



Moroccan EFL Teachers' Perceptions towards the Use of Authentic Materials to Improve Students' Reading Skill

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Received: 05 Jul 2023; Received in revised form: 04 Aug 2023; Accepted: 12 Aug 2023; Available online: 23 Aug 2023

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Abstract— *It has been well-documented that the use of authentic materials while teaching reading comprehension can be one of the keys to motivate students interacts with the reading texts. Moroccan ELT textbook sometimes go beyond learners' level and interest. For these reasons, it becomes very necessary for teachers to vary materials and strategies while teaching reading comprehension. This paper aimed to investigate the attitudes of Moroccan EFL teachers towards the use of authentic materials in teaching reading comprehension to senior high schools. Six English teachers took part in completing a survey questionnaire for the purpose of the study. The researcher, therefore, aims to find out whether the use authentic materials can motivate learners interact with the reading texts and voice out their opinions. The results obtained indicated most teachers agree that texts mentioned in the textbook go beyond the level of students' understanding because of the difficulty students face while dealing with texts in the textbook. Most teachers perceive the use of authentic materials as useful for motivating students to be engaged in the learning process. That is, English teachers have positive attitude towards the use of authentic materials.*

Keywords— *authentic materials, EFL teachers, reading comprehension.*



I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is crucial for completing some tasks as well as for improving language intuition and evaluating academic performance. Students must therefore possess strong reading abilities, especially those who are attended colleges. They should develop the skills necessary to be able to manage any reference they require with ease in order to complete any task that is assigned to them. Additionally, students can escape having to cope with completing academic paper writing, which ultimately required them to study numerous books and references. Reading proficiency is essential for students to develop (Apsari, 2014).

The usage of actual resources appears to help the pupils advance their reading abilities. That is, students are able to participate in reading enthusiastically when using authentic resources to engage in the reading process and show their interest in what they read. In order to motivate students to read for their needs and requirements, authentic materials

are beneficial in classrooms (Rao, 2019). According to Berardo (2006) as cited in Namaziandost et al. (2021), the use of authentic resources helps pupils learn real language that has been used in real contexts.

Using real materials encourages students to read more by providing them a sense of achievements when they comprehend what they have read. Day (1994) claimed that "One of the more complex tasks facing the English as a foreign language (EFL) reading teacher is the selection of appropriate reading passages" (P.20). This means that, educators need to select reading materials wisely and not randomly. To put it differently, if teachers select and pick up the appropriate texts that fit the students' needs, levels, and interest, the students will be more motivated and consider reading as an active, important, and interesting activity. It is the teachers' attitudes that contribute to the motivation of their students in the classroom. In addition to the teachers' attitudes, it is very crucial to know about the

students' attitudes and perceptions concerning the use of reading materials as a teaching and learning tool to know whether students have positive or negative attitudes towards the use of these materials.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the reasons behind the teachers' selection of suitable reading materials and try to figure out the weaknesses of EFL learners in performing well in the reading process. I intend to study this issue in Moroccan English classes to see whether EFL teachers depend on or deviate from the textbook. In fact, no one can deny the importance of textbooks since they add a supplement to the teacher's instruction on how to plan and teach lessons; however, sometimes, it becomes necessary for teachers to deviate from the textbook and select the right reading materials wisely to motivate their students perform well in the reading process.

II. AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

2.1 DEFINITION

The notion of authentic resources in EFL classes is a topic of much debate. The following experts' perspectives on some of the popular definitions of the term are presented in this chapter.

Peacock (1997) defines authentic materials as "materials that have been produced to fulfill some social purposes in the language community" (p.23). Similar to what Peacock has mentioned, authentic materials would be used in the classroom by native English speakers, such as radio news report brought into the class (Widdowson, 1990).

Similarly, Nunan (1999) defines:

Authentic materials as spoken or written language data that have been produced in the course of genuine communication, and not specifically written for purposes of language teaching. In fact, in his teaching he encourages his students to bring into the classroom their own samples of authentic language data from real-world contexts outside of the classroom. They practice listening to and reading genuine language drawn from many different sources, including TV and radio broadcasts, taped conversations, meetings, talks, and announcements. They also read magazine stories, hotel

brochures, airport notices, bank instructions, advertisements and a wide range

of other written messages from the real world in situations as they occur. (p. 43)

There are other common definitions of authentic materials illustrated by some exports:

- According to Carter & Nunan (2001, p. 68) authentic materials are "ordinary texts not produced specifically for language teaching purposes."
- Jacobson et al (2003, p:1) claim authentic materials as "printed materials which are used in classroom in the same way they would be used in real life".
- "Authentic learning" is a new pedagogical phrase proposed by Herrington and Oliver (2000). This term prepares students for dealing with circumstances they may encounter in the real world by being closely relevant to their everyday lives.
- According to Herod (2002), authentic learning resources and activities are created to mimic real-world situations.
- According to Jordan (1997), authentic texts are those that are not created with instructional goals in mind.

2.2 SOURCES OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

There are some examples of authentic materials that EFL teachers rely on and focus on while teaching reading comprehension (Gebhard, 1996). The first one is authentic listening viewing materials. They included in this are TV advertisements, quiz shows, cartoons, news clips, comedies, movies, soap operas, professionally audio-taped short stories and novels, radio commercials, songs, documentaries, and sales pitches. The second one is authentic visual materials. They are about slides, photos, paintings, drawings by children, stick figures, wordless street signs, silhouettes, magazine images, ink blots, postcard images, wordless picture books, stamps, and X-rays are examples of this. The third one is authentic printed materials as newspaper articles, movie ads, astrology columns, sports reports, obituary columns, advice columns, song lyrics, restaurant menus, street signs, cereal boxes, candy wrappers, tourist brochures, university catalogs, telephone books, maps, TV guides, comic books, greeting cards, grocery coupons, pins with messages, and bus schedules are all included in this. The last one is realia. This includes, among other things, coins and money, folded paper, wall clocks, phones, Halloween masks, dolls, and

puppets. Realia are frequently used in role-playing games or to visually illustrate ideas.

The Internet is constantly updated, offers a greater variety of visually appealing content, and is also interactive, encouraging readers to take a more active approach than a passive one (Berado, 2006). From a more realistic standpoint, the Internet is a reality of the modern age; most students use it, and teachers have easier access to an endless supply of material of all kinds. Even more practically and economically, trying to find authentic materials abroad can be very expensive; an English newspaper or magazine may cost up to three or four times as much as it usually does, and occasionally it may not even be very good.

Finding materials frequently takes no money and only a small amount of time thanks to unlimited access in the workplace. The kind of reading material that students will need and want to be able to read when they are traveling, studying abroad, or using the language in other situations outside of the classroom should be considered authentic. Instead of focusing on the form, learners can engage with real language and content when using authentic materials. Due to its use outside of the classroom, learners believe they are learning the target language. The goal should be to understand meaning rather than form when selecting materials from different sources, especially when using literary texts where the emphasis is on what is being said rather than necessarily on the form.

Nuttall (1996) lists three main considerations when selecting a text to be used in the classroom: readability, exploitability, and content suitability. The importance of the reading material should be determined by how well it meets the needs of the students and how much they enjoy it, making content suitability the most crucial of the three factors. The texts ought to inspire readers as well. Exploitability refers to the text's potential for enhancing students' reading skills. In the classroom, a text that cannot be used for teaching has no value. Just because something is written in English doesn't automatically make it useful. The term "readability" also refers to the combination of a text's structural and lexical difficulty.

2.3 THE ADVANTAGES OF USING AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

It is well worth the extra time spent by teachers planning to use authentic materials to enhance lessons. Utilizing genuine materials actually has a number of benefits. The direct connection between the language classroom and the outside world can be reinforced for students, according to Brinton (1991) (as cited in Hedge, 1991), through the use of authentic materials and media. According to Gebhard (1996), using authentic materials can help put language learning into context. Students frequently pay more

attention to content and meaning than the language itself when lessons are focused on understanding a menu or a TV weather report. It provides students with a valuable source of language input so they are not only exposed to the language presented in the text and the video.

Additionally, Melvin and Stout (1987) find that when students use authentic materials for the study of culture in the language classroom, they have an overall higher motivation to learn as well as a renewed interest in the subject. Students frequently travel to a city in a target culture by using planned, task-based activities and real-world resources. Students gain confidence in using language in real-world situations, appreciate authentic materials, learn about cultures, and practice skills outside the classroom.

There are a number of spoken language differences between authentic and non-authentic materials, according to Porter and Roberts (1981). For instance, conversations that are recorded for language texts frequently move at a slow pace, have specific structures that recur with obtrusive regularity, and have very distinct speaker turn-taking.

According to Hedge (1991, p. 29), using real language in the classroom is crucial because:

1. Language is natural when it is streamlined or changed for educational purposes as limiting structures and controlling vocabulary. These purposes make the task more challenging. Actually, z might remove meaning-related hints.
2. Students have the opportunity to work with a limited amount of authentic language that simultaneously contains complete and meaningful messages.
3. Students have the chance to use non-linguistic cues (layout, pictures, colors, symbols, the physical setting it occurs in) to aid in meaning discovery when using authentic printed materials.
4. Real-life material that is treated realistically makes the connection between what adults learn in the classroom and what they need to do outside of it obvious.

Nunan (1999) acknowledges that it is unfeasible for teachers to use only authentic materials in the classroom but argues that students should be exposed to as much authentic information as they can because, in the end, if they are only exposed to fabricated dialogues and listening texts, their learning task will be made more challenging. He continues by stating that it is crucial for students to read and listen to as many different types of authentic content as they can. In the sense that, when students realize they can follow the directions to complete a particular laboratory experiment,

for instance, they may feel a sense of accomplishment as a result of using authentic materials. This is a very encouraging fact because learning materials, whether they are authentic or published, should serve the process rather than the end goal (Kuo, 1993).

2.4 THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN READING CLASSES

Materials are important in language teaching. It is the materials that make the complex text easier to understand. Teaching materials are those that assist a teacher in clarifying, interpreting, and mapping a subject's concept. It is important to the students. The teaching aids assist the teacher in carrying out his or her duties better, and they also assist students in focusing their attention on objects, actions, and situations events and circumstances that provide meaning and context for the words and sentences presented by the teacher in the classroom (Bitchener, 2006, p. 48).

In language teaching, authentic materials play a crucial role in the EFL classroom. They are considered an essential step to take into consideration for facilitating the task of teaching and learning. When teachers use supplementary materials, teaching aids, and materials in the classroom while teaching reading, they contribute to enhancing learning activities by providing entertainment, effectiveness, and interest. Common language teaching aids include chalkboards, flannel boards, magnet boards, pocket charts, realia, pictures, models, flash cards, pictures, songs, and games. These materials serve various functions and contribute significantly to language teaching.

Additionally, the use of authentic materials helps learners engage in the learning process as they motivate them to read and enjoy the materials they are reading as Nuttall (1996) declares that "authentic texts can be motivating because they are proof that the language is used for real-life purposes by real people" (p.172). Which means that, textbooks should be cater for encouraging real-life reading skills. Grant (1987) lists them as follows:

- Reading for gist: This means reading to get the main point of a text.
- Reading for information: This means that the reader reads selectively those parts of the text
- Reading for studying: It is necessary an any situation where students may have to study texts in order subjects in the English language.

If these skills are not handled in the book, then teacher should find a supplementary material that tackles all the mentioned skills. The alternative I to devise exercises which will motivate the students in the process of acquiring the reading skill. To elaborate more, extracting materials from a real text in a new/different language can be extremely

motivating, increasing students' motivation for learning by exposing them to real language (Guariento & Morley, 2001).

2.5 AT WHICH LEVEL CAN AUTHENTIC MATERIALS BE USED?

Although many experts advise using real materials when teaching a foreign language, we should consider whether it is suitable for all students at all levels. The level of the learners must be taken into consideration when employing real resources, which is an important factor. It is very crucial to use authentic materials in the classroom. In other words, if the materials are too difficult or advanced for the students, it may demotivate them and prevent them from learning the language (Huda, 2017). According to Kilickaya (2004), advanced and intermediate level students are the only ones who should use original resources. This is consistent with Larisa Lutskovskaia's findings. (2016) found that when adult professionals use AMs for their group and individual work, they are more engaged and demonstrate higher learning outcomes.

Another viewpoint is held by other researchers. They think that authentic resources can be used with students of all skill levels. Teachers need to be aware that using authentic resources will only be beneficial if it is done in the manner for which they were intended, which is the real world instead of in the classroom. By this way, a text can only have true authenticity in the setting in which it was written.

III. PREVIOUS RESARCHERS ON TEACHERS' PERCEPIVE TOWARDS THE USE OF AUTHENTIC MATERIALS IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN EFL CONTEXT

The views of Iranian teachers about the use of authentic materials in EFL classes were investigated by Akbari & Razavi in 2015. The research was carried out in TED (Tabadkan English Department), one of Mashhad, Iran. Regardless of their nationality, level of teaching experience, or educational background, the results showed that all of the teachers had a favorable attitude toward incorporating authentic input into their classes. To enhance students' abilities and expose them to authentic English, such an attitude was adopted. Teachers also mentioned that reading classes would typically employ more real materials than listening classes. The outcomes also showed that the most popular channels for accessing real materials would be TV and the internet (Huda, 2017).

These results are in line with recent research, such as the Zhafarhandi study and the Soliman E. M. Soliman ones, which offered proof in support of teachers' favorable

opinions toward employing real materials in their classes. The teachers disagreed on the appropriate student level for giving such things, according to this study. The majority of the teachers held the opinion that the course objectives and the text's language level should serve as the primary determinants for choosing relevant texts. Finally, the majority of participants also expressed a need for further instruction in creating acceptable tasks when employing authentic resources. The findings of this study may serve as a springboard for further investigation into the application of real materials in EFL instruction (Huda, 2017).

In 2015, Wiji, Z.L., conducted a critical reading process in a public senior high school in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The goal of this study was to help the students develop their ability to read critically. The outcome demonstrates that the students' reading abilities can be enhanced by critical reading with the aid of authentic materials. Critical reading gives students a forum for debate, allows them to voice their opinions, and aids in their comprehension of the book. It also demonstrates that the teachers had a good attitude regarding the use of authentic materials in their classes, particularly when selecting texts for discussion topics that are hot-button issues that encourage students to be more engaged and interactive (Huda, 2017).

IV. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The theories that underlie the study have been expanded upon in this section. In general, the study follows Richard's (2006) model for investigating the use of authentic materials in communicative language teaching today. In particular, he argued that the push for authenticity for classroom activities, including the use of materials, is necessary because students are getting ready for real life, and language is used as a tool of communication in real life.

The study mentioned CLT in addition to the ideas of the efficient classroom learning tasks and exercises that give students the chance to negotiate meaning, increase their language resources, see how language is used, and engage in meaningful interpersonal exchange. Students are absorbing knowledge that is pertinent, useful, fascinating, and engaging as they communicate meaningfully (Huda, 2017).

Additionally, the study incorporates findings from earlier studies on the use of authentic materials in teaching English from the perspectives of teachers in Iran and Indonesia, as well as how those practices are carried out in those two nations, which both studies showed that teachers in those two nations had a favorable attitude toward the use of authentic materials in teaching English (Huda, 2017).

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is investigating teachers' attitudes or perceptions regarding the use of authentic materials in the Moroccan classrooms.

5.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2010: 22), "the research design describes how the study is conducted, and the purpose of a research design is to indicate a plan that will generate evidence that will be able to answer the research questions." This research is based on a qualitative research method using questionnaire to collect data.

5.2 RESEARCH SAMPLE

This study was conducted in three high schools in Kenitra. The questionnaire had 6 English teachers as respondents. Due to two factors, I chose these three high schools. The first reason is that, since I have been teaching in these three schools, I have a strong desire to learn about the attitudes of English teachers about the use of real materials in Moroccan classrooms. The second reason is that I get along well with the English teachers and the administration. Teachers may be more willing to participate in my research in a more cooperative manner.

5.2.1 PARTICIPANTS

Four males and two females' English teachers were purposefully chosen to take part in this study. They were chosen on purpose under the presumption that they have rich information regarding their attitudes toward the use of authentic materials in teaching English and they have been teaching for more than 10 years. Additionally, all of their academic training has been in English.

Participants	Gender	Age	Education	Teaching Experience
T1	F	29	Doctorate candidate	10
T2	F	35	Bachelor	15
T3	M	45	Bachelor	20
T4	M	29	Master's	10
T5	M	40	Master's	15
T6	M	38	Doctorate candidate	10

5.3 PROCEDURE AND INSTRUMENTS

The survey questionnaire was distributed to six English teachers via an online survey in order to identify teachers' perception and attitude towards using of authentic materials in teaching reading. Creswell (2012) claimed that "surveys help identify important beliefs and attitudes of individuals"

(p.6). Additionally, the questionnaire survey includes closed-ended questions. The first part of the questionnaire was about the participants' background information (their gender, age and teaching experience) and the second part was about the participants' attitude towards the use of authentic materials in the classroom. The participants had to return the survey questionnaire by the deadline and the findings were then analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages.

5.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey questionnaire. Any notable findings, such as specific patterns in their response, have been focused and

investigated. By doing so, a better understanding can be explained.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research related to English teachers' opinions toward the use of authentic materials in teaching English is presented in this part, along with discussion of the findings. The study hopes to answer the following questions:

1. What are Moroccan EFL teachers' perceptions about the use of authentic materials?
2. Do Moroccan teachers prefer to use authentic materials? Why?

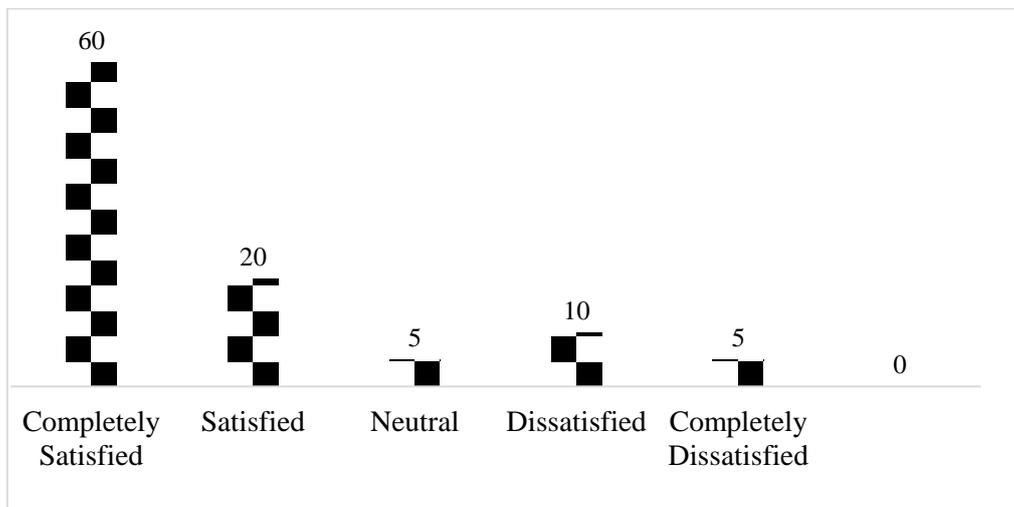


Fig.1: Moroccan EFL teachers' satisfaction with the textbook they use

The findings in the figure above indicate that Moroccan EFL teachers hold positive attitudes towards the textbook they use in the classroom. Relatedly, a large proportion of the participants are completely satisfied and/or satisfied (60% and 20% respectively). Additionally, only a negligible

proportion (5%) of the study's participants are completely dissatisfied with the textbook used. We can, therefore, argue with complete confidence that Moroccan EFL teachers are highly satisfied with the textbooks used in Morocco.

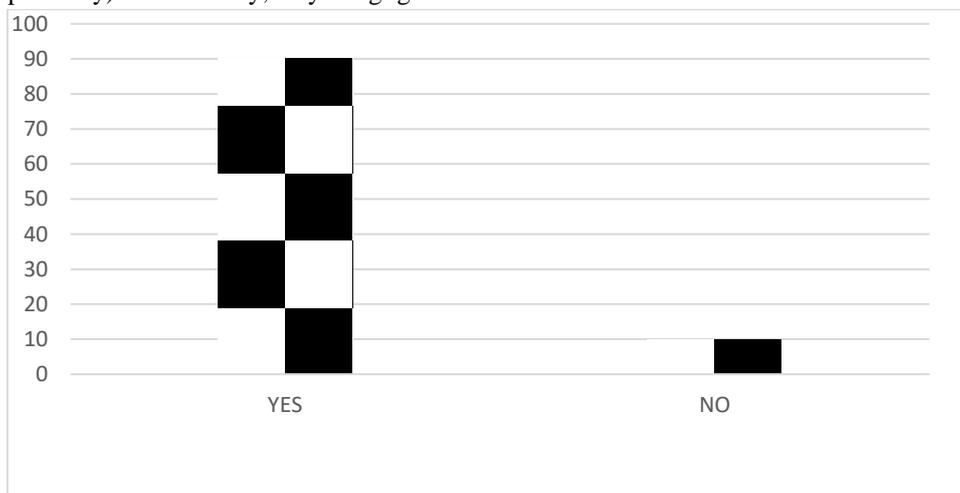


Fig.2: Moroccan EFL Teachers' use of authentic materials

The figure above illustrates that Moroccan teachers have positive attitude towards the use of authentic materials (95%) and only 5% of teachers who do not use authentic materials. So, what is striking about this figure is that the

use of authentic materials is widely used by Moroccan EFL teachers while teaching reading; Which means that, teachers agree that the use of authentic materials have positive effect on students' language skill and performance.

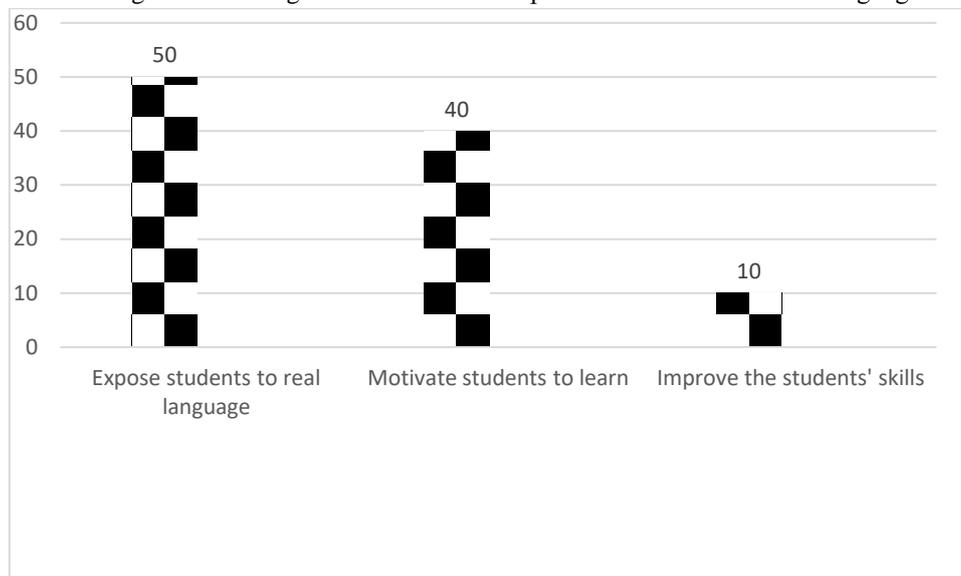


Fig.3: The reasons for using authentic materials

Based on the chart above, it is obvious that the reasons that push Moroccan EFL teachers to use authentic materials in the reading lessons is that they expose students to real language (50%); this indicates that teachers recognize the importance of providing students with authentic materials that reflect their real life and real world. Undeniably, this exposure paves the way for students to engage in the learning and become able to prompt a deeper understanding of what they read in the class. On the other hand, other teachers believe that the motivation of students accounts for 40 %; which means, the respondents believe that the use of authentic materials play a crucial role in enhancing student motivation. To put it differently, when students read enthusiastically, this means that teachers foster an engaging and stimulating leaning environment that leads students to motivation and participation. Finally, improving students' skills represents 10%. This means that authentic materials play an important factor in enhancing language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. To sum up, Moroccan EFL teachers prefer to use authentic materials because they expose students to real life and language, motivate the students to be engaged in the learning process, and improve their language skills.

The graph clearly shows the sources that Moroccan EFL teachers to obtain authentic materials for their reading lessons are as follows: newspapers and magazines account for 16,7%; TV and videos as well as radios account for 0%; whereas, internet accounts for 83,3%. This means that the majority of teachers rely on internet as a primary source for

obtaining their authentic materials. This finding illustrates internet becomes an easy source for teachers to provide huge sources of authentic materials.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study explores teachers' perception regarding the use of authentic materials in Moroccan EFL classrooms. The results reveal interesting insights about the use of authentic materials. That is, the majority of teachers are aware of the importance of authentic materials and its positive impact on students' performance. To put it differently, teachers who use authentic materials in the classroom, they transmit their enthusiasm to their students to be exposed to real English language and to motivate them to learn English enthusiastically. Furthermore, the results show that the internet is one of the primary sources that teachers use to obtain authentic materials. These results are consistent with recent research, which, according to Akbari & Razavi (2016)'s investigation, showed a clear evidence about teachers' perceptions about the use of authentic materials in their reading lessons. Most teachers hold positive attitude towards using authentic materials and agree that the course objectives and the text's language level serve as the primary concepts for selecting texts that suit students' level and interest. The findings of this study could be used as a springboard for further investigation into the application of real materials in EFL classrooms.

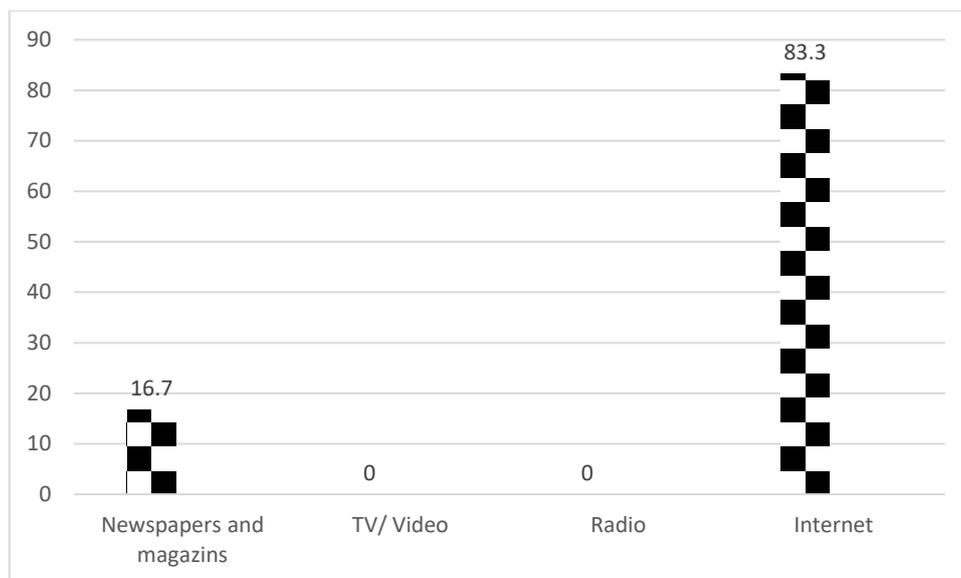


Fig.4: The sources that Moroccan EFL teachers to obtain authentic materials

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