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High-school English teachers' attitudes toward using authentic and non-authentic materials in English lessons in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-method design study examines high-school English teachers' attitudes toward using authentic and non-authentic materials in Turkey. It thoroughly investigates teachers' instructional material uses and the underlying reasons for using certain materials in their teaching practices. The study comprised forty Anatolian high-school English language teachers from five schools in five districts of Kayseri. Data gathered from a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews revealed that high-school English language teachers in Turkey had positive attitudes toward using authentic materials (materials used by native speakers in their daily life). In contrast, they had negative attitudes toward using non-authentic materials (current official textbooks). It was also pointed out that despite their negative attitudes toward these materials, teachers used official textbooks more frequently than authentic materials. The primary underlying reason for this discrepancy was explained as the relevance of these materials to the curriculum and the lack of time to adapt authentic materials. Teachers also reported that they could not use authentic materials as frequently as they wished even though these materials were appropriate for their students' needs with their engaging, communicative, and flexible content. This study's results are expected to contribute to the future development of the curriculum and teaching materials, considering teachers' attitudes in Turkey.

Keywords
Authentic materials, commercial textbooks, textbooks, instructional materials

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Introduction

Globalization, technological advancements, the needs for cooperation, and communication among nations increase the demand to learn English. This demand, in turn, yielded the importance of using high-quality English language teaching materials and boosted the efforts of researchers to define the criteria influencing the quality of language teaching materials (Rashidi & Safari, 2011; Shi, 2015; Tomlinson, 2010; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). Then, referencing these criteria, a significant body of research has focused on evaluating the quality of language instructional materials and their content (Anggis & Setyadi, 2016; Erlina, 2018; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016; Kılıçkaya, 2004; Richards, 2001). However, language teachers' attitudes and roles in material evaluation and selection have received little attention (Islam, 2015). Since teachers' attitudes shape their day-to-day practices and these practices have direct

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links with students' language development (Shi, 2015), it is significant to investigate teachers' attitudes (individual thoughts, actions, and opinions) toward using language teaching materials.

Recently, a handful of research has sought a better understanding of teachers' perceptions and thoughts on using authentic materials such as newspapers, brochures, and official music videos (Allag, 2017; Al-Musallam, 2009; Rusmawaty et al., 2018; Silvani, 2018) as well as non-authentic materials such as official (Alhamami & Ahmad, 2018; Vanha, 2007) and commercial textbooks (Srakang, 2013). In addition, several other studies have focused on teachers' material preferences in their teaching practices. (Islam, 2015). Nevertheless, how often teachers use these materials in their teaching practices and which factors affect their uses still need to be investigated. To address this gap, the current study investigates Turkish state high-school language teachers' use of authentic and non-authentic materials and their opinions on the factors affecting their uses.

Theoretical Background and Related Studies

Teaching materials are used to enhance the comprehensibility and efficiency of the teaching process. However, their poor quality has been recognized as a potential problem influencing language learning. According to Çelebi (2006), teaching materials used in classes fail to meet the demands of the learners. The same study also added that textbooks are the main reason for disengaged students during the lessons due to their content.

In response to the call for similar problems, several theories appeared to define the principles teachers should consider while evaluating textbooks (Rashidi & Safari, 2011; Tomlinson, 2010). However, these theories were narrow in scope since they just considered ESL textbooks. Indeed, ESL teaching materials are not expected to include the same features as EFL teaching materials. This situation seemed to increase the need for conceptualizing a more comprehensive theory, including other materials worldwide, and only two years later, new theories arose in the field (Shi, 2015; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). These theories emphasize the material evaluation criteria derived from L2 acquisition theories, principles, and researchers' experiences (Shi, 2015; Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2013). The former theory presents 21 universal criteria which provide a broader perspective. In comparison, the latter mentions four main factors influencing teachers' material choices in an EFL context similar to Turkey. Both theories are hoped to provide different prominent contributions to this study's frame while complementing each other. To define the factors influencing teachers' material uses, the criteria determined by these theories have been categorized under seven common categories by the researcher: being appropriate to the students, being communicative, being appropriate to the curriculum, being interesting, including real language use, being flexible, and having real language input.

Begin with textbooks, they are designed by experts purposefully in the light of the theories mentioned above, and they are widely accepted as the most appropriate materials for teaching any specific subject worldwide (Tomlinson, 2010). However, geographically dispersed researchers reflected teachers' negative attitudes toward using textbooks. For example, both Alhamami & Ahmad (2018) in Saudi Arabia and Srakang (2013) in Thailand have noted that teachers are unwilling to use textbooks due to their '*insufficiencies to meet the curriculum requirements* and courses' aims. They are also reported as being inadequate in meeting '*students' needs and enhancing their cultural sensitiveness*.' Importantly, Vanha (2007) explores Finnish language teachers' perceptions of textbooks' role. This study indicated that teachers' negative perceptions are derived from the restrictive nature of textbooks. These results confirm the existence of universal principles influencing teachers' attitudes toward certain materials. Nevertheless, they might be inadequate to explain teachers' commitments to using textbooks even though they have negative thoughts about doing so.

The contextually bounded nature of teachers' actions may explain the disparity between teachers' thoughts and actions toward using textbooks. For example, in Vanha's (2017) study, language teachers at primary, elementary, and secondary schools have reported that textbooks are generally used as complementary materials or as a starting point. Because they are ready-made materials and *'appropriate to the curriculum*.' For this reason, they save time and energy by reducing teachers' workload when teachers have to teach at least 25-30 hours per week. Similarly, secondary school teachers have defined textbooks as the primary and indispensable resource for conducting lessons in line with the curriculum (Srakang, 2013). These results suggest that regardless of universal principles influencing teachers' thoughts, contextual factors such as heavy workload, national exams, and institutional or educational policies can play a crucial role in their actions.

Regarding authentic materials, previous researchers from different contexts have a consensus on teachers' positive perceptions toward using these materials, and they stressed similar factors. For instance, a study by Al-Musallam (2009) examined female students' and instructors' perceptions of using authentic materials in reading classes in a Saudi Arabia college. Most teachers in this study have reported positive views toward using authentic material. The same result was echoed by Silvani (2018), who conducted his research in Indonesia and by Allag (2017), who explored the use of authentic materials at a university in Algeria. All these studies have noted that authentic materials are enjoyable and '*motivated*' with their '*interesting'* content. The same studies showed that when learners were exposed to authentic materials, their engagement in the lesson increased. Students began to participate in the lessons more willingly since these materials included '*real language use*.'

Even though these similar results might confirm the rationale behind Shi's (2015) and Tomlinson & Masuhara's (2013) conceptualizations of universal features of these materials, recent research has revealed that some contextual factors have a determining role in teachers' authentic material uses. For example, institutional policies restrict teachers' freedom to use these materials in Iran. Schools' administrators are blamed for forcing teachers to follow certain textbooks since they are '*appropriate to the curriculum'* (Al-Musallam, 2009). However, it is different in the Indonesian context, teachers use authentic materials frequently there (Silvani, 2018). Moreover, since authentic materials are not produced for educational purposes, adapting them by ensuring the *'appropriateness of these materials to the learners'* means an increased workload for some teachers. The studies conducted in Iran by Al-Musallam (2009) and Indonesia by Rusmawaty et al. (2018) have reported the same problem. They also added that authentic materials are inappropriate for beginners and local culture. However, Allag's (2017) contrary findings show the benefits of these materials for enhancing cultural awareness and improving elementary-level learners' language skills.

Overall, a small body of research provides ample knowledge of teachers' perceptions of using instructional materials. However, only a little is known about teachers' material preferences, their material uses, and the factors affecting their uses. Moreover, since attitudes are highly subjective and material uses are contextually bounded, the results of previous works in different educational settings cannot be generalized to other contexts. Thus, more research is required to comprehensively understand Turkish high-school teachers' attitudes toward using authentic and non-authentic materials. To this end, this study aims to investigate the following questions:

1- What are high-school English teachers' thoughts on using authentic and non-authentic materials?
2- How do high-school English teachers use authentic and non-authentic materials?
3- What are high-school English teachers' opinions on the factors affecting their use of teaching materials?

Methodology

This study was conducted with a mixed-method design comprised of qualitative and quantitative data. This research design was used primarily to reduce the subjectivity of researchers' interpretations of the study's findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) and, secondly, to combine the strengths of both methods (Kumar, 2015). In this way, the current study is expected to provide more valid and reliable findings with enriched data with the help of a survey and follow-up interviews.

Context and Participants

The sample of the research was determined in two steps. Cluster sampling was used in the first step, and a simple random sampling method was used in the second step. For cluster sampling, a total of five schools (one Anatolian high school in each district of Kayseri) were recruited. Regarding the random sampling, 40 English teachers (30 females and 10 males) were chosen out of 51 teachers working at these schools. 12 out of the 40 teachers agreed to take part, and 5 of them were assigned randomly for the semi-structured interviews. Even though this sampling was limited to English language teachers working at Anatolian high schools in Kayseri, the data gathered from this group can offer rich insights to formulate ideas that other studies confirm.

The participants' age in the survey ranged from 22 to 45 years. In terms of their experiences, a large proportion of the group (22 teachers) had more than fifteen years of teaching experience, and 8 teachers in the group had teaching experienced less than five years. The remaining teachers (10) had an experience between 5 and 15 years. In addition, 29 respondents had a bachelor's degree, while 11 had an MA degree. The demographics of the interview group, comprised of 5 teachers, are as follows.

Table 1. *Demographic information of participants in the interview*

Teacher	Gender	Age	Experience	Academic degree
TS	Male	33	10	Master's degree
TI	Female	34	5	Bachelor degree
TU	Female	36	13	Bachelor degree
TM	Male	45	20	Bachelor degree
TE	Female	40	15	Bachelor degree

Instruments

This study utilizes two data collection methods: a survey and semi-structured interviews. Five-point Likert scales were taken from the studies by Allag (2017) and Al-Musallam (2009) for the survey. These scales were chosen since their content aligns with Tomlinson & Masuharas' (2013) and Shi's (2015) theories. Allag's (2017) attitude scale enabled the researcher to collect data on teachers' thoughts toward instructional materials. Al-Musallam's (2009) scale assisted the researcher in gathering data on teachers' opinions about their use of instructional materials. For the final version of the questionnaire, participants' demographic information and open-ended questions were added to the existing items in these scales. Open-ended questions are as follows: 1-How often do you prefer using textbooks/authentic materials? 2- Which authentic materials do you use? 3-If you have any other opinion, could you explain it? As a result, a total of 41 open-ended and five-Likert scale items were formulated to collect data on high-school English teachers' attitudes toward using authentic/non-authentic materials, teachers' uses of certain materials with frequencies, and teachers' opinions on the factors influencing their uses. To check the content validity of the questionnaire, a teacher out of the study group and an expert

in the ELT field took part in the evaluation process. For the feasibility of all questions, piloting was done with five teachers out of the study group. They were asked to rate the questionnaire. In this step, the internal reliability of the survey was calculated with Cronbach's alpha. The results showed that the questionnaire had a high level of reliability ((a)=0.812) as its Cronbach's alpha score was above 0.70 (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

For semi-structured interviews, a set of questions derived from the survey and literature was asked. The questions were as follows: 1-Do you recommend using textbooks/authentic materials? 2-What kind of difficulties do you face while using textbooks/authentic materials? 3-What criteria do you consider while choosing instructional materials? 4- Which is the most important for you and why?

Procedure

Initially, participants were informed about confidentiality, anonymity, and their rights to withdraw from the study anytime. Then two data collection instruments were employed, one after another. First, the survey was conducted with the participation of 40 teachers. Then, to get a high response rate, researchers distributed the survey during teachers' lunchtime. In this way, researchers gave teachers forty minutes to complete the survey. When surveys were returned, the researchers double-checked the survey returned to ensure that the teachers accidentally skipped no questions.

Three days later, interviews were employed with 5 teachers among 12 volunteers. Interviews were conducted individually and in their mother tongue to enable respondents to express their ideas in a relaxed atmosphere. Each interview lasted approximately 40 minutes.

Data Analysis

For the analysis phase, SPSS software (version 22.0) was used to perform the relevant statistics. First, positive survey items were recorded to software using numeric codes such as 'Strongly agree = 5, Agree = 4, Uncertain = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly disagree = 1'. At the same phase, the negatively worded survey items were reversed. Then the Shapiro-Wilk test results were checked for a normal distribution. Since the p-value was p=0.211, it was assumed that the data did not show a significant deviation from the normal distribution (Bryman & Cramen, 2011). Next, the Chi-Square test was utilized for turning five-point Likert items into three main categories (agree, uncertain, and disagree). Lastly, modes, medians, and frequencies were calculated based on Boone & Boones' (2012) recommendations, and the obtained data were interpreted according to Srakang's (2013)'s framework (0-2.99=negative attitude, 3.00-3.49 = neutral attitude, and 3.5-5 = positive attitude).

Regarding qualitative data analysis, the results of interviews were analyzed by following Braun & Clarkes' (2006) 6 phases thematic analysis framework. First, all extracts based on individuals' audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and uploaded to Atlas.ti software program. After similarities in the data and connections were identified based on pre-determined codes in the literature, sub-themes and themes were formed by combining these codes. Then, the researcher determined whether any new codes emerged different from the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As the final step, a thematic map was created to identify potential sub-themes, determine how each sub-theme is connected to the main themes, and analyze how each theme relates to the others. In this process, any irrelevant result was extracted.

For coding consistency, the researcher and one of her colleagues with a Ph.D. degree assessed the same data twice two weeks later (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). First, they had meetings to discuss themes and coding schemes. Then, they measured inter-coder reliability

with Cohen's Kappa statistics. In these statistics, the agreement was found as 0.90, which showed a high level of consistency, according to Miles & Huberman (1994).

Results

High-school English Teachers' Thoughts Towards Using Authentic or Non-authentic Materials

The overall score in Table 2 and Srakang's (2013) framework revealed that teachers had negative thoughts toward textbooks (M=2.62). The highest mean scores for official textbooks (M=3.4) revealed a degree of agreement among teachers on using textbooks as a primary source. Interestingly, according to the same data, teachers reflected that students could learn without textbooks (M=2.1).

Table 2. *Means and standard deviation of teachers' thoughts toward current official textbooks*

Textbooks	**Mean**	**SD**
1- School textbooks are beneficial for students.	2.4	1.1
2- Students can still learn English well without exposure to school textbooks.	2.1	0.8
3- It is an opportunity for students to interact with school textbooks.	2.6	1.0
4- Textbooks should act as primary sources.	3.4	1.0
5- Using school textbooks is more effective than using authentic materials.	2.6	0.8
Overall Mean Scores:	**2.62**	

The underlying reason for this controversial result was explained by two teachers as follows:

> 'Textbook can guide students and teachers to prepare for upcoming lessons beforehand. Therefore, they should be used. But they are not adequate to fulfil students' all their learning needs' (TU) (TI)

Table 3. *Means and standard deviation of teachers' thoughts toward authentic materials*

Authentic materials	**Mean**	**SD**
1- Authentic materials are beneficial for students.	4.3	0.9
2- Students can still learn English well without exposure to authentic materials.	3.5	1.0
3- It is an opportunity for students to interact with authentic materials.	4.2	0.6
4- Authentic materials should act as a primary source.	3.1	0.6
5-Using authentic materials are more effective than textbooks.	4.1	0.9
Overall Mean Scores:		**3.84**

Additionally, the results obtained from overall scores from the scale of the authentic materials in Table 3 (M=3.84) showed that teachers had positive thoughts toward authentic materials (Srakang, 2013). The highest scores in the same data implied that many participants

believed in the benefits of using these materials (M=4.3). However, the lowest score showed teachers' concerns about using authentic materials as a primary source in classes (M=3.1). In the interview, when teachers were asked the reasons behind these beliefs, TU and TS reported:

> ’I would like to use authentic materials more frequently, yet, I think using them can increase my workload in the school.’ (TS)

> 'I believe in the benefits of using authentic materials. However, since they provide different content than official textbooks, their use should be limited. (TU)

It is important to note that using commercial textbooks is prohibited at state schools in Turkey. Therefore, there is not any explanation of teachers' attitudes or the use of commercial textbooks in this study.

High-school English Teachers’ Use of Authentic and Non-authentic Materials

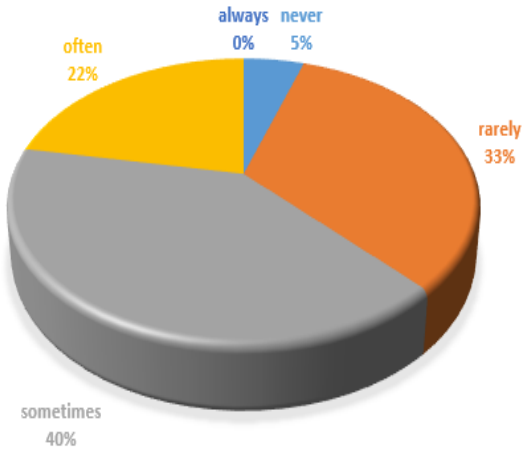


Figure 1: Percentages of using authentic materials

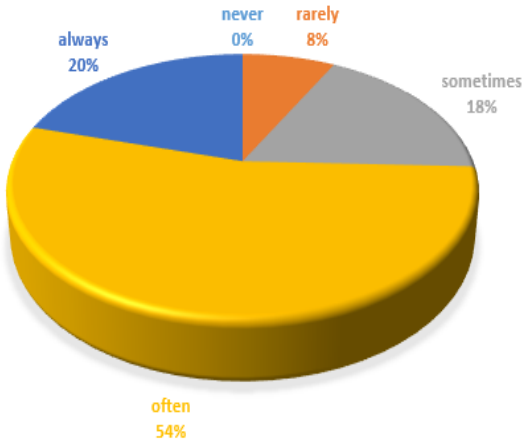


Figure 2: Percentages of using current official textbooks

Figure 1 depicts teachers' authentic material use rates, while Figure 2 illustrates teachers' current official textbook use rates during English lessons at high schools in Turkey. It was clear from the pie charts that roughly three-quarters of participants (72%) always used textbooks, while 20 % percent of the teachers often used these materials. Additionally, the percentages of those against using authentic and non-authentic materials were nearly identical, at 3% and 5%, respectively. Lastly, none of the participants rated the 'never' or 'always' options in the survey.

The results from the figures and tables above might show that both materials were important in English language classes. Hence, current official textbooks were likely to be the primary source in Turkish high schools despite teachers' negative thoughts about using them. On the other hand, it is also suggested that teachers did not use authentic materials and commercial textbooks as frequently as they would like despite having positive thoughts toward using them.

Bar Chart 1 displays that pictures and Youtube videos (for both 85%) were the most commonly used authentic materials in classes. With a slight difference, the real objects and short stories come second (83%). Additionally, more than fifty percent of teachers reported TV programs and brochures as being used, which shows 63 % and 60% percentages, respectively.

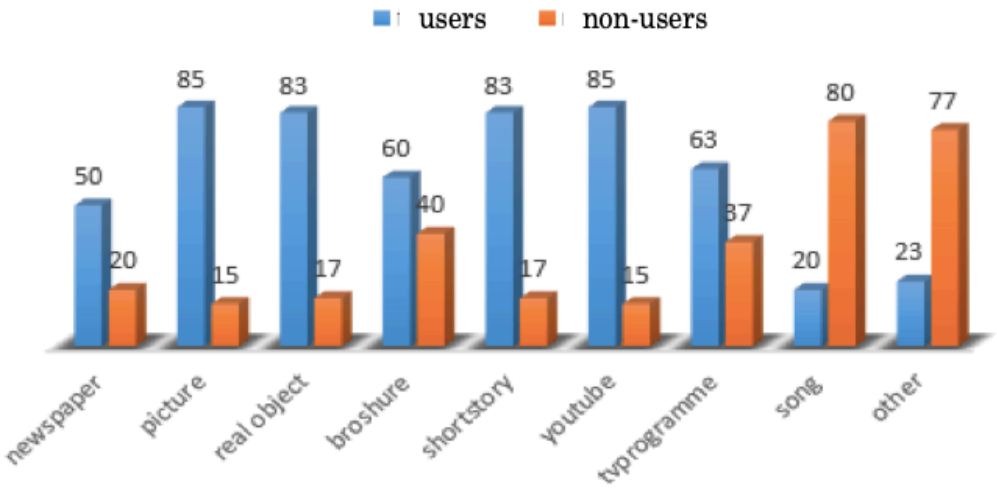


Figure 3. Most frequently used authentic materials in classes by high-school English teachers

On the other hand, the teachers reported that songs and other types of authentic materials were the least preferred materials by the teachers (20% and 23%, respectively). Aside from the authentic materials in the bar chart below, the teachers added other materials, such as games, videos, and podcasts, in the survey's open-ended questions section.

Teachers' Opinions on the Factors Influencing Their Material Use: Non-authentic Materials (Textbooks)

The third research question in this study explores the factors influencing teachers' material preferences and uses. According to Table 4, more than half of the teachers (65%) believed that current official textbooks were appropriate for the curriculum and students' cultural backgrounds. However, the majority of teachers expressed their disagreements with the remaining items. For example, approximately half of the participants disagreed that textbooks contributed to students' communicative skills. According to teachers, textbooks do not explain how language is used in real-life situations (52%), and they do not increase students' vocabulary (54%) or grammar knowledge for daily conversations (54%). Another interesting finding is that nearly half of the participants agreed that textbooks were ineffective at increasing students' cultural awareness (%57) and insufficient for providing appropriate content (45%) for students' needs.

In the interview, the primary and the most significant criterion influencing teachers' use of textbooks was reported as *'textbooks' being appropriateness to the curriculum*.' More than half of the teachers stressed the importance of using textbooks since they were time-saving, cheap for the students, and a ready-made guide for teachers in implementing the curriculum:

> 'Textbooks can be followed easily, and they can help us to reach the curriculum's pre-determined goals that the teacher should accomplish at the end of each year. Thus, I prefer using textbooks to authentic materials.' (TS)

> 'Using textbooks is beneficial for both teachers and students. They can help teachers to reduce the amount of time for lesson preparation. It is economical for students because the Turkish Ministry of Education is responsible for distributing them free of charge. (TI)

Table 4. *Descriptive statistics of teachers' opinions towards using official textbooks*

	Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Median	Mod
1- Textbooks are appropriate for the aims of the curriculum.	26	64%	5	12%	9	22%	4	4
2- Textbooks give flexible content to fulfil different students' needs.	13	32%	9	22%	18	45%	3	2
3- Using textbooks is interesting.	12	30%	9	22%	19	47%	3	2
4- Using textbooks motivates students to learn more.	8	20%	12	30%	20	50%	3	2
5- The content of textbooks is difficult for students' proficiency level.	19	47%	10	25%	11	27%	2	3
6- Using textbooks increases students' familiarity with the use of grammar rules in their original context.	10	25%	8	20%	22	54%	2	2
7- Textbooks introduce students to how language is used in the real world.	13	32%	6	15%	21	52%	2	4
8- Textbooks improve students' cultural understanding.	6	15%	11	27%	23	57%	2	4
9- The content of textbooks causes cultural conflict that hinders comprehension.	8	20%	11	27%	21	52%	2	2
10- Using textbooks improves students' proficiency level.	11	27%	13	32%	16	40%	3	3
11- Using a textbook is time-consuming for students.	16	40%	12	30%	12	30%	3	3
12- Textbooks introduce the students to how language is used in the real world.	9	22%	9	22%	22	54%	2	3
13- Textbooks increase students' knowledge of the necessary vocabulary items in real situations.	13	32%	5	12%	22	54%	2	4

Additionally, the concerns about *the 'scarcity of flexible activities'* in textbooks were expressed in the survey by 45% of teachers and by two teachers in the interview. They said:

> 'Particularly, listening and writing activities are extremely irrelevant to my student's interests, and they are above their current proficiency levels. As I cannot simplify these activities, I skip them and prefer authentic materials instead. Simple songs, pictures, or reading texts are appropriate for their levels.' (TU)

> 'Many times, I want to photocopy texts from other external sources to make an extension for the subjects in the book since current official textbooks include poor-quality exercises. However, economic problems in schools seem to restrict these facilities.' (TS)

As reflected in the excerpts below and the survey (50%), the boring content of the textbooks seems unsuccessful in attracting *'learners' interest and enhancing their motivation.'* Teachers addressed this problem as follows:

> 'All the content of the current textbooks includes only Turkish cultural items. Thus, Turkish students explain Turkish culture to other Turkish students in class, but the language is English. How can it be attractive or motivating for the students?' (TI)

> 'Additional to textbooks' contents, visuals in the textbooks are highly artificial and generally irrelevant to their topics. These visuals cannot attract students' attention to the topics or texts. For this reason, I sometimes prefer not to use these materials. (TM)

'Real language use' was emphasized as another factor influencing teachers' attitudes. Many participants in the survey and interview suggested that textbooks must be more

comprehensive to present the real language uses and the target cultural content. In this regard, several participants claimed:

> 'Textbooks present made-up language structures since they are designed as a guide to reaching the pre-determined goals of the curriculum by sequencing level-appropriate structures and vocabulary.' (TU) (TM)

Regarding materials' '*being appropriate to the students' cultural backgrounds, proficiency level, needs, and purpose to learn English*,' one of the teachers reported:

> 'In Turkey, textbooks are mainly designed for the use of state schools, and they are expected to avoid any controversial issue. That is why the textbooks' content has to be revised by different experts before publishing. I think the elimination and purification of the content make everything highly artificial in textbooks. ' (TU)

Similar to two-fifths of teachers in the survey, a few participants in the interview expressed that the authorities did not care about students' needs in foreign language departments at high schools. Books distributed in these classes can be used only as materials for the revision of previous years. Because they are insufficient to improve students' English or guide them for university entrance exams:

> 'Textbooks present common and language structures recursively with minor variations at each level. This repetitive content prevents learners from progressing in terms of their academic needs.' (TU)

> 'The students' needs in the language department are always ignored. Indeed, the students in these classes desire to become English teachers in the future. Thus, expecting them to practice English through materials designed for general purposes instead the academic ones is unrealistic.' (TS)

In line with the majority of teachers' claims in the survey, textbooks were not stated as appropriate for "*the proficiency level of students"* in the interview. This might be a common concern that leads to teachers becoming unwilling to use textbooks, as reflected in the excerpt below:

> 'Our classes have a homogenous distribution of students in their proficiency levels. We are always confused about which level to focus on during the lessons. Should we aim to improve the level of the half who had an A1 proficiency level, or should we follow the level for B2 learners? Under this circumstance, I do not believe that textbooks fixed with a specific level could be effective.' (TS)

> 'Particularly, the level of grammatical structures in textbooks is complicated for some learners while they were straightforward for others. In any case, this upper or lower level of language structures causes learners to lose interest in the lessons.' (TE)

Finally, the low quality of activities in textbooks and the reality of their contents were stressed in the interview. Since these activities require learners to memorize specific structures, they disregard the needs of learners to become effective communicators. In this respect, teachers opt to use authentic materials more than textbooks to acquire communicative competence. They said:

> 'Current textbooks and teaching aids like CDs are not distributed at the beginning of the year. Even if we get them somehow, we cannot benefit from them efficiently due to their poor audio quality. Thus, I prefer using authentic materials. (TM)

> 'I believe that textbooks do not cater to our student's needs in terms of giving proper activities to teach how to speak efficiently.' (TU)

Teachers' Opinions on the Factors Influencing Their Material Use: Authentic Materials

Table 5 demonstrated that most teachers agreed on the '*authentic language existence'* in authentic materials. Notably, they include communicative activities with interesting and motivating content. Furthermore, parallel with 72 percent of teachers surveyed, the interview revealed that authentic materials were considered *'appropriate to the curriculum*.' Again, however, it was up to teachers' efforts. They stated:

> 'Teachers should adapt authentic materials with the help of their pedagogical knowledge and their IT skills. However, I do not think that all the teachers can consider their students' academic needs and cultural background while adapting the authentic materials to the curriculum's aims.' (TM)

> 'Finding appropriate content for the curriculum's goals takes a lot of effort and time. Finding authentic materials for reading or listening tasks is particularly troublesome, so I cannot use these materials regularly.' (TI)

Table 5. *Descriptive statistics of teachers' opinions towards using authentic materials*

	Agree		**Uncertain**		**Disagree**		**Median**	**Mod**
1- Authentic materials are appropriate for the aims of the curriculum.	29	72%	7	17%	4	10%	4	4
2- Authentic materials give flexible content that fulfills different students' needs.	30	75%	3	7%	7	17%	4	4
3- Using authentic materials is interesting.	38	95%	9	22%	3	6%	4	4
4- Using authentic materials motivates students to learn more.	37	93%	2	5%	1	2%	5	5
5- The content of authentic materials is difficult for students' proficiency level. (even if the teachers adapt them)	3	7%	1	2%	36	91%	4	4
6- Using authentic materials increases students' familiarity with the use of grammar rules in their original context.	37	93%	2	5%	1	2%	2	2
7- Authentic materials introduce students to how language is used in the real world.	29	72%	10	25%	1	2%	4	4
8- Authentic materials improve students' cultural understanding.	36	91%	4	10%	2	5%	4	5
9- The content of textbooks causes cultural conflict that hinders comprehension.	25	62%	13	27%	2	5%	4	4
10- Using authentic materials improves students' proficiency level.	24	60%	10	25%	6	14%	4	4
11- Using authentic materials is time-consuming for students.	3	7%	4	10%	33	84%	4	4
12- Authentic materials introduce the students to how language is used in the real world.	34	86%	4	10%	2	5%	4	4
13- Authentic materials increase students' knowledge of vocabulary items they need in real situations.	37	93%	3	7%	0	0%	4	4

What is more, for the majority of the teachers (%75) in the survey, authentic materials provide a wide range of *'flexible'* content that can be modified to cater to the needs of different learners.

> 'Authentic materials include various topics addressing different proficiency levels of students in the same class. Also, they can be adapted or modified to fit the various student's needs.' (TU)

> 'I generally adapt a song as a listening activity, then design a speaking activity from the same song as a follow-up activity. Sometimes I use authentic materials even as a writing activity depending on my students' levels and interests.' (TM)

The same data also indicated an agreement (over 90% of participants in the survey) upon the positive effects of authentic materials on increasing interest and motivation during class activities. Two teachers in the interview explained how they could be *' motivating and interesting* for students:

> 'We live in an era that students can access authentic materials like official music videos or interactive games easily.' Once they encounter the same material in class, their motivation increases.' (TM)

> 'I am a teacher at a high school. Thus, to enhance students' participation in the lesson, I choose authentic materials, including teenagers' favorite characters in a film or a game that they play.' (TS and TU)

The *'real language use in authentic materials'* was also emphasized as another reason. Two respondents mentioned using authentic materials since these materials could foster learners' awareness of other cultures and provide daily language uses. In this way, they could raise learners' self-confidence to speak with native speakers.

> 'Real language use is crucial for those who want to learn English to communicate. I believe that authentic materials present cultural items and actual use of the target language in its context. (TE)

> 'The self-confidence can increase, particularly when he/she can communicate without a breakdown or misunderstanding in a conversation. I believe authentic materials can be helpful in this respect since they present the language structures in a real conversation.' (TI)

Consistent with the survey, *'being appropriate to the students'* was reported in the interview as another prominent factor. Few teachers linked it with mixed-skilled students in classes as follows:

> 'Besides textbooks, I prefer using authentic materials. These materials present different language structures appropriate to mixed-skilled students. (TE)

> 'Even if it is hard to adapt the authentic materials according to my students' proficiency levels, I use them since they enhance the majority of students' interests.' (TI)

Being supported by 62% of participants in the survey, teachers in the interview stressed the '*appropriateness of authentic materials to the students' cultural background'* as a factor that influences their choices. Nevertheless, they can be beneficial only after they are reviewed and adapted by the teachers:

> 'There are some inappropriate items for Muslim students in some authentic materials. For example, the image of a pig, alcohol, and some festivals should be eliminated from the material's content.' (TU)

> 'Some parents in my school are opposed to using music and video clips in English classes because they believe that these materials impose other cultural values and deteriorate students' morale.' (TI)

In line with survey results (72%), in the interview, the appropriateness of authentic materials for *'students' purposes to learn English'* was also defined as a reason for using authentic materials. Remarkably, one of the teachers gave details about how she used these materials. She reflected:

> 'I am teaching a handful of students who aim to become English teachers. To reach their goals, they need to read articles to enlarge their academic vocabulary knowledge. However, the university entrance exam format does not allow us to use these materials as much as we can. Instead, we are using tests similar to the university entrance exams and forcing our students to memorize the pre-set structures.' (TS)

Finally, all the participants in the interview addressed that authentic materials were *'communicative.'* This argument was in parallel with the majority of participants' responses from items 40 and 41 (86% and 93%) in the survey. According to teachers, authentic materials content could increase interaction in class. For this reason, teachers reported using authentic materials from time to time instead of using boring or irrelevant dialogues in textbooks.

> 'To motivate my students to speak more, I sometimes skip the activities in the textbook and use authentic materials instead whenever I encounter an interesting picture or a dialogue relevant to the topic in the book.' (TI)
> 'I use YouTube videos for listening and speaking activities to encourage my students to speak more. Authentic materials, I believe, provide us with more communicative activities than textbooks.' (TM) (TE)

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate teachers' thoughts toward authentic and non-authentic materials, teachers' use of these instructional materials, and the factors affecting their uses. The findings are significant since the teachers' attitudes toward different materials would affect their teaching practices directly while influencing students' success in language learning indirectly.

One of the most significant findings in this current study was teachers' commitment to using current school textbooks despite having negative thoughts toward doing so. Contrary to the findings from Alhamami & Ahmad (2018) and Srakang (2013), the main reported reason for teachers' use of textbooks frequently was these materials' appropriateness to the curriculum and being economical. A probable explanation leading to this difference might be due to the educational implementations of the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE). For example, official textbooks in Turkey are designed following the curriculum, and they are ready-made resources saving time to meet curriculum requirements in a limited amount of time. In other words, textbooks are planned to follow the educational goals of the Turkish Ministry of Education by considering Turkish cultural values, students' cultural backgrounds, and national policy. Therefore, teachers do not need to revise the content to check its appropriateness to students. Another assumption is that official textbooks in Turkey are distributed free of charge in Turkey as a part of social state policy, and using supplementary materials or purchasing commercial textbooks is prohibited at state schools (Doğan, 2022). It means that teachers and students have little autonomy in choosing their materials.

Regarding the factors impacting teachers' negative thoughts towards using textbooks, the most salient ones were the '*inappropriateness of them to the student'* and *'being boring*.' For example, English textbooks in Turkey are published by a committee comprised of local English teachers and experts in linguistics who are also well-versed in Turkish culture. To make textbooks appropriate for students' cultural backgrounds, the committee pays huge attention to the cultural values of Turkish society and adds various cultural content to the textbooks. Nevertheless, considering students' cultural sensitivity too much in teaching materials could lead to boring lessons. It was explained well by Krashen (2009) that ''If the message is completely known, students will show no interest, and the students will probably not participate'' (p.66). Besides, textbooks are reported as inappropriate for their students' proficiency levels. When mixed-skilled classes in Turkey are considered, it might only be possible to cater to some of these students' needs by using a textbook, including one fixed proficiency level. These findings supported the claim that high-school English language

teachers' commitment to textbooks was the main reason for most students' being unsuccessful communicators and having poor knowledge of English (Özen et al., 2013). Activities in the textbooks were reported as the second major problem. Teachers stated that textbooks could not improve students' communicative skills since they did not include communicative activities and could not provide enjoyable and interesting learning opportunities for the learners.

Another prominent finding was that teachers could not use authentic materials as frequently as they would like despite having positive thoughts toward using them. This result aligns with previous literature (Allag, 2017; Silvani, 2018) in that they all define authentic materials as primary sources for teaching English. Also, they all support using these materials since they have interesting, communicative content with various real language uses. It is a well-known fact that authentic materials include various language chunks, phrases, and idioms used in a real target language context. In this way, these materials subconsciously make learners aware of some upper-level structures/words. Therefore, authentic materials can provide flexible, rich, enjoyable, and motivating content for mixed-skills classes in Turkish high schools when adapted or carefully selected. When these reasons are combined with the collective nature of classrooms in Turkish high schools, they can explain why authentic materials were considered appropriate for the students. In other words, Contrary to the other studies in the literature (Al-Musallam, 2009; Rusmawaty et al., 2018), using authentic materials would benefit students in a school implementing collective teaching.

However, it is important to stress that authentic materials are not designed for educational purposes. Therefore, using them can cause several problems in some contexts. One of these problems might be the language structures in authentic materials. Particularly, they are not appropriate for beginners (Al-Musallam, 2009; Rusmawaty et al., 2018) since they include language structures and phrases of different proficiency levels (Kılıçkaya, 2004). Also, their content is not appropriate for Muslim students. To use these materials in their classes, teachers need cultural background knowledge of society, energy, and time to adapt them by considering curriculum, requirements of national exams, and students' proficiency levels. These concerns might explain teachers' limited use of authentic materials in the Turkish high-school context. Secondly, teachers' lack of IT skills in how to adapt these materials can lead to limited use of authentic materials. Özen et al. (2013), in partnership with the Turkish Ministry of Education and TEPAV, concluded that more than 80% of the observed teachers in Turkey had pedagogical and technological competence. This result might support the findings in this study when we consider teachers' willingness to adopt various authentic materials that require IT skills. For example, adapting and using the materials such as online games, newspaper websites, and videos require advanced IT skills, and they are reported as the most frequently used materials. However, a recent study by Öztürk & Aydin (2019) showed that ''pre-service education in Turkey suffers from finding ways of helping their candidates gain technology integration competencies, and the majority of the efforts are constrained by the endeavors of individual academicians'' (p. 192). Therefore, the assumption mentioned above may not be valid, especially for all educational contexts in Turkey. Also, since the data in this study did not provide any information on teachers' IT skills, much research is required to get a thorough understanding.

These results are vital in filling the literature gap by presenting results on teachers' use of authentic and non-authentic materials and the underlying reasons behind their uses. In addition, this study hopes to raise awareness of the differences between teachers' attitudes and their actual classroom practices. In this way, it might assist curriculum designers in developing more appropriate syllabuses based on students' needs and teachers' preferences. Also, the findings of this study are hoped to help material designers create more relevant content that improves the effectiveness of teaching English in the Turkish context.

Limitations

Despite having prominent contributions, this study has a few limitations. Firstly, the small sample size limits the generalisability of the results in other contexts. For this current study, only 40 high-school English teachers were recruited from 5 Anatolian high schools in 5 different districts of Kayseri. However, different types of high schools exist (Vocational and technical schools or İmam-Hatip High-schools) in Turkey, and teachers' profiles in these schools are highly different. Thus, it should be kept in mind that the majority of the teachers in other types of high schools might be less or more experienced. Since the different profiles of teachers could change the results, a broader investigation needs to be done to gather more generalizable data in the future. Secondly, commercial textbooks are not allowed in Turkish state high schools. For this reason, teachers' thoughts about using commercial textbooks were excluded from the results. Also, teachers' use of commercial textbooks and opinions on using them are not reflected. In future studies, this dimension of the textbooks can also be included to get a more in-depth understanding of teachers' material choices in other school contexts.

Conclusion

This study examined EFL high-school teachers' attitudes toward teaching materials, how frequently they use them, and which factors influence their uses. Incorporating the voices of teachers with different backgrounds and experiences, we can draw several implications for English language teachers, administrators, and material designers. For school administrators and teachers to improve the effectiveness of classroom materials, students should take English placement tests. The classes should then be formed based on the results of these placement tests and the student's English proficiency levels, which helps individualized learning to some extent. In this way, textbooks tailored for a specific level could address most students' needs in class. For material designers, the textbooks should include more flexible and communicative activities that enhance all students' interests in mixed-skilled classes. These activities must also be adaptable enough to be compatible with authentic materials.

In future research, more research is required to investigate students' and teachers' attitudes toward using authentic and non-authentic materials at the same time. In addition, since contextual factors can shape teachers' attitudes and practices, longitudinal empirical studies are required to investigate how teachers' attitudes and practices vary in various school contexts, such as primary, elementary, and secondary schools.

Disclosure Statement

This study derived from the author's Master's dissertation, 'High-school English teachers' attitudes towards using authentic and non-authentic materials in English lessons in Turkey, ' submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Arts, Leicester De Montfort University, United Kingdom. There is no potential conflict of interest.

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