

Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers of EFL and Authenticity in Foreign Language Teaching

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<p>Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tarkastella ei-natiivien englantia puhuvien englannin opettajien ja autenttisen opetuksen käsitteen suhdetta toisiinsa. Aihe on kiinnostava, sillä perinteisesti autenttisuus on liitetty vahvasti englantia äidinkielenään puhuviin englannin opettajiin, vaikka opetuksen autenttisuus ei ole riippuvainen opettajan äidinkielestä. Sen sijaan opetuksen autenttisuus rakentuu esimerkiksi opetusmateriaalien sekä merkityksellisten oppimisaktiviteettien varaan. Täten tutkimuksessa oli kaksi keskeistä käsitettä: englannin opettajien jako ei-natiiveihin ja natiiveihin opettajiin sekä autenttisuus opetuksessa.</p> <p>Tutkimusdata kerättiin elokuussa 2016 haastattelemalla viittä suomea äidinkielenään puhuvaa englannin opettajaa, joiden vastaukset analysoitiin sovellettua temaattista analyysiä apuna käyttäen. Tutkimuskysymyksinä oli selvittää mikä on ei-natiivien englantia puhuvien opettajien käsitys autenttisesta opetuksesta, sekä miten he käytännössä toteuttavat autenttisuutta omassa opetuksessaan.</p> <p>Tutkimustulokset osoittivat, että opettajien näkemykset autenttisuudesta keskittyivät pitkälti opetusmateriaalien autenttisuuteen. Opetustilanteen autenttisuus ei tullut vastauksissa juuri esille. Opettajat vahvistivat oman opetuksensa autenttisuutta materiaaleilla, joita he olivat tuoneet ulkomailta, sekä jakamalla omia kokemuksiaan ja kuviaan matkoilta ja rohkaisemalla oppilaita kertomaan myös heidän omista kokemuksistaan. Kieliopin opetuksen suhteen opettajat kuitenkin pitivät autenttisuutta toissijaisena: heillä merkityksellisempää oli se, että kaikki oppilaat tasosta riippumatta pysyvät opetuksessa mukana. Heidän mielestään autenttiset materiaalit voivat olla liian haastavia joillekin oppilaille, sillä kouluissa on monentasoisia oppilaita.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to examine the ways Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers' (NNEST) define authentic language teaching and how authenticity is implemented in their teaching. The study was conducted by interviewing five Finnish NNESTs, whose interview answers were analyzed through the lens of applied thematic analysis. There are two central concepts in the present study: the division of teachers into non-native- and native speakers, and authenticity in foreign language teaching.

According to Medgyes (2001: 430), a simplified definition of native-speakers of English is that they are individuals who were born in an English speaking country. Hummel (2013: 21) explains that non-native English speakers are those who have not acquired the language as their first language, but instead their language skills developed later in life, usually in institutional language education. The definition of authenticity in language teaching in this thesis relies to large extent on Mishan's (2004:18) interpretation of it. Her definition emphasizes the authentic origins of the materials, their original communicative function, and their presentation in context. In addition, authentic learning activities should be meaningful and motivating, and they should teach the learners useful language skills they will likely need outside the classroom (Mishan 2004: 18).

The relationship between non-native foreign language teachers and authenticity is intriguing, because often the two concepts are not associated with each other. Authenticity in foreign language teaching is an imprecise concept and it is often related to native English-speaking Teachers (NESTs) in such a way that the native speakers are thought to be more authentic than non-native speakers, as research has proved. However, according to Mishan's (2004: 18) definition of authentic language teaching, the teacher's nationality and mother tongue are irrelevant. This disagreement was the starting point of this thesis, and more specifically the focus was on Finnish NNESTs and their relationship with authentic foreign language teaching, since there appears to be little research of the topic. Therefore, the research questions are as follows: 1.How do the NNESTs' define authentic language teaching? and 2.In what ways do the NNESTs promote authenticity in their teaching?

2 BACKGROUND

As it was mentioned, there are two concepts that are central in my thesis: the non-native/native English-speaker dichotomy in foreign language teaching and the concept of authenticity in language teaching. As it will be explained in the following subsections, in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), the two concepts, authenticity and the native/non-native division, relate to one another quite closely. For clarity, it should be noted that Native English-speaking Teachers will be addressed simply as NESTs in this thesis, and Non-native English-speaking Teachers are referred to as NNESTs. Another term that will be abbreviated is Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), which refers to teaching English to those individuals who do not have English as their mother tongue but instead learn English either as a Foreign Language (FL) or Second Language (L2).

2.1 NEST/ NNEST Dichotomy

The teachers of English as a second or foreign language are divided into two categories: native and non-native speakers of English. Hummel (2013: 21) explains that non-native speakers of English have acquired the language as a second or foreign language, and in general in institutional and instructional settings. The most simplified definition of native speakers is that they are individuals who are born in an English speaking country, as Medgyes (2001: 430) defines them. However, he adds that this rigid definition does not take into account variables such as bilingualism, multilingualism, or changes in the place of residence, such as the individual moving to another country in early childhood from an English speaking country to a non-English speaking country or vice versa.

Regardless of the fact that the term ‘native speaker’ is an attribute which does not have an unwavering definition, it is widely used and appreciated, and it continues to influence English learning and teaching (ELT) companies’ and schools’ hiring policies. Many factors attribute to the appreciation of native speakers, but one crucial reason is that they are considered to have legal ownership over English language – a view that relates closely to the Center-Periphery Model and the monolingual bias that are presented below.

The Center-Periphery model was originally presented by Phillipson (1992, as cited by Medgyes 2001: 432-433), according to whom the Center belongs to powerful Western countries where English is a native language, such as the United Kingdom and United States. The Periphery consists of underdeveloped countries where English is a second or foreign language, such as many Asian and African countries (ibid.). Phillipson (1992, cited by Medgyes 2011: 433) argues that based on his research and observations, NESTs enjoy better reputation and are valued higher than NNESTs both in the Central and Peripheral Countries. As Phillipson (1992, cited by Medgyes 2001: 433) puts it, “in certain countries and historical circumstances, even backpackers with no teaching qualifications or teaching experience are extended a warm welcome”. Phillipson added that this inequality reigns not only in the field of TESOL, but also in research projects, aid programs and training courses.

Medgyes (2011: 431) comments that this unequal treatment of native and non-native speakers originates from the idea that the imagined ownership of English belong to those with better language proficiency and stronger cultural affiliation – the native speakers. The ownership of English relates closely to the monolingual bias discussed by Mahboob (2010) as well. Mahboob (2004: 1) explains that the monolingual bias is the way of viewing non-native speakers as life-long learners of English instead of proficient users of the language. Similarly as in the Center-Periphery model, the monolingual bias causes the place of origin be seen as the determining factor in how competent language user an individual can be. The monolingual bias is ingrained in the field of TESOL quite deeply, as Mahboob (2010: 3) argues. According to him, the language models provided by native speakers are often seen as the invisible ideals for English use, which has led to the language models provided by the native speakers to have become the ‘correct’ models for English learners in many instances. The same idealization of native speakers can also be seen in evaluation, since in many cases, a learner is considered to be successful if she or he is capable of sounding or writing like a native English speaker (Mahboob 2009: 5).

Multiple studies have confirmed that NEST favoritism prevails in TESOL. For example, Ali (2009: 34) researched the experiences of NNESTs in English Language Teaching (ELT) businesses in the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) Countries and found out that these businesses largely preferred western NESTs, even if they have the opportunity to hire qualified NNESTs with non-western backgrounds. One reason for the NEST favoritism according to

Braine (1998, cited by Ali 2009: 38) is that the ELT businesses believe that learners prefer native-speaker teachers, and thus hiring NESTs attracts more learners. In order to test this claim, Ali (2009: 49) conducted a research in which she examined the opinions of EFL learners in order to find out what they considered to be the most important features of an English teacher. The study revealed that the EFL students did not regard being native or being Western among the desirable qualities of an English teacher, but instead the learners valued other factors considerably more. First of all, interviewed students valued such aspects in foreign language teachers as “cares about the students and their progress”, “challenges them to do better” and “develops their self-esteem”, which relate to student-teacher relationship. Secondly, they valued teachers’ positive personality traits such as enthusiasm and patience. Nationality and mother tongue were not mentioned by any of the interviewed students in the study.

This indicates that some ELT businesses operate on the false belief that NESTs attract more students, even though EFL students have been proven to value other factors more than nativeness. There are other studies as well that have confirmed this argument to be true: for example, a study conducted by Medgyes (2001: 436) revealed that 29% of the EFL students in the study preferred NESTs, 27% NNESTs and 44% inserted ‘both’ as an answer when asked about whether EFL learners prefer native speakers or non-native speakers as teachers. As it can be seen, the results indicate that a majority of EFL learners either do not mind having non-native teachers or even prefer them over native speakers.

Nevertheless, even if at times NESTs are favored over NNESTs for no valid reason, it is without doubt that NESTs have some benefits and advantages compared to NNESTs. Medgyes (2001: 434) notes that in general, NESTs make little pronunciation mistakes, are proficient with multiple language registers, can handle diverse communication situations and have superior cultural knowledge. In addition, Medgyes (2001: 434) points out that since NESTs generally use the language more spontaneously they provide models of fluent language use. Even if NNESTs can improve their language skills with practice, dedication and travelling in English speaking countries, they cannot attain native like language proficiency – a fact the NNESTs are well aware of themselves as well, as Medgyes (ibid.) points out.

However, Medgyes (2001: 434) continues that NNESTs have some advantages on their side as well: whereas NESTs provide better *language* models, NNESTs provide better

learner models; since NNESTs have been in the position of the language learners they can identify better with the learners' struggle to learn a foreign language and offer more specific advice regarding learning strategies. NNESTs also supply more information about the English language, whereas NESTs tend to regard some grammar rules as self-evident, for example. In addition, NNESTs, who often have the same mother tongue as the students they are teaching, are aware the interference of the mother tongue and know which aspects of language to pay careful attention to, as Medgyes (2001) remarks. Lastly, he notes that NESTs tend to have overly optimistic expectations of their learners, whereas NNESTs are more realistic: expecting too much from the learners might frustrate both the teacher and the learners.

As a conclusion, even though the superiority myth of NESTs still prevails in TESOL due to the Center-Periphery model, the alleged native-speaker ownership of the English language and the monolingual bias, both NESTs and NNESTs have their own assets and disadvantages. Hence, both types of teachers can be equally good teachers with proper education, training and sufficient working experience. However, according to Medgyes (2001: 435), there is one major difference between NESTs and NNESTs: in general, NESTs pay more attention to fluency, meaning, oral skills and colloquial registers, flexibility and innovativeness, whereas NNESTs emphasize accuracy, formal features of language, grammar, the meaning of printed word and formal registers. Therefore, even though non-nativeness or nativeness does not determine teachers' competency, their background might influence what aspects of language they stress in their teaching.

2.2 Authenticity in Foreign Language Teaching

Mishan (2004:10) notes that in order to discuss the role of authenticity in foreign language teaching and learning it is necessary to first of all clarify what is meant by terms such as *authenticity* and *authentic*. Mishan (2004: 10) explains that the term authenticity is in general related to definitions like *real*, *genuine*, *pure* and *naturally occurring*. The association of *natural occurrence* as a core part of authenticity is what connects the NEST/NNESTs dichotomy and authenticity of language learning and teaching together, which are the two main concepts of the present study. As Hummel (2013: 7-8) explains it, native speakers' language skills occurred

naturally via L1 acquisition, which begins right after birth. Hummel (2013: 21) continues that L2 or FL acquisition on the other hand begins generally much later in life and takes place in instructional and institutional settings. Therefore, learning an L2 or FL is often perceived to be a less acquisition-centered process, and a less natural and authentic way of learning a language.

This way of viewing certain type of language acquisition as the only authentic way is the basis for the monolingual bias in TESOL, which was introduced earlier in this thesis. As Kachru (1985 cited by Mahboob, 2001:1) explains, the monolingual bias is based on the perception of NNESTs as mere imitators of native speakers, because NNESTs' language skills are not innate and 'authentic', unlike NESTs'. The same goes for L2 or FL teaching, since teaching takes place in instructional and institutional settings and follows generally a certain predefined schema to make the learners adopt the language and there is little room for natural acquisition, which is why it could be claimed that it is not as authentic as L1 acquisition. Thus, the monolingual bias is the way 'authentic' origins are valued over qualifications and experience. If authentic foreign language teaching were defined on more accurate grounds than the nationality of the teacher, the monolingual bias might become less dominant in the field of TESOL, which would benefit NNESTs.

In addition to improving the position of NNESTs, defining what authentic teaching is would make it easier for teachers to monitor and improve the authenticity in their own teaching. However, Mishan (2004: 1-2) explains that in the field of language teaching, there has not been animosity about authenticity's role, definition or significance, even though the role of authenticity in teaching has been discussed for decades. Mishan (2004) remarks that the lack of definition is not surprising considering the fact that the term 'authenticity' is a relatively young term, dating back to the 1970s and to the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT was a significant change of perspective in language teaching, for it emphasized the role of authentic texts and relinquished strictly structure focused teaching.

However, the criteria for authentic materials have been defined differently in different decades. As Mishan (2004: 13) explains, CLT in the 1970s underscored that authentic materials must be originally made for communicational purposes instead of pedagogical purposes. In the 1980s the general consensus agreed that the materials would only be authentic if they were produced by native speakers for native speakers, to ensure that the language would be similar to

what the learners will face when facing actual communication in the target language country. However, Morrow (1997, as cited by Mishan 2004: 13) argued that when the materials are analyzed for teaching and learning purposes, they automatically become unauthentic by losing their communicative function; thus, classroom teaching cannot by default be authentic. Morrow (1997, as cited by Mishan 2004: 14) also added that the topic, function and audience of the texts affect the effectiveness of learning more than their authenticity. This is agreed on modern researchers as well to some extent, but Mishan (2004: 11) remarks that modern day research has also confirmed that the use of authentic texts and other teaching materials prepares learners better to face language outside the classroom, so the materials' authenticity have significance.

Concluding from all the different definitions of authentic materials, Mishan (2004: 15) notes that even though there is no clear definition of authentic materials, some key features exist. First of all, the materials provenance matters. For instance, this means that a recording of two British people talking is not made by two American actors pretending to be British, but instead the record is actually of a real discussion between two British people. Another example of authentic provenance is that an excerpt from a blog should be from a real blog, not an excerpt from the textbook writers who fake to be bloggers. Secondly, authentic materials should have original communicative purpose and socio-cultural function, meaning that the materials were created for genuine communicative purposes and not solely for classroom use, as Mishan (2004: 1) explains. Thirdly, it is important that the language items that are presented in class are not separated from their context, since language does not naturally exist in a vacuum.

Nevertheless, the modern definition of authentic language teaching includes also the teaching situation. Mishan (2004: 17) explains that the 1990s saw the rise of more learner-centered approach to authenticity. Some pedagogies from that time, such as the task-based approach, emphasize how authenticity has more to do with what is done with the teaching materials rather than where they are originally from. As Taylor (1994, cited by Mishan 2004: 16) remarks, "we must acknowledge that the classroom itself is a real place", which illustrates well how these more learner-centered approaches emphasize how authenticity cannot be brought to the classroom from the outside. Instead, it is related to whether the texts and tasks have a real-life communicative purpose perceived to be meaningful by the learners and the teacher (Mishan 2004: 17).

As a conclusion, the concept of authenticity in teaching has experienced great changes over the decades and there is no watertight definition of it. In addition, the question of what authentic teaching is can be approached from multiple perspectives: therefore, there is no right or wrong answer to what it entails. As Mishan (2004: 18) explains, even though there is no one solid definition of what authenticity in teaching means, there are some central factors that reinforce it in teaching. First of all, the teacher should pay attention to the provenance of the materials. Secondly, the materials should have original communicative and socio-cultural purpose. Thirdly, the language items that are taught should be presented in context, meaning that the teaching materials should consist of whole entities, instead of them being cut into single sentences or phrases. However, Mishan (2004: 18) remarks that besides teaching materials, authenticity can and should also be implemented in teaching activities. Authentic learning activities are built so that they require learning and using skills which are necessary for the learners. Additionally, it is important that the learners' perception of teaching materials and activities is that they are meaningful and motivating.

3 AIM, DATA AND METHODS

The aim of this study is to explore the NNESTs' understanding of authentic language teaching, and how they implement authenticity in their teaching. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do the NNESTs' define authentic language teaching?
2. In what ways do the NNESTs promote authenticity in their teaching?

Interviewing proved to be the most suitable method of data collection for the purposes of the present study, for the research aim is to examine opinions, feelings and thoughts. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the seven interview questions were planned beforehand, but the discussion was not rigidly structured around the questions. The interviews were conducted individually and the language used was the interviewees' mother tongue, Finnish. The interview questions can be found both in Finnish and English in the Appendix on pages 23-24.

The data was collected by interviewing four secondary school teachers and one upper secondary school teacher in Northern Finland. Four of the interviewees were female and one of

them was a male person. Since the teachers had varying amount of teaching experience and different backgrounds, they are introduced below briefly. However, despite the differences, there are unifying factors as well: besides sharing the same mother tongue, all of the teachers were qualified teachers and they had abroad experience.

Teacher A is a teacher of English and textile work at a secondary school. She is also a special education teacher. She has been teaching English for six years, although she has been a textile work and a special education teacher for a couple decades. She has not had the time to work or study abroad, but she has travelled abroad.

Teacher B teaches English, Spanish and Swedish in a secondary school, and has been teaching for around three decades. Earlier she has worked in many different teaching institutions: in an upper secondary school, a vocational school, and in basic- and adult education. She gained some abroad work experience when she worked as an au pair in Britain, and on top of that, she has travelled abroad.

Teacher C has Swedish as her major, but she switched to teaching her minor, English, from early on in her teaching career. Teacher C's teaching career is over two decades long. Teacher C is now a teacher in a secondary school, but she has been teaching in basic education as well as in a business school. She has gained abroad experience from her employment as an au pair in Britain and from the United States as a part time worker besides travelling in foreign countries.

Teacher D has been teaching French in addition to English earlier in her teaching career, but she is now teaching only English. Teacher D works in upper secondary school, and she has been teaching in a secondary school as well. Teacher D's teaching career is over three decades long, and she has been in exchange in the United States during her studies and has travelled abroad as well.

Teacher E teaches English and Swedish. He has been teaching in basic education, but works now in a secondary school. He has been working as a teacher for five years. He has not worked or studied abroad, but he has travelled in foreign countries.

The collected data was examined through applied thematic analysis (ATA). Guest et al. (2012: 15) explain that applied thematic analysis focuses on revealing implicit and explicit

ideas, i.e. *themes*, from the collected data instead of focusing on numerical data. Guest et al. (ibid.) explain further that the found themes can be compared in relation to their frequency and co-occurrence. This was the most appropriate way to analyze the data, for the aim of the interviews was to find out if there are any common themes that become apparent in the interview material regarding authenticity in foreign language teaching and being a non-native teacher of English.

4 ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the interview results will be analyzed from the point of view of thematic applied analysis. In the first subsection, the interviewed NNESTs' language choices in the classroom are discussed. In the second subsection, there will be discussion about the authentic learning activities. In the third subsection, the teachers' choices regarding teaching materials will be presented, which will be followed by a subsection dedicated solely to the teachers' choices of language and teaching materials in grammar teaching.

4.1 Language Choices

The teachers reported using mainly English in their classrooms; in other words, they were communicating in English with the learners, and not using English only in teaching. According to Mishan (2004: 19), communication is one hallmark of authentic language use and a part of authentic way to learn and teach languages, for it prepares the learners language skills they probably need in the future. Therefore, it could be argued that the teachers' choice to communicate with the learners in English is one way how they promoted authenticity in their teaching.

However, the teachers used also Finnish in their classrooms to some extent. All of them agreed that sharing a L1 with the learners has been extremely helpful for them in teaching English. None of them said that they felt that Finnish hinders teaching English, or that they felt that were less-authentic than native speakers of English because of their mother tongue. Teachers A and C said that the whole class understands the instructions if Finnish is used, and it is easier to explain the meaning of some words (See Example 1).

(1) Pystyy niin kuin neuvomaan suomeksi, ja se että voi niin kuin vertailla että suomessa tämä menee näin ja englannissa se meneekin näin, että se vertailu niiden kielten välillä, koen sen semmoseksi plussaksi.

One can give instructions in Finnish, and also compare, like "in Finnish this goes like this and in English it goes like this," the comparison between the languages, I consider that a plus. (Teacher C)

Teacher E also mentioned that Finnish can be used not only to give instructions, but also to check if everyone has understood (see Example 2).

(2) Vaikka puhuukin englantia niin aina voi tarkistaa suomeksi, että ootteko kartalla vielä.

Even though one speaks mostly English, it's possible to always check in Finnish that are you [the students] still following. (Teacher E)

Teachers B and D agreed that it is important that all of the students understand: therefore, using Finnish is acceptable to check understanding, even if English is otherwise used in the class.

Teacher D also mentioned that having the same mother tongue makes it easier to understand some mistakes the learners make (see Example 3).

(3) Kyllä sitä ymmärtää oppilaiden ongelmia ehkä paremmin kun tietää että tämä ongelma todennäköisesti johtuu siitä, että suomeksi sanotaan asioita näin, joillakin on se suomenkielien suodatin niin vahva.

You understand the students' problem better since you know that this problem is probably because we say it in Finnish like this, for some students the so-called Finnish filter is so strong. (Teacher D)

However, besides the benefits of sharing a mother tongue with the learners, the teachers also pointed out that there are some drawbacks in being a NNEST as well. All of the teachers agreed that they cannot provide a native-like language model for the learners, which is one of the disadvantages of being a NNEST. All of the teachers admitted that in addition to having more cultural knowledge, NNESTs have the advantages of native-like pronunciation, fluency of speech, and vast vocabulary. The teachers conceded that as long as NESTs are qualified teachers, they can be very cogent teachers. A quote from Teacher E:

(4) Tottakai jos on semmonen tyyppi, joka puhuu natiivina ja on vielä maisterin paperit taskussa, on aika hyvä koska se ääntää hyvin ja tietää myös että mistä ne kielen jutut tulee.

Of course, if he's that kind of guy who speaks like a native and also has master's papers that's pretty good because he spells it [English] well and also knows why the language works the way it does. (Teacher E)

It appears that the teachers were subjects to the monolingual bias, which was introduced earlier in this thesis, to a certain extent. Even though the interviewees reported being confident as teachers and pointed out the advantages of sharing the L1 with the learners, being able to speak like a native was regarded as the ideal way to use language, and they considered not being able to provide a native language model to the learners regrettable. The teachers' comments indicate that they considered the native-like language models to be the correct ones, which is a typical feature of the monolingual bias (Mahboob 2004: 3).

Although many of the interviewees felt that it is a shame that they are not able to speak like the natives, as Teacher A commented in Example 5, not speaking like a native does not necessarily mean that they are lesser teachers:

(5) En mä ole englanninkielinen – tavallaan sitä on tutkimassa sitä kieltä heidän kanssaan, oon ottanut sellasen asenteen.

I'm not English-speaker, in a way I'm here to study the language with them [the students], that's the attitude I have taken. (Teacher A)

4.2 Authentic Learning Activities

According to Mishan's (2004:18) definition of authentic teaching, meaningful learning activities are as important as teaching materials in authentic foreign language teaching. Meaningful learning activities in this case refer to those activities that develop language skills the learners need in the future when they have to use English independently. Interestingly, a minority of the teachers mentioned meaningful and motivating learning activities in their answers regarding authentic language teaching, and a majority of them focused solely on authentic materials, which are discussed in subsection 4.3. Teacher C pointed out that to her, authenticity means that the skills being taught and learned are actually necessary and interesting, so the authenticity of the learning activities was present in her answer. Her view is parallel with Mishan's (2004) definition of what authentic learning activities can entail. According to Teacher D, an authentic teaching situation means that the teacher would direct the learning while letting the learners realize aspects of language themselves. Giving the learners space to develop their skills as autonomous language

learners and language users is one way to enhance authenticity in foreign language teaching. Teacher D compared the process to the way a child acquires basic skills (see Example 6).

(6) Jos se ois niin kuin autenttinen tilanne, niin ajattelisin että se ois jotenkin niin että mä vain ohjaisin ja auttaisin sitä oppimaan, ei tarvisi sormella osoitella eikä nimetä mitään. Että se opiskelijan oivaltaminen tulisi sen kummemmin osoittelematta ja huomauttamatta. --- Voisin vetää yhtäläisyysmerkit siihen että kun pieni lapsi oppii ihmisyyden taitoja, niin ei sitä ohjata, vaan kannustetaan ja seurataan lempeästi sivusta kun se itse oivaltaa että miten tämä toimii.

If it were an authentic situation, I think that it would be like I would merely direct and help to learn, that there would not be the need to directly point things out or make remarks. ---I could compare it to how a small child learns basic skills, there is little direction, just encouragement and standing by when it learns itself how things work. (Teacher D).

The fact that Teacher C and Teacher D were the only ones to mention the meaningfulness of the exercises and the role of the teacher relating to authenticity might have two implications: first of all, it is possible that the other teachers do not relate these aspects of teaching to be meaningful factors in shaping authentic language teaching. Secondly, the interview questions could perhaps have been formulated more precisely to make the interviewees think about their role as teachers and the exercises' meaningfulness.

4.3 Teaching Materials

As it has been mentioned earlier in this thesis, according to the interviewees the teaching materials played an important part in authentic language teaching. The fact that the interviewed NNESTs emphasized the meaning of materials is parallel with Medgyes' (2001: 435) findings about how NESTs and NNESTs stress different aspects of language use. In general, NNESTs emphasize accuracy, formal features of language, grammar, the meaning of printed word and formal registers. Medgyes' (2001) research results seem to apply to these teachers as well. All of the teachers mentioned that the course book was their primary material in teaching. The reasons were varying; Teacher A mentioned that one lesson has a limited amount of time (see Example 7).

(7) Se on se tunti niin lyhyt, että jos sä lähdet rönsyileen se aika loppuu kesken. Hyvä kun saa edes nuo perusjutut käytyä läpi.

One lesson's so short that if you start meandering you will run out of time. You barely have the time to get the basic things done. (Teacher A)

From the point of view of authenticity, the course books are not the best option as teaching materials. Teachers A, B, C and D reported that the course books they were using were first of all rather old-fashioned. Teacher B mentioned that the instructions to the assignments and the grammar section were often in Finnish, and Teacher C remarked that some of the chapters in the course book she was using were rather uninteresting for teenagers because the topics did not relate to the young people's lives. Teacher A noted that the recordings on the course book's CD that were done by voice actors tended to sound clumsy and even unintentionally amusing. Using voice actors indicates the lack of original communicative purpose of the recordings, which diminishes their authenticity.

However, no far-reaching conclusion can be made about the course books, since in order to be able to further examine their authenticity, it would have been necessary to see what kind of exercises they entail. According to Mishan (2004:19), exercises are one core factor which shapes the teaching materials' authenticity. The analysis of the course books used by the interviewees would have required more time and resources than what were available; thus, no all-inclusive deductions can be made about how authentic they were as teaching materials. The comments made about their authenticity in this thesis are based on the interviewees' answers. Nevertheless, based on the teachers' comments, it appears that the books used by Teachers A, B and C lack original communicative function, which is one of the requirements for authentic teaching materials according to Mishan (2004:19).

Nonetheless, none of the teachers relied solely on the course book. Almost all of the teachers reported having their own collections of teaching materials, which were borrowed from somewhere, created by the teachers themselves or brought from abroad. Teacher D described her classroom as follows (see Example 9).

(9) Luokkahuoneessa niin siellä tällä hetkellä seinillä englanninkielisten maiden lippuja seinillä, sekä karttoja ja muita kuvia, ja luokan perällä on kirjahylly, jossa on sarjakuvalehtiä ja sanakirjoja, ja kielioppikirjoja ja tämmöistä näin.

In the classroom, at the moment there are flags of English-speaking countries, maps and other pictures on the walls, and in the back of the class there is a bookcase with comics, dictionaries and grammar books and so forth. (Teacher D)

The materials the teachers had brought from abroad, such as magazines, books, flags, pictures and timetables, are an example of authentic teaching materials: they have original communicative purpose and socio-cultural function. Hence, these materials offer an example of what kind of language the students might encounter in the world outside the classroom. Teacher E said that he would also include pictures and his own experiences from travels if they were related to the chapter in some way, which was agreed on by Teacher C, who reported that she encouraged the learners to tell about their own travel experiences for the class as well. Teachers C and E agreed also on the matter that an efficient way to bring the outside world to the classroom would be to bring visitors from abroad and have them speak to the class. Bringing something from the outside to the classroom seemed to be the common theme in the teachers' answers regarding how authenticity can be implemented in teaching and how they perform authenticity in their teaching.

4.4 Teaching Grammar

There were two ways used by all of the interviewees to implement authenticity in their teaching: they used the target language to communicate with the learners, and they had brought materials from abroad to supplement teaching materials. A minority of the teachers mentioned the authenticity of the learning activities as well. However, when teaching grammar was in question, all of the teachers would deviate from their routines. First of all, the teachers would rather play it safe and use Finnish more than in general when teaching grammar. Teacher E reasoned that it is double the work for the students to study new structures of grammar in foreign language, and the other teachers agreed that ensuring the learners' comprehension matters more than being authentic. Secondly, Teachers B and D pointed out that when teaching grammar, using completely authentic materials might just confuse the learners. A quote from Teacher B:

(10) Kun ollaan vielä tällä asteella, niin osalle oppilaista voi olla äärimmäisen vaikeaa että jos on vaikka autenttinen teksti niin hahmottaa sieltä asioita. --- Pitää tasapainoilla sen välillä, että jokainen sais kuitenkin jotakin, se on todella ikävä tunne että ”hei, mä en ymmärrä tästä mitään!”

When we are still on this level [secondary school] it can be extremely hard for some students to understand things from an authentic text --- A teacher must balance between it that everyone would get something [out of the materials], it's really nasty feeling to be like "hey, I cannot understand a thing here!" (Teacher B)

Teachers B's and D's choice to put authenticity in the background while teaching grammar does not align with Mishan's (2004: 15) views: as she explains, presenting grammar items in context is a more authentic way to present them, since the grammar items will not exist in a vacuum in real life communication situations. Nonetheless, the teachers motivated their view by pointing out that there are multiple different learners in the classrooms that are not on the same level of competence, and they wanted to ensure that all the learners can keep up with the teaching by keeping the teaching materials simple.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to examine how NNESTs define authentic language teaching and how they implement it in their teaching. The study was conducted by interviewing five NNESTs from Finland, whose interview answers were analyzed through the lens of Applied Thematic Analysis. The common themes concerning authentic language teaching that emerged from the study regarded the language choices of the teachers, the teaching materials they used, and grammar teaching.

First of all, it was found out that the teachers communicated with the learners in English. Authentic communication in the target language is one way to implement authenticity in a foreign language classroom. However, the teachers also used Finnish to aid teaching and to ensure that the learners understand what is taught, especially when grammar teaching was in question. Grammar teaching affected all of the teachers' language choice, for they used Finnish more than in general for teaching it. The teachers motivated their answers by pointing out that there are multiple different learners in the classrooms all of whom have different competence level, and because they wanted to ensure that all of the learners are included in teaching, they would use Finnish more than usual.

Secondly, the teachers related authentic teaching materials to be a core part of authentic language teaching; only a minority of them mentioned learning activities and the teaching situation to be significant factors in shaping it. There can be two possible explanations for this. On the one hand, the majority of the interviewees might not consider learning activities and the teaching situation relevant from the point of view of authentic language teaching. On the other hand, perhaps the interview questions could have been formed differently to get more precise answers. In practice, all of the teachers had brought materials from abroad to the classroom to supplement their teaching materials. Bringing something from the outside to the classroom to increase authenticity was a frequently appearing theme; for example, the interviewees agreed that a teacher could bring physical materials, such as magazines, brochures and timetables from their travels to the classroom, as well as share their abroad experiences with the learners. However, grammar teaching proved to be an exception regarding the teaching materials, since two of the teachers mentioned that authentic materials were not the best suitable ones for teaching it. They considered learning grammar to be difficult enough as it is and pointed out that the learners' language skills vary greatly, which is why authentic materials might interfere with the learners' understanding.

The fact that grammar teaching affected the teachers' routines and opinions indicates that they regard it to be a distinct part of language teaching; no other areas in which authentic materials would not be suitable or that affected their language choices were mentioned. Hence, the teachers' rejection of authentic materials in grammar teaching could be examined in further studies. Another possible research topic that emerged from this study is researching authenticity in Finnish secondary and upper secondary English course books' from the point of view of authenticity, for this matter was to a large extent left unexamined in the present study. Even though the sample was small and therefore the results cannot be generalized, the findings indicate that authenticity can and is established by Non-Native English-Speaking teachers in multiple different ways; therefore, authenticity is not reserved for native-English speakers only.

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7 APPENDIX

7.1 The Interview Questions in Finnish

1. Taustatietoa

- 1.1. Opetatko muita aineita kuin englantia?
- 1.2. Mitä luokkia opetat nyt?
- 1.3. Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt opettajana?
- 1.4. Millaisissa opetustehtävissä olet toiminut? (Esim. Aineenopettajana, luokanopettajana, lukiossa, yläasteella, ala-asteella, kansalaisopistolla.)
- 1.5. Oletko koskaan opiskellut tai työskennellyt ulkomailla?

2. Opettaminen

- 2.1. Millainen on tyypillinen oppituntisi? Esim. millaisia rutiineja sinulla on, kuinka aloitat/lopetat oppitunnin.
- 2.2. Millaisia opetusmateriaaleja käytät? Miksi juuri niitä materiaaleja?
- 2.3. Käytätkö suomea oppitunneillasi? Jos, niin millaisissa tilanteissa?
- 2.4. Onko äidinkielestäsi eli suomesta hyötyä opetuksessa? Entä haittaa?
- 2.5. Mitä vahvuuksia on suomea äidinkielenään puhuvilla englanninopettajilla? Entä mitä heikkouksia?
- 2.6. Mitä vahvuuksia on englantia äidinkielenään puhuvilla englanninopettajilla? Entä mitä heikkouksia?
- 2.7. Mitä asioita kielten opetuksen autenttisuus tuo sinun mieleesi?

7.2 The Interview Questions in English

1. Background Information

- 1.1. Do you teach any other subjects than English?
- 1.2. What classes do you teach at the moment?
- 1.3. How long have you been working as a teacher?
- 1.4. What type of teaching experience do you have (i.e. Have you been teaching as a subject teacher, a class teacher, in high school, secondary school, elementary school, adult educational center.)
- 1.5. Have you studied or worked abroad?

2. Teaching

- 2.1. What is your usual lesson like? I.e. what routines do you have, how do you start/end a class.
- 2.2. What kind of teaching materials do you use? Why these particular materials?
- 2.3. Do you use Finnish in your lessons? If so, in what kind of situations?
- 2.4. Do you think your mother tongue helps in teaching/ interferes with teaching?
- 2.5. What strengths/weaknesses do the English teachers with Finnish as their mother tongue have?
- 2.6. What strengths/weaknesses do the English teachers with English as their mother tongue have?
- 2.7. What does the concept authenticity in language teaching bring to your mind?