

## **Perceptions of EFL Intermediate Students Toward Authentic Material:**

### **A Comparative Study of Two Colleges of Quetta, Balochistan**

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#### **Abstract**

This study intends to investigate the perceptions of EFL college students toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom. A total of 311 college students in which 160 boys and 151 girls students participated from two public colleges of Quetta, Balochistan province of Pakistan. The researcher employed quantitative research design to answer two research questions of the study. The quantitative data was obtained through the survey questionnaire. Initially, to respond to the first research question of the study, Descriptive Statistics was performed in SPSS, and to answer the second research question, Independent Simplest-test was also run in SPSS to check the statistical significant difference between boys and girls college students. The findings revealed that college students showed positive response towards the use of the authentic material in the EFL classroom. In addition, the results of Independent Samples *t*-test showed the boys' college students emphasized more use of authentic material than girls' students. These findings have implications for both curriculum designers and English language teaching in the Pakistani context.

*Keywords:* Authentic material, communicative language teaching (CLT), and English as a foreign language (EFL).

#### **Introduction**

During the 1960s, the generative grammar by Chomsky (1964) revolutionized the second language acquisition process in western countries. Later on, Hymes (1972) criticized generative grammar for its limited scope since it exclusively emphasized on the linguistic competence of the language and ignored the communicative competence of the language where learners are required to learn the appropriate use of language. Thus, the communicative language teaching

(CLT) emerged due to the Hymes's (1972) theory of communicative competence which not only emphasizes on the linguistic competence but also stresses to learn the appropriate use of the target language in different real life settings. Therefore, this concept paved the path for communicative activities in the shape of the authentic material, which is an effective activity for the EFL and ESL classrooms to learn a foreign language. Kilickaya (2004) defines authentic materials as experience to real life use language and preparation students to interact appropriately in particular situation. Moreover, Dornyei (2003) suggested that language teachers' role is pivotal to motivate students toward their language learning achievements. Furthermore, many scholars also claim that the use of authentic materials is crucial because it enables students to overcome the classroom language knowledge and ability to communicate in the target language in real-life situations. Consequently, the use of authentic materials in EFL classroom results in the acquisition of target language along with communicative competence. In addition, Nuttall (1996) stated that the authentic material motivates language learners to real-life conversations, and it results in the effective communication in the target language. Widdowson (1990) asserted two terms, i.e., authentic compare to non-authentic to differentiate both terms; the reason is not the material which has been taught, the main point is the effectiveness of the material which motivates the language learners to communicate in the target language. Bacon and Finnemann (1990) stated that the language teachers should know the skill to manipulate authentic materials to get the maximum benefit of it in the classroom. In this modern age, the language teaching methods in most of the public colleges of Pakistan is outdated, and due to the reason, it is producing incompetent EFL learners who cannot communicate in the English language. Moreover, Warsi (2004) asserted that the English language teaching methods are obsolete the in public educational institutes of Pakistan. Therefore, it is pivotal to investigate the perceptions of Pakistani government college students. Thus, this survey study was intended to examine government boys and girls intermediate collegestudent perceptions toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom in Quetta, Pakistan.

## **Literature Review**

Akbari and Razavi (2015) carried out a quantitative study to investigate EFL students' attitude toward the use of the authentic material in the EFL classroom. The author of this study adapted a survey questionnaire which was comprised of 9 survey items on use of the authentic material in EFL classroom. In addition, statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data. Thus, the findings indicated that EFL students showed highly positive attitude concerning the use of the authentic material in EFL class.

In another study by Guo (2012) who employed experimental investigation to explore the effect of reading authentic material for better language proficiency in Taiwan. Moreover, 50 undergraduate college students were randomly selected to participate in this study. The researcher conducted pre-test on English proficiency which was designed to check the proficiency level of the students and participants were equally divided into two groups, i.e., (i) experimental group, (ii) control group. Furthermore, only the experimental group received the treatment of reading from ten internet websites related to their classroom lectures for the period of three months. The same pre-test was administrated as post-test at the end of the session. Additionally, the descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed on statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to analyze the data. Hence, the findings of this experimental study revealed that use of authentic material on reading from different internet websites improved EFL students' vocabulary and also developed overall English language skills of the students.

Karimi and dolatabadi (2014) carried out an experimental study to check the effect of authentic materials on listening comprehension of 50 intermediate students of Iran. The researcher organized an experimental and a control group in this study. Hence, the findings unveiled that listening comprehension of authentic material improved students listening and oral abilities.

Moreover, Zoghi, Moradiyan, and Kazemi (2014) conducted an investigation to explore the effect of the authentic material on vocabulary development. This study included randomly

selected 50 IELTS learners. First, the researcher observed IELTS classes, and later on, the students' self-reported survey questionnaire was administrated to the participants in selected classes. Hence, the findings revealed that the majority of the EFL students favoured the use of authentic material.

In another study, Mousavi and Iravani (2012) carried out an experimental investigation to explore the effect of authentic material in comparison with non-authentic material on learners listening skill. This study included 80 undergraduate student participants who were randomly selected from different English language centres in Khoramshahr and Abadan, cities of Iran. Initially, after pre-test, the participants were divided into two equal groups, i.e., (i) control group, (ii) experimental group. In addition, the control group was treated with the listening of non-authentic material. In contrast, the experimental group received treatment by listening to the authentic material which were the audio records taken from BBC and VOA news. Thus, the findings confirmed that listening of authentic material produced better results compared to the non-authentic listening material.

Similarly, Wu, et al., (2011) conducted a mix method investigation to explore the effectiveness of listening authentic materials on EFL students' motivational level. Moreover, the researcher designed listening activities for advanced EFL students. The findings based on the students' questionnaire and interviews showed the positive effect of listening of authentic material, and students also reported joyful experience. Hence, the listening of the authentic material produced better results, and it also motivated EFL students towards language learning skills. Numerous past studies also support the use of authentic material in EFL classroom (see, Jiaju, 1984; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; McCoy, 2009; Morrison, 1989; & Sun, 2010).

### **Research Questions**

This present study investigates following two research questions:

- R.Q.1. what are the perceptions of government boys and girls college student towards the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom?
- R.Q.2.Is there any statistical difference between boys and girls college students towards authentic material in EFL classroom?

### **Methodology**

#### Research Design

Keeping in view, the nature of research questions, the quantitative research method was projected by the researcher to answer the research questions of the study. Moreover, the survey instrument was administrated to collect the data from the participants of this investigation. According to Creswell (2012) “Survey research are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or characteristics of the population” (p. 339).

#### *Research Participants*

This survey investigation included 311participants from two public colleges of Quetta, Balochistan province of Pakistan. The researcher employed simple random sampling method to survey Government college students. The following Table 1 shows the demographical formation of the research participants:

Table 1

#### *Information of Participants*

Government College Students	Participants	Total
Boys Students	160	
Girls Students	151	
Total		311

#### *Survey Instrument*

The survey questionnaire was designed to explore the perceptions of Government boys and girls college students towards the use of the authentic material in the classroom. The survey questionnaireconsistedfour constructs i.e., (i) English newspaper and magazine, (ii) English

songs, (iii) taped stories and novel, and (iv) use of Internet website material, which were based on 5-points Likert scale survey questionnaire i.e., Strongly Disagree (5) Disagree (4) Neutral (3) Agree (2) Strongly Agree (1).

*Pilot Study*

The researcher conducted a pilot study which included 30 intermediate students from target population other than the target samples of the study (15 from Government boys college students and 15 from Government girls college students) and to evaluate the validity of survey questionnaire, focus group discussions were conducted, and survey questionnaire items were also revised accordingly. Moreover, the reliability analysis of the questionnaire and the value of “Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Test” was 0.72 as shown in Table 2 below;

Table 2

<i>Reliability Statistics</i>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.72	4

*Data Collection Procedure*

Initially, to conduct this survey investigation the researcher sought formal permission from Secretary Education Quetta, Balochistan and also from both the principals of Government colleges respectively. In addition, by the help of both college administration, the lists of students enrolment were obtained to prepare the sampling frame, listed and numbered in serial order from one to the total number of college students, then selected the participants randomly from the listed students. The researcher distributed the survey questionnaire to the randomly selected participants and 30 to 45 minutes were given to participants to respond to the survey questionnaire.

### *Data Analysis*

This survey investigation aimed to answer two research questions of the study. Initially, to respond to the first research question, the descriptive statistics was run in SPSS (version, 20) to determine college student's perceptions toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classrooms. Moreover, to answer the second research question, Independent-Simplest-test was performed in SPSS (version, 20) the check if there is any statistical significant difference between boys and girls college students. Pallant (2013) suggested that to measure the differences between two different groups Independent Sample *t*-test should be performed.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### *Findings*

To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics was run in SPSS (version 20), and the table 3 below presents the results;

Table 3

#### *Descriptive Statistics of Boys and Girls Students*

Authentic material constructs	Students	Mean	SD
English newspaper and magazine	Boys	4.3	1.23
	Girls	4.1	1.20
English songs	Boys	3.5	1.13
	Girls	3.7	1.11
Taped stories and novel	Boys	2.7	1.5
	Girls	2.8	1.2
Use of internet website material	Boys	4.51.	2.7
	Girls	3.0	1.20

Table 3 above depicts that the findings of boys and girls college students on the use of the authentic material in the classroom. Moreover, the results based on four constructs of the meanscores of boys college students were higher than mean scores of girl's student. Hence, the

results revealed that the boy's college students emphasized more toward the use of authentic material than girls' students.

Furthermore, to answer the second research question of this study the researcher employed Independent Sample *t*-test on SPSS (version 20) to investigate is there any statistical significant difference between Government boys college students compare to Government girls college students of Quetta, Pakistan.

Table 4

*T-Test of Boys and Girls Students Perceptions*

	Girls college students		Boy College students		<i>t</i>	df	<i>P</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Authentic material	13.60	3.40	15.07	3.02	3.67	308	.002*

Note. *Difference is Significant at p-value < 0.05*

The above Table 4 presents that the statistical significant difference was found between boys and girls college students on the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom, and the *p*-value was less than  $p > 0.05$ , i.e.  $p > 0.002$ . Therefore, a statistical significant difference can be noticed on the use of authentic material between boys and girls students. The finding showed that boys college students scored [ $M=13.60$ ,  $SD=3.40$ ;  $t(308)= 3.67$ ,  $p=.002$ ] emphasized more on the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom more than girls college students. Similarly, Pallant (2013) states that significant difference in can be obtained through *t*-test if the value of  $p > .005$ .

**Discussions**

This survey research aimed to investigate the perceptions of college students toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classrooms. To answer first research question descriptive statistics were employed on SPSS to analyze the data, the finding of mean scores of first research question revealed that the college students reported highly positive perceptions toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom. Consequently, the findings of this survey study are in line with the study of Akbari and Razavi (2015), Bacon and Finnemann (1990), Dornyei (2003), Guo (2012), Karimi and dolatabadi (2014), Kilickaya (2004), Rogers (1988).

To answer the second research question, Independent Sample *t*-test was run in SPSS, and the findings revealed that statistical significant difference ( $p > .002$ ) between boys and girls students' scores. The boys' students showed more desirability towards the use of the authentic material than girls' college students. The findings of the results are in the vein of the study of Mousavi and Iravani (2012) and Zoghi, Moradiyan, and Kazemi (2014) and Wu, et al., (2011).

### **Conclusion**

This present study explored the positive perceptions of EFL students toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom. This study was carried out in two public colleges of Quetta, Balochistan. The findings revealed that majority of college students showed positive perceptions toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classroom. Moreover, the results also indicated that use of authentic materials is essential for English language proficiency, i.e., (i) English newspapers and magazine activities, (ii) English songs activity, (iii) taped short stories and novel activity, (iv) use the internet is essential for all four language skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. Additionally, the results of the study can be generalized to the target population of the students to adopt authentic material activities to enhance confidence level and oral abilities of EFL students and to furnish the needs of EFL students at the intermediate level of education. Hence, it is recommended by this survey study that authentic material activities may be included in the syllabus of intermediate EFL learners to equip students with the modern day approaches to for language at Pakistan EFL context and to improve EFL students oral skills.

### *Limitations of the study*

This present investigation has various limitations as follows:

The first limitation is that this survey study only involved two Government colleges of the Quetta city. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized widely to other colleges of Pakistan.

The second limitation is that researcher conducted survey questionnaire to collect only quantitative data, so triangulation of survey data was not carried out to validate the results of survey questionnaire by conducting interviews or opened ended questions to validate the

findings. The third limitation is that this study only focused on EFL students' perceptions toward the use of authentic material, but EFL college teachers perception were not taken into account. The fourth limitation is that no treatment was given to students group to evaluate the effectiveness of authentic material cannot be measured.

#### *Implications of the study*

This study has many implications, the authentic material prepared by class teachers or taken from internet websites; it can help learners to improve their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills because authentic material facilitates real-life spoken language which was ignored through the teaching of non-authentic material. Therefore, regular teaching of authentic material will eventually increase the self-confidence of the EFL students.

Moreover, the inclusion of authentic material in syllabus can extend many benefits to EFL students because authentic material improves listening skills which help students to understand classroom lecture because the latest knowledge and teachers lectures are in the English language.

Past research shows that English audio and video records increases English language proficiency, and students who have good command and practice of authentic material score high in TOEFL and ILETS tests, so students can get admission in eminent foreign professional colleges and top ranked Universities around the world, therefore better English language proficiency can result in better future prospects of the students.

In addition, good practice of authentic material can also help EFL students to acquire foreign language along with better language fluency, which may also develop interpersonal skills in EFL students.

#### *Suggestions for Future Research*

This survey study investigated the perceptions college students towards the use of authentic material which involved two government colleges of Quetta city of Balochistan province of

Pakistan. Consequently, there are few suggestions are mentioned for future research. As this survey study concentrated on two public colleges of Quetta city, the future researchers may focus comparative study between public and private colleges in other cities of Pakistan, which will help to validate the findings and along with it may provide a comparison of perceptions of students of other cities. Moreover, mix method research design containing interviews and open-ended questions are suggested to obtain in-depth insight of students perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards the use of authentic material. In addition, cross-validation of teacher perceptions may also be focused, because it is pertinent to explore EFL teachers' perceptions toward the use of the authentic material in EFL classrooms, and also to explore the real obstacles which hinder the implementation of authentic material activities in EFL classrooms. Finally, future researchers are also suggested to carry out experimental research design to investigate the effectiveness of the authentic material in EFL Pakistani context.

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