, reasons for using authentic material, types of authentic materials used and challenges in using authentic material.

2.2. Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consisted of all 63 grade 10 English as a foreign language teachers in one of the school districts in Palestine. There were 30 males and 33 females. Their ages ranged from 22 – 40 years old. Their teaching experience varied; some had 1-5 years, some 6-10 years and some more than 11 years. The majority of them held a BA in English. Only eight held an MA in English.

2.3. Instruments and Materials:

Throughout the second semester of 2017-2018 scholastic year, all participants in the study were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of four parts; the first

part of the questionnaire titled "Personal information" aimed to provide an insight about the samples' gender, age, qualifications, and years of experience. The second part consisted of five sections. The first one was titled "the use of authentic material", and it aimed to show to which extent teachers think about using authentic materials and if they are able to use them or not. The next one titled "The reasons I support or use authentic materials in my classroom" aimed to reveal the reasons behind supporting the use of authentic materials or even using them in their classrooms. The third one, "In general", aimed to explore general thoughts about the use of authentic materials. However, the fourth one titled "Types of Authentic materials I use in my classroom" aimed to investigate the types of authentic materials they use in their classrooms and to reveal the most common used ones. At the end of the questionnaire, the participants were invited to add any other comments or information that was not captured by the questionnaire. The idea of this section was to give the teachers a space to comment on the subject, the questionnaire itself, or using authentic materials in teaching English in general. The researcher believed that their comments would enrich the **data** collected through the questionnaire.

To guarantee the validity of the teachers' questionnaire, it was evaluated by three experts in the filed including a university professor and two English instructional supervisors in the Schools Directorate. Some adjustments related to the language of the questionnaire were made, for example the titles of the paragraphs were clarified and were made more specific to fit with the study questions. The university professor added some items in the third part (types of authentic materials I use). The reliability of the questionnaire is considered high (0.867 Cronbach's Alpha).

2.4. Data Analysis

Teachers' responses to the part that describes their attitudes were measured using the SPSS program based on Likert scale that started from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree. The second part of the questionnaire about the types of authentic materials they use was also analysed based on Likert scale, as (1) stands for never, (2) rarely, (3) occasionally, (4) frequently, (5) very frequently. However, reverse coding was used for the negative items. Descriptive analysis was used to calculate the means, standard deviation, percentages, and frequencies for the items in the questionnaire.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) Qualitative Thematic Analysis method was used to analyze the qualitative data collected by the open-ended questions at the end of the survey. Thematic analysis is "a process of encoding qualitative information" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 5). It includes looking through the data, which could be interviews, observations, or any other texts, to find connections or repeated patterns that form meanings. These patterns that describe and represent crucial meanings related to the study questions are to be classified as themes.

Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that despite the fact that thematic analysis is a flexible method that is widely used with both quantitative and qualitative researches, there is no specific agreement on how it is done. Therefore, they have developed the six-phase model, which works as an outline for the thematic analysis process. The researcher has followed the six-stage model including rereading the data, coding, categorizing, revising the codes and presenting themes as described below.

In phase one, the researchers read and reread the data many times to make themselves familiar with all the aspects of the data. Moreover, they had taken some notes and underlined some ideas throughout the reading and rereading process to help them in the coding phase. In the second phase, the researchers started organizing the data and coding them. In the third phase, the researchers revised the codes and put them in themes. A thematic map was used to assess the relationship between the codes, the themes and the sub-themes. In the fourth phase, the researchers reviewed the coding extract for each theme. Some adjustments and editing were

made. Then, they reviewed the themes and their coherence and their relation to the entire data. In other words, the codes, which at the previous phase seemed not to fit in with the themes, were revised and their relations to the themes became clearer. In the fifth phase, the researchers completed the final refinement of the themes and the sub themes and naming the themes. In the final phase, the meaningful themes were presented and supported with evidence.

3. Results

3.1. Teachers' Attitudes towards Using Authentic Materials in the Classroom:

Table (1): Frequencies and percentages for using authentic materials

No.	Items		SA	A	UN	D	SD	total
The use of Authentic materials:								
1.	I support the use of authentic materials in English language classroom.	F	23	26	1	1	-	51
		P	44.2%	50%	1.9%	1.9%	-	98%
2.	I think the use of authentic materials is challenging.	F	4	15	6	23	3	51
		P	7.7%	28.8%	11.5%	44.2%	5.8%	98%
3.	I encourage my students to use authentic materials outside the classroom.	F	27	23	1	1	-	52
		P	51.9%	44.2%	1.9%	1.9%	-	100%

Table (1) shows the frequencies and percentages of teachers' attitudes towards the use of authentic materials. As the table illustrates, 44.2% and 50% strongly agreed and agreed consecutively on item No.1 which asks participants' opinion pertaining to supporting using authentic materials in the classroom. Only one participant strongly disagreed and one participant disagreed regarding the aforementioned item. These percentages indicated that almost all the teachers support the use of authentic materials in English language classrooms. The second item (No. 2) "I think the use of authentic materials is challenging." aimed to check if these teachers think that the use of authentic materials is challenging. It was found that four teachers (7.7%) strongly agreed that it's challenging, 15 agreed (28.8%), while 6 teachers (11.5%) were not sure about it and could not decide. 23 teachers (44.2%) and 3 teachers (5.8%) respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed that the use of these materials is challenging for them. The last item in this section (No. 3) asked the teachers if they encourage their students to use authentic materials in other places other than the classroom, "I encourage my students to use authentic materials outside the classroom." Twenty-seven teachers strongly agreed and 23 teachers agreed. However, only two teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed on this item.

3.2. Reasons behind Using Authentic Materials:

Table (2): Means and Std. Deviations

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The reasons I support or use authentic materials in my classroom are that they:			
4	Enrich classroom inputs	4.58	0.572
12	Increase students' motivation	4.54	0.609
10	Expose students to real language	4.50	0.754

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
5	Develop students' reading ability	4.50	0.610
9	Increase students' vocabulary	4.48	0.727
13	Improve students' communication skills	4.40	0.670
6	Develop students' listening ability	4.37	0.720
14	Are interesting for me as a teacher	4.33	0.785
11	Increase students' cultural awareness	4.29	0.723
8	Develop students' speaking ability	4.28	0.701
15	Are interesting for my students	4.27	0.700
7	Develop students' writing ability	4.10	0.799

Table (2) shows the means and standard deviations for the reasons behind teachers support for the use of authentic materials in their classroom. The results in the table were obtained by analyzing the data using the statistical SPSS package to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each item in this section. As the table shows, these reasons were sorted in ascending order to shed the light on the highest means. Item number 4, which states that the use of authentic materials enrich classroom inputs, received the highest mean (M= 4.58). Teacher agreed highly that using authentic materials enrich their classrooms inputs. Accordingly, the second one (M= 4.54) was for item (No. 12) "Increase students' motivation", and the third one (M= 4.50) went for item (No. 10) "Expose students to real language". Reading skill, item (No. 5) "Develop students' reading ability" got the highest mean (M= 4.50) among the other four language skills, and the next item was item (No. 9) "Increase students' vocabulary" with (M= 4.48). However, the next item was item (No. 13) "Improve students' communication skills" (M= 4.40). Developing students' listening skills that received the mean 4.37 came after the reading skill. After that, item (No. 14) "Are interesting for me as a teacher" and item (No. 11) "Increase students' cultural awareness" got perspectively (M= 4.33) and (M= 4.29). Pertaining to English skills, as the table above shows, using authentic materials develops students' speaking skills (M= 4.28) and improves students' writing skill (Mean= 4.10). Further, that learners enjoy using authentic materials scored (Mean= 4.27). Despite the fact that item (No. 7) got the lowest mean, its mean score is still high (M= 4.10).

3.3. Challenges Facing Teachers Using Authentic Materials:

Table (3): Means and Std. Deviations

No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
C. The challenges I face when using authentic materials are:			
16	Using authentic material needs for an extra effort	4.27	0.843
17	Its demand for a different way of planning	3.88	1.041
18	Its being time consuming	3.29	1.316
21	Lack of needed equipment	3.24	1.255
19	Equipment being difficult to access	2.90	1.237
20	Materials being difficult for my students to understand	2.88	1.166

Table (3) shows the means and the standard deviations for the challenges that teachers face when using authentic materials. The mean and standard deviation for each item in this section were calculated using the Statistical SPSS package. The results were sorted from the highest mean to the lowest one. It indicates that the biggest three challenges for teachers from their opinion are: First, (No. 16) that "it needs an extra effort" (M= 4.27). The second is item (No. 17) that "it demands a different way of planning" (M= 3.88), while the third item (No. 18) is that it's "time consuming" (M= 3.29). It is noticed that these challenges are mainly related to the teachers themselves, their effort, way of planning, and time. Technical challenges (lack of needed equipment) scored 3.24 mean and that the equipment is difficult to access scored a 2.90 mean. The last challenge is related to their students: item (No. 20) "Difficult for my students to understand" with (M= 2.88).

3.4. Frequency of Exposing Students to Authentic Materials:

Table (4): Frequencies and Percentages

No.	Items		SA	A	UN	D	SD	total
22.	I think students should be exposed to authentic materials at the beginning level.	F	22	17	4	6	1	50
		P%	42.3	32.7	7.7	11.5	1.9	96.2
23.	I think students should be exposed to authentic materials at the intermediate level.	F	21	19	8	2	1	51
		P%	40.4	36.5	15.4	3.8	1.9	98.1
24	I think it is easy to access authentic materials nowadays due to the internet.	F	27	19	3	2	-	51
		P%	51.9	36.5	5.8	3.8	0	98.1

Table (4) shows the frequencies and the percentages for general thoughts about the use of authentic materials. The table shows 22 teachers strongly agree that students should be exposed to authentic materials at the beginning level and 17 teachers agreed on this issue, while only one teacher strongly disagreed (1.9%) and six other teachers disagreed (11.5%). However, (21) teachers (40.4%) strongly agreed on item (No. 23) "I think students should be exposed to authentic materials at the intermediate level". Further, nineteen teaches only agreed on using authentic materials with learners at the intermediate level. Only one teacher strongly disagreed on this item (1.9%) and two teachers disagreed (3.8%). Since items (No. 22) and (No. 23) are very close, EFL teachers strongly support using authentic materials in teaching English. In addition, more than half of the teachers strongly agreed that it is easy to access authentic materials.

3.5. Types of Authentic Materials Teachers Use:

Table (5): Means and Std. Deviations for Section (E)

No.	Types of materials	Mean	Std. Deviation
3	Photographs	3.98	.969
2	Picture books	3.90	1.107
1	Websites	3.72	0.991
7	Postcards	3.69	1.140
21	Maps	3.59	1.023

No.	Types of materials	Mean	Std. Deviation
10	Movies	3.57	1.237
22	Signs	3.52	0.980
23	Blogs	3.31	1.273
17	Signs with symbols	3.31	1.068
8	Brochures (e.g. Travel)	3.29	1.143
24	Food labels	3.18	1.228
13	Documentaries	3.17	1.184
11	Cartoons	3.16	1.173
16	Art work	3.10	1.177
4	Radio	3.10	1.390
9	TV shows	3.08	1.291
6	Newspapers articles	2.90	1.053
12	News broadcasts	2.82	1.257
18	Restaurant menus	2.78	1.222
20	Sales catalogues	2.76	1.2545
19	Advertisements	2.73	1.285
5	Magazines	2.60	1.212
14	Commercials	2.54	1.146
15	Phone messages	2.44	1.211

Table (5) shows the means and standard deviations for the types of authentic materials that teachers use. In order to obtain the results described in the table above, the researchers used the SPSS statistical package to calculate the mean and standard deviation for each item in the table. The results were sorted from the highest mean to the lowest one. As the table shows, the most five used materials are: 1. Item (No. 3) Photographs (M= 3.98) 2. Item (No. 2) Picture books (M= 3.90) 3. Item (No. 1) Websites (M= 3.72) 4. Item (No. 7) Postcards (M= 3.69) 5. Item (No. 21) Maps (M= 3.59). Whereas, the least five used items are: 1. Item (No. 15) Phone Messages (M= 2.44) 2. Item (No. 14) Commercials (M= 2.54) 3. Item (No. 5) Magazines (M= 2.60) 4. Item (No. 19) Advertisements (2.73) 5. Item (No. 20) Sales catalogues (M= 2.76).

3.6. Teachers' Comments on Using Authentic Materials:

At the end of the questionnaire, in an open-ended question, the participants were asked to add any other comments that they would like to share with the researchers regarding using authentic materials in their EFL classrooms. Fourteen teachers shared their thoughts, and wrote their comments. The comments focused on three main issues. The first issue focused on the types of authentic materials they use and the reasons behind using these materials; the second on the methods they prefer to use in their classrooms; however, the third was concerning the tools they use in their classrooms.

The results showed that nine teachers commented on the types of authentic materials they use and the rationale behind using them. These comments indicated that teachers use these

materials because they meet their students' needs, and as a result, they motivate them. In addition, participants stated that these materials make the learning process more interesting and enjoyable. Teachers also think that these materials improve students' cultural awareness. In the words of one of the participants: "[Authentic] materials are a great resource for students when it comes to learning the language and they help the students to understand the foreign culture associated with their new language."

The participants used different methods to introduce their students to authentic language materials. These methods were mainly communicative. For instance, one of the teachers commented: "what I think of as the most effective way in my classes is group work and student-centered teaching strategies". Other strategies the teachers mentioned include class discussions, role plays, and drama. In addition, the participants reported that they are open to use new approaches and methods in their classrooms as long as such methods assist them in using target language in a student-centered classroom.

The majority of the participants also reported that they depend highly on technology in their lessons. They were aware of the importance of utilizing these technologies in their lessons. One of the participants said: "I usually use the smart board and it's really amazing and useful. It completely attracts students' attention". They also use the internet, searching for authentic materials to use in their classrooms. In general, teachers' comments were positive and supported their answers on all sections of the questionnaire.

4. Discussion:

The research questions in this study focused on English language teachers' attitudes towards using authentic materials, reasons behind using authentic materials, challenges in using authentic materials, type of authentic materials they use and the frequency of using such materials in English language classrooms. Results of the descriptive analysis indicated that teachers had positive attitudes towards using authentic materials in English language classrooms. The majority of the teachers supported the use of authentic materials in their classrooms. Moreover, they encouraged their students to use them as well. Teachers agreed that using these materials was challenging; however, they were aware of the great effects authentic materials had on their classrooms. Photographs, picture books, and websites seemed to be the most preferred materials for the teachers. Whereas, phone messages, commercials, and magazines seemed to be the less used ones.

Results revealed that most of English language teachers supported or used authentic materials in their classrooms; 44.2% strongly agreed and 50% agreed to the use of authentic materials in English language classrooms. They believed that the use of authentic materials in their classrooms was of paramount importance. This finding is in congruent with Ting-fai's (2011) results that EFL teachers had a positive attitude towards the use of authentic materials and believed that these materials facilitated students' English learning.

In the current study, teachers agreed that the most obvious reason for them to use authentic materials in their classes was that these materials enrich classroom inputs. This is mainly due to the vivid nature of these materials. The main focus for these materials is the communicative competence of the learner. They enhance natural interactions within a communicative framework. As Savignon (2006) argued, such materials engage the readers with the interpretations of meanings that are communicative. They allow these readers to explain, express and discuss these meanings.

In addition, the results of the current study showed that teachers believed that these materials are beneficial for teaching the four language skills. This is in congruent with previous studies that have been conducted in various contexts. For instance, Karimi and Dowlatabadi (2014) and AbdulHussein (2014) found out that using authentic materials enhances listening comprehension Besides, interacting with these materials make learners pay attention for the various accents used by different English speakers (Oguz & Bahar, 2008). Other studies confirmed the positive effect these materials have on students' reading, vocabulary retention, and writing skills (karimi and Dowlatabadi, 2014; Ghaderpanahi, 2012). The reasons behind such benefits of using authentic materials are that these materials expose English language learners to different text types and styles that are hardly found in non-authentic materials. They expose English learners to the target language as it is used outside classrooms (Kilickaya, 2004).

Exposition to and use of authentic materials in EFL classes motivate ELL learners. According to Berardo (2006), authentic materials motivate students because these materials work as a reminder and evidence that the target language is actually used in real-life situations by real people. When learners interact with 'real' language, they feel that they are really learning. When learners are able to use the language they learn inside classrooms, as one of the authors observed, in authentic life situations, particularly when communicating with native speakers, they feel happy and satisfied. On the other hand, when they are unable to communicate with native and non-natives, they feel frustrated, embarrassed and depressed.

It is the sole responsibility of EFL teachers to prepare and use authentic materials in their classes even though it is challenging and efforts and time demanding. Teachers are required to exert their best efforts in using simplifying and illustrating authentic material. This became even more significant when they reported that these materials were not very challenging to their students to understand. Principals and supervisors should provide their EFL teachers with the time and rewards for searching, developing and using authentic language materials with their learners. This is particularly critical because, as the participants in the study reported, it is not hard to find authentic materials now using the internet.

Using authentic materials develops students' communicative competence by engaging them in communications using authentic language. Since all schools and language programs main goal is to improve students' communicative competence, using such materials becomes imperative. It is EFL teachers' responsibility to develop English learners' linguistic and communicative competence. The main focus should be on emphasizing communication, not only teaching grammar and vocabulary in isolation. Textbooks activities and teachers' applications should focus on producing correct natural authentic language. Moreover, the target language should dominate classroom interactions rather than students' mother tongue.

To be able to use the target language in classroom interactions, EFL teachers need to be fluent in English in the first place. When they themselves have problems with speaking in English, it's a natural consequence that their students fail to use the language. Moreover, teachers should be trained to work in a communicative student-centered environment. They should be given the required time that is necessary to achieve the goals of the English curriculum. English textbooks used by some school authorities should be aligned with the English curriculum and flexible enough to allow EFL teachers to enrich it with authentic real life language activities.

5. Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is crucial to redefine the expected outcomes from the EFL curriculum and allow for the use of authentic materials in classroom activities to go along with these outcomes. However, it is important that these modifications take into consideration that when the students get used to hearing unnatural language, they will be frustrated when they are in a situation that required actual use of the language. Therefore, ELLs should not learn about the target language but, instead, they should learn how to use the language in authentic real life situations. The target language should be used intensively in EFL classrooms. Since EFL teachers and learners have positive attitudes towards using authentic materials, it is an opportunity to school authorities to provide EFL teachers with the flexibility, time and reward to use such materials. This will definitely motivate and engage both teachers and learners in learning English. A word of caution should be noted here about generalizing the results of the study to other contexts, as each context has its unique restrictions and requirements. The study was conducted in one of the largest Palestinian school districts. The participants in the study were sixty three grade 10 teachers. Finally, the researchers conducted follow up interviews with a small number of the participating teachers.

Based on the results of the current study, some recommendations for further researches could be suggested. A study that will investigate students' attitudes towards the use of authentic materials in English language classrooms will be effective and informative. It will provide insights to the types of materials students prefer. This includes the types of topics, activities and tools in which they have interest. There is a serious need to investigate the authenticity of the assessment tools used in EFL classrooms, since they might have great effects on teachers' practices. There is a need for a qualitative study that explores and compares English language teachers' beliefs with their practices. Such study will provide deep understanding of the sources of these beliefs. In addition, it will investigate to which extent they hold these beliefs in practice. This will examine if there is a gap between the teachers' attitudes and their actual practice. Moreover, it will reveal much about the challenges that teachers face. The current study has found that teachers depend highly on using their native language instead of the target language. As a result, teachers' fluency and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) need to be investigated, in order to find out whether the problem is related to their lack of training or to their fluency.

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