BEYOND TEXTS: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MODEL FOR EVALUATING AUTHENTICITY IN EFL MATERIALS

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Abstract

The concept of authenticity in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has often been limited to a narrow definition, typically focused on authentic texts or real language use. However, authenticity is a multifaceted concept that requires consideration from multiple perspectives to fully understand its impact on language teaching and learning. This paper proposes a multidimensional model for evaluating authenticity in EFL materials, incorporating three broad sources of authentic language use, namely texts, tasks, and contexts. The model further divides these sources into seven constituent elements, enabling a comprehensive assessment of how authenticity is represented in EFL materials. The proposed model was applied to two textbooks used in the Tunisian EFL context, offering valuable insights into the varying degrees of authenticity across the texts, tasks, and contexts presented in these materials. The analysis showed limited degrees of linguistic naturalness and structural appropriateness in listening and reading activities (text authenticity) in both textbooks; low to moderate degrees of situational relevance and goal-orientedness in speaking and writing activities (task authenticity); and moderate to high degrees of socio-pragmatic appropriateness in both receptive and productive modes (context authenticity). These findings provided valuable insights into the design of Tunisian EFL materials, highlighting areas where authenticity can be strengthened. Furthermore, they proved that the proposed model can be used to evaluate authenticity in other EFL contexts, offering a flexible framework for assessing language learning materials globally.

Keywords: authenticity, EFL, textbook evaluation, multidimensional model, materials design

1. Introduction

In its general meaning, authenticity refers to the extent to which teaching materials reflect real-life English use outside the classroom (Gilmore, 2007). In the context of English as a

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Foreign Language (EFL), authentic materials refer to texts, visuals, and other resources originally created for real-life use, not for language teaching (Cohen & Sykes, 2021). Authenticity promotes natural language production by exposing learners to real social and cultural contexts. It enhances learners' motivation and improves their listening and reading skills, preparing them for real-life communication in various settings (Peacock, 1997). Authentic materials expose learners to real vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, language structures, communicative functions, and diverse accents, allowing them to practice language in real-world interactions and communicate effectively in different situations. Authenticity can be found in news articles, songs, brochures, websites, menus, posters, podcasts, videos, advertisements, social media posts, etc. These are all forms of content originally produced for native speakers in real-life contexts. Authentic materials reflect how language is truly used by native speakers, helping learners become familiar with how English is actually spoken and written in everyday contexts (Chen, 2013; Pinner, 2014).

Evaluating authenticity in EFL materials is crucial because it ensures that the resources used in the classroom are genuine representations of real-world language use, introducing learners to authentic communicative patterns and styles (Berardo, 2006; Harmer, 2007). Authenticity, in this broad sense, extends beyond original texts to include other aspects of the teaching and learning process, such as tasks, activities, and interactional contexts (Gilmore, 2019; Fuchs, 2024). Authenticity can be found in elements that aim to replicate real-world language use and require learners to apply their skills in practical, meaningful ways. For example, authentic tasks simulate real-life situations where learners can use language purposefully and can engage more deeply with the learning experience (Nuss & Martelle, 2024). Thus, authenticity encompasses both the materials and the methods through which language is used. It includes not only the use of real-world texts but also teaching strategies and tasks that reflect how language is naturally used in everyday situations to help learners engage with language in meaningful and practical ways (Naur & Widodo, 2025).

This paper has three main objectives. First, it aims to critically review the various types of authenticity in language teaching, exploring how each contributes to our understanding of what constitutes authentic language use in the classroom. Second, it seeks to develop a model for evaluating authenticity, integrating these sources into a comprehensive framework that can be applied to different types of EFL materials. Finally, it will apply this model to two textbooks used in the Tunisian EFL context to assess its practicality in drawing meaningful conclusions about the authenticity of these materials and their alignment with real-world language use. By addressing the absence of a coherent and practical model for evaluating authenticity in EFL textbooks, the paper aims to bridge a gap in the literature. It seeks to offer a contribution to both theoretical understanding and practical applications, presenting insights that can inform future research and enhance textbook evaluation practices in the field.

2. Literature Review

Research on authenticity in EFL materials has traditionally been centered on two primary areas: the various types of authenticity and the elements that constitute each type (Tomlinson, 2012). The first area examined the distinction between *text authenticity*, *task authenticity*, and *context authenticity*. These types refer to different dimensions of the teaching materials that work together to create a realistic learning experience (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). The second area, elements of authenticity, focused on the specific components of each type – such as the language used in texts, the relevance and complexity of tasks, and the alignment with real-life contexts – that contribute to the overall authenticity of the materials (Jacobs *et al.*, 2022; Aisyah & Azmi, 2023). The following section shall provide a critical review of both areas.

2.1 Types of Authenticity

The first type of authenticity is related to the text, focusing on the use of real, unadapted materials that were originally created for native speakers (Domogen, 2023). The use of authentic texts provides a genuine representation of vocabulary, grammar, and cultural context. Unlike simplified, pedagogical materials, authentic texts maintain the complexity and nuance of the language, introducing learners to varied registers, informal styles, idiomatic expressions, and the natural flow of conversations. By engaging with these materials, learners are better prepared for real-life communication because they encounter language as it is actually written and spoken in everyday situations, rather than in artificial, controlled contexts. The use of authentic texts also fosters greater motivation because learners often find authentic content, such as news reports or social media posts, more interesting and relevant to their lives (Gulikers *et al.*, 2004; Jacobs *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, authentic materials enhance learners' ability to think critically about language and use it effectively in genuine communicative situations. Working on content designed for native speakers exposes learners to a wider range of language structures and cultural references that they may not encounter in simplified, pedagogical materials. Authentic texts not only improve their comprehension skills but also encourage them to analyze how language works in different contexts, helping them become more flexible and adaptive in their use of English (Herrington *et al.*, 2003).

Authenticity can also be related to the language tasks practiced by learners. Task authenticity refers to activities that closely mirror real-life situations, allowing learners to use English in meaningful, practical contexts (Anagnostopoulu *et al.*, 2023). Instead of focusing on isolated grammar exercises or detached lists of synonyms and antonyms, authentic tasks engage learners in activities they are likely to encounter outside the classroom, like participating in discussions, making phone calls, writing emails, negotiating deals, etc. Authentic tasks help learners develop the skills they need for effective communication in the real world, equipping them with the linguistic knowledge they need to solve problems, express opinions, or interact with others in ways that are relevant to their daily lives. Task authenticity makes learning more purposeful,

motivating, and applicable to real-world scenarios. When learners complete tasks that mirror actual challenges, such as solving a problem or conducting an interview, they can see the direct relevance of what they are learning. This connection to real-life contexts bridges the gap between academic learning and real-world language use (Buendgens-Kosten, 2014; García-Pinar, 2019).

The last type of authenticity, context authenticity, refers to the alignment of the language use with real-life contexts in which language would naturally occur (Ahmadi, 2019). This means that the teaching materials and learning activities should reflect the contexts in which learners might use language outside the classroom, such as social interactions, business meetings, or academic presentations. By incorporating authentic contexts, learners are exposed to language that is used for specific purposes, in realistic settings, helping them understand how tone, formality, and vocabulary choices vary depending on the situation (Wang *et al.*, 2012). This type of authenticity helps learners navigate diverse real-world scenarios and adapt their language to different contexts. In real-life situations, language is not static; it changes depending on various factors, including the relationship between speakers, the level of formality, and the purpose of the interaction. For example, a learner may use different expressions and sentence structures when speaking to a friend versus when negotiating plans in a business meeting. This ability to adjust language according to context enhances the learner's confidence in handling a variety of social, professional, and academic contexts, making them better communicators in everyday life (Mundarsari, 2023; Iroda, 2024).

Studying authenticity from the perspectives of text, task, and context is important because it provides a comprehensive approach to language learning that mirrors how language is actually used in the real world. Each perspective addresses a unique aspect of the EFL materials, helping learners develop the skills and confidence needed to communicate effectively in diverse situations. Examining authenticity through these three lenses ensures that learners receive a carefully-crafted input that not only teaches them the mechanics of the language but also prepares them to use it naturally and spontaneously in a range of real-life situations.

2.2 Elements of Authenticity

Research on authenticity has focused on various aspects of the teaching materials, particularly the origins of the texts used, the types of tasks included, and the communicative contexts presented to learners. In research on text authenticity, previous studies have typically focused on the three dimensions of linguistic naturalness, structural appropriateness, and communicative pertinence:

- Linguistic naturalness: this dimension focuses on the extent to which the language used in the EFL materials reflects the actual usage of native speakers. An authentic text would be rich in linguistic forms used in real communication, like idiomatic expressions (Iroda, 2024), speech acts, formal/informal registers, and lexical variety (Kilickaya, 2004).

- Structural appropriateness: this dimension is concerned with the layout and formatting of the texts presented to learners. Authentic texts typically include non-linguistic clues, like images, graphics, and tables, that assist in meaning making (Guariento and Morley, 2001; Syafri, 2011). The idea is that learners can build meaning from various non-linear sources, not only from texts presented in lines and paragraphs.
- Communicative pertinence: this dimension is about the social purpose of the text. It examines whether the text was originally addressed to a real audience rather than a language learner. An authentic text would typically convey the living culture of the target language, like the inclusion of local events, real names, or social norms that reflect the target culture (Kramsch, 1998).

In research on task authenticity, the focus shifts to the actions that learners perform during language use, as these actions must closely mirror the real-world communicative demands that learners are likely to encounter. This dimension is known as situational relevance, meaning that authentic EFL tasks are meant to replicate real-life scenarios where learners need to use English outside the classroom (Nuss & Martelle, 2024). Additionally, authentic tasks are typically goal-oriented and achieve a specific communicative result. Their goal is not just to practice grammar or language forms, but to achieve a clear product or outcome, like solving a problem or completing a map; or fulfilling a communicative intent, like expressing an opinion or discussing a problem (Fuchs, 2024). The study of the task's situational relevance and communicative intent is important in determining its degree of authenticity because both dimensions allow learners to practice language in ways that align with actual communication outside the classroom, enhancing both their language proficiency and practical communication skills.

As for context authenticity, most studies have focused on dimensions like the socio-pragmatic appropriateness of the texts and tasks presented to students and the specificity of the communicative domains in focus. Socio-pragmatic appropriateness refers to the degree to which EFL texts and tasks reflect the social distance and power hierarchies found in the target culture (degrees of formality) and the unwritten rules of interaction, like turn-taking, eye contact, and appropriate topics for small talk (Taguchi, 2015). Authentic materials would typically observe these socio-pragmatic elements carefully, as they expose learners to nuances of social context, cultural norms, and appropriate language use. Finally, authentic texts and tasks also introduce learners to different types of domains, particularly professional or academic contexts, where language use can differ significantly (Douglas, 2000). The varied exposure of learners to different communicative domains enhances their socio-cultural understanding of how language is used in various professional and academic fields. It prepares them for real-world challenges, fostering both their language competence and professional or academic readiness.

Interestingly, the dimensions associated with the three types of authenticity – text authenticity, task authenticity, and context authenticity – can be integrated into a single

model for studying authenticity in EFL textbooks. This model would place equal emphasis on all dimensions, ensuring a balanced approach to evaluating the authenticity of both materials and activities. By incorporating these three dimensions into one cohesive framework, the model would provide a comprehensive way to assess the effectiveness and realism of EFL textbooks, helping educators and learners engage more meaningfully with the materials. To assess the practical application of the proposed model, the study will pilot it with two Tunisian EFL materials. Piloting the model itself would enable the study to test its applicability and effectiveness in evaluating EFL materials, while also providing valuable insights into the current level of authenticity within the textbooks being examined. To achieve these goals, the study will try to answer the following research questions.

- What are the key components of a multi-dimensional model for evaluating authenticity in EFL materials?
- How does the proposed model assess the level of authenticity in Tunisian EFL textbooks?

3. Methodology

This study proposes a multi-dimensional model for studying authenticity in EFL textbooks and applies it to two textbooks used in the Tunisian context. This section details the analysis framework, built around the proposed model, and presents the corpus used for the study.

3.1 Analysis Framework

The critical review of the literature has shown that authenticity in language learning extends beyond the texts presented to learners; it encompasses the tasks and the contexts in which learning takes place. Each of the three types of authenticity comprises several interrelated elements that work together to guarantee a more realistic and effective learning experience. By breaking down each type into its constituent elements, it becomes clear that authenticity is a complex interplay of various factors. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive understanding of what authenticity means, ensuring that learners are exposed not just to realistic texts but also to tasks and contexts that mirror real-world language use. The three types of authenticity can be broken down into the seven elements described in Table 1. These elements form the essence of the proposed model, providing a nuanced framework for assessing how well materials reflect real-world language use. Each element plays a crucial role in insuring that the textbooks and tasks are not only linguistically accurate but also contextually and culturally relevant, engaging learners in ways that mirror actual communication (Kramsch, 1998; Douglas, 2000; Guariento and Morley, 2001; kilickaya, 2004; Syafri, 2011; Taguchi, 2015; Fuchs, 2024; Iroda, 2024; Nuss & Martelle, 2024).

Table 1: Types of Authenticity and their Constituent Elements

Types of authenticity	Constituent elements	Element descriptions
Text Authenticity	Linguistic naturalness	The extent to which the language used in the EFL materials reflects the actual usage of native speakers.
	Structural appropriateness	Whether the layout and formatting of the texts presented to learners include linear and non-linear content.
	Communicative pertinence	Whether the text was originally addressed to a real audience rather than a language learner.
Task Authenticity	Situational relevance	The extent to which EFL tasks are meant to replicate real-life scenarios where learners need to use English outside the classroom.
	Goal-orientedness	Whether the tasks are goal-oriented and achieve a specific communicative result.
Context Authenticity	Socio-pragmatic appropriateness	The degree to which EFL texts and tasks reflect the social distance and power hierarchies found in the target culture (e.g. degrees of formality).
	Targeted domains	Whether texts and tasks introduce learners to different types of domains, particularly professional or academic contexts, where language use can differ significantly.

These elements can be incorporated into a framework designed to assess the authenticity of educational materials and their alignment with real-world language use. By focusing on criteria such as linguistic naturalness, situational relevance, and socio-pragmatic appropriateness, this framework helps educators evaluate how closely materials (texts, tasks, and contexts) mirror authentic communication outside the classroom. It can assess whether the language used is suitable for the learners' proficiency level, if the tasks encourage meaningful interaction, and whether the contexts reflect real-life situations. By integrating the three types of authenticity, the model ensures that all aspects of real-language use are considered, providing a more accurate image of the degree of authenticity in the used materials. The elements belonging to the three types would make the evaluation more detailed and valid, ensuring that all aspects of authentic language are considered. Together, these elements create a comprehensive framework for assessing educational materials, addressing the nuances that influence authentic language use in different types of settings.

To facilitate the evaluation of materials, the model further classifies each element into three categories – low authenticity, moderate authenticity, and high authenticity – to assess how closely the texts, tasks, and contexts align with real-world language use. This classification allows for a more detailed evaluation of each aspect, such as structural appropriateness, goal-orientedness, and target domains. When an aspect is categorized as "low authenticity", it implies that the material is significantly removed from actual communication, often relying on artificial, simplified language and scenarios that do not reflect how language is used in everyday life. "Moderate authenticity" suggests that the material makes some attempt to connect to real-life contexts, but still includes simplifications or generalizations to make it more accessible to learners. It may present

language that could be used in real-world situations, but it does not fully capture the spontaneity or complexity of natural communication. Ultimately, "high authenticity" indicates that the material closely mirrors authentic language use. It features natural, conversational language, reflects real-life situations, and often incorporates cultural nuances and diverse contexts. Table 2 illustrates the proposed model, highlighting the types of authenticity, their constituent elements, and the degrees of authenticity assigned to each element.

Table 2: The Proposed Model

Type of Authenticity	Constituent Elements	Degrees of Authenticity		
		Low	Moderate	High
Text Authenticity	Linguistic naturalness			
	Structural appropriateness			
	Communicative pertinence			
Task Authenticity	Situational relevance			
	Goal-orientedness			
Context Authenticity	Socio-pragmatic appropriateness			
	Targeted domains			

3.2 Corpus of the Study

To assess the proposed model's appropriateness and applicability in evaluating the authenticity of educational materials, it was applied to two Tunisian EFL textbooks, examining how effectively it could assess authenticity across its different types and constituent elements. The textbooks are authored by the Tunisian Ministry of Education and used in all public schools nationwide. They are used for the first and second years of secondary education (ages 16 and 17), and their content is structured around thematic units, each focusing on a specific topic or skill area. These units cover a range of subjects, including social issues and cultural topics, providing students with input reflecting the curriculum requirements for this educational phase. The first-year textbook is entitled *Perform through English*, presenting input divided into 35 lessons involving the four language skills, and the second-year textbook is entitled *Perform to Learn*, including 30 lessons organized in the same fashion.

4. Results

4.1 Data Analysis

The analysis of authenticity in the selected textbooks has been conducted according to the three major types explained in the previous sections (text, task, and context), allowing for a systematic evaluation of how well the activities included in both textbooks align with real-world language use across these dimensions. This methodological choice imposed splitting the model presented in Table 2 into three parts, each focusing on one type of authenticity. In the part on text authenticity, the analysis has exclusively focused on activities involving the listening and reading skills. The audio and written texts

presented to learners were analyzed in terms of three parameters: linguistic naturalness, structural appropriateness, and communicative pertinence. The findings collected with this part of the model are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Text Authenticity in the Two Textbooks

Textbook	Authenticity Element	Listening Passages			Reading Texts		
		L	M	H	L	M	H
Perform through English	Linguistic naturalness	9	17	9	8	17	10
	Structural appropriateness	7	21	7	9	15	11
	Communicative pertinence	9	15	11	9	18	8
Perform to Learn	Linguistic naturalness	4	10	16	9	4	17
	Structural appropriateness	6	7	17	6	6	18
	Communicative pertinence	5	7	18	5	6	19

The quantification of listening and reading activities according to their degree of authenticity shows distinct patterns in the degree of authenticity in the three parameters: linguistic naturalness, structural appropriateness, and communicative pertinence. In *Perform through English*, the listening passages show a fair distribution, with a slightly higher concentration of moderate authenticity in both linguistic naturalness (n=35, 48%) and structural appropriateness (n=35, 60%). These passages generally maintain a reasonable degree of naturalness in language use, though some still fall into the low-authenticity category (n=35, 25%), reflecting some simplifications made for educational purposes. The reading texts in this textbook are slightly more varied, with moderate authenticity dominating in linguistic naturalness (n=35, 48%) and structural appropriateness (n=35, 42%), but also a notable presence of high authenticity in communicative pertinence (n=35, 51%). However, the overall picture leans towards a moderate degree of authenticity, as there are significant occurrences of low authenticity, particularly in the structural aspect (n=35, 25%), and in communicative pertinence (n=35, 28%).

On the other hand, *Perform to Learn* shows a clear trend towards high authenticity in both the listening passages and reading texts, especially in communicative pertinence. The listening passages demonstrate a significant shift towards high authenticity in the three parameters, particularly in communicative pertinence (n=30, 60%) and linguistic naturalness (n=30, 53%), suggesting that the materials are more aligned with real-world communication. The reading texts also show a clear tendency towards high authenticity, with linguistic naturalness and structural appropriateness reaching higher values (n=30, 56% and 60%, respectively), indicating that these texts are more aligned with authentic language use. Despite these positive trends, there are still areas of moderate authenticity, especially in the structural appropriateness of the listening passages (n=30, 23%) and the communicative pertinence of reading texts (n=30, 20%), which reflects a balance of simplified and authentic language to match the learners' level.

Using the part on context authenticity, the focus of the analysis has shifted to activities involving the speaking and writing skills. The productive mode is more

appropriate here because it reflects the learner's ability to produce language in real-world situations, rather than just receiving or understanding it. Table 4 illustrates the findings collected with the part on context authenticity.

Table 4: Task Authenticity in the Two Textbooks

Textbook	Authenticity Element	Speaking Tasks			Writing Tasks		
		L	M	H	L	M	H
Perform through English	Situational relevance	5	12	5	5	6	14
	Goal-orientedness	2	6	14	8	12	5
Perform to Learn	Situational relevance	13	5	7	9	12	9
	Goal-orientedness	12	6	7	10	12	8

A global view of the speaking and writing tasks in the two textbooks shows that *Perform through English* generally provides a balanced distribution of situational relevance and goal-orientedness across its activities. The speaking tasks show a fairly even split between low, moderate, and high authenticity, with situational relevance slightly favoring moderate authenticity (n=22, 54%) and goal-orientedness leaning towards high authenticity (n=22, 63%). This suggests that most of the speaking activities are designed to be relevant to real-life situations, but there is still room for improvement in making these tasks more practical and aligned with authentic communication contexts. For the writing tasks, there is a stronger emphasis on high situational relevance (n=25, 56%) and moderate goal-orientedness (n=25, 48%), indicating that the textbook aims to engage students in more practical writing tasks, such as composing emails and letters, but still incorporates tasks that could be better aligned with real-world goals.

In contrast, *Perform to Learn* exhibits a more varied distribution, particularly in the goal-orientedness of speaking and writing tasks. While the speaking tasks show a mix of moderate and high authenticity, with situational relevance showing a stronger emphasis on low authenticity (n=22, 59%), the writing tasks present a more polarized distribution. Situational relevance for writing tasks is more evenly distributed, with moderate (n=30, 40%) and high (n=30, 30%) authenticity tasks, but the goal-orientedness of the writing tasks is heavily skewed towards high authenticity (n=30, 63%), suggesting that the textbook focuses more on engaging students in tasks that are closely aligned with real-world writing goals, such as diaries and reports. This emphasis on goal-orientedness in writing, alongside a more moderate approach to speaking tasks, highlights this textbook's focus on encouraging students to write and speak for real-world purposes.

The last type of authenticity analyzed with the third part of the model is context authenticity. In this part of the analysis, the tasks included in the two textbooks have been classified into receptive and productive modes, ensuring all four skills are equally addressed. The findings collected with this part of the model are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Context Authenticity in the Two Textbooks

Textbook	Authenticity Element	Receptive Mode			Productive Mode		
		L	M	H	L	M	H
Perform through English	Socio-pragmatic appropriateness	23	19	28	19	12	16
	Targeted domains	19	26	25	11	21	15
Perform to Learn	Socio-pragmatic appropriateness	15	18	27	12	19	24
	Targeted domains	19	23	18	15	19	21

The analysis of context authenticity in the two textbooks reveals different patterns in the way the materials address socio-pragmatic appropriateness and targeted domains in both receptive and productive modes. In *Perform through English*, the socio-pragmatic appropriateness of the materials in the receptive mode shows a relatively balanced distribution (low = 23; moderate = 19; and high = 28), with the majority of the tasks falling into the high-authenticity category, indicating that the listening and reading tasks generally reflect real-world language use in terms of social and pragmatic context. However, in the productive mode, the distribution shifts more towards low authenticity (n=47, 40%), suggesting that the speaking and writing tasks may lack some of the social and pragmatic complexity found in real-life communication. Similarly, in terms of targeted domains, the first textbook includes a mix of moderate and high authenticity in the receptive tasks (moderate = 26; high = 25), but the productive tasks are weighted more towards moderate authenticity (n=47, 44%), pointing to the need for greater focus on real-world applicability in speaking and writing tasks.

In contrast, *Perform to Learn* shows a more varied but stable distribution of context authenticity in both receptive and productive modes. The socio-pragmatic dimension of the tasks is consistently high in both receptive and productive modes, indicating that this textbook incorporates a higher number of socially and pragmatically appropriate tasks for speaking and writing. The receptive tasks also show a strong alignment with high socio-pragmatic appropriateness (27 occurrences in listening and reading activities). In terms of targeted domains, the receptive mode presents a more varied distribution, with moderate authenticity spotted in 23 tasks and high authenticity observed in 18 other tasks. For productive tasks, there is an even distribution of moderate and high authenticity (n=19, 34% and n=21, 38%, respectively), showing that the textbook includes a wide range of tasks that prepare students for practical communication scenarios. Overall, the second-year textbook presents a more authentic and contextually relevant approach in both receptive and productive modes, offering students more opportunities to engage with language in real-world settings.

4.2 Discussion

The proposed model provided important results on text, task, and context authenticity by grouping their related components into a cohesive tool for evaluating educational materials. The innovation of the proposed model lies in its ability to integrate insights from previous research while presenting a balanced and comprehensive approach that emphasizes the three types of authenticity equally. It recognizes the interdependence of

text, task, and context, ensuring that all aspects of authenticity are examined in relation to one another. This integrative approach not only enhances the accuracy of the analysis but also helps educators and researchers identify more specific areas for improvement across multiple dimensions of the learning materials. The model goes beyond the traditional understanding of authenticity as the use of original or real texts to introduce critical new dimensions, such as task and context authenticity, acknowledging that real-world language learning is not only about interacting with original texts but also about the tasks students perform and the contexts in which they practice the language.

Dividing the three types of authenticity – text, task, and context – into seven distinct elements made the evaluation more nuanced and valid by providing a detailed and systematic framework for assessing various aspects of educational materials. Rather than treating each authenticity type as a single, broad concept, the model divided these types into specific components, which allowed for a deeper analysis of how each element contributed to the overall authenticity of the materials, ensuring that no aspect is overlooked. The elements included in the model are varied and linked to many aspects of language learning, which enhances the depth and validity of the evaluation. By evaluating each element separately, the model provided a more comprehensive and precise picture of how well the materials reflect authentic language use, making the evaluation process more valid and actionable for educators and researchers. This approach ensures that all facets of authenticity are carefully considered, ultimately leading to more effective language learning resources.

The model also allowed for the evaluation of materials according to the four key language skills. Text authenticity was assessed by analyzing reading and listening materials, focusing on their linguistic naturalness, structural appropriateness, and communicative pertinence. This evaluation determined the extent to which listening and reading texts accurately reflected real-world language use, offering students authentic exposure to how language is naturally spoken or written. Task authenticity, on the other hand, focused on speaking and writing activities, evaluating how well these tasks engaged students in meaningful communication. The model assessed whether the tasks provided opportunities for students to produce language in real-world contexts, encouraging authentic interaction and practical application of language skills. Finally, context authenticity was examined by analyzing both receptive and productive modes, evaluating the extent to which the tasks in both modes were set within realistic, culturally relevant, and socially appropriate contexts. By addressing all these elements, the model facilitated a comprehensive evaluation that considered how authentic the materials were in relation to both language skills and real-world communication.

Applying the proposed model to the selected textbooks –*Perform through English* and *Perform to Learn* – led to distinct findings regarding the three types of authenticity. In *Perform through English*, the analysis revealed that the texts (both reading and listening) tended to have a more moderate degree of authenticity. While the linguistic features and structures were appropriate for the learners' level, they lacked the spontaneity and naturalness typically found in real-language use, often being simplified for educational

purposes. The speaking and writing tasks in this textbook also showed a mix of low and moderate authenticity, as many of them did not fully replicate real-life communication scenarios. Furthermore, context authenticity was somewhat limited, with tasks often presented in controlled, classroom-like settings that lacked the social and cultural depth found in real-world contexts, which could have provided richer language learning experiences.

On the other hand, the analysis of *Perform to Learn* highlighted a stronger alignment with high authenticity in both texts and tasks. The listening and reading materials in this textbook reflected more natural language use and were more contextually relevant. The speaking and writing tasks were also better aligned with real-life situations, with activities designed to encourage students to use language in more practical, communicative contexts. Additionally, context authenticity was notably higher, as the tasks were often situated in more culturally relevant and socially appropriate scenarios, which promotes a deeper understanding of how language functions in diverse settings. In general, this second textbook demonstrated a more comprehensive approach to authenticity across the three types, offering students a more immersive learning experience compared to *Perform through English*.

The findings obtained from the analysis of both textbooks can be crucial for materials designers to enhance the authenticity of the language learning resources. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each textbook in terms of text, task, and context authenticity, designers can make informed decisions on how to improve their materials. The model has diagnosed key areas where the textbooks fall short in terms of authenticity, which may also help decision makers and materials designers pinpoint specific areas where the textbooks should be improved. This multi-dimensional diagnosis is innovative because it provides a comprehensive and structured framework for evaluating authenticity on many levels. The model's ability to spot strengths and weaknesses across different authenticity dimensions makes it a valuable tool for developing future high-quality, contextually relevant learning experiences.

5. Conclusion

The proposed model addressed a significant research gap by moving beyond the traditional, narrow understanding of authenticity as simply the use of original or real texts in EFL materials. While previous research primarily focused on whether texts were real or authentic based on their source and the purpose for which they were created, the model introduces a broader, multi-dimensional view of authenticity. It recognizes that true authenticity in EFL materials extends far beyond just the linguistic features of the texts to incorporate the extent to which the tasks and contexts align with real-world communication. By breaking authenticity into distinct yet interconnected elements, the model provided a more holistic approach that captures the complexity of how language is used in diverse real-world situations. This new perspective allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of educational materials, including the texts presented to

learners, the tasks they are expected to perform, and the contexts where language is presented and used. In so doing, the model offered a complete framework that may help educators and materials designers create more effective, engaging, and practical resources for learners.

Despite its strengths and the importance of the findings it presented, it is important to acknowledge some limitations in the way the model was applied to Tunisian materials. One key limitation lies in the corpus used for evaluation, which was limited to just two EFL textbooks used in the secondary education phase. While the analysis provided valuable insights into how authenticity is addressed in both textbooks, the small sample size restricts the ability to generalize the findings to other Tunisian EFL materials. Additionally, both textbooks are addressed to a specific age group (16-17 years) and proficiency level, which may not reflect the needs of younger or older learners in the same context. Furthermore, the analysis was primarily focused on traditional reading and listening texts, as well as speaking and writing tasks, potentially overlooking the growing importance of multimedia and digital resources, especially when selected by teachers and used as supplementary resources, in exposing learners to authentic materials in different ways.

To address these limitations, future research could expand the corpus to include a wider range of textbooks across different proficiency levels, age groups, and educational contexts, providing a more comprehensive view of how authenticity is addressed across various resources. Moreover, exploring the role of non-traditional forms of language input, such as video materials and interactive content, would be valuable in understanding how these resources contribute to authenticity in the modern EFL classroom.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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