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Theses / Dissertation

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Abstract

This study attempts to elicit EFL learners' and teachers' beliefs and attitudes regarding the use of authentic reading materials at the college level in Saudi Arabia. The descriptive research design used incorporated both qualitative and quantitative instruments to accomplish the objectives of the study, employing two questionnaires – a learners' attitude questionnaire and a teachers' attitude questionnaire—as well as interviews with both learners and teachers from a randomly selected representative sample of the participants. The participants were 144 female Saudi university students majoring in EFL and 32 female college EFL teachers from three higher education institutions in Riyadh. The analysis of the results indicated that EFL Saudi college learners and teachers had positive attitudes toward the use of authentic materials in their reading classes. In fact, they indicated that an ideal reading class should use a combination of both authentic texts and textbooks. However, a *t*-test analysis showed a statistically significant difference between teachers' and learners' attitudes, with the learners having stronger positive attitudes. In addition, a negative correlation existed between the learners' age and their attitudes, whereas the other variables – including the amount of outside readings, and language proficiency level – had no effect on their attitudes. The results further revealed a negative correlation between teachers' academic degrees and their attitudes, although the remaining variables – including nationality, years of experience, and study in an English-speaking country – had no effect on their attitudes. The participants identified short stories as the most preferable type of authentic material, whereas poems were the least preferable. A major conclusion of the study was that EFL language programs should consider introducing authentic materials into the curriculum as a tool to improve the current learning environment.

Keywords: TEFL/ TESL, authentic material, reading, learners' attitudes, instructors' attitudes, authenticity, attitudes.