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İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ İNGİLİZCE OKUMA DERSLERİNDE GERÇEK MATERYAL KULLANIMIYLA İLGİLİ TUTUMLARI

PROSPECTIVE EFL TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN EFL READING CLASSES

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Abstract

This study aims to elicit prospective EFL teachers' attitudes towards the use of authentic reading materials in EFL classrooms. A survey approach was used in this mixed study. Teachers Attitudes Towards the Use of Authentic Materials scale by Ellis (2002), consisting of 50 likert type items, was used to collect quantitative data. Further, the qualitative data was collected through 4 open-ended questions. Conducted with the participation of volunteer 95 trainee teachers selected by applying convenience sampling strategy from a Turkish state university, this study has value as teacher attitudes towards the use of reallife materials in EFL reading classes have not received much attention in Turkey. This study contributes to the detection the teachers' attitudes towards the impact of these materials on teaching foreign language in Turkey. The analysis of the results indicated that EFL prospective teachers had positive attitudes towards the usage of authentic texts and materials in EFL reading classes. It is implicated that integration of these authentic materials into the language teaching curriculum might be considered by course material designers and educational policy makers in order to enhance the quality of current learning settings.

Keywords: Authentic Materials; Attitudes; Prospective Teachers; Efl Reading Classes.

1. Introduction

The emergence and advancement of the communicative approach has led to many attempts by experienced teachers and *educational policy makers* to integrate natural language teaching materials into classrooms (Zhafarghandi, Barekat, &Homaei, 2014). But application of these materials in specific classroom settings and curricula brought speculations and opposing views with it (Zhafarghandi, Barekat, &Homaei, 2014). In spite of the fact that the use of authentic language teaching materials is a widely accepted phenomenon by a great number of educators, the successful integration of these materials into learning environments is still a controversial subject matter (Blagojevic, 2013).

Blagozevic (2013) states that when students are provided with natural language teaching materials, they perform their tasks more professionally; however language teachers might find the application of these materials hard in classroom settings as these materials should be related to the cultural elements of the target language and also, as there is a need to organise the lesson plan

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carefully beforehand. Darling-Hammond and Snyder (2000) state that it might be demanding for teachers to decide about how to handle specific situations in classrooms if they have inadequate knowledge of the impact of culture, practice and discourse on human beings' growth, learning and improvement. So, it is the responsibility of the teachers to integrate these real life events into classroom environments by incorporating natural materials into reading courses (Al-Musallam, 2009). Carter and Nunan (2001: 68) define these materials as "ordinary texts not produced specifically for language teaching purposes". There are infinite numbers of authentic materials that might be applied in classrooms but *newspapers, magazines, TV programs, movies, songs, literature* and especially the internet are among the most commonly used ones (Berardo, 2006). Yet, there are still a variety of contradictory opinions about the usage of real-world materials (Ismet Perkasa, 2012). For example, while several researchers advocate the significant role of authentic materials in relating classroom situations to real life phenomena by providing learners with exposure to natural input (e.g. Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014; Hart, 2002; Hwang, 2005; Kim, 2000; Lien, 2010; Soliman, 2013; Zhafarghandi et al., 2014), some others claim that the use of authentic materials in specific classroom setting is time-consuming and too difficult for language teachers to handle (e.g. Guariento & Morley, 2001; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Martens, 2005; Kilickaya, 2004; Perkasa, 2012).

Communicative language teaching has always been in favor of the use of real-life materials in language teaching; these materials are defined as items not produced or edited expressly for language teaching but for the purposes of some other communication mediums (Hinkel, 2005: 734). Also, Tomlinson (2011: 9) described authentic texts as inscriptive or verbal materials not generated directly for the purpose of language teaching, such as *a newspaper article, a rock song, a novel, a radio interview, instructions on how to play a game and a traditional fairy story*. Kilickaya (2004) has defined authentic materials as "exposure to real language and use in its own community." According to Little, Devitt, and Singleton, an authentic text is "created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced" (as cited in Guariento & Morley, 2001: 347). One of the main reasons integrating real-life materials into language teaching classrooms is to provide learners with exposure to the real language as much as possible (Berardo, 2006). Although the situations created in the classrooms are not natural, real-life items that enable learners to feel as if they are real have great importance (Berardo, 2006). However, selection of unsuitable materials might cause learners to face some challenges in the process of learning a foreign language (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014). So, the chosen materials should increase learners' motivation and should encourage students to learn willingly. Otherwise, this situation might lead the students to be demotivated and after all they will not learn anything (Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014). According to AbdulHusseini (2013: 332), "Authentic material may provide the core of a very specialized course if the course objective is, for example, to develop skills for reading manuals, instructions, contracts, or financial reports, or to develop letter writing or report-writing skill". Further, Berardo (2006) states that suitability of content, exploitability, and readability is a significant criterion that language teachers should bear in mind when choosing authentic texts.

In this sense, the present study attempts to shed light on teachers' views related to the impact of authentic materials in EFL reading classes. Specifically, it investigates EFL prospective teachers' attitudes towards the use of natural materials in reading classes in Turkey. These following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the EFL prospective teachers' attitudes toward the use of authentic materials in reading classes?
2. What are the authentic materials frequently preferred by the prospective teachers in reading classes?

Value of the Study

To the best knowledge of the authors, the issue of teacher attitudes towards the use of authentic materials in reading instruction has not received much attention in EFL reading classes in the Turkish context. Further, the previous research has largely focused on the application of these natural and real-life materials in Turkish EFL classrooms (Arıkan & Taraf, 2010; Çakır, 2006; Durmuş, 2013; Erkaya & Rocha, 2005; Haşimoğlu, 2005; Uçkun & Onat, 2008).

For instance, Durmuş (2013) aimed to reveal particularly in which forms reading texts are presented to the learners in the process of language teaching on the basis of relevant international theoretical and practical works. To that end, the impact of modified and authentic texts on improving

learners' reading comprehension levels was examined. It was noted out that authentic texts helped learners develop their communication skills in the foreign language. On the other hand, modified texts were found to affect learners' language motivation positively. In another study, Arıkan and Taraf (2010) examined the impact of authentic materials on the grammar and vocabulary learning of young learners. The data were collected through pre- and post-tests of elementary school students who were divided into two groups (one treatment group and one control group). While the control group was instructed by traditional language teaching methods, the treatment group was instructed by animated cartoons. The results proved that cartoons had positive effects on learners' acquisition of the grammar and vocabulary of the target language. Also, the treatment group outperformed the control group according to the post-test results.

Similarly, in 2006, Çakır carried out a study on the contributions of videos to students' second language learning abilities. Pointing out the positive effects of the use of videos in language teaching, the study recommended the integration of these rich resources into the curriculum. Uçkun and Onat (2008) investigated the use of authentic texts and tasks in a course book named "Quick Step", promoted by the Ministry of Education, in terms of its adequacy in reflecting cultural elements of English language. The qualitative study revealed that the book that was formed generally by modified and simplified texts but was deprived of authentic texts related to the culture of the target language. So, this situation was anticipated to have adverse effects on students' language learning abilities by demotivating them.

In another related study, Hişmanoğlu (2005) investigated the effects of authentic literature usage on basic language skills and language areas of EFL learners. The study, emphasizing the appropriate choice of real-life contexts in language teaching classrooms, attracted notice to the value of authentic materials and to the important role of the language teachers. Likewise, Erkaya and Rocha (2005) carried out a study on the impact of TV commercials on foreign language learners' communication skills. Commercials that successfully reflect the cultural constituents of the target language were appreciated to have beneficial effects on the communicative competence of the language learners.

Thus, no previous studies seem to have dealt with the issue of assisting learners with real-life materials in Turkish EFL reading classes. Information obtained from the present study may have significance in detecting useful materials for English language teaching and establishing the teachers' attitudes. Also, the results of the study could contribute to the integration of more effective real-life materials into the curriculum.

This study is limited in the following ways:

1. The participants in the study were limited to EFL prospective teachers in a Turkish state university.
2. The study investigated the prospective teachers' attitudes towards the use of authentic reading materials only; it did not investigate authentic aural texts.

Some research considers the integration of authentic materials into classroom settings as an inseparable part of the language teaching process as these items enable learners to gain adequate exposure to the real-life in a variety of ways (e.g. Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014; Hart, 2002; Hwang, 2005; Kim, 2000; Lien, 2010; Soliman, 2013; Zhafarghandi et al., 2014). However, there are some linguists who advocate the limited and controlled use of these materials as this proceeding is thought to be demanding and time consuming (e.g. Guariento & Morley, 2001; Gulikers, Bastiaens & Martens, 2005; Joy, 2011; Kilickaya, 2004; Perkasa, 2012).

Hart (2002) carried out a study on whether Japanese English learners could acquire necessary communicative and cooperative skills to use English language authentically and whether they could take responsibility for their own learning process. Junior high school subjects of Australia were applied to a few groups of Japanese students in order to observe their development. Students were all encouraged to connect with each other cooperatively and they were asked to develop and apply their own strategies of learning by using the internet so as to reach real language contexts. Although no quantitative data was obtained related to learners' perceptions, the diaries that the students used during the courses provided significant information about their perceptions. It was found that the strategies applied during the courses increased the Japanese students' awareness of global communication.

In another study, Zhafarghandi et al. (2014) investigated pre-intermediate level students' and teachers' perceptions towards the use of authentic materials. In order to determine the impact of natural listening materials on learners' acquisition of listening skills, 60 university students studying at Rodaki Higher Institute Education in different departments were randomly chosen as the subjects of the study. The students' language proficiency level was detected through a Standard Oxford Placement Test. Afterwards, these students were allocated into two separate groups: one control group and one treatment group. While the treatment group was instructed by authentic listening items received from a radio program, the control group was instructed by *simplified listening materials*. Then, these students and the course teachers' attitudes were measured through a questionnaire assessing their perceptions of authentic materials. The findings of the study revealed that both experimental and control groups had positive attitudes towards the use of natural listening items in classrooms and the treatment group was found to have improved their listening comprehension abilities in the second language. Accordingly, focusing on the benefits of extensive reading, Lien (2010) attempted to determine EFL students' attitudes towards extensive reading instruments that they selected themselves. The study conducted with participation of 108 EFL college students over a period of five months. First, the students were asked to decide on the types of reading materials such as authentic fiction, graded reading, etc. Then, they were required to fill in a report assessing their understanding of the books they read. The findings of the study indicated that the participants who selected graded readings did not take pleasure from the books they read. On the other hand, the majority of the participants who preferred authentic reading tools declared that they enjoyed them while reading and regarded them as supportive and helpful.

Similarly, Soliman (2013) examined Libyan university teachers' perceptions towards the use of real-life materials in EFL reading courses. A questionnaire was developed to obtain background information and the opinions of teachers regarding the integration of authentic items into reading lessons. Soliman stated that the majority of the instructors had positive attitudes towards the use of authentic texts in the reading courses and they were of the opinion that these materials should be incorporated into EFL settings as they have a motivating impact on learners' acquisition of L2 basic skills.

Along the same lines, Kim (2000) conducted a study investigating Korean EFL students' perceptions towards authentic input. In this research, 26 randomly chosen students participated in the study and they were divided into one control group and one treatment group. While the treatment group was provided with graded and ungraded input, the control group received just non-authentic input. At the end of the instruction period, the difference between the groups was measured through interview and pre- and post-tests. Both qualitative and quantitative data results revealed that these participants were mostly instrumentally motivated learners who were good at reading and grammar courses. Although many students declared their indifference and opposition to the use of authentic materials in the pre-test, they changed their opinions positively according to the post-test results. Further, it was found out that all of the students' awareness of authentic input was at a considerably low level.

Al Azri and Al-Rashdi (2014) carried out a qualitative study on the use of authentic materials in EFL classrooms during the teaching process. Reviewing the previous studies investigating the effects of authentic means on learners' comprehension abilities, the researchers concluded that these materials are regarded as supportive language instruments since they provide learners with adequate exposure to the real world and the language is used spontaneously. Likewise, emphasizing the importance of authentic input, Hwang (2005) investigated the place of popular authentic materials in language teaching environments. Considering the EFL students' education in Taiwan, the researcher concluded that learners' exposure to the real world language is very limited and this deficiency ought to be overcome by incorporating more materials that reflect real life into classroom settings. By this means, the inevitable appeal of these items might enhance learners' competence of L2 basic norms.

All of the studies mentioned above declared positive and constructive effects of authentic materials and authentic input in oneway or another. In contrast with these opinions, there are some studies revealing no impact of authentic tools in language acquisition process. For example, Guariento and Morley (2001) addressed the controversial issue of the level at which learners should be exposed to authentic materials. And the authors attempted to shed light on task and text authenticity since the concept of authenticity has been considered as limited to texts. The study results showed that the use

of authentic items might frustrate and demotivate learners by leading to confusion when they are too challenging for learners to understand and when these means do not compensate for initial needs and interests somehow. Gulikers, Bastiaens and Martens (2005) examined the impact of an *authentic electronic learning environment* on learners' accomplishments and on their intrinsic motivation level. In this context, 34 randomly selected university students participated in the study and they were divided into two groups (one instructed by authentic mediums and the other instructed by non-authentic mediums). The data of the research were obtained through a performance test, a multiple-choice test and a questionnaire. The data results indicated no significant difference between the performances of these two groups. According to Kılıçkaya (2004), real-life materials can be challenging for language teachers as these items require modifications in vocabulary and grammatical structures so as to enable learners to comprehend better. In 2012, Perkasa investigated learners' perceptions towards the use of authentic language materials. In total, 30 Indonesian EFL learners participated in the study and they were informed about the use of both authentic and non-authentic language teaching tools. Afterwards, their attitudes towards these materials were measured through a questionnaire. The results of the study revealed no significant difference between their responses to both types of materials.

The above review of literature indicates that the use of authentic materials in language teaching settings is still a controversial issue. While some of the studies focused centrally on the effects of real life items on learners' understanding and acquisition of L2 (e.g. Al Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014; Hart, 2002; Hwang, 2005; Kim, 2000; Lien, 2010; Soliman, 2013; Zhafarghandi et al., 2014), some other studies revealed no significant impact of these genuine materials on learners' comprehension levels (e.g. Gulikers, Bastiaens & Martens, 2005; Perkasa, 2012). Furthermore, in the Turkish context, no previous studies seem to have dealt with EFL learners' perceptions and attitudes towards authentic input and authentic language materials. So, there is a need to shed light on the EFL learners' attitudes towards these materials providing a pedagogical basis. The present study attempts to bridge this gap, concentrating on reading classes.

2. Methodology

Participants

A convenience sampling strategy was used in selecting the sample. Ninety-five volunteer pre-service teachers studying in the English language and literature department in a Turkish state university (both male and female) participated in the study. They were assumed to have similar English language proficiency and teaching experience.

Data Collection Instrument

In order to determine the participating pre-service teachers' attitudes towards authentic materials, a questionnaire on Teachers Attitudes Towards the Use of Authentic Materials by Ellis (2002) was used. It is composed of both 50 selected-response items and 4 open-ended questions. Previous studies also used this questionnaire (Al-Arfaj, 1996; Al-Nujaidi, 2003; Bacon & Finnemann, 1990; Ellis, 2002; Al-Musallam, 2009). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is 0.846.

Procedure

The data of the research were obtained at the end of the fall semester 2014. In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, the questionnaire was administered to the volunteer prospective teachers by the author of the research. The data were analyzed according to SPSS 20.0 for windows. Frequency counts and percentages were used to show the prospective teachers' attitudes towards the use of authentic reading materials.

3. Results

Quantitative results presented first. Table 1 presents participants' opinions about authentic material use in EFL reading classes, Table 2 presents their attitudes toward current reading classes/courses in secondary and high schools, Table 3. presents their attitudes toward the use of authentic text, Table 4. presents opinions about the level that exposure to authentic materials should start at, Table 5. the authentic materials that prospective teachers prefer to use, finally Table 6. shows the factors which affect prospective teachers' choice of authentic material. Then qualitative results were presented. They include their preferences regarding types of authentic texts to use in their

reading classes, suggestions for using authentic reading materials to improve Turkish students' reading abilities, criteria for selecting authentic reading materials, and necessity and types of training that teachers need in using authentic reading materials.

Table 1: The prospective teachers' opinions about EFL reading

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree		
Reading in English is important	.1		.2	3	3.7	9	3.2
Reading helps to improve students' language proficiency	.1		.2	3	4.2	4	7.4

Table 1. shows that the prospective teachers mostly think that EFL reading is important. Further they think that reading may contribute to EFL students' language proficiency. This indicates that the prospective teachers have positive opinions about teaching reading in EFL classes.

Table 2: The prospective teachers' attitudes toward current reading classes/courses in secondary and high schools

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree				
Reading classes are beneficial	.1	.1	.3	3	4.7	4	6.8		
The reading courses enable the students to read and comprehend other materials outside the classroom.	.1	.2	9	0	7	8.9	5	6.8	
The reading courses introduce the students how language is used in real world	.1	.2	5	6.3	1	2.6	5	6.8	
The reading courses motivate the students to read other materials outside the classroom		.3	.4	4	6.3	7	8.9		
I am satisfied with the current reading courses	.2	3	3.7	5	6.8	8	9.5	5	5.8

Table 2. shows that the majority of the prospective teachers have strong positive attitudes about the benefits of reading classes. Similarly, they believe that reading courses enhance learners' comprehension of materials out of the classrooms. Also, they are mostly of the opinion that students get the chance to use language naturally in reading courses. Likewise, a clear majority of them state that reading courses have a motivating impact on learners' reading other materials outside the classrooms. However, most of them are uncertain about the satisfactoriness of the current reading classes.

Table 3: Prospective teachers' attitudes toward the use of authentic text

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree			
Introduces students to how language is used in the real world		.3	1	2.1	3	4.7	6	7.9
Fulfills students' needs		.2	5	6.3	8	0.5	9	0
Enables students to see the value of reading classes	.1	.1	0	1.1	0	2.1	8	9.5
Improves students' language proficiency more than textbooks do		.2	8	8.9	0	2.1	3	4.7
Improves students' reading comprehension ability more than textbooks do		.3	2	2.6	0	2.1	8	0
Help develops students' writing styles more than textbooks do	.1	.2	9	0	1	2.6	9	1.1
Increases students' familiarity with the use of grammar rules in their original context	.1	.2	1	1.6	1	3.2	7	8.9
Increases students' knowledge of vocabulary items which they in real situations		.1	5	5.8	6	7.9	3	5.3

Improves students' cultural understanding				.1	5	5.8	1	2.6	7	9.5
Be difficult for students to comprehend	1	1.6	7	7.9	1	2.6	6	7.4		.4
Cause cultural conflicts that hinder comprehension	2	2.6	5	5.8	6	7.4	9	0.5	0	0.5
Make students feel frustrated	7	7.9		.5	0	2.1	2	3.2		.3
Be interesting		.1		.2	2	2.6	6	8.4	0	1.6
Motivates students to do more reading outside the classroom		.1		.1	8	8.9	2	4.2	1	2.6
Helps to overcome some cultural barriers to language learning				.1	9	0	2	4.2	2	3.7
It is important to use authentic materials in EFL reading instruction		.1		.1	2	2.6	6	7.9	3	5.3
It is difficult to access authentic materials	4	5.3	1	1.6	2	3.2	1	2.1	6	6.8
It is difficult to select appropriate authentic materials		.4	1	2.1	1	2.1	9	1.1		.3
It is difficult to design the appropriate types of tasks when using authentic texts		.2	9	0	9	0.5	3	4.7		.5
The use of authentic materials is time consuming		.2	3	4.2	0	1.6	7	8.4	0	0.5
I prefer to use authentic texts rather than textbooks in my reading classes		.1		.2	5	6.3	9	1.1	2	3.2
I prefer to use authentic texts as supplementary materials in my reading classes				.3	5	6.3	5	7.4	8	8.9

Table 3. reveals that most of the prospective teachers find authentic texts sufficient in providing learners with exposure to the real language. Also, they generally think that authentic texts meet students' needs. Further, they mostly claim that the use of authentic texts makes learners understand the importance of reading courses. Similarly, most of the prospective teachers believe that learners' language proficiency and reading comprehension might be enhanced through authentic texts rather than normal textbooks. In the same line, they mostly think that authentic texts develop students' writing styles and authentic texts make learners' get familiar with the use of grammar rules in their original context. Likewise, prospective teachers mostly assume that authentic texts improve learners' vocabulary knowledge. At the same time, authentic texts are mostly assumed beneficial in improving learners' cultural awareness. However, the majority of the prospective teachers are indecisive about whether authentic texts are difficult to comprehend or not. Also, they are mostly of the opinion that the use of authentic texts might lead to cultural conflicts, too. And, they are generally hesitant about whether the use of authentic texts makes students frustrated or not. But, authentic texts are evaluated as interesting materials by the majority of the prospective teachers. Also, they highly accept the motivating impact of authentic texts outside the classroom. Again, prospective teachers are of the opinion that these materials help learners overcome cultural barriers and they are important tools for EFL reading. The number of the prospective teachers who find accessing authentic texts not difficult is slightly more than of those who find it hard. However, most of them find it challenging to select suitable authentic texts and to prepare appropriate tasks for these texts. In spite of the fact that most of the prospective teachers are of the opinion that using authentic texts is time consuming, in reading classes they generally prefer to use them instead of textbooks. Further, a great majority of the prospective teachers use these authentic texts as supplementary tools in their reading courses.

Table 4: Prospective teachers' opinions about the level that exposure to authentic materials should start at

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree					
Beginning levels of language learning	4	4.7	1	1.6	2	2.6	0	1.6	5	6.3
Intermediate levels of language learning		.3		.3	0	1.1	3	4.7	8	9.5
Advanced levels of language learning	9	0	1	1.6	0	1.1	2	3.2	1	2.1

Table 4. indicates that most of the prospective teachers are of the opinion that exposure to authentic materials should start at the intermediate level of the language learning, but this exposure might be provided at beginning and advanced levels of language teaching.

Table 5: The authentic materials that prospective teachers prefer to use

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree				
Newspaper	.2	.3	6	6.8	4	5.3	6	8.4	
Magazines	.1	2	2.6	9	0	1	2.1	0	2.1
Novels	.2	0	0.5	8	8.9	8	9.5	4	5.8
Short Stories	.1	.2	3	3.7	0	1.1	5	7.9	
Internet materials	.2	.3	2	3.2	6	7.4	8	0	
Books	.1	.3	8	8.9	1	2.6	0	2.1	
Poems	.5	4	4.7	6	6.8	8	9.5	5	6.3
Brochures	1	1.6	.5	9	0	3	4.2	0	1.6

Table 5. shows that prospective teachers generally use all of the materials listed in the table; however, they mostly prefer to use short stories and newspapers. The least preferred materials by the teachers are poems and brochures.

Table 6: The factors which affect prospective teachers' choice of authentic material

	Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree			
Language levels	.1	.2	.4	3	4.2	8	1.1	
Length of text	.2	.2	2	2.6	3	4.7	3	5.3
Students' needs	.1	.3	0	0.5	4	5.3	4	6.8
Students' interests	.1	.1	2	2.6	8	9.5	2	4.7
Percentage of new vocabulary	.1	.2	1	1.6	3	4.7	6	8.4
Complexity of grammar structures	.1	.4	4	4.7	5	6.8	.1	
Course objectives	.1	.3	4	4.7	3	4.7	9	1.1
Type of texts	.2	.2	6	6.8	2	3.7	0	2.1
Writing style	.1	.3	8	8.9	8	9.5	2	4.2
Cultural content	.2	.5	5	5.8	3	4.7	4	5.8

Table 6. reveals the fact that while choosing authentic materials prospective teachers mostly take the language level of the students into consideration. Also, a great majority of them claim that they pay regard to the length of the texts that they select. Further, most of the prospective teachers take account of students needs when they decide on the materials they use. Students' interest is another important factor that pre-service teachers mostly consider while choosing authentic materials. Similarly, the number of the new vocabulary items that authentic texts should include is considered important by the majority of the prospective teachers. Likewise, most of the participants claim that complexity of the grammatical structures is a factor which affects the choice of authentic material. Also, a great majority of the prospective teachers are of the opinion that course objectives should be considered while integrating authentic material into language classes. The type and writing styles of the texts are claimed to be effective factors that most of the teachers take into account when they decide on proper authentic materials. Likewise, the prospective teachers mostly think that cultural content is another important criterion in the selection of authentic materials.

Qualitative Data Analyses

Analysis Of Open-Ended Responses

In total, 63 of the participants responded to the four open-ended questions, and these responses were mostly composed of short phrases. Participants' answers were categorized in terms of four topics: types of authentic texts that they prefer to use in their reading classes, suggestions for using authentic reading materials to improve Turkish students' reading abilities, criteria for selecting authentic reading materials, and necessity and types of training that teachers need in using authentic reading materials.

Types of Authentic Texts Teachers Prefer To Use In Reading Classes

The prospective teachers claimed to use fifteen types of authentic materials: articles, journals, documentaries, essays, radio dialogues, cartoons, menus, cultural presentations, advertisements, movies, letters, dramas, food recipes, comics and timetables. One of the participants stated:

"Most of the female learners are interested in food recipes and similarly, most of the male students are interested in sports advertisements and comics, the use of these authentic materials encourages them to get involved in the learning process more willingly".

Suggestions For Using Authentic Reading Materials

The prospective teachers generally suggested that the use of authentic texts and materials should be integrated into the curriculum and that the type of material should be decided in line with the students' needs and interests. A participant stated;

"If students are exposed to real-life materials that successfully reflect the culture of the target language, this situation might arouse learners' interests and enhance their comprehension abilities".

Another pre-service teacher emphasized the motivating impact of the authentic materials when they are modified by the teacher according to learners' comprehension levels, stating:

"If a teacher wants to use authentic texts in his or her class, he or she might simplify or modify the text according to the learners' comprehension abilities. By this means, students can easily be motivated".

Criteria For Selecting Authentic Reading Materials

The participants mainly underlined seven criteria when they decide on the materials that they use in their reading classes: language level of the students, cultural content, complexity of the materials in terms of grammar and vocabulary, communicative aspect of the materials, audio visual aids, texts or materials that have entertaining features. A prospective teacher indicated:

"First of all, I take into account the language level of the students, and then I try to choose audio visual authentic materials in order to motivate learners and make them take pleasure from every phase of the learning process. Thus, they can both comprehend and have fun".

Types of Training Teachers Need In Using Authentic Materials

In total, 52 of the participants gave no answer or were found to be neutral about the necessity of any kind of training for using authentic texts and materials. While 4 of the participants declared that they did not need any training to use these materials, 39 of them stated that they needed special training to use these materials proficiently. They generally proposed that a seminar or a course on effective use of these materials could help them choose suitable materials and enable them to integrate these tools successfully into the classroom. One of the prospective teachers expressed the view that:

"If I have the chance to attend a course or go to a relevant seminar before the graduation, it can make me more familiar with the efficient use of authentic materials and texts".

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Focusing on the issue of exploring EFL prospective teachers' attitudes towards the use of authentic materials this study aimed to investigate the most common materials that teachers make use of during language teaching process. The findings revealed that the prospective teacher participants had strong positive attitudes towards the use of authentic materials in their reading classes. As mentioned before, many researchers were of the opinion that the use of authentic materials enables

students to comprehend the way that language is used in the real world and enhance the students' proficiency levels of reading, listening and speaking by both motivating and informing them (Berardo, 2006; Shomoossi & Ketabi, 2007; Al-Musallam, 2009; Soliman, 2013; Abdulhusein, 2014). A great majority of the prospective teacher participants stated that when both authentic texts and textbooks are combined this constitutes an ideal reading class for students, which supports Soliman's (2013) expression that both authentic texts and textbooks should be used in reading classrooms, as the combination of these materials might be more effective on learners' comprehension abilities. Moreover, most of the participants expressed the view that the use of textbooks without any supporting material in reading classes is insufficient to meet students' needs and interests as they can not provide learners with real-life situations in which language occurs spontaneously. Further the participants declared the authentic text types that they mostly prefer in their reading classes. While the most preferred materials at which by the teachers are short stories and newspapers, the least preferred ones are poems and brochures. The benefits of using short stories are emphasized in previously conducted studies too. For example, Wheeler (2001) stresses that a short story is useful if it has the repetition of the same pattern of language as it gives students a chance to be familiar with the similar patterns of the target language and to acquire the necessary grammar structures and vocabulary. By this means, a well-chosen story can attract children's attention, stretch their imagination, and change their perspectives towards the target language. Therefore, teachers should be careful about the content of the story chosen to be used for the course. The participants also mentioned, in order, books, internet materials and novels. Moreover, they proposed the use of articles, journals, documentaries, essays, radio dialogues, cartoons, menus, cultural presentations, advertisements, movies, letters, dramas, food recipes, comics and timetables.

The present study also investigated prospective teachers' opinions on the stage that exposure to authentic materials should start at. In this context, most of them are of the opinion that it should start at the intermediate level of the language teaching process. In accordance with this result, Soliman (2013) asserted that exposure to authentic texts should start at the intermediate level of language learning. Addressing the criteria that prospective teachers consider when they decide on the type of authentic materials, it was found that they mostly take into account the learners' language level. The other criteria that they apply are, in order, students' interests, percentage of new vocabulary, students' needs, length of text, complexity of grammar structures, course objectives, type of texts, writing style and lastly cultural content. Some of the prospective teachers stated that authentic materials might be chosen according to the students' wishes. In another study carried out by Lien (2010) on learners' perceptions of self-selected materials for extensive reading, it was found out that learners mostly preferred to read authentic books since they were thought to be more effective than textbooks. Also, Shomoossi and Ketabi (2007: 153) stated, "Ultimately, the best resource of genuine materials could be the learners themselves, and in particular those who have been exposed to real life situations and tasks"

Regarding the suggestions for using authentic reading materials, most of the participants emphasized that the use of authentic texts and materials should be integrated into the curriculum as they think that the preparation and organization of these materials are time-consuming for the teachers. Although a great majority of them are neutral about the necessity of training for proper use of authentic materials, a significant number of the participants claimed that they need special training to use these genuine materials more successfully. In another similar study Zhafarghandi et al. (2014) found out that the use of authentic materials enhances learners' cultural awareness, develops their vocabulary knowledge and enables them to use the real language naturally. These findings are consistent with related previous studies supporting the positive impact of using authentic materials in classroom settings. According to Al Azri and Al-Rashdi (2014), "Authentic materials encourage learners to learn a particular language successfully, because they notice they are dealing with the language in real life".

In conclusion, prospective teachers were found to be aware of the importance of reading in EFL classrooms. Although a significant number of them declared that they are satisfied with current reading classes, they stated that a reading class supported with authentic materials will be more effective than any reading classroom that uses just textbooks. Moreover, they were highly of the opinion that the use of these real life materials should be incorporated into current the foreign language teaching curriculum. Generally, the prospective teacher participants showed positive

attitudes towards the use of authentic materials in reading classroom settings. The results of this study support the aspects of using authentic materials in foreign language reading classrooms. However, the present study has some limitations in that the participants were composed of prospective teachers of a Turkish state university, and it investigated the prospective teachers' attitudes towards the use of authentic reading materials only; it did not investigate authentic aural texts. In this context, further investigation might be carried out into teacher and learner attitudes toward authentic listening materials.

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