



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# AN ASSESSMENT OF EFL TEACHERS' PRACTICE OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: THE CASE OF FIVE SELECTED PREPARATORY SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to assess EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials in improving students' communicative competence. The researchers selected five woredas out of 14 woredas using simple random sampling technique. Thus, 15 English language teachers who were teaching English language in the year 2017/18 G.C. in the schools were selected for interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, and classroom observation by using simple random sampling technique. Mixed research design which involves both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection and analysis were employed. The data gathered through open ended questionnaire, interview and document analysis were transcribed and thematically organized and then qualitatively analyzed. Then, the researchers tried to triangulate the data obtained through these methods by observing what actually happened in the actual classroom. The overall findings of this study indicate that in spite of the fact that authentic materials are crucial to develop students' communicative competence, less attention is given to incorporate the materials.

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## INTRODUCTION

**Background of the study:** The roles of foreign languages in modern societies have made educators devise new ways of teaching methods so as to meet learners' needs and expectations. Acquiring a foreign language implies developing several skills in the target language which sometimes can be a challenge for pupils, especially when they are exposed to real-life communications. Therefore, using authentic materials in the class can be useful tool to motivate pupils and make them feel comfortable using the foreign language. In this sense, Nuttal (1996) argues that "authentic materials can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people". Norman Fairclough suggests that "language is part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are linguistic phenomena" (2001). Language as a social experience provides individuals with information, emotions and interactions to solve the everyday problems. Language is considered a social phenomenon because all the individuals use it to construct interpersonal relations. Using authentic materials represents a relatively easy and convenient way to improve not only pupils' communicative competences, but also their confidence in real situations. Rogers and Medley contend that if students are expected to function effectively in

a foreign language, they should be given the opportunity to develop and internalize the necessary strategies which enable them to deal with the real language outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers should "bring authentic materials in to the classroom and make them consistently accessible to the students" (1988). Widdowson (1990) believes that "exposing learners to authentic materials is indispensable because of the rich language input they provide." Pupils are generally fascinated by the authentic materials, especially if these materials refer to topics they are interested in, such as cinema, fashion, music, food, etc. offering them the opportunity to further inform and use English in their day-to-day activities and enabling them to communicate their opinions, feelings and thoughts with confidence whether inside or outside the classroom. The study was attempting to assess preparatory schools English language teachers practice of using authentic materials in improving learners' communicative competence. Everyday classroom activities have revealed problems that students have in various aspects like efficient reading, understanding the overall meaning of the text not just the words, or understanding native speakers' language, communicating in a foreign language, etc. At present, it seems to be crucial that students should be exposed to authentic learning situations which have a connection to the real world, in which they can have the opportunity to practice language using authentic materials. The major concern in this paper was that teaching English through authentic materials can help students to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and

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their capacity to participate in real-life communication situations as they “bring pupils closer to the target language culture and this will result in making the teaching-learning process enjoyable and useful and thus, motivating” (Peacock, 1997). Authentic materials expose learners to real language as it is used in real life situations by native speakers. The ability to handle real language outside the classroom is also highlighted by Rogers and Medley (1988) who point out that teachers should help students to see and hear that the target language “being used as the primary medium of communication among native speakers- as language with a purpose.” Introducing authentic materials in teaching English language classroom can be beneficial for students as these materials assist learners to develop their communicative competence. As Hymes (1972) states communicative competence includes both linguistic competence or implicit and explicit knowledge of the rules of grammar, and textual or sociolinguistic knowledge of the rules of the language use in contexts. If EFL teachers do not teach the language aspects using authentic materials, students cannot develop their communicative competence. As a result, students face difficulty with using the target language in the English classroom as well as in different social contexts outside the classroom. Therefore, this study was intended to assess EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials in improving students' communicative competence.

**Statement of the problem:** In teaching and learning scenario, language learning can be more facilitated if language teachers and learners adopt and use authentic materials which expose them to real language of the native speakers' culture and beliefs. One way of doing this is using authentic materials in teaching and learning language skills which help the teachers and learners feel confident in using the target language properly. It seems common that most Ethiopian preparatory school students face problems to communicate in the target language -English. Very commonly, preparatory school students' communicative competence seems at lower level. The researchers have noticed the problem during their former years of teaching experience in the preparatory schools; for example they have observed that most students faced problems like: unable to communicate adequately with their teachers, friends and others in writing and speaking. Basically, the major driving force for researching such issue was that the researchers believed that the students' communicative competence was getting low since learners were not exposed properly with authentic teaching materials. Besides, as far as the researchers' experience was concerned, the majority of freshman Mettu University students were noticed facing difficulty with communicating their ideas competently. Thus, to develop students' communicative competence, teachers of English language should use authentic materials and help their students to use the target language competently both in writing and speaking. Similarly, the use of authentic materials in EFL classroom is very significant because they expose learners to the real world situation and they motivate and raise learners' interest. If the teaching materials are not interesting and motivating, learners will learn nothing. Hayland (2003; 94) states that one of the most important advantages of using authentic materials is that it increases learners motivations and reflects positively on the learning process. In other words, students learn the language better if EFL teachers use authentic materials as teaching aid in their classroom. So, it is reasonable to assess EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials in improving students' communicative competence. As Hedge

(2000) states the main goal of teaching English as a foreign language everywhere is to enable students to communicate with English speakers and to offer them a window to the world. But the main question here was that: did preparatory English language teachers in Ilu Ababor Zone use authentic materials to develop learners' communicative competence? In reality, the students' communicative competence remained very low and unsatisfactory due to a number of extraneous factors. Therefore, this study assessed English language teachers' practice of using authentic materials to assist learners improve their communicative competence.

### Objectives of the study

**General objective:** The general objective of this study was to assess EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials in improving students' communicative competence in five selected preparatory schools of Ilu Ababor Zone.

**Specific Objectives:** In line with the general objective, the following specific objectives were set:

1. To examine EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials to improve students communicative competence.
2. To find out the extent to which EFL teachers use authentic materials to improve learners' communicative competence.
3. To examine challenges that restrain EFL teachers from using authentic materials in EFL classroom.
4. To identify whether the textbook supply authentic materials to learners to improve their communicative competence.

### Research Questions

The present study attempted to find answers to the following questions:

1. How do EFL teachers use authentic materials in EFL classroom to improve students' communicative competence?
2. To what extent do EFL teachers use authentic materials to improve learners' communicative competence?
3. What are the challenges which restrain EFL teachers from using authentic materials in EFL classroom?
4. To what extent do the textbook supply authentic materials to learners to improve their communicative competence?

**Significance of the Study:** The findings of this study might contribute a lot to the betterment of English language teaching learning process by using authentic materials both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Besides, the findings of this study might largely help EFL teachers to evaluate their teaching methodologies in their classroom and depict them to use alternative methodologies in their classroom so as to improve learners' communicative competence. In addition, EFL teachers might get some insights about how and when to use authentic materials both in the classroom and outside the classroom so as to help learners improve their communicative competence. Moreover, it might also help interested researchers to use it as one source of information when they want to conduct further study in related areas that the researchers may fail to cover. What is more, the findings of this study might suggest some realistic and appropriate procedures and guidelines that may help EFL teachers in using authentic materials to help learners improve their communicative competence.

**Scope of the study:** The study was delimited both in its study area and its scope. Therefore, this study was delimited to Oromia Region, Ilu Ababor Zone, five selected woredas. The participants of the study were EFL teachers and students from five selected preparatory schools who would be selected for the proximity of the researchers' work place and for the convenience of data gathering purposes. Based on its scope, the study was also delimited to only assessing preparatory schools EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials to develop students' communicative competence.

### Review of Related Literature

**Authentic materials:** Many meanings are associated with the concept authenticity; therefore, it is not surprising if the term remains somehow ambiguous in many teachers' minds. In part this is because many types of authenticity can be identified, and these are not clearly distinguished. In many cases, it is not clear whether we are dealing with authenticity of language, authenticity of tasks, or authenticity of situation. Breen (1985: 61) distinguishes four types of authenticity.

1. Authenticity of the text which we may use as input for our learners.
2. Authenticity of the learners' own interpretation of such texts.
3. Authenticity of the tasks conducive to language learning.
4. Authenticity of the actual situation of the classroom.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) make the point well when they say that authenticity is not a characteristic of the text itself. It is a feature of a text in a particular context. They say that "we should not be looking for some sort of abstract concept of authenticity, but rather the practical concept of fitness to the learning purpose". Widdowson (1979) gives a similar opinion when he talks about authenticity as he argues that "I think it is probably better to consider language authenticity as not a quality residing in instances of language but as a quality which bestowed upon them, created by the response of the receiver". He further adds that "we do not recognize authenticity as something there to be noticed, we realize it in the act of interpretation". In the same line, Kramsch (1993) points out that: all pedagogy is artifact of educational discourse and that we need to measure what goes on in the language classroom, not against some problematically defined criterion of authenticity, but against whatever communicative and cognitive goals are accepted as appropriate in particular educational context. To sum up, the term authentic material has been defined in different ways throughout the literature. What is common in these definitions is the exposure to real language and its use in its own community.

**Researchers' view on authentic and non-authentic material:** Researchers have given different definitions about authentic and non-authentic materials. Wallace (cited in Berardo, 2006) said that real-life text that does not have pedagogical aim is called authentic material. Jordan's definition matches with Wallace's definition as Jordan (cited in Al Azri and Al-rashdi, 2014) has also mentioned that authentic text is not made for pedagogical purposes. It means a simple text lost its authenticity because of having special teaching goal (Nunan and Carter is being cited in Al Azri and Al-rashdi, 2014). Therefore, it is authentic material that enables learner to communicate with the real world without relying on the language form only (Ferit, 2004). As a result, learners try to

understand the language use rather than simply emphasizing on the form only. According to Nunan (cited in Al Azri and Al-rashdi, 2014), authentic material emphasizes on the purpose of learning. Herod (cited in Al Azri and Al-rashdi, 2014) believes the designing process of authentic materials and activities resembles real life context. Though different researchers have given separate definition for authentic material, their definitions overlap or match with each other to some extent. The common thing in their definition is that authentic materials are based on real-life context and it gives learners a real purpose along with enabling to deal with real world. According to Widdowson (cited in Berardo, 2006), the conventional belief has been to simplify the language so that learner can acquire the language easily. However, this long-established belief is changed today as the present world demands for authentic language presentation (ibid). Though authentic materials aim to achieve social goals in a language community (Peacock cited in Al Azri and Al-rashdi, 2014), non-authentic material contrasts this idea by focusing on language learning purposes. Therefore, non-authentic materials focus on teaching something. As a result, materials become unreal, lifeless or monotonous (Berardo, 2006). It means the concentration of non-authentic material is teaching. As the language is artificial and seeks to be simplified for learner's understanding, so it does not enable learners to deal with real-life language (Berardo, 2006). As a result, non-authentic texts are unable to provide the gist of real life language presentation (ibid). Harmer (cited in Awasti, 2006) believes those texts which are not only designed for the language students, but also for the language speaker is called authentic materials. In contrast, language students are the only audience for non-authentic material. Richard (cited in Awasti, 2006) states that the language of textbook can be non-authentic. Therefore, textbook can be a non-authentic material.

**Different types of authentic material:** According to Nunan (cited in Oura, 2001), authentic material serves to create genuine conversation and he inspires students to carry individual's specimen which is separate from their classroom environment. Different authentic resources that they practice are TV, radio broadcasts, taped conversation, magazine stories, bank instructions, advertisements and so on (ibid). Gebhard (cited in Oura, 2001) has classified these examples into different categories below:

- a. Authentic listening: news clips, cartoons, movies, professionally audio taped short stories and novels, songs, documentaries, sales pitch.
- b. Authentic visual materials: slides, photographs, wordless street signs, pictures from magazines, stamps, ink blots, postcard pictures.
- c. Authentic printed materials: newspaper articles, restaurant menus, astrology columns, tourist information brochures, telephone books.
- d. Realia: coins and currency, dolls, Halloween masks, wall clocks, folded paper, puppets (Oura, 2001).

Internet is one of the effective sources for authentic material compared to newspaper and printed materials (Berardo, 2006). Students use it and teachers can find a variety of materials from internet (ibid). It gets updated spontaneously and students can read them at the time of travelling or wherever they want outside the classroom (ibid). As authentic material seeks for natural language used in the society, so slangs and idioms can be labeled as authentic (Daskalos and Ling, 2005).

**Advantages of using authentic material:** Authentic materials help students to be exposed to real life language in the classroom though the environment itself is an artificial one (Berardo, 2006). Therefore, authentic material plays a significant role to create a real life situation (ibid). If a video of an interview that contains speeches by renowned people is being showed in a class, students will get an exposure of real life language use (Tamo, 2009). As a result, the idea of real life language usage is being provided to the students through using authentic material in the classroom (ibid). In addition, the authenticity of the material makes students interested to pick up the language (Gower, Phillips and Walters, 1995). Therefore, authentic material is interesting and stimulating (ibid). When a learner finds his interest in a text, he can easily relate it with his own experience also (Berardo, 2006).

**Disadvantages of using authentic material:** Senior (cited in Berardo, 2006) believes that a specific pedagogic goal has to be set before using any authentic material in the classroom. Apparently, teacher's pedagogic support makes the students confident. Therefore, students' ability should be emphasized while choosing an authentic text. It may happen that the student cannot get the whole meaning of the text. A teacher can replace the difficult words with less difficult vocabularies to overcome this situation. Using easy words may become a problem as it will make the text less authentic. This is one of the disadvantages of using authentic material in the classroom. Another drawback of using authentic material is to find out the appropriate material that matches with student's ability (Gower, Philips and Walters, 1995). A teacher cannot simply come to the class with a material by thinking that student will get this. As students' ability is a major factor to bear in mind, so a teacher also has to explore a material which is easy and interesting at the same time. As a result, teacher has to be prepared for that and therefore, it takes a lot of time to prepare a text which is accessible to the students. It takes more time for creating an environment to use authentic material (Gower, Philips and Walters, 1995). It is because the teacher has to build up confidence inside the students (ibid). Therefore, he/she has to start the class with an easy task (ibid). Becoming successful on those tasks will help the students to feel confident (ibid). As a result, the teacher has to spend an extra time before going to the main task (ibid). It kills valuable time of the classroom (ibid). Richard (cited in Berardo, 2006) thinks that authentic material includes tough language, hard vocabularies and difficult sentence structure which can create difficulties for teachers as well. Martinez (cited in Berardo, 2006, p.65) also feels complex sentence structures make it difficult for lower level students to decode the meaning of the text. Therefore, a question arises that when to use authentic material for which level in the classroom (Kilickaya, 2004). Sometimes it may happen that the information given in the material might get old and lost its validity (Alex, 2012).

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

**Research design:** The researchers used mixed research design. This research design was used because the researchers believed that it was suitable and relevant to the study which looks into what actually happens in the classroom in the teaching learning process. It also provides opportunities for the researchers to collect and describe numerical and non-numerical data. Moreover, the qualitative approach helps to collect data through open ended questionnaire, observation, document analysis, and in-depth interview whereas, the quantitative

approach enables the researchers to collect larger amount of data from close ended questionnaire (Abyet al. 2009:37). Generally, this design provided the researchers with the opportunity to assess EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials in the actual classroom.

**The research site:** The schools are found in south west Oromia Region, Ilu Ababor Zone, particularly in five selected woredas namely, Mettu, Hurumu, Yayo, Bure, and Gore. According to Creswell (2003) it is possible to take one third of the total population as a sample<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the researchers selected five woredas out of the total of 14 woredas in the aforementioned zone using simple random sampling technique. Each of the selected woreda has preparatory school.

**Population and sampling:** As stated earlier, the main concern of this study was to assess preparatory school English language teachers practice of using authentic materials in developing students' communicative competence. Thus, data were gathered from EFL teachers and students. Accordingly, the participants of the study were both teachers of English language and students at Mettu, Hurumu, Yayo, Gore, and Bure preparatory schools. In order to collect data that are representative of the population, sampling is a very good method that enables the researchers to study relatively small units instead of using the whole population. Thus, three teachers were selected from each woreda using simple random sampling. Totally, 15 English language teachers who were teaching English language in the year 2017/18 G.C. in the schools were selected for interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations by using simple random sampling technique. Besides, five students from each section were also participated in the study. Therefore, totally, 50 students from both grade levels were selected using simple random sampling technique.

**Instruments of data collection:** In order to gather valuable information for the study, the researchers used questionnaire, interview, classroom observation, and document analysis as instruments for data gathering purpose.

**Questionnaire:** Questionnaire is an important data gathering tool since it can help the researchers to collect data from a large number of participants. Hence, to assess preparatory school English language teachers practice of using authentic materials in developing students' communicative competence, both open-ended and close-ended formats were prepared and distributed. Before preparing and administering the questionnaire, pilot testing was carried out. Based on the information obtained, the questionnaires were organized and got ready for final distribution to gather large amount of data from the respondents.

**Interview:** The purpose of using interview as data gathering instrument was to get teachers' perception about authentic materials, to assess the extent to which EFL teachers used authentic materials, to identify challenges which restrained teachers from using authentic materials, and it helped to triangulate the information that were obtained through questionnaire.

**Observation:** In addition to the above tools, direct classroom observation was used to get information about the actual classroom teaching-learning process and to see how preparatory schools English language teachers used authentic

materials and to what extent they used authentic materials to improve learners' communicative competence. Besides, it was also appropriate to collect qualitative data that allow the researchers to crosscheck the data gathered through questionnaire and what was actually taken place in the actual classroom teaching learning process. Moreover, additional observations on the sources and availabilities of authentic materials in the schools' libraries, store rooms, language and mini media clubs, and language laboratories were conducted. While observing the 15 selected classes, the researchers used standardized observation checklist to keep the researchers to the right track that could not be out of the scope of the subject. The randomly selected classes were observed three times in different periods in the actual classroom. This was purposefully done to see and check whether teachers used authentic materials which could help learners improve different language skills. After sufficient data was collected, the researchers transcribed the data qualitatively in words.

**Document analysis:** The researchers tried to analyze grade eleven and grade twelve English textbooks as well as teachers guides which were designed by the Ethiopian Ministry of education and the results were compared and contrasted to the data obtained from the participants' responses. Here, the researchers tried to evaluate the textbooks and the teachers' guides whether they supplied authentic materials or not. As suggested by many scholars such as Cunningham (1995) and McDough and Show (1993) in order to perform an effective internal inspection of the materials, it is useful to pick out at least two units of a book and analyze them in detail. So the researchers evaluated the textbooks by selecting four units randomly from those textbooks.

**Procedures of data collection:** After developing the research instruments as presented above based on the research objectives and research questions, the researchers followed various procedures to gather reliable and valid data for the study. First, the questionnaire were prepared and distributed to the participants. Assistant data collectors were invited to help the researchers in collecting the questionnaire from sample populations. After that, interviews were conducted with those selected samples. With this process, all the information was recorded in note form. Then, classroom observations were employed three times in different periods with the help of observation check-list. Finally, textbook analysis was carried out.

**Methods and procedures of data analysis:** Soon after the data collection has been completed, the researchers organized the data and proceeded to the analysis and interpretation phase. Firstly, the data that were gathered through close ended questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using percentage and frequency. Secondly, the data from open ended questionnaire, interview, and document analysis were transcribed and thematically organized and then qualitatively analyzed. Then, the researchers tried to triangulate the data obtained through these methods by observing what actually happened in the actual classroom. Therefore, classroom observations were conducted to triangulate the data gathered through the aforementioned instruments.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Analysis of teachers' interview data:** To obtain relevant data for the study, 15 English language teachers were taken so as to

conduct interview. The teachers were asked to give their responses on the following issues:

- ✓ The type of materials that they used in their EFL classroom,
- ✓ The use of authentic materials,
- ✓ If they had an easy access to authentic materials in their schools,
- ✓ Where they obtain authentic materials?
- ✓ What criteria they followed to select authentic materials?
- ✓ How they used authentic materials in the classroom?
- ✓ Whether they encouraged or not their students to use different authentic materials outside the classroom so as to help students improve their communicative competence, and
- ✓ How they see the purposes of textbooks and the teachers' guides in the classroom?

Accordingly, the researchers believed that they had provided pertinent data for 11 interview questions. The first question was designed to obtain teachers' answers on the types of material that they used in their EFL classroom. In this regard, out of 15 EFL teachers, 13 of them responded that most of the time they used the materials that were presented in the textbooks. They also indicated that these materials are pedagogical materials (materials prepared for the sake of language teaching). But the remaining two EFL teachers answered differently. One of them reported that he often used texts from different sources; for example, from internet and Encarta to teach language skills. The other one replied that he used the materials depending on the lesson forwarded in the textbooks. If the textbooks invite him to use other material apart from materials presented in the textbooks, he uses those materials in his EFL classroom. The teachers were also asked whether they used authentic materials such as magazines, newspapers, internet, letters, songs, recorded radio/TV news or talks, recordings of announcements made at airport/bus station, real life dialogues and the like in their EFL classroom. Concerning this question, thirteen EFL teachers reported that they used some of these materials sometimes in their EFL classroom. However, only two of them indicated that they never used such materials in their EFL classroom. But, although the majority of the respondents said that they used some authentic materials sometimes in their EFL classroom, the researchers did not observe them using any authentic material during the classroom observation.

The third question was designed to generate teachers' opinions and comments on the use of authentic materials in teaching English language. In this regard, all the teachers were in favor of the use of authentic materials. They indicated that using authentic materials in EFL classroom can expose students to the real language use or give chance to them to practice how the language is used in the real world. They also pointed out that authentic materials are very interesting and motivating for students to learn the language. That is, they suggested that if EFL classroom is presented with authentic materials, students can access the real life communication. So, students can learn variety of language aspects and this will help them to develop their language competence. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that teachers were aware of about the use of authentic materials in teaching language skills. In addition to what is stated above, the teachers were asked about the sources they use to obtain authentic materials for their EFL classroom. Concerning this, all of them indicated that they used materials

such as newspapers, magazines, news, brochures, leaflets, TV/video, radio, internet, tape recorder as a source to obtain authentic materials. As far as the access to authentic materials in the schools is concerned, teachers were asked in item 5 if they had an easy access to such materials in the schools. In response to this question, 4 of the respondents replied that they had an easy access to some authentic materials. However, these respondents indicated that although there was an access to such materials in the schools, they did not use or bring them into the classroom. The reason for this, according to them is that they have some restricting factors such as students exam oriented attitude, workload, class size, and the like. On the other hand, the rest 11 teachers said that they did not have an easy and quick access to such materials. The teachers were also asked about the criteria they used in selecting authentic materials. As response to this question, half of the teachers mentioned that they tried to use authentic materials which were accessible to them. Besides, simplicity, content, and students' level of understanding the material, and their background knowledge are taken into consideration when they select authentic materials. A question was also asked to get teachers' response on how they use authentic materials with the students in the classroom. In this respect only four of the respondents indicated that they sometimes designed or created tasks and activities to use with authentic materials in the classroom. However, the remaining 11 respondents replied that they did not design or create tasks and activities to use with such materials in the classroom.

The teachers were also asked about how they see the purposes of textbooks and the teachers' guides in the classroom. Concerning this question, almost all of the respondents replied that textbooks and teachers guides play a fundamental role in language classrooms in all types of educational situations. In some situations they serve as the basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom. They may also provide the basis for the content of the lessons, the balance of skills taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in. In other situations, textbooks serve primarily to supplement the teacher's instruction. For learners, textbooks may provide the major source of contact they have with the language apart from input provided by the teacher. In general, it is believed that much of the language teaching that occurs throughout the world today could not take place without the extensive use of textbooks. Teachers were asked in item 8 whether they encouraged or not their students to read different printed authentic materials and listen to different English listening sources such as BBC, English VOA and other mass media outside the classroom. In response to this question, 12 teachers responded that they encouraged their students to read different printed materials and listen to audio-video authentic materials. But three of them replied that they never encouraged their students to do so outside the classroom. In item 9, the teachers were asked 'Is the use of authentic materials time consuming? How and why?', and two out of fifteen teachers did not think that use of authentic materials is time consuming. Four teachers feel that it depends on the teachers how they utilize the time. Eight teachers mentioned that a teacher needs to be prepared enough before coming to the class and s/he needs to have organized plan to run the class by using authentic materials. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents believe that use of authentic materials is time consuming and it needs the teachers' effort highly. However, two teachers did not answer the question. In question item 10,

EFL teachers were also asked, 'Do you face any difficulty while using authentic materials in the classroom? Twelve out of fifteen teachers face difficulty of accessing authentic materials in their schools. Two out of fifteen teachers mentioned that they do not have necessary equipment like audio-video player, recorded dialogues, films, etc. in the schools to use authentic materials. However, 1 teacher did not say anything in this regard. In question item 11 teachers were asked, "Do you think our context of education is appropriate to using authentic materials?" In this regard, two out of fifteen teachers think that our context of education is a bit appropriate to use authentic materials in the language classroom. Nine out of fifteen teachers' feel that our context of education is not yet conducive to using authentic materials and the process is still under development. However, 4 teachers disclosed that even though the schools do not provide authentic materials so as to support the teaching learning process, the teachers should be devoted to search for authentic materials and to make them ready for the teaching learning process.

**Analysis of the students' questionnaire data:** As stated earlier, one of the research questions of this study was aimed to investigate the benefits that the students get from authentic materials. To answer this research question, questionnaire was administered and completed by 50 students who were attending their education at Mettu, Hurumu, Yayo, Bure, and Gore preparatory schools. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage in the table below.

**Summary of observation on the sources and availability of authentic materials:** To observe the sources and availability of authentic materials in the schools' libraries, store rooms, and language and mini media clubs, observation was carried out. The purpose of observation on the sources and availability of the materials was for the researchers to closely observe the sources and the availability of authentic materials in relation to their types. In order to observe, the sources of authentic materials, 7 close ended items have been prepared in the checklist form (see Appendix-D). The first question (i.e. item 1) which reads "Does the school have audio-tape recorder/player?" Concerning this question, the researchers tried to observe what is mentioned in the question. So, the researchers observed one audio-tape recorder and three audio-tape players in the language and mini media clubs in the schools. For question number two, which reads "Does the school have video/DVD player?" Based on this question, the researchers observed whether these materials were available or not in the schools. According to the observation, the researchers could not find such material in the schools. Question number three was intended to observe whether the school has TV/radio which is the other sources of authentic materials. The researchers had practically observed the presence of plasma television with its satellite dish receiver in the schools. However, as we got information from the schools directors, in most cases the plasma televisions were not functional because of inconsistent electric power. Besides, the researchers witnessed this fact during their stay in the schools for data collection purpose. Moreover, the researchers had also observed the availability of radio which gives worldwide services, but the researchers could not see when EFL teachers used the radio for classroom purposes. The researchers observed the availability of internet access in the schools based on the fourth question which reads "Does the school have the internet access or service?" The answer was no. All the schools

did not have internet access. Item 5, was meant to observe if there were any recorded cassettes in the schools. In this regard, there were no recordings of CDs and audio cassettes. Regarding item 6, which reads "Does the school have language Lab?" According to the observation, the schools had no language Laboratory. Item 7 was intended to observe if there were any authentic materials either in print or in any case in the schools. In this regard, the researchers carried out observation on the schools' libraries, store rooms, language and mini media clubs and the available resources in general. Accordingly, the researchers had observed the availability of different types of authentic materials such as magazines, newspapers, brochures, leaflets, fictional and non-fictional books, letters, films (comedy and documentary), songs, cartoons, short stories, lectures, recording of meeting and other resources. Among these authentic materials only outdated and limited number of newspapers, magazines, brochures were found in the schools. Besides, both fictional and non-fictional books were available in the schools' libraries.

**Summary of classroom observation:** In order to crosscheck the data gathered through interview from teachers, classroom observation was carried out whether the teachers used any authentic materials in the classroom. The results of classroom observation showed that the teachers dominantly used materials presented in the textbooks. The researchers also tried to check the teachers' daily lesson plans vis-à-vis the textbooks and the teachers' guides. However, their lesson plans were full of materials which the textbooks contain. During the whole classroom observation time, the researchers did not observe teachers when they used any authentic materials in their EFL classroom.

**Students' questionnaire results and discussions:** The use of authentic materials provides learners with full advantages of the source of linguistic information that the real world provides and enables them to extend their knowledge of the target language. Listening to videos, radio broadcasts, podcasts, talks and announcements and reading different authentic printed materials expose learners to the spoken and written words and enrich their communicative competence with new syntactic, lexical, phonological and pragmatic information. The results of students' questionnaire reveal that most of the students did not expose to authentic materials to listen and read real life language in the classroom. Thus, according to the data obtained from students' questionnaire, insignificant number of respondents was exposed to listen to and read such materials. However, the majority of the students did not do so. Introducing and utilizing naturally occurring materials can be a very meaningful experience for students and can capture the interest and stimulate students. The results of questionnaire also indicated that almost all students read and listen to authentic materials because it arouses their interest to learn the language. The result of students' questionnaire also reveals that students listen to authentic materials because it gives them a sense of achievement in learning the language. In this regard, Tamo (2009) states that authentic materials can produce sense of achievement, e.g. if students are given a brochure on England to plan a visit. In line with this, Joy (2011) indicates that authentic materials provide opportunities for students to see, experience and perform function through text which is realistic in nature. Therefore, by using authentic materials, teachers can help their students improve their level of comprehension as they feel that they can achieve a level of proficiency that has meaning and add value to their life when listening/speaking/reading English as a foreign language.

## Summary of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations

**Summary of the Major Findings:** Based on the data analysis and discussions, the following major findings are drawn.

1. The results of students' questionnaire and interview with English language teachers showed that teachers and students were aware of about the use of authentic materials in teaching and learning English language.
2. The results of classroom observation and interview with English language teachers indicated that the teachers dominantly used textbooks and teachers guides in their EFL classroom.
3. The teachers disclosed that they rarely used authentic materials because of some restricting factors such as workloads, class size and the like.
4. Observation on the library, language and mini media clubs, and store rooms revealed that the schools had not good sources and enough authentic materials. Besides, the observation result showed that there was no internet service in the schools. In addition, the schools had no language laboratory which is one of the simplest ways to provide students with authentic listening practice.
5. It was found that most teachers did not create tasks and activities to use with authentic materials during their EFL classroom. However, insignificant number of teachers disclosed that they did so.

## Conclusion

This study attempted to assesses EFL teachers' practice of using authentic materials in developing students' communicative competence. The study tried to assess teachers' practice on the use of authentic materials at Mettu, Bure, Hurumu, Gore, and Yayopreparatory schools. The participants of this study were 50 students who were attending their education and 15 English language teachers. The study employed instruments such as semi-structured interview questions for teachers, closed-ended questionnaire for students, document analysis, and observation. The use of authentic materials material such as magazine, newspapers, fictional and non-fictional books, English songs, radio/TV news, entertainments (such plays/drams, sport programs), films, and other recordings of short stories, telephone conversation, etc. in the classroom has been discussed with students benefiting them from being exposed to authentic language in the authentic materials. Another advantages indicated by students were that they were highly motivating, and giving a sense of achievement when understood the intended messages via the material; as a result, encourage further language learning. They also reflect changes in the use of language and contain a wide variety text types as well as represent topics and language in current use and so on. In addition, the use of authentic materials has been discussed also with the English teachers in regard to the benefits it gives both for students and teachers. Concerning this, the teachers forwarded positive opinions and comments with good understanding about the use of authentic materials. Besides, the types of materials that they use mostly in their EFL classroom access to authentic materials in the schools and how they select authentic materials for their classes have been touched in the study. Moreover, it has been discussed with the teachers where they obtain (i.e. the sources) authentic materials and how they use such materials in the classroom. Today's world emphasizes on communication.

Therefore, language teacher should use those materials which will prepare students to compete with the real world. As English is our second language, so we try to learn English by memorizing. As a result, we remain unsuccessful to use them in our real life situation. Teacher should bring the outside world to the classroom and he should make the class an interactive one. Therefore, effective language materials should be exposed to the classroom by the teachers. In Bangladeshi context, authentic materials are less used in primary and secondary level as English is taught as a subject rather than a medium to communicate. Therefore, students have to go through various difficulties while they get introduced with authentic materials in tertiary level. Authentic materials and non-authentic materials both have advantages as well as drawbacks. The purpose is to make the best use of language materials, so that students can be benefitted to the fullest.

**Recommendations:** Based on the data analysis and discussions, summary of the major findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are forwarded for the English language teachers, students, material designers and for further researchers.

**For EFL teachers, students and Material Designers:** It is now generally accepted that students need to develop their communicative competence so that they will be able to understand and respond to what is being there in English in the real world. Therefore:

- ✓ Teachers have to use authentic or near authentic materials that can expose students to real language use. The most common sources of authentic materials are news clips, cartoons, movies, professionally audio taped short stories and novels, songs, documentaries, sales pitch slides, photographs, wordless street signs, pictures from magazines, stamps, ink blots, postcard pictures, newspaper articles, restaurant menus, astrology columns, tourist information brochures, telephone books, coins and currency, dolls, , wall clocks, folded paper, puppets, and internet.
- ✓ Teachers should create suitable tasks and activities that mirror the real-world purposes and situations in which and for which language is used or spoken. Authentic listening does not happen in isolation. So, it needs designing appropriate tasks and activities to use with it in the classroom.
- ✓ Teachers should expose students to different listening sources such as BCC and English VOA outside the classroom. In order to provide students with appropriate authentic listening materials, instructors have to consider

some criteria such as students' interest and level, quality, relevance, exploitability of the material, linguistic demands etc when selecting authentic materials.

**Suggestions for Further Research:** Although the current study provides some insights on the use of authentic materials in teaching listening skills to college students, much remains to be investigated scholarly research in the field of authenticity in EFL teaching and learning. Therefore, based on the outcomes of the current study, the following suggestions are outlined below as possible areas for future study.

- ✓ The use of authentic materials in teaching listening skills to school students( including elementary, junior and high school students)
- ✓ Designing task and activities with authentic listening materials
- ✓ Providing training for EFL teachers on selecting and creating suitable authentic listening activities.

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