



UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN  
*Centro de Estudios de Postgrado*

Master's Dissertation/  
Trabajo Fin de Máster

# A CASE STUDY OF THE PERSPECTIVE OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ON THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN THE TEACHING PROCESS

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**November, 2017**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Authentic materials constitute an extensive resource to be used in the English teaching-learning process. This type of input has been studied and utilised since the 1970's and its popularity has grown immensely with the appearance of the new technologies. The majority of professionals embrace and promote their use as they are considered to provide a series of vital skills for language learners. Other scholars, however, argue that the proper selection and use of these materials is rather difficult and does not result in sufficient advantages.

In Spain, in particular, the use of authentic materials is being generously embraced as an occasional complement to the text-book. Videos, magazine-articles and radio-programme recordings are an increasingly common part of the English lesson and whereas their impact and utility counts with vast research, the attitude of students towards it is not so broadly analysed.

This project aims to focus on the self-declared prospective of learners towards the use of authentic materials. It also intends to measure the dissimilarities between the opinions of different-level students and finally gauge the perception of the teachers regarding this aspect so as to reach conclusions that can better our understanding of this type of input and encounter practical pedagogical implications.

***Key words:*** *authentic materials, language learning, learners' attitude, teaching resources.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This study is based on a necessity to analyse the attitude of English learners towards the use of authentic materials in a specific geographical and social background such as it is Spain, and particularly Madrid. A detailed description of its content is given below.

In the first chapter of this research an exhaustive depiction of authentic materials is given, to serve as a basis on which our study is grounded, followed by a thorough overview of the influence of authentic materials on the teaching process. In succeeding sections the specific functions as well as the appropriate time to implement authentic materials in the teaching process is discussed, followed by their types and main sources.

Chapter two aims to justify our investigation on the basis of the studies previously presented and further on, in chapter three, the objectives and methodology are presented, prior to chapter four which will focus on the results and discussion of the research.

Chapter five will present the limitations of the study and lines for future research and the final chapter six will focus on the main conclusions.

### **1.1. Objectives**

The main goal of this research is to identify the perspective of a group of Spanish language learners towards the use of authentic materials in class. The investigation also presents two secondary aims: on the one hand it seeks to determine if there are any significant differences between the attitude of advanced learners and that of pre-intermediate learners regarding the use of authentic materials. On the other hand, it analysis the attitude of teachers and compares it to that of the learners.

### **1.2. Justification and relevance**

Authentic materials have been extensively defined in prior research, Nunan (1990: 54) considers them to be “[...] materials produced for purposes other than teaching”, a definition similar to the one of Harmer (1983: 146) who regards them as “[...] materials produced for native speakers”.

But perhaps among the most quoted definitions we find Morrow’s (1977: 13), who believes authentic materials to be “a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a

real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort”.

The utility and contribution of these materials in the teaching- learning process has also been addressed by numerous researchers. In a lengthy one year study carried out by Gilmore, (2007: 22) in which textbooks are being compared to authentic materials, the author concludes that: “Authentic materials, particularly audio-visual ones, offer a much richer source of input for learners and have the potential to be exploited in different ways and on different levels to develop learners’ communicative competence ”.

Thanajaro (2000: 97) carried out a research with a group of foreign students in an American university and concluded that exposure to authentic recordings has a positive impact on students’ listening abilities. The same positive impact has been noted by Miller (2003: 1), who has also linked the use of these materials to an increase in listening and comprehension skills as well as in motivation.

A recent study has been carried out by a group of Iranian researchers, which analysed Iranian teachers’ attitudes towards using authentic materials in the classroom, focusing on reading and listening. Their results are consistent with similar research on the subject and reveal that most teachers have “positive attitudes toward providing authentic input in their classes, regardless of their nationality, teaching experience, and academic degree” (Akbari & Razavi, 2016: 8).

Whereas the use and effect of authentic materials in the language learning process has been growing along with the need to implement the communicative language teaching since the 1970’s, it is today, in our current globalised world, more than ever before that teachers must make sure to equip their students with skills for real life communication. It is therefore imperative for us, researchers and teachers, to aim to find the best way to make them accustomed to the sort of language they will need for interaction. One step to be taken into account for doing so, should be understanding the need of authentic materials for the language classroom while looking at the possible attitudes students and teachers may have about them.

Conducting this piece of research on the subject under scrutiny in the context of a private language learning environment in Madrid, specifically in an academy that teaches English as a foreign language, even if with a small sample, seeks to look at potential pedagogical implications of the use of authentic materials.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has shown that in the last decades, the manner in which we teach and learn languages and the materials we use to do so has utterly changed. One may argue this is strongly related to the fact that the reason why we learn languages has changed as well. We need to be prepared for the real world and be ready to communicate in real-life situations and, thus, we need to become accustomed to that very type of input. We will therefore discuss the main ideas presented in research regarding authentic materials, from a historical but also an analytic and practical point of view.

### 2.1. Brief history of teaching methods and their connection to authentic materials

A historical analysis, brief as it may be, must begin with the mention made by Anthony (1963) and his three levels of conceptualization of the language teaching concepts. This hierarchy is quoted by Richards & Rogers (2014: 21) and refers to the distinction between *approach*, *method* and *technique*. As the authors explain it:

According to Anthony's model, approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified; method is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught and the order in which the content will be presented; technique is the level at which classroom procedures are described. (Richards & Rogers, 2014: 21)

So, throughout history, some language teaching proposals remained at the level of approaches, whereas many others developed in distinct methods and subsequently techniques. Specifically, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the so-called "Methods Era" emerged as a consequence of the previously popular Direct Method. This particular method, highly focused on vocabulary, intended to make students assimilate second language in the same way as first language. The target language was used exclusively and native teachers were of utter importance in its implementation. Regardless of its immense success in certain environments, the method has eventually seen its downfall, as many researchers believed it lacked sufficient theoretical support. It has had however an important consequence, the commencement of the previously mentioned "Methods Era". In this period most researchers agreed that teaching methodology played a core role in the language teaching-learning process.

Our analysis of the different methods will thus begin with those from the “Methods Era”, briefly canvassing them, but will particularly focus on the chronologically succeeding ones, and which mention the use of authentic materials in the classroom, as is the main focus of this dissertation.

The “Methods Era” was marked by the Humanistic Methods after the decline of the Direct Method. This group consisted on four main varieties, all of them focused on the role of the emotional aspect in the learning process: Total Physical Response, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning and the Silent Way.

However, the first method relevant for our purpose, the Communicative Language Learning, appeared as a result of the next chronological approach, the Natural one. With the Communicative Language Learning, the focus was put for the first time on communicative competence and the development of the four language skills in order to achieve it (Richards & Rodgers 2004: 155) and so, this is the first method that underlines the importance of exposing learners to real language in order to prepare them for real communication.

Further on, the Lexical Approach emerged, as a posterior variation of the Communicative Language Learning. This approach, analyzed in detail by Richards & Rogers (2004), focuses, as its name suggests on the lexical aspect of the language, considering vocabulary as the main resource and aspect through which a language could be learnt. As a matter of fact, among the sources suggested within this method, we find a reference to corpora (Richards & Rogers, 2004: 136) as a potential authentic material example to be used by learners.

The Task-Based Learning Approach is built upon the meaning-oriented interactions idea. According to this approach, students assimilate language better if made to engage in activities that they consider relevant and, thus, the focus on the teacher should be to provide learners with this sort of tasks, which Willis (2016) calls, in a revised version of her article “A flexible framework for task-based learning”, “opportunities for interaction” (Willis, 2016: 3). The task-based learning approach implies therefore a process in which students learn by communication and we find exposure to authentic materials, such as videos or interviews within the variety of sources that can be used to potentiate the development of this interaction:

Tasks can have a variety of starting points: they may be based on a written text, or a recording of spoken data, or visual data, and/or they may draw on



learners' own input, on their personal experience or their knowledge of the world. They could be games, demonstrations, interviews or a combination of several of these. (Willis, 2016: 3)

Moving on to more recent approaches that encourage the use of authentic input, we must mention CALL or Computer Assisted Language Learning. This approach consists in the use of new technologies in order to encourage language learning. It has become increasingly popular especially with the younger generations as they are technologically literate. On the other hand, the autonomy provided by this approach makes learners value its benefits and embrace it. CALL implies potential exposure to authentic materials such as videos and recordings found online, as well as other resources resulted from Internet searches.

Finally, focusing solely on its relevance for our investigation and leaving aside chronological classification, it is worth noting that any attempt to create a link between teaching approaches and the use of authentic materials would be incomplete without mentioning the Constructivist Approach. In this approach, perhaps the most important for our subject of investigation, the students play the core role, as they take responsibility for their own learning and pursues their linguistic goals in an active and meaningful way. The Constructivist Approach considers that learning environments, as well as contents, tasks and skills must be authentic and closely related to the real world (Bahar, 2008: 329). Therefore, the use of authentic materials occupies a central position in this approach and in this particular learning environment. As Bahar (2008, 329) points out: "Authentic materials used in the constructivist environments enlighten a matter from various perspectives and give the learner a chance to acquire information about life".

So, to briefly summarize, many have been the approaches and methods that throughout the history of language teaching have identified the benefits and promoted the use of authentic materials. Each and every one of them, but particularly the increasingly famous Constructivist Approach, contributes to the reason why the matter of authentic materials has been so exhaustively analysed by researchers in the recent years. Its demonstrated relevance is also the reason behind this project of investigation.

## **2.2. Definition of authentic materials**

The notion of authentic materials counts with numerous definitions, which on occasions make it rather complicated to reduce the concept to one simple description. Researchers have

historically focused their characterisation of authentic materials on (two) different aspects such as their quality of being real language or their function of being language produced by and for native speakers.

With regards to the first perspective, several authors define and explain authentic materials as real language, used in real-life human interactions. Perhaps the most accepted is the definition given by Morrow (1977: 13): “An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort”.

The same vision is supported by other scholars such as Nunan (1990) and Wallace (1992), who are quoted by Berardo (2006: 64). They all emphasise that authentic materials are instances of language, may it be spoken or written that has not been specifically created for the pedagogical process but for communication. Whereas some researchers like Geddes & White (1978: 137-145), partially agree, they argue that the language may or may not have been created for teaching purposes, stressing that language must be potential to actual, real communication.

As quoted in Adams (1995: 2-4), Harmer (1983) provides definitions centred in the receptors of authentic materials: the native-speaking audience. For him, these materials are created by and directed to native speakers of the language. In the same line of thought and quoted by the same author (Adams, 1995: 4), Villegas & Medely (1988) refer to authentic materials as “Language samples both oral and written that reflect a naturalness of form, and an appropriateness of cultural and situational context that would be found in the language as used by native speakers”.

Nevertheless, as our understanding of the language grew more complex, the definition of authentic materials has also been taken beyond the quality of the features of the language or its users. In this sense a crucial contribution is that of Widdowson, who discusses the issue in two of his books: *Explorations of Applied Linguistics* (1979) and *Learning Purposes and Language Use* (1983). In his perspective, the first definition of the term coincides with the visions expressed by Morrow (1977) or Nunan (1990). The former regards authentic materials as “[...] actually attested language produced by native speakers for a normal communicative purpose” (Widdowson, 1983: 30). In this first proposed description of the term, the author identifies authenticity with the product, he focuses the attention on the material and the scope of that material in the communication process.

However, Widdowson's view is the only one in all the literature in the field going a step beyond the term "authentic materials", that is, he provides a second definition which is not centred on the input itself, but on the use that is given to that material: "[...] the communicative activity of the language user, [...] the engagement of interpretative procedures for making sense, even if these procedures are operating on and with textual data which are not authentic in the first sense" (Widdowson, 1983: 30). In this sense, authenticity is and should always be a characteristic of the teaching-learning process, an interactive procedure and the ultimate goal of teaching: "We do not begin with authenticity: authenticity is what learners should ultimately achieve: it represents their terminal behaviour" (Widdowson 1983: 166). What Widdowson attempts to specify in this way is that a difference must be made between authentic materials and authenticity, especially since the issue of the latter goes beyond the mentioned features of the language itself.

To the effects of defining the concept for its further application in the language learning process, Gilmore (2007: 3-4) identifies at least eight different meanings that are given to authenticity in literature. He bases his classification on an extensive research which results in a rather complete depiction of the concept of authenticity:

Firstly, the very same reference to language produced by and for native speakers is made. It seems clear, thus, that however complex the concept, its definition starts by the link with the quality of language.

The second meaning coincides with the previously mentioned definition given by Morrow (1977) and it is focused on a "real message of some sort". (Morrow 1977: 13).

The third meaning of authenticity, as identified by Gilmore (2007), is perhaps the most important as it refers to the distinction made by Widdowson (1979). In this sense authenticity is not only a function of the language but also of its participants.

Moving on in his classification, Gilmore (2007: 4) makes reference to the "interaction between students and teachers". This potential meaning of authenticity has been more than once presented by Van Lier (1991), who puts forward his vision in a very direct way:

[W]e do not have to limit our judgments to the usual question of whether or not the materials were produced for purposes other than language tanning, or if the activity is one that resembles activities that go on in the so-called

"outside world." Rather our question now is: Am I using undistorted language sincerely to further language learning, to promote commitment and interest, and in ways that make my intentions clear to my audience? This means that language specially made up for the occasion, and activities invented for the classroom, can be authentic in far more valid and meaningful ways than some article clipped from a newspaper, a videotaped conversation, or a student-student exchange about "what I did last weekend". (Van Lier 1991: 29)

Van Lier (1991: 29-68) also supports the next meaning of authenticity as presented by Gilmore (2007): something related to the task that is being selected. His idea is partially expressed in the previous quote but is also sustained by Breen (1985: 60-70), who thinks that a careful choice of both the task as well as the language used in the task are of utter importance in order to aid learners in their communicative goals.

Further on, Gilmore (2007) identifies three last meanings of authenticity, which may not present the very same relevance as the ones mentioned before, but still contribute to the definition of the concept.

Thus, authenticity as closely related to "the social situation of the classroom" is further proposed along with authenticity as connected to assessment. Regarding this last aspect, Lewkowicz (2000: 46), points out that authenticity is as important in the teaching process as it is in assessment.

Conclusively, one last meaning to be mentioned is that related "[...] to culture and the ability to behave or think like a target language group in order to be recognized and validated by them" (.) Gilmore (2007: 3-4).

Therefore, according to the meanings provided by Gilmore (2007), authenticity can be related either to the language, its users, the teaching-learning process, the social and cultural aspects or to a combination of them all. This leaves us with a rather elusive definition of the term and makes us wonder where we should draw the line in order to provide a practical, objective description of the term.

For the purpose of this research, authentic materials will be firstly understood as instances of spoken and written language, which have been created with the sole scope of communicating and not for teaching purposes, a definition similar to that provided by Morrow (1977) and mentioned

at the beginning of this paragraph. On the other hand, the characterisation of authenticity as an aspect of the teaching-learning process, that involves interaction and interpretation procedures as mentioned by Widdowson (1977), will be taken into account. Seeing authenticity as a consequence of the teaching-learning process is the core idea behind Widdowson's theory. This vision is essential in the development of this research project as we are trying to determine the attitude of students towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom; and, therefore, we regard authenticity as an interactive process that implies both participants' contribution as well as the quality of language.

### **2.3. The role and influence of authentic materials on the teaching process**

Academic research has long advocated the necessity of incorporating authentic materials into the teaching process, claiming numerous advantages on the overall student performance. As mentioned by Guo (2012: 203) in the study on "Using authentic materials for extensive reading to promote English proficiency", the implementation of such materials might positively impact learners' communicative skills, language competence and their motivation.

With the continuous social change and globalization it has become more urgent for learners to be able to use "real" English, one that is not reduced to or defined solely by textbooks. It has repeatedly been stated that authentic materials help bridge the gap and create a relationship between the classroom and the outside world and it is believed that exposure to authentic materials is paramount in order to predict how students will react in real life situations and that without them it is virtually difficult to say anything about their communicative ability (Khaniya, 2006: 17-23).

Brosnan et al. (1984), as quoted in Oura (2001: 69), provide us with four chief reasons why authentic materials should occupy a place in the teaching process: firstly, as Oura puts it, "Language is natural". What is meant is that any alteration of language with teaching purposes might difficult the assimilation rather than facilitate understanding. Secondly, the use of authentic materials can provide a shortcut for learners to experiment and deal with "complete and meaningful messages". Images and symbols can be used from authentic printed materials to help students infer meaning in a simple and visual manner. Finally, a reference is made to the

necessity of adult learners to create a relationship between the theoretical input and its practical application.

Gilmore (2004) carried out a one year - long study comparing textbook to authentic materials and their effects on the competence of the learners. By an analysis of simplified information and the results in language acquisition, he concluded that modified information does not necessarily benefit students more than authentic materials, as the increase in comprehension and assimilation is not greater. However, he points out the following:

But all these types of authentic input can be expected to have very different surface discourse features and some will serve as better input to stimulate language acquisition in our learners than others. Authenticity doesn't necessarily mean 'good', just as contrivance doesn't necessarily mean 'bad'.  
(Gilmore, 2004: 5)

The most analysed skills as far as the effects of authentic materials is concerned is listening. Studies such as the one of Miller (2003: 1) show the positive influence of authentic texts on listening skills, whereas Thanajaro (2000: 97) carried out a study with a group of foreign students at an American university, where she exposed them to continuous but controlled authentic input and observed slight improvement in some of the learner's listening and comprehension ability.

Whereas so far we have dealt with potential advantages of using authentic materials, we must now turn our attention to the possible drawbacks. Mentioned disadvantages to using authentic input are normally related either to the degree of difficulty or to the cultural bias aspect. Regarding the linguistic challenges, Darian (2001) makes speaks about the problems that authentic materials might present and divides the discussion into four sections:

Firstly, he refers to the semantic elements and points out that students might encounter complications when trying to make the difference between the primary and secondary connotation of a word. A further element is the lexical one, where, according to the same author, obstacles may appear in the form of infrequently used words, arbitrary collocations or idioms, verbal ambiguity and the meaning of the concepts. Syntactic elements should be looked at from the point of view of punctuation, elliptical forms and parallelism. Finally and as a last set of elements, he mentions the discourse ones about which he states:

Many features of English at the level of the paragraph—and beyond—make reading easier or harder for the language learner. These include the use of referents, headings, and redundancy and the need to add or subtract material. (Darian, 2001: 5)

Another good analysis of these disadvantages is made by Kilickaya (2004: 1), who quotes Richards (2001: 253) to prove this point. According to him, lower students may not benefit from the implementation of authentic materials because of their reduced vocabulary and language knowledge to the point where this may have the opposite effect and prove to be a complication and difficulty for both students and teachers. Regarding the second aspect, Kilickaya (2004: 1) points out that authentic materials are thought to potentially be too culturally charged and contain too many idioms and references that might prevent students from complete understanding of the message or difficult it.

Apart from positive and negative aspects of their use, authentic materials must also be carefully selected so as to ensure their maximum utility. Talking about selection, Khaniya (2006: 21) mentions that instructors have to take at least three main elements of the learners' background into account: the linguistic, conceptual and ultimately the cultural. This might present a difficulty for the teacher and seems to be the most complex part of the process of including authentic materials in the teaching process. However, each these characteristics will be later analysed in subsequent sections, leaving us with one more concern regarding selection, an aspect which should be analysed in more detail.

One of the most hotly debated issues in the current theoretical discussion concerns the ownership of language and therefore authentic materials and their pedagogical implications. Some researchers such as Widdowson (1994: 387) and Gilmore (2007: 25) argue that by using authentic materials, excessive privilege is given to native speakers, understood as the ones contained in Kachru's (1985) inner circle, not only in terms of language competence but also in terms of language teaching competence.

More recent considerations expand the definition of native speakers to all users that demonstrate proficient control of the language, and thus invalidate the argument, but change the focus on a much more important question. As Gilmore puts it "Whose authentic English should we use as our model, if any, or is some form of contrived lingua franca more appropriate in the classroom?"

There are cases to be made for either choice although the pedagogical consequences are quite different” (Gilmore, 2007: 26). In order to answer Gilmore’s question, one must wonder about the core scope for teaching and learning a language. Is it universal, global, communication? If so, a lingua franca model might prove more beneficial for learners as it provides them with a wider range of vocabulary and expressions, it prepares them for understanding a more extensive range of accents and, ultimately, it is more permissive with the deviations from the grammar rules (mistakes learners might make). On the other hand, defending the traditional single-variety English teaching model, may signify that learners preserve original, acknowledged and widespread language rules which will ensure them acquiring a more “correct” English. Nevertheless, this will inevitably imply that they will be exposed to and presented with one particular diversity of the language, which of course, will have effects on their assimilation as well as their production skills: they will learn one specific accent, one sole set of vocabulary and grammar rules and will be prepared to communicate in a more restricted variety of conditions.

Moving on in our attempt to present the role and influence of authentic materials on the teaching process, a point must be made related to the sources to be used. Nowadays, teachers have an extremely wide variety of sources to choose authentic materials from, being the use of the Internet the main aid in this direction. Sources from magazine articles to YouTube videos can be utilised and they will extensively be discussed in the following parts of this research project, however for the purpose of this chapter, their diversity can be seen as a convenience in the endeavour of introducing authentic materials to the classroom.

Timing is also an aspect of the implementation process that can strongly influence the impact and utility of authentic materials. A more detailed treatment will be given to this issue in the next section, but, here, it is worth mentioning that a common concern regarding this perspective is the way in which exposure to authentic materials can affect learners of different levels and especially, lower-level students. They are believed to experience frustration and difficulty when exposed to un-simplified, authentic materials and this definitely constitutes a negative influence on both learners themselves as well as the dynamics of the class in general.

In other words, several aspects must be taken into account when evaluating the potential use and role of authentic materials in the classroom. Primarily, we must decide what linguistic advantages can be provided by the use of these materials and, of course, make sure they adapt to our



students' needs. Here, we could be referring to improved motivation, greater language awareness or bettered comprehension skills. Further on, we must determine the relation of these positive aspects to the appreciable obstacles that this practice might present in the classroom. Difficulties related to the complexity of the language used, as well as the cultural bias aspect might constitute an important barrier with certain groups of students, which consequently will diminish the utility of authentic materials.

Secondly, after having decided to engage in the use of authentic materials, a careful selection must be carried out. In this stage, decisions must be made to choose between exposing the students to specific native dialects or rather focus on the theory of "universal English". Further on, sources should be adapted to the group and lastly, but of utter importance, timing should be questioned. Timing, can greatly influence the whole process as premature exposure can potentially create frustration. Appropriate timing in the use of authentic materials can help alleviate the possible negative effects and the limitations of utility that this kind of input can present. Thus, this research project will further look into the most adequate manner to introduce authentic materials, considering all the aspects mentioned above, to later be able to focus on the self-declared attitude of students and teachers regarding their use.

#### **2.4. When to incorporate authentic materials**

The issue of appropriate timing for the incorporation of authentic materials counts with two main perspectives in research. Therefore, the two separate visions will be dealt with in detail.

On the one hand, there are those who believe that such materials should be introduced at post intermediate levels arguing that students need to master a wide range of vocabulary and structures in order to avoid frustration or demotivation (Guariento & Morley, 2001: 347-353). The core argument behind this idea is that students must be able to fully understand the input in order to obtain any advantage from being exposed to it. Adams (1995: 4-5) addresses this issue by mentioning two chief visions regarding comprehension that can be found in literature: on the one hand he mentions the researchers who "argue that comprehension of input isn't always necessary for acquisition to happen" (Adams, 1995: 5). And, on the other hand, he refers to the utter importance of message comprehension for the input to be integrated in the learner's language system. In defence of this last idea Gass & Selinker (1994), as quoted in Adams (1995: 5), explain: "Everything boils down to comprehensibility. If the input is not comprehensible,

regardless of how applicable and adaptable it is, it appears to serve no greater purpose to the learner than does language that is never heard". This idea is in tune with the perspective presented at the beginning of this section: lower level students might have difficulty comprehending authentic materials and therefore timing of exposure must be reconsidered and adapted to their linguistic abilities.

But is ensuring comprehension enough? Adams (1995: 6) mentions the raising interest of material developers for instances of authentic materials to be used with low level students, emphasising that "Comprehension is therefore a usual and customary requisite to acquisition, although we can't say that comprehension necessarily leads to acquisition". This is an important aspect to be taken into account if and when deciding to incorporate authentic materials to the teaching process as it would imply the challenging task of selecting adequate input and foreseeing when learners are ready to be exposed to it in order to obtain pedagogical benefits.

This potential lack of understanding does not only affect students but also teachers and the dynamics of the class. In an article on "Applications for using authentic materials in the second language classroom", Matsuta (no data) mentions that using authentic materials might present a difficulty for language teachers as they have to engage in lengthy and careful preparation of the materials to make them accord to the language abilities of the students.

In contrast to everything above mentioned, an increasing group of researchers claim that learners of all levels can enjoy and benefit from exposure to authentic materials, if helped by teachers to decode the message. An experimental study conducted in 2010 by Baleghizadeh on a sample of Iranian students concluded that: students who were exposed to authentic materials and were aided by their teacher outperformed the other two groups who were either exposed to simplified texts or authentic materials with no help from instructors (Sasan, 2010: 20-28). A previous study conducted by Chavez (1998) and focused on learners' attitudes towards using authentic materials concluded that providing sufficient pedagogical support even students at low levels enjoy dealing with authentic materials as they consider it a way to interact with real language.

Summarizing, in this section we have faced the vision that does not recommend exposure to authentic materials at lower levels, claiming that it may result in negative consequences such as student frustration derived from the lack of comprehension. The issue of comprehension is also

addressed, as several researchers question its link to language acquisition. Eventually, a second perspective is referred by those who defend the use of authentic input at any level, claiming that students have a positive attitude towards it (Chavez, 1998).

This very attitude is what we are aiming to analyse in this research project, as we seek to compare the prospective of lower level learners to that of advanced ones and observe if timing of exposure has the relevance attributed by research, for our specific sample of participants.

## **2.5. Types and sources of authentic materials**

Once we have established the importance of using authentic materials, we should focus our attention on their selection and in order to do so, the distinct types and sources must be taken into account.

Firstly, it should be noted that the use of authentic materials as a complement of the textbook in the classroom is no new practice. As Gilmore (2007: 1) mentions, at the very beginning of his article “Authentic materials & authenticity in Foreign Language Learning”, their presence can be dated back to the nineteenth century when Henry Sweet (1899: 177) made a reference to the advantages that can be drawn from this kind of input. This author is the first one to identify the benefits of using authentic materials and to propose various sources.

Of course, the variety of authentic materials available to us nowadays is incomparable with that on any other moment in the past, technology has made almost any printed material accessible online and, as a consequence, both the types and sources have incremented.

A reference to the classification of authentic input is given by Jordan (1997), who was quoted by Khaniya (2006: 20-21). For Jordan, the main source worth exploiting were the newspapers, as they would provide a good reflection the everyday life, as well and cultural values of society. He then remarks videos tapes as a relevant visual source, which have of course been replaced nowadays with the CD/DVDs. Next, he states that role plays and dramatizations could lead to further conversation practice. Finally, he refers to culture quizzes or tests as a manner of presenting and comparing the target culture.

According to Oguz & Bahar (2008: 330), authentic materials can be divided into four categories:

- Listening-viewing materials

- Visual materials
- Printed materials
- Realia (real objects)

The latter ones, real objects, are the one that can be brought by the teacher or even the students into the classroom in order to aid in some way the comprehension and acquisition of the language. It might prove useful for lower levels or for situations in which an approximation to the cultural background is intended.

In the printed materials category we might include items such as recipes, brochures, restaurant menus, as well as newspaper articles.

Visual materials mainly refer to posters, pictures, photographs, paintings and even street signs.

Perhaps the most important category nowadays, the listening-viewing authentic materials, contains elements such as movies, documentaries, songs, radio and, of course, web pages.

The aspect of classification and sources of authentic materials has suffered an expected shift with the appearance of the Internet and its inclusion in our daily lives. Almost any materials that are not realia can be found virtually in the web and are available to us at anytime and anywhere. So, whereas categorizations such as the previous one and traditional sources (Jordan, 1997) may be valid, it is necessary for teachers to become aware of the vast resources found online and master their use.

An obligatory reference in this respect must be made to CALL, as it strongly changed the focus of language teaching in recent years. As it has been mentioned in a previous section, Computer Assisted Language Learning is an approach that uses new technologies in order to encourage language learning. It is focused on student autonomy and implies contact with a variety of authentic materials. Studies such as that of Lee (2000: 2) enumerate various benefits to using Computer Assisted Language Learning, such as “experiential learning, increased motivation, enhanced student achievement, authentic materials for study, greater interaction, individualization, independence from a single source of information and global understanding”. As it can be noted, even as early as the beginning of the 2000’s authentic materials were regarded as a valuable source and aspect within the Computer Assisted Language Learning. The variety of

authentic input made available with this method is extreme and, thus, sources can vary from videos and interviews found on the Internet to chats and forums where learners can be exposed to authentic materials by the very interaction with native speakers of people from different countries. Undoubtedly, the effect that new technologies are having on the teaching process will continue to increase and they will keep providing one of the main sources of authentic materials.

This classification of sources made reference to various instances of authentic input and any conclusion would be premature without first mentioning those selected to be used in this dissertation. For the purpose of this investigation, an article extracted from the New York Times has been chosen to be utilised with an advanced group of students and another rather traditional source, an advertisement of a Brooklyn Bridge bike tour will be presented to a pre-intermediate group. The justification behind this choice is not in any way related to a lack of preference for computer provided input but rather based on the fact that this type of materials adapt better to the purpose at hand, an analysis of the students' attitude towards their use.

To summarize it is worth mentioning that authentic materials traditionally count with a variety of types and sources that have been consistently extended by the appearance of the new technologies and the change in the focus on the language teaching.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides an in-depth description of the methodology utilised in the development of the study, as well as the rationale behind the steps that were taken, along with a depiction of the sample selection, data collection and data analysis.

The primary research objective of this study is to identify the perspective of a group of Spanish students towards the use of authentic materials in the English classroom. The students attend a private English academy in Madrid, called English Connection and study English as a foreign language, at either pre-intermediate or advanced level.

The secondary research objectives are:

- To determine the differences between the perspective of pre-intermediate students and the ones of advanced students in relation to the use of authentic materials.

- To gauge the possible variations between the view of teachers and that of learners regarding the implementation of authentic materials.

### **3.1. Research design**

The following investigation is qualitative in nature. It is fairly practical as it focuses on the use of authentic teaching materials in the classroom, and constitutes an instance of primary research. The approach is analytic as it focuses on students' perspective towards authentic materials.

Its inductive purpose also seeks to derive conclusions related to the difference between the teachers' point of view and the students prospective with regards to the implementation of authentic materials. The study includes mostly qualitative data, collected in the classroom through quasi-experimental methods, such as personal interviews. This cross-sectional research makes use of an interpretive and generally subjective method of analysis.

The research project took place in the second half of 2017 in an English academy from Madrid, where the main purpose is teaching English as a foreign language. One group of 10 pre-intermediate students and one of 10 advanced students, all adults have taken part in the investigation. The two groups of participant learners have been exposed to one instance of authentic material consisting of a magazine article selected for their respective level in the case of advanced learners and an authentic brochure with simple information in the case of lower level students.

The participants have been asked to complete a short questionnaire designed to establish and verify their background information. This questionnaire consisted of 5 questions related to the participants' age, gender, education level and time of exposure to the language. The mentioned questionnaire is included in the Appendix 1.

Afterwards a set of interviews have been carried out in order to infer in their personal perspective of the experienced exposure. Each interview consisted of 13 questions.

A later step was the implementation of the interviews to a group of 4 English teachers, employees of the same English academy where the research was carried out, so as to determine and analyse the possible differences with respect to the conclusions obtained from the students' participation.

### **3.2. Selection of authentic materials: objectives, content, development of the activity and timing**

In order to carry out this project of investigation, two instances of authentic materials have been utilised. On the one hand, an article was selected from the New York Times to be used in an activity with the group of advanced learners and, on the other hand, an advertising of a Brooklyn Bridge guided bike tour was chosen for an activity with the pre-intermediate group. Both are included in appendix (8.2 and 8.3). The reason behind only using one instance of authentic materials per group and in only one specific moment is that the sample for this investigation is reduced and the focus of the study is not longitudinal. As the present dissertation only aims to analyse this sample's specific perspective towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom, these examples and activities have been used in order to assure that the learners fully understand the meaning and have experienced the exposure to authentic materials.

#### Activity for the advanced group

As previously mentioned, the 10 students group of advanced learners has been exposed to an article extracted from the New York Times. The article, entitled "How exercise might increase your self-control", was written by Gretchen Reynolds and was published on the 27th of September 2017. The duration of the activity carried out with this source of material and hereby described, was 50 minutes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITY
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To familiarize the students with vocabulary related to physical exercise as well as scientific research.</li><li>2. To identify and explain the unknown words and expressions.</li><li>3. To use the input in order to promote further conversation by means of previously prepared questions related to the text.</li><li>4. To posteriorly analyse their attitude towards the use of an instance of authentic material in the classroom.</li></ol>

#### CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

1. The students are presented with the article and are given 4-5 minutes to read it individually. They are made aware of its origin and know that they are not given textbook material.
2. The teacher names a couple of students and asks them to share the main ideas specified in the article with the class.
3. The students and the teacher discuss the meaning of mentioned unknown words.
4. The students are divided into pairs of 2 (5 pairs) and are given a set of questions for discussion.
5. The teacher nominates two pairs of students to share their opinions with the class.
6. The teacher proceeds to correcting and marking their discourse on the blackboard mentioning the following aspects: content, discourse management, pronunciation and interaction.

#### QUESTIONS MENTIONED IN EXERCISE 5

1. Would you say you have a healthy and balanced lifestyle?
2. Do you find it easy to resist temptations when it comes to food?
3. Do you exercise regularly?
4. Do you agree with the idea expressed in the last paragraph of the article “that normal people “can change and improve their self-control with regular physical activity”?

#### Activity for the pre-intermediate group

A total of 10 pre-intermediate level English learners have been exposed to a virtual advertisement of a “Private Brooklyn Bridge guided bike tour”. This was found on a touristic website dedicated to offering exclusive one day activities around the city to New York visitors. The complete page is included in appendix (8.3). The activity had a duration on 45 minutes.



### OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITY

1. To familiarize the students with vocabulary related to organised excursions and outdoor activities.
2. To identify and explain the unknown words and expressions.
3. To ensure reading comprehension by answering a series of questions related to the text.
4. To discuss about a few simple questions regarding travels and New York.
5. To posteriorly analyse their attitude towards the use of an instance of authentic material in the classroom.

### CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTIVITY

1. The students are presented with the advertisement and are given 1-2 minutes to scan it. They are made aware of its origin and know that they are not given textbook material.
2. The students, together with the teacher, discuss the main information presented in the input.
3. The students read the text individually and answer a series of comprehension questions.
4. The students then are given a couple of minutes to compare their answers in pairs before correcting them as a class.
5. The teacher and the students identify and discuss the unknown and the difficult words.
6. The students are given a couple of questions and the teacher asks some of them individually.
7. Finally the teacher provides correction and feedback on the blackboard.

#### QUESTIONS MENTIONED IN EXERCISE 3

1. How long does the tour last and how many parts does it have?
2. Is it suitable for children?
3. What monuments are visible from the Brooklyn side tower?
4. What are visitors recommended to bring?

#### QUESTIONS MENTIONED IN EXERCISE 6

1. Would you like to travel to New York? Why? Why not?
2. Would you like to go on this tour? Why? Why not?

### **3.3. Sample**

Two groups of adult English learners of a private language academy from Madrid have been asked to participate, specifically one pre-intermediate level and one advanced level. The students, 40% men and 60% women, come from different social backgrounds and had diverse education levels, which guaranteed demographic variety. The groups consisted of ten students each, plus a sample of 4 active English teachers, employees of the academy where the investigation was carried out. To recruit the students, I contacted the director of the academy and after obtaining authorization, I informed the learners that participation in this research would consist of their regular attendance and a face-to-face interview lasting for fifteen minutes. After consent from students was obtained, the interviews began with the lower level.

#### **3.3.1. Selection**

The criteria that were set in selecting students for the present study were the following:

1. From a geographical point of view, students had to reside in Spain at the time of study, being their mother tongue different from the English language. The nationalities of the students who participated in the research were: Spanish, Bolivian, Venezuelan and Argentinian.
2. As far as the academic perspective, students had to be enrolled in a one-year English learning program, in a specific private academy from Madrid (English Connection).

3. Linguistically, students had to have either a pre-intermediate English level or an advanced English level, depending on their inclusion in one of the two groups. These specific levels have been chosen in order to reflect more clearly the potential difference between their perspectives and to determine if there were any connections to their higher or lower control of the language.

### **3.4. Variables**

A series of identification variables have been employed in order to determine the background and personal characteristics of the participants, both students and teachers. These data was collected through a short questionnaire followed by the interview with questions that regarded moderating variables related to linguistic aspects.

Thus, in this qualitative study, three types of variables have been taken into account: dependent, independent and moderation ones.

The core dependent variable was considered the participants' English language competence, as far as grammar, vocabulary and the four skills, reading, listening, writing and speaking (students' English level).

The independent variable corresponds to the exposure to authentic materials.

Moderating variables contain: age, gender, education level, time of exposure to the language outside the classroom and motivation.

In the case of learners exclusively, the time of exposure to the language in a formal school context was also taken into account.

### **3.5. Instruments**

In these following sections, the aspects related to the instrument design, instrument validation and instrument administration will be discussed. Details regarding the interviews conducted with both the students as well as the teachers will also be given and finally data collection and data analysis methods will be detailed.

#### **3.5.1. Instrument design**

The main instrument used for the purpose of this investigation was the interview. It is worth

reminding that a questionnaire (included in Appendix 1) has also been used but for the sole purpose of checking the learners' background information. Returning to the interview, the reason why this instrument was chosen is because it permits a one-to-one interaction with the learners and it allows the researcher to collect original information, inferring in their opinions. Likewise, this type of data collection was preferred considering the small sample used for the research. The instrument design was partially based on the strategy used by Thanajaro (2000) in her doctoral dissertation, where she observes the influence of authentic materials on students' listening comprehension during one semester and analyses their perspective mainly by means of interviews. Several other researchers have preferred qualitative instruments such as interviews for their inferring into students perspectives, implying that it constitutes both a more personal approach and a more suitable means of collecting the data especially with small samples.

### **3.5.2. Instrument validation**

The issue of validity and reliability, a rather complex one in qualitative research, is explicitly summarised by Afzaal, Azeem & Bashir (2008) in their article on the "Reliability and Validity of Qualitative and Operational Research Paradigm". They state the following:

The validity and the norms of rigor that are applied to quantitative research are not entirely applicable to qualitative research. Validity in qualitative research means the extent to which the data is plausible, credible and trustworthy; and thus can be defended when challenged. Reliability and validity remain appropriate concepts for attaining rigor in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers have to salvage responsibility for reliability and validity by implementing verification strategies, integral and self-correcting during the conduct of inquiry itself. This ensures the attainment of rigor using strategies inherent within each qualitative design, and moves the responsibility for incorporating and maintaining reliability and validity from external reviewers' judgments to the investigators themselves. Afzaal, Azeem & Bashir (2008: 1).

These mentioned verification strategies have been implemented in the present study and just as the previous authors point out, I have attempted a self-correction during the interviews with the students. All this, with the purpose of obtaining "plausible, credible and trustworthy" data (Bashir, Afzaal & Azeem, 2008: 1) regardless of having conducted an entirely qualitative research.

### **3.5.3. Instrument administration**

One set of interviews was administered to the participants individually, each interview lasting for about fifteen minutes. The interview with the advanced students was carried out completely in English, whereas for the pre-intermediate group, the researcher facilitated translations when needed to ensure complete understanding of the questions. In order to guarantee the administration conditions, the interviews were carried out in the English language classroom exclusively between the researcher and the students. As far as the instruments implemented to the participant teachers, they have been carried out in non-distracting conditions, in the director's office.

#### **3.5.3.1. Interviews with the students**

The interview consisted of a total of 13 questions divided in blocks according to the aspects analysed. It started with references to the students' general background and their attitude towards the language and then focused on aspects such as time of exposure both in a formal school context, as well as outside the classroom.

In addition to these questions, each participant was given a background questionnaire, consisting of 5 questions, to confirm information regarding their gender, age, mother tongue and reasons for studying English. The questionnaire is included in the appendix and the answers of the participants are presented in two separate tables, one for the advanced group and another for the pre-intermediate group.

In the following segment, the questions of the interview conducted with the students will be presented:

#### Interview: Using authentic materials in the English classroom

General background and attitude towards the language
1. Tell me about your English learning experience at school.
2. How about your experience in the academy and outside a formal context?
3. How would you define your attitude towards learning the English language?
Reasons for studying English
4. What would you say are the most important reasons why you are learning English?

5. Have you ever used English to communicate with other people? How about natives?

Time of exposure in formal and informal contexts

6. How long have you been studying English?
7. Do you watch series, read magazines or listen to the radio in English outside the classroom? What is your attitude about them?
8. How long would you say that you spend in contact with the English language outside the classroom?

Personal perspective towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom

9. What are your perceptions on using real language in the classroom? (this question has been asked posterior to familiarizing the participants with the meaning and connotation of authentic materials and real language)
10. How do you think that reading and listening to real language in class can affect your skills outside the classroom?
11. When reading a real article/a brochure like the one we just have, what difficulties, if any, do you encounter?
12. Do you personally prefer to work with text-book material or with a real article/ brochure like the one we had and why?
13. Anything else? (after each question)

### ***3.5.3.2. Interviews with the teachers***

The interview with the teachers was conducted after the one with the students and consisted of a set of 5 questions intended to infer in their perspective towards the use and utility of authentic materials. The teachers had the opportunity to add anything else they deemed relevant on the subject and sections of the transcriptions are presented below to highlight the common impression for each question.

#### **Interview: Teaching with authentic materials**

1. How would you define authentic materials?
2. What would you say is your general perception of the use of authentic materials in the classroom?
3. What kinds of authentic materials, if any, do you use?

4. What do you personally think is their impact on the students' overall language performance?
5. Anything else? (after each question)

### **3.6. Data collection**

Interviews and questionnaires have been used in order to collect the data for this study. Interviews with the students were planned to be carried out during the month of October of 2017 and have been carried out after the students had individually answered the personal information questionnaires. All the interviews have been recorded for analysis purposes. As a second step, interviews with teachers have been conducted posterior to the ones of students, at the end of October. The purpose of recording the interviews was for the researcher to be able to observe the key words used to answer the different interview questions.

### **3.7. Data analysis**

The main data source for the present study consists of the interviews with the students. On the other hand, interviews with teachers helped answer the secondary research questions, regarding the possible relations between teachers' and students' perspectives. The data has been analysed using Excel 2013.

In the table below there is a summary of the answers given by the participants, to all the questions of the interview. The answers are highlighted using key words that have been more commonly used by the learners throughout the interview.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The present chapter begins with a brief summary of the investigation and further attempts to present the results obtained from analysing the previously collected data, as well as to link the findings to the theoretical framework and existing research on the subject. Finally, it will also discuss the pedagogical implications which derive from these results.

### **4.1. Summary of the investigation**

The core objective of this study was to determine the attitude of a small group of English learners towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom. Its two secondary objectives

were to analyse, on the one hand, the potential difference between the attitude of advanced learners and that of pre-intermediate learners and on the other hand, to establish the relationship between the learners' attitude and the teachers' attitude towards this teaching strategy.

A total of 24 interviews were conducted and recorded, 20 with students (10 with each group) and 4 with teachers. In addition to this, a background questionnaire was given to all participants.

## **4.2. Results**

The analysis of the data collected in this study by means of the interviews and partially of the questionnaire, revealed that in general, students have a positive attitude towards the use of authentic materials, such as magazine articles or real-life videos or recordings. The immense majority of advanced students appear to prefer combining the use of textbook materials and authentic materials. However, lower level learners have shown less willingness to use authentic materials and opted to rely more on traditional, text-book input. On the other hand, teachers have all agreed on the necessity to introduce this type of materials in the teaching process, but one of them, remembered to mention that higher level students can benefit from this strategy more, as lower level learners may face frustration. Thus, a detailed description of the mentioned results will be given in the next section.<sup>1</sup>

### **4.2.1. Results of the interview with students**

The findings for the main objective of the study are all based on the interviews conducted with the students. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain information regarding their general attitude towards the language, their reasons for studying English as well as the time of exposure to the language, previous to analysing their personal perspective towards authentic materials. In order to present the results that help us address the general objective of the research, in this first section, the students' answers will be considered regardless of their belonging to one group or the other.

In relation to the general attitude towards learning (Question 1) English as well as their personal

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<sup>1</sup> The transcript of answers shown in sections 4.2.1. and 4.2.2. have been reproduced *verbatim*, with the same words used by the participants themselves. This may explain the potential presence of errors in the text.



experience both in and outside a formal context (Question 2), 70% of the students reported to have had rather unsatisfactory episodes. Some of the most noted complaints regard the fact that the teacher used to speak Spanish during the classes, which apparently made it difficult for students to enjoy or to create an attachment to learning the language. On the other hand, 20% of the participants declared to having had a positive experience and only 10% of them remained neutral. These results are presented in Figure 1 below.

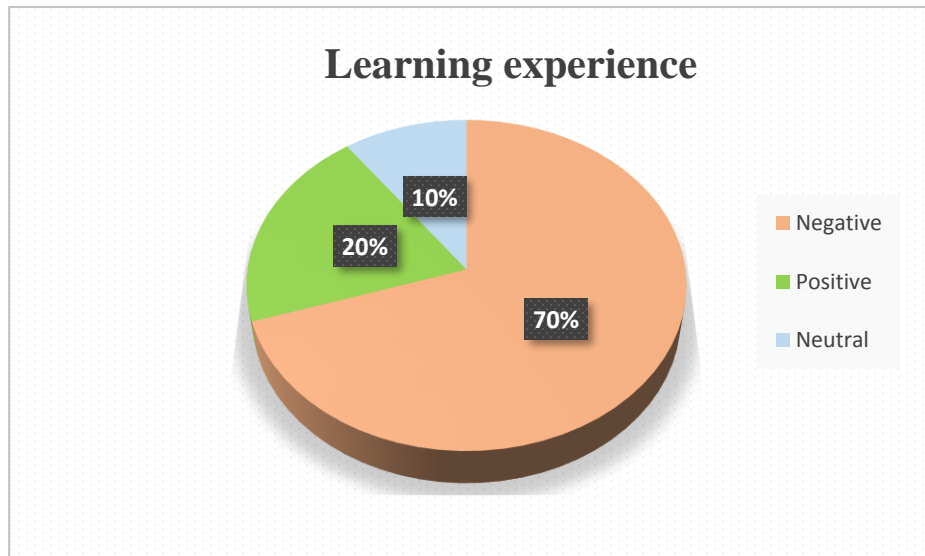


Figure 1. Learning experience at school and outside formal context

The next extract from an interview with an advanced learner, highlights this commonly shared point of view:

Question 2: “Tell me about your English learning experience at school. How about your experience in the academy and outside a formal context?”

Learner:

Uhhh... about my learning experience at the school, it wasn't very... pleasant, because ummm normally we were talking Spanish so, we didn't learn too much about English and if you want to have a good level of English, it was necessary to pay an academy. So, I wish I had better teacher or... I don't know... better luck, about English.

On the other hand, several students have pleasant recollections of their school-time experience and all of them (100%) agree that it was related to the general focus of the class: learning while playing. These results are presented in Table 1 below.

QUESTION NUMBER	PERCENTAGE	POSITIVE EXPERIENCE	PERCENTAGE	NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE
1 & 2	70	Key words: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning and playing</li> <li>• Games in class</li> </ul>	20%	Key words: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speaking English in class</li> <li>• Not enough classes</li> <li>• Wrong focus of the class</li> <li>• Not enough practice</li> <li>• Unexperienced teacher</li> </ul>

Table 1. Reasons for positive and negative learning experience

The following extract, again from an interview with an advanced learner, reflects one of these opinions:

Learner:

I have started learning English uhmm... when I enter kindergarten, my mother always tells me that I learn, that I learn the colours in English before I did it in Spanish. I continue studying English at school... uhmm... normally 5 hours a week, one per day. It was the happy hour, not like maths... when we used to do projects, in English I mean, we used to do projects, songs, films, fun Fridays...

Further on in our analysis of the interview, the general attitude of the learners towards learning the language (Question 3) was examined. All the 20 students (100%) regardless of their level declared having a rather positive attitude towards learning the language at present, however 5 (25%) admitted to having felt quite frustrated in the past, due to reasons such as bad class organization, lack of motivation and, most importantly, unexperienced teachers.

As far as the reasons why the participants chose to study English (Question 4), they are clearly presented in table 2. As it can be observed, professional motives are the most relevant (70%) and

this result is consistent regardless of their current English level. This finding may be explained by the fact that we currently live in a globalized society in which it is an imperative request to have a good control of the English language in order to aspire to having a good job.

QUESTION NUMBER	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	REASON	KEY WORDS
3	14	70%	PROFESSIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a job</li> <li>• Get a promotion</li> <li>• Important skill at work</li> </ul>
	6	30%	PERSONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with natives</li> <li>• Travel to other countries</li> <li>• Globalization</li> <li>• Understand written and spoken language</li> </ul>

Table 2. Reasons for studying English

A considerable percentage of the part takers (30%), however, admit to having engaged in the learning process to satisfy their need for communication to other (foreign) people. They do not specifically regard getting a better job, as the main reason for their effort, but rather a desire to be able to understand and make oneself understood.

Regarding the time of exposure to the language (Question 6), this is generally consistent with the inclusion of the students in the lower or the higher level group. All the results are presented in table 3 and these show that most advanced learners report having been studying English for a longer period of time than pre-intermediate level learners. However, there is a surprising number of lower-level students, 4 (20%), that admit having tried to learn English unsuccessfully for more than six years. Although the reason for this finding goes beyond the focus of the present study, it is interesting to note that apparently longer exposure does not necessarily lead to acquiring more language proficiency.

QUESTION NUMBER	GROUP	0-3 YEARS		4-6 YEARS		+6 YEARS	
		NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
6	PRE-INTERMEDIATE	6	60%	0	0	4	40
	ADVANCED	0	0%	0	0	10	100

Table 3. Time of exposure to the language

Still referring to the time of exposure to the language (Question 7), when asked if they read magazines, watch series or listen to the radio in English, all the students (100%) declared doing at least one of these things, in the following percentages: series 45%, books and magazines 35%, movies and music both chosen by a sample of 20% and finally radio 10%, being the advanced students more prom to willingly expose themselves to authentic language. The chart 1 gathers the results obtained in this question.

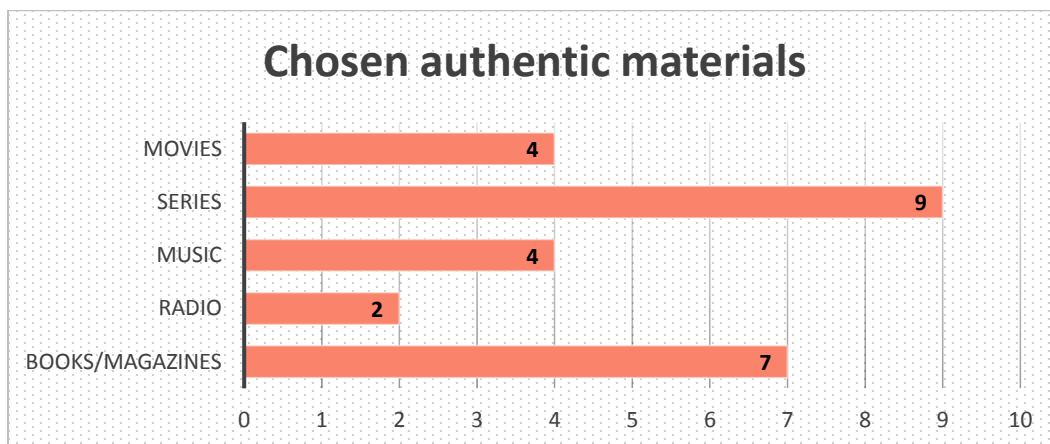


Chart 1. Preferred authentic materials for exposure

One of the most preferred practices seems to be watching series, as it gives students certain control over the content of the input as well as over the time of exposure. In this respect, one advanced student declared:

Question 7: “Do you watch series, read magazines or listen to the radio in English outside the classroom? What is your attitude about it? “

Learner:

I’m... I try to see... I try to watch series in English with subtitles in Spanish, but sometimes I’m quite boring... bored to do that, so, so I change to Spanish, but if I start a series watching it in English, I finish it, so... and I like it. It depends on the series I’m watching... because uhmm... there are some of them that if you are watching them in Spanish, they have no sense!

On the other hand, lower-level students admitted getting tired when trying any of these experiences (Question 7). One student commented:

I don’t have time for watch... for watch series or listen to the radio, I could read, read magazines in English but not during a lot of time. Because... uhmm... because I need more vocabulary to understand it and I tire out immediately. I am download, I am downloading series, series in English with subtitles, no more than 20 minutes for learn and not bore me.

This not surprising result may be due to the fact that lower level learners need to make considerably more effort in order to understand the language and this inevitably makes them see it less like a leisure activity and more like a controlled practice. Once they reach a higher level, they experience less frustration and this makes them voluntarily engage in other activities of the sort as the declared by some of the advanced students: listening to the radio while driving (5%),

watching YouTube videos (60%) and ted talks (10%) and reading articles of renowned international newspapers on the Internet (10%).

Consistent results, also show that higher level learners spend an overall higher number of hours (approximately 3.2 per week) of exposure to the language (Question 8). However, it is worth noting that lower level students declared spending most of the time (approximately 1,7 per week) studying the language, doing exercise and practising listening as opposed to advanced learners who prefer to expose themselves to authentic materials.

One of the questions that helps us analyse the main objective of the study is that regarding learners' attitude towards the use of real language in the classroom. To the question "What are your perceptions on using real language (spoken English expressions, slang, regionalism etc.) in the classroom?" (Question 9), 18 out of 20 of the participants (90%) answered that they regarded it as a very important practice, mentioning reasons such as the necessity to be prepared to communicate with natives (20%) or when travelling to another country (70%), the need to have a realistic approach of the language used in English speaking territories (20%) or just alleging that it would provide a more authentic bond and communication experience with other people (10%). The 2 students (10%) who declared that the use of "real language", understood as idioms, regionalisms and slang, is not a necessary part of the classroom language, said that people attending academies or learning in formal contexts (like themselves), usually do so in order to pass an exam and obtain a language certification and that requires learning a rather formal language. It seems possible therefore, that the attitude towards the use of "real language" holds a relation to the reasons for studying.

Another relevant and closely related question for the subject of investigation is the one regarding the difficulties that the students encountered, posterior to their contact with a real article/brochure in the classroom (Question 11). Vocabulary is regarded as the main obstacle of the participants (90%). Both lower-level as well as higher-level learners declared having encountered difficulties with specific words (70%), mentioning the advanced group (50%) that regardless of this difficulty, they were able to deduce the meaning from the context in most of the cases. Pre-intermediate students needed the dictionary or the teachers' help, more than the advanced group, which might also explain their general attitude towards using authentic materials, which will be presented in subsequent sections.

When asked how they thought that reading or listening to real language in class can affect their skills outside the classroom (Question 10), as shown in table 4, learners mentioned that it makes it easier for them to assimilate concepts, it improves their communication skills when travelling but it also helps them be more confident when speaking to other people. Therefore, it appears that learners are able to find a variety of practical benefits to using authentic materials in the classroom, regardless of their current level.

QUESTION NUMBER	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE	KEY WORDS / IDEAS
10	12	60%	IMPROVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS WHEN TRAVELLING
	10	50%	IMPROVE CONFIDENCE WHEN SPEAKING
	7	35%	MAJOR EXPOSURE TO REAL-LIFE LANGUAGE
	2	10%	EASIER TO ASIMILATE CONCEPTS

Table 4. Benefits of using authentic materials in the classroom

Further on, the last question of the interview (Question 12: “Do you personally prefer to work with text-book material or with a real article/ brochure like the one we had and why?”) helps us approach the main purpose of the study: students’ perspective towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom. This is perhaps the most relevant question, as it infers in the students’ self-declared attitude on using this type of input. A complete transcript of the interviews for this

question is given in Appendix 8.4, and the main results are hereby discussed.

Having to say whether they preferred using text-book resources or rather magazine articles for example, most students (90%), regardless of their level, showed a positive attitude towards the latter. This does not mean that they have rejected the use of traditional text-book materials, since most of them (85%) have opted for combination of the two types of resources. It became rather clear however, both from a general analysis as well as from a closer look at the answers given by each separate group that this particular sample of participants embraced and defended the general use of authentic materials.

Subsequent sections discuss the perspective of learners according to their group and so expose the results that help us deal with the second objective of our research: determine the differences between the perspective of pre-intermediate students and the ones of advanced students in relation to the use of authentic materials.

A majority of 9 out of 10 participants (90%) of the advanced group have concluded that a mix between the two mentioned resources would be the most appropriate to use in the classroom. This group has not shown any reluctance to using authentic materials, nor have they mentioned that this practice can prove to be difficult or problematic. The next extract reflects the common opinion expressed by most of the learners:

I think... uhhh... that working with a text-book is good, because it helps, because it help you to practise all kinds of exercises and different activities and it helps you also to understand how the structure of the language, of the language works, but also, articles from a magazine are a good idea because they are more real. If for example, if it speaks about something that I normally do in my daily life, I can feel that the article is more uhhh... appropriate for me and that, that can make me feel better and learn a bit more. Because I am more confident with that type of vocabulary or expressions or conversation in general.

In order to justify the partial use of text-book, advanced students have mentioned that it can create a solid base (60%), it is appropriately divided by levels (30%), it contributes with a wide



variety of vocabulary and grammar structures and the explanation for those grammar structures (70%), in other words, it offers necessary theoretical support. On the other hand, the same part takers, defended the complementation of the textbook with authentic materials, noting that they can help improve one's listening and speaking skills (70%), provide a more realistic approach of the language that is actually used (50%) and at the same time can familiarise learners to new vocabulary, new words (30%).

There was however one declared preference towards the exclusive use of authentic materials, one learner that declared:

“Aaa... I personally prefer to work with a real magazine, because is reality. The things you read in a text-book is, is, things to... is, is, made on purpose to learn, is not real English “.

However, on further questioning, it became clear that this one student, unlike the others, is attending class with the sole purpose of improving his communication skills and not so as he can sit the Cambridge Advanced Exam (CAE). So again, there appears to be a relation between the purpose for studying and the preference for text-book or authentic materials: students that do not have the aim of sitting a formal exam or acquiring a high level of academic English tend to be more prom towards the (combined) use of authentic materials.

Briefly concluding, it can be noted that advanced learners have proven to have a quite positive attitude towards using authentic materials and can identify several benefits for their overall language level.

As far as the lower-level group is concerned, their answers were similar to the ones of their advanced colleagues, in the sense that most of them, 8 out of 10 (80%), declared to prefer a combination of textbook input and authentic materials. Their reasons were consistent as well. In defence to traditional text-books, the participants mentioned that these can provide them with the formal vocabulary and expressions they need to use in their jobs and it gives them a strong grammatical base, whereas using authentic materials teaches them about the real language used by the people. The following is an extract from one interview with a pre-intermediate student that summarizes the common opinion of the group:

“I think the better option is to work with both kind of material. The text book give us the...

uhmm... the base grammatical... and the magazines or newspaper... uhmm... learning us the true language that use the people”.

However, while in the advanced group the deviation from the general point of view showed a preference for authentic materials exclusively, in the present case, two students (20%) reported preferring textbooks only. One of them explained:

“I prefer to work with a text-book. (Pause) The part of grammar or vocabulary are, are clear. And it’s better to learn. For learning. “

It appears that some lower level students, if given the choice, will rather work with a textbook and experience controlled practice in the classroom. This preference might be more noticeable with a larger sample, however, this result may be due to the unsurprising frustration that pre-intermediate students face when exposed to instances of authentic materials.

Nevertheless, the general opinion of this group is very much the same as the one of the advanced learners, that is, a combination of textbook materials and authentic input seems to be the preferred classroom practice of most participants of the study (80%).

#### **4.2.2. Results of the interview with teachers**

So as to answer one of the secondary questions of the study, an interview with a sample of 4 English teachers was conducted. The aim was to compare their perspective on using authentic materials in the classroom with the one of their learners’.

The interview began by asking the fellow teachers to define authentic materials (Question 1) with the purpose of making sure that the analysis will be made on a shared concept and that all of them understand the same when referring to instances of this type of input. In this sense, all 4 teachers agreed on the main characteristics. The following extract from the interview with one of the teachers, summarizes this shared point of view:

Question 1: “How would you define authentic materials”?

Teacher: “I think that authentic materials are those that are used in the classroom but that have aaa... and origin from real life. For example it can be a video from YouTube, people speaking on a YouTube channel for example, or aaa... a text from a newspaper or similar”.

Further on, the teachers were asked about their general perception regarding the use of authentic materials in the classroom (Question 2). All of them agreed that such input is becoming more popular with the appearance of new technologies and with the resources that these technologies provide us. It has also been stated that students tend to be appreciative when exposed to instances of real language and it often has a positive impact on the dynamics of the class. Nevertheless, one of the four teachers, declared that such materials might not be appropriate for all levels but rather preferable for advanced learners:

Teacher: “ Well I’ll say that authentic materials for me, it’s better to be used with more advanced levels, students...aaa...maybe for them to engage in what they might experience in a native speaking atmosphere. “

Question 2: “Ok. So, would you say that they’re not necessarily recommended for lower levels or pre-intermediate students?”

Teacher: “Uhhh...pre-intermediate I guess yes, but beginners no. I think, maybe they’ll get a bit overwhelmed.”

The expressed worry of the teacher is extensively present in research, however otherwise, all the 4 participants (100%) defended the use of authentic materials and admitted using various types (Question 3), such as web pages, news, YouTube videos, podcasts, brochures, magazine articles, realia and well-known songs.

The last question for the teachers (Question 4) was “What do you personally think is their impact on the students’ overall language performance?” and it aimed to analyse the advantages that the teachers encountered for their learners in the use of authentic materials. The answers were consistent and the teachers unanimously agreed that authentic materials can help students develop a more natural way of speaking and get a better view of how people really communicate in English speaking countries.

Concluding, in an attempt to give an answer to one of the secondary questions of the study (Question 2 of the secondary), “What is the difference between the attitude of teachers and that of learners towards the use of authentic materials in class?”, it can be observed that learners and teachers generally agree on the necessity of authentic materials in the teaching-learning process

and also that both teachers as well as students themselves seem to be aware that exposure is recommended in higher levels, so as to avoid frustration.

### **4.3. Link between results and theoretical framework**

In the present section we will analyse, firstly, the connection found between the results obtained for the main objective of the study and previous research. We will further look at the conclusion obtained from the teachers' interview and the potential parallelisms with the existing research on the subject. However it must be noted that the potential conclusions are tentative due to the reduced size and unrepresentative characteristics of the participant sample.

Awasthi (2006) extensively discussed the use of authentic materials and the textbook in his article, published in the Journal of NELTA. He mentions the study carried out by Chavez (1998) in which this author concluded that “[...] students enjoy dealing with authentic materials since such materials enable them to interact with the real language and its use.” (Awasthi, 2006: 2)

The outcome coincides with the expressed preference of the participants in this research, as the massive majority (90%) also declared to enjoy and understand the benefits of using instances of authentic materials.

In the results of the present study it can also be observed that pre-intermediate students, the lower group, affirm to encounter more difficulty when being exposed to authentic materials. Their level seems to be the cause of a slight frustration when it comes to this kind of practice. This conclusion is analysed in detail by numerous researchers, who have concluded that authentic materials are not to be used with lower level students, but should be reserved exclusively for advanced learners. To mention but one study, Richards (2001:253), as quoted by Awasthi (2006: 2), highlights this same idea, pointing out that authentic materials often contain difficult vocabulary, which makes them unsuitable for beginners. According to him, this not only derives is frustration for the students but also constitutes a difficulty for the respective teacher, as s/he must find a way to bridge the gap between the level of authentic materials and that of the learners.

On the other hand, teachers' perspective towards the use of authentic materials was studied by Akbari & Razavi (2016: 110-111), who analysed the opinion of 57 Iranian teachers and discovered that 100% of them recognized the benefits of using authentic materials in class:

[...] the analysis of the data indicated a general concord among English teachers [...] concerning the positive effect of authentic materials in teaching EFL. In their answers to the first item, all 57 teachers indicated that they prefer to use authentic materials in their language classes. Akbari & Razavi (2016: 110-111).

These results show consistency with the ones obtained in the present investigation, but, unlike ours, are based on a much larger sample which provides them with higher value in their context. However, regarding the context, it is interesting to mention that although the named research has been carried out in a different geographical and social background (Iran as opposed to Spain), teachers seemed to coincide and equally identify the necessity for authentic material in the teaching process.

## **5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND LINES FOR FUTURE RESEACH**

In this chapter the potential limitations as well as the ideas to continue advancing the research agenda will be presented.

The present study has been carried out on a rather small sample of population, a total of 20 students and 4 teachers and this has inevitably had an effect on the characteristics of the results. The reduced number of participants has also determined a restricted geographical representativeness. All the part-takers reside in the same city and while not having the same nationality, the share a similar social background.

This investigation has been based solely on one type of data analysis: qualitative. Interviews are the main instruments that have been used to collect the data, therefore, there is a lack of quantitative techniques and a consequent impact on the conclusions. Qualitative data analysis is often considered to be less objective than the quantitative one and this should be bared in mind when observing the findings of the current study.

On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that the research project is not longitudinal, it only collects the data at a specific point in time. This may constitute another shortcoming, as it does not provide a complete an image of the results as it would with a cross-sectional focus.

Furthermore, the lack of triangulation as well as the limited amount of variables utilised, might

have also had an impact of the quality of the results.

Considering the previously mentioned limitations, there are numerous aspects that can be addressed in further investigation.

Firstly, the study could be replicated with a more geographically and numerically representative sample but also in a different context. An interesting line for research could be focusing a research project of this sort on a larger sample taken from a public learning context rather than a private language learning academy as it has been done here. The English level of the participants could also be varied so as to enrich the potential conclusions. For instance, the perception of secondary school pupils, regarding the use of authentic materials could be analysed.

Combining qualitative and quantitative research could also be a beneficial for further investigation. Quantitative data collection instruments such as questionnaires and tests can provide results that are easier to analyse.

Conducting a longitudinal study could also be taken into consideration, as a prolonged in time investigation generally gives the researcher the opportunity to validate the results in a more complete way.

Last but not least, using a larger number and complexity of variables could be an interesting point to consider. Closer attention could be paid for example to the reason why students engage in learning the language, to see if there is any direct relationship between this aspect and their preference for using a certain type of materials.

On the other hand, an age-focused research project could prove revealing as it would expose the potential differences between the sample of population that has been educated following more traditional strategies and the newer generations, who are being exposed to more interactive learning practices.

Whether further research is focused in one of the mentioned directions or in a novel one, it is safe to mention that studying the impact of and necessity for authentic materials is a broad and complex field of inquiry that can provide fruitful conclusions with valuable practical application.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

This last section seeks to emphasize the main points made throughout the research project and to bring forth its chief findings.

This study is set out to determine the attitude of a specific sample of English learners towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom. Secondly a comparison has been made between the attitude of higher level students and that of lower level students so as to unveil potential differences. It has also aimed to discover if there are any dissimilarities between the declared attitude of the students and that of their teachers.

It is of undoubted importance reminding that this research project is a case study carried out in a private English academy in Madrid and that it is based on a reduced sample with the purpose of inferring their perspective towards the use of authentic materials in this specific sample, an aspect which makes the results obtained therefore tentative.

The results of the investigation show that, in general, students have a positive attitude towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom regardless of their level. It has however been observed that lower level learners present hesitation when it comes to prolonged exposure to authentic input. They are also more sensitive to the difficulties that may be encountered in instances of authentic material and require more support from their teachers. This finding is in line with previous investigations such as that of Richards (2001:253), regardless of all the deep differences existent between the two research projects, although both defending that authentic materials are to be used with higher level learners only.

In addition, the study has found that teachers also present a favourable attitude and declare using authentic materials in their classes. Nevertheless, one of the four interviewed teachers has pointed out his preference to using this type of materials with advanced students, so as to avoid frustration.

As far as the impact that the analysed results can have from a practical point of view, it seems imperative to start by recalling that both the students' perspective as well as the teachers' viewpoint support the use of authentic materials in the classroom. That being said, a closer look must be given mainly to the numerous advantages, but also to the few drawbacks of using authentic materials in this particular context.

As it is generally agreed in research, the use of authentic input provides numerous gains for language learners, some of the most mentioned being the opportunity to have a more accurate vision of how the English language is really like, but also the chance to engage in a more genuine interaction and learning experience.

It is also worth mentioning that by exposing our students to authentic materials such as we have so done with the article and the advertisement focus of attention of this paper, we aid to better their reading and comprehension skills. This is in turn achieved in a more motivating and interactive way than by just using the textbook.

It should neither be forgotten that a careful selection of these materials is essential, so as to ensure their usefulness. In this study, some lower level learners have expressed reservations with regard to the time of exposure alleging that they experience tiredness and boredom. Therefore, according to the students' level, an adequate instance of authentic material should be employed but also the frequency and duration of the exposure should be closely controlled.

Likewise, the purpose of the course, as well as the personal aims of the students should also be taken into consideration. A group which follows a programme designed to help learners obtain an official qualification, may benefit just the same but might need less actual exposure to authentic materials than one which abides by a curriculum designed to improve students' communication skills.

Nevertheless, provided that the authentic material is properly selected and implemented, its use may offer considerable benefits to the learners and the development of the class in general.

To conclude, it is worth repeating that perhaps the most important practical implication is that the use of authentic input will prepare students for a more genuine communication with other people, which is after all the most common and ultimate goal for learning a language and much more in the globalized world we live.



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## 8. APPENDIX

In the following section, additional documents will be included. Firstly, in 8.1 the questionnaire utilised to gather students' background information is presented. Sub-sections 8.2 and 8.3 contain the instances of authentic materials that have been used in the activity conducted with the participant learners and, finally, 8.4 contains a full transcript of the answers given by students to question 13 of the interview (Do you personally prefer to work with text-book material or with a real article/brochure like the one we had and why?).

### 8.1. Personal information questionnaire

<b>QUESTIONNAIRE</b>		
<b>1.- I AM</b>		
Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>2.- I AM FROM</b>		
Spain <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>3.- I AM</b>		
18-35 years old <input type="checkbox"/>	36-65 years old <input type="checkbox"/>	+65 years old <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.- I HAVE FINISHED</b>		
Secondary school <input type="checkbox"/>	High school <input type="checkbox"/>	University <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.- I HAVE BEEN STUDYING ENGLISH FOR</b>		
0-3 years <input type="checkbox"/>	4-6 years <input type="checkbox"/>	+6 years <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 1. Personal information questionnaire

## 8.2. Article used with the advanced group

### The New York Times

#### How Exercise Might Increase Your Self-Control

by Gretchen Reynolds Sept. 27, 2017

For most of us, temptations are everywhere, from the dessert buffet to the online shoe boutique. But a new study suggests that exercise might be a simple if unexpected way to increase our willpower and perhaps help us to avoid making impulsive choices that we will later regret.

Self-control is one of those concepts that we all recognize and applaud but do not necessarily practice. It requires forgoing things that entice us, which, let's face it, is not fun. On the other hand, lack of self-control can be consequential for health and well-being, often contributing to problems like weight gain, depression or money woes.

Given these impacts, scientists and therapists have been interested in finding ways to increase people's self-restraint. Various types of behavioral therapies and counseling have shown promise. But such techniques typically require professional assistance and have for the most part been used to treat people with abnormally high levels of impulsiveness.

There have been few scientifically validated options available to help those of us who might want to be just a little better at resisting our more devilish urges.

So for the new study, which was published recently in Behavior Modification, a group of researchers at the University of Kansas in Lawrence began wondering about exercise.

Exercise is known to have considerable psychological effects. It can raise moods, for example, and expand people's sense of what they are capable of doing. So perhaps, the researchers speculated, exercise might alter how well people can control their impulses.

To find out, the scientists decided first to mount a tiny pilot study, involving only four men and women.

These volunteers, who had been sedentary and overweight, were told they would be taking part in an exercise program to get them ready to complete a 5K race, and that the study would examine some of the effects of the training, including psychological impacts.

The volunteers began by completing a number of questionnaires, including one that quantified their "delay discounting," a measure that psychologists use to assess someone's ability to put off pleasures now for greater enjoyments in the future. It tests, for instance, whether a person would choose to accept \$5 today or \$15 a week

from now.

The delay-discounting questionnaire is generally accepted in research circles as a valid measure of someone's self-control.

The volunteers then undertook a two-month walking and jogging regimen, meeting three times a week for 45 minutes with the researchers, who coached them through the sessions, urging them to maintain a pace that felt difficult but sustainable. Each week the men and women also repeated the questionnaires.

Finally, a month after the formal training had ended, the volunteers returned to the university for one more round of testing. (Later, two of them also ran 5K races.)

The results were intriguing, the researchers felt. Three of the four participants had developed significantly greater self-control, according to their delay-discounting answers, and maintained those gains a month after the formal training had ended. But one volunteer, who had missed multiple sessions, showed no changes in impulsivity.

A four-person study is too small to be meaningful, though, so the researchers next repeated the experiment with 12 women of varying ages, weights and fitness levels.

The results were almost identical to those in the pilot study. Most of the women gained a notable degree of self-control, based on their questionnaires, after completing the walking and jogging program. (In this experiment, they were told they were training for better fitness.)

But the increases were proportional; the more sessions a woman attended or the more her average jogging pace increased, the greater the improvement in her delay-discounting score.

These gains lingered a month after the training had ended, although most of the women had tapered off their exercise routines by then.

The upshot of these results would seem to be that exercise could be a simple way to help people shore up their self-restraint, says Michael Sofis, a doctoral candidate in applied behavioral science at the University of Kansas who led the study.

These two experiments cannot tell us, though, how exercise helps us to ignore a cupcake's allure. But Mr. Sofis says that many past studies have concluded that regular exercise alters the workings of portions of the brain involved in higher-level thinking and decision-making, which, in turn, play important roles in impulse control.

Exercise also may have more abstract psychological impacts on our sense of self-control, he says. It is, for many of us, a concentrated form of delayed gratification. Exerting ourselves during a workout is not always immediately

pleasurable. But it can feel marvelous afterward to know that we managed to keep going, a sensation that could spill over into later decision-making.

Of course, with a total of only 16 participants, these experiments remained small-scale and limited, relying on a fundamentally artificial, mathematical measure of self-control. The scientists did not, for example, track whether the volunteers became less impulsive in their actual daily lives. Mr. Sofis and his colleagues hope to conduct follow-up studies that will look at the real-world impacts of exercise on self-control.

But for now, he says, these results suggest that normal people “can change and improve their self-control with regular physical activity.”

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/well/move/how-exercise-might-increase-your-self-control.html>.

### **8.3. Advertisement used with the pre-intermediate group**

#### **Private Brooklyn Bridge Guided Bike Tour**

From \$299.00

Manhattan, NY

Duration: 2 hours

Explore lower Manhattan on a 2-hour guided, private tour. Cycle around Manhattan’s southern tip, climb uphill into the City Hall area, then up onto the Brooklyn Bridge itself. This will be a steady climb of about 15 minutes, stopping at the Brooklyn-side tower of the bridge for photos.

Highlights

Choice of morning or afternoon departure

Cycle the city streets to absorb the local atmosphere

Pickup from a centrally located meeting point

Small group ensures personal service

Small-group tour



Perfect for all ages and skill level

Cycle up in the air above New York City. A private guide will lead you around Manhattan's southern tip, into City Hall and then up onto the Brooklyn Bridge itself. This will be a steady climb of about 15 minutes, stopping at the Brooklyn-side tower of the bridge for photos. You'll be about 160 feet (about 50 meters) up. The entire New York Harbor will be visible, including the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, Staten Island, the port of Brooklyn, and several miles of the New Jersey coastline.

You will then descend into Brooklyn, seeing NYC's Financial District from across the river, followed by historic houses of Brooklyn Heights - returning over the bridge, to South Street Seaport. Remember to bring your camera: there will be spectacular views in all directions from the top of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Source: <https://www.nycgo.com/tours/private-brooklyn-bridge-guided-bike-tour>.

#### 8.4. Transcript of answers question 13<sup>23</sup>

Question 13 → Do you personally prefer to work with text-book material or with a real article/ brochure like the one we had and why?

##### Advanced group answers:

- Student 1: “I prefer uhmm... I prefer to use authentic materials. Also it is very important to use the book for explanations of grammar”.
- Student 2: “I think... uhmm... that working with a text-book is good, because it helps, because it helps you to practise all kinds of exercises and different activities and it helps you also to understand how the structure of the language, of the language works, but also, articles from a magazine are a good idea because they are more real. If for example, if it speaks about something that I normally do in my daily life, I can feel that the article is more uhmm... appropriate for me and that, that can make me feel better and learn a bit more. Because I am more confident with that type of vocabulary or expressions or conversation in general”.
- Student 3: “Aaa... I personally prefer to work with a real magazine, because is reality.

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<sup>2</sup> The transcript of answers for question 13 shown in the present section (8.4) contains quotes, some of them are longer than four lines. However, in order to maintain visual integrity, the same format has been given to all the quotes regardless of their length.

<sup>3</sup> The transcript of answers for question 13 shown in the present section (8.4) has been reproduced *verbatim*, with the same words used by the participants themselves. This may explain the potential presence of errors in the text.

The things you read in a text-book is, is, things to... is, is, made on purpose to learn, is not real English “.

- Student 4: “Uhhh... in my opinion I think it's important to have theoretical support like a textbook and then do real activities from real magazines... in my opinion.”

- Student 5: “I prefer use authentic materials... also it is very important to use the book for explanations of grammar. I would prefer a textbook in 60% but ummm... complement the lesson with real material”.

- Student 6: “I don't really know what I prefer... I think... I think that I prefer a textbook in the case of learning English but in the case of developing your, your language... your English, your speaking or your listening maybe either the magazine or the recording or something like that”.

- Student 7: “In my opinion umh... I think a mix of both method would be great. The magazine shows us the real English”.

- Student 8: “For me... both are correct because textbook try to highlight the main vocabulary and expressions used in English and are classified on levels for different students... on... on the other hand the magazine articles can improve the English skills because new expressions and vocabulary is used in these kind of text”.

- Student 9: “Uhhh... I think textbook is important to create the base... and if you only have the textbook you... I mean that if you only have the textbook, you will speak in a very... I don't know, polite way or academic way... which sound weird to a native. But if you only learn slang and you don't know how... why you say what you are saying, you won't learn English so well either... so I think both are necessary firstly the textbook and after that for higher levels maybe... more usage of authentic materials”.

- Student 10: “In my opinion the text but is necessary but ...uhmm also to use articles and videos. The grammar from the text book because is explained and the speaking from the articles, magazines, things like that...I prefer speaking from the authentic materials. It's more funny for me”.

#### Pre-intermediate group answers:

- Student 1: “I think the better option is to work with both kind of material. The text book

give us the... uhmm... the base grammatical...and the magazines or newspaper... uhmm... learning us the true language that use the people”.

- Student 2: “For my work is better, good to learn with text-book but for the... How do you say ‘día a día’? (researcher answers)... eso, day-to-day it is better than formal... the informal”.

- Student 3: “I prefer to work with a text-book. (pause) The part of grammar or vocabulary are, are clear. And it’s better to learn. For learning. “

- Student 4: “For me is better text-book because... I don’t understand, words in article and for me is difficult read article. “

- Student 5: “I think is better combine the two. The... text-book for learn correct grammatical and articles and uhm... videos for learn vocabulary. And for speak”.

- Student 6: “For me... uhmm... I prefer the text-book for grammar and... for improve... and for improve speaking also the article and video music. I think”.

- Student 7: “Uhmm... work with the both options. Work with article and video to know how is the English and work with the book to know grammar correct”.

- Student 8: “In my opinion I like to use the book for make exercise... and I like to read article... and I like video for know the language and the... how do you say ‘cultura’? (the researcher answers) ...yes, the culture”.

- Student 9: “I don’t know... for me is difficult answer this. I don’t... I don’t read articles. I read text-book and, and... I think is more easy for text-book, with text- book for learn. But article and video is good for learn speak... uhmm... more good”.

- Student 10: “The article and video and music is good for learn... uhmm... expresiones? but I think is good too the text-book for grammatic”.