AUTHENTIC MATERIALS: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND WHY THEY MATTER

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Abstract: The goal of learning English language in a class is to demonstrate the use of the language in real life application. Hence, the teaching and learning process must reflect, in such away, fits the reality. This calls for the use of real materials or authentic materials (AM) in the teaching and learning process. Though the positive result has been yielded by many researchers, the implementation of AM in teaching and learning English is not implemented fully in EFL setting. This research is conducted to investigate how teachers' perception toward the use of authentic material in teaching and learning process. In depth - interview toward eight EFL school teachers, observation and documentation toward 4 English teachers are done to get the necessary data. In addition, focused group discussion (FGD) is done to triangulate the data. The finding showed that teachers perceived the important use of AM. Yet, they mostly fail to define what is AM and how it is implemented in the classroom. Their perception and action somehow do not match revealing a conclusion that they don't' fully understand what is AM; moreover the misconception of why it should be implemented matter the most.

Keywords: Authentic Materials (AM), EFL School teachers, teachers' perception

BACKGROUND

English language became one of the subjects to be taught in our curriculum since 1970s, the teaching procedure had implemented several approaches from grammar translation method, audio-lingual method, communicative approach, and genre based approach and the current approach (applied in Indonesia), a scientific approach. These methods have sounded changes in the way teacher taught EFL to students. Yet, the most interesting fact about the teaching and learning process emerged when it comes to communicative approach where in this approach the term authentic material begin to exist and profoundly applied during the teaching and learning process of EFL. Moreover, this approach focused on how the teaching and learning English in the classroom really useful when real situation is engaged. Krashen (1983) implied that Native-like fluency is what all learner and teacher expect to have. However, learning second language could be exciting and productive, yet it could be vice versa; painful and useless. The difference of both lies in how students learn the language and how teachers teach the language. Krashen above indicates the importance of creating condition where native like conditioning occurs.

Although Authentic Material (AM) begun from communicative approach, the issues of AM use seems go beyond the approach itself. It is not surprising that factors which decided the success of the teaching and learning process comes from many aspects including the use of authentic material (materials which exist in the real life). The use of AM become more and more important when an EFL student gets difficulties understanding a real text in authentic situation which, in some way, have distinct features from what they have learned in the classroom, this creates confusion as well as declining students' motivation and both lead their negative perception toward English language, they have learned in the classroom but it frustrates them when meeting the reality. The use of authentic material across the approaches is still relevant due to the paramount goal of what learning language itself that is to be able to demonstrate appropriately the language in the real situation.

In EFL setting, the AM implementation become crucial, since it is not the first language which consequences the practitioners to learn not only the language with all of its rules, but more importantly how the language can be used in the real life in correct situation, place and time; it is their discourse skill will matter most for EFL. The ability to use the language precisely in suitable will be very important and it should be done continuously to form a sharp intuition of EFL learners. Hence, the call for AM use in teaching and learning process is worth to be explored more and more.

Teachers play a core role in teaching and learning, a part of their teaching process is designing material to be used to get a successful result; text book, audio and video are designed specifically to meet certain objectives. However, the materials used could be divided into two types, based on the making process: authentic materials and by designed materials. Both types have their own benefits, using authentic materials exposes the students with the real context of why and how certain text appears in real circumstances, while by designed material gives a chance to teacher to suit the need of the students. Teachers' understanding toward the materials used surely give different nuance in EFL teaching and learning process. Furthermore, it may lead to the easy–use material that can maximize the precision of students' English language intuition.

Material design for EFL teaching and learning process plays a vital part which requires teachers' understanding as well as ability to craft it well. Despite the fact that AM promote a positive opinion in some EFL setting. The design possibly promotes stimulating learning process leading to serious positive result in students learning success. Here, the teacher's perception and understanding toward the use of authentic materials during teaching and learning process shapes teacher's attitude in treating the material use for teaching and learning. Dörnyei (2003) clarified that students' motivation and, learning achievement are highly influenced by the teachers' attitudes. This calls for researcher to dig up the facts of how English teacher perceive the authentic material implementation during the teaching and learning process in EFL.

This study mainly focused EFL teachers of SMP, SMA, MTs and MA. Despite abundance theory and positive result of AM implementation in EFL setting, the fact is still interesting phenomenon. Here, a tickled question on how do teachers perceive authentic materials in teaching English as foreign language.

The use of AM in teaching and learning has come under discussion since the 1970s. Many researchers have studied the impact of this kind of materials on learners. Using authentic materials particularly in teaching language in classrooms yielded an effective

result over the past decades. Many researchers declare the usefulness of authentic materials to support language learning and teaching. Many scholars ensues different definition on what is it actually about, yet the big picture could be drawn into any text which exist in the real English context in natural way but created not to meet the learning the language. Nunan (1989) defines authentic materials as any material which has not been specifically produced for the purposes of language teaching but is created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced. Harmer (2004) added that authentic material as the ones designed for native speakers not for language students but for speakers of language. It is the degree of congruence between the language of a learning material and the features of target language use (Khaniya, 2006)

Authentic Materials in EFL context

Using inappropriate teaching materials makes learners face difficulties in learning a foreign language. Learners need to be motivated to succeed in learning any language. Therefore, teaching materials must be motivating and raising learners' interest. If teaching materials are not interesting and motivating, learners will learn nothing. In order to help learners learn better, a lot of researchers suggest using authentic materials (AM). The use of AM in teaching has come under discussion since the 1970-s. Many researchers study the impact of this kind of materials on learners. Using authentic materials particularly in teaching language in classrooms has been effective over the past decades. Many researchers even strenghten the usefulness of authentic materials to aid language learning and teaching (Guariento and Morley, 2001; Shrum and Glisan, 2010). Most of them propose that this kind of materials help increase the learners' motivation towards reading.

Toward listening, authentic material is beneficially rise students' confidence when listening to real text in real situation. It creates a familiarity with the natural language content and context. It is noticed that learners' self-satisfaction and motivation showed improvement after employing authentic texts in the classroom (Otte, 2006 and Thanajaro, 2000). Authentic materials help motivate learners learn the language by making them feel that they are learning the 'real' language (Guariento & Morely, 2001).

Whereas in teaching writing the use of authentic materials (AM) provide a chance for students to enrich linguistic inputs as their repertoire of the targeted language (English). Harmer (2004) emphasizes the fact, that learner does not gain only knowledge of a new grammatical item but of other language items such as new vocabulary, cultural context, etc. it is due to language-richness of authentic materials. The use of authentic text allows teacher to explore text facilitating creative teaching to exploit texts. Thus, provide students relevant models to their target need Hyland (2003: 94). He even suggests the assistance of authentic materials in teaching as a teaching aid that increases learners' motivation and reflects positively on the learning process. In other words, students learn the language better when teachers use authentic materials.

Furthermore, without the use of authentic materials while exposing learners to EFL situations, it is difficult to anticipate how the learner will perform in the real situations. Peacock (1997) mentions several reasons why authentic materials are essentially important in teaching foreign language: first, they prepare learners for real life. Second, they meet learners' needs. Third, they affect learners 'motivation positively. Fourth, they encourage teachers to adopt effective teaching methods. Five, they present authentic information about

culture. Authentic materials therefore, help learners realize the relationship between the language presented in the classroom and the language used in real world situations. From his side, Genhard (1996) claims that authentic materials serve a context in language learning. In addition, authentic materials accommodate the gap between the language being taught in the classroom and the language used by native in real situations.

Authentic Martials Debate

Despite their positive impacts toward teaching and learning, its implementation gives controversy for some educators. Its concern deals with the culture of the language use within the materials provided. They can broadly fall into some categories; complexity of the vocabulary, complex structure, content of the material and the length of the materials (Richards,2001; Klickaya,2004) these cause difficulties to students to have better understanding toward the material use in learning, and it potentially decrease student's motivation in learning EFL. For teachers, they got difficulties in accessing the authentic materials itself, and it is due to the complexity in suiting the level and the materials teacher wants to implement in teaching certain students. Some materials match to certain level only which consequences the availability of the materials for certain levels. This situation adds the burden in applying authentic materials during teaching and learning EFL.

Authentic Material in Indonesian Context

Authentic materials also have been explored by many researchers in Indonesia. It reveals the effectiveness of the implementation in four skills; reading, listening, speaking and reading. It is also valuable to boost student's motivation during their learning session. In reading using experimental study found that AM implementation increase students' interest in reading (Aryati & Anggaira, 2016); Firmansyah 2015). In listening, the use of AM is proven to be effective in increasing students' listening comprehension (Octasari& Hastini, 2014; Hapsari& Ratri, 2014). Positive impacts also found in writing skills by improvements in three aspects; content, language use and vocabulary (Mardanigsih, Ida & Fitri, 2015). Those data indicates the positive impacts of AM implementation in teaching.

The researcher believes the issues of authentic materials implementation (AM) is still crucial and important to explore. With the rapid change in delivering and getting information through internet networking where the boundaries are almost extinct, people can easily access information with just one finger click. It is no doubt to state that most language used in internet is English, the data taken from internetworldstatistic.com updated in March 31, 2017 shows that English beat other languages, with 25 % of the total English internet user worldwide. Using sophisticated gadget like smartphone, laptop, notepad and many other kinds of gadget, people easily get the access of information in English language through internet connection and what they get is real and authentic use of the language. Hence, the researcher himself stands on agreement to consider that AM is, still, as an important issue for EFL teachers.

METHOD

This research design implemented is qualitative case study where it aims to investigate a case which is tightened by particular time and place directed to investigate and interpret what is happening (Clark & Craswell 2014). Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on social

phenomenon which exists in real setting which can give voice to the feelings and perceptions of the participants under study; it is to deal with behavior, perception, motivation and action. It produces descriptive data in the form of words in a natural specific context by utilizing a variety of scientific methods. (Moleong: 2007).

The participants in this research are English teachers in Cirebon region, Indonesia. There are eight teachers who represent school under DIKNAS which is under ministry of national education supervision (SMP, SMA) and DEPAG which is under ministry of religious affairs (MTs, Aliyah). The researcher are interested in taking those schools to investigate the perceptions toward the implementation of authentic material in teaching English on both institutions since the subject is taught in their schools. In this research, purposive sampling was implemented since in this qualitative case study, the samples do not represent a population, but it is information representation. Therefore, the number of the sample is not too crucial; yet the deep understanding of information taken to solve the problem raised in this research is more importantly concerned.

An In-depth Interview, which researcher recorded, to participants of the research (eight EFL teachers) has been conducted. The researcher asks several questions based on an interview guideline, listens for answers or observes behavior, and records responses on the survey (Creswell, 2012:382). An interview is a "conversation with a purpose" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) conducted with a person or a group.

Prior to interview process, the researcher has prepared the variables and the essential questions to be addressed to EFL school teachers; also the researcher had developed the interview guideline and interview protocol for interviewer. There are eight EFL school teachers resembling two different types (private and public) and institution between schools under DEPAG and DIKNAS (MTs, Aliah and SMP, SMA) around Cirebon city. The interview was conducted by some trained people to those schools. The training and the simulation was conducted a week before the execution.

To get the comprehensible data finding, the researcher generates the conclusion of the findings by accumulating some data instruments. First, transcribed interview was compiled to be analyzed and interpreted by the researcher. Second, the use of document archives in pictures and observation field note formats are gathered to clearly elaborate the condition during teaching and learning EFL. The last is the minutes during focus group discussion where it is noted based on what emerges during the discussion among some teachers and lecturers who handles English as foreign Language.

The data gathered by researchers are in form of transcribed interview of eight English teachers. To analyze these data, the researcher use Atlas ti.version7, it is CAQDAS software (*Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software*). This software only assists the researcher which cannot produce the result its own. Still, the researcher job is to interpret the served-data by the software (atlas.ti7). the use of the software really helps researcher in generating the amount of transcribed interview. Meanwhile, the procedure of its implementation is based on what Drijvers (2012) has suggested, he develops the sequenced procedure on how this software informs the researcher from collecting the data to the output of the analysis. Below are procedures suggested by Drijvers.

1. Creating hermeneutic unit
2. Assigning primary document
3. Discovering relevant passages

4. Creating codes and memo
5. Building theory: weaving concept to network
6. Visualizing and writing a result

To strengthen the result of the research, the result of the analysis was presented in a discussion where some teachers and lecturers from some institutions in Cirebon are gathered in weekly discussion of ALTI (Indonesia Applied Linguistic Association), branch IAIN Syekh Nurjati. This chance is done to triangulate the validation of the data by getting the insight from different informants. There are four ways of how data can be triangulate namely; data, researcher, method and theoretical triangulation (Paton in Sutopo, 2002). In this research, data triangulation is taken since the writer wanted to check the data from different sources. Moelong (2000: 278) stated that this type of triangulation is aimed to compare data from different sources to check the information which was taken through different time and instrument within qualitative methodology, therefore the idea of focus group discussion emerges. Within the session, all important information related the research topic is noted in the minute which is later used to enrich the findings in this research.

FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

From the interview conducted of eight EFL Teachers, it is found that basically all of them agreed on the implementation of AM for teaching English. Yet, to define what AM is and how it should be implemented or executed in teaching most of them have misunderstood affecting them to be misleading of the implementation which could implicate in some negative consequences. From the question of how do teacher perceive the authentic materials, it can be generated into three parts, teacher's misperception toward AM, teacher's dependency toward the books and teacher effort to get to authenticity. Thus, the result emerged due to transcribed interview, could be elaborated as follows.

Teacher Misperception toward Authentic Material (AM)

All of interviewed teachers agreed that presenting fresh and interesting material is crucial. They specifically mentioned that the materials used should close to the students' world to make it interesting. Teachers also belief that materials closed to the students' world give students better performance and acceptance.

> *...It is waste of time to teach something that they are not into it ...*
> *... materials should be relevant to students' daily life ...*

The transcribed interview sample above indicates that closeness is neither what teachers' belief to be prominent to the success in TEFL, since English is not their first nor the second, to master it needs hard effort, mainly in meeting or filling the gap of both language. The gap could be in different culture either the culture of the language as well as the culture of native daily habitual activity. Both can't be separated easily since language considered as social semiotic which imply that it resembles what certain group or community interact each other in their social life.

Despite what teacher belief toward the types of promising material used during teaching and learning EFL in the class, a gathered interview transcription sounded unstable and different answer when they define what authentic material is.

...Authenticity means real, if the material is in accordance with student's situation then we use it...
...Yes, authentic. It means relate to students' condition...

Here, the teachers seems don't realize about the function of using authentic martials during teaching and learning. Instead of focusing on how close the language learned to the nature setting of the native user, the teacher seems more focused on the relevancy of the materials toward the students' situation. So, an authentic material is defined as the authenticity toward the students' need and situation.

Further, misconception about what authentic material is continued among the EFL teachers in terms of what is it actually about. The transcribed interview below shows that AM is seen as the way students practice or perform what they have learned. AM, may be considered as referring to the students' ability in handling the language in practice. It is believed as a confirmation of what they have learned and their performance.

...Authentic material is given only a few compare to casual material; When it is needed to know the students' performance directly...

Yes, I use authentic material, we deliver theory first, and then I relate to the reality. After theory has been explained they directly practice. Sometimes I use story telling. So, they apply the theory.

The term authentic materials seem overlaps with authentic assessment, a teacher perceived that the former aims to know students authentic competence which is actually deal with the latter. Authenticity is profoundly suggested in K13, yet it refers to the use of authentic assessment. Teachers' misperception happened because their lack of understanding toward AM theoretically. This lead to teachers mistakenly executes the term authenticity in material use during teaching and learning EFL. The term authenticity is loudly pronounce in K13 (curriculum 13) or Kurnas (national curriculum)**,** yet the focus is in authenticity of assessment. Another teacher surely agree on the use of authentic materials, yet the teacher doesn't really sure or do not fully comprehend AM itself. He perceives it as the method of delivering the lesson in teaching and the learning process.

...I usually maximize the use of AM; most teachers did because it sometimes helps students understanding material from easy to difficult one. It could be done through question and answer and discussion.

The same question addressed to different teacher about the AM implementation which has resulted almost the same as previous transcribed interview viewing AM as method. Even the teacher describes it further as an approach of how we should execute the teaching and learning process. The teacher seems unsure regarding her own answer.

...emmm, we can't teach using one method....certainly, teachers know better, emm..., which approach suitable for their students, isn't it...

Teachers' Dependency on the Package Book

Using material in teaching and learning process must be related to the spesific goal of each course. They have to meet a certain criteria in each session of the lesson. There is a minimum accomplishment of subject taught in every session, and it has been decided explicitly by policy makers. Teachers are geared by that limitation. This should ease the teacher on planning the teaching and learning process including the material preparation. But since our government or other private party commercially provide the books on English language in every level causing most teacher use the books fully without any critical judgment toward the material used. The belief of meeting the standard decided by government could be the first reason and doing exactly the same as the book provided is more less-time consuming.

...the materials I used are based on the package book ...but sometimes I develop it myself. But still, it based on the authentic material in the package book...
..., I use authentic material for sure, Like in the book...

...Yes, I always use the book which is matched with the materials i will teach like a book agreed by the school...

Thus, it clearly seen that teachers are too dependent on the book provided either by government or commercially-made by other parties. Since the ability to design as well as to use appropriate materials and implement it in teaching and learning English is very important, it is crucial skill for teacher to analyze and evaluate the use of material in the books. This can be concluded that basically the teachers don't fully understand the concept of authentic materials in teaching and learning English. Instead of elaborating what they perceive and the action taken, those teachers prefer to refer the package book provided. Moreover the use of authentic materials in the package book has not been explored deeply. Shrum and Glisan (2010) added that many language textbooks contain poorly motivated and illogically sequenced texts and dialogues that do not reflect real-world language or situations.

The existence of text book is very important to get the same achievement fulfilled during teaching and learning. It also eases the teacher and students to see where are they heading in completing the English lesson. Teachers' dependency on the text book provided implicate either the book has met the criteria or the teacher do not want to explore the material use in teaching. Whereas, the books' quality need to be content-review and criticized because the failure in designing the materials inside affects the teaching and learning English, if teacher "*take it for granted*". possible problem will be encountered when implementing or using the book For example, both Mindth and Kennedy (1998) cited in Hwang (2005) agreed, based on A comparative study of authentic language data and textbooks for teaching English as a foreign language has revealed that the used of grammatical structures in textbooks differs considerably from the use of the structures in authentic English.

This problem creates a condition of mislead English class where English is taught by the teacher but students often fail when they meet the authentic text in real life. Surely, this

could demotivate students in learning the language creating the senses of useless. Mindth (1996) cited in Hwang (2005) even warned English teacher that there is obviously a kind of school English which does not seem to exist outside the foreign language classroom. As a result, learners who leave their school surroundings very often find it hard to adapt to the English used by native speakers. Learners who communicate with native speakers constantly have to reshape their linguistic behavior in those areas of the language which were not taught properly.

Again, the book use to teach English is crucial in assist learners to master English language appropriately. A kind of book that put authenticity in content and material in order to simulate the use of the targeted language in real practice is what teacher need. Here, teacher's dependency, without critically review the material contents, on the text book provided imply their less understanding of why authentic materials should be implemented during EFL teaching and learning process.

Teacher's Strategy to Meet Authenticity

Some interesting answers by teachers dealing with handling the authenticity of the materials are they, in some way, try to meet the authenticity by grasping the materials as close as possible to learners' circumstances. Although this could be considered as authentic, but their most answer concerning about authentic materials focus only on their effort to minimize the culture gaps of culture localization.

...We try to relate as closely possible what we teach to their (students) environment...
... Authentic means meeting the students' condition....the culture is difference. So, we make some adjustments like we add the expression my own....

The transcribed interviews above implicitly discuss about what teachers do to come to authenticity; it is by getting or relating the materials with the students' situation. A critical view could be addressed to the ways of teachers do to get close to students. It is not merely about the similarity among two languages but rather to the context closeness of how certain expression and utterances are used in real situation. Klickaya (2004) added that authentic material should enable learners to interact with the real language and content rather than the form. It creates nuances that they are learning a target language as it is used outside the classroom.

Moreover, teachers' action indicates the factors hindering authentic materials implementation. The struggling effort of teachers in making their students understand the materials given probably due to students and teacher fail interpretation in decoding the message from English to Bahasa Indonesia. Martinez (2002) cited in Klickaya (2004) added that authentic materials may be too culturally biased and too many structures are mixed, causing lower levels have a hard time decoding the texts. This could be the case of why it hard to implement Authentic Materials. Yet, careful selection and review of English teacher is crucially paramount. Indeed, the training for teachers is also important.

CONCLUSION

The result of the data gathered to eight English school teachers could be concluded as follows; teachers perceive that using authentic material during the teaching and learning

English is important and they deliberately means to implement the authentic material in teaching and learning. Yet, they still do not have a firmed concept of what it is, why it is and how authentic materials should be executed during the teaching and learning process which resulting biased practical implementation. The overlap between authentic materials and authentic assessment understanding could be one of the cases. Teacher less competence in finding and selecting the appropriate material could be the second case. In addition, teachers' perception is crucial in their action because perception precede an action. It is implied that if the teacher mistakenly perceive the authentic materials it leads to their teaching process execution which ignores the concepts of authentic material theoretically and practically. From the findings above; the researcher admits that this research is limited in setting and place. It couldn't generate all English teachers in Indonesia.

Discussing the findings and interpreting the transcribed interview imply some suggestions which are addressed for educators, teacher training program and other researchers. First, the need of training in authentic material is principal for English teacher to familiarize the students with the real use of the language. Second, teachers' dependency on provided-book calls for analysis in the use of authentic materials either in package books government has provided or commercially-made books. The last is the issues of filling the culture gaps in using the authentic materials is, again, worth to explore.

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