UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA

Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias de la Educación

Carrera de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

The Use of Authentic Materials in the EFL Classroom

Trabajo de titulación previo a la obtención del título de Licenciadas en Ciencias de la Educación en Lengua y Literatura Inglesa

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Cuenca - Ecuador

-19 de febrero de 2021-

Resumen:

Esta síntesis investigativa tiene como objetivo descubrir los efectos y percepciones que se han reportado sobre el uso de los materiales auténticos en el aula EFL. En base a los criterios de inclusión y exclusión de este estudio, 21 artículos que usaron diferentes instrumentos y tuvieron lugar en diferentes niveles, fueron seleccionados para ser analizados. Los resultados revelan que los efectos de los materiales auténticos en las destrezas lingüísticas y no lingüísticas son positivos. Adicionalmente, los estudios analizados indican que tanto estudiantes como maestros presentan mayor cantidad de percepciones positivas que negativas con respecto al uso de los materiales auténticos. Los resultados de este análisis pueden servir como futura referencia para que los maestros incluyan estos materiales en el aula EFL.

Palabras claves: Material auténtico. Efectos. Uso. Implementación. Empírico. Revisión de la literatura. Aula EFL. Material no auténtico. Percepciones.

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Abstract:

This research synthesis aims to discover the effects and perceptions that have been reported on the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom. According to the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study, 21 empirical studies which used different instruments and occurred at different levels, were selected to be analyzed. The findings of this research show that the effects of the use of authentic materials in linguistic and non-linguistic skills are positive. In addition, the analyzed studies indicated that both teachers and students presented more positive than negative perceptions towards the use of authentic materials. The outcomes of this analysis can serve as future reference for teachers to include those materials in the EFL classroom.

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Acknowledgment

There are a number of people without whom this research synthesis might not have been written, and to whom I am greatly indebted. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Juan José Santillan whose guidance, support and encouragement have been invaluable through this work. I also wish to thank all my teachers for their willingness to impart their knowledge. To conclude, I would like to thank my parents and husband for all their unconditional support and patience.

Daniela Cevallos

I express my sincere thanks to my tutor Juan José Santillan for his guidance and support in completing this project. I extend my gratitude to all the teachers that supported me throughout my student life at the University of Cuenca. I would also like to thank my parents, brothers, and boyfriend for always believing in me and encouraging me to finish this project. Lastly, I want to acknowledge the Instituto de Fomento al Talento Humano (IFTH), whose financial support was necessary to finish this project.

Sandra Pauta

Dedication

I dedicate this research synthesis to my parents, Nancy and Manuel, who taught that so much could be done with little and who are my strength and inspiration. To my stepfather Patricio who has actively supported me in my determination to find my potential. To my dear husband Steven for encouraging me to believe in myself. I also dedicate this work to my beloved grandmother, Doris, who passed away before I finished my studies. I had promised to make my grandmother proud by the achievement of this academic goal, and I hope I have fulfilled that promise.

Daniela Cevallos

I dedicate my research project to my beloved parents, Rosa and José, who thought me to work hard for the things that I spire to achieve, and who accompanied me throughout all my career. I equally dedicate this project to my dear boyfriend Daniel who encouraged me and gave me his unconditional support even in the most difficult moments. Finally, I dedicate this work to my brothers Javier and Henry who were by my side when I needed some advice and motivation.

Sandra Pauta

Introduction

The process of learning English in the EFL classroom may become difficult for some students since most of the time the used materials are pedagogical materials that do not offer enough exposure to real language. Moreover, since all the process of learning occurs inside the classroom, there are few opportunities for the students to explore the outside world. In order to aid in this process, the use of authentic materials in the classroom when learning English has been investigated in the educational field. As authentic materials provide students with authentic language and opportunities to interact with real situations, it has been widely accepted. Therefore, this research synthesis aims to explore the reported effects that authentic materials produce on linguistic and non-linguistic skills and to report the common perceptions from teachers and students on the implementation of this type of material. The report of this study consists of the following chapters:

Chapter I. In this chapter, the topic and description of the research are presented. The background, statement of the problem and rationale are explored. In addition, research questions and objectives are stated.

Chapter II. This chapter includes the theoretical framework which contains the explanation of the key terms used in this study.

Chapter III. In this chapter, the existing literature about authentic materials is exposed. Twenty-one empirical studies are described.

Chapter IV. This chapter includes the methodology of the study in a detailed manner. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used for the data collection process is explained.

Chapter V. This chapter includes the analysis of the results from the selected studies.

Chapter VI. This chapter encompasses the conclusions and recommendations derived from the analysis.

Chapter I

1. Description of the Research

1.1. Background

There are several types of materials that have been used in EFL classrooms by teachers to facilitate learning, and one of them is the authentic material. The use of authentic materials in EFL classes is a topic that started to gain consideration in the 1970s as a result of the spread of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014). Linguist Henry Sweet was one of the first to discuss about the use of authentic materials with the purpose of improving learners' reading comprehension. Sweet claims "the great advantage of natural, idiomatic texts over artificial 'methods' or 'series' is that they do justice to every feature of the language" (as cited in Sample, 2015). He grants importance to authentic materials because he considers they contain more natural and real language in contrast to the contrived materials widely used in classrooms. On the other hand, Firmansyah (2015) states that learners can benefit from both authentic and non-authentic materials, and that they are necessary in the learning process because each one of them contributes in different ways.

The definitions of authenticity and authentic material have created ample discussion among scholars. Thornbury argues "the notion of authenticity was originally introduced to distinguish between artificially simplified texts and unmodified real texts" (as cited in Lazovic, 2017, p.72). In this sense, authentic materials can be defined as any written and spoken language prepared for native speakers and not meant for being used in the educational field, but still can be beneficial in the learning process because they offer real

language exposure (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014; Jacobson, Degener, & Purcell-Gates 2003; Sample 2015; Hartatik & Rahmah 2016).

Moreover, there has been a great deal of controversy regarding the usefulness of authentic materials in the educational field. For some researchers, authentic materials are useful as they prepare learners for real-world situations. For instance, Nuttall claims, "authentic texts can be motivating, because they are a proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people" (as cited in Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014, p. 249). Similarly, according to Kilic (2015), authentic materials can cause an impact on students´ attitudes and motivation under the condition that they are used in a correct way by both teachers and students. On the contrary, there are some scholars who claim authentic materials are not essential in the learning process of a foreign language. For example, Kienbaum, Russell, and Welty (1986) state that there are no significant differences in learners' performance by using authentic materials and others who use pedagogical materials. This is in line with the findings of a study made by Peacock (1997) in which learners reported authentic materials to be less interesting than artificial materials.

Nowadays, it is necessary that teachers bring as much samples of natural or real language into the classrooms as possible (Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014). Furthemore, Bacon and Finnemann (1990) state that "teachers need to find ways and means of exploiting authentic materials in classroom instructions" (p. 459). Nevertheless, adjusting authentic materials to students' levels becomes a challenge because making these modifications entails a great deal of time and energy (Rusmawaty, Atmowardoyo, Hamra, & Noni, 2018). Besides, Blagojevic (2013) argues that teachers do not have the confidence to use other

materials different from the coursebook because these materials require deeper explanations which may lead to the delay of a planned language class.

Therefore, based on the information that has been presented, it is possible to assume that teachers should be concerned about the need to implement effective teaching materials to help students learn English in a meaningful and realistic context. Thus, this inclusion might help the development of skills that may facilitate the use of language in a natural way when performing in the outside world.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The materials used in the classroom have been considered an important resource since they are the means used by the teacher to assist learning that occurs both inside and outside the classroom (Castillo, Insuasty, & Jaime, 2017). According to Cronquist and Fiszbein (2017), in the Latin American context, the lack of well-prepared English teachers represents a barrier in the learning process. Thus, they suggest that efforts in the educational system of Latin America are needed, and this can be achieved by looking at other learning opportunities and exploring innovative solutions. Mosquera (2016) claims that the educational system in Ecuador still implements obsolete strategies in the classrooms which do not allow an active participation of the students in the acquisition of new learning. Therefore, it can be inferred that, in the Ecuadorian context, teachers select materials without a proper analysis on the benefits that materials can provide to the learners, and as a result, they are not aware of the effects that the implementation of different types of materials might produce.

There is a large amount of materials that can be used in EFL classrooms; nonetheless, authentic materials are not frequently used in the process of teaching a new language (Widya, 2017). Perhaps this circumstance is due to the fact that teachers need to devote a great deal of time in order to select authentic materials and prepare tasks according to the English level of students (Halim, Mukminatien, & Anugerahwati, 2018). In the Ecuadorian context, Mosquera (2016) argues that teaching materials handled by teachers are posters, book completion, flashcards, which are rarely used, and other pedagogical sources such as course books. Unfortunately, some of these non-authentic materials are incapable of bringing the real English-language world to the students (Kilic, 2015). As mentioned before, this leads to consider that probably decisions about the implementation of materials are being taken without considering the possible effects they offer. This issue can be attributed to the insufficient knowledge of teachers due to poor training about the use of materials which causes learners to receive limited education (Calvopiña, 2016).

1.3. Rationale

The selection of materials that will be implemented in the EFL classroom is a process that has to be conducted carefully to guarantee the accomplishment of language proficiency goals, bearing in mind that learning a foreign language in a natural context is not the same as learning it in the classroom (Kozhevnikova, 2014). There has been plenty of research about the implementation of authentic materials in other countries around the world and the overall effects they produce in the EFL classroom. Results have shown that using authentic materials help the improvement of linguistic skills, such as listening and reading, and non-linguistic, skills such as motivation and attitudes (Marzban, 2015; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Kilic, 2015). On the contrary,

Guariento and Morley (2001) argues that, even when authentic materials have been selected according to the level of learners, their use may cause students to feel frustrated, confused and demotivated. Hence, teachers should be informed about these results from empirical studies before making decisions about the implementation of authentic materials in the classroom.

Thus, based on the information that has been presented, this research synthesis becomes necessary and beneficial to assist teachers of the English language to design lessons in a meaningful way by providing an informed selection of authentic materials that aids in the achievement of the learning objectives. Finally, this research synthesis is also feasible since information for the analysis of the most relevant literature regarding the use of authentic materials is available in several databases. In addition, the library of the University of Cuenca provides the necessary means to fulfil the purpose of this analysis.

1.4. Research Questions

After analyzing the relevant literature for this synthesis, the following questions have risen.

What are the reported effects of using authentic materials in the EFL classroom?

What are the common reported perceptions from teachers and students on the implementation of authentic materials in the EFL classroom?

1.5. Objectives

1.5.1. General objective

To identify the effects and perceptions that have been reported on the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom.

1.5.2. Specific objectives

To analyze the effects obtained from the implementation of authentic materials in the EFL classroom as reported in 21 empirical studies.

To describe the most common perceptions from students and teachers on the implementation of authentic materials in the EFL classroom, as reported in 21 empirical studies.

Chapter II

2. Theoretical framework

In the following section, important definitions and concepts based on academic theory and practitioner's experience are explained in order to understand the use of authentic materials. In this research synthesis, the concepts are: macro skills: receptive and productive, intercultural and pragmatic competence, authentic materials and authenticity, types of authentic materials and finally advantages and disadvantages of the use of authentic materials.

2.1. Language Learning/Acquisition Hypotheses

In the past three decades many scholars have conducted studies in the area of language acquisition and different theories and hypotheses have been proposed (Lai & Wei, 2019). According to Gilmore (2007) over the years, the process of proposing different theories lead to "a realization that communicative competence involved more than knowledge of language structures and contextualized communication began to take precedence over form" (p. 97). Consequently, this author claims that the importance given

to communication rather than linguistic structures, paved the way to consider authentic texts valuable. This is supported by Bacon and Finnemann (1990) who affirm "authentic materials provide the necessary context for appropriately relating form to meaning in the language acquisition process" (p 459).

Among the hypotheses which intend to offer an overall explanation for language acquisition there are Krashen's learning/acquisition hypothesis and the Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis which belong to the Monitor Model proposed by Krashen in the 1980s. This model experienced widespread popularity and gain influence in the field of language acquisition teaching as well as research, and this theory has been improved over years (Lai & Wei, 2019).

Krashen's learning/acquisition hypothesis holds that learning and acquisition are different processes. Krashen and Terrell (1988) consider that learning is a conscious process that draws students' attention to the form and rules of the language to be learned. On the other hand, acquisition is a subconscious process in which learners internalize the new language while exposed to samples of it putting emphasis on the message or meaning. This process occurs in the same way by which the mother tongue is acquired, that is, not paying conscious attention to language form (Krashen & Terrell, 1988; Lightbown & Spada, 1999). According to Abukhattala (2012), habitually in the classrooms, students are requested to always remain conscious of what they want to say as teachers tend to emphasize grammar rules instead of facilitating acquisition of English. Nevertheless, as this author claims, in real life, learners rarely focus their attention on the form of the language. Instead, they pay attention to what the speaker means. Consequently, it is necessary to

change the type of materials and activities used in class in order to help students to acquire

the language subconsciously in an accurate and efficient manner (Abukhattala, 2012).

Therefore, a type of material that can be used in order to help students is the authentic ones.

As stated by Harmer (1994) authentic materials have a positive impact on learners as they

help them to produce better language output, help learners to acquire the language promptly

and provide learners with confidence to face real life situations (as cited in Al Azri & Al-

Rashdi, 2014). Moreover, Gomez (2012) affirms that "EFL learners should not entirely

acquire language through textbooks, but also through the use of authentic texts" (p.50).

Krashen's' comprehensible input hypothesis proposes that the learner acquires a

language when he/she is exposed to language that is comprehensible, and this input is one

step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence, represented as 'i + 1'

(Lightbown & Spada, 1999). As Abukhattala (2012) mentions, in this hypothesis, from

input to production there is a silent period in which students do not produce any original

statements but internalize the input properly. However, when this period is broken, students

tend to develop a negative attitude towards learning a new language. Therefore, Fields

claims that in order to help students to feel relaxed and find materials, such as authentic

ones, motivating, it is necessary to inform students in advance that we do not expect them

to understand the whole messages, and that it is good if they get only part of it (as cited in

Alijani, 2014). This way, learners will acquire language and input that may be beyond their

actual knowledge in a subconscious way. These hypotheses are linked to the Krashen's

natural approach. In this approach, the first principle states that comprehension precedes

production. Thus, the starter point in language instruction is to help acquirers to understand

the message (Krashen & Terrell, 1988). Additionally, Krashen states that "the acquisition of both structure and vocabulary comes from many exposures in a comprehensible context, that is, we acquire new structures and words when we understand messages that they encode" (as cited in Kozhevnikova, 2014, p. 4464). In order to boost language comprehension in the classroom, it is necessary to expose students to real language as much as possible (Abbasian, Mahmoudi & Shahbazi, 2016). As stated by Akbari and Razabi (2015) authentic materials may be useful as they provide exposure to real language and are more associated to the natural necessities of the language learners.

2.2. Integrated Skill Approach

Brown claims that despite the history of treating the four skills in separate segments of a curriculum, there is a recent trend toward skill integration which clarifies the advantages of this approach in EFL classrooms (as cited in Tajzad & Ostovar-Namaghi, 2014). According to Su (2007) "the philosophy of integrated-skills instruction is based on the concept that in natural, day-to-day experience, oral and written languages are not kept separate and isolated from one another. Instead, they often occur together" (p. 29). This approach connects oral and written language and gives special emphasis to the use of meaningful and authentic language (Su, 2007). Therefore, the use of authentic materials may help learners to acquire the ability to use language in real world situations while improving their proficiency level in the four skills (Akbari & Razavi, 2015). Regarding teaching, this approach suggests that "in order to develop a real and authentic purpose for foreign language instruction, the instructor should develop units which emphasize the communication of real meaning and the interactive use of all four skills instead of linguistic

forms" (Su, 2007). Moreover, the process of communication in a real context involves the integration of the four language skills, and learners in an integrated-skill instruction are exposed to authentic language and activities that are meaningful and interesting (Shen, 2003 as cited in Movahed & Karkia, 2014, p. 54). Research findings show some advantages that the skill integration approach provides. For instance, Myers and Hilliard (1997), Jing (2006), and Richard-Amato (1996) states that the integrative skill approach allows learners to experience a realistic language learning process, offers a dynamic and interesting classroom environment and puts emphasis on realistic language which leads to improve student's communicative competence in English. In this sense, these advantages may be accomplished faster by using authentic materials because as Kilic (2015) states they "provide the interaction for the development of language skills as well as being an opportunity to encourage practicing authentic language in a non-threatening manner" (p. 11). It is important to mention that the value of authentic materials is associated to the number of skills they encompass, that is "the more skills the authentic materials embrace, the more valuable authentic materials are" (Kilic, 2015, p. 11).

2.3. Macro Skills: Productive and Receptive

According to Hakan (2014), the macro skills are listening, speaking, reading, writing, also called language skills, and they are related to each other by the direction of communication: receptive and productive. Listening and reading are considered receptive skills while speaking and writing are considered productive skills. The four macro skills complement each other; without listening, no speaking is possible, without reading, no writing is possible (Sreena & Ilankumaran, 2018).

2.4. Productive Skills

The productive skills are known as active skills since learners need to generate forms of language or produce an output in order to communicate their ideas either in speech or text. (Sreena & Ilankumaran, 2018; Ivančić & Mandić, 2014).

Writing belongs to this category, and it is generally considered to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, as it involves not just a graphic representation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way (Hakan, 2014). Barrot (2016) defines writing as "the act of putting ideas in text whether print or nonprint" (p. 3). Additionally, this author claims that through writing, it is possible to achieve several things. For instance, writers can reflect on the world around them, communicate in an effective way and capture thoughts and ideas relevant to decision making. Similarly, Sreena and Ilankumaran (2018) claim "in the act of writing, the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eyes, hand and brain contains a unique way of supporting learning and discovering new ways of expressing ideas" (p. 670).

In regard to the speaking skill, the following definitions have been proposed. Learners must simultaneously attend to content, morphosyntax and lexis, discourse and information structuring, and the sound system and prosody, as well as appropriate register and pragmalinguistic features. According to Tarone, speaking is a complex process as it requires learners to attend to different features such as content, vocabulary, discourse, information structuring, morphosyntax, sound system, prosody, and pragmalinguistic features (as cited in Hinkel, 2006, p. 114). For Boonkit (2010) "speaking is one of the four macro skills necessary for effective communication in any language, particularly when

speakers are not using their mother tongue" (p. 1305). Similarly, Segura (2012) claims that speaking is generally considered as the most important of the four skills, especially in learning a foreign language, and that actually the most common frustration learners expose is that they are not able to master this skill after many years of practice.

2.5. Receptive skills

The receptive skills are referred as passive skills since language is received and meaning is decoded for the easy understanding of the message (Sreena & Ilankumaran, 2018). In regard to reading, researchers have defined it in similar ways. According to Barrot (2016), reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding written symbols even though, traditionally, this skill is considered a simple process that is linear and passive. In a like manner, Davies (1976) defines reading as "the ability to understand texts of various degrees of complexity" (p. 441). Furthermore, Sacha (2006) defines reading as "something that we do every day, it is an integral part of our daily lives, taken very much for granted and generally assumed to be something that everyone can do" (p. 60). According to Hakan (2014) "reading can help build vocabulary that helps listening comprehension at the later stages" (p. 674). The reading process can occur in two ways, top-down or bottom-up. The first occurs when the reader constructs meaning by reading word by word or letter by letter, carefully scrutinizing vocabulary and syntax. On the opposite, top-down occurs when a global meaning of the text is obtained, through hints in the text (Sacha, 2006).

Equally, listening belongs to the receptive skills, and it can be defined as a complex process that consists of developing and adapting interpretations of the world within a linguistic context in which repetition of input is not usual (Nurkholida, 2016). Similarly,

McLaren, Madrid and Bueno (2005) consider listening as a complex process, and argue that "listening is a psychological phenomenon, which takes place on a cognitive level inside people's heads, and a social phenomenon, which develops interactively between people and the environment surrounding them "(p. 282). According to Underwood, "a child receives a large amount of verbal input through listening prior to developing speaking, writing and reading skills. These skills are developed later as the child matures" (as cited in Nurkholida, 2016, p. 257). This assertion can be supported by Lindsay and Knight (2006). They claim that the act of listening is present in a variety of activities we perform throughout our lives. For example, we listen to conversations, announcements, weather forecasts, music, lectures, dialogues, instructions and directions. Lastly, considering the development of receptive and productive skills is very important since they play an essential role in the process.

2.6. Other Dimensions of Language Learning: Intercultural and Pragmatic competence.

Intercultural and pragmatic competence are important terms to define in order to understand their impact when learning a second language. Penn (2011) defines intercultural competence as "the effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations" (p. 66). A field in which intercultural competence has become important is languages as illustrated by Byram (1997) who argues that intercultural competence is the ability to identify cultural issues that are expressed through real use of the language. In this respect, Sihui affirms that language and culture cannot be separated because the beliefs, ideas, and identities of a group of people are constructed through the language use (as cited in Gomez, 2012, p. 51). In addition, Byram (1997) states that authentic literary texts provide EFL learners the chance to build intercultural communicative competence by using

"cultural products" that can help students to appreciate thoughts, and national memories of a culture.

Koike (1989) defines pragmatic competence as "the speaker's knowledge and use of rules of appropriateness and politeness which dictate the way the speaker will understand and formulate speech acts" (p. 279). The notion of pragmatic competence was early on defined by Chomsky (1980) as the "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use (of the language), in conformity with various purposes" (p. 224). Moreover, according to Castillo et al. (2017) the development of pragmatic competence refers to "the ability to control the functional features of language and the sensitivity to the conventions of language use in context" (p. 90). Similarly, Kaltenböck, Mihatsch, & Schneider (2010) defined pragmatic competence as "the ability to communicate your intended message with all its nuances in any socio-cultural context and to interpret the message of your interlocutor as it was intended" (p. 15). In addition, Abbasian, Mahmoudi and Shahbazi, (2016) define it as "the students' ability to match the appropriate linguistic action with appropriate social situations" (p. 256). Thus, in order to use the language appropriately it seems to be important to develop pragmatic competence.

2.7. Authenticity and Authentic Materials

The definition of authenticity plays an important role when talking about authentic materials. Researchers have defined it in different ways. According to Al-Azri and Al-Rashdi (2014), "defining 'authenticity' is a vital element for both materials designers and language teachers, who are willing to employ authenticity in language teaching in EFL classrooms" (p. 250). Tatsuki (2006) considers that authenticity is a synonym of

genuineness, realness, truthfulness, validity, reliability, among other words. Furthermore, MacDonald, Badger and Dasli (2006) state that authenticity is an attribute of language, text or materials. Additionally, they state that if there is correspondence between language texts or materials used by teachers in the classrooms and texts or artifacts used in the real world, in this case, these texts can be considered authentic. This definition can be linked to the definition of authenticity in the language classroom proposed by McDonough and Shaw (as cited in Lazovic, 2017, p. 73). They point out that authenticity implies a close approximation of the world outside the classroom in terms of both the selection of language material and the activities used for practicing. After introducing the definitions of authenticity, it is possible to review the definitions of authentic materials.

Over time, researchers have provided several definitions for authentic materials. According to Carter and Nunan, authentic materials are common texts not designed for language teaching purposes (as cited in Abbasian et al., 2016, p. 268). Similarly, Jacobson et al. (2003) consider authentic materials as "print materials used in ways that they would be used in the lives of learners outside of their adult education classes" (p. 1). In a similar way, Hartatik and Rahmah (2016) consider that authentic material is "any written and spoken language which the students hear, see, and use in their daily life; the language is not meant for educational purposes but still can be so beneficial in the teaching and learning language process" (p. 2). For Bacon and Finneman (1990), input is authentic when it is produced by and for native speakers of the target language. The definition of Ianiro (2007) is slightly different from the ones already mentioned. She shares the opinion that authentic materials are not meant to be used in the classroom. However, she adds that it is this nature

of authenticity which makes authentic materials excellent learning tools for students. To conclude, the presented definitions share the idea that authentic materials are not designed for pedagogical purposes because they include language as it would be used for real purposes.

2.8. Types of Authentic Materials

Researchers have proposed different classifications for the types of authentic materials. According to Darwish and Salwa (2014), there are four types of authentic materials. These types are discussed below:

- Authentic Listening/Viewing Materials which include silent films, TV commercials, movies, children's songs, etc.

- Authentic Visual Materials which include photographs, paintings, calendar pictures, pictures from travel, etc.

- Authentic Printed Materials including restaurant menus, street signs, cereal boxes, world and city maps, grocery coupons, transport schedules, etc.

- Realia such as dolls, puppets, currency, toy animals, walkie-talkies, bug collections, plants, coffee cans, credit cards, etc.

Gebhard (1996) makes a similar classification of authentic materials into the three following categories: Authentic listening materials, such as radio news, cartoons, songs, etc., authentic visual materials, such as street signs, magazines and newspapers pictures,

postcards, etc., and authentic printed materials, such as sports reports, newspapers, train tickets, etc.

The classification proposed by Ianiro (2007) is slightly different. This author considers that there are two main categories of authentic materials: print and auditory. Examples of authentic printed materials include: ATM receipts, street signs, coupons, traffic tickets, greeting cards, calendars, TV guides, newspapers, among others. Examples of auditory materials include: phone messages, radio broadcasts, E-books, videos and DVDs, Television programs, etc. Furthermore, Adam, Stan, Moanga, Oroian, Mihai and Ciubancan (2010) propose a similar classification. However, this classification differs from the one proposed by Ianiro (2007) as they classify them into: published materials (Paper-based), audio-visual materials, and materials available on the internet. Classifications of authentic materials are very divergent from one researcher to another as can be seen above. Considering the information presented in this section about the types of authentic materials, for the purpose of this particular research synthesis, the classification used for this research is presented below:

- Listening authentic materials

- Audio-visual authentic materials

- Visual authentic materials

- Realia

- Printed authentic materials

● Materials available on internet

2.9. Advantages of the Use of Authentic Materials

Even though the majority of definitions for authentic materials state that they are not designed for language teaching, it is possible to use them in the classroom. In fact, some authors, based on academic theory and their practitioner's experience, state that there are several advantages when using authentic materials in the classroom. According to Philips, Shettlesworth, Clarke and Peacock, the main advantages of using authentic materials include having a positive effect on learner motivation, granting authentic cultural information, exposing learners to real language, relating to learners ' needs and supporting a more creative approach to teaching (as cited in Richards, 2001).

This idea is shared by Martinez (2002) who claims there are several advantages of using authentic reading materials in the EFL classroom. Some of them include exposing students to real discourse, keeping students informed about what is happening in the world, so they have an intrinsic educational value, producing a sense of achievement, and using the same material under different circumstances. For Kelly C., Kelly L., Offner and Vorland (2002), authentic materials provide advantages such as "the opportunity to practice English, help the students gain confidence in their English ability, expose the students to cultural differences and customs, and help the students develop their ability to find pertinent information quickly" (p. 12). Furthermore, Harmer states that authentic materials have a positive impact on language learners since they can aid learners to enhance their language output; assist learners acquire the target language; and boost students' confidence to deal with language used in real life (as cited in Al-Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2016, p. 252).

Taking into account this information, it may be presumed that the number of reported advantages of using authentic material in EFL classrooms is considerably great. Therefore, in a general aspect, it is possible to infer that authentic materials may help learners to be exposed to samples of real language in the classroom and be prepared to face real world situations.

2.10. Disadvantages of the Use of Authentic Materials

Despite the reported advantages previously mentioned, which seem to demonstrate the usefulness of authentic materials, there are some disadvantages that their use entails. For example, Richards (2001) argues that authentic materials often contain difficult language and unnecessary vocabulary, which can difficult the understanding and distract teachers and learners from the real purpose of the class. He also states that authentic materials can cause stress to teachers since a considerable amount of time is needed for locating suitable materials and developing activities related to them. Besides, he grants no much value to authentic materials over created materials because he considers created materials may be superior to authentic materials as they are built around a syllabus and hence provide a systematic coverage of teaching items. Similarly, Martinez (2002) argues that some authentic listening materials contain varied accents, and for this reason the learners may have difficulties to understand. In addition, he mentions that authentic materials such as newspapers or magazines outdated easily. Finally, he points out that authentic materials are regarded too culturally biased and difficult to comprehend in the classroom because the authentic texts from one culture can give a misconception to students from different cultures when they are not presented in an authentic context that makes absolutely clear what they illustrate. Likewise, Guariento and Morley (2001) believe

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that the use of authentic texts in the classroom can restrict learners' response in significant ways and cause feelings of frustration, confusion and lack of motivation. Based on the information presented according to the academic theory and practitioner experience of the authors mentioned before, it may lead to consider that the use of authentic materials in the classroom can encompass negative effects depending on the way in which those materials are presented and used. Thus, it is possible to deduce that the use of those materials can affect the performance of both students and teachers in their learning and teaching process respectively.

Chapter III

3. Literature Review

The following literature provides a review of the existing literature that is useful for this research synthesis. After analyzing the literature about the use of authentic materials, several similarities were found through the research, and based on this information, categories emerged in order to set up a link between the topic of this research and what has already been found in this field. The studies have been classified according to the effects and perceptions associated to the use of authentic materials; therefore, the classification is as follows: the linguistic and non-linguistic effects of authentic materials, authentic materials against non-authentic materials, and finally teachers and students' perceptions on the use of authentic materials.

3.1. The Linguistic Effects of Authentic Materials

In order to accomplish the purpose of this analysis and to find possible gaps in research, the studies that have been selected are the ones that include effects on receptive

skills as well as pragmatic competence and cultural awareness. There are some current approaches to teaching language that attempt to integrate the four skills in the learning process whenever possible such as the integrated skills approach. According to Pardede (2017) "the philosophical basis of integrative skills approach is the concept based on the fact that in everyday life communication the four language skills are used together" (p.150). This is affirmed by Harmer (2007) who states that receptive skills and productive skills complement and reinforce each other in various ways because what we say or write is heavily influenced by what we hear and see. In other words, the four language skills should be learned interactively.

According to Harmer (2007) authentic materials actually develop students' listening and reading skills. This is supported by Bantmeir (as cited in Akbari & Razabi, 2015) who states that real life reading comprehension texts should be employed as a fundamental part of language curriculum. Similarly, Gunduz, Ozcan and Uzunboylu (2017) claims that listening plays a substantial role in daily communication as well as the education process. Therefore, he considers that aural authentic materials should be given importance with the assumption that they are acquisition-rich input. Additionally, the importance of receptive skills has been uttered by different authors such as Cohen and Burgess (as cited in Pardede, 2017) who posited that the best way for integrating language skills is to practice receptive skills in the first place, and it will lead to practice productive skills. This can be achieved by exposing students to authentic texts, videos, music, magazines they read or listen to and later asking them to reproduce some of its content in spoken or written language.

Research has been carried out to analyze the effects of authentic materials on linguistic skills such as listening, reading, cultural awareness and pragmatic competence (Nurkholida, 2016; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Wilarsih, 2018; Gomez, 2012; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Abbasian et al., 2016). Research on this particular dimension has been primarily qualitative and quantitative (Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Gomez, 2012; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Nurkholida, 2016; Wilarsih, 2018), with an exception (Abbasian et al., 2016). The most common instruments have been interviews, pre and post-test and observations (Nurkholida, 2016; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Gomez, 2012; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Abbasian et al., 2016). Most participants were Asian learners over 18 years, and their overall level was intermediate. Only one study worked with advanced learners (Gomez, 2012). Finally, most studies were carried out in language institutes and universities.

The studies regarding effects on receptive skills are explained before the ones that analyzed effects in other dimensions of language because, after exhaustively analyzing the available empirical evidence, it was found that the availability of studies on listening and reading is greater than the ones on pragmatic competence and cultural awareness. Regarding listening comprehension, the studies made by Nurkholida (2016) and Barekat and Nobakhti (2014) analyzed the effect of authentic materials on EFL learners' listening comprehension ability. Findings revealed that students English listening comprehension ability increased significantly after being exposed to authentic materials. In terms of the effects on the reading skill, Fruzan and Bahman (2017) and Wilarsih (2018) found that authentic materials used in the ELF classroom helped learners to improve their reading

skill. Even though both authors agreed on that statement, Fruzan and Bahman (2017) reported that learners became more motivated while Wilarsih (2018) found that learners increased their vocabulary.

Similar results were found in the studies conducted by Gomez (2012) and Kozhevnikova (2014) which analyzed the effects on pragmatic competence. Results indicated that authentic materials helped learners to enhance their cultural awareness as they explored various aspects of cultures that were different from their native culture. In addition, students considered authentic materials as a beneficial tool for their cultural and linguistic development as well as for their motivation towards learning foreign languages. Moreover, Abbasian et al. (2016) sought to find the effect of authentic materials on improving EFL learners' pragmatic competence. At the end of this study, it was concluded that authentic materials were remarkably beneficial on the improvement of intermediate EFL learners' pragmatic competence as learners achieved higher scores in the pragmatic competence post-test.

3.2. The Non-Linguistic Effects of Authentic Materials

Research has been carried out to analyze the effects of authentic materials on non-linguistic skills such as motivation and attitude (Kilic, 2015; Peacock, 1997; Sample, 2015). Research on this particular dimension has been primarily qualitative and quantitative (Kilic, 2015; Peacock, 1997; Sample, 2015). The most common instruments have been questionnaires, interviews and observations (Kilic, 2015; Peacock, 1997; Sample, 2015). All participants were Asian learners under 18 years, and their overall level was beginner.

Finally, most studies were carried out in high school, and in all studies, participants were divided in a control and experimental group.

Sample (2015) and Peacock (1997) examined if the use of authentic materials in the classroom increased young EFL learners' motivation. Sample (2015) found that the use of authentic materials increased motivation in the experimental class in comparison to the control class, which noted repetitiveness as a cause of student dissatisfaction. However, factors such as increased vocabulary or varied language structures caused some de-motivation in the experimental class. Nevertheless, different results were found in the conducted by Peacock (1997). Even though results indicated that motivation increased when authentic materials were used, learners also reported authentic materials to be significantly less interesting than artificial material. In terms of attitude, Kilic (2015) carried out a study to discover the effects of authentic materials on students' attitudes in the EFL classes. Results revealed that students trained with authentic materials had a greater enhancement in the attitude post- test than those who did not get a similar training.

3.3. Authentic Materials against Non-Authentic Materials

Research has been carried out in order to contrast the effects that authentic materials and non-authentic materials may produce in the learning process (Abd, Muhammad, Raja, Azelin & Azrai, 2011; Alijani, 2014; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012). Research on this particular dimension has been primarily quantitative (Alijani, 2014; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012) with an exception (Abd et al., 2011). The common instrument used was a pre and post-test (Abd et al., 2011; Alijani, 2014; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012). Most participants were learners over 16 years studying in an English institute, and their overall level was upper-intermediate.

Moreover, in all studies participants were from Asian and were divided into a control group that used authentic materials and an experimental group that used non-authentic materials.

For instance, Abd et al. (2011) analyzed the effects of using authentic materials and non-authentic materials on EFL learners' English grammar performance. Results showed that students in the experimental group presented better grammar performance in terms of past tense forms than students in the control group. In the same manner, Alijani (2014), and Mousavi and Iravani (2012) explored the effects of authentic versus non-authentic materials on EFL learners' listening comprehension. Similar results were found since the use of authentic materials increased learner's listening comprehension performance more than performance of students who used conventional materials. It was also found that even though authentic materials are considered important, it does not imply that non-authentic materials should be excluded in the classroom.

3.4. Teachers and Student's Perceptions on the Use of Authentic Materials

Research has been carried out to analyze different perspectives from students and teachers on the use of authentic materials. (Castillo et al., 2017; Darwish & Salwa, 2014; Firmansyah, 2015; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Gunduz et al., 2017; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Marzban, 2015; Rusmawaty et al., 2018; Sri & Malabar, 2016). Research on this particular dimension has been primarily qualitative (Darwish & Salwa, 2014; Rusmawaty et al., 2018; Sri & Malabar, 2016; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016) and quantitative (Gunduz et al., 2017; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Marzban, 2015) with certain exceptions (Castillo et al., 2017; Firmansyah, 2015). The most common instruments have been interviews, questionnaires and observations (Darwish & Salwa,

2014; Firmansyah, 2015; Rusmawaty et al., 2018; Sri & Malabar, 2016; Gunduz et al., 2017; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016; Marzban, 2015). Most studies included more than 20 Asian participants. Finally, the majority of studies were carried out in universities.

Regarding teachers' perceptions, Darwish and Salwa, (2014) conducted a research study in order to analyze elementary school teachers' perceptions on the use of authentic materials as motivational tools in teaching EFL. The results showed most of the teachers agreed that the use of authentic materials was relevant and enjoyable as they offered contextual support and helped learners to reinforce the relation between the language classroom and the outside world. Similar studies were conducted with the same purpose (Darwish & Salwa, 2014; Rusmawaty et al., 2018; Sri & Malabar, 2016), and overall results showed that the majority of teachers reported that the use of authentic materials was considered highly beneficial and enjoyable for EFL learners. However, negative perceptions were also found in the studies mentioned before. For instance, Rusmawaty et al. (2018) found that teachers considered authentic materials just as a supplementary tool and non-authentic materials as the main tool for teaching. Additionally, they agreed that using authentic materials becomes a challenge because a great deal of time and energy is needed to adjust them according to student's needs.

Students' perceptions regarding the use of authentic materials in the process of learning English in an EFL classroom were also analyzed in a study made by Castillo et al. (2017), Gunduz et al. (2017) and Kozhevnikova (2014). The results indicated that students had positive perceptions in terms of interest, understanding, usefulness, and motivation.

These results differ with the findings obtained from the study conducted by Hartatik and Rahmah (2016) in which most students thought that authentic materials, especially in speaking, were not easy to understand. Based on the findings, it can be inferred that authentic materials are viewed in positive and negative manners by the students and teachers, but there are some considerations that need to be taken into account for its implementation.

Along with the perceptions previously mentioned, important considerations such as complexity of the vocabulary and familiarity of the topic were acknowledged by both teachers and students regarding the implementation of authentic materials in the EFL classroom. For instance, in the study made by Firmansyah (2015), findings showed that the familiarity to the topic was an important consideration as it affected students' attitudes in a positive manner. Likewise, Marzban (2015) found that factors such as complex vocabulary and difficult language structures of the authentic materials made students feel a little frustrated. In a similar way, in a study made by Fruzan and Bahman (2017), results indicated that language teachers should select material that is comprehensible and interesting at the same time. If learners are exposed to materials that are difficult for their level, they can be disheartening.

In conclusion, through this review of the literature it was possible to explore the most relevant findings of the studies that are related to the topic of this research. The studies showed that there were different linguistic and non-linguistic effects produced by the use of authentic materials. In the same way, studies compared the effects of using authentic materials with the ones produced by non-authentic materials, and students and

teachers expressed their perceptions toward those materials. Moreover, as it could be seen, there has been plenty of research about the use of authentic materials in Asian countries. However, in the Ecuadorian context no research has been conducted. Furthermore, according to Mosquera (2016), the educational system in Ecuador still implements obsolete strategies in the classrooms. Hence, it might be inferred that in our context, there is not enough information about the implementation of authentic materials in the EFL classroom. As stated previously in the rationale, the purpose of this research synthesis is to facilitate information from empirical studies about the use of authentic materials that would help teachers make the decision of implementing them or not in the EFL classroom. Thus, these data are essential, and it will be coded and analyzed in the next section in order to answer the questions and to accomplish the objectives of this paper.

Chapter IV

4. Methodology

This paper was a research synthesis which can be defined as the conjunction of a particular set of literature review characteristics in which the primary focus is to integrate empirical research for the purpose of creating generalizations (Cooper & Hedges, 2009). A meticulous analysis was necessary in pursuance of providing accurate data for this exploratory research of bibliographic character. In order to collect information from relevant studies about the use of the authentic materials in the EFL classroom, the inclusion criteria that were taken into account for this review were the following:

- The studies must be published in peer reviewed journals. Consequently, results were based on more reliable information.

- The studies must be published over the last 10 years in order to analyze recent information about the adoption of the use of authentic materials in the field of education.

- The research method of the studies must be quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. There was not any restriction related to the design since its function is to ensure that the evidence obtained from the studies facilitates to answer the initial questions as unambiguously as possible regardless the type of design used (De Vaus, 2006).

- The studies must present findings obtained through empirical research since the focus of the synthesis was to report the findings on the implementation of the use of authentic material in the EFL classroom.

- The studies must be conducted in an EFL context because "the literature has recently seen an unprecedented surge in published research into different cognitive aspects of English teachers in EFL contexts due to the widespread popularity of this language" (Hoang, 2018, p. 976). Consequently, there would be a high availability of studies conducted in this context.

- The studies must be applied at different levels of education in order to obtain substantial information that would provide a global vision of the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom.

The exclusion criteria that were considered for this review were the following:

- The studies were not published or appeared in non-academic sources.

- The studies were published more than 10 years ago.

- The studies used designs different from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method studies.

- The studies were not empirical.

- The studies whose participants did not belong to EFL classrooms.

- The studies analyzed languages other than English.

The keywords that were used for the search of articles were the following: (a) authentic materials, (b) effects, (c) use, (d) implementation, (e) empirical, (f) literature review, (g) EFL classroom, (h)non-authentic material, (i) considerations, and (j) perceptions. In addition, empirical studies were searched in online databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Academia, ResearchGate and Pro Quest. Finally, some journals revised were the following: *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, *International Journal of Basic & Applied Sciences, International Journal of Research Studies in Education*, *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *PROFILE Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, *Journal of Education and Practice*, *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra*, *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Learning, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras*, . *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, International Association of Research in Foreign Language Education and Applied Linguistics ELT Research Journal*, . *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *Canadian Center of Science and Education*, *DEIKSIS*, *ELT Journal, Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *Macrothink Institute*, *LLT Journal: A*

Journal on Language and Language Teaching, Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran

Khatulistiwa (Annex 1). Through a preliminary research relevant articles were found in these journals. Consequently, 21 articles met the established criteria, and a classification process was carried out with the purpose of categorizing them according to different criteria that emerged through the analysis.

Chapter V

5. Analysis

In order to answer the research questions of this synthesis, 21 studies were collected and analyzed. These studies were classified in the following categories: research design of the studies, data collection instruments, participants' level, year of publication, geographical area, effects of the use of authentic materials, students' and teachers' perceptions on the use of authentic materials. These categories appeared inductively after carrying out a preliminary analysis. The first five categories deal with the methodological features of the studies while the last two categories focus on answering the research questions of this synthesis. Data were organized in tables with their corresponding description and discussion.

5.1. Research Design of the Studies

Table 1: Research Design of the Studies

Research Design	N	%
Qualitative	7	33
Quantitative	10	48

| Mixed | 4 | 19 |

The quantitative approach and qualitative approach are the two common research methods used by experts around the world (Atmowardoyo, 2018). Even though both research methods are widely used in research, table 2 indicates that there is a tendency towards the use of quantitative methods since 10 studies used this methodology. The reason for this tendency may be associated to the characteristics that the quantitative method entails in scientific investigation. As Payne and Payne claims, "quantitative methods use variables which can be represented numerically as frequencies or rate, whose associations with each other can be explored by statistical techniques, and accessed through researcher-introduced stimuli and systematic measurement" (as cited in Rahman, 2016). Thus, it may be inferred that this method is trustworthy because it uses precise measurements and techniques. In addition, the explanation for the predominance of the use of quantitative methods over qualitative ones may be attributed to the fact that, even though nowadays there are qualitative data analysis softwares which aid in the task of transcribing and coding data, qualitative research still requires a lot of manual work and intense work (Ma, 2015). Moreover, this type of research design can be considered an excellent option especially when analyzing the effect that authentic materials produce as this method offers replicability. This characteristic is important since studies that use this method follow clear objectives and guidelines, and consequently they can be replicated at a different time and setting and the obtained results will be consistent (Shank & Brown as cited in Eyisi, 2016).

5.2. Data Collection Instruments

Table 2: Data Collection Instruments used in the Studies

Instrument	N	%
Pre-test and Post-test	9	42
Observation	6	28
Interview	9	42
Questionnaire	9	42
Survey	2	9

* Studies are counted in more than one category

  Percentages are calculated based on the total of the studies

Table 2 indicates that among the instruments that were used for the collection of data, pre-test, post-test, observations and questionnaires were the most employed because they appeared in the majority of the studies for this synthesis. According to Dimiter, Dimitrov and Rumrill (2003), the pre-test and post-test is a widely used instrument in research used to compare and measure results after experimental interventions. As reported on the reviewed studies, researchers indicated the necessity to apply a pre-test and post-test in order to compare the effects produced by authentic materials in the EFL classroom (Abbasian et.al. 2016; Alijani, 2014; Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Castillo et al. 2017; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Kılıç, 2015; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012; Nurkholida, 2016); Wilarsih, 2018). The implementation of questionnaires and interviews also proved helpful in finding the perceptions of students and teachers in relation to the implementation of authentic materials. These instruments allow teachers to elicit students' insights, and, based

on the obtained results, they can take actions with the purpose of improving the learning process (Ma, 2015).

5.3. Participants' Level

Table 3: Participants' Level

Age	N	%
Beginners	3	14
Intermediate	5	24
Advanced	6	29
Not reported	7	33

Table 3 shows that the majority of studies have been conducted with intermediate and advanced learners while only 3 studies were carried out with beginners. The reduced number of studies may be related to what teachers reported in the study conducted by Akbari and Razabi (2015), that is "beginners cannot touch such materials because they lack many lexical items and grammatical structures of English language" (p.111). In fact, Martinez (2002) and Peacock (1997) support this idea as they state that certain features of authentic materials such as unnecessary vocabulary and difficult grammar structure can affect the motivation of beginner learners in a negative way. For this reason, Guariento and Morley (2001) suggest that the appropriate levels to use this type of material are the higher ones since most learners have mastered grammar structures and acquired extensive vocabulary at these levels (as cited in Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014). On the contrary, other researchers suggest that authentic materials can be used by learners of all levels, including

beginners, since these materials can be adjusted to learners' level (Nunan; Mishan as cited in Lazovic (2017). As it can be seen, there is a debate regarding the appropriate level at which authentic materials should be applied in the classroom. Thus, considering that few studies included beginner participants, further research should concentrate on the analysis of the use of authentic materials on this specific level.

5.4. Publication Year of the Studies

The year of publication is most of the time considered as a variable of interest because research methods undoubtedly are progressing over the years (Cooper & Hedges; Lipsey & Wilson as cited in Norris & Ortega, 2006).

Table 4: Publication Year of the Studies

Year of publication	N	%
2011-2014	6	28
2015-2018	14	67
*Others	1	5

N=21

*This study is the only one that belongs to a period of time beyond the last 10 years.

Table 4 shows the number of studies according to their year of publication. Data demonstrate that 14 of them were published within the last five years while the rest of them were published at an earlier period of time. This result proposes that the use of authentic materials has received importance in the research field and in EFL classrooms lately since one of the rising trends in EFL teaching consists of facilitating learners more natural input

and unmodified language (Peltola, 2014). Besides, it may be assumed that the use of these materials could gain more relevance in the next years since Khaniya (2006) claims that progressively the use of authentic materials has become popular in the educational setting. Similarly, Fruzan and Bahman (2017) affirm that "nowadays, there are many experts who prefer to use authentic materials in teaching and learning English, both written and spoken as an alternative material" (p. 50). In other words, the demand of combining the classroom atmosphere with the outside world seems to be a growing issue in the EFL classroom in recent years, and authentic materials seem to be a tool that fulfills this concern.

One study belonging to a period of time beyond the last ten years was considered for the analysis. The reason for this inclusion is that the results obtained in the study conducted by Peacock (1997) differ from most of the results of studies carried out in the last 10 years in terms of the impact that authentic materials can produce on the motivation of EFL students. The author found that there was no significant difference in learners' motivation when they used authentic materials. However, over the last ten years, it has been very difficult to find studies in which researchers share the same opinion as Peacock (1997) regarding the impact that authentic materials have on motivation. This fact indicates that, probably by the time at which this study was conducted, there was insufficient information about the use of authentic materials (Peacock, 1997). Moreover, another possible reason may be linked to accessibility to authentic materials since at that time Internet connection was limited. Consequently, it was difficult to find not only information about their use but also the material itself. On the contrary, nowadays the development of technology has increased making it possible to have access to authentic materials easily and sufficient rationale about their use (Oguz & Ozge, 2008).

5.5. Location

This category intends to show a classification according to the geographical area in which the studies were conducted. It was made in order to analyze their availability in both hemispheres of the world (East and West) so that the English language teaching community would see if there is a tendency for studies to be conducted in the East rather than in the West.

Table 5: Location

Geographical area	*N*	*%*
Eastern countries	19	91
Western countries	2	9

N=21

Table 5 indicates that, according to the databases in which studies for this research synthesis were found, statistics reveal that there is a tendency of studies to be more numerous in the East than in the West as the majority of them were performed in European and Asian countries (Abbasian et. al., 2016; Akbari & Razabi, 2015; Alijani, 2014; Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Darwish & Salwa, 2014; Firmansyah, 2015; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Gunduz et al., 2017; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016; Kılıç, 2015; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Marzban, 2015; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012; Nurkholida, 2016; Peacock, 1997; Rusmawaty et al., 2018; Sample, 2015; Sri & Malabar, 2016; Wilarsih, 2018) while only two studies took place in an American country (Castillo et al., 2017; Gomez, 2012). It is important to

mention that there is a contrast between the variety of topics found in the eastern and the western hemisphere regarding the use of authentic materials. For instance, the studies conducted in America, specifically in Colombia, placed emphasis on the use of authentic materials for the enhancement of communicative competence. This emphasis is placed with the purpose of helping students improve their English communication in order to achieve academic and professional goals (Cronquist & Fiszbein, 2017). On the other hand, the studies conducted in Eastern countries include a wider range of topics such as the effects they produce on linguistic and non-linguistic skills and teachers' and students' perceptions which might indicate that there is a high availability of research on authentic materials in the Eastern world. Besides, it seems that according to the reviewed studies, more importance to examine the effects of authentic materials has been given in the Eastern than in the Western hemisphere.

5.6. Effects of the Use of Authentic Materials

This category analyzes the main effects that the implementation of authentic materials produces on EFL learners' performance. According to Gurevitch, Koricheva and Stewart (2018), it is important to detect effects in order to consider their magnitudes and variation and to examine the factors that influence them. For this category, 16 studies were chosen since they focused on linguistic and non-linguistic effects while the other four focused on teachers' and students' perceptions regarding the use of authentic materials (see below).

Table 6: Effects of the Use of Authentic Materials

Effects	N	Category
Linguistic effects	11	Reading kill
		Listening skill
		Cultural Awareness
		Pragmatic competence
Non- linguistic effects	5	Motivation
		Attitude

N= 15

*Studies are counted in more than one category

5.6.1. Linguistic Effects

As it can be seen, Table 6 shows that linguistic effects could be found in the majority of studies reviewed for this synthesis while studies investigating non-linguistic effects were less numerous. This fact might indicate that, as Castillo et al. (2017) claims, authentic materials in the language classroom may have a positive impact on the linguistic skills or that not much research has been done regarding non-linguistic effects.

Based on the analysis of the studies, learners improve receptive skills when using authentic materials in the EFL classroom (Alijani, 2014; Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012; Nurkoholida, 2016; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Gunduz et al. 2017; Marzban, 2015; Wilarsih, 2018). The studies that analyzed the effects on listening

used authentic listening materials while studies that analyzed reading used authentic printed materials. Additionally, materials available on the Internet were used for both skills. The overall result obtained from the studies was that students improve their receptive skills after being exposed to authentic materials. (Fruzan & Bahman; 2017; Wilarsih, 2018; Marzban, 2015, Nurkoholida, 2016; Barekat & Nobakhti 2014; Alijani, 2014; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012; Gunduz et al., 2017). Besides, findings showed that authentic materials help learners interact in real life situations because they were not only focused on the linguistic features but on the content (Fruzan & Bahman; 2017; Wilarsih, 2018; Marzban, 2015, Nurkoholida, 2016; Barekat & Nobakhti 2014; Alijani, 2014; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012; Gunduz et al., 2017). According to Table 3, it seems that researchers have not studied the effects of authentic materials on speaking and writing. The predominance of receptive skills over the productive skills shows that researchers may be more interested in finding the effects that authentic materials produce on the receptive skills. As stated in the literature review, the reason for this predominance may be related to the necessity to develop receptive skills first, and this will lead to the development of the productive ones (Cohen; Burgess, as cited in Pardede, 2017). This idea is corroborated by Bhatt and Lilian (2016) who affirm that receptive skills constitute the base for the productive ones, and if this base is not strong, it will cause problems in the production stage. Therefore, in the process of learning English the attention to productive skills comes after students have mastered receptive ones, and usually this is the order in which skills are acquired (Golkova & Hubackova, 2014). This order is given due to the complexity that productive skills entail. For instance, Masood (2013) affirms that acquiring the writing skill is one of the most complex processes when

learning a language, and for that reason it should be learned after extensively practicing the receptive skills.

Concerning other dimensions of the target language that are affected by the use of authentic materials, studies have focused on cultural awareness and pragmatic competence. In the studies conducted by Kozhevnikova (2014), Gomez (2012) and Abbasian et al. (2016), it is demonstrated that, with the use of authentic materials, students learned how to behave on certain occasions such as weddings and holidays. Besides, students became aware of social problems that belong to the target culture and learned its background in a deeper manner. Consequently, Abbasian et al. (2016) suggest that a change from conventional teaching methods to an innovative way of teaching using authentic materials may prevent EFL learners from pragmatic failure. On the other hand, in their studies, Kozhevnikova (2014) and Gomez (2012) acknowledge that, even though authentic materials are considered as useful tools, it is equally necessary to use pedagogical materials as complementary tools. Therefore, further experimental studies are necessary to examine about the effectiveness of the combination of authentic materials with pedagogical materials in the EFL classroom. It is important to mention that research regarding the improvement of subskills has not been reported since authors just mentioned improvement on linguistic skills in a general manner. This limitation will be explained in more detail in the final chapter.

5.6.2. Non-linguistic Effects

Effects on non-linguistic skills when using authentic materials can be found in Table 3, but in a smaller amount than the linguistic effects. Kilic (2015), Firmansyah

(2015) and Abd et al. (2011) found varied results regarding effects on students' attitude, and the overall result was that authentic materials improve students' attitude in different forms. According to Zhao (2015), attitude deals with learner's learning experiences, beliefs, values as well as educational background and determines the success of failure of students' learning processes. Moreover, Kilic (2015) shares the same point of view and states that authentic materials can enhance students' attitudes on the condition that they should fulfill students' needs and interests. On the other hand, Firmansyah (2015) states that students' attitudes do not depend on whether the materials are authentic or non-authentic. He considers that what actually determines students' attitudes is the way in which the teacher delivers materials in the classroom. Therefore, it can be assumed that the conditions under which authentic materials are employed play an important role for the enhancement of students' attitudes. Thus, in order to develop positive learners' attitudes by using authentic materials in the classroom it is important to combine both points of view. First, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics and background of the learners to select suitable materials according to their necessities. Thus, as stated by De Bot, Lowie and Verspoor (2005), in order to improve learners' linguistic competence, a recommendation is that learners should receive some $i + 1$ input that goes in line with their current stage of linguistic competence. This affirmation is based on Krashen's $i + 1$ hypothesis which states that the acquisition of language occurs when learners are exposed to input that is just above their level (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Moreover, this effort must be made jointly with an appropriate procedure of applying authentic materials which may be accomplished by providing teachers the necessary training about how to use this type of material properly.

Regarding motivation, analysis shows that some authors might support the use of authentic material for enhancing motivation. For instance, Sample (2015) and Marzban (2015) conclude that even though learner's motivation improved after being exposed to authentic materials, some factors such as difficult vocabulary, the nature of the activity, and complex language structure may affect learner's motivation in a positive or negative manner. On the contrary, Peacock (1997) alleges that there is not a significant difference in motivation when learners used authentic materials. This assertion may be attributed to the fact that the age- range of the participants of this study was the highest of the three studies that analyzed motivation. Therefore, further experimental studies are necessary to demonstrate if motivation varies according to the age of the learners or to the factors mentioned previously. Moreover, in this study, learners used authentic materials at the same time, that is, one day students used authentic ones and the next day non-authentic ones. This may have created confusion or frustration in learners due the sporadic use of one type of material which probably led to demotivate students rather than motivate them. The application of authentic materials in this study contrasts with the way in which these materials were delivered in the other studies that also analyzed motivation (Sample, 2015; Marzban, 2015). The studies that analyzed motivation in which the overall results showed positive effects after using authentic materials share the characteristic of applying authentic materials consistently for a period of time with a specific group of students. Thus, it may be inferred that, in order to enhance students' motivation, it is necessary to apply authentic materials continuously, so they would become familiar with this type of material.

As Ulug, Ozden and Eryilmaz (2011) claim, the student's performance is influenced by many factors such as the attitude of the teacher which may affect not only the student's motivation and attitude towards school, but also their self-confidence. Consequently, as teachers' characteristics have not been mentioned in the studies analyzed, it is not possible to determine if their attitudes affected the results in a negative or positive manner.

5.7. Students' and Teachers' Perceptions on the Use of Authentic Materials

This category intends to show the perceptions of students and teachers towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom. Some studies from the other categories were also included here since, besides analyzing effects, they determined students' or teachers' views towards the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom. For a clearer illustration of the results, students' and teachers' perceptions will be analyzed separately.

Table 7: Students' Perceptions on the Use of Authentic Materials

Students' perceptions on the use of authentic materials	Perceptions	*N*
Positive perceptions	Useful	3
	Motivating	5
	Interesting	4
Negative perceptions	Difficult to comprehend	4
	Less interesting that non-authentic materials	2

N= 10

*Studies are counted in more than one category

In Table 7, students' perceptions are analyzed because they are important to support the English learning process, especially in classroom activities (Pramestiya, 2013). Findings revealed that the most remarkable positive perception that students shared is that authentic materials are motivating in the learning process. In the conducted studies by Kozhevnikova (2014) and Hartatik and Rahmah (2016), students consider authentic materials as motivating tools due to the fact that the integration of these materials in the classroom produce on the learners a feeling of excitement to travel around the world and to learn foreign languages in general. Additionally, students feel more comfortable to explore the outside world after being exposed to authentic materials because these materials provide meaningful samples of real situations. Consequently, learners not only learn new vocabulary from real scenarios but also implicitly learn how to behave in those situations (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

Firmansyah (2015) and Castillo et al. (2017) found that the reason for considering authentic materials motivating was because they provide confidence to the students which lead them to participate actively during the classes. These results corroborate with what was said by Coon & Mitterer who claim that intrinsic motivation occurs when learners simply enjoy an activity or see it as an opportunity to explore, learn, and actualize their potentials (as cited in Zhao, 2015). Thus, the analysis of the studies suggests that with authentic materials, students are intrinsically motivated and consequently their perceptions toward authentic materials are positive in general. Nevertheless, in the study conducted by Fruzan and Bahman (2017), participants acknowledge that authentic material encourages them to learn about their own favorite topics in order to share this information with other people.

Hence, it may be suggested that authentic materials are considered motivating because they help to achieve not only personal goals but also to fulfill social reasons. Moreover, the analysis also suggests that learners' motivation improve because authentic materials help to develop the necessary critical skills to deal with stereotypes of different cultures and consequently to develop an informed opinion about certain topics that result interesting for them (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

Besides, students' motivation increased after observing that even native speakers make pauses and mistakes in real communication, and this is completely acceptable in real language (Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016). Thus, bearing in mind that these features are accepted in authentic situations, learners may become actively engaged in the classroom without being afraid of making mistakes during the process of learning the English language.

Even though students showed positive views towards authentic materials, there were few negative perceptions. Students admitted that authentic materials, especially when used for the first time, are difficult to comprehend due to the complex vocabulary and the speed at which words are pronounced by the native speakers in audio visual authentic material (Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016; Alijani, 2014; Peacock, 1997; Gomez, 2012). Nevertheless, in Gomez's (2012) study, students manifested that, after becoming familiar with the authentic material, these difficulties are overcome, and it is easier to use them. Thus, this finding may suggest that, as previously mentioned in the literature review, teachers should pay special attention to the material that is going to be used because if it does not fit students' level , it will cause students to feel frustration, which consequently

will lead them to have a negative perception of authentic materials (Castillo et al., 2017). Furthermore, Hwang claims that it is possible to overcome this issue by providing pedagogical support, for example, by providing students' equivalent expressions in the mother language to make the comprehension of authentic materials easier (as cited in Castillo et al., 2017, p. 92).

There were only two studies that reported that authentic materials are considered less interesting than non-authentic material (Peacock, 1997; Gunduz et al., 2017). According to Gunduz et al. (2017), the reason for this result might be that learners were more familiar with non-authentic materials than authentic ones. As mentioned in the study of Darwish and Salwa (2014), teachers have the obligation to follow a strict lesson plan given by the authorities of the schools, and these lessons are based on a particular textbook for each course. Consequently, as teachers are required to follow a curriculum, it is difficult for them to include new materials beyond the textbook. For this reason, students are more accustomed to use non-authentic materials rather than authentic ones. For Peacock (1997), an important variable that may affect students' perceptions towards authentic materials is related to the type of material that is used. Hence, he applied a great variety of authentic materials such as poems, TV programs, articles, an English newspaper, an American song, and English magazine advertisements. Nonetheless, even though students were exposed to several materials, the overall results in terms of students' perceptions were not positive. This may be related to the way in which he delivered those materials since the activities he used were almost the same every day. It should be noticed that some of the materials used in Peacock's study have been used in other studies (Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016;

Kozhevnikova, 2014; Nurkholida, 2016; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017), and learners did not consider authentic materials less interesting that non-authentic material. In fact, Hartatik and Rahmah (2016) used authentic videos, pictures and dialogues, and students agreed that the availability of pictures is one of the characteristics which make authentic materials interesting as they did not only learn the materials by written text. Thus, certain flaws in Peacock's study can be identified for example, using the materials in the same kind of activities, and these flaws might have had a direct effect on the findings. Consequently, more research is needed to examine if the type of material is a determining factor for considering authentic materials less interesting than non-authentic ones.

Table 8: Teachers' Perceptions on the Use of Authentic Materials

Teachers' perceptions on the use of authentic materials	Perceptions	*N*
Positive perceptions	Provides real exposure	2
	Enjoyable	1
	Motivating and interesting	1
Negative perceptions	Need of additional training	2
	Considered as supplementary material and time consuming	1
	Difficult to adjust to students' levels	1

N= 4

*Studies are counted in more than one category

Teachers' perceptions towards the use of authentic materials were also taken into account because they are important in the learning process. As mentioned by Rusmawaty, et al. (2018), the perceptions of teachers do influence their decisions during their teaching practices. This statement demonstrates that the opinions and perceptions of teachers are a significant factor to understand the different effects that authentic materials may produce.

Table 8 shows that teachers have both positive and negative attitudes towards the use of authentic materials. Teachers consider them interesting, motivating, and enjoyable. In the conducted studies by Akbari and Razabi (2015) and Rusmawaty et al. (2018), teachers affirm that authentic materials provide real exposure. Nonetheless, it is also acknowledged that teachers cannot stop using their current English textbooks as the main material for their classes. This may be related to what is mentioned in the study conducted by Rusmawaty et al. (2018) in which teachers admit that authentic materials become supplementary materials because they are used to support their teaching practices. Additionally, in two studies the majority of teachers mention the need of additional training, and the reason was because they felt that they were not prepared either to implement authentic materials nor to select the appropriate material for their students' level (Akbari & Razabi, 2015; Rusmawaty et al., 2018, Sri & Malabar, 2016).). The same point is stated in the study made by Darwish and Salwa (2014) in which teachers admit that adjusting authentic materials in order to make them comprehensible to students requires a great amount of time and effort. These results may suggest that, from teachers´ perceptions, it is important to receive more information about how to implement authentic materials in

the EFL classroom. Consequently, it may help teachers to fulfill the need of additional training, making it easy to adjust authentic materials according to students´ levels.

Based on the presented studies, it can be concluded that authentic materials produce different effects on the linguistic and non-linguistic skills, being the listening skill the most benefited one. In spite of the fact that authentic materials enhance the learning process, positive and negative perceptions from teachers and students were found. The most interesting finding is that, even though authentic materials are considered difficult, there is broad acceptance on their use in the educational field (Alijani, 2014; Akbari & Razabi, 2015; Castillo et al., 2017; Darwish & Salwa, 2014; Firmansyah, 2015; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017; Gomez, 2012; Gunduz et al., 2017; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Nurkholida, 2016; Peacock, 1997; Rusmawaty et al., 2018; Sri & Malabar, 2016). This is supported by Kilic (2015) who states that in order to provide better learning opportunities for students, it is necessary to provide them with an authentic atmosphere which can be achieved by bringing the outside world inside the classroom through the use of authentic materials. As Castillo et al. (2017) claims, authentic materials may be difficult and complex because of the linguistic richness they possess. However, as mentioned by Kozhevnikova (2014) authentic materials are necessary to compensate the absence of natural language in the classroom. Thus, considering the information presented, the implementation of authentic materials may result beneficial in the EFL learning process.

Chapter VI

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

This research synthesis intended to analyze the effects of the use of authentic materials in the EFL classroom. The effects were divided into linguistic and non-linguistic in order to provide a better understanding. Additionally, the perceptions from both teachers and students were taken into account. The outcomes of the data analysis are discussed in this section with reference to the research questions of this study. Moreover, relevant concepts mentioned in the theoretical framework were taken into consideration when writing the conclusions. In this section, a particular discussion for each research question is provided.

The 21 analyzed studies have provided sufficient information to suggest that the use of authentic materials may be beneficial when learning English as a foreign language. These materials are useful for teachers of modern languages as they provide students the opportunity to deal with real world situations since they offer real language exposure (Adam et al., 2010; Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014; Jacobson et al., 2003; Sample, 2015; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016).

This assumption is done because the majority of studies used in the analysis section exhibited positive results which leads to consider authentic materials as potential tools that can improve the learning process in the EFL classroom. Therefore, regarding the first research question about the reported effects that the use of authentic materials entails in the EFL classroom, it was found that the use of authentic materials affect linguistic skills such

as receptive skills, cultural awareness, and pragmatic competence in a positive manner

(Abbasian et al., 2016; Alijani, 2014; Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Fruzan & Bahman, 2017;

Gomez, 2012; Gunduz et al., 2017; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Marzban, 2015; Mousavi &

Iravani, 2012; Nurkoholida, 2016; Wilarsih, 2018). An important aspect in learning a

language is that teachers should consider the implementation of alternative classroom

activities which integrate the four macro-skills to help students learn English in an

authentic way (Su, 2007). Nevertheless, it was noticeable that according to the studies

reviewed, the focus was placed upon receptive skills. It may be because receptive skills

constitute the basis for the development of the productive ones and consequently, they

should be given more emphasis (Krashen as cited in Abukhattala, 2012). In fact, students

need to practice receptive skills in the first place, and it will lead to the practice of the

productive ones (Cohen & Burgess as cited in Pardede, 2017)

Another important finding based on the studies reviewed, is that authentic materials

are beneficial for the acquisition of a foreign language as they contain paralinguistic

elements, such as talking speed, hesitations, different tones and gestures (Alijani, 2014;

Barekat & Nobakhti, 2014; Gunduz et al., 2017; Mousavi & Iravani, 2012; Nurkoholida,

2016; Piri, 2014) . It is important to mention that authentic input contains different

discourse features which can help to stimulate language learning acquisition Gilmore

(2007). These elements may benefit not only the acquisition of the language but also the

conscious reflection about other elements related to learning since it is assumed that

autonomy in learning is stimulated by the use of authentic materials (Ghanbari, 2015).

Moreover, studies have demonstrated that the use of authentic materials may help students feel motivated and maintain a positive attitude when learning English. In fact, the learning process becomes easier when students present positive attitudes towards the target language (Chambers as cited in Kilic, 2015; Firmansyah, 2015). Even though attitudes are considered important, it is equally necessary to take into account the role of motivation in the EFL classroom since higher levels of motivation are linked to higher levels of students' success when learning a foreign language (Dev; Wood as cited in Sample, 2015). In order to attain this motivation, students should be informed that through the use of authentic materials they are learning a language that is used in real life contexts by real people and consequently it will be useful for them to confront real life situations (Nutall as cited in Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014). Moreover, as it was explained in the analysis section, in order to keep students motivated, it may be necessary to apply authentic materials in the classroom recurrently, so learners would become familiar with this type of material. Thus, it can be inferred that the use of these materials can help learners avoid negative attitudes in the learning process and to keep them motivated. This is supported by Krashen's affective filter hypothesis which affirms that an essential factor in the acquisition of a language is directly associated with the emotional state of the students (Krashen, 1982 as cited in Lin, 2008). Moreover, he recommends the use of relaxing classroom activities to help students learn a language more effectively and affirms that teachers should create an appropriate atmosphere where students can feel comfortable to participate and develop their self-esteem.

In relation to the second research question about the reported perceptions from students and teachers about the use of authentic materials, the analyzed studies indicate that both of them present positive and negative perceptions. Findings from the studies that consider students' perceptions have yielded positive results in terms of interest, motivation and usefulness (Alijani, 2014; Castillo et al., 2017; Firmansyah, 2015; Gunduz et al., 2017; Hartatik & Rahmah, 2016; Kozhevnikova, 2014; Nurkholida, 2016). However, negative perceptions were also found as students considered authentic materials difficult to comprehend and less interesting than non-authentic materials (Gunduz et al., 2017; Peacock, 1997). According to Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis, the input that students receive should be one step beyond students' level (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). For this reason, selecting and adjusting authentic materials according to students' level is important in order to avoid complications in the classroom, such as students' frustration or tediousness (Fruzan & Bahman, 2017). However, this issue may become a challenge for teachers since authentic materials provide a rich source of context (Abbasian et al., 2016).

Finally, studies have demonstrated that teachers tend to have positive perceptions as they consider that authentic materials provide real exposure and are enjoyable, motivating, and interesting. However, negative perceptions from teachers were also identified through the analysis in a reduced number of studies. First, authentic materials demand a great amount of time and effort to find and adjust them to students' level (Darwish & Salwa, 2014). Second, teachers manifested the necessity of additional training on how to use and implement these materials along with useful activities related to them (Richards, 2001). Therefore, an effective implementation of authentic materials in the EFL classroom is

related to teachers' experience using this type of material (Castillo et al, 2017). Third, teachers admit that authentic materials are used as a complementary tool and not as the main one (Rusmawaty et al., 2018). However, overall positive perceptions appear to outweigh negative ones, which lead to assume that using authentic materials in the EFL classroom may result beneficial in the learning process. Moreover, these results lead to consider that authentic materials may become effective tools that may serve to complement non authentic materials. Finally, even though authentic materials have proved to positively affect the learning process, its effectiveness does not rely only on the type of material used, but on the way teachers implement those materials. For instance, teachers' attitudes and self-determination play an important role in this process because their beliefs do influence their teaching practices (Rusmawaty et al., 2018). Equally important, teachers' creativity is necessary in order to reach the course objectives and to design classroom activities that are suitable with the students' level, needs and interests (Sri & Malabar, 2016).

6.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research synthesis, there are certain recommendations for future research studies. First, as the process of adjusting authentic materials takes a great amount of time, it is recommended that teachers bear in mind that they need to prepare those materials in advance in order to prevent difficulties during the class. Even though there is an ample availability of authentic materials online, teachers need to develop extra activities before and after applying those materials. For instance, it is important to develop activities regarding unknown vocabulary and difficult language structures in order

to familiarize students with the topic to be learned. Similarly, it should be followed by post activities where the teacher makes sure that the topic was learned effectively.

Second, it is necessary that the topics that will be covered with the use of authentic materials should be according to students' interests and likes in order to avoid lower levels of motivation. If students' motivation is low from the beginning, it will become difficult for them to engage in the topics that will be covered later, and consequently their performance will be affected. Thus, teachers should get familiar with their students and know their interests and preferences from the beginning of the course, so it will make it easier for teachers to choose the appropriate topics that will call the students' attention and increase their motivation.

Third, teachers should select material according to the student's level in order to avoid frustration or negative attitudes towards the target language. Thus, before implementing authentic materials in the classroom, teachers should apply a diagnostic test in order to determine students' level. This diagnostic test may serve as a base to help teachers in the selection of appropriate material for students.

Lastly, as all studies that were analyzed were conducted in EFL environments; thus, a suggestion is that more studies about authentic materials should be held in ESL settings. This may serve to compare or contrast if the role of English as a second or foreign language influences the effects that the use of authentic materials may produce in the classroom. Similarly, as mentioned in the analysis, the sample for linguistic skills was limited to receptive skills, so further research should concentrate on productive skills to have a deep understanding of the effects that the use of authentic materials may produce on them.

Besides, no studies have been conducted with the purpose of analyzing the improvement of subskills after using authentic materials, so further research should cover this area in order to have detailed information on how authentic materials affect students' performance.

Moreover, as the majority of studies in this research synthesis have been conducted in Eastern countries, it is recommended to analyze and trigger further research in local contexts such as Latin American countries in order to provide teachers information based on contexts that are more familiar or similar to each reality.

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Appendix 1

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